



# Back In THE BRONX

CELEBRATING THE EXPERIENCE OF GROWING UP AND LIVING IN THE BRONX

## Poe Park, Coming of Age

By Carol Aaron, morris3h@aol.com

When I was growing up in The Bronx, the go-to place to socialize in the summer was **Poe Park**. Located a short bus ride, or long walk, away from my apartment, it was a mecca for teens, who congregated there to listen to music and meet and greet.

Edgar Allan Poe spent the last years of his life, from 1846 to 1849, in The Bronx living in what became **Poe Cottage**, a museum of sorts. A small wooden farmhouse, built about 1812, the cottage once commanded an unobstructed view over the rolling Bronx hills. It was a bucolic setting, in which the author penned his most enduring works, including *Annabel Lee*, *The Bells*, and *Eureka*.

In April, 1844, Poe and his wife Virginia moved to The Bronx. Virginia was ill, and Poe hoped that the country air would rescue her failing health. Unfortunately, she died of tuberculosis in January of 1847. Poe himself died two years later under mysterious circumstances in Baltimore, Maryland.

The cottage, no longer in the country, was set on the outskirts of the park, an oasis of greenery in a very urban location, surrounded by stores and apartment buildings. A bandstand was set up in the middle of **Poe Park**, where on Wednesday nights in summer, a band played the



Poe Park Gazebo

popular songs of the sixties. Sometimes, a group of us would visit Poe's house, and then eagerly make our way towards the bandstand.

Circling the grassy area containing the bandstand was a concrete path, filled with park benches. Elderly neighborhood ladies, wearing coats despite the warmth and clutching vinyl handbags, and sometimes older men, would perch on these benches, regularly commenting on the youth parading in front of them. Many of these folks were hard of hearing and their comments could be overheard.

"Isn't she sweet? Hope that cute guy in the red shirt goes for her."

"That one over there looks just like Elizabeth Taylor."

A lady replied with a sniff and toss of her head, "That one, that Elizabeth Taylor. She stole Eddie Fisher right out from under the nose of Debby Reynolds," she stated, commenting on the headlines of those days. Those types of remarks made me smile.

Hollywood divorces were a good topic for gossip in the early sixties.

Looking at a passing girl, another lady would comment loudly. (She too was hard of hearing.) "Her skirt is too tight. How could her mother let her out of the house like that?" These voyeurs were



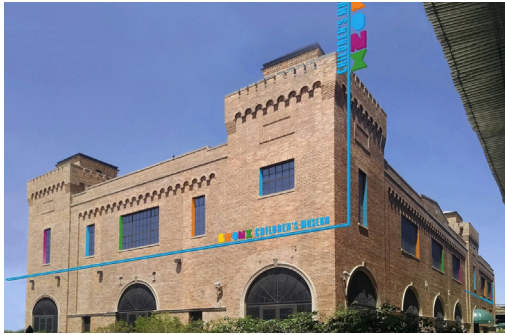
Poe Cottage

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# From The Editors . . .



Clinton '61 Taft '62



**Bronx Children's Museum, exterior**

Bronx Children's Museum, exterior and adults in the arts and sciences, using its bus as a roving learning environment. The Museum also has temporary exhibits and ongoing after-school and summer programming throughout the borough at community-based organizations, schools, shelters, libraries, local festivals, and parks. The Museum will serve nearly 75,000 children each year and will feature bright, open exhibit spaces; age-appropriate permanent and temporary interactive exhibits exploring the richness of The Bronx in the arts, culture, community, natural resources, greening, and energy; flexible studio space for community gatherings and meetings; and offices for Bronx Children Museum staff.

To give the children of The Bronx a fun portal to playful learning, the Bronx Children Museum will open its doors in late 2021. The Museum is one of few cultural institutions in The Bronx geared toward young children, especially those children and families who cannot afford (or would not normally visit) a museum. The Bronx has 1.3 million residents. It is larger than Boston, has 250,000 children under the age of nine years, and is the only borough in New York City without a children's museum facility.

