

AUTUMN  
CALENDAR

**Oct 30–Nov 13** "The Neighborhood Show"—Crafts, Dance, Live Music and Spoken Word. 552 Flatbush Ave. (The old Mike's International). Hours: Mon–Fri, 2–8pm; Sat, 10am–8pm; Sun 12–6 pm; Free

**Nov 15** Last day to pay LMA membership dues if you wish to receive a Christmas wreath.

**Dec 3** LMA members wreath distribution. Volunteers welcome. Please contact Mary Miller at mary.h.miller@gmail.com.

## Politicos at LMA Meeting Assert Stingy Congress and Conniving Banks Perpetuate Bad Economy

by MILFORD PREWITT

Some of Prospect Lefferts Gardens elected representatives accused a "do-nothing" Congress and shyster banks for retarding the nation's economic recovery and crimping their ability to serve their constituents effectively.

As if the threat of a double-dip recession and 14 million unemployed were not bad enough for the nation, PLG's elected officials charged that Republicans' seemingly personal disdain for President Barack Obama and his job-creation plans—in step with tight-fisted lending policies by banks—are hurting consumers, job seekers, small business, homeowners and the middle and working classes.

"It's almost as if these [Congressional Republicans] are deliberately doing all they can to keep people unemployed rather than see the President's jobs plans succeed," charged our U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke at the Lefferts Manor Association's general meeting Oct. 15 at Church of the Evangel. "They've taken this presidency very personally."

"I swear, I don't see how the President can play golf with [Speaker of the House] John Boehner. I couldn't be that friendly with him or the Tea Party given some of the surreal stories they say about him."

Clarke said she was personally offended that the first African-American president had to produce a birth certificate to prove his citizenship and few voices in the mainstream media stepped up to condemn the insult.



At the LMA's fall general meeting Representative Yvette Clarke blasted her Republican colleagues for exacerbating the nation's economic condition. LMA President Ben Edwards looks on.

photo: Celestine Thompson

Joining her at the packed church meeting hall, where about 100 LMA members and neighbors gathered, were Borough President Marty Markowitz, State Sen. Eric Adams, and Councilman Mathieu Eugene—an impressive turnout by elected officials in a non-election season.

Clarke, who has lived in the our area her entire life, abandoned her prepared text to speak unscripted and angrily about the lack of cooperation in Congress to get the nation moving. She said she believes some of her colleagues on the Republican side are *(continued on page 2)*

## So Long K-Dog & Dunebuggy—We'll Never Forget You

by ROBERTA WOELFLING

Dozens of high-spirited and affectionate fans of the K-Dog & Dunebuggy café packed the beloved neighborhood spot and spilled out onto the street on the gloomy, humid Saturday afternoon of September 24. A cheerfulness in the patrons' faces masked the sad and depressing reality that had brought them together: K-Dog, one of the most popular gathering spots in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, was closing forever in a few hours.

Drinks, live music and lots of chatter alluded to a festive affair but it was much like the band that kept playing on the deck of the Titanic as it sank: lovely but over.

Gabrielle "Gabby" Lowe was Commander-In-Chief of the beloved establishment, turning a forlorn retail footprint into a virtual community center that masqueraded as a coffee shop and café.

The staff accepted packages for regulars and swept and shoveled the sidewalk for the residential tenants upstairs. The Maple Street School used it for deliveries and people left keys there for friends. K-Dog was the main ticket sales location for the annual PLG House Tour. It hosted movie nights, game nights, knitting groups and it was a mini art gallery displaying work by local artists on its walls. Free and alternative newsletters and other publications—including this one—saw K-Dog as the most vital retail conduit in the neighborhood for dropping off their publications for residents to read.

There was rarely any space left to post flyers or business cards on the large community bulletin board just outside the entrance where yoga instructors, music teachers, math tutors, geek repairmen, apartment or roommate seekers, masseuses, contractors, website designers, dog walkers, landscapers, trash removers, personal trainers, karate instructors, musicians and singers advertised their services, needs or up-coming performances.

