

# THE BRONX Beat

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## Homeless children spend hours commuting

By Vinnee Tong

Sashai Brown is tired. Each day, she gets up at 5 a.m. for the commute to her Brooklyn school. To get there, she rides two subway trains and a bus, a two-hour trip that often makes her late for school. The sun sets before she returns to a homeless shelter in the Bronx, where she stays with her mother, Rainelle Smith, and younger brother and sister.

It's a long day for an 8-year-old. "Their schedule keeps changing," Smith said. "They don't know. They just know that they're exhausted."

For the city's estimated 8,000 homeless children living in shelters, school is one of the few constants. Families are often placed in shelters far from their previous homes, and parents are faced with a tough choice: spend hours on trains and buses each day for the sake of consistency, or spare the commute but move their children from school to school.

Maria Toro of Kids First New York, an advocacy group, said the decision often is no more than a guess.

"How are you to know when you're going to find permanent housing?" Toro asks. "They're from the Bronx. They find Tier II housing in Brooklyn. Then they find permanent housing in Queens."

"It's a Catch-22. There's really no right answer when a family is bouncing around."

Smith, who is on disability, and her children have been living in the Bronx shelter since mid-February. Before that, they had been in another shelter for a month when they had to leave their Brooklyn apartment. Smith decided to keep Sashai, now a third-grader, at the same school to avoid change in her daughter's routine. Sashai has been attending Public School 53 since first grade and knows the teachers and students.

Each morning, Smith, 28, wakes early to get her children ready. After they are dressed and

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## Women of the world say no to war



BARBARA ORTUTAY  
Ines Contreras, a member of the Bronx Spanish Evangelical Church in Melrose, protested against a war with Iraq at a rally on March 8, International Women's Day, in Union Square in Manhattan.

## War worries Muslims

By Jordan Green

With a war with Iraq seemingly imminent, some Muslims in the borough are weighing the risks of military intervention with deep ambivalence.

"Muslims are really against war because they don't want innocent people to be killed," said Syed A. Zaidi, 40, a Pakistani-born clerk at Discount Cigart grocery on Lydig Avenue. "But they want Saddam to be out. He kills his own people, the Shias and the Kurds. So what will he do to the others?"

The potential consequences of

a war are sharply felt by the thousand-plus Arabs who live in the borough along with the 9,304 residents from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh whose geographic and religious ties give them a keen empathy for the plight of the Iraqis. Particularly in the Lydig Avenue area, a busy Albanian, Puerto Rican and Pakistani community, concerns for the welfare of fellow Muslims in the Middle East coexist with wider sentiments of American patriotism.

Zaidi belongs to the Shiite Muslim faith, the majority sect in Iraq that has been harshly



Syed A. Zaidi hopes for the end of Saddam Hussein's regime, but opposes the use of force.

JORDAN GREEN

## Frozen meals for seniors may replace hot food

By Matthew E. Milliken

The Department for the Aging is considering sending frozen meals to homebound seniors instead of making daily hot-meal deliveries.

"If we go to frozen meals, we may even have enough savings to expand our program to serve more seniors," Edwin Méndez-Santiago, the department's commissioner, said last week during the taping of a television program at the Aging in America Senior Center in Pelham Parkway.

The program, "Aging Well", will be shown at 7:30 p.m. March 31 on Bronxnet, Channel 67 on the Cablevision sys-

tem.

Meals-on-wheels, as the home-meal delivery service is commonly known, might be the only regular human contact for some frail seniors. Various local administrators are concerned about the potential switch to less frequent frozen-meal deliveries. Other food program coordinators, even those who favor a change, say some seniors lack working stoves or microwaves or are physically incapable of reheating the meals.

City residents may qualify for meals-on-wheels if they are 60 or older; cannot cook, shop for food or prepare nutritious meals; do not have friends or relatives who can help them with meals; and are ineligible for other types of government support, such as Medicaid-sponsored home attendants. About 17,000 city seniors receive home-meal delivery.

David Beiss, the meal-delivery coordinator for the Bronx Jewish Community Council, said his drivers and deliverers discover incapacitated seniors "on a regular basis."

"When they don't answer their door, we immediately contact their family," Beiss said.

One city organization has run pilot frozen-food delivery programs for about two years. "We started doing it because the city was building up a waiting list" for home-delivered meals, said Marcia Stein, executive director of Citymeals-on-Wheels, a privately financed group that works with city government. She said recipients are "quite happy because it allows them to choose what they want to eat."

But not every homebound senior can reheat frozen dinners. "We have not yet done an assessment person by person to see what percentage of people could handle the meals," Stein said.

Theoni Angelopolous, a Department for the Aging spokeswoman, said that frail seniors need not worry about losing daily contact with food deliverers because other services, such as case manage-

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# Dirty lots spur housing plan

By Travis Loller

It's been nearly five years since the city auctioned three lots on East 159th Street between St. Ann's and Eagle avenues, but the property remains vacant and filled with rubbish.

"It looks like a junkyard," said Dimas Cepeda, who has lived in Morrisania for more than 30 years.

Now a City Council member is introducing a resolution that he hopes will mean fewer vacant lots like this and more affordable housing across the city.

The resolution, which will be introduced by Queens Councilman James Sanders Jr. on March 26, calls on the council to stop approving the sale of city-owned land unless it will be used for affordable housing.

It comes on the heels of a report by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, which stated that 66 percent of the lots the city had sold at auction since 1996 in specific communities were still registered as vacant.

In the Bronx, the organization studied lots in Mott Haven, Morrisania, Hunts Point and Highbridge. The report identified 1,697 vacant lots in the four neighborhoods, 594 of them still owned by the city. A sample found that almost three-quarters of them were blighted, ranging from lots with a moderate amount of trash to lots full of abandoned cars and overgrown weeds.

The report also said that the communities with the most vacant land have the greatest need for affordable housing.

Councilman José M. Serrano, on a recent tour of vacant lots in Morrisania, said that while he wanted to read up on the resolution first, the auction process, on the surface, "is not as good as it could be."

He added, "For the residents,



Members of the community group ACORN and City Councilwoman Helen Foster's Chief of Staff, James H. Fairbanks, tour the vacant lots of Morrisania.

it's a negative thing to see vacant lots year after year."

Councilwoman Helen Diane Foster has pledged her support for the resolution. She has seen the saga of these vacant lots played out firsthand, growing up in Highbridge in the 1970s.

"When I went away to college, there was only the house I grew up in, the apartments across the street and a church, and everything else was abandoned," she said.

