



VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS

Jackson Heights – “A Garden in the City”

Volume 33, No. 4
Winter 2022

Jackson Heights
Beautification Group

www.JHBG.org



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!

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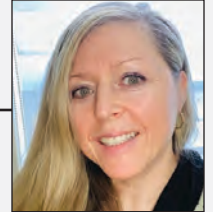
On the cover:**Art by Kirsten Magnani.**

The motto, 'Jackson Heights: The whole world in one Neighborhood', written in Erick Teran's handball court mural at IS145, is representative of life here--as is the Unisphere, a Queens icon, which can be dressed up in celebratory lights from our many cultures. We have so much to be thankful for.



President's Message

BY LESLIE ELLMAN



Dear Neighbors,

We are often preoccupied on a day-to-day basis with our routines and daily priorities. We have deadlines, appointments, and schedules to keep. Those of us who are parents or caretakers are usually busy tending to others' needs.

Now that the season of thanks and giving is upon us, it is a great time to pause and reflect. I always appreciate this time because it presents an opportunity and a reason to really think about what we can be grateful for and how we can help others.

In Jackson Heights, we have much to be grateful for. One thing for which I am thankful is the level of engagement and involvement that many of us have in service

of our beloved neighborhood. It's unique and wonderful to live somewhere where people are consistently and actively involved in dialogue and deeds for the betterment of their community. Certainly, this can lead to passionate discourse and differences of opinion, but I always bear in mind that we are all starting from a place of love for our neighborhood, and in a time of great division across our society, having common ground is something to be grateful for.

On behalf of the entire JHBG board we thank all of our volunteers, members, and donors for their ongoing support, and we wish all of our neighbors a happy and healthy holiday season!

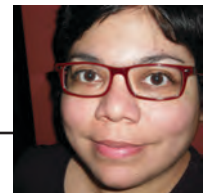
Leslie Ellman, President

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Editor's Message

Reflecting on the Passing Year BY MELISSA ZAVALA



The Holiday Season and the end of each calendar year often inspire contemplation. This issue then reflects on community life in its different forms and from various perspectives, including those of children growing up in the neighborhood. It partly looks back on the passing year to put the upcoming one into perspective from the vantage point of community life and togetherness. It does this by telling stories about special residents who have left their mark here, commemorated in our streets, while informing readers about everyday issues around the neighborhood, remembering some of the year's highlights, and more. We celebrate another year of

shared efforts to redefine what it means to live in Jackson Heights after a pandemic.

We appreciate your thoughts and are grateful for your support. Please send us your feedback, your stories, and/or ideas on what you would like to read about and 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.**

Happy Holidays to all!

Melissa Zavala, Editor

WINTER EVENTS IN JACKSON HEIGHTS

Holiday Lighting: Saturday, December 3,
Holiday crafts between 4-5; lighting at 5 p.m.
 Post Office – 78-02 37th Avenue

JHO Concert: Wednesday, December 14 at
7:30 p.m. \$10-\$20 suggested donations, at St. Mark's
 Episcopal Church, 33-50 82nd Street on 34th Avenue.

JH Art Talks

Saturday Dec. 10 to January 28, 2023.

A.R.T. (Art Retail Therapy), 84-26 37th Ave.
 Off-Brand, a group exhibit of 27 local artists, will
 open on Saturday, December 10, at 7:30 pm at
 A.R.T. (Art Retail Therapy) and will run until January
 28. The show is curated by JHAT (Jackson Heights Art
 Talks) in partnership with A.R.T. Off-Brand will feature
 artworks integrated into and in dialogue with the

retail environment. Shoppers will encounter a variety
 of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and installations
 as they browse the store's offerings. Work might be
 suspended from the ceiling, hanging above displays of
 paints, or sitting on shelves next to bottles of ink. More
 than showing examples of how certain art supplies
 have been employed, the show aims to create a sense
 of surprise and delight in a non-traditional gallery
 setting, as it celebrates the local creative community
 and rallies around a newly opened small business.

En Construcción Winter Readings

Saturday December 3, 7 p.m. Reading in Spanish.
 In-person readings presented by authors of En
 Construcción at the bookstore, *Librería Barco de Papel*,
 40-03 80th Street.



Join JHBG, neighbors,
 and friends for
 caroling, crafts, and
 celebration to ring in
 the holiday season!

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022



Queens Pride Parade Returns June 5, 2022

Queens Pride celebrated its 30th anniversary
 this year. The second oldest and second largest
 pride parade in the city, marchers returned
 with renewed energy after a pandemic hiatus
 with over 100 groups reportedly marching in celebration
 of the progress made over the past three decades against
 homophobia. Originally organized in memory of Julio Rivera,



the 29-year-old gay man brutally killed by skinheads in
 1990, the parade celebrates the strength and pride of the
 LGBTQIA+ community here and everywhere.