Currently a "museum without walls", BxCM serves almost 18,000 Bronx residents annually. Through innovative mobile programming, BxCM engages children



**Bronx Children's Museum, interior**

A major renovation project at a New York City landmark which was halted due to the coronavirus pandemic is back on. The plan includes restoring history while investing in the future of the beach at Pelham Bay Park. The sun has been shining over Orchard Beach, The Bronx's only public beach, which environmental leaders who studied the water quality in 204 beaches along the Long Island Sound have listed in the top 10. But opposite the view of the Long Island Sound is a bit of an eyesore. The deteriorating pavilion has been mostly closed to the public for years. A restoration has been the mission of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., who grew up going to the beach, the so-called "Bronx Riviera". He has been trying to restore this piece of area history, which was built in the 1930s, but it took years to raise the \$75 million needed.



**Orchard Beach Pavilion**

Diaz has allocated nearly \$25 million of capital funding into this project, for which the city's Parks Department and Economic Development Corporation are partnering. After a pause due to COVID-19, and time spent getting approval from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (the site was designated a city landmark in 2006), the designers, Marvel Architects, can now move forward. Changes include ramps for easy access to the beach, and also the return of concessions. Diaz said he pictures stores, an event space, and restaurants to bring people to the beach year-round. Construction is set to start next spring and take about two years, so expect to see the entire vision come to life in 2024.

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A number of the photographs in Back In THE BRONX are courtesy of and available from the Bronx Historical Society.

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# Weatherproof Halloween

By Ann S. Epstein, [annsepstein@att.net](mailto:annsepstein@att.net)

The brick apartment building where I grew up in the 1950s was typical of the **Norwood** section of The Bronx. We lived at **3405 Putnam Place**. Our neighborhood was populated by immigrants and their descendants, primarily Eastern European and Russian Jews, and Irish and Italian Catholics. The emphasis was on assimilation; that is, slipping into the mainstream of American life. For Jewish kids like me, that included celebrating Halloween and going trick-or-treating. We were ignorant of its Christian origins. To us, Halloween was as American as Thanksgiving, the other American fall holiday that didn't entail foreign rituals, spicy foods, or a language that the adults spoke when they didn't want their children and grandchildren to understand what they were saying.

Decades later, when I watched the movie *E.T.*, listened to forecasts, or worried about my daughter (and now my grandsons) traversing our Midwestern neighborhood on Halloween, I marveled that concerns about safety and the weather played no part in my Bronx childhood. With six floors, and eleven apartments per floor, there were plenty of doors for us to knock on without stepping outside. Moreover, we traveled in secure packs. Fourteen elementary-aged children lived in the building. So, just as there was always at least one kid around to play with, there was always a group to trick-or-treat with. This situation was especially fortunate because our short street, **Putnam Place**, had few other options for importuning people to give us a treat.

North of our building were the stores lining **Gun Hill Road**. The corner drugstore was owned by the father of my sixth-floor friends. In our otherwise working-class neighborhood, my mother spoke of this

man with reverence as a "pharmacist", although she complained about his prices. The candy stores that anchored the other three corners all sold more than candy, and we frequented each for different reasons. I didn't visit the one on the northeast corner until I bought my first pack of cigarettes, Newport Menthol,

despite being well below the then-legal age of 17.

The store on the northwest corner was good for emergency school supplies like Eberhard Faber Erasers. But our go-to store, on the southwest corner, was **Lapin's**, the source of mint chocolate chip ice cream cones with chocolate sprinkles, thick and salt-coated Rold Gold pretzels which our grimy hands pulled from a jar, and

pastel-colored sugar dots on a paper strip whose residual backing stuck to our tongues. **Lapin's** also sold the new Spalding pink rubber balls, whose high bounce our motor reflexes had to adjust to after weeks of using our half-dead old ones.

On the other side of **Gun Hill Road** was **Sam's Appetizing**, which reeked of lox, herring, and whole smoked white fish with bulging eyes, and where we fished in a barrel for five-cent pickles. **Harry's Shoes** was where our mothers took us for sturdy footwear before we became style-conscious and upgraded to the children's shoe department at **Alexander's** on **Fordham Road**.

