

Editorial

Gazette's 25th Anniversary Issue Is On The Way

The start of a new year always has special meaning—new laws taking effect, new lawmakers being sworn in and resolutions galore being made.

The Year 2007 has very special meaning for the *Queens Gazette*. This newspaper will celebrate its 25th birthday this year, a major milestone for this community-oriented weekly publication.

As part of celebrating this important event—the original publication date was Jan. 26 1982—we also are planning to publish a 25th anniversary edition in the spring.

As is the case with any publication, the early years are generally fraught with

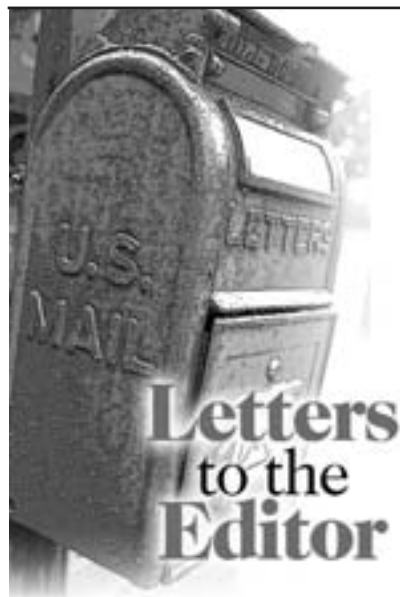
problems from day to day and week to week, but still our earliest readers in Astoria, Long Island City, Jackson Heights, Woodside, Sunnyside and Elmhurst supported our efforts and took us into their hearts as “their” newspaper. We’re proud to say we have continued to serve as their newspaper for all the ensuing years.

Our readers’ loyalty has also allowed us to grow steadily, to broaden our coverage and to expand to other parts of the borough from our original base in the Astoria/Long Island City area.

The anniversary issue will explore: who the newsmakers, the power brokers

and our leading citizens were in our first 25 years and the physical changes in our areas of coverage—new buildings and new business developments, those who have left us and a look at where we’re going.

Join us as we take a stroll down memory lane to revisit old friends and take another look at the major stories that filled our pages. Birthdays are a time to reflect on beginnings, on what’s going on in the world of our readers and to explore what the future might be. The past quarter-century will make our 25th anniversary issue entertaining and interesting. We look forward to presenting it to you, our readers.



Flyer Is False

To The Editor:

I am responding to a flyer left on cars parked in the municipal parking lot on 29th Street and Astoria Boulevard by someone too cowardly to attach their own name to it, which claims that “I am closing this parking lot on December 18”. Just for the record, the lot did not close on December 18. However, it will be closing temporarily on January 20, 2007, when construction for the 184-unit affordable senior housing complex and 68-space public parking lot commences. This project is part of the city’s New Housing Marketplace Plan, which involves the development of over 65,000 affordable housing units throughout the city.

The city has been reviewing all of its municipal lots for possible sale or development, with particular focus on those lots deemed underutilized. The Department of Transportation (DOT) determined that this lot was, in fact, underutilized and primarily accommodated “park and ride commuters”. When I found out that the city had its sights on the lot for either sale or development I immediately initiated a dialogue with them about its future. Keeping the needs of the community in mind, my office was instrumental in preventing any possible sale and negotiated with the city to build much needed affordable senior housing and a public parking lot on the site. I also worked with community leaders to incorporate additional public parking into the proposed project to meet the immediate area’s parking needs.

The lot will be closed during construction. However, the developer will make every effort

to keep a portion of it open to the public if it is safe to do so. In addition, I am currently working with DOT to determine whether changes should be made to existing parking regulations that would increase short-term parking and parking in general in the area, as well as the conversion of unused space beneath the Triborough Bridge between Crescent Street and 26th Street to a parking lot.

The flyer sarcastically claims that the proposed development of the municipal lot is akin to “...giving the citizens of Astoria a present that they will always remember me by”. The fact remains that this underutilized lot, which could have been sold to a private developer for any purpose, will soon become an affordable home for over 225 of our most important citizens—the elderly (50 percent of which will come from our district), while maintaining a substantial amount of public parking.

Despite the existence of these factually challenged leaflets, it is important to remember that the vast majority of the community understands the importance of this project and supports it. This project is a “gift”, not from me but from our entire community, to those who have given so much to many of us throughout the years, our senior citizens. It is only appropriate that we not allow this rare opportunity to provide affordable housing and relief to our elderly, as well as public parking, slip through our fingers.

Peter F. Vallone Jr.
Councilmember—22nd Council District

Bono Deserves Title

To The Editor:

I like to applaud her Majesty Queen Elizabeth for appointing the Irish Rocker Bono to be an honorary Knight Commander of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Here is a man that thought beyond his own worldly needs and desires, and has shown great concern for humanity and for those who suffer the most, like the children of man. He has campaigned tirelessly with a great deal of courage, a tenacious spirit and a commitment to alleviate the suffering in the world. He has seen first hand the extreme poverty and the diseases that have plagued Africa. He has seen the children that are dying from AIDS which is running out of control in many nations of Africa. I therefore believe Bono is the personification of what Jesus said in Matthew Chapter 25 verse 40, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” And to that I say, kudos, Sir Bono, for being a great humanitari-

an.
Sincerely Yours,
Frederick R. Bedell Jr.
Bellerose

News Enlivens, Enlightens

To The Editor:

Several news items that I either read in your Dec. 6, 2006 issue of the *Gazette* or heard on the radio, are worthy of sharing with you, the readers of the *Gazette*, and all of them are of a positive nature.

I was pleased to read in the pages of the *Gazette* that our Police Precinct in our area has chosen an officer of the month due to her good work and dedicated efforts and in the light of the negative press that many police officers have been given lately, this was really a positive news item. The idea of selecting an officer of the month motivates others to achieve the same, and in addition demonstrates to the public that police are doing their best to protect the health, safety and property and lives of others.

I applaud our Councilmember [Peter] Vallone [Jr.] for his tireless efforts in serving on committees concerning affordable housing in our area. New buildings are shooting up so quickly and unfortunately the rents are so high and it is my concern that families will not be able to move into our area due to these exorbitant rents that have to be paid. Affordable housing is not a luxury, but a necessity since shelter is a basic and very important human need necessary for survival.

I am also happy that I.S. 125 students are striving to plant gardens and are employing their abilities and talents constructively. [Editor’s Note: These were not planted gardens but painted panels named “Garden in Transit” for New York taxis.] I am a former graduate of that junior high school and am proud of those students who are role models for the youth of today and leaders of tomorrow.

Lastly, I am happy to learn through TV and radio media that by 2008 all restaurants will ban trans fat in food. Trans fat is dangerous, causing heart problems, losses in productivity, illness, untimely deaths and huge medical costs. Our health both today and tomorrow is precious and most valuable and must be protected.

Thus, again, positive has been accentuated in this letter, putting us all in the holiday spirit.

Cynthia Groopman
Long Island City

The Queens
Gazette

**PUBLISHED BY THE
SERVICE
ADVERTISING
GROUP INC.**



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Display Advertising Copy Deadline
Friday 5 p.m.

Camera Ready Deadline Monday 4 p.m.
Editorial Copy Deadline Friday 12 noon

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The Queens Gazette ISSN: 1547-3538 is published weekly on Wednesday for \$20 per year by Queens Gazette Newsprinting Service Advertising Group Inc. 42-16 34th Avenue. Long Island City, N.Y. 11101. Periodical postage paid at Long Island City. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Queens Gazette 42-16 34th Avenue Long Island City N.Y. 11101.

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