Many of the lot owners would not return phone calls, but one said he did have plans for his property.

Michael Malhas said he bought a lot on Third Avenue near Boston Road in Morrisania 10 or 12 years ago in the hope of building an office for his construction business.

"At the time, the neighborhood was not conducive to that," he said. "My staff was worried about working late at night at that location."

So Malhas put a parking lot there and bought a second lot at 148th



Street and Bergen Avenue in Mott Haven where, he said, he wants to build his office within two years. He's ready to build on the Third Avenue lot, too, but he doesn't have the

money yet.

"The area is reviving," he said. "People have been coming to me, wanting to buy the lot, but I want to build there myself."

## Groups aim to redefine meaning of low income

By Travis Loller

A national advocacy group for the poor and members of the City Council are hoping to change the way the city housing department defines low income.

Under a new housing plan proposed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, about 16 percent of 35,000 units would be built or rehabilitated for low-to-moderate-income households.

But the 16 percent figure is misleading, according to the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now and City Councilman Hiram Monserrate, because households considered low income can earn as much as \$50,000. They say

that the figure should be more like \$30,000.

The city provides subsidies and land donations for affordable housing development for low-, moderate- and middle-income residents. Different sources of financing have different guidelines, but low income is generally defined to be no more than 80 percent of median income.

In New York City, median income is determined by looking at the five boroughs plus Putnam, Rockland and Westchester Counties. Because incomes in the suburbs are substantially higher than those in the city, that figure, \$62,800, is much higher than the \$38,870 median income for the

five boroughs.

A recent study of nine neighborhoods in the city, including Mott Haven, Morrisania, Highbridge and Hunts Point, found that their median income was \$21,688, only a third of what the city uses to decide who qualifies for affordable housing.

For some programs, that means a household can be considered low income by the city while earning more than twice the median income of these nine neighborhoods.

"I think we're at a critical point in time when it comes to working families," said Don Baylor,

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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Lawyers accused in bribery scheme

Six personal-injury lawyers, including two from the borough, were part of a bribery ring that stole patient information to try and corner the market on lucrative accident claims, authorities alleged.

They were among 12 people arraigned last Thursday in Manhattan Supreme Court on charges of bribing hospital employees for addresses and phone numbers of patients, mainly victims of car accidents, to file millions of dollars in personal-injury lawsuits.

The two Bronx-based lawyers, Lawrence Dicker, 55, and Anthony Ferrandino, 49, pleaded not guilty and refused to comment before the trial begins May 16.

Eddie Vega, 40, a former Lincoln Hospital employee who is accused of accepting bribes for confidential patient information, was indicted separately.

If convicted on charges of enterprise corruption, the lawyers face up to 25 years in prison.

#### HMO funds stolen

Two men were charged with stealing more than \$250,000 from the largest health-care provider in the borough, authorities said.

Emilio Noble, 39, a marketing director at Affinity Health Plan, and Luis Omar Rodriguez, 53, billed the company for marketing brochures that were never printed, Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson said.

The men face up to 15 years in prison if convicted.

The Affinity Health Plan insures low-income people through state-subsidized programs.

#### Hip-hop job fair

Hip-hop industry leaders will be in the borough this week to discuss careers in the music business. Students from Bronx Community College and University Heights Secondary School are holding a hip-hop job fair from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Friday in the theater of the college's Roscoe C. Brown Student Center. Some of the artists scheduled to appear include rapper KRS 1, comedian Rajen Persaud, and filmmaker Roderick Giles.

Jeremy Smerd

The next issue of The Bronx Beat will publish March 31.

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# Higher fees hit restaurants

By Melissa Nann  
and Marc Parry

The smoking ban takes effect in two weeks, but borough restaurant owners will barely have time to catch their breath before the city hits them with the triple-punch of new regulations.

Over the next three months restaurant proprietors will have to adjust to a 700 percent rise in rental costs for sidewalk seating, higher prices for hauling trash and a 100 percent increase for some Department of Health inspection fines.

Proprietors are concerned about how the ban on smoking in workplaces will affect

## Riders fret express bus may come to dead end

By Kosuke Takahashi

Residents in three far-flung neighborhoods, Co-op City, Parkchester and Morris Park, want to know if their express bus service to Manhattan will be canceled.

But at a public hearing last Thursday, Department of Transportation officials said that the city and the New York Bus Service had not reached an agreement over workers' pension funds. The private bus company that has provided a vital link to Manhattan for 30 years says if an agreement is not reached by March 31, it will no longer be able to afford to operate. The Metropolitan Transit Authority agrees with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg that it should take over the service, but no final decision has been reached.

This has made 15,000 riders anxious. Bracing for a probable \$1 fare increase, to \$4, that would take effect May 1, the riders are dismayed at the prospect of losing what they consider an essential service. "I need the New York Bus Service's express bus to meet my doctors in Manhattan," said Grace Mazzurco, a retired Parkchester resident who can no longer manage the subway stairs.

"The express bus is my lifeline," she testified during the DOT's public hearing at the Bronx County Court Building. In an area with few transportation options, thousands of commuters depend on the private bus service. Co-op City does not have any MTA-Metro North Railroad stations or subway stops, and residents there say the four public bus lines around Dreiser Loop are inconvenient because commuters have to transfer two or even three times to get to Manhattan. Anna Capell, a Co-op City resident in her 70s, enjoys riding on the New York Bus

business. Now they say the combination of all these changes at the same time will put severe pressure on the cash-strapped industry.

"The cumulative effect of all of this could be to drive some small businesses that are already struggling out of business," said one Arthur Avenue cafe manager, who declined to be named for fear of retribution by the health inspectors.

Of the three new changes, the revised sidewalk rental rates have stirred up the most opposition.

The cost of renting sidewalk space from the city has held steady at less than \$10 a square

foot for the past decade. But under legislation signed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in February, open-air sidewalk cafes in the borough will have to pay \$1,440 for the first 20 square feet and \$22.50 for each additional square foot. Enclosed sidewalk cafes, which are open year-round, will pay twice that.

Consumer Affairs Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra said the change reflects the fair-market value of sidewalk space.

"New York City's sidewalks are a thriving, bustling marketplace," Dykstra said in a statement. "Unfortunately, for the past decade, the cost to use this limited public space has been

grossly underassessed."

But the reassessment will hit small cafes like the ones on Arthur Avenue in Belmont particularly hard. Unlike larger sidewalk restaurants where people order full meals, most of these owners said they make little money off the tables and might have to pack them up to avoid paying the new rates.

