

Get into a conversation with a long-time Queens resident and you're likely to discover a subscriber of the *Long Island Star-Journal*, a daily paper that informed the community about local and world news until it folded in 1968. A banner across the *Star-Journal* masthead reminded readers that the newspaper's name came from the merger of the *Long Island Daily Star* (1876) and the *North Shore Daily Journal-The Flushing Journal* (1841).

Welcome to October 1940!

Justice Thomas Cuff added a baseball reporting service to the attractions of Queens Supreme Court. During trial of a dull accident suit, Judge Cuff kept jurors, litigants, and lawyers awake by periodically announcing the score of the Cincinnati-Detroit World Series game.

The judge got his information from his secretary, Daniel Bergen, who had access to a radio in chambers. Four times Bergen came out of chambers to inform Judge Cuff how the game was going. The judge in turn relayed the information to the jurors, lawyer, and litigants. All concerned appeared pleased with the information. When Judge Cuff finally announced that Cincinnati had won by a score of 5 to 3, smiles appeared on several faces while others seemed dejected.

The jury was dismissed at the end of the day without the need for deliberation when the parties agreed to an out of court settlement.

On October 15, the papers reported that if President Franklin D. Roosevelt were elected for a third term, Queens would be without a borough president. George Harvey, Queens Borough President, suggested at a Republican rally in Connecticut that the American public should head to Canada if Republican presidential candidate Wendell Wilkie were not elected. He went on to state that concentration camps "will blossom throughout the country" and

New Deal opponents would be incarcerated. He went on to compare the WPA to "the forced labor camps of Germany and Russia".

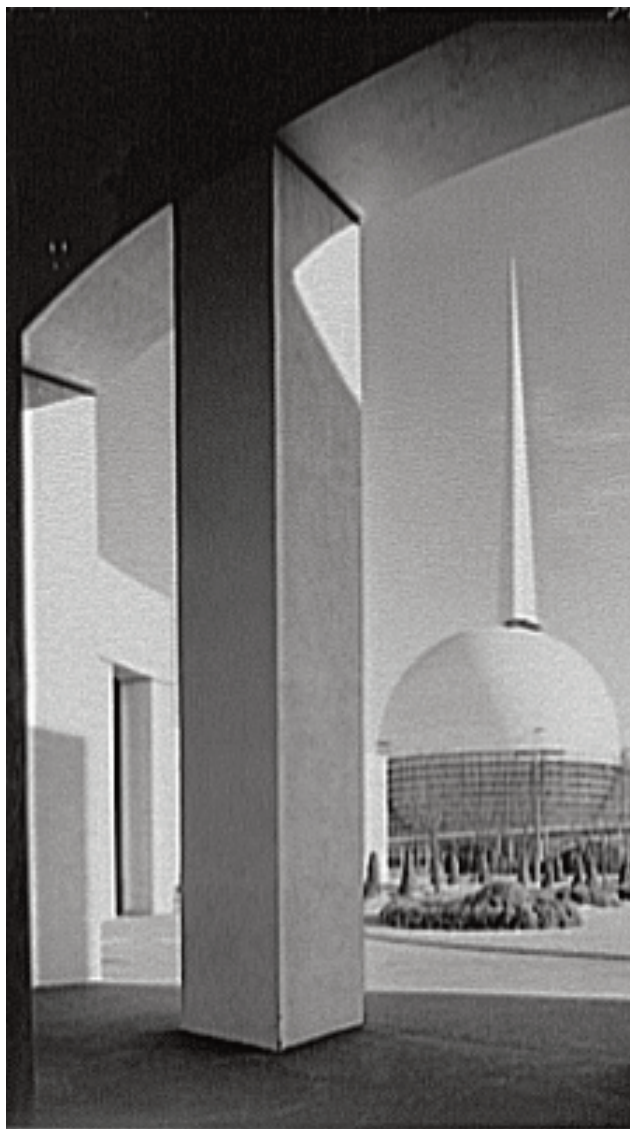
This was not the first time the borough president threatened to move. Four years before, in 1936, he threatened to move "to the Untied [sic] States"—Maine or Vermont to be precise—the only two states to vote for the Republican candidate, Alf Landon.

A few days later, at the annual Queens Conference of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, Harvey charged "Fifth Columnists" were undermining "national



unity". He continued that the republic has to be afraid of "mamby-pamby school and college-trained youth". Harvey believed that American ideals were undermined for a variety of reasons, from taking the Bible out of schools, "besmirching" national heroes like George Washington and "weak minded" ministers to the taking over of labor unions. City University was a special target for his anger: "It took the Board of Estimate two years to erect a flagpole on its campus."

Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia was "drummed out" of the Republican Party by County Republican Leader Warren Ashmead of Jamaica. "Even if I stand alone, Mayor LaGuardia will not get the Republican endorsement for another term as mayor in 1941," Ashmead declared as he lashed out at the mayor for taking the stump for the New Deal. "I was right in 1937 when I told the other



Judge Doubles As Sports Reporter In October '40

1939 World's Fair. President Franklin Roosevelt. Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia

Republican leaders not to endorse him because I knew of certain private commitments he made. But he denied them and promised all the leaders that he would not take a stand in the national elections. But he broke that promise and I tell you that he is not getting the Republican nomination in 1941, even if I have to fight the battle by myself. Next year we need to nominate a real 100% Republican for mayor of our great city."

On October 21, the World's Fair began its closing week and the curtains began to draw closed on the borough's two-year stand as the ranking showplace of the world. The papers listed the advantages to the borough from the fair: the Corona dumps were eliminated, the great international publicity to the borough from exhibits of 61 nations and 45 million paying visitors, an impetus that might have taken decades to boost the highway and transit system, and

the refurbishing of the borough as businesses and homeowners alike put on an attractive picture for the millions of guests. It was widely hailed as the most spectacular show in history.

Queens enrolled 101,000 men in five hours as part of the nation's first peacetime conscription registration. The borough had half of its anticipated 210,000 men between the ages of 21 and 36 enrolled shortly after noon. In New York City alone, about 1.2 million were expected to register. President Roosevelt, in an unprecedented 8 a.m. radio speech to the American public—an hour after draft boards opened—told Americans that their cause is to protect democracy and peace against those "who have dared to threaten the whole world with war. To the 16 million young men who registered, your action affirms not only your loyalty to your countrymen, but your will to build your future for yourselves".

On October 12, the *Star* profiled the story of a Queens farmer, father of 18, who won a battle with authorities to keep livestock. A raiding party of 15, including six agents of the ASPCA and one for the Children's Society visited John August's barnyard at 149th Street and 152nd Avenue on the edge of the Jamaica Bay marsh. Officials counted 30 goats, a like number of ducks and several dozen other animals. The veteran stood his ground, "All my life I've had but one ambition, to earn a living and be let alone. I don't ask for charity. There are lots of animals here but I



like them and they help support my family. The goats give me milk, the best for growing kids. Ducks and chickens give me eggs and meat. The horses I need when my truck breaks down, and the pigs I will butcher this fall. The opossum, dogs and rabbits are my kids' pets." August, a rugged individualist if there ever was one, explained that he earned money by collecting crates and packing boxes from stores, repairing them and reselling them for five cents to truck farmers. He also gathered kindling that he sold to the neighborhood for two cents a box.

He spoke proudly of his children, 12 by his first wife, and six by his second. One, born five years before, was named for President Roosevelt. The youngster drowned at age two in one of the open sewers that bisected the marshland. When the next baby came, he, too, was named Franklin Delano Roosevelt August.

They lived in a five-room house a block from the barnyard. "There's no lath or plaster on the wall," August said, "and it's a little drafty, but we make out all right."

His visitors eventually withdrew, convinced that while August's barnyard might not be a model, he certainly had earned the right to be let alone.

That's the way it was in October 1940!

On Monday, November 3, at 6:30 p.m., the Greater Astoria Historical Society is hosting a lecture on "The Irish American Athletic Association of Celtic Park" at GAHS headquarters in the Quinn Memorial Building, 35-29 Broadway, Long Island City.

Not only does Ian McGowan, guest speaker, live and breathe the research he does on his topic, he also calls Celtic Park, the housing development built on the site of the former athletic complex, home. His research has uncovered the special part both club and park played in the history of the Irish in New York City. A true history detective, McGowan unearthed a treasure trove of medals and awards won by IAAAC athletes that had been lost for more than 70 years. That story and many others, including anti-Irish sentiment and especially the 1908 Olympics, will be a part of McGowan's PowerPoint presentation.

For the past three years, McGowan has worked as an archivist in the CUNY Institute for Irish American Studies, Center for the Preservation of Irish American Publications at Lehman College, where he was engaged in digitizing Irish studies material. He is working on his master's degree at CCNY, where he is studying the Irish Diaspora in Latin America. He is currently collaborating with the Greater Astoria Historical Society on a monograph on the IAAAC and Celtic Park.

For more information, contact the Greater Astoria Historical Society at 718-278-0700 or visit www.astorialic.org.