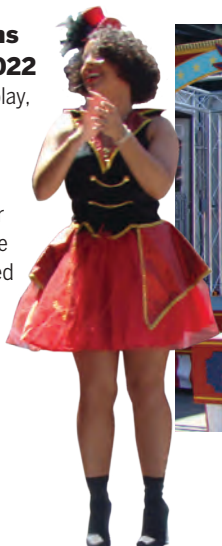


A Walk with Little Amal September 21, 2022

The 12-foot Handspring Puppet
 Company's creation of a Syrian refugee
 girl whose name means hope in Arabic,
 arrived in Jackson Heights to walk in
 the city's most diverse neighborhood.
 Representing the global burgeoning
 refugee crisis and in the middle of the
 politically motivated stunt of busing
 asylum seekers north by Republican-
 led border states, Amal brought political
 theater and a message to Jackson
 Heights this fall. Her mild swaying
 motions and demeanor beg us to
 consider the most vulnerable: children,
 especially those separated from their
 families and homelands around the
 world. Her message of humanity and
 hope have been captivating audiences
 abroad as well as here in the city
 where crowds gather everywhere to
 experience music and spectacle.

Bindlestiff Cirkus Entertains Local Audiences • July 3, 2022

Founded in 1995, formerly called Fireplay,
 the founding duo of Keith Nelson and
 Stephanie Monseu traveled the world
 mixing circus and sideshow acts.
 Following the forced closure from their
 storefront venue, formerly a shoe store
 in Times Square in a building scheduled
 for demolition, the company now has
 been offering a variety of acts from
 burlesque to sideshow exhibitions
 and much more, for free, to engaged
 audiences in streets across the city.



Growing Up in Jackson Heights:

Local Children Reflect on Their Neighborhood

COMPILED BY MELISSA ZAVALA

Famed anthropologist of the 20th century, Margaret Mead, is quoted as saying, “The solution of adult problems tomorrow depends in large measure upon the way our children grow up today. There is no greater insight into the future than recognizing that when we save our children, we save ourselves”. With this in mind, we ask: what elements of community life do some of our neighborhood youth care about the most? In what follows, children ranging from high school to elementary school ages reflect on their lives in Jackson Heights.



Sita, 13 I've traveled a lot and been to many different countries, as well as many different parts of the U.S. Jackson Heights is the one place where I have seen so many different people in the same place. Our neighborhood has multiple synagogues, churches, mosques, and temples dedicated to other religions. Most of our schools offer dual-language programs, and if you walked five blocks in each direction from your home, you'd be very likely to find places with Eastern European, South Asian, East Asian, South American, and Western European heritage. Living in Jackson Heights is like condensing the entire world into the neighborhood's 300 acres.

Jack, 14 One thing that I'm grateful for, that is unique and specific to Jackson Heights, is how there are ample opportunities for children growing up here, and now that I'm entering high school, I'm beyond grateful that I was able to take advantage of that. Playing sports was a big part of my childhood, and without St. Joan of Arc's sports teams, I wouldn't have had the chance to play basketball or soccer locally. I was also able to make friends through this, with whom I still hang out with frequently. Most recently, throughout the pandemic, it was difficult to socialize with friends and get out. But thankfully, 34th Avenue was pedestrianized. Given this opportunity, I was able to walk with friends and family on the avenue in a socially distant and safe manner. There were definitely some really fun memories made on those walks. Overall, there's really nothing you can't do in Jackson Heights, with multiple parks, libraries, youth departments, and more.



Naomi, 12 The thing that I like most about Jackson Heights is the open street on 34th Avenue. I find it unique to Jackson Heights even though there are open streets in other neighborhoods because I feel that the open street on 34th Avenue has more people using it, and it also looks really nice. I think that a lot of people really like it. People are always walking or jogging on the street no matter what time of the day it is. As soon as it opens, there are people on it. Before it closes, people are on it. The street is really nice during spring and summer, but in truth, it is really pretty any time of the year.



