

## Vallone Wants More Blue And Gold Amid Flushing Meadows' Green Acres

BY JOHN TOSCANO

After a recent report showing that criminal activity in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park remained the second highest in New York City, City Councilmember Peter Vallone Jr. called on the New York City Police Department to add a permanent police presence in Queens' largest outdoor facility.

In making the request, Vallone (D–Astoria) stated: “The NYPD is stretched to the limits, but we need to ensure that our officers are where they can do the most good.”

Vallone, chair of the council Public Safety Committee, added: “Flushing Meadows–Corona Park is a valuable asset to Queens, but our residents must feel safe in order to use it. Although crime is at an all-time low, we can always be doing more to keep New Yorkers safer.”

Vallone said park crime statistics for the third quarter showed there were 21 crimes committed in the park in both the second and third quarters of this year, which was an increase of two and five crimes, respectively, from the corresponding quarters last year.

The only park in New York City with a higher crime rate than Flushing Meadows–Corona Park is Central Park in Manhattan.

Vallone said that for the first three quarters of 2007, ending September 10, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park had a total of 43 crimes, only one of which was reported during the first quarter because of the low park usage from January through March.

The third quarter total of 43 crimes compared to about 90 crimes in Central Park during the same period, Vallone noted. The city park with the next closest number of crimes was Prospect Park in Brooklyn, which had 27 crimes in the third quarter, Vallone said.

Vallone and other public figures in Queens for a long time have called for a greater police presence in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. These requests have varied from a new police precinct to cover the park area to a mobile command center to added patrols.

The NYPD in its responses has noted that crime statistics from the park were an aberration caused by one particular set of thugs during a crime spree last fall and winter, Vallone pointed out.

But, he said, crime figures covering the first three quarters of this year confirm that there is a continuing need for more officers to stop more crimes from occurring.

“People go to the park for peace and



Vallone (D–Astoria) stated: “The NYPD is stretched to the limits, but we need to ensure that our officers are where they can do the most good.”

solitude, and that is both their greatest advantage and their greatest danger,” Vallone said. “We want people to be able to wander the city’s wonderful green areas, but still see enough blue and gold to feel safe.”

—John Toscano

## Global Warming?

Homeowners fretting over the cost of heating oil may get a break this year from “Ol’ Man Winter”.

The chief long-range forecaster for AccuWeather, Joe Bastardi, predicted last week that the Big Apple is in for a mild winter like those experienced in 2001 and 2002 with average temperatures of 39.3 degrees this winter—4 degrees above normal.

Bastardi has also predicted a colder than normal December, followed by milder temperatures from January until March or April, when New Yorkers could see an early spring. He said the effects of La Niña would bring cooler temperatures in the Pacific Ocean and could bring warmer weather to the Northeast.

That’s good news for landlords and homeowners who are facing heating oil prices that are expected to skyrocket 7 to 20 percent this winter, compared with 2006 prices.—Liz Goff

## Auditions For ‘City At Peace’ Art Program

City at Peace is a performing arts program that helps to empower teens, 13 to 19, to transform their lives and improve their communities through performing an original musical based on their life and how they’ve helped improve their communities. Auditions are being held now to June 28, 2008 from 11 a.m. (sharp) to 1 p.m. at Queens Borough Hall, Room 213, 120-55 Queens Blvd. in Kew Gardens. For an appointment or information, call 212-924-9204 or go to [nyc@cpnational.org](mailto:nyc@cpnational.org).

## Gioia, ERDA Give Turkeys To Public Housing Residents



As they have for the fifth consecutive year, City Councilmember Eric Gioia and Queensbridge Tenants Association President Nina Adams gave away turkeys donated by Fresh Direct to residents of Queensbridge Houses, the largest public

housing development in the country.

For the fifth year in a row, City Councilmember Eric Gioia, Bishop Mitchell G. Taylor, president of the East River Development Alliance (ERDA), and Fresh Direct gave away hundreds of turkeys to public housing residents in the Woodside, Ravenswood, Astoria and Queensbridge Houses. The project marks another success for the dynamic public/private partnership that has emerged to spur revitalization and improve lives in Western Queens.