"They'll cause a small guy like me to go out of business," said David Greco, owner of the Arthur Avenue Cafe, a tiny eatery that seats as many people outside as in. "I might have to close down. It's that bad."

The new regulations allowing garbage carters to charge businesses by weight have garnered less attention.

In the past, carters could charge only based on how much space the bags took up. That meant that with two bags, one weighing 75 pounds and another 25, city regulations prevented carters from billing more for the heavier bag.

Under the new rate cap set by the Business Integrity Commission, carters may charge as much as \$8 for 100 pounds of trash.

City regulators insist that prices will not significantly rise because the new cap will increase competition. But the carting industry acknowledged that

businesses like restaurants with heavy, water-filled trash will be paying more to have it hauled away.

"For certain categories of waste, no doubt, there will be price increases," said Gerald Padian, a lawyer who represents independent carting companies.

At Mario's Restaurant on Arthur Avenue, owner Joseph Migliucci said he pays \$500 a month to have his garbage picked up. Migliucci worries that carters will dupe him under the new rate cap.

"What I'm going to do is buy a scale and weigh my garbage so I don't get cheated on the other end," Migliucci said.

In the final change, the Department of Health is doubling some fines and tightening code enforcement.

What that means for restaurants is that a \$500 fine for failing to have a certified restaurant operator on the premises will rise to \$1,000.

"Some of these small places, if they end up with \$400 to \$500 in fines, that's their net income for the week," said Charles Hunt, a local representative of the New York State Restaurant Association. "It seems that everyone's trying to make up the deficit by way of the restaurant industry these days."



KOSUKE TAKAHASHI

Grace Mazzurco voiced her concerns about the possible loss of the New York Bus Service express last Thursday during a public hearing at the Bronx County Court Building.

Service express to Midtown Manhattan. Capell, who uses a wheelchair because of spinal muscular atrophy, takes the hourlong trip three times a month to attend gatherings with her friends, to visit her lawyer and doctor, and to shop. Capell catches the express bus at Dreiser Loop on the northern end of Co-op City. The end of that service would amount to house arrest, she said.

"We cannot drive a car," said Capell, who heads the 450-member Handicapped Adult

Association in Co-op City. "We would be isolated and this would be disaster for us

Stephen Mangione, spokesman for the bus service, sympathized with riders but said his company was in a bind. "We understand Bronx commuters' concerns," Mangione said. "We will be waiting for the city's decision. We have complete confidence in the city that they are working toward resolving this issue." New York Bus Service is one of two companies running in the borough. It covers the east, while Liberty Lines runs routes in the west.

## Crime victims closer to help

By Hide Tamura

A victim of domestic violence who recently relocated to the North Bronx needed help. She lives five miles from the district attorney's office, but the distance seemed greater because she has a baby and doesn't own a car.

Sensing that some victims, especially those who live in the North Bronx, may not be receiving public assistance simply because of the distance from his office, District Attorney Robert T. Johnson announced last Thursday that the first satellite center for crime victims would open in Wakefield this fall.

"We are dealing with the needs of victims," Johnson said at a monthly community meeting at the 47th Precinct. "Whether it be reparations or counseling, we are going to bring that closer to you."

The district attorney's office on 161st Street provides an assortment of free services, including counseling, therapy, transportation and relocation for crime victims. More than 2,000 people sought help in 2001, according to the district attorney's office.

But to receive such assistance, they often have to go to the

office. Some say that discourages crime victims from getting help.

"It's a major distance for people in our neighborhood, especially for seniors," said Carmen Angueira, district manager of Community Board 12 in the North Bronx. Ann Morrison, first vice president of Wakefield Tax Payers and Civic League, said that many of her neighbors have to take two or more buses and subways for the five-mile trip.

The satellite office will be housed in a conference room at the Community Board 12 building on 4101 White Plains Road. The office will be financed by the U.S. Justice Department.

Beth Ann Holzhay, director of the Crime Victims Assistance Unit of the district attorney's office, said the new office is expected to open by October, and some of the staff will be recruited from the community.

Angueira said that her neighbors, many of whom are immigrants, would feel comfortable if someone they know was in the office.

"They pay taxes too," Angueira said. "We all deserve these services."

# Small role is vital to military

By Megan Murphy

In a dark, cluttered factory in Hunts Point, Neil Shultz heats plastic paneling used in naval submarines to more than 1,500 degrees. If the plastic melts, or releases poisonous gases like cyanide or phosgene, the panels are scrapped.

Shultz is the president of VTEC Laboratories, a thermal testing and research facility and one of the few defense contractors left in the borough. The company does everything from measuring the corrosiveness of military cables in extreme weather conditions to checking the flammability of aircraft interiors.

"We can test almost anything right from here," Shultz said. "But we're pretty specialized. There aren't many companies doing general defense work in the Bronx anymore."

As the nation's armed forces mobilize for possible combat in the Middle East, some of the gear they will rely on has been manufactured or engineered in the borough. But not nearly as much as in past conflicts like the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Though there were more than a dozen military contractors in the borough 10 years ago, that number has dwindled to a handful. In 2001, the last year for which figures are available, Bronx County was awarded defense contracts totaling slightly under a million dollars. By comparison, Nassau and Suffolk counties, long the center of military manufacturing in the state, received more than \$1 billion.

It's a far cry from the 1980s and early 1990s, when companies like Loral Corp., Wedtech Corp. and the Industrial Acoustics Co. poured tens of millions of Department of Defense dollars into the borough's economy. Over the past two decades, many manufacturers have

been shut down, acquired or relocated to less expensive areas like New Jersey.

The aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, for example, shuttered Loral's high-tech radar plant in the South Bronx shortly after buying the company's defense business in 1996.

Wedtech, a Hunts Point small-engines maker, met a much more spectacular demise. Once the darling of the Pentagon's minority contracting program, Wedtech filed for bankruptcy in 1986 amid a corruption scandal that brought down dozens of government officials, including the former Bronx Congressman Mario Biaggi.

The remaining military contractors in the borough have yet to see any sizable boost from the current conflict, representatives said. Clyde Simmons, a spokesman for Roanwell Corp., a communications equipment manufacturer based in Mott Haven, noted that most contracts are awarded months, if not years, in advance.

"We've seen a slight increase, but not as much as most people would think," Simmons said.