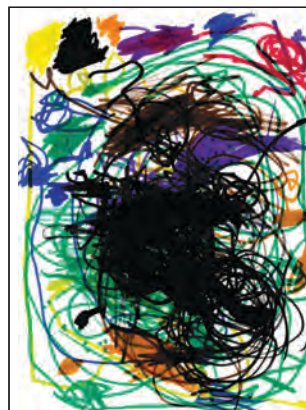


Julian, 10 What I like best about Jackson Heights are the charming buildings, gardens, and the trees. When I walk around the neighborhood, there are lots of trees, wildlife, and a brand-new park. Sometimes I see a variety of birds like crows, woodpeckers, cardinals, hawks, and pigeons. The fancy buildings like the Towers have interesting designs and lots of space. I live in the Chateaus, which are buildings from the 1920s on 80th and 81st Streets. What is nice about my building are the large windows and the unique mansard roofs. The 100-year-old Elm trees in my backyard make the garden a shady spot where I can play with my friends. When you live in Jackson Heights, you can get a touch of nature and at the same time you can even see the Empire State building!



Amelia, 8 I like Jackson Heights because I like the parks, seeing my friends there, and going to concerts. Other parks don't have concerts and that's what makes it special to live here. I'm grateful that there is no gun shooting, too. I feel safe and like that my friends live nearby.

Noah, 8 Jackson Heights is a calm and peaceful neighborhood. It is very sporty. There are lots of running groups on 34th Avenue and people riding bikes and scooters. Travers Park is a great park for climbing. It would be better if there were more kids' sports events. I like The Queensboro because I like the pasta. One problem in Jackson Heights is the amount of motorcycles and scooters that speed by and make a lot of noise.



Harald, 4 I like my doll house. I love trains! I get to see them when we go to daddy's garden [JH-SCRAPS composting center], and I can see them from my school. I am thankful for people because I love my family and my dog.

Keep Calm and Carry On Composting BY ASHLEY CRUCE

Hey Queens!
Got yard waste, leaves
and food scraps?



JHSCRAPS COMMUNITY COMPOST SITE
every Saturday 11am-1pm
on 69th St. near 35th Ave.
GROWNUP'S FOOD SCRAP DROP-OFF (FSDO)
at the Jackson Heights GreenMarket every Sunday 8:30am-2pm on 79th St. near Northern Blvd.

All of Queens has *finally* gotten Curbside Organics collection by the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY), which officially started the week of October 3rd. While it's been a rocky roll-out for some—with collection schedule confusion and theft of brown bins in parts of our neighborhood—we encourage everyone to stay calm and carry on composting! We want this new Queens Curbside program to succeed at collecting food scraps, leaves, and garden waste that otherwise go to landfills. NYC Councilmember Shahana Hanif (Brooklyn District 39), who advocates for citywide mandatory composting, reminds us that “Curbside composting is one of the simplest ways New Yorkers can reduce their carbon footprint”. So, keep your eyes on this ultimate vital climate activism goal! The city's commitment to wider-scale curbside composting in Queens, with 2.4 million people, is definitely necessary to begin to make a dent in NYC's huge waste stream, rat infestation, and our impact on climate change through reduced greenhouse emissions!

It is disappointing that this new Queens Curbside

Organics program will start, then stop, and then start again: it will stop at the end of December and then start again in Late March/April. It will be very important to advocate to Mayor Adams and to Queens Councilmembers to come up with extra funds to continue it since our household food scraps don't disappear in the winter months!

However, we are fortunate to have other options to continue composting food scraps in Jackson Heights, which will continue year-round as usual: **JHSCRAPS** Community Compost site every Saturday 11am-1pm on 69th St. near 35th Ave. and **GrowNYC's** Food Scrap Drop-off (FSDO) at the Jackson Heights GreenMarket every Sunday 8:30am-2pm on 79th St. near Northern Blvd.

BUT it's important to remain aware of the difference between WHAT is accepted at our local community compost site, JHSCRAPS, and at the GrowNYC's FSDO at the Sunday JH Green Market [no meat, bones, grease, dairy, etc.] VERSUS the Sanitation Curbside Organics collection in the brown bins, which can handle these items at the industrial scale.

Ashley Cruce is a Master Composter (JHSCRAPS, Dunolly Gardens Co-op)

HELPFUL LINKS!

Here's a great breakdown: commongroundcompost.com/what-can-cannot-be-composted-in-nyc/
To find out your organics collection day: www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/collectionSchedule

Mensaje de la presidenta

POR LESLIE ELLMAN

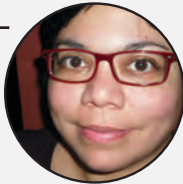
Queridos vecinos: Ahora que la temporada de agradecer y dar está aquí, es un buen momento para hacer una pausa y reflexionar. Siempre aprecio mucho esta época porque representa una oportunidad y una razón para pensar realmente acerca de lo que podemos estar agradecidos y cómo podemos ayudar a otros. En Jackson Heights, tenemos mucho que agradecer. Yo agradezco el nivel de compromiso y participación que muchos de nosotros ponemos en el servicio de nuestro querido vecindario. En nombre de la junta directiva del JHBG, agradecemos a nuestros voluntarios, miembros y donadores por su continuo apoyo, y deseamos a todos nuestros vecinos unas felices y saludables celebraciones de fin de año.