The menu consisted of home-cooked meals featuring handmade sandwiches, imaginative soups, salads and all manner of fresh pastries, breads, strong coffee and rich teas. Customers bussed their own tables.

Wi-fi friendly, K-Dog & Dunebuggy was the remote office for many customers who spent hours of the day there on their various digital devices entertaining themselves or conducting personal and professional business.

Gabby moved to Lefferts Manor in 2003 and fell in love with it. With her background in restaurant management, she decided to take a big leap and provide a kind of

food service amenity that hadn't existed here. In October of 2005, she signed a lease for the space at 43 Lincoln Rd. and formally launched K-Dog & Dunebuggy on March 6, 2006.

Little did she know that K-Dog would become a pioneer that would elevate Lincoln Rd.'s retail character to a fledgling Restaurant Row, all the more so after restaurant entrepreneur Jim Mamary, following 10 visits with Gabby for reassurance, later opened the hugely popular Café Enduro and later, Lincoln Park Tavern.

So why did a place so popular close up shop?



Gabby Lowe, founder of K-Dog & Dunebuggy, fought back tears on the last day of business.

photo: Bob Marvin

Part of the answer is the financial disillusionment, lack of family time and chronic exhaustion that comes with being the sole owner of a food service establishment that demanded hands-on attention 24/7.

But what sealed K-Dog's end was the stress, strain and chronic exhaustion Gabby says she suffered for more than a year attempting to win a manageable lease with her landlord, who owns much of the commercial and residential property on K-Dog's side of the street. She believed she was being steered towards a bad business deal, and disagreed with the landlord's insistence to convert to a bakery and spend big dollars remodeling the facade.

Exasperated with the whole situation, Gabby felt compelled to reassess K-Dog's future. *(continued on page 4)*

## Empty Restaurant Space Begins a New Life as Culture Hub Pop-Up Art Exhibit Brings PLG Neighbors Together

by Milford Prewitt

Many of the bold and colorful, Impressionistic paintings of mundane, everyday life scenes in Prospect Lefferts Gardens by painter Brian Fernandes were not what they seemed.

If you looked close enough, things were not what they appeared to be at first blush: a bunch of teens who huddled up in one painting appear to be up to no good until you realize they are actually marveling at a friend's new baby; a pit bull leaping up joyfully in his handler's leash to lick and greet a human friend projects a shadow like a beast from Hell on the sidewalk; and even Fernandes, who painted himself in a three-paneled self-portrait buying beer, builds a bridge of communication to a young child.

In fact, communication and neighborhood togetherness was the underlying theme of "Between Neighbors," an exhibition held in a pop-up art gallery located in the long mothballed retail space that used to house Mike's International Restaurant.

Fernandes moved into this neighborhood nearly a year-and-a half ago. He became transfixed with the idea of opening a gallery space in the closed restaurant and approached the landlord and State Sen. Eric Adams, who immediately lent his support.

But it would be the clout and ability of PLGArts and PLGNA—in their first-ever joint marshalling of resources—to make the gallery a go by getting the insurance and marketing the event. Also lending a hand were the

Brooklyn Arts Council and the Citizens Committee For New York City.

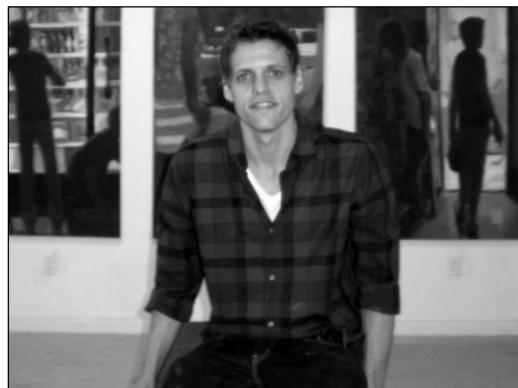
Both the opening night (Oct. 13) and the closing night (Oct. 23) drew the kind of crowd that Fernandes was hoping would show up: racially and economically diverse, young and old, renter and homeowner, browser and buyer.

