

Editorial

Hospitals Help Queens Rank Among Top Places To Live

At the turn of the last century, the average person could expect to live to about 45 years of age. Back then, infectious diseases regularly raced unchecked by any means save quarantine through the population. Surgery was something dreaded, to be avoided at all costs. Doctors could do little more than hold their patients' hands. A century ago, few people who entered a hospital as patients expected to leave under their own power. Hospitals were places where the very ill went to die.

Advances in the field of health care would leave us open-mouthed with astonishment—if we paused to consider them, rather than taking them for granted. Today treatments, medications and lifestyles have advanced the average life span to

more than 70 years of age—in some cases, closer to 80. That's an average. This newspaper regularly carries reports of people well into their 90s and in some cases having reached the century mark. (Judging by the photographs we receive with the stories, most of these people look pretty good, too. We salute them.)

Health care and attitudes toward the concept have changed radically in the past 100 years. One such change, a notable one, is the general feeling toward hospitals. They are not regarded as hotels, nor should they be, but neither are they feared and dreaded. Having a hospital in a neighborhood is good for the hospital, the neighborhood and the people who live in the hospital catchment area and avail

themselves of its services. Queens has some of the best of such institutions within its borders. Happily there is no area of the borough that is truly isolated from health care. Easy access to care and to education and prevention as well marks Queens as a premier place to live and work.

Throughout this borough, high-quality health care is available to all. We salute our hospitals and the dedicated doctors, nurses and ancillary personnel who staff them. Our hospitals, as do our houses of worship, schools and cultural institutions of all sorts, provide one more reason for those of us who live and work in Queens to take pride in our borough and ourselves.

our oil and gas crisis and we can do it only if we get the government off the backs of the big, and especially the small, oil companies and let them drill where they want. Private enterprise in the oil industry is the answer and it always has been. Government restrictions stopping oil drilling and production have caused the present gas crisis, not the oil companies. We have hundreds of years' supply of American oil and gas in our country and we should develop it now. Our oil companies are not allowed to drill off our coasts but Communist China and Cuba reportedly are allowed to drill off our shores in the Gulf of Mexico and we shouldn't allow it.

We should go to JBS.org and search: "gas gone wild" to see Congressman Ron Paul's bill H.R. 2415, the "Affordable Gas Price Act" that will get oil production going again in our country big time and bring down the price of oil, natural gas and gasoline. This is critical to our everyday life and national security. We should contact our congressmen and demand they co-sponsor and support Congressman Paul's H.R. 2415 "Affordable Gas Price Act" immediately to restore oil production now.

Sincerely,
Ed Nemechek
Landers, California

Let Us Pray

To The Editor:

I would like to bring up this subject that gives me a great deal of concern and whether we should bring prayer back to public schools. First of all in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that religious instruction in public schools was unconstitutional. In 1963 it ruled that mandatory reading of Bible verses or prayers are similarly unconstitutional. Now I believe the Supreme Court was wrong and made a mistake in those decisions.

The First Amendment in part states, "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." By prohibiting children permission to pray, I believe is in violation of this amendment. Now look at this in this way and that prohibiting prayer and yet allowing religious clothing and jewelry. Is that not a violation of church and state? I believe religious freedom is where you have the right to pray anywhere and at anytime that does not interfere with educational studies. Since this ruling, there has been an increase in crime, venereal dis-

ease, premarital sex, illiteracy, suicide, drug use, public corruption and social ills, added to that there has been an increase in school killings and teenage pregnancy.

In my opinion prayer should be allowed back in school on a voluntary basis. There are many different religions and I think a neutral prayer might be in order. I think one that acknowledges a creator or a supreme being that would help children with their many difficulties in the course of their day and help them navigate their day.

One such prayer, might be one called, "The Serenity Prayer"—God give me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and [the] wisdom to know the difference." We need to bring back prayer and need to take this back to the Supreme Court and convince them to change the decision of 1963 to reflect what our founding fathers really meant with the separation of church and state and that was not to deny his existence nor to prohibit prayer.

Frederick R. Bedell Jr.
Glen Oaks Village

Many Thoughts

To The Editor:

Here I am again ready to share my comments and opinions on a variety of different subjects that were either heard on the radio or presented in the pages of the *Gazette*.

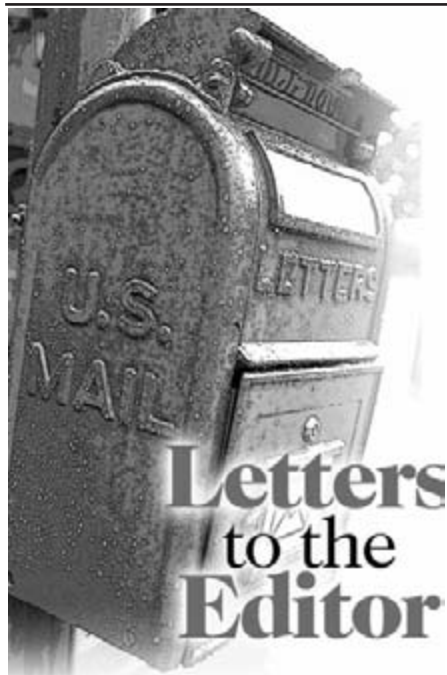
I am dismayed and angered at the fact that diplomats owe so much money, millions of dollars in fines for parking tickets and for property taxes. We, the ordinary citizens and residents of NYC, are obligated to obey the rules.

These diplomats are taking advantage and are costing the city millions of dollars in unpaid taxes and fines.

Everyone is supposed to be treated equally. What happened to this idea in the distribution of payments and fines and payments for tickets?

Also, I heard that many MTA big whigs travel in gas guzzling limos to and from work, paid by the government of course, and here the MTA is going to raise fares. Again the ordinary hardworking citizens and residents and students and senior citizens have to pay more money to the MTA who claims that there is a deficit, while their big shots travel in style and in comfort at our expense. Where is the equality and justice for all?

Diplomats and MTA heads are human beings and subject to equal treatment under the law. It



Wants Bike Lanes

To The Editor:

In response to Al Volpe's letter to the editor [*Gazette*, July 2, 2008], I want to chime in on the side of the bike lanes. Not only do they enhance the safety of our community in Sunnyside, but in terms of the future of transportation, it is very progressive to think of the bike riders, and, perhaps, encourage more bike riding. As gas prices soar (and I don't think they've hit a ceiling yet), more and more alternative forms of transportation, including bike riding, will become popular.

As to the safety issue, personally, I have almost been struck by cars crossing both Skillman and 43rd Avenue at least four times. Each time, I was crossing with the light, and was in the right of way. The last time, the car came within 4 inches of hitting me. It is not only the reported injuries to consider, but the unreported and the near misses.

My hope is that local politicians and the city do not cave in to this regressive thinking demonstrated by Mr. Volpe's letter to you.

Sincerely,
Teresa Ward
Sunnyside

Let Oil Companies Drill

To The Editor:

Drill for American oil now! as Chuck Norris (of "Walker, Texas Ranger" fame) is demanding, and leave the oil companies alone, is the answer to

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