Mensaje de la editora. Una reflexión sobre el año que termina

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

La temporada de festividades y el fin de año con frecuencia inspiran a la contemplación. Este número reflexiona sobre la vida comunitaria en sus diferentes formas y desde varias perspectivas, incluidas aquellas de los niños que crecen en el vecindario. En parte, hace una retrospectiva del año que termina para poner el que viene en la perspectiva de la vida comunitaria y la unidad. Celebramos otro año de esfuerzos compartidos para redefinir lo que significa vivir en Jackson Heights después



de una pandemia. Apreciamos sus ideas y agradecemos su apoyo. Por favor, envíennos su retroalimentación, sus historias y/o ideas acerca de lo que les gustaría leer y de cómo podemos servir a info@jhb.org o, por correo tradicional, a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372**. ¡Muy felices fiestas a todos!

Recuento del 2022: momentos especiales en Jackson Heights

Mientras el país pedía el regreso a la normalidad, algunos eventos representaron momentos especiales este año en el vecindario, entre ellos el regreso del Desfile del Orgullo Gay el 5 de junio con la celebración de su 30° aniversario; la llegada del Circo Bindlestiff el 3 de julio para entretener a la audiencia local; y la caminata por Jackson Heights con la pequeña Amal, una muñeca de 3.6 metros de la Compañía de títeres Handspring, que representa a una niña siria refugiada, cuyo nombre significa esperanza.

Tramposa respuesta del gobierno de la Ciudad de Nueva York a los "árboles encadenados" y otros problemas

POR LEN MANIACE

El 28 de marzo, el JHBG y la Asociación de la Calle 82 hicieron un recorrido por la Calle 82 y la Avenida 37 con cinco agencias de la Ciudad para hacer notar varios problemas, incluidos los vendedores ambulantes y las extensiones ilegales de los restaurantes en las calles, una de ellas construida alrededor de un árbol. Un mes después, buena parte del

equipamiento ilegal había sido retirado. Por tres semanas había pocos comerciantes, pero después regresaron incluso en mayor cantidad. El Departamento de Transporte no respondió a nuestros repetidos emails para saber si los restaurantes que había cometido violaciones fueron multados. A pesar de al menos un email al mes de parte del JHBG a todas las agencias involucradas en verificar los avances, éste fue el pobre resultado.

Los abejorros

POR DAVID WATSON

Si quieres que tus plantas nativas produzcan semillas viables y nuevas plantas, los abejorros son la opción. Desde el comienzo de la primavera hasta el verano y el otoño, algunas especies de abejorros viven en colonias sociales formadas por una abeja reina, abejas obreras hembras (las que se alimentan del néctar y lo llevan a la reina) y abejas macho. Puedes ayudar asegurándote de que tu jardín provea los recursos para su reproducción y alimentación hasta la llegada del invierno. Deja la tierra suelta, el sotobosque de agujas de pino y los residuos de hojas; no los rastrilles. Estos parecen ser algunos elementos clave que los abejorros buscan. Mucha de esta información fue tomada de www.xerces.org.

Las historias de nuestras calles

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

Éste fue un año excepcional por sus tributos a los residentes notables del vecindario mediante el



co-nombramiento de algunas calles en su honor. Recordémoslos y veamos sus nombre como un llamado al servicio, que es el espíritu representativo de Jackson Heights: *Monti Castañeda Sánchez* (Monti Castañeda Corner, Calle 89 y Avenida 35, ceremonia realizada el 22 de mayo); *Peter Magnani* (Peter Magnani Way, Calle 81 y Avenida 34, ceremonia realizada el 18 de junio); *Joseph Ricevuto* (Joseph Ricevuto Way, Calle 86 y Avenida 37, ceremonia realizada el 25 de junio); *Steven Knobel* (Steven Knobel Way, Calle 76 y Avenida 37, ceremonia realizada el 10 de julio); y *Dr. Sergio Rubio* (Dr. Sergio Rubio Way, Calle 89 y Avenida 34, ceremonia realizada el 15 de octubre).