Our side of the main drag was home to the green grocer, whose produce we supplemented with goods from Charlie's wooden cart, whose bedraggled horse made its weary rounds from spring to fall. The deli, owned by another Sam, sold the stuffed potato knishes I much preferred to pickles as an after-school snack when I could afford them. In the middle of the long block was Dave the butcher, who was the father of my



**3405 Putnam Place**

# Reminiscing

classmate (who served steak at her birthday party!) and whose assistant, Benny, saved the *Jewish Daily Forward* for my grandmother, who lived with us, and delivered the used paper, slightly blood-stained, along with the brisket.

South of our building was **Reservoir Oval**, a.k.a. “the Oval,” where we played hopscotch and rode our bikes around the street-level tier, and either took the stairs or trail-blazed down the hill of forsythia bushes to the playground below. In a secluded “grown-up” area, old men played chess, but invited us to watch and tried to explain the rules. The park’s only off-limits spots were the water fountain and wading pool, where polio threatened in the days before the Salk vaccine.

Across from our apartment building, on the east side of the street, was a rundown single-family house, rumored to be inhabited by our Bronx equivalent of Boo Radley. We called him “Barky.” He was said to have a wife and son, but I don’t remember a student at **P.S. 94** identified as “Barky’s kid”, nor do I recall every seeing Barky or his spouse. For all I know, the house had been abandoned years earlier.

Given the sparse Halloween pickings in three directions, we could have headed west one block to **Tryon Avenue**, which offered more buildings, including those where our classmates lived. Yet we never did. Why

bother when we could take the elevator up to our building’s sixth floor and tramp down a flight at a time, without the wind or rain mussing our costumes? The same logic applied to the kids who lived in those other apartment buildings. On the night of October 31<sup>st</sup>, no one from outside our building came to **Putnam Place**.

If store-bought costumes existed then, we never heard of them. Ours were homemade. I don’t recall any of us dressing up as witches, monsters, or other scary creatures. Perhaps we feared frightening our benefactors, or ourselves. Boys went as cowboys if they had fringed vests, holsters with a pair of six guns, and cowboy hats. (Dad’s work hat would do in a pinch.) Another option was to be a baseball player by donning a cap and hanging a glove from one’s belt loop, leaving one’s hands free to haul home the loot. Girls were Tinkerbell, Cinderella, or princesses decked

out in moms’ dresses and costume jewelry. Crowns, always handmade, were created with construction paper, Crayola crayons, and glitter from the Five-and-Ten on **Jerome Avenue**.

Like children of any era, we had our favorite candies, and those we trashed as soon as we got home. Among the best were Cherry Tootsie Pops, Milky Ways, and Raisinets. So bad they weren’t even tradeable were Turkish Taffy, Good and Plenty, and Brach’s Mints. “Older” boys (grades 4 to 6) claimed to like Atomic Fireballs, but I never saw a boy eat one, not even on a dare.

I don’t know what my grandmother, an Orthodox Jew, thought of Halloween or about me and my brother trick-or-treating. Unlike a number of families in our generation and a growing number in subsequent ones, we never celebrated Christian holidays like Christmas or Easter. Our kitchen and our observances were strictly kosher. While other Jewish families in my building,

and the neighborhood as a whole, may have been less observant than ours, they too did not display “Chanukah bushes” or colored lights, nor did anyone other than Catholic kids dye eggs or receive Easter baskets.

Perhaps what made Halloween acceptable to Jews, other than its being an American tradition, was that a central part of the holiday was collecting money for

UNICEF. This practice was in keeping with the Jewish commandments of *Tikkun Olam* (“healing the world”) and *tzedakah* (charitable giving). The UNICEF drive was a school-wide endeavor. A few days before October 31<sup>st</sup>, teachers distributed “Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF” boxes, which were the size of the single-serving milk cartons given out in the lunchroom, and had a slit on top for coins. When we knocked on a door, we specifically said, “Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF” and held out our boxes to collect money before opening our hand-decorated brown grocery bags for candy. The following day, each classroom tallied its donations, and the school awarded a prize to the class that had collected the most. I don’t recall what the prize was. The students certainly didn’t need more sugary treats. Perhaps it was simply the recognition of having excelled at “doing good”.