That's not to say Bronx-based companies will not play a key role in any conflict. Roanwell's lightweight headsets, for example, are used in thousands of Army combat helmets, while some of their noise-canceling microphones fly with Air Force One. VTEC, for its part, recently tested the flammability of pads used to insulate on-ship command centers from missile attacks. Over the next few years, it will help develop a safer sprinkler system for the Navy's next-generation DD(X) warships.

"We've tested hundreds of things that will be over there to make sure that they can be used safely," Shultz said. "We think that what we do is pretty critical."



ITAI MAYTAL

Director Clinton Daley and Assistant Director Rachel Streiter discuss the benefits of the Venture Center.

## Business cocoon gives more start-ups shelter

By Itai Maytal

Home-based entrepreneurs will soon be able to strut in offices worthy of high-powered executives. But they'll have to watch the clock.

In early April, the Bronx Venture Center will begin a membership program that will grant home-based businesses access to its office space, computer center and other support services by the hour.

The center houses 26 full-time businesses within its 32 offices at 270 E. 137th St., but it is extending its resources to other local start-ups.

"Our goal is to help home-based businesses that cannot afford a full-office membership by giving them access to services at more user-friendly rates," said Clinton Daley, director of entrepreneurial development programs at the Venture Center, a project of the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp.

The center will offer two membership plans. Hourly tenants may use "the facilities to meet clients, scan the Internet and get mail, or they may share one of the

fully furnished offices, which range in size from 75 to 300 square feet, in addition to using other amenities. Membership rates have not been set, but they will run no more than \$154 a month, Daley said.

Hourly tenants will also benefit from the center's marketing, Web design and business plan development services. But several home-based businesses are principally drawn to the professional setting.

For Franklyn Waters, a local Web and graphics designer, membership would allow him to trade his cramped Parkchester home for a renovated office with hardwood floors and a riverfront view of the Manhattan skyline.

"I would look like I have this big business, and the average person wouldn't know that I'm not there 24 hours," said Waters, who started 1209 Studios in 2001.

Stacey Willis, an artist and local television personality, would prefer winning over investors for her collaborative art gallery in the center's conference room rather than at local shops and diners.

"The center gives you a business-like environment that you cannot find in a restaurant," said Ellis, the host of "Blackwash Televised Art," a weekly BronxNet morning show on Channel 70.

The Venture Center, housed in a three-story building that also includes a JP Morgan Chase bank, can provide hourly membership for about 75 businesses. Tenants of the \$1.5 million facility, which opened in 2001, will also benefit from tax, employment and investment incentives through the South Bronx Empowerment Zone, a local economic development initiative. But only start-ups need apply.

"The Venture Center targets business at the cocoon level," said Bibi Singh, a co-owner of WhatWorks Advertising. "If you've passed the concept and research phase of your business, it may not be the place for you."

*Additional information on the Venture Center and its membership programs can be obtained by contacting Rachael Streiter at (718) 665-8888.*



MEGAN MURPHY

Neil Schultz, the president of one of the borough's few defense contractors, uses a cone calorimeter to perform fire and safety tests on a wide range of materials.

## Muslim

From page 1

with messages of "No war" and "Don't die for oil," and the stars of its American flag were replaced with a swastika. In the past two weeks, the mural has been retouched, obscuring the words of protest, though not the Nazi symbol.

Those fierce sentiments, however, are much stronger than the qualified opinions voiced last week by five Muslim men, who expressed the desire that Hussein be deposed.

"He should be out, but not by force," Zaidi said. Asked if he would support a United Nations-led intervention, he responded, "We should give the U.N. more time to do the inspections."

At the Bronx Muslim Center in

Van Nest, Imam Ali Salhab said, "Everybody wants Saddam to go, but it's a question of how to do it."

Salhab, who was born in Jordan witnessed thousands of Iraqi refugees pouring into the country during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He fears that the Iraqi government possesses chemical weapons, as the Bush administration has charged. "If he's got chemical weapons, he's going to use them because he's losing," Salhab said, referring to Hussein. "It's a very critical point."

For Loui Almofhli, a 28-year old Yemeni immigrant who works at his family's deli in Mott Haven, the issue of whether the United States should invade Iraq is uncomplicated. "We need to take Saddam out because he's dictatorial," he said.

At the back of the store, a television was set to Al-Jazeera, the Qatar-based Arab-language broadcast network, where tape of President Bush threatening regime change alternated with footage of international anti-war protests.

Salhab, like others interviewed, said he thinks the risk of an anti-Muslim backlash in the United States is minimal, but last week the FBI warned state and local law enforcement that a war with Iraq or a new terrorist attack could spur a wave of hate crimes against Muslims and Arab-Americans.

"If there's a long war and parents' sons and daughters die, maybe there will be strong feelings, like after Sept. 11," Salhab said.

# Veterans decry horror of war

By Eric V. White

As America approaches a possible war with Iraq, some Bronx veterans, now war-scarred medical patients, stand resolute against military action.

"I've seen war," said Steward Edwards, a Korean War veteran from Co-op City. "These young troops have little idea what they'll experience."

He never fought, but Edwards, in his 70s, lost friends who did. He witnessed soldiers, their bodies racked by artillery fire and half ripped apart, being brought back from the battlefields. Crippled civilians. Entire villages destroyed. These experiences, he says, have left indelible scars.

For decades, he has been treated at the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center for multiple war-related mental disorders. He fears psychological damage of U.S. troops, but Edwards says he and many Bronx veterans are concerned about the war's effect on American life in general.

"This war is an excuse to escape domestic issues," he said. "This war will only make dealing with them harder."

Sammy Temple, a combat soldier during the Vietnam War, agrees. He was honorably discharged from the Army after four months because of combat-related psychological problems. Today, he depends on Veterans Affairs checks. He says he fears war-traumatized troops coming home from Iraq to a weak economy. Temple is also concerned about the civilian poor.

He said, "Taking money from the people who need it most, like veterans and poor people in the Bronx." The Bush administration has projected a multibillion price tag for a war with Iraq. Meanwhile, the economy has continued on a downward spiral. "Big business wants a war because it can make money, but young, poor people will fight and suffer," said Temple, a Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center patient.

James Henry, a 55-year-old Vietnam veteran also treated at the Bronx medical center, says President Bush is greedy.

"How can you accuse Saddam of having ties to terror, if you have no concrete evidence?" he said. "It's all for oil."

Eugene Diaz, a Vietnam veteran, thinks differently.

"Saddam is not dumb," he said. "He's destroying a few, but he's hiding thousands."