Mantén la calma y adelante con el compostaje

POR ASHLEY CRUCE

Por fin, todo Queens ha obtenido la recolección Curbside Organic del Departamento de Saneamiento de la Ciudad de Nueva York, que comenzó oficialmente el 3 de octubre. Queremos que este nuevo programa tenga éxito en el acopio de desechos de comida, hojas y desperdicios de jardines que, de otro modo, acabarían en el basurero. Es decepcionante que el programa termine en diciembre y vuelva a comenzar hasta finales de marzo o principios de abril. Sin

embargo, somos afortunados de tener otras opciones para continuar con el compostaje de comida en Jackson Heights durante todo el año: el sitio Comunitario de Compost **JH-SCRAPS** los sábados de 11:00 a. m. a 1:00 p. m. en la Calle 69 cerca de la Avenida 35 y el sitio de entrega de desperdicios de comida de **GrowNYC** en el Mercado de granjeros los domingos de 8:30 a. m. a 2:00 p. m. en la Calle 79 casi esquina con Northern Blvd.

Kiharu Nakamura, una Geisha japonesa

POR DAN KARATZAS

Una de las geishas más famosas del siglo xx vivió en Jackson Heights, donde murió a los 90 años en enero de 2004. Las geishas son una clase de mujeres japonesas artistas y animadoras, educadas en la tradición artística japonesa de la danza, la actuación, la música y el canto. Kiharu nació en Hokkaido en 1913, pero creció en Tokio. En su adolescencia se unió a la Asociación Shimbashi de Geishas. Finalmente, se casó y se mudó a India con su esposo diplomático, con quien tuvo un hijo. Más tarde se divorció y regresó a Japón en plena II Guerra Mundial. Después de su segundo divorcio a mediados de la década de 1950 y desalentada por el modo en que la reputación de la geisha había sido manchada por su equivocada asociación con la prostitución, Nakamura se mudó a los Estados Unidos. Durante sus años en Nueva York, fue considerada como experta en la tradición de las Geishas. Fue consultora para la Ópera Metropolitana en la producción de *Madama Butterfly* de Puccini y para algunas producciones

de Broadway, asimismo colaboró con Arthur Golden en su novela *Memorias de una geisha*. El documental *Smoke & Mirrors—A Geisha Story* fue lanzado en 2004. Pasó los últimos días de su vida en Jackson Heights.

Reverdezcamos Queens. ¿Demasiada ropa y muy poco espacio? Apoyemos ReFashionNYC

POR MELISSA ZAVALA

¿Qué podemos hacer con la ropa que ya no necesitamos? Ya que la Ciudad de Nueva York juega todavía un papel importante en la industria de la moda, reducir el desperdicio de ropa es una parte crítica en la disminución de desechos. Para hacerlo, DSNY se ha asociado con DonateNYC. Este servicio promueve la reducción de desechos como parte del programa ZeroWaste (cero desperdicios). La asociación también ha impulsado la iniciativa ReFashion Week, organizada alrededor de la Semana de la moda. El programa, que comenzó en 2011, ha desviado 12 200 toneladas de materiales. Los neoyorkinos ahora pueden solicitar un contenedor residencial para su recolección. Participar en el programa es fácil: llena el formulario y agenda una visita de un representante de DSNY, quién se reunirá con el personal del edificio para aprobar la petición antes de instalar el contenedor. Así, nada se desperdicia y una buena cantidad de los residuos son desviados de los basureros. ¿Qué soluciones verdes te gustaría promover? Envíanos un email a info@jhb.org o escríbenos por correo tradicional a **JHBG, PO Box 720253, Jackson Heights, NY 11372.**



NYC's Bumbling Response to Trees in Chains and Other Street Woes

BY LEN MANIACE

Stop me if you've heard this one before: How many city agencies does it take to remove tables, chairs, and other vending equipment illegally chained to trees and bike racks in Jackson Heights?

Answer: Five.

That's not very funny. On March 28, JHBG and the 82nd Street Partnership toured 82nd Street and 37th Avenue with city agencies to note many problems, including illegal street vending and illegal restaurant street sheds, one of them built around a street tree.

(Note: that's the second time we've mentioned trees. JHBG is big on trees. Trees are part of NYC's climate resilience plan because trees are Mother Nature's air conditioners. Chaining stuff to trees and wrapping tree branches with holiday lights that remain in place for years can weaken trees and even kill them.)

So why does it take five agencies to remove stuff chained to city property?

First, the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) deals with equipment chained to its property - bike racks, parking signs, light posts, etc.; street trees are not its responsibility, however. The Department of Parks and Recreation was there for that.

Next, the city's Department of Consumer Affairs and Worker Protection warned vendors to remove their equipment - or a fourth city agency, the Department of Sanitation, would cut the chains and

toss everything into a garbage truck. The Queens Borough President's Office oversaw the operation.