**Reservoir Oval, 1953.**  
**Author in front row, left (with bare knees)**



# The Day I Made Officer Joe Bolton Laugh

By Jimmy Newell, jimmeynewell623@gmail.com

On an ordinary late summer Tuesday afternoon, my mother called down to me from our second-story apartment at **1261 Leland Avenue**. She asked me to come upstairs. This was certainly not an unusual occurrence for me or any of my friends on **Leland Avenue**. Mothers, and sometimes fathers, frequently summoned us home for one reason or another.

But this request from my mother turned out to be a very special request, leading to a very special event.

As soon as I got to the landing outside Apartment Six, my mother was waiting there for me and looking ready to go somewhere. She had her hat on and was carrying her purse. I couldn't imagine where she was going or why I had to come upstairs to find out. My curiosity soon was abated as she proceeded to tell me that we were going to **Freedomland!**

Now, we had been to **Freedomland** several times, but never on a Tuesday afternoon and never without my father joining us. My mother reassured me that he would be joining us later in the evening when he got home from work. My father worked for Con Ed at their **Hunts Point** plant, so it was a short ride to **Freedomland** that was only made to seem long by the traffic he undoubtedly would encounter.

Not thinking about my father's commuting woes at the moment, my mother and I proceeded on our journey. As we walked on **Westchester Avenue** and crossed **White Plains Road**, the number six trains rumbled overhead on the El. We were so used to the sound of the trains, the noise hardly interrupted our discussion and never kept us awake at night.

Crossing **Hugh Grant Circle**, we approached the entrance to the **Parkchester** station. From there, it was a hop, skip, and a jump to **Pelham Bay Park** and the bus to **Freedomland**.

In no time, we were entering the gates to America.

**Freedomland** was the World's Fair for The Bronx, and just walking around was a treat for an eleven-year-old boy or girl.

**Freedomland** allowed us to see the America where Elsie The Cow had a Boudoir; I could assist the Chicago Fire Department put out the fire that had been started by Mrs. O'Leary's cow. (What was it with cows!?) Later, we would experience a western gunfight and a Civil War battle. But the best was coming, and I didn't even know what lay ahead.

There were plenty of rides to experience and arcade games to play. I especially enjoyed driving the antique automobiles and walking into the spaceship that actually served as a radio station for WABC, who played all our favorite songs.

As usual, my mother packed a lunch, and she would let me get a soda. Whenever I was at **Freedomland**, I made sure to get an A&W Root Beer, which was terrific. Don't get me wrong, I still loved Dad's and Hire's Root Beer, but you could only get A&W at **Freedomland**.

After lunch, we proceeded on our trek across America. As we got closer to the Monorail ride, which was more of a Wild Mouse than an actual monorail, we saw a sign for a show that was going to be put on by Officer Joe Bolton. The sign indicated that the first show would be at 3:00 PM. That was in ten minutes.

Officer Joe was a favorite of mine for as long as I could remember. He was the host of *Our Gang Comedy*, and then he was the host of *The Three Stooges*. More recently, he was the host of the *Dick Tracy Cartoon Show*. Only now, he was Chief Joe Bolton! Way to go, Officer Joe!

My mother and I entered the small arena set aside for the show. Officer Joe came out and put on a great show, making me laugh quite a few times. Towards the end, he asked if anyone in the audience knew the



**Freedomland, USA**

# Reminiscing

theme song to *Our Gang Comedy* and could whistle it.

I knew the song, and I could whistle it in my sleep, but I wasn't going up there and risking looking silly by getting stage-fright and blowing it. My mother glanced down at me, almost with a look of disappointment.

As we left the arena, she said, "You know that song, and you can whistle it, can't you?" I admitted that I could, and she said, "Then why don't we come back for the second show?" My mother had challenged me to make her proud, so what could I do?

An hour later, we came back to the arena, and sure enough, Officer Joe put on the same show, but he had a little twist that he hadn't done in the first.