Martin Ruiz, president of the PLGNA, said the show represented a bold cultural change in the neighborhood's character.

"Without overstating it, I think this is the rebirth of PLG," Martin says. "Art is one of those things that I'd like to think is uniquely human and as such, brings them together."

Artist Brian Fernandes in front of his three-paneled self-portrait depicting him buying beer.

photo: Milford Prewitt



The next pop-up event in the space will be "The Neighborhood Show," a diverse mix of crafts, dance, art and music. It will open Oct. 30 and run until Nov. 13.

## LMA Meeting (continued from page 1)

“delusional” when you look at the kind of pork barrel projects they get funding for in their home districts while Democrats discretionary budgets go unfunded.

In response to a question whose answer proved to be an example of what she was talking about, she said right now funding for various AIDS programs in the district hang in the balance because Congress has cut discretionary budgets—the money representatives normally funnel home for community improvements and social programs.

Clarke said she supports the Occupy Wall Street movement, but expressed regret that the protestors are challenging societal and economic problems she thought earlier generations had solved long ago.

“I salute Occupy Wall Street,” she said. “Their voices couldn’t come at a better time, but isn’t it ironic that here we are in 2011 fighting the same battles all over again? I mean, I thought some of these things were taken care of before I was born: the right to get a job with decent pay; the right to deal with honest banks; the right to decent, affordable housing.”

With 71st Precinct commanders and other officers in attendance and in rapt attention, Clarke said she is all for the decriminalization of marijuana. But she said she was very upset by a recent *New York Times* report that revealed that some narcotics detectives in the most elite undercover squads had taken confiscated drugs from the evidence rooms to plant on young black men during arrest when the alleged perp had nothing illicit on them.

State Sen. Adams, a police officer for 20 years and critical observer of his former employer, agreed with Clarke in expressing his concern that young black men’s reputations and ability to land a job are being ruined by frivolous stop-and-frisk arrests. Adams said he shares neighborhood concerns that crime is going up in PLG, but arresting and detaining the innocent is no way to get the job done. He argued that local businesses could help reduce street crime if more operations installed video cameras.

“I’m a big fan of security cameras,” he said. “One thing we know about predators who are caught after video surveillance is that they are repeaters and it helps the police tremendously.”

Adams indicated that there are government funds to help cover the costs of video camera installation and he urged merchants to get in touch with their local precincts to research what is available and what kind of businesses qualify.

Like Clarke, Adams said he too supports the Occupy Wall Street phenomenon. He noted that he has lost his discretionary budget in the current legislature and is unable to provide funding to certain projects he normally helped. But he lost his funding not from Republicans, but Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a fellow Democrat, who secured the power to consolidate the state senate’s discretionary budget allocations to one account that the governor administers.

On another matter, Adams urged people to write New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman in support of his refusal to sign an agreement with other state attorneys general that would bring no prosecutions against the big banks for their fraudulent lending and accounting practices that led to the 2008 financial collapse and subsequent mortgage crisis.

“It’s amazing, taxpayers gave a multi-billion dollar bailout to banks who today are foreclosing on homeowners who got no financial support in their time of need,” he said. “Yet many of these banks are criminally liable for what they did to the economy and now they are working on a deal with many of the state attorneys general to get a pass by paying a small fine...Eric Schneiderman is to be complimented in not signing this agreement and we should all write him and support him.”

Councilman Eugene told those in attendance that crime can only be reduced when local residents and police form better lines of communication, residents volunteer for community vigilance programs and parents are more mindful of their children’s comings and goings.

“Why is a 15-year-old out at night?” Eugene asked. “That’s not a question for the police to answer, that’s for us and the kid’s parents to answer.”