The Iraqi government has destroyed dozens of Al-Samoud II missiles, which violate a post-Persian Gulf war United Nations mandate, but President George W. Bush contends Hussein has more. "Vets are going crazy over this situation. We want this resolved so we can rest," said Diaz. He has been treated at the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center since 1991 for a series of violent flashbacks he suffered during the Persian Gulf War. "Make it quick so we can set up democracy there," Diaz said.

Henry says democracy in Iraq is not the goal. "Since Eisenhower, it's been about world domination and oppressing the poor," he said.

Steward Edwards says the Bush administration has oppressed American citizens. Police have impeded Veterans for Peace, an anti-war organization he belongs to, from participating in war protests in past months, he said.

"This country wants to show that it is the single superpower," Edwards said.

# Serving double duty

By Ke Xu

In their civilian lives, Matthew Moritz and Danny Suarez spend their workday riding in ambulances and tending to those in need of emergency care. These days, they are earning full-time pay as military men, and keeping their colleagues back in the Bronx aware of their war preparations.

"I still miss working on shootings and stabbings in the Bronx," Moritz, a 20-something from the Bronx, wrote in a letter attached by pushpin to a wall of the Boston Road headquarters of Emergency Medical Services Battalion 26.

An emergency medical technician for the New York City Fire Department and a Navy reservist, Moritz had written those words on a Navy letterhead and mailed them to the battalion where he worked for four years before being called to active duty in 2001.

Moritz also sent an article from a Navy medical journal showing him vaccinating other military personnel. That too was tacked to the battalion's bulletin board, alongside a photo

of the USS Comfort passing the Statue of Liberty as it sailed the Hudson River.

For now, Moritz is a corpsman in the sick bay, one of the largest medical treatment facilities activated for the potential war with Iraq. For security reasons, his colleagues said, he could not give the ship's location.

Fifty-seven of the 300 firefighter reservists have been dispatched as part of the military buildup in the Middle East. By contrast, the city's police department, with 1,200 reservists, has had 400 called to active duty.

The number of Emergency Medical Services reservists was not available.

Like Moritz, Suarez is a 20-something from the Bronx who has written to his colleagues about life in the Kuwaiti desert and about how he misses them.

Lt. David Stone, chief of Battalion 26, said he missed Suarez and Moritz, too. "We just rely on the people we have here to fill in their vacancies," Stone said, adding that their positions will be kept open.

"I am proud of them," said Gilbert Aviles, an emergency medical technician. "They are big men to go out there and actually do

something for the country. We pray for them every night."

Maximo Pena, another Emergency Medical Technician, agreed. "I hope all of them come back safe and sound," Pena said. "I wish they were still here. They didn't have to go over there."

Pena has been watching the news a lot more than usual because he is worried about everyone in the Persian Gulf, he said.

Firefighter Walter Powers, a Marine reservist, is also on active duty, his colleagues at Company 45 on East Tremont Avenue said. He is stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Powers was activated in 2002 and is scheduled to be away for almost a year. He was home only two weeks before he received his latest assignment.

"He is taking two shots by being FDNY and on reserve," said Gerald Hart, a firefighter in Company 45. "He is protecting our country."

Stone, 50, has never fought a war, but some of his friends died in Vietnam.

"I don't want to see any people lost," he said. "I would rather see people sit down and talk things out in a peaceful manner."



Lt. David Stone is concerned about his emergency medical technicians who have been sent overseas.

KE XU

# Food stamp outreach begins

By Ke Xu

The South Bronx has recently become the focus of a citywide initiative to enroll 100,000 additional participants in the federal food stamp program.

The United Way of New York City recently began a two-year campaign called the Food Stamp Access Project in five neighborhoods across the city in an effort to encourage more people to use food stamps. The nonprofit Community Food Resource Center, based in Manhattan, has been tapped to head up the outreach programs here.

Although food stamps can provide a huge benefit to families and individuals living below the poverty level, the city's Human Resources Administration estimates that only half of the 1.6 million people eligible for federal food stamps received them last year. In the Bronx, 41 percent of those eligible are not collecting the benefits.

The new campaign hopes to address flaws in the way the city administers the program. Last year, the Community Food Resources Center released a report saying that the city makes it difficult for families to collect food

stamps. In particular, the report cited the Human Resources Administration, which administers the federal program, for poorly trained staff and limited office hours, among other obstacles.

In accordance with the report's recommendations, by June 2 the city will begin using a four-page application form, which was shortened from 16 pages by the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Applicants will be pre-screened by computer, and more field workers will be sent to needy neighborhoods to identify potential recipients at public locations like supermarkets and food pantries.

The project, estimated to cost the city a total of \$4.7 million, has been started with a donation of \$575,000 from Vivendi Universal Corp. The project will be run in partnership with Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum's office, the Human Resources Administration and the state Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Carlos Rodriguez, director of the project for the Community Food Resources Center, applauded the campaign for "making the city healthier" by providing more families with

food. And because more food stamp dollars will be spent in local bodegas and supermarkets, "it helps the local economy," Rodriguez said. According to the center, the city's businesses are losing an estimated \$1.4 billion each year because of the number of people who fail to claim food stamp benefits.

In the Bronx, for example, nearly 160,000 of the 385,000 residents eligible for food stamps have not collected the benefits, according to Human Resources Administration figures. Of those 160,000, most reside in Soundview and Parkchester, with 20,200 people not collecting benefits. Highbridge and Concourse Village run a close second with 19,974 residents failing to collect.

Food stamps can make a big difference for those living below the poverty level. A family of three earning \$1,385 a month, for example, is eligible for \$130 worth of food stamps each month. This adds up to 10 to 12 percent of a family's monthly income.

"Food stamps help low-income people stretch their budgets," said Jeanette Brown, a spokeswoman for the United Way of New York City. "They should feel comfortable coming forward and using it."

# Study cites long commutes

By Vinnee Tong

When Congress passed a homeless assistance act in the 1980s, they could not have predicted the law's unintended side effect: more than two hours of daily travel time for hundreds of New York City schoolchildren.

The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act, signed into law by former President Ronald Reagan in 1987, included laws to help the homeless with food, health care and housing. Part of the act allows homeless children to continue attending the same school even if they move to a shelter in another district.

"The idea that children benefit from consistency of education makes a lot of sense," said Laura Caruso, director of management and budget for Homes for the Homeless, which runs four family shelters in the boroughs. The long commutes to school are an "unintended consequence," she added.