When he got to the point of the show when he asked if there was anyone who knew the theme song, I jumped up and ran to the stage. Officer Joe was a terrific guy and was so friendly and welcoming. He asked me my name, and when I told him, he



**Officer Joe Bolton**

said. "Okay, Jimmy, are you ready to whistle the theme song to *Our Gang Comedy*?"

I said I was, and I stood at the microphone, proceeding to whistle. This was when Officer Joe got sneaky.

As I started whistling, Officer Joe pulled out a lemon and got right into my face, trying to make me goof up. I wouldn't have it, and I started walking around the mic while I kept whistling. The closer Officer Joe got, the quicker I walked around that microphone.

Finally, Officer Joe Bolton laughed out loud and patted me on the back, congratulating me for my beautiful rendition of the song in the face of a sour lemon. For my efforts, Officer Joe awarded me a Dick Tracy Transistor Radio.

But my real reward was making Officer Joe laugh, which I thought was the least I could do after all the joy he had brought me and my friends watching Channel 11.



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on today's streets of  
The Bronx

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a photo of your building in  
The Bronx



# The Underworld Knocks at the Alhambra

By Marc Estrin, [mestrin@mac.com](mailto:mestrin@mac.com)

The Alhambra! The great red palace in Grenada? “A pearl set in emeralds”, as to the Moorish poets? No, actually it was an apartment building on **Pelham Parkway** between **Wallace** and **Holland Avenues**. And far from being a residence for Muslim sultans, or after the Christian Reconquista in 1492, a home for Ferdinand and Isabella (who not only gave us Columbus Day, but also the Alhambra Decree, which kicked the Jews out of Spain), the Alhambra became the snazziest apartment complex south of the parkway, a 1927 beauty which didn’t know nothing from the economic collapse and Great Depression just around the corner.

A luxury apartment it was, a Dakota wannabe, lofting high above green parkland, built by rich Jews (Springstein and Goldhammer) for a cool million bucks, near good schools and the IRT, in walking distance from **Bronx Park**, **The Bronx Zoo**, and the **Botanical Gardens**, it called to the once-huddled, largely Jewish masses yearning to be free from the Lower East Side, called them to trade looking out on laundry lines and street carts for views of the parkway, or of a manicured garden with a fountain at its center. It was the suburbs before there were suburbs. Decorative wrought-iron gratings and balconies on the lower-floors, red tile roofs, deep window-niches with semi-circular arches, and romantic modernist brick motifs.

And that was only outside. Inside, there were stippled hallways decorated with huge Moorish sideboards, their empty drawers littered with bubblegum wrappers, but smelling of exotic, ancient worlds. And great armchairs of wood and leather in which no one ever sat. Each lobby had its own Otis elevator with art-nouveau button plates and wooden buttons, with elegant folding gates to be opened by hand to then exit through sliding doors. And, as

an elevator alternative, splendid marble steps only slightly eroded in the middle of their treads.

For the kids, elevator up, and steps and bannisters down. For the seltzer man, with that extra bottle of U-Bet Chocolate syrup, the elevator both up and down. At the Alhambra, the lower-lower-middle-class became the lower-middle class.



**Alhambra Gardens, 750-760 Pelham Parkway**

Inside each of the four apartments to a floor, there were no dim hallways connecting small rooms, but a large foyer leading out to spacious rooms. In the kitchen, refrigerators had replaced ice boxes, and incinerator chutes allowed garbage to fall freely down, right to the furnace, and finally out to garbage cans as ash.

Those cans and their contents were wrangled below by John, the “Super”, who lived in the cellar, had a German accent during the Second World War, and smelled perpetually of beer. Beer, German, dark cellar, furnace. It was a wonder he wasn’t lynched by the Jewish tenants who lived above him.

The cellar itself was a mysterious, and more than semi-scary, place for building and neighborhood kids to explore. It was the laundry room which introduced us to it, first under the care of our laundering mothers. And in some of those hose-receiving sinks, there occasionally appeared giant spiders and centipedes; that was the scariest thing in that underworld, even to adult renters who dwelled cheek-by-mandible with thousands of cockroach roommates, some small, and some very large.