Despite the budgetary restrictions that are hampering Adams and Clarke, Eugene said he used his discretionary budget to spend about \$3 million in park improvements and after-school youth activities throughout the district.

Borough President Markowitz also ran down a list of accomplishments in the past year, though he stressed he is in no way in favor of the express bus lines and bike paths that are removing car lanes throughout the borough, including Rodgers Ave. in PLG.

“I think all of this stuff is an attempt to take cars out of New York City,” he said. “I respect your opinion if you disagree, but I believe you have a right to own and operate a car in this city and this express lanes and bike paths are ruining that.”

Markowitz said he is concerned that too many big-box storage facilities are opening in the neighborhood along Empire Ave. and he is working with City Council to see if there should be a new zoning restrictions to control the industry.

On a more upbeat note, Markowitz said the renovation of the long-abandoned Loew’s King Theater on Flatbush near Tilden Ave. is on schedule and is destined to become the “Beacon Theater” of Brooklyn when it opens three years from now.

## Captain Michael Telfer, 71st Precinct’s New Executive Officer, Recounts PLG’s Crime Prevention Gains and Setbacks

Captain Michael Telfer, the new executive officer of the 71st Precinct, introduced himself to members attending the Lefferts Manor Association’s fall meeting in October, revealing himself to be a quick-witted, amusing speaker who genuinely loves being a cop and especially being a cop in Brooklyn.

Telfer joined the 71st after a long stint in the Bronx. He was offered promotions to administrative, desk-bound duties at other precincts. But the 18-year veteran of the force and Jamaican native who grew up along Flatbush Ave. said he loves Brooklyn and being a “street cop” too much to spend the remaining years of his career in front of computer screens.

“I can’t think of anything I ever wanted to do more than be a cop, a street cop,” he said. “Besides, I know that Flatbush has the best jerk chicken in the city, too.”

A tall man, Telfer is akin to an operations officer at the precinct and is second-in-command behind Insp. Peter Simonetti, precinct commander.

Although he didn’t join the 71st until earlier this year, he clearly knew the neighborhood’s frustration with the all-day loitering and suspected drug dealing that goes on at the corner of Flatbush and Maple and centered around Ray’s, the bodega.

He said undercover officers have attempted to make buy-and-busts in the store several times, but surprisingly they rarely see anything out of line or the perps are too suspicious to do business with strangers. He said officers have had more luck making arrests inside the liquor store across the street from Ray’s where drug dealing can also be flagrant at times.

He said one of the major problems in law enforcement in PLG is that witnesses to crimes, for whatever reasons, do not step forward to say something when they see something or suspect something.

The notorious shooting on an August Saturday night at the Sneaker Q sports apparel and sneaker store on Flatbush is a case in point, Telfer noted. Despite streets crowded with pedestrians and customers inside the store that yielded leads to 11 persons who witnessed details of the event when a man in a black Maserati shot into the store, hitting another man who ran away before authorities could arrive, not one witness gave police anything more to work on. To this day, there have been no arrests and the wounded man has never been identified.

Another problem that he confronts is that only 10 officers patrol the entire neighborhood from Flatbush to Utica Avenue each shift and they are usually in patrol cars or on scooters. He said uniformed foot patrol officers make up that contingent occasionally and during special events. “So imagine what happens when we make an arrest for something and have to escort the suspect to the lock-up,”

he noted. “That’s two less officers on your streets.”

But with the coming graduating academy class, he is optimistic that that he will gain the personnel to put more officers on foot patrol along Flatbush.

Asked to comment on U.S. Rep. Yvette Clarke’s comments earlier in the meeting, wherein she cited a *New York Times* report that corrupt narcotics officers are contributing to the disproportionate arrests of young black men by planting confiscated drugs on suspects and in answering a related question if such illegalities could be going on in the 71st Precinct, Telfer said: “Normally when I get questions like that I tell the person to get in touch with public affairs,” he said. “There are bad apples in every organization and the NYPD is no different.