Homes for the Homeless, along with the Institute for Children and Poverty, released a study on the problem in late January. The report showed two-hour-plus travel times to school for 34 percent of the children at the Saratoga Family Inn shelter in Queens. Because they spend so much time on the road, students often miss the opportunity for extra help in after-school programs.

The report found that 226 children, aged 6 to 13, at the Queens shelter were traveling to 110 different schools in Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan. About 8,000 school-age children live at homeless shelters throughout the city.

Homes for the Homeless released the study to provoke debate on the issue, and it plans to engage the Board of Education to find a solution.

As Caruso said, "We want to make sure these children are not forgotten."

# Commute

From page 1

fed, she usually leaves her 3-year-old daughter at the shelter's day care center. Then Smith gets on the subway to take Sashai to school while juggling her 1-year-old son, a stroller and bags with their belongings.

"My daughter said, 'Mommy, I'm so tired of doing this,'" Smith said.

On a recent Thursday, Smith was running behind schedule. She had been late to pick up her daughter from day care the evening before, so the center refused to take her that day. When Smith finally left at 11 a.m., her load was a little heavier than usual.

With all three children and a stroller big enough to carry two of them, Smith started out for P.S. 53. Sashai wore a backpack and carried her mother's black bag, filled with information for her apartment hunt.

They boarded the D train and rode about 15 minutes into northern Manhattan. At 145th Street, they switched

to the A for a 40-minute ride to Brooklyn. After getting off the train at Nostrand Avenue, they boarded a bus for a 25-minute ride. Finally, they walked the final five blocks to the school in East New York.

Smith said she plans to keep Sashai at the same school until they find a permanent apartment in either Queens or Brooklyn. Until then, Smith will take Sashai from the Bronx to Brooklyn every day.

As they waited for a train at 145th Street on a recent Thursday, Sashai took out a pack of playing cards. Her younger sister cried and fussed, climbing on the stroller her mother wheeled with them.

To get ready to board their next train, Smith took the cards out of Sashai's hands, tucked them back into their holder and slipped the pack into one of their many bags.

"We can play a game of war on the A train, O.K.?"

## Complaints rise over composting in Soundview

The Department of Sanitation violated state environmental laws when it built three composting sites in city parks, including the one in Soundview Park, right, City Comptroller William C. Thompson Jr. charged last week. Thompson said that the sanitation department failed to obtain proper permits from the state Department of Environmental Conservation to build and operate the sites.

Community leaders and organizations were angered that they were not informed when the site was selected and that they had lost parkland in an area without much open space. John Pamplone, a sanitation spokesman, said the department would respond in writing to the comptroller, who called for public hearings. The Department of Environmental Conservation is also reviewing the complaint.

Ted Phillips



TED PHILLIPS

# Affordable

From page 2

legislative director for ACORN. "If we don't take this opportunity to change course, in terms of the percentage of units going to low-income families, we're going to feel the effect for decades to come."

To this end, Monserrate, a Queens Democrat, said he would introduce a resolution at the end of the month urging the city to base income guidelines on the median income of the five boroughs and calling on the council to veto any housing projects that use the higher standard.

Other legislation in the works would ask the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to use the same numbers when reporting to the City Council.

Baylor said that when the housing department reports having built a certain number of units for low-income

households, the council is told only that those households earn less than \$50,000.

"They could all be making \$49,000," he said. "We also want to define upper income for the first time ever."

The housing department helps finance units for what it calls low-, moderate- and middle-income households. Current programs generally define a household earning \$157,000 as middle income.

Possible new legislation would label those households upper income, and the housing department would have to report how many units it helped finance for upper-income households.

"We haven't defined what upper-income limits would be, but I think a household making about \$100,000 is upper income," Baylor said.

# Freeze

From page 1

ment, telephone reassurance and in-person visits, are available to those who need them.

Seniors would be able to get hot meals if necessary, Angelopolous said, but frozen-meal delivery would provide savings and standardize costs across the city.

Frozen meals haven't been cheaper than hot ones for the Citymeals-on-Wheels pilot program. But the organization, which serves 1,200 people daily, delivers only 150 frozen meals. "If we go citywide, there may be some savings," Stein said.

Chicago meal delivery programs switched to frozen meals in 1995. Maria Perez of Open Kitchens, which covers all of Chicago under a city con-

tract, said that the twice-weekly frozen-food deliveries give seniors more flexibility in how they spend their day and when they eat their meals. Since the switch, Open Kitchens has expanded its service to 5,000 seniors from 2,800.

"It came out much much better than what we had expected," Perez said.

Stein believes New York should explore frozen-food delivery. Because home-meal delivery has expanded tremendously in recent years, overburdened kitchens delivering along extended routes have trouble meeting the demand for hot food.

"We have to think about stretching the capacity of the network," Stein said.

## BEAT ON THE STREET

Bronxites talk about their favorite places in the borough.



**Angelo Darden, 42, Olinville**  
"The Hall of Fame at the Bronx Community College. It's one of the few places that's high above the borough. I get a sense of peace and inspiration there."



**Roman Kostjukov, 20, student, Pelham Bay**  
"Van Cortlandt Park. That's my heaven. I have so much history there. I live in Pelham Bay, but I go there every day."



**Arturo Griffith, 56, retired, Grand Concourse**  
"Yankee Stadium. I'm a baseball fan. All I do is go to the games, watch TV and read books."



**Evelyn Garcia, 44, unemployed, Longwood**  
"Crotona Park. I got a lot of kids and grandkids, and they fixed the playground for the kids."

Matthew Gluth

## New Charter Schools in the Bronx

Four charter schools are scheduled to open in the borough in September. Information on three is listed below. At press time, the fourth school, Bronx Charter for Children, had not returned calls. Charter schools in New York City do not charge tuition.