Down there were also the remnants of a ballroom; a large, empty space with a wooden, not cement, floor, and a stage of sorts. Miss Haversham might have waltzed there. Tennessee Williams. But no music hung in the rafters, only the smell of dust and dankness.

Those were the deep cellar haunts of the Alhambra, the building itself haunted by refugees from Byzantium

# Reminiscing



and Nazism, from pogroms and quota restrictions, from other neighborhoods that didn't want them, and would beat their children up.

But that cellar was, in reality, only the underworld of the underworld. Depending on the floor you lived on, there were varying levels of upper underworlds beneath you.

We lived on the fourth floor: Apartment 4K (K for Kafka?). I never knew who lived in 1K, or 2K, but my whole family was certainly aware of who lived in 3K, just below us. It was "Mrs. Melnick". No first name, no Mr. Melnick, no child or baby Melnicks, just "Mrs. Melnick". She was the Baba Yaga of our lives, who dwelled, perhaps unimaginably, in a cave right below us, or perhaps in some other species of third-floor abode built on chicken feet, and sharing a ceiling with our floor.

Though we were obedient, well-behaved Jewish children, we did our share of running around the apartment. And every now and then, the ominous struck: a thumping, a banging, a knocking in the floor; a threatening, fierce rebuke from Mrs. Melnick, the "old witch" below, as she, what, beat the ceiling with her broom handle (we imagined), protesting our peregrinations? As I write this now, I realize I don't actually know how she knocked, or with what implement. A broom handle would be a tool befitting a witch. But a broom handle banging hard several times a day on a plaster ceiling? How long would the ceiling last? In any case, there it was, the daily banging, dampening our play, and indicating a menacing presence, intimately lurking.

It was my parents who provided the label, and for us, the interpretation of "the old witch". How dare anyone threaten, even distantly, the creative play and exercise of their darling little boychicks? But listen: at the same time, my mother was not above using the old witch for her own nefarious ends. "If you don't do what I tell you, I'm going to call Mrs. Melnick!" That brought us into line, fast, though not quite as quickly as her "I'm going to call the Institution" routine, which usually involved picking up the phone. Presumably,



**Alhambra Gardens Courtyard**

the Institution had to be reached telephonically, while Mrs. Melnick could be called in a more chummy, immediate fashion. Mrs. Melnick, a secret ally of my mother, contactable at any time? What could be more sinister?

As I have indicated, we usually went up and down (or at least down) via the stairs, maneuvering

those slippery marble slabs with a variety of dance steps to an astonishing number of rhythms. Sometimes we slid down the bannisters. Why? For fun? Perhaps a little. But mostly for fear that the elevator would stop at Three! Yes, there were three other tenant families on Three who might need the elevator. But what if it were not they, but Mrs. Melnick? What if she got into the elevator with us; just the three of us, locked into that tiny space together for however long the descent? It sounds ridiculous now, but every time we used the elevator we were deeply terrified as Three approached, and relieved of a hellish weight as it went by. Given how many times the encounter happened, I suppose repetitive relief was good for us, implanting an optimistic sense of recurring redemption. As the saying goes, banging your head on the wall is good for you because it feels so nice when it stops.

Yet it did happen. Only once that I recall, once in ten years. The elevator stopped at Three, and Mrs. Melnick got in. It may have been the only time we ever saw her. For all we knew, she had three heads and the legs of a brontosaurus. But there she was, Mrs. Melnick, getting into the elevator with us. How did we even know it was she? I don't know. We just knew. A heavy-set woman of fifty, in a filthy pink quilted bathrobe, wearing bedroom slippers, with curlers in her hair. She got in without acknowledging us: perhaps she didn't even see us. We backed silently against the wall, and when the car stopped at "L" (for "Lobby"), we oozed around her, opened the gate, slid the door open, and made a break for freedom. Mrs. Melnick continued silently down to "B", to the dark, labyrinthine basement, her natural abode.