“Thanksgiving is America’s oldest tradition,” Gioia, who represents Woodside, Sunnyside, Long Island City, Astoria and Maspeth in the New York City Council, said. “As we celebrate and give thanks this week, we also reflect on what we can do to make a difference. Today, we come together as a city and a family to provide public housing residents with a little something that could mean a whole lot.”

The turkey giveaway was coordinated by ERDA, a community based organization in Long Island City working to connect public housing residents to economic opportunities and basic resources. “This is a model partnership that shows what can happen when government, business, and community come together to lift the spirit of a neighborhood,” Taylor said. The turkeys were donated by Fresh Direct, an online grocer with headquarters blocks away from Queensbridge in Long Island City.

Joining Gioia and Taylor was Nina Adams, president of the Queensbridge Tenants Association. “It’s just great to have partners like Councilman Eric Gioia and ERDA,” Adams said. “Our neighborhood continues to get better and better, and it goes to show that when people come together, great things can happen.”

## News Of The Neighborhoods

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

### SJU Aids Military Families

Officials at St. John’s University (SJU) last week announced a program designed to help military personnel and their families adjust to troop deployment in the Middle East. The program will help military personnel and their families adjust to stress and the psychological impact of deployment, Richard Morrissey, director of the St. John’s Center for Psychological Services, said.

Morrissey said the program is designed to assist soldiers and their families as they face issues and stress before, during and after deployment. “We are especially interested in reaching reservists and members of the National Guard who are not covered under the Veteran’s Administration.”

He said he expects the program will serve dozens of individuals, including those serving, returning or who have returned from Iraq as well as veterans of Desert Storm. Counseling is free and will be provided by 35 graduate students at the St. John’s Psychology Department—all of whom are trained to perform confidential assessments and assistance. All counseling will be supervised by personnel at the Center for Psychological Services, located at 152-11 Union Tpke.

For information, or to register, call 718-990-1900. The center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Lawmakers Call For Storm Aid

Queens Assemblymember Jose Peralta and City Councilmember Hiram Monserrate are sending out an urgent call to New Yorkers to help the victims of Tropical Storm Noel, which caused untold damage in the Dominican Republic on October 29.

Noel, dubbed the deadliest storm of 2007, hit the Dominican Republic with devastating conse-

quences, leaving thousands of people homeless, Peralta said. Hundreds more are still missing and feared dead as a result of the storm.

Donations of water, rice, beans, cooking oil, powdered milk, canned goods, cereals, medicines, blankets, sheets, mosquito netting, cots, clothing and shoes may be dropped off at a trailer located at 104th Street and Roosevelt Avenue in Corona.

Donations can also be sent to: Help For Victims of Tropical Storm Noel RD, c/o Hispanic Federation, 55 Exchange Place, 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10005. All donations should be marked for account number 680-269-8299. Financial aid should be made in the form of a check or money order.

For more information call 718-458-5367 or 718-205-3881.

### Blue And Gold Ball In February

Don’t forget the date, Feb. 2, 2008, when officials at the 115th Precinct Community Council will be holding their annual “Blue And Gold Ball”.

Honorees at the formal event will include the executive board of the 115th Precinct Community Council, officials said. Council members will also take time out at the gala to honor 115th Precinct Commanding Officer Deputy Inspector Douglas Rolston and Executive Officer, Captain Christopher Tamola as their “Cops Of The Year”.

Everyone is welcome to attend the ball at Bruno’s on the Boulevard, 88-25 Astoria Blvd., East Elmhurst, from 7 to 11 p.m. on February 2. (Look for a reminder in the *Gazette* Calendar sometime in January ’08.)

For information, or to purchase tickets to the affair, or to place a message or advertisement in the Community Council Journal call Lillian Kowalsky at 718-672-9194.