	The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning	Bronx Charter School for the Arts	ReadNet Bronx Charter School at Metropolitan College
Director	Dr. Theodore F. Swartz	Xanthe Jory	Robin Hubbard
Specialty	Teaching methods and curriculum tailored to individual needs of students	Instruction in the practice of visual and performing arts	Concentration on literacy and history
Partners	The Gattegno Foundation for Education; Association for the Science of Better Learning	The Point Community Development Corp.; Bronx Museum of Arts; Bronx-Lebanon Hospital	Metropolitan College
Chartering group	SUNY Board of Trustees	New York State Board of Regents	New York State Board of Regents
Location	Williamsbridge; negotiating to lease space at 971 E. 227th St.	Hunts Point; building under construction at Longfellow and Garrison avenues	Mott Haven; 429-437 E. 148th St.
Grade level	50 students in grade 1; planned growth to 250 students in grades K-4	K-3; planned expansion to K-6	K-1; planned expansion to K-5
Class size	12	20; student-teacher volunteers on hand	20; two teachers per classroom
Special education	Immersion model; full-time teacher with certified special education training on staff	Immersion model; full-time teacher with special education training on staff; Bronx-Lebanon Hospital expected to provide speech, occupational and psychiatric services; full-time social worker on staff	Immersion model
Bilingual classes	ESL teacher available	ESL classes to be offered	Spanish-speaking teachers on staff
Schedule	8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.; after-school tutoring available; 180-day Department of Education school year	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; proposed after-school program 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. through The Point; 180-day Department of Education school year	Extended day; extended school year
Admissions	By lottery; applications available April 1 and due April 30	By lottery; applications due at Bronx Arts office or postmarked by April 18	Attend information sessions March 17, 18, 21, 24 at 525 Courtland Ave. at E. 149th St.
Meals	Breakfast, Title I lunch (free or reduced cost)	Breakfast, Title I lunch, snack	Breakfast, Title I lunch
Transportation	To be coordinated with the Department of Education	To be coordinated with the Department of Education for students who live more than half a mile from the school	To be coordinated with the Department of Education
Miscellaneous	The school plans to prepare students for standardized tests while fostering independent thinking.	The arts will be taught as individual subjects and integrated with traditional subject areas.	Collaboration with ReadNet, an education foundation, and Columbia University's history department
Additional information	(845) 753-2227	(718) 893-1042 www.bronxarts.net	(212) 838-2344

Sources: individual schools

Reporting by Daniel Burke; Graphic by Ken Kostel/Bronx Beat

# Fighting fear with facts

By Tanya Pérez-Brennan

On a recent Sunday, Halima Ceesay and her husband were walking in Manhattan when they were stopped near an area sealed off with yellow tape.

Ceesay, 40, a Muslim from Gambia who wears a white headscarf, said the police pulled her over to question her and asked for her passport.

"We don't know what happened," she said, visibly upset at the memory. "We didn't see anybody there."

Ceesay's anxieties and concerns about her immigration status led her to a church-run workshop on visa issues.

Like Ceesay, more and more immigrants have become apprehensive and fearful in recent months. The new registration requirement for men over age 16 from predominantly Muslim countries and the reorganization of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services) under the Department of Homeland Security have caused confusion. But many have been finding help in local churches.

Ceesay's concern led her to the Church of God of Prophecy, at 85 E. 165th St. in Morrisania, which was leading its first such workshop. The pastor, the Rev. Earl McKay, saw a need to quell anxieties by explaining changes in immigration regulations.

"People don't really know what to do," McKay said. "We're trying to allay the fear."

McKay was prompted by his congregants' experiences. A Jamaican woman who went to Canada to meet friends was arrested on the way back aboard a Greyhound bus because she had no documents. A Jamaican man, a green card holder, traveled to the Caribbean only to find himself stopped by U.S. officials upon returning. He did not disclose his arrest for a misdemeanor five years earlier and was arrested.

In the same neighborhood, Church Alive Community Church, at 1201 Findlay Ave., has been running immigration workshops for 13 years.

Although Catholic churches have traditionally played a dominant role in addressing immigrant concerns, so have smaller churches. The Church Alive workshops, led by the Rev. Timothy Birkett, have also played an important role in educating immigrants. Birkett said attendance at the workshops dropped from about 20 before Sept. 11, 2001, to as few as five.

Birkett recently went on Bronxnet cable television to calm fears about looming registration deadlines and to draw more attendants.

"That's one of the things that scared them away," Birkett said. "They thought it was for everybody."

At the Church of God of Prophecy's Saturday workshop, Ceesay was one of 123 immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean. The workshops address nuts-and-bolts issues like petitioning for relatives, marriage petitions, student visas and green card lotteries.



TANYA PÉREZ-BRENNAN

Immigrants from Jamaica and Africa listen to the Rev. Timothy Birkett at Church of the God of Prophecy give a workshop covering visa regulations.

The audience members asked a lot of questions during Birkett's two-hour presentation. They listened attentively to news about the "V" visa, which may be issued to certain spouses of permanent residents and their children to enter the country during the completion of the immigration process.

"I'll certainly come again if new things are discussed," said Pam, a 34-year-old Jamaican who declined to give her last name. "Every day new things crop up."

Like Ceesay, Pam said that things had gotten worse for immigrants

since the terrorist attacks.

"They're looked down on as intruders," she said, noting that immigration officials have become more vigilant. "They're taking a second look at what people are doing."

Many immigrants are learning how to overcome their fear of government authorities.

"Most of them come from countries where they never went to school," Ceesay said. "They don't know what their rights are."

# Dead mill still churns debate

By E.L. Wasson

After a dozen years and millions of dollars, a South Bronx paper mill that was never built continues to manufacture grief.

Two new books have revived finger-pointing over the failure of environmentalists to build the Bronx Community Paper Co.

"Tilting at Mills" by Liz Harris and "Bronx Ecology" by Allen Hershkowitz detail the struggle over what the authors contend could have been the largest manufacturer in the city. Both works describe naive environmentalists falling victim to turf battles among community groups and politicians.

Hershkowitz, former president of the mill, said politics blights the economic future of the South Bronx.

"It's not an accident that so many abandoned brownfields

and potentially usable sites remain undeveloped," he said.

The project's most vocal opponent disagrees.

"This was just a push by investors that was going to damage the community," said Carlos Padilla, president of the South Bronx Clean Air Coalition.

The mill was designed in the early 1990s by Maya Lin, the designer of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, to turn recycled paper into newsprint.

Hershkowitz, a scientist at the National Resources Defense Council, an environmental group, believed the mill would save millions of acres of forest while reducing garbage, and said it would have created 400 jobs.

The project was abandoned in 2001 after the former partners sued to get in on the project, the books say.

Hershkowitz said the fatal mistake was turning ownership over to Banana Kelly, a community group known for its organization of tenants.

"They suddenly found themselves sitting on a \$500 million project and they mismanaged the responsibilities," Hershkowitz said.

The project's collapse played a part in Banana Kelly's fall from grace. Yolanda Rivera, Banana Kelly's former chairwoman, is under investigation by the state Attorney General's office, suspected of financial wrongdoing.