When we moved from the Alhambra, it was into a first-floor apartment in a new building directly across

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## In the Navy

By H.P. Schroer, hp91126@gmail.com

Although at my age the synapses in my brain misfire on occasions, the pictures from Steve Samtur's "The Bronx: The Way It Was" presentation brought these memories back into focus.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1926, after a whack on my backside, I first opened my eyes to see and smell the aroma of the beautiful Bronx. I lived there for over 30 years, only leaving for 2 ½ years when my best friend and high school fraternity brother Jack Duffy (Omega Gamma Delta, **Evander Childs High School** 1943) and I enlisted in the Navy in February of 1944.

Jack and I applied for a job as ushers at the **Loew's Paradise Theater**. It was a magical place. The shining, sparkling stars on its ceiling created the perfect setting for the audience's shock when Clark Gable said to Vivien Leigh, "Frankly, Scarlet, I don't give a damn." The audience was held spellbound by the use of the word "damn". The sound rippled through like a wave at **Orchard Beach**. This, along with the term "nerts", was sufficient enough for my mother to wash my mouth out with Kirkman soap. What do today's mothers use?

Failing to get the ushers' job at Loew's, we applied and were successful in becoming Soda Jerks at **Krum's** across the street. Also a magical place. Our career was short-lived, when the store manager noticed that we didn't charge some fraternity brothers for the famous **Krum's** ice cream sundaes.

Jack and I, as part of our fraternity initiation ritual, were required to enter a Frank Sinatra contest at the **RKO Chester** on **Tremont Avenue** and **Boston Post Road**. I sang the popular ballad, "Pistol Packing Mamma", and Jack sang "Paper Doll", a song made popular by the Mills Brothers. A bevy of fraternity brothers sat in the front row, cheering and jeering us when the theater manager placed his hand above our

heads to determine the winner. Sadly, my musical career ended there.

Jack, while not a winner in the Frank Sinatra contest, went on to become a successful classical and Broadway musical composer and producer. He wrote and directed the musical version of **Ginger Man**, a book written by the Irish expatriate writer Patty Dunleavy, a boyhood friend who grew up in the **Woodlawn** section of The Bronx. Jack's music can also be heard at the Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor.

At an early age, we moved to **Knapp Street** in the **Eastchester Road** section of The Bronx, where **Co-Op City** is located. The area was swampland and

our favorite location for crabbing. In 1930, we moved to **4322 De Reimer Avenue**, where I attended **P.S. 87** on **Bussing Avenue**. We were in the midst of the Depression, and the availability of food and the cost of housing was always a problem. We had a garden in our backyard where we grew our own vegetables. To accommodate the addition of my new sister, we took in a boarder, known to us as Uncle Ernie. He was a fire lieutenant with the NY Fire Dept. Since Uncle Ernie had his



4322 De Reimer Avenue

own bedroom, my brother and I shared a bed in the remaining small bedroom.

Speaking of sharing: My brother was rather short, and it took him a while to grow tall enough to go from knickers to long pants. In the meanwhile, my body hormones were kicking in, and in order for me to go from shorts to knickers, I had to wait for my brother to outgrow his knickers. This meant that I was still wearing shorts when my contemporaries were in knickers. My masculinity was brought into question every time we moved to a new neighborhood. So, of necessity, I became a pretty good street fighter.

When we moved from **De Reimer Avenue** to **4349**

# Reminiscing

**Brunner Avenue**, I was immediately called a sissy by Rudy Santabello, one of the kids in the neighborhood. A fight ensued. As was the usual case when I won, my pugilistic counterpart became my best friend. This held true with Rudy.

Although we drifted apart over the years, our

acquaintanceship was renewed when my daughter and I opened a store on **Hughes Avenue** in the **Arthur Avenue** section of The Bronx, diagonally across from **Addeo Bakery**. It was here we produced our “Cheeches”, a cheesy version of a quiche. As fate would have it, Rudy owned the social club on the corner, as well as the local linoleum store, a thriving business. The Con Ed electric meter for both our store and the social club was located in our store’s basement. Needless to say, Con Ed shareholders’ income was impacted by this location.

After graduating from **P.S. 87**, I attended **P.S. 113** on **Barnes Avenue**. While the cost for the subway was only a nickel, we saved ten cents by walking to school. It was over