Now, I've read about multi-agency task forces bringing down international drug rings, but is that much coordination needed for such a routine matter? And would these agencies continue working together if the problems returned?

A month later, much of the equipment illegally chained to trees and elsewhere was gone, as were most of the holiday lights on trees. For three weekends there were fewer vendors.

Then the vendors returned in even greater numbers. Why does that matter? Vendors have taken up the front of P.S. 69, previously set up as school parents' flea markets to raise money for education, and also used by the Jackson Heights Arts Club's "On the Fence" art shows.

The illegal chaining of equipment also returned. And now joining the vendors are big businesses; cell-phone services and health insurance companies have set up sidewalk shops.

Three of four illegal restaurant sheds remained as this was being written in mid-October. The DOT told us it could not remove the sheds found to be in violation until October. It failed to answer repeated emails asking whether the offending restaurants were fined.

That poor performance resulted despite at-least-monthly emails by JHBG to all involved city agencies checking on progress. No, that's not very funny.

the stories our streets tell

BY MELISSA ZAVALA



Courtesy of Manuel Lacayo

This year was an exceptional one for tributes to distinctive neighborhood residents honored with co-named streets. The controversial powerbroker and visionary builder who left his fundamental imprint on the city and state, Robert Moses (1888-1981), hated requests for co-naming streets, saying about this practice in response to one request recorded in his archives, “The naming of public squares after individuals in most instances has little meaning to the residents of the neighborhood ...” (NYPL Robert Moses Collection, Box 99 Dept. of Parks, 1947-1953). But are streets honoring unique individuals truly meaningless to residents of neighborhoods, or do rebranded streets tell collective stories across generations? If residents’ names tell stories, what do our latest street names tell?

Monti Castañeda Sanchez

Monti Castañeda Corner, 89th Street and 35th Avenue (Ceremony held on May 22)

Raised in Jackson Heights by a single mother from Guatemala, Monti Castañeda earned two master’s degrees she funded herself. An advocate for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA recipients, as well as healthcare for seniors, she worked tirelessly mentoring young Latinas in the neighborhood and beyond. Working at AMERICARES before her passing, her work also had an international impact, combating poverty in Central America and providing emergency care to those stricken by disasters and living in crisis. Monti Castañeda was a gracious and energetic neighbor who supported the arts, especially that of underrepresented Latin artists. Her legacy lives on among our immigrant community.

Peter Magnani

Peter Magnani Way, 81st Street and 34th Avenue (Ceremony held on June 18)

Former Deputy Queens Borough President under the late Claire Shulman, Peter Magnani was a Corona native, an architect, and a true public servant. Magnani was a consistent “indispensable force for good”, according to former Councilmember Barry Grodenchik, who spoke at his street co-naming. Peter Magnani was also Director of Capital Projects for the Queens Public Library and had a hand in restoring the median along the whole stretch of 34th Avenue, which now more closely resembles the greenway he envisioned. He was remembered for his love of food and family, his warmth, and his tireless work on behalf of Jackson Heights and the borough at large.



Courtesy of Magnani family

Joseph Ricevuto

Joseph Ricevuto Way, 86th Street and 37th Avenue (Ceremony held on June 25)

Civic leader, war veteran, sociable organizer of the aging community of Jackson Heights, jolly clown in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, Joe Ricevuto was friend and neighbor to all. He was an active



member of the board of directors for JHBG, CB3, and St. Joan of Arc, bringing gardens and trees to the neighborhood, and organizing lively lunches for seniors before his passing last year. He is remembered fondly by friends and strangers alike considering Joe Ricevuto's tendency to talk to everyone on the street as though they were friends, offering candy to young children, and making everyone smile much as he did while entertaining them.

Steven Knobel

Steven Knobel Way, 76th Street and 37th Avenue (Ceremony held on July 10)

Long-time Jewish Center of Jackson Heights President and community supporter vis-à-vis his role in that position, Steve Knobel brought people together. He creatively managed to keep the doors to the Jewish Center open despite a waning congregation, offering it as a home to

other religious worshippers as well as neighborhood groups serving children, LGBTQ organizations, immigrants, and others. As former Councilmember Danny Dromm has said of Steve Knobel, he truly understood the meaning of community service. He also represented the core Jewish values of Tikkun Olan, Tzedakah, Chesed, and others, all of which sustain a sense of justice and call for an equal embrace of strangers through actions of radical generosity guided by a fundamental belief in human uniqueness and equality. He will be remembered by all for his dogged spirit and good humor before all odds.