Its new chairman is former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, who held the position in the 1990s. Hershkowitz writes Ferrer canceled support for the paper company because Banana Kelly wasn't his choice to run it.

Ferrer angrily denies this, saying he recused himself because Banana Kelly lied to him about its financial stake.

"Had they not lied to me, I probably would have supported the project," Ferrer said.

Some analysts have blamed Hershkowitz's lack of business savvy for the failure. He readily acknowledges this and said he hopes his book will teach environmentalists the skills necessary to build eco-friendly factories.

Padilla said his group opposed the project because it was going to increase truck traffic. He also said all the jobs associated with the mill would have been "transplants or robotics."

Hershkowitz countered that his group advocates converting sanitation trucks from diesel to natural gas and blamed unions for



LEA JULIET HERSHKOWITZ

Allen Hershkowitz limiting jobs.

In Harris's book, an unnamed woman from Padilla's coalition demands \$70,000 from Hershkowitz to make "problems go away."

Padilla denies the allegations. "I'll take a lie-detector test," he said.

"Garbage transfer stations are there now, as a result of our failure, in part stimulated by the coalition," Hershkowitz said. "Tens of thousands of more polluting vehicles are going there than had we gone on line."

## Artist taking subway to Paris

By Lindsay Pollock

When Chris Ellis goes to Paris, he's taking the Zerega Avenue subway station with him.

Ellis, 41, whose tag name, Daze, dates to his days as a teenage graffiti artist, crated 12 paintings of elevated subway stations last week. They will hang at his second Paris show at Galerie Speerstra, which runs March 22 to May 3. The paintings are priced from \$6,000 to \$25,000.

The age of subway graffiti is over and Ellis has stayed true to the times. His oil-on-canvas images show stations with clean platforms and pristine trains. While he still creates murals and canvases with spray paint, he is equally excited by working with a brush.

After Paris, Ellis will paint a mural in Brazil and mount shows in Japan and Italy. Ellis also has a following in the United States, and is well known in the borough. He has had a studio on East 149th Street and Brook Avenue since 1980, and started a Web site of his work, www.dazeworld.com, three weeks ago. Ellis said he gets a creative boost from the neighborhood.

"I'm inspired by being in the South Bronx, being with my people," Ellis said, standing amid stacks of brightly colored canvases in the loft he shares with another artist, John Matos, whose tag name is Crash.

Ellis and Matos got famous fast. They met in 1978 when both lived in Mott Haven's Betance Houses and went tagging, or spraying their street names on subway trains. Ellis, the eldest of five children of a city engineer and a homemaker, attended the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan. He studied cartooning in class and honed his graffiti skills outside.



LINDSAY POLLOCK

Chris 'Daze' Ellis, an artist, stands in front of his painting of Blaxploitation hero Superfly in his East 149th Street studio.

The prestigious School of Visual Arts held his attention momentarily. During his first semester, opportunities for gallery shows and fame pulled him away. He started exhibiting at Fashion Moda, a legendary Third Avenue space that showed artists like Keith Haring. Dropping out of college was a pivotal decision, one Ellis has never regretted.

"I decided to take art seriously," he said. "I felt like my whole reason for being alive was to focus on it."

With money from show sales, Ellis and Matos rented a studio. Over the years, collectors like Eric Clapton have made pilgrimages to the borough to buy their art.

Ellis' work was included in an exhibit at the Bronx Museum of Art in 1999. Lydia Yee, the senior

curator, said graffiti and the South Bronx were both considered exotic by collectors in the 1980s, but those days are over. Ellis was among several artists who succeeded in crossing from graffiti to galleries, she said.

These days, Ellis is working on a series of paintings based on Blaxploitation movies from the 1970s.

"Those were our heroes if you grew up in the 'hood," Ellis said, nodding toward a Superfly painting. "Superfly was a coke dealer, but he was beating the system, taking control of his own destiny."

Ellis said he admires independent characters.

"I work for myself," he said. "I don't look at art as my job, I look at art as my life."

## Betty Boop keeps good company

By Matthew Gluth

Jennifer Lopez may be the first name to come to mind when one thinks of women from the Bronx. But other less well-known women have had a lasting influence on history in the borough and the nation.

To celebrate Women's History Month, the Bronx Beat presents a gallery of women whose fame was more than momentary.

Perhaps the most well known is the religious separatist **Anne Hutchinson**, whose struggles with the colonial government in Massachusetts helped lead to the constitutional separation of church and state.

While living in Boston, she began to attract followers with her belief that true godliness came from a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, not from following the earthly laws of the church.

The church excommunicated her and exiled her from Massachusetts, claiming that her "opinions fretted like a Gangrene and spread like a Leprosie, and will eat out the very Bowells of Religion."

She fled with her husband and followers to Rhode Island. After her husband died, she moved to the Bronx, near present-day Co-op City, where she lived in a cabin near the river that now bears her name.

In 1643, a band of Mohicans raided her cabin and killed her and five of her 11 children.

Two centuries later, **Grace Dodge** was born in Greystone Mansion in Riverdale. She dedicated herself to improving women's education and health, and started some of the earliest social services in New York.

She was elected the first president of the Young Women's Christian Association in 1905 and helped found the Columbia University

School of Social Work and Teachers College.

One of the most influential women to call the Bronx her home was actually born a man. In 1952, **George Jorgensen** became Christine in the first successful male-to-female sex change operation in history. She spent the rest of her life trying to help other transvestites overcome societal stigma. She died in 1989.

In 1974, the early days of the ecological movement, **Ruth Anderberg** founded the Bronx River Restoration Project to clean the river of debris.

A few years later, **Rosalyn Yalow**, working at Kingsbridge Veterans Administration Hospital, helped save millions of lives by developing a test for the early detection of cancer. She won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1977. She now works at Montefiore Hospital.

**Genevieve Brooks** helped begin a boroughwide rebirth in the 1980s through community organizing. Brooks organized a block association to clean the streets and perform neighborhood-watch duties. She and representatives of nine similar groups organized the Mid-Bronx Desperados to restore residential units and houses in the borough after the fires of the late 1970s.

Former Borough President Fernando Ferrer appointed her his deputy in 1990, the first woman to hold the post. As the top administrative officer in the borough office, she focused on housing, health and human services issues.

Lopez is not even the most famous singer to live in the borough. Hunts Point's **Helen Kane**, widely known in the Roaring '20s, inspired the "flapper" stereotype. Known for her doll-like looks and voice, nervousness once made her add the phrase "boop-boop-de-doop" to her songs, and Betty Boop was born.