“Do these things happen? Yes. But is it a systemwide problem throughout the department? No. It was one narcotics unit in Brooklyn South and it is being broken up and people are being prosecuted.”

But he did not deny that racial profiling has been a long, deep-rooted problem in the police department. In fact, he has been a victim of it himself.

Recounting his early days on the job when he had to report the theft of his own car, a fancy sports car, the investigating officers didn’t believe him and turned what should have been a routine Q-and-A into an interrogation. Telfer brought the house down in laughter when he noted: “Those guys were so good, by the time they were finished with me, they had me convinced that I had stolen my own car,” he said. “That’s right. I was about to confess that I stole my own car.”

He urged residents to get involved with the community patrol programs and to get children, especially teens, involved in the precinct’s Explorer Program.

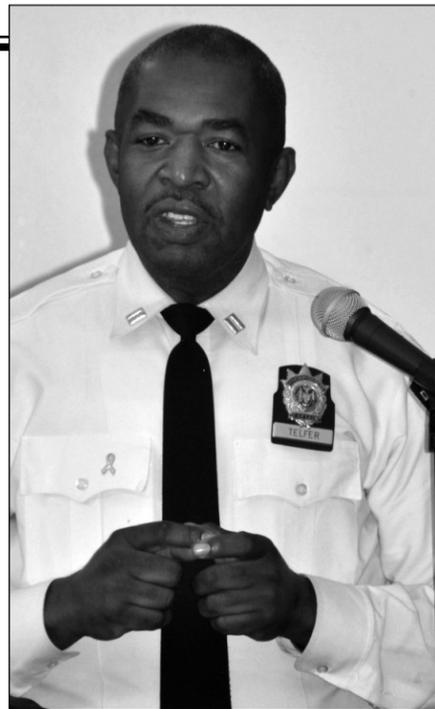


Photo: Catherine Thompson



Since March, neighborhood pets in need of special spa pampering can visit Bow Wow at 521 Rogers Avenue.

## Bow Wow! (and meow, too)

by Mary Miller

Lefferts Manor is known as a very pet-friendly neighborhood. Fortunately for those of us with fur families, more services are becoming available right where we need them.

Bow Wow Pet Boutique & Spa opened in March on Rogers Ave., between Rutland and Midwood Sts. The owners, Tay and Georgia, both live in the area and are dog lovers who worried about their pets when they went off to their respective workplaces — Tay in the world of legal marketing and Georgia in the world of global real estate.

Both women, friends since high school, were involved in the Baruch Executive MBA program when corporate life paled and they had a chance to reinvent themselves.

Little did they realize how soon they would put their business training to use as they turned to establish a neighborhood service that they wished they had use of themselves: a pet boutique and spa servicing both cats and dogs.

The boutique employs Andrea, a professional dog groomer, Lance, a senior professional cat groomer who provides

services in the cat owner’s home, and Dr. Alex, a veterinarian with more than 20 years of experience.

Tay and Georgia are eager to offer the kinds of help that can be a real blessing for the busy Manor resident. They can visit your home to feed and or walk your furry friend during the day or if you are kept late at work. Day and overnight boarding are also available, as well as veterinary services (Sundays 11 to 3). Their pet taxi service can pick-up and drop off for grooming or trips to the airport. Grooming hours are 9 to 5, Tuesday through Saturday, but because they live in the area, Georgia and Tay are more than flexible.

So let your next dog-walking jaunt take you by Bow Wow Pet Boutique and Spa to see what they can do for the four-legged creatures in your life, or visit [www.bowwowpetboutiquenspa.com](http://www.bowwowpetboutiquenspa.com). You can also follow them on Twitter or Facebook. In the coming weeks followers will be eligible to win prizes and discounts.

Mary Miller is a long time resident of the Manor, organizer of the annual flower barrel planting and Christmas wreath projects, and a board member of the LMA.