Dr. Sergio Rubio

Dr. Sergio Rubio Way, 89th Street and 34th Avenue (Ceremony held on October 15)

A hard-working immigrant from Peru, Dr. Sergio Rubio served his community by providing veterinary care to the



Courtesy of Council Member Shekar Krishnan's office

neighborhood's mascots, often free of charge. Trained in Peru, he became licensed in the U.S. shortly after arriving here in 1970. After working as a house call veterinarian for some years, he opened a practice on Northern Boulevard near 89th Street, before moving his office to East Elmhurst, where he lived. He passed away on May 10, 2020. A humanitarian, he leaves behind his family, the many friends he provided care to, and those he counseled.

Despite its early history as an exclusive planned community, Jackson Heights has evolved into a rich tapestry of different groups, becoming a home to immigrants, sexual minorities, and others. The spirit of advocacy, civic engagement, and strong acceptance is certainly told by the lives of the individuals now memorialized in our streets. Let's remember them and see their names as a call to service, a spirit representative of Jackson Heights.

City Widens the Division Over the Open Street

BY LEN MANIACE



How are these two streets similar and how are they different?

One photo is of 78th Street between 34th and 35th Avenues, as a two-way street for several months after access at the north end was closed due to the Open Street. Parking on both sides of the street was outlawed because,

JHBG was told, the NYC Department of Transportation said the travel lanes would not be wide enough to meet city regulations. The DOT maintains even limiting parking to one side of the street would not work.

The other photo is of 64th Street, also between 34th and 35th Avenues, and it's been a two-way street for many years.



Parking here is allowed on both sides of this similar-sized street. Yes, you read that correctly; parking on both sides of this two-way street is allowed, despite the DOT's insistence that it must be banned on both sides on 78th Street.

JHBG supports the Open Street program and has consistently spoken out for

improvements there that will also make this community asset less divisive. Since the Open Street is already an imposition on drivers—justified given its benefits—it's hard to see why so much parking should be lost on a street that is not part of the Open Street. This is hardly a gesture to bridge the neighborhood divide that now exists here.

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Dogs Rescue Humans, So Spread the Love

BY GAIL SIEGEL

I've been a resident of Jackson Heights since 2002. In 2006, I got my first dog. My building didn't allow dogs, but I needed one for my well being. I found a two-and-a-half-year-old rescue from the streets of the Bronx, waiting for a home. No one wanted him as the man fostering him said he might never be housebroken. I never had a dog before, but I have two grown sons and thought I could handle a 13 lb. dog. I chose a poodle mix after a lot of research, thinking he would be an asset to my life at 60. Who knew that *he* would rescue *me*?

I started a new job at almost the same time. My boss was a good friend, and very brave. He took a chance on both of us, and my dog came to work with me on the subway for 14 years. He was much beloved by the customers and some even worked on their fear of dogs as he would sit near them and lean into their legs for comfort. My dog gave me the opportunity to learn how wonderful Jackson Heights is as we were greeted everywhere and made friends all over the neighborhood; many admired my dog. He brought joy wherever he went. Prescribing small pets to elderly people living alone or suggesting they might want to participate in the care of dogs or cats in their buildings, or on their blocks would be a win-win for all involved.



JACKSON HEIGHTS NOTABLES

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

Kiharu Nakamura

Japanese Geisha BY DANIEL KARATZAS

One of the 20th century's most famous geishas lived in Jackson Heights, where she died at age 90 in January of 2004. We likely passed her on the street in the 1990s and never realized she lived here.

Geishas are a class of female Japanese performing artists and entertainers. According to internet sources, geishas are trained in traditional Japanese performing arts styles ranging from dance, music and singing. They are talented hosts, conversationalists, and entertainers at parties called *ozashiki*, organized for wealthy clientele, as well as at festivals. They are recognizable for their trailing kimonos, traditional hairstyles, and *oshiroi* make-up.

Born in Hokkaido in 1913, her prosperous family moved to Tokyo. By her teens, she joined



the Shimbashi Geisha Association. Her decision to study and learn English brought her international attention while still living in Japan. She is said to have entertained such 20th century luminaries as Babe Ruth, Leopold Stokowski, William Randolph Hearst, and Charlie Chaplin. She eventually married, moved to India with her diplomat husband, and gave birth to a son. She later divorced him and moved back to Japan even as World War II was raging.

After her second divorce in the mid-1950s and

discouraged at how the reputation of the geisha had been sullied by the association of this tradition-bound profession with prostitution, Nakamura moved to the United States. During her years in New York, she was widely viewed as an expert on Geisha traditions. She consulted with the Metropolitan Opera on productions of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, on the Broadway productions of *Pacific Overtures* and *M. Butterfly*, and with Arthur Golden, for his novel, *Memoirs of a Geisha*. In 1983, she published her own memoir, *An Edo-ko Geisha*. It was a sensation in Japan and was made into a mini-series for Japanese television. This was followed by other memoirs and novels published in Japan.

