



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Volume 33, No. 3
Fall 2022

Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

www.JHBG.org

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

Resilient Jackson Heights

Pin Oak •

Quercus palustris




Tree ID
Number 5062328

Trunk
Diameter 40 inches


Closest
Address 33-34 77 St.

This One Tree in One Year:

REDUCES
17,746 tons 
of Carbon dioxide

CONSERVES
2,537 kWh of 
energy

REMOVES
6 lbs of 
Air Pollutants

INTERCEPTS
7,122 gallons 
of storm water



How do trees help the environment in these ways? They reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by absorbing the CO₂ in stems and leaves. They'll conserve energy by providing shade and cooling buildings, reducing the need for air conditioning. Trees remove pollutants by absorbing them, and capture water when it rains—lessening stormwater runoff that carries pollutants to waterways like oceans, streams and lakes. The New York City Tree Map at tree-map.nycgovparks.org catalogs hundreds of thousands of individual trees in NYC, estimating each tree's environmental benefits.

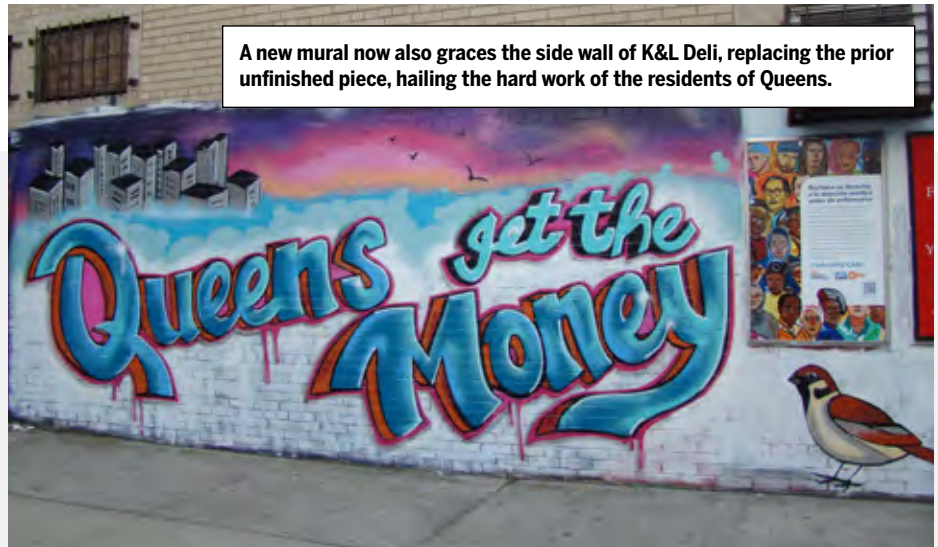
Help the JH community by volunteering at our cleanups and other events!
Go to JHBG.org or e-mail info@jhb.org to sign up!

President's Message	2
Editor's Message	2
Fall Events in JH	3
Northern Boulevard Bus	3
Kaleidospace	4
JH Notables: Don Rickles	4
Queens World Film Festival	5
Community United	
Methodist Church Needs Help	5
En español	6
<i>Queens Is The Future</i>	
Mural Returns	8
JH Community Mural	10
Wild Sightings in JH: Songbirds	10
Shaping a Bio-Diverse Garden	11
Let's Green Queens:	
RETI Center's Floating Gardens	11
Ongoing Events	12
Membership Form	12

On the cover: Art by Kirsten Magnani.

How can resilience be described visually? Listening to WNYC's Brian Lehrer's July 20 radio show: "#BLTrees: A Year in the Life", available online at bit.ly/3pDruxF, led to this image. Mature trees with trunk diameters of 30 inches and over remove 70 times more particulates than younger trees with 3-inch diameter trunks. Thank you, Pin Oak tree #5062328 with a 40-inch diameter, for all your work!

en español páginas 6-7



A new mural now also graces the side wall of K&L Deli, replacing the prior unfinished piece, hailing the hard work of the residents of Queens.

President's Message

BY LESLIE ELLMAN



Dear Neighbors,

Each year as Fall approaches, there is a moment when I am suddenly aware of that shift that indicates one season's end and the start of another. The changing slant and sparkle of the sunlight catches my eye. The beautiful hues of the foliage unfold subtly at first, and then dramatically with leaves of bright crimson color everywhere.

As residents of Jackson Heights, we are very fortunate to experience this splendor in full glory. Thanks to our Tree LC program run by Len Maniace, our tree canopy receives year-round care and advocacy by our dedicated group of volunteers because we believe that we all benefit from a healthy urban forest. Street trees are the ultimate symbol of resilience and our caring for them represents an essential partnership between urban people and nature. When we care for our trees we care for ourselves and for each other. This pact is the result of and the perpetuation of resilience for our community now and for generations to come.

This Fall when you first notice the beautiful slant of light and catch your first glimpse of yellow, orange or gold, I invite you to reflect on this seasonal splendor as a symbol of resilience.

Leslie Ellman, President

Editor's Message

Building a Sustainable and Resilient Community BY MELISSA ZAVALA



It's hard to believe the year will soon come to an end. Following another season of intense heat and irregular weather patterns, along with new waves of communicable diseases like monkeypox (orthopox), this issue considers sustainability and resilience in everyday ways. It includes stories of spirited renewal: a revamped beloved mural now iconic for the borough as a whole and housed here in Jackson Heights is now paired with a portrait of the community, a thriving film festival highlights the voices of our unnoticed neighbors, native plants gardens expand around the neighborhood, and more. Our community has come together

to support each other and to collectively impact our environment in meaningful ways.

We always appreciate your support and welcome your thoughts. Please send us your suggestions for stories, your articles, and any other ideas on how we can better serve the neighborhood by emailing us at info@jhb.org or writing to us by mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

Bring on the Fall colors!

Melissa Zavala, Editor

FALL EVENTS IN JACKSON HEIGHTS

JHBG's Halloween Parade

Monday, October 31,
line-up 4:45 pm, start march 5 pm
 37th Avenue, from 89th to 76th Street.

Jackson Heights Art Talks Events

All talks at Espresso 77. Arrive early to get a seat and enjoy happy hour from 7 to 8 pm.

Wednesday, September 14, 8 pm

Cecilia Jurado Chueca, introduced by Norma Markley

Wednesday, October 12, 8 pm

Firoz Mahmud, introduced by Eleen Lin

Wednesday, November 9, 8 pm

Hilliary Gabryel, introduced by Maria Liebana

En Construcción Fall Events

Librería Barco de Papel, 40-03 80th Street
Saturday September 10, 7pm (in Spanish)

Guillermo Severiche will be presenting his novel, 'El agua viene de noche', at Centro Cultural Barco de Papel. That day will be dedicated to Argentine literature, anchored by Severiche's book presentation.

Saturday October 1, 7pm Reading in Spanish. In-person readings presented by authors of 'En Construcción.'

Saturday December 3, 7pm In-person readings by authors of 'En Construcción' at the bookstore.

St. Mark's Gardening:

Gardening (Saturdays), 10:30 am

At the gardens at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on 34th Avenue, between 81st and 82nd Streets



Scenes from the last Annual Halloween Parade; this year's will be held on Monday, October 31, at 5pm on 37th Avenue.



A Bus that's More Pronto than Pokey

BY LEN MANIACE

Imagine boarding a bus on Northern Boulevard, speeding along a bus-only lane as traffic lights linger green, and arriving in Manhattan in less than a half hour. A magic bus, you say?

The city's Department of Transportation approved the first stage of this plan in June, announcing Northern Boulevard bus-only lanes from 61st to 114th Streets. That followed a five-month campaign by two community groups, including JHBG and three elected officials.

The coalition in mid-July then called for the Metropolitan Transportation Agency, which is responsible for our

bus, subway, and commuter rail, to bring Select Bus Service to the boulevard. SBS is the agency's version of bus rapid transit, a concept pioneered in Brazil and Colombia designed to eliminate those typical delays that turn buses more pokey than pronto.

At the same time, JHBG, the Northern Boulevard Rapid Riders, State Sen. Jessica Ramos, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, and City Councilmember Shekar Krishnan, called for a phase two of the Northern Boulevard bus lanes that would complete the route from Manhattan's East Side to Flushing via the Queensboro Bridge.



The Q66 stuck in traffic as it is often found, lengthening commutes for those dependent upon it.

With much of Queens, including the area above Northern Boulevard, too distant from subway service and no new subway construction planned here, the idea is to rev up key bus service

to more resemble subway quickness. Among major SBS routes are 14th Street, 125th Street, and Second Avenue in Manhattan, and Woodhaven Boulevard/Cross Bay Boulevard.

Kaleidospace: Communities Create Together

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

Much like the kaleidoscope, the colorful toy containing loose bits of tinted materials pinned between two flat plates and two mirrors that make colors morph into endless combinations of patterns as their positions are adjusted, the art collective Kaleidospace is well-named. This collection of musicians, actors, photographers, visual artists, and dancers are homegrown in Queens, and like multivariate bits of bright colors forming designs, together they aim to produce new configurations with each collaboration. These young artists and makers teamed up following the pandemic seeking to work closer to home. Splashes of color now enliven some of the public spaces around Jackson Heights as members of the group find ways of beautifying their home neighborhoods and bring people together, putting into practice what painter Thomas Kincade is quoted as saying about art transcending all cultural boundaries.



Mark Saldana celebrates his murals at Travers Park during the "Made in Queens: Art Walk" where Kaleidospace showcased their work.

Mark Saldana is among the artists leaving their mark around Jackson Heights. He is the painter behind Travers Park's (78th Street and 34th Avenue) new tree box designs called *Somos Uno (We Are One)*. Having grown up in Corona, he is moved by the mix of cultural traditions preserved here by different immigrant



communities. His Mexican heritage is not his only inspiration, however. An important local personality also impacted him. Oswaldo Gomez, better known as Miss Colombia, whose cheerful outsized personality was amplified by striking fashions, left an impression on Saldana at a young age. A Queens icon for the LGBTQ community, Miss Colombia's unapologetic flamboyance became an instant source of inspiration, helping Saldana realize that beauty defies constraints, opening up his sense of aesthetic as well as his ability to express himself. Saldana's artwork conveys the joys of local cultural traditions in his use of bright colors, abstracted creatures, his inclusion of flowers, and other natural forms. His murals are brought to us by the city's Art in Parks Program with funding from Councilmember Shekar Krishnan's office. Members of the New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE) skills-training program assisted his painting.

JACKSON HEIGHTS NOTABLES

Highlighting former Jackson Heights residents of notable interest for the ways in which they represent our neighborhood.

Don Rickles

Local Funnyman BY DANIEL KARATZAS

In 2022, just five years after his death, his humor may seem insensitive or mean-spirited to some. His nickname was, after all, "Mr. Warmth". But Don Rickles, who navigated standup comedy, films, and television for over 60 years, was a scrappy survivor who befriended the likes of Bob Newhart and Frank Sinatra, the latter who loved him despite being the butt of many of his jokes and put-downs.

Born on May 8, 1926, the Rickles family resided at 89-09 32nd Avenue, across from PS 148. After graduating from Newtown High School in 1944, Rickles served in the US Navy during World War II. Soon after returning home from the war, he entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Manhattan. Having failed to land any parts in Hollywood or on Broadway, Rickles began performing in nightclubs across the country. It was during this time that his close friendship with Frank Sinatra began, lasting until Sinatra's death in 1998.

Although he finally landed his first Hollywood role in 1958, and appeared in many films during the 1960s, he became well known because of his



Don Rickles grew up in this building, on the other side of Northern Boulevard, at a time when anti-Semitism prevented Jewish families from living in the heart of Jackson Heights.



numerous television appearances. He appeared in such classic 1960s TV shows as *The Munsters*, *The Lucy Show*, *Wagon Train*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *F Troop*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, and many more. But it is *The Tonight Show*, with Johnny Carson, for which he might be best remembered.

His insult comedy endeared him to many Americans at the time, likely because he was seemingly an equal opportunity "insulter". He appeared in a number of Hollywood films later in his career, including Martin Scorsese's *Casino*.

Those under 40 probably remember him as Mr. Potato Head in the various *Toy Story* films.

While insult comedy may not be to everyone's liking, he won the respect of many comedians and entertainers. Certainly, the longevity of Don Rickles' career says something. His best friend Bob Newhart probably summed it up best: "He was called 'The Merchant of Venom', but in truth, he was one of the kindest, caring, and most sensitive human beings we have ever known." Don Rickles died at age 90 on April 6, 2017.

DEFINING HOPE: Queens World Film Festival Explores Resilience

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

The pandemic did not stop Katha Cato, her husband Don Preston Cato, or the dynamic Queens World Film Festival crew. At the start of the quarantine in 2020, the festival screened 191 films online, and then another 198 virtually and 143 live in five venues in 2021. Then, while reviewing photos of last year's events, the Catos and their crew were struck by how exhausted everyone seemed to look. They took a step back to reflect upon what everyone had just been through. It is this which inspired their latest development, *The Listening Tour*. This project traces how Jackson Heights residents and others have been coping with the pandemic and spotlights the stories of those largely invisible populations hit hardest.

Interviews begin with a seemingly basic question posed to interviewees: How do you define hope? The responses



Alex Ortiz, Don Preston Cato, Katha Cato, and Richard Calvached at their PS69 screening; also with the great staff at K&L Deli on 37th Avenue and 76th Street.

have been profound. Stories range from those of fifth graders at PS69, workers at K&L Deli, librarians at the local Queens Public Library branch, staffers at Materials for the Arts, among others. Cato says of the local students, "How these fifth graders feel, know, experience the same things that the rest of us do, are literally invisible to the world". Cato is



making them visible. In another revealing instance, she realized she did not know the person who has been preparing her food for years (even while her husband does), or those who feed their team at large. This prompted her to reflect on the disparity between people who

perform critical services and those who benefit from them. She realized that we do not talk to each other enough. The labor performed by essential workers affects so many people and they are not heard from. Find out what these oftentimes invisible neighbors have to say and participate in this year's film festival, running November 1–6. Visit the festival's website for more information: queensworldfilmfestival.org.

Please also consider other ways of helping, including by completing their survey on the importance of the arts in the city at bit.ly/3R4VcYd. Arts funding is critical. By better understanding how New Yorkers engage different artistic outlets, institutions around the city can better serve their audiences as well.

The Queens Memory Project will be archiving all finished and unedited materials related to this project.

The Community United Methodist Church of Jackson Heights Needs Your Help!



This spring, the JHBG was contacted by Kathy Keiter of the Community United Methodist Church (CUMC), alerting us to the challenges they face maintaining their landmarked house of worship.

This was just prior to our annual Historic Weekend, where we have held our events every second Saturday of June for about thirty years. We invited Kathy to speak to the assembled audience to explain the situation in the very room where Scrabble was perfected (the basement social room of the CUMC). Here is a summary of what she shared with us:

Built in 1923, the Community Church is one of the first houses of worship constructed in the community and is located within the Jackson Heights Historic District. Their congregation is small but diverse, focused on serving those in need.

Unfortunately, time has taken its toll on this lovely building, and extensive restoration work

is needed to fix the tower and slate roof leaks, crumbling mortar, loose stones, rotted stained glass window frames and entry doors, and unstable steps and ramp.

The total cost of this restoration will likely exceed \$350,000; a sum that their small congregation will be unable to raise in full without help from the Jackson Heights community.

The Church has created a GoFundMe page for these much-needed repairs—please visit the Church website at: onechurchnyc.com and follow the link at the bottom of the home page, or [scan the QR code at left](#).

Checks may be made out to CUMC and mailed to: **Community United Methodist Church, 8110 35th Ave., Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

For more information regarding

their church restoration efforts, please contact Kathy Keiter, kkeiter@gmail.com.



SCAN ME

Mensaje de la presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

Queridos vecinos:

Cada año, con la llegada del otoño, las hermosas tonalidades del follaje se desenvuelven, primero, con sutileza y, después, con dramatismo cuando las hojas de brillante carmesí llenan todo de color. Gracias a nuestro programa Tree LC dirigido por Len Maniace, las copas de nuestros árboles reciben cuidado y asistencia todo el año por parte de nuestro dedicado grupo de voluntarios. Los árboles de la calle son el mayor símbolo de resiliencia, y su cuidado representa una asociación esencial entre la naturaleza y la gente de la ciudad. Este otoño, cuando notes los bellos rayos de luz y percibas los primeros amarillos, naranjas y rojos, te invito a reflexionar sobre este esplendor estacional como símbolo de resiliencia.

Nota de la editora: construir una comunidad sustentable y resiliente

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Es difícil creer que el año pronto terminará. Después de otra estación de calor intenso y patrones de clima irregulares junto con nuevas olas de enfermedades contagiosas como la viruela del mono (orthopox), este número del boletín considera la sustentabilidad y la resiliencia en formas cotidianas. Este trimestral incluye historias de renovación espiritual: un querido mural renovado, ahora ícono de Queens y ubicado aquí en Jackson Heights, aunado

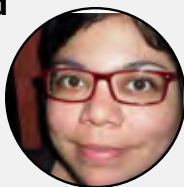


a un retrato de la comunidad, un festival de cine que destaca las voces de los vecinos poco notados, la expansión de jardines de plantas nativas en el vecindario y mucho más. Como siempre, apreciamos tu apoyo y recibimos tus opiniones. Por favor, envíanos propuestas para historias, artículos o cualquier otra idea que nos ayude a servir mejor al vecindario a info@jhb.org o escríbenos a nuestro correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372**. ¡Que vengan los colores del otoño!

Los destacados de Jackson Heights: Don Rickles, el chisto del barrio

POR DAN KARATZAS

Don Rickles, quien navegó a través de la comedia de monólogo, el cine y la televisión por más de 60 años, nació el 8 de mayo de 1925 y vivió con su familia en el 89-09 de la Avenida 32, enfrente de la SP148. Después de graduarse de la preparatoria Newtown High School en 1944, Rickles sirvió en el Ejército de Estados Unidos durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Poco después de su regreso de la guerra, ingresó en la Academia Americana de Arte Dramático en Manhattan. Después de su fracaso en obtener algún papel en Hollywood o en Broadway, Rickles comenzó a actuar en centros nocturnos por todo el país. Aunque finalmente consiguió su primer papel en Hollywood en 1958 y apareció en muchas películas durante la década de 1960, se dio a conocer más por sus numerosas presentaciones en televisión. Pero quizás sea mejor recordado por su participación en The Tonight Show, con Johnny Carson. Don Rickles murió a la edad de 90, el 6 de abril de 2017.



¡La Iglesia Metodista de la Comunidad Unida de Jackson Heights necesita tu ayuda!

POR DAN KARATZAS
Esta primavera, Kathy Keiter, de la Iglesia Metodista de la Comunidad Unida, contactó al JHBG para alertarnos sobre los retos que enfrenta el mantenimiento del edificio histórico de su iglesia. Construido en 1923, el hermoso edificio ha padecido los estragos del tiempo y se necesita un trabajo de restauración mayor para reparar la torre y las goteras de la loza del techo, la argamasa desmoronada, las piedras sueltas, los marcos podridos de los vitrales de las ventanas y las puertas de la entrada, y los escalones y la rampa inestables. El costo total excedería los \$350.000, suma que la pequeña congregación no podrá reunir sin la ayuda de la comunidad de Jackson Heights. La iglesia ha creado una página GoFundMe para recibir donaciones. Visita el sitio web onechurchnyc.com y sigue el vínculo al final de la página de inicio. Los cheques se pueden enviar a nombre de **CUMC a la dirección Community United Methodist Church, 8110 35th Ave., Jackson Heights, NY 11372**. Para más información, envía un email a Kathy Keiter a la dirección electrónica kkeiter@gmail.com.

Reverdezcamos Queens. Actualización y corrección sobre el corcho: su uso en los jardines flotantes del RETI Center

POR KIRSTEN MAGNANI Y MELISSA ZAVALA

Después de la publicación de nuestro número de verano, M Wells Steakhouse (43-15 Crescent Street, Long Island City) recibió una donación de corcho que nos llevó a descubrir que, aunque todavía son miembros de la red ReCORK, la churrasquería ahora dona todos sus corchos a un proyecto en formación, parte de los Jardines BlueBlocks del RETI Center en Brooklyn. Este proyecto sirve como un sistema flotante de fitolimpieza para mejorar la calidad del agua y de los hábitats. Este proyecto está bajo exploración con una instalación modelo en Governor's Island. Tus corchos apoyarán estos diseños en un programa piloto que intenta cambiar las formas en que la ciudad concibe la jardinería y las riberas. ¿Qué soluciones verdes te gustaría promover? Escríbenos a info@jhb.org o envíanos tus preguntas y comentarios por correo a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372**.

Un autobús más rápido que lento

POR LEN MANIACE
Imagina subirte a un autobús en Northern Boulevard que vaya por un carril sólo para autobuses mientras los semáforos cambian al verde y llegar a Manhattan en menos de media hora. Un autobús mágico, ¿no crees? El Departamento de Transporte de la Ciudad de Nueva York aprobó la primera etapa de este plan en junio y anunció los carriles exclusivos para autobuses en Northern Boulevard, de la calle 61 a la 114. ➡

La idea es acelerar el servicio esencial de los autobuses a una rapidez más parecida a la del metro. Entre las principales rutas del Select Bus Service (SBS) están la calle 14, la calle 125 y la Segunda Avenida en Manhattan, y Woodhaven Boulevard/Cross Bay Boulevard.

Guía para dar forma a un jardín biodiverso

POR DAVE WATSON

Sustentabilidad del jardín: construye un ecosistema relativamente pequeño para un jardín en la ciudad.

TIERRA: no disturbances la tierra y usa plantas que crezcan en ese tipo de suelo.

PLANTAS: usa plantas nativas, encuentra buenos recursos para plantas nativas auténticas, no cultivadas, y riégalas un poco menos, ya que estas plantas, una vez establecidas, tienen raíces profundas.

INSECTOS: los insectos benéficos son esenciales para los ecosistemas. No uses pesticidas y atrae polinizadores con plantas variadas que florecen a lo largo del año.

DEJA LAS HOJAS: no remuevas los restos de hojas en invierno y primavera, porque dan a las abejas y otros insectos la oportunidad de hacer nidos.

Hábitat para los pájaros: los pájaros necesitan insectos, los arbustos pueden crear islas de hábitat y de refugio para los pájaros y les ofrecen fruto durante la migración del otoño y durante el invierno.

HUMANOS: aprende más cómo trabajar con plantas nativas en libros y sitios de internet como los del NYBG, Mt. Cuba Center y en ecobeneficial.com.

Renovado y restaurado: *Queens Is the Future* está de regreso

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

En febrero pasado, la página de Facebook del vecindario hizo ruido con una discusión entre sus miembros sobre los méritos de restaurar el mural *Queens Is the Future*, que dejó de recibir mantenimiento hace algunos años. El trabajo original representaba un metro elevado sobre sus vías llevando un mensaje alentador sobre el futuro, parecido a la comunidad diversa de Jackson Heights. El mural está en la pared de la cancha de balonmano del patio de recreo de IS145. Pero en 2014 se convirtió en un colorido anuncio corporativo enfocado en la figura de Spider-Man rescatando un metro lleno de niños con la Estatua de la Libertad y la silueta de Manhattan al fondo. Las alteraciones fueron patrocinadas por Sony Pictures para promover la película y contar una historia diferente: un súper héroe salva la ciudad. Pero ¿qué se pierde cuando el arte público se transforma en un anuncio comercial? Los artistas originales fueron motivados a visitar el mural y su restauración ha recibido el apoyo de líderes comunitarios, negocios y residentes. Esta pieza se ha vuelto parte de nuestro acervo cultural y es emblemática de la rica diversidad de Queens. El proyecto se finalizó a tiempo para la graduación de la escuela en junio. Su restauración fue celebrada con una gran develación en julio.

Definir la esperanza: el Festival de Cine Mundial de Queens explora la resiliencia

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

La pandemia no detuvo a Katha Cato, su esposo Preston Cato ni al equipo del dinámico Festival

de Cine Mundial de Queens. Mientras revisaban las fotos de los eventos del año pasado, los Cato y el equipo quedaron impactados con lo exhaustos que todos se ven en las fotos. Entonces retrocedieron para reflexionar sobre e inspirarse en lo que cada uno ha atravesado. El último proyecto, The Listening Tour, explora los modos en que los residentes de Jackson Heights y de otros lugares han sobrellevado la pandemia, y destaca las historias de las poblaciones más invisibles y golpeadas por el COVID-19. Las entrevistas comienzan con la pregunta básica: '¿Cómo defines la esperanza?'. Historias que abarcan desde los chicos de sexto grado de PS69 hasta los empleados de K&L Deli, los bibliotecarios de la Biblioteca Pública de Queens, el personal de Materials for the Arts, entre otros. Descubre lo que estos vecinos, con frecuencia invisibles, tienen qué decir y participa en el Festival de este año, que será del 1 al 5 de noviembre. Para más información visita el sitio web:

queensworldfilmfestival.org.

Un mural comunitario que contiene al mundo entero en un vecindario

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

El año pasado, el JHBG fue contactado por el artista Erick Teran, quien buscaba apoyo para pintar un mural para la comunidad en el patio de recreo de IS145. Durante meses, Teran recolectó ideas de los residentes del área, quienes identificaron los lugares que consideran más esenciales para la comunidad, y ensambló una vista panorámica estilizada de Jackson Heights: un homenaje, un retrato de casa. Teran trabajaba como maestro sustituto en IS145, y es el fundador de CITYPRINTSNYC

en CITYPRINTS, LLC, una plataforma diseñada para ofrecer a los artistas mayor control sobre su trabajo y que sirve como alternativa a sitios como Etsy. Con el espíritu de resiliencia de un artista, Teran da vida a sus ideas y representa el carácter valiente del vecindario en general.

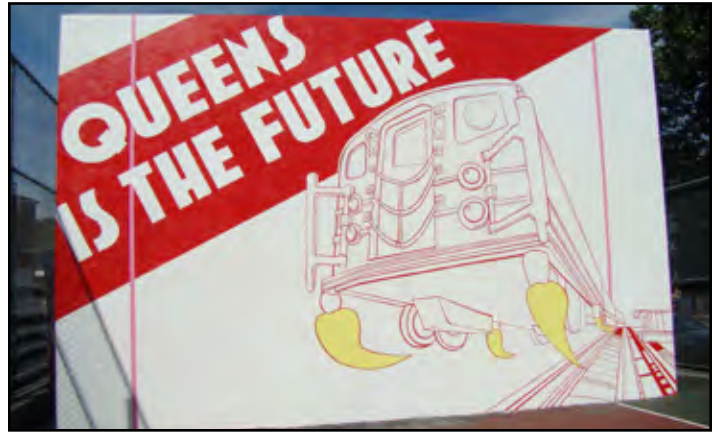
Avistamiento inusual en Jackson Heights. Seamos mejores vecinos de los pájaros

POR KIRSTEN MAGNANI

Caminando cerca de Travers Park, Kirsten Magnani se tropezó con un raro espectáculo: un pájaro de tamaño considerable que medía 6-7 pulgadas, tenía un plumaje sedoso de color café y gris, el pecho amarillo limón, un distintivo "antifaz" negro alrededor de los ojos y una suave cresta. El ave yacía muerta sobre la banqueta; su cuello seguramente roto. "Debió haber chocado contra una ventana", dijo Magnani. El Ampelis Americano (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) es un pájaro cantor posadero nativo de América Central y América del Norte. Su época de reproducción ocurre a finales de la primavera y durante el verano cuando buscan el campo abierto. En este tiempo debemos mantenerlos lejos de los peligros de los vidrios de las ventanas, que para ellos parecen el cielo y pedazos de vegetación. Mantener las luces apagadas y las telas mosquiteras en toda la ventana son sólo algunas de las formas económicas de ayudar a cuidarlos durante su periodo de migración en mayo. ¿Qué vida salvaje inusual has visto en el vecindario? Envíanos fotos y comparte tu historia por email a info@jhb.org o por correo a JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.

RENEWED & RESTORED: 'QUEENS IS THE FUTURE' RETURNS

BY MELISSA ZAVALA



BEFORE & AFTER: Chipped and faded, Spider-Man is replaced by the original design celebrating the peaceful diversity found in Queens.

Back in February, the neighborhood Facebook page buzzed with a lively discussion among members on the merits of restoring the *Queens is the Future* mural which fell into disrepair some years ago. The original artwork featured a subway soaring off its tracks, conveying an uplifting message about the future resembling the diverse Jackson Heights community. This mural is painted on the handball court wall of the IS145 playground. What in 2007 was mostly a white and red design featuring the Queens phrase in simple block letters reminiscent of old cruise ship brochures, by 2014 had become a colorized corporate ad. Spotlighting the figure of Spider-Man rescuing a subway full of children with the Statue of Liberty and the Manhattan skyline behind the train, the alterations were funded by Sony Pictures to tell a different story: a superhero saves the city. In a publicity stunt set for opening weekend for *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, Sony Pictures hired an artist from Staten Island, Ibrahim Wann, to replace the mural and create a piece to promote the movie. Out of respect for the original artists, Wann met Sony's aims while preserving the general design, instead altering it. But what gets lost when public art is transformed into corporate advertisements?

Using their online community forum,

neighborhood residents exchanged their thoughts. Some argued for the positive associations of a worthy Queens superhero featured in our neighborhood and the excitement students and the community felt when Andrew Garfield, who portrayed Peter Parker in the movie, and other actors, visited the school for the official unveiling. Paul Trust, the author of the post, called for a restoration emphasizing the problems with the lack of consent from the original artists and the corporate nature of the image. The time was right for a renovation.

"Queens contains the whole world in one place. The future will look more like Queens in a lot of ways that are really beautiful and really powerful."

—ARTIST JOSHUA FRANKEL

The original artists were motivated to revisit a piece that had strayed far from their main intent by the Queens Distance Runners' interest in using their mural's design. In August of 2021, the group organized a run to raise funds for the residents displaced by the fire in the building on 34th Avenue between 89th and 90th Streets—everyone wore matching

shirts featuring the first mural. The runners had contacted the original artists, married couple and Manhattan natives, Joshua Frankel and Eve Biddle, who collaborated with them. On the day of the race, Frankel attended the event and was introduced to the current Principal of IS145, Iván Rodríguez, and art teacher, Iván Asin, laying the groundwork for the restoration. Upon seeing their design on so many shirts, Frankel was moved, saying: "It made my heart explode, giving an introvert like me more of a reason to talk to more people than I'm used to". A Jackson Heights artist who worked as a substitute teacher at IS145, Erick Teran, was also interested in working on a mural representative of the community. He had identified IS145 as the right site for it, prompting him to contact the couple in December of last year. They agreed to collaborate.

The artists have since spoken out about the Spider-Man debacle, recounted in *The New Yorker* in 2015*. Though initially withholding comments upon seeing the children excited about the changes made to their work, Frankel now says of the altered mural: "When the Spider-Man thing happened, it really hurt, but I didn't want kids to feel bad about feeling excited about the movie and a superhero they liked". Movie stars came to the school, and it seemed wrong to make

QUEENS IS THE FUTURE MURAL continued

a big deal about how the artists felt about Sony's changes. But excitement for the mural did not last long after the movie's opening weekend. The paint began to chip, and the image became fractured. The restoration required structural renovation and a labor-intensive process inspired by the "Crack is Wack" mural, painted by famed 1980s graffiti artist, Keith Haring. Haring's mural is still found in a Harlem playground. It was painted at the height of the Crack epidemic. It is overseen by the Parks Department.

Restoration of our local mural has received support from community leaders, businesses, and residents. Its uplifting message expressed in the recognizable phrase—and not in a corporate ad or a superhero—inspires at a time when, as Frankel puts it, there

are "so many bad things happening, so many horrors in the world". Artistic works aim to represent a world in common. In public spaces and for the public, art is a representation of what is possible. Now renewed, the mural channels the power of community resilience. Paul Trust says of it, "This restoration feels to me like a wrong that has been made right again".

The image has appeared in other sources as well. It has inspired Municipal Arts Society programming and been featured in *Sports Illustrated*. It is in the background in a 2019 documentary about Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and is featured in a *Time Out New York* magazine story touting Queens as the hottest borough. The phrase now also serves as an opening for the introduction penned by Joseph Heathcott, a neighborhood resident

and Chair of Urban and Environmental Studies at The New School, for a recent book on the borough's unique architecture entitled *All the Queens Houses* by Rafael Herrin-Ferri (2021). The tag phrase, "Queens is the Future" came to the couple while living in nearby Long Island City on regular visits to Frankel's mother who was then a teacher at PS222. Frankel says, "Queens contains the whole world in one place. The future will look more like Queens in a lot of ways that are really beautiful and really powerful." The mural has become part of the local lore and is emblematic of the borough's rich diversity. The project was completed in time for the school's graduation in June. Its restoration was celebrated with a grand reveal in July, bringing together the community in celebration.



QUEENS IS THE FUTURE
mural in progress, June 2022.
From left: Artists Joshua Frankel
and Eve Biddle with painters
Shana Siegel and Valerie Light.

Courtesy of Eve Biddle

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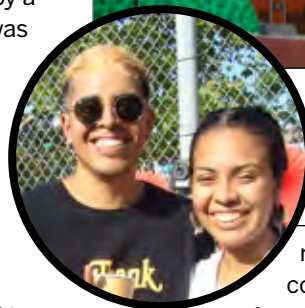
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A Community Mural Containing the Whole World in One Neighborhood

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

Late last year, JHBG was contacted by a local artist named Erick Teran. He was seeking support for a community mural in the handball courts at IS145. He had been busily trying to make this happen. He also contacted the original artists for the "Queens is the Future" mural, painted on the other side of the handball court infamously redesigned by Sony Pictures to promote a Spider-Man sequel in 2014. Determined to deliver his neighborhood a special tribute to replace the worn and faded image of a brain and a skyline with the quote "Knowledge is Power", Erick Teran was prepared to find a way to create something fresh and joyful. For months, he collected input from area residents who identified the places they find most essential in their community. He says: "My goal was to give our community a voice in deciding what about our neighborhood gets seen, highlighted, and celebrated, all the while giving the participants of the survey and JH residents an opportunity to take part in the process through the hand-print activity that invited residents to

literally have a hand in the making of this community mural. As a life-long resident, I'd like to believe this piece represents the joy we all feel when we call Jackson Heights our home, and created a piece that



Can you identify all of the businesses featured in the mural? Drop by and take a look. The hand prints of supporters and collaborators are found throughout. Erick Teran and his sister, Kacia Flórez.

reflects our collective pride, from the color palette to the mural's subject, focus, and scale".

He has assembled a stylized panoramic view of Jackson Heights, an homage to our neighborhood that encompasses all of the businesses and locales that make our community the vibrant, welcoming, and lively place it is. Without identifying the buildings by name, their identity is clear to residents. It is a portrait of home.

In addition to his artistic training, Teran has experience in merchandising, a career he abandoned during the pandemic. He worked as a substitute teacher at IS145. Teran is also founder of CITYPRINTSNYC at CITYPRINTS, LLC, a platform designed to offer artists more control over their work, and one that serves as an alternative to sites like Etsy. With the resilient spirit of an artist, he represents the spunky character of the neighborhood at large.

Along with his sister, Kacia Flórez, a musician, they are part of a network of young artists beginning to put their imprint on the neighborhood. Their soulful take on their home community is now evident beyond the handball courts, now including designs found at Travers Park where the community can revel in imagery by Mark Saldana, evocative of Latin American folklore and the work of the great Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, who documented life in all of its historical complexity, expressed with surrealist mystical flair.



Principal Iván Rodríguez cuts the ribbon at the official unveiling; artists Erick Teran is to his left, and Joshua Frankel to the right.

Wild Sightings in Jackson Heights: Being Better Bird Neighbors

KIRSTEN MAGNANI REPORTS

Walking near Travers Park, Kirsten Magnani stumbled upon a rare sight: a substantially sized bird measuring between 6-7 inches, with silky plumage mostly of brown and

gray color, with a lemon-yellow chest, a distinctive black "mask" around the eyes, and a gentle crest. The bird laid dead on the sidewalk; its neck likely broken. "It must have flown into a

window", Magnani recounts. She had never seen this bird species in Jackson Heights: "It must be green enough here for them to make a stop



Let's Green Queens!

Cork Update and Correction: RETI Center's Floating Gardens Use Cork

BY KIRSTEN MAGNANI & MELISSA ZAVALA

Following the publication of our summer quarterly, a cork donation was made to M Wells Steakhouse, 43-15 Crescent Street, Long Island City, leading us to learn that while still members of the ReCORK network, the steakhouse now donates all corks collected instead to a Brooklyn project forming a part of the RETI Center's

BlueBlocks Gardens. This project serves as a floating phytoremediation system for improving water quality and enhancing habitats. Phytoremediation entails harnessing the natural processes of plant life to draw out toxins from the environment. The floating structures created using recycled materials are submersible, serving at different ecosystems levels. This project is under exploration with a model installation at Governor's Island (an important site for environmental



Residents from The Towers organized a donation of used corks made to M Wells Steakhouse in LIC for reuse in the RETI Center's floating BlueBlocks Gardens.

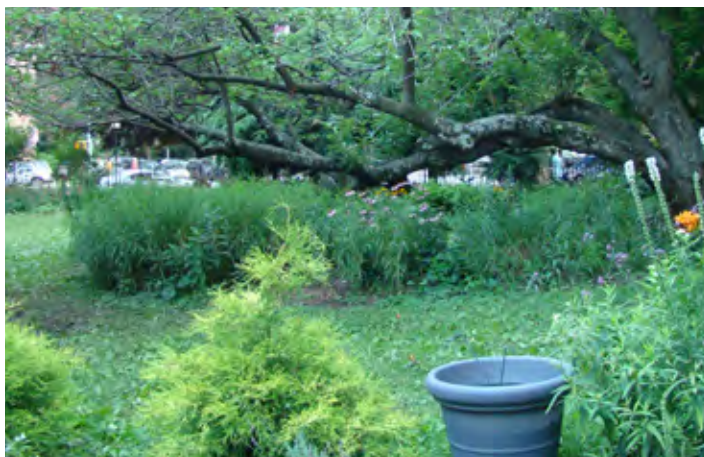
innovations). The BlueBlocks Gardens are planned for different types of environments—from tidal wetlands to river estuaries of different depths, and more—throughout the Hudson Bay to the Gowanus Canal, an especially polluted waterway currently designated a Superfund site.

Unlike plastic, cork is harmless as it is organic and does not break down and pollute waterways. Your corks will support these designs in a pilot program that aims to change the ways in which the city conceives of gardening and the waterfront.

What green solutions would you like to promote? Email us at info@jhb.org or send us questions and comments via regular mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**

Outline for Shaping a Bio-Diverse Garden

BY DAVE WATSON



GARDEN SUSTAINABILITY:

Construct a relatively small, garden ecosystem for city living. In Jackson Heights, JHBG, The Towers, Hawthorn Court, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church are creating native garden areas. Read Douglas Tallamy's books on ecosystems.

SOIL: Do not till/disturb the soil. Know your soil: sand, clay, silt, or a mixture. Use plants that thrive in your soil type.

PLANTS: 1. Use native plants as hosts for beneficial insects as well as for beauty; they have formed a deep ecological relationship over a long, evolutionary time period.
2. Find good sources for true species of native plants, not cultivars.
3. Water a little less: native plants, once established, usually have deep root systems.

INSECTS: Beneficial insects are essential for ecosystems. (Learn more at Xerces.org.) Do not use pesticides. To attract pollinators, grow a variety of plants that will bloom through the seasons. In general, plant in groups. This allows pollinators to forage more efficiently.

LEAVE THE LEAVES:

A number of beneficial insects pupate under fallen leaves, and some insects over-winter in the leaf litter. Do not remove plant debris in the winter/spring because it provides nesting opportunities for native bees and other insects.

HABITAT FOR BIRDS:

1. Birds need insects, especially caterpillars, to feed themselves and especially their nestlings.
2. Shrubs can create islands of habitat and safe shelter for birds.
3. During fall migration, and during winter, native shrubs offer the berries that birds need for survival.
4. Leave seed-heads standing for the birds.

HUMANS: Learn how to work with native plantings using these books: *The Northeast Native Plant Primer*, *The Pollinator Victory Garden*, and the catalog for Prairie Nursery. Visit native plant gardens at NYBG and Mt. Cuba Center and check out ecobeneficial.com—especially the podcasts. Let yourself soak in the ecosystems.

WILD SIGHTINGS continued

during migration season," she says.

Cedar waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) are perching songbirds native to Central and North America. Their common name is based on the brilliant red markings on their secondary wing feathers which look like droplets of wax. The color is the result of a pigmented layer

surrounded by a transparent cuticle; the color is determined by the birds' diet consisting of a variety of sugary fruits which are their specialty. They breed in wooded areas in flocks, being social birds, with males performing a hopping dance to attract females. Breeding season occurs late spring through summer when birds seek

open forests. They must be kept safe at this time from the dangers of glass windows which to them appear as open sky and patches of vegetation. Tape strings, decals, sun catchers, or mylar strips to your windows in the spring. Keeping your lights off and mosquito screens over entire windows, are only some of the easy inexpensive

ways to help keep birds safe during their migration period in May.

What unusual wildlife have you seen around the neighborhood? Send us pictures and share your story by emailing us at info@jhb.org or writing via regular mail at **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**



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VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Fall 2022

ONGOING EVENTS

Saturdays, 11am-1 pm

JH-SCRAPS (composting)

69th St. & 35th Ave.

For info on what is compostable,
contact info@JHBG.org

Most Saturdays, 10 am

Tree LC

Meets at the NE corner of
80th St. & 37th Ave.

Schedule may vary and include
some Sundays. Check the

[JHBG Facebook page](#)

for complete information.

Saturdays 10 am

Clean and Green

For complete details,

go to www.jhbg.org.

Daily

JH-CREW dog run

69th St. between 34th & 35th Aves.

To join, go to www.jhbg.org

for application. Suggested
donation, \$25/year.

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS:

Please join us or renew your membership (there are 2 ways):

Go to www.JHBG.org/membership and pay by credit card.

It's quick and easy! Mail a check with this form
for the membership level you select to:

JHBG–Membership • P.O. Box 720253

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Membership includes a subscription to *Views from the Heights* and helps fund our numerous
community activities. JHBG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your contribution is tax deductible.

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If you're interested in being contacted about any JHBG activities, please email
info@JHBG.org.