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BROOKLYN Weekly

LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS
PAGE 11

Dec. 6, 2015

Neighborhood - Your News®

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Seniors: We need access to center

BY COLIN MIXSON

Getting to Marine Park's community center is no walk in the park for these seniors.

The Parks Department must open a service road — currently reserved for city vehicles — so the aged and disabled don't have to hazard an uphill trek that's nearly the length of a football field to get from the nearest Fillmore Avenue parking spaces to the field house, locals said. The service road — opposite Madison Place — leads uphill about 150 feet into the park and connects to a foot path leading another 100 feet up to the center. For some locals, the seemingly simple stroll is insurmountable, one disabled Marine Parker said.

"There are people who can barely make it to the building,"

Continued on page 10



REMY CLAU IS COMING TO TOWN: Stop by Grumpy Bert's art shop at 82 Bond St. on Dec. 6 and 13 for free portraits with Remy the pug dressed as Kris Kringle himself.

Photo by Stefano Giovannini

LITTLE HELPER

Pug poses for howl-iday pics

BY DENNIS LYNCH

Get snug with a pug for the holidays!

Holiday revelers who want a photo with Santa Claus can switch things up this holiday season by having a tiny Santa sit on their lap!

At the Grumpy Bert gift shop and art gallery in Boerum Hill on Dec. 6 and 13, Remy, the gallery's

beloved shop dog, will get a jolly makeover to look like Saint Nick, and will pose with humans and other pooches alike, said the gallery's owner and namesake.

"We're getting a Christmas tree, decorating, so its going to look festive and we'll have photo lights set up," said Albert Chau. "It's for humans and four-legged

Continued on page 6

Eatery gets face-lift

BY DENNIS LYNCH

You cannoli keep the same look for so long.

The owners of Gargiulo's unveiled the restaurant's newly renovated interior to friends and family with a cornucopia of Neapolitan cuisine on Nov. 25. Restaurateurs the Russo family cele-

brated 50 years behind the helm by sprucing up the iconic W. 15th Street eatery, and the new look was long overdue, one co-owner said.

"Who wants to see the same old shirt?" said Anthony Russo, who owns the restaurant with his

Continued on page 10



Photo by Louise Wateridge

IS THIS A BOTTLE I SEE?: Chris Hirsh plays Macbeth in a production inside the New York Distilling company.

Something liquor this way comes

BY LOREN NOVECK

Pour spirits in thine ear — and thine mouth!

A crafty theater company is staging a boozy production of Shakespeare's "Macbeth" inside Williamsburg's New York Distilling Company from Dec. 7 to 13, where audience members will watch

the Scottish play while sipping actual Scotch — or at least rye whiskey — a pairing the director says goes together as perfectly as eye of newt and toe of frog.

"A lot of the poetry of this play works well with the extended metaphor of distilling and of the spirits — in the double entendre of

'spirits,'" said "Macbeth: Things Bad Begun" director Jamie Watkins of performance collective Masterfool.

The evening begins with a hot toddy and ends with an open-bar after-party serving "Macbeth"-themed cocktails — titles

Continued on page 6

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GOING GREEN

Construction begins on long-awaited Bay Ridge Green Church successor

BY DENNIS LYNCH

They finally got the green light.

Workers broke ground on a new “Green Church” on Ovington Avenue earlier this month — seven years after the Bay Ridge United Methodist Church demolished the deteriorating, century-old house of worship to preservationists’ chagrin and sold most of the land with promises to build an easier-to-maintain chapel on the remainder.

The new church’s scale will not be quite as grand as the old one’s, nor will it have the green-tinged, serpentine stone facade that lent the long-gone house of god its nickname, but it will be green in another way, according to the pastor.

“We’re going to have solar power,” said congregation pastor the Rev. Robert Emerick. “It’s really the Green Church now. It’s the new Green Church.”

The congregation sold the land in 2008, because maintaining the then-109-year-old church was too costly. The buyer planned to build condos there, but he sold the site to the city for \$10 million in 2009 to build PS 331.

Parishioners successfully lobbied the National Parks Foundation to list the original church on its National Register of Historic Places in 1999, but when the site’s judgment day came a decade later, it was preservationists who fiercely opposed the temple’s destruction and congregants themselves who warned that sparing the ball would spoil the church. Worshipers thought it imprudent to “keep plowing money into a building” when they could spend the green advancing their religious mission, according to Emerick.

Church leaders prom-



NEW CHURCH ON THE BLOCK: A rendering shows the modern design for the new Bay Ridge United Methodist Church building at 364 Ovington Ave. It is built on land the church retained when it sold its larger plot that covered the corner of Ovington and Fourth avenues in 2008.
Bay Ridge United Methodist Church

ised to erect a new worship space on land alongside the school, but hold-ups obtaining the Department of Buildings’ approval kept contractors from breaking ground until now, Emerick said.

“It’s been a continuous haul since we started with the demolition,” he said. “It’s just taken this long to get everything ready and the process approved.”

The new church will occupy an Ovington Avenue plot the congregation retained when it sold the rest of the lot in the aughts. The smaller

complex is adequate for the 40-person congregation and will include some classrooms and church office space, Emerick said.

Still, the new church is no replacement for its iconic predecessor, said one neighbor who led preservation efforts seven years ago.

“I’m glad the church is keeping its commitment to parishioners, but I saw the renderings, and it doesn’t compare to what was there before,” said Victoria Homfo. “We’re sorry that the church had to come down at all.”

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WILL IT FLOAT?: Businessman John Quadrozzi Jr. wants to turn the S.S. United States as a floating office and entertainment facility on the Red Hook waterfront.

SSUSC / GBX

All hands on deck to save the U.S.

BY LAUREN GILL

Mayday! Mayday!

A Red Hook dock owner's dream of bringing historic luxury passenger liner the S.S. United States to Brooklyn and turning it into a floating office and entertainment complex may be headed for Davy Jones' Locker if he can't find the backers to make it happen — and now other property sharks are circling.

The entrepreneur says he is treading water — investors won't commit until the boat's owners do, and the boat's skippers want *them* on board first.

"We're in a bit of a holding pattern," said John Quadrozzi Jr., who owns the Gowanus Bay Terminal at the end of Columbia Street. "Without that commitment it's hard for us to put together the support and the financing that would be necessary to make the vessel work here."

Quadrozzi has been in talks with the ship's stewards for years, but the campaign to save and restore the craft — which is racking up bills languishing in a Philadelphia berth — became urgent in October when they sent out an S.O.S. to the world asking for money to help save the iconic vessel from the scrap heap.

The owners ultimately drummed up more than \$600,000 in donations — which should keep it afloat well into next year — but the campaign also scored the attention of real-estate moguls nationwide. Meanwhile, Quadrozzi says his backers lost enthusiasm when they heard the boat was on the brink.

Now the Red Hook concrete tycoon has to compete with other developers who not only have the estimated \$50 to \$200 million needed to remodel the ship, but can also back up their plans with engineers and contractors, according to a spokesman for the S.S. United States Conservancy.

One of the competitors is just a short trip across the river — a mystery Manhattan developer reportedly has the money, but has not offered up a berth, according to Quadrozzi. Conversely, he has the dock, but is still appealing to donors, developers, investors, and government agencies to carry out his vision and fund the Titanic bill.

Quadrozzi wants to refit the S.S. United States with offices, restaurants, a gym, and a school, but said he has heard the hated Manhattan rival envisions the liner as a

swanky hotel. The conservancy would not disclose any details, but did confirm that there is another New York City developer in the mix.

But Brooklyn needn't wave the white flag just yet — the conservancy said it is still interested in bringing its buoyant piece of history to Red Hook, it

just needs more of a commitment to move ahead. "In order to bring her to Brooklyn, we would also need to have some interest on the part of a de-

veloper to redevelop the ship and we are actively looking for someone who would be interested in doing that," said spokesman Tom Basile.

'I sailed on the S.S. United States!'

Brooklynites can only dream of stepping foot on the deck of historic ocean liner the S.S. United States until a Red Hook dock owner succeeds in bringing it to our hallowed shores. Until then, live vicariously through this thrilling tale from legendary community newswoman Roz Liston, who sailed the high seas aboard the storied ship in its heyday!

It was a trip to remember.

Back in the twilight days of the S.S. United States, I booked a trans-Atlantic crossing on the venerable ship from Southampton in England to New York. It marked the end of a yearlong stay for me in London, where I had a memorable time living in a flat without central heating, eating cans of baked beans when the pounds had just about run out and making several trips to High Holborn — the immigration office — wearing sunglasses to look like a rich American so I could extend my visa yet again.

The S.S. United States was a perfect way for me to segue back into American life. The stately ship had breathtaking interiors — a magnificent ballroom, expansive state-rooms, and inviting bars tucked into corners — that were a bit over the top. The look was mid-century design in a very posh setting, decidedly American in flavor and a welcome respite from the understated



BEEN THERE, DONE THAT: Legendary CNG editor Roz Liston sailed across the pond on the S.S. United States.

Associated Press

English decor of the time.

But this was not my class, dear, as the British are fond of saying. My cabin was in bilge class, down on the bottom deck not far from the engine room. But for an upstart American in her early 20s, a state-room four levels below the first deck with portholes meant I had arrived — where I was not clear.

But I knew I had to upgrade my

status to have freer run of the ship. Even before the United States left port, I had checked out first class, second class and the decks, so that my face would be familiar to the crew. As soon as the liner's horns blew farewell to England and we started out to sea, I had parked myself in a deck chair in first class along with my cabin mate, a young English woman traveling to America for graduate studies.

She was up for the game, which started immediately when we were asked to leave first class. Somehow we managed to charm our way into staying put in our deck chairs, wrapped in elegant woolen blankets. And then we met someone I'll call Martin.

He was a distinguished man of the world who moved in circles far from our small orbits. But Martin

Continued on page 9

It's Puppy Central Station

Dog owners can pay to stash pooches in sidewalk kennels

BY LAUREN GILL

Call it a barking lot!

A new curbside kennel service in Fort Greene lets dog-owners pay to “park” their pooches while they run errands, which the creator says makes it easier to go see a man about a dog while you’re already out walking one.

“I hope they will make it a little easier to keep a dog in the city,” said Dog Parker inventor Chelsea Brownridge, who came up with the idea because she doesn’t like leaving her terrier Winston at their Bedford-Stuyvesant home when she is out and about.

Users pay \$25 to join, then 20 cents a minute or \$12 an hour to stash their hounds inside lockable boxes with a slim window at the front while they duck inside a cafe or do their banking, and Brownridge says around 50 people have signed up to the service so far.

Two of the boxes are up and running in the neighborhood now, but Brownridge hopes to have 100 out on Brooklyn streets by spring.

And neighborhood businesses re-



DOG DAY: The accommodations inside Dog Parkers – a pay-by-the-minute curbside dog kennel.

Photo by Paul Martinka

port that they’re working as promised — more customers are coming inside now that their owners are un-

encumbered by canine companions, said one store-keep.

“Before, we usually had people asking for a menu and staying outside but now they can actually come inside,” said Keith Goldberg, who owns Baguetteaboutit bakery on Vanderbilt Avenue, one of two Dog Parker locations alongside the Fort Greene General Store on DeKalb Avenue.

Some dog owners are freaked out by the idea of leaving their mutt locked inside a box on the street, so Brownridge says she is creating a mobile application where they will be able to watch their pups on in-kennel cameras and monitor the temperature inside the doghouses.

But dogs love being in enclosed spaces because they’re den animals, Brownridge claims — though she acknowledges the experience isn’t for every man and his dog.

“There are plenty of dogs who don’t like kennels, but for the people who have signed up, their dogs have been comfortable with it,” she said.

And the boxes are no flea-bag motels, she says — someone swings by to sanitize them every day.



SNIFFING IT OUT: A Fort Greene pooch gets up close with a Dog Parker. There are currently two of the pay-by-the-minute kennels in Brooklyn.

Photo by Paul Martinka

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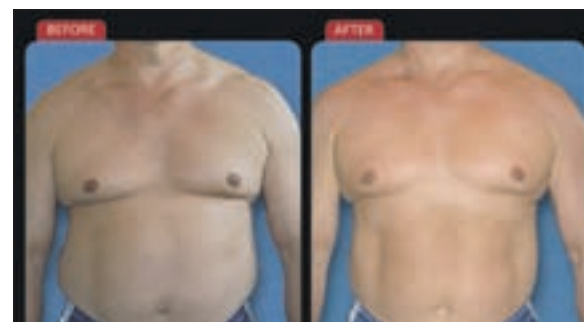
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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: Anya Sapozhnikova performs some aerial stunts in the new House of Yes while fellow performer Kae Burke looks on.
Photo by Stefano Giovannini

Jingle sells: High-flying show about Santa shilling

BY COLIN MIXSON

Call it the House of “Yes, Virginia.”

The theatrical performance space House of Yes, which was priced out of its Williamsburg location in 2012, will re-open on Dec. 10 in a fully-renovated Bushwick warehouse tricked out with zip lines, rigging, and a climbable wall. The artists behind the innovative new venue will celebrate the grand opening with a Christmas Spectacular featuring practically every manner of theatrical performance under the sun.

“It’s every genre we like, which is a lot, crammed into one show,” said House of Yes co-owner and performer Anya Sapozhnikova.

House of Yes has hosted Christmas extravaganza’s before, but the venue’s inaugural performance show will be its first holiday show with a plot — previous incarnations were more akin to variety shows with a theme, according to co-owner and performer Kae Burke, who wrote and directed the show along with Sapozhnikova.

The story begins as Santa Claus accepts a new marketing gig as the brand ambassador of a highly addictive energy drink called XXX-mas Cheer, and the extravaganza follows his misadventures during a promotional tour for the toxic swill, the writers said. Old Saint Nick struggles with his new du-

ties promoting the beverage and potential narcotic, and by the end of the show, everybody learns an important lesson.

“He falls into all sorts of adventures and learns the true meaning of Christmas,” said Burke.

House of Yes specializes in the art of aerial dance, and the owners have been hard at work for over a year rigging up all sorts of neat contraptions to take the performance off the stage and into the air, said Sapozhnikova.

The owners had to literally raise the roof of the former warehouse space — originally 16 feet high — elevating it to 28 feet to accommodate the swinging show guys and gals. The result is a wonderland

for aerial acrobats, say the owners.

“It’s a dream palace for creativity,” Sapozhnikova said. “We get to do whatever we want here.”

Aerial dancers are just one part of House of Yes’s holiday spectacular, and the show, which will include 24 different theater artists, will offer something for every fan of performance art, including ballet, precision dancing, musical theater, and more, Burke said.

“It’s basically an entire collaboration of creative shenanigans,” she said.

Holiday Spectacular at House of Yes [4 Wyckoff Ave. at Jefferson Street in Bushwick, www.houseofyes.org] Dec. 10–13 at 8 pm. \$30 (\$50 VIP).

SANTA PUG

Continued from page 1

creatures too.”

This is the first time Chau and his wife Lynne have dressed up Remy for such a shoot, so they plan to keep the canine Claus on his best behavior with the help of treats, he said.

“His favorite treats are carrots, so he’s probably going to get a lot of carrots,” said Chau.

The 4-and-a-half-year-old pug is a fixture at the gallery. Since the Chau opened the space in 2012, he has kept patrons company during shopping hours, at art shows, and during Lynne’s Lost Lit writing workshops and readings.

“He’s been around since the beginning,” said Chau. “Everyone pretty much adores him, so he’s like our little shop mascot. There’s neighborhood people that just come in and ask for him.”

Remy is so popular with artists that many have pushed the Chau to hold an art show dedicated to the pooch.

“They aren’t very patient, they’re always giving us Remy art, like portraits of him,” said Chau. Some of that art can be seen on the Remy the Pug Instagram page.

For those who want to meet Santa’s little helper before their photoshoot, the pooch will attend opening of the gallery’s annual FlipBookKit Show on Dec. 5 at 6 pm. The show will feature flipbook art (also called kineographs) from 44 artists set inside of customized contraptions that rapidly flip the images to create an animation.

“Take A Photo With Santa Remy Claus” at Grumpy Bert [82 Bond St. between State Street and Atlantic Avenue in Boerum Hill, (347) 855-4849, www.grumpybert.com]. Dec. 6 and 13, 10 am–noon. Free.

MACBETH

Continued from page 1

include the Sainted King and the Hurlly Burly — creating a seamless booze-infused experience that is a one-of-a-kind feast for the eyes, ears, and liver, said an organizer.

“From the moment that they walk in until they walk out at the end of the experience, they’ve really been somewhere and done something they’ve never done before,” said Miriam Thom of event company Fox Wolf, which produced an acclaimed version of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” with Masterfool inside the Richardson Street firewater factory earlier this year.

The distillery itself plays a big role in the show, Watkins said — the players perform all over the

cavernous space, which is filled with oak barrels, copper stills, and functioning industrial machinery that take the audience on a journey back to old Scotland, with a little old New York in the mix.

“The space has a lot of whiskey barrels, which are used in the staging of the show,” he said. “We are making full use of the distillery space as a playing area.”

And the thespian group is thrilled to be able to show off the neighborhood hooch workshop and its wares to a wider audience in return, Thom said.

“Macbeth: Things Bad Begun” at New York Distilling Company [79 Richardson St. between Lorimer and Leonard streets in Williamsburg, (718) 412-0874, www.foxwolfproductions.nyc]. Dec. 7–13 at 7 pm. \$40 (\$35 in advance).



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Host Choice of Pasta-
Penne Marinara, Penne Ala Vodka or
Penne Bolognese

Host Choice of Salad-
House Salad or Caesar Salad

Guest Choice of Entree-
Chicken Francaise, Broiled Filet of
Sole, Broiled Salmon, Shrimp Scampi
Boneless Shell Steak 12 oz. Cut
Roast Loin of Pork
(Entrees Served with Potato Croquettes & Fresh Vegetables)

Occasion Cake, Coffee & Tea

\$49.00 Per Person
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antipasti		pasta		entrees	
HALF TRAY	FULL TRAY	HALF TRAY	FULL TRAY	HALF TRAY	FULL TRAY
Fried calamari.....	50.00.....95.00	Penne Pomodoro.....	50.00.....95.00	Chicken Parmigiana.....	50.00.....90.00
Fried shrimp.....	60.00.....110.00	Penne Alla Vodka.....	35.00.....60.00	Chicken Marsala.....	50.00.....90.00
Fried Ravioli.....	45.00.....95.00	Lasagna.....	50.00.....90.00	Chicken Francese.....	50.00.....90.00
Calamari Marinara.....	50.00.....95.00	Manicotti.....	45.00.....85.00	Chicken Piccata.....	50.00.....90.00
Caprese.....	50.00.....95.00	Stuffed Shells.....	45.00.....85.00	Chicken Scarpariello.....	60.00.....110.00
Mozzarella in Carozza.....	35.00.....60.00	Stuffed Rigatoni.....	45.00.....85.00	Veal Parmigiana.....	60.00.....110.00
Baked Clams.....	75.00.....	Ravioli.....	45.00.....85.00	Veal Marsala.....	60.00.....110.00
Cold Antipasto.....	125.00.....	Lobster Ravioli.....	50.00.....90.00	Veal Piccata.....	60.00.....110.00
Eggplant Napoli.....	40.00.....70.00	Baked Ziti.....	35.00.....65.00	Veal Pizzaiola.....	60.00.....110.00
Seafood Salad.....	65.00.....120.00	Baked Ziti Calabrese.....	50.00.....90.00	Eggplant Parmigiana.....	45.00.....85.00
Mussels Marinara.....	40.00.....70.00	Baked Ziti Siciliana.....	50.00.....90.00	Eggplant Rollatini.....	50.00.....90.00
Mini Riceballs.....	75c each	Orecchietti Puglise.....	45.00.....85.00	Meatballs.....	55.00.....90.00
Potato Croquettes.....	75c each	Fettucini Alfredo.....	45.00.....85.00	Sausage & Peppers.....	45.00.....85.00
Calzonetti.....	2.00 each	Rigatoni Bolognese.....	45.00.....85.00	Sausage & Broccoli Rabe.....	60.00.....120.00
Stuffed Mushrooms.....	35.00.....60.00	Linguine with Clam Sauce (Red or White).....	45.00.....85.00	Shrimp Parmigiana.....	65.00.....120.00
Shrimp Cocktail.....	60.00.....110.00	Penne with Garlic & Oil.....	30.00.....50.00	Shrimp Scampi.....	65.00.....120.00
		Penne Primavera.....	45.00.....85.00	Shrimp Marinara.....	65.00.....120.00
		Penne Puttanesca.....	45.00.....85.00	Shrimp Francese.....	65.00.....120.00
		Pasta Alla Nonna.....	50.00.....90.00	Filet of Sole (broiled).....	60.00.....110.00
		Gnocchi.....	45.00.....85.00		
		Carciofi Pasta.....	50.00.....90.00		
		Italian Tuna Salad.....	40.00.....65.00		
		**Add grilled chicken to any Salad.....	15.00.....25.00		
		Penne Vodka.....	50.00.....90.00		
		Alla Giacomo.....	50.00.....90.00		

salads

HALF TRAY	FULL TRAY
Mista Salad.....	30.00.....50.00
Caesar Salad.....	35.00.....60.00
Tri-Color Salad.....	35.00.....60.00
Arugula Salad.....	35.00.....60.00
Italian Tuna Salad.....	40.00.....65.00

additional options

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Shopping the canal

Canal-inspired souvenir shop has goo for you

BY COLIN MIXSON

Now you can take home a memento of your trip to the Gowanus Canal that isn't a rash!

A pair of Gowanus-ites just opened a souvenir store selling trinkets, knickknacks, and novelties crafted by local artists in celebration of the neighborhood's famed toxic waterway.

"Most of what we sell are custom-made for the shop to relate to any one of the many weird stories related to the canal," said Ute Zimmermann, co-owner of the Gowanus Souvenir Shop on Union Street between Bond and Nevins streets.

The shop's novelty wares occupy a space between art and irony, and include "Gowanus Swim Team" T-shirts, poison bottles labeled

with various toxins found in the fetid neighborhood waterway, and handcrafted mutant action figures — all created by neighborhood makers, according to Zimmermann.

The owners, who have backgrounds in the art business, say they have generally relied on word of mouth to accrue a catalogue of talented locals to contribute to the shop.

"Gowanus is known for all these makers and artists, and one person begets another," said Zimmermann. "It happens organically and I was really surprised."

The fledgling gift-emporium owners are currently working with the neighborhood talent to develop new items to sell, and Zimmermann says the store will of-

fer a few fresh tchotchkes in time for Valentine's Day.

"The funnest part of starting the shop so far has been getting to know and develop ideas with these people," she said. "We have a lot more things we're commissioning that are going to come, but that's a process and we'll see a lot more stuff in the spring."

The gift store found its inspiration from Proteus Gowanus, a gallery and reading room that previously occupied the space on Union Street, and where Zimmermann worked for a time. Before it closed, the founder mentioned that the gallery had a gift store that did a roaring trade in postcards, and Zimmerman figured there might be a market for other Gowanus-themed items.



IT CAME FROM THE CANAL: The Gowanus Souvenir Shop sells mutant masks and poison bottles to commemorate your visit to Brooklyn's Nautical Purgatory. Community News Group / Colin Mixson

"She said the only thing that ever sold there were the Gowanus postcards, and then a light went off in my

head," said Zimmermann. The Gowanus Souvenir Shop [543 Union St. between Bond and Nevins streets in

Gowanus, entrance on Nevins Street, (424) 888-2869, www.gowanussouvenir.com].

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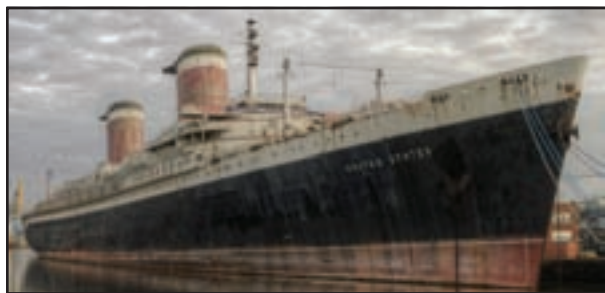
Continued from page 3

was a closet rebel at heart, it turned out, and had an outrageous sense of humor.

Bored with the ship's class divisions and decorum, Martin invited us to dinner in the first class dining room, where many of the men wore black tie and the women formal dresses. We stowed the jeans and did the best we could to look upscale, which was a stretch, but Martin eased our way by showing up in a dress shirt with no tie.

The maitre d' did not want to let us into the dining room, but Martin prevailed and it was clear to us that he was somebody, even as the waiters looked somewhat appalled at our total violation of the ship's dress code.

Unspoken were the rules Martin laid down — first names only, no discussion of who we were in our lives beyond the ship



SHIP SHAPE: The S.S. United States once hosted celebrities like John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe — not to mention TimesLedge editor Roz Liston. SS United States Conservancy

and no questions asked. He did tell us he was traveling with his wife, whom he called a less polite version of the "old biddy."

And so for the rest of our evenings on the ship we were first-class crashers as the dinner guests of the mysterious Martin, who delighted in breaking the rules.

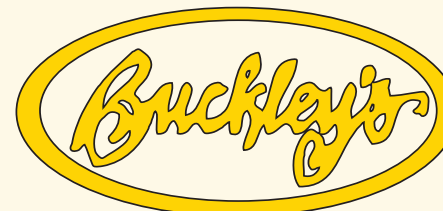
As the ship entered New York Harbor, I happened to run into one of the first-class waiters who asked if I knew the identity of our elegant host. I wasn't sure I wanted to know, but he told me we had been wined and

dined by one of the world's most famous jewelers. His name was synonymous with opulence, power, and discretion.

I never saw Martin again. But I look back on those five days on that luxury liner as a re-entry capsule for me to my New York roots and Martin's insouciance as a reminder of what I had missed about America. He was the perfect dinner companion for the trip home.

Roz Liston is the esteemed editor of our sister publication in Queens, the TimesLedge.

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SENIORS

Continued from page 1

said Robert Probetzky, 62, who is bound to a wheelchair after an abscess in his spine left him partially paralyzed.

Millennium Development's Marine Park Active Adults senior program serves more than 3,000 elders at the center, offering activities such as pingpong and line-dancing for ambulatory oldsters and games, art, and computer classes for less fleet-of-foot folks. But there isn't a single handicap parking space for the thousands of elders who frequent the \$16 million, two-and-a-half-year-old community center, according to Community Board 18 district manager Dorothy Turano.

"It's primarily a senior center," Turano said. "Someone who has a handicapped pass — why shouldn't they be able to park there?"

Parking on the nearby Fillmore Avenue is limited from 7 am–4 pm dur-



BUMPY ROAD: Robert Probetzky says it's way too hard for him, and other seniors, to make it into the Carmine Carro Community Center and enjoy the great programs it offers.

Photo by Arthur De Gaeta

ing school days in order to accommodate bus traffic coming in and out of JHS 278, and the closest parking lot, located at 32nd Street and Avenue S, is more than two football fields from the community center.

Even Turano was forced to stick it to the man following a knee surgery that left her temporarily

hobbled over the summer — she was on her way to a community meeting at the Carmine Carro center but wasn't able to find parking within a distance she could reasonably walk, so she parked along the forbidden access road, but parks employees quickly accosted her, she said.

"At one point I parked it on that road for a meet-

ing and I was chastised," Turano said. "I laughed and said 'I see your vehicles are up there, there's no handicapped spot, and I can't walk.'"

The field house has riled locals in the past, because the project's cost ballooned from \$5 to \$16 million amid countless delays, and because contractors couldn't even manage to get bathroom door handles on right.

Disabled locals can request permission from center officials to be dropped off along the access road, but the Parks Department isn't looking to make such drop-offs "an official thing," a spokeswoman said. Agency vehicles frequent the roadway, according to locals. But the path was designed for pedestrian traffic, and an increase in civilian vehicle traffic could be dangerous, the spokeswoman said.

"It would be super unsafe if we were allowing people to ride through an area that's not really connected to the road," spokeswoman Maeri Ferguson said.

GARGIULO'S

Continued from page 1

three brothers. "You gotta change your shirt, give yourself a face-lift, and you reinvent yourself."

The Russos gave the front dining room darker wood accents, a new bar, and new tables and chairs. They installed new lighting fixtures and put up neutral wallpaper in the catering halls — bringing the halls' former 1980s-era sheik into the 21st century, said brother Nino Russo.

The renovations are also a major step forward for a restaurant that Hurricane Sandy hammered three years ago. Nine feet of flood water destroyed the Gargiulo's basement and forced the Russos to do emergency reconstruction in the catering and dining halls, which saw two feet of flood water, the Russos said. But those fixes were stop-gaps so the restaurant could get back to serving up food, which was more important at the

time than redesigning the restaurant, the brothers said.

"When we were hit by Sandy, we really didn't have the time to get a designer, coordinate colors, and all that — we wanted to open up," Nino said.

The decor is far from the first upgrade to the century-old institution. Last year, order-taking waiters substituted their note pads for iPads.

The digs may be new, but the food is still the same — and that's good, because some things shouldn't change, according to a patron who first came to the restaurant in 1970 and now drives from bucolic Staten Island at least once a week for Gargiulo's consistently great veal.

"The reason I keep coming back is because the food is always the same," said Harold Wolchok. "You get exactly what you want, and you know that it will always be the same. And the people who serve you are fantastic."

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Photographed by Sean Kennedy Santos

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