In a 2004 documentary, *Smoke & Mirrors – A Geisha Story*, was released. It chronicled the friendship between filmmaker Artemis Will with a still beguiling Nakamura, then in her late 80s. A true international celebrity who flew under the radar of her neighbors, she spent her remaining years in Jackson Heights.

Let's Green Queens!

Want to do more to slow climate change? Here is another green tip to help the cause.

Too Many Clothes, Too Little Space? Let's ReFashionNYC

BY MELISSA ZAVALA

With the holidays around the corner, bringing gifts of clothes just after having rotated our seasonal outerwear leaving us with more clothes to store, what can we do to thin our closets responsibly? New Yorkers dispose of over 200,000 tons of textiles yearly, according to the Department of Sanitation of NY (DSNY; 2021 figures). With the city still a key player in the fashion industry, reducing clothing waste is a critical part of wasting less. To do this, DSNY has partnered with DonateNYC. This city service promotes waste reduction as part of the ZeroWaste program. It offers New Yorkers a directory of convenient places where unwanted items can be donated. This partnership has also spurred the ReFashion Week

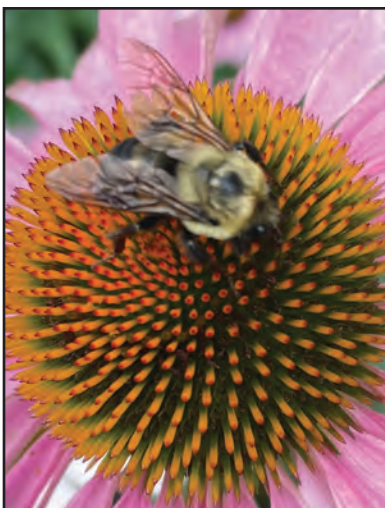
initiative, organized around Fashion Week to raise awareness of the vast amount of clothing waste produced yearly and what city residents can do to curtail it. Started in 2011, the program has diverted 12,200 tons of materials. New Yorkers can now request a collection bin for residential, as well as school and office buildings (with support from school communities and building owners). Participation in the program is easy: fill out a request form to schedule a visit from DSNY representatives who will meet with building staff to approve the request before bins are installed. Materials are sorted in the warehouse of the agency Housing Works, which allocates goods to their 10 thrift shops around the city, sells items online, or sends materials to nonprofit

second-hand stores, recycling still others. Nothing is wasted and a significant waste stream is diverted away from landfills, making a real difference on the amount of rubbish entombed underground.



Small bins are the size of a refrigerator, while large bins are just under twice that size. Consider organizing your residential or community buildings to support this important but little-known program! Our local Green Market on Sundays used to offer a pick-up site operated by Wearable Collections, a non-profit organization operating similarly to ReFashionNYC, but that company left some years ago. Let's organize to grow the 1,300 buildings in total housing these useful bins and find new users for clothes we no longer wear.

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**. Link for DSNY Request page: www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/donate-goods/refashion-nyc



Bumble Bees

BY DAVID WATSON

If you want your native plants to produce viable seeds and new plants, bumble bees are your ticket. Early in the spring through summer and into fall, some species of bumble bees live in social colonies made up of a queen bee, female worker bees (which you see feeding on nectar and bringing it to the queen), and male mating bees.

Bumble bees typically nest in pre-existing cavities like rock piles, empty mouse burrows, and under layers of dense vegetation. The queen will construct a few waxen

pots, fill them with nectar and pollen, and proceed to lay her eggs on top.

As summer wanes and mating (by the male bees and the queen) is complete, the male bees die off. Late fall is a critical time of year for new queen bumble bees; they need enough flowering resources near their nest to build up fat reserves before heading into winter. Ensuring that your garden beds provide these resources is another opportunity for you to help.

Leave loose soil, pine needle duff, and leaf litter; do not rake it up.

These also seem to be key features they seek out.

Once she finds a good, winter location underground, a new queen will drop her metabolic rate to conserve energy and produce an antifreeze-like chemical to withstand cold temperatures. Then, upon receiving cues from the environment that spring has arrived, the new queen will emerge, begin anew, and the cycle will repeat itself.

Much of this information is gathered from Xerces information on bumble bees: www.xerces.org.



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VIEWS FROM THE HEIGHTS – Winter 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 info@JHBG.org.

Daily

JH-CREW dog run

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

To join, go to info@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:

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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.

Please check membership level:

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info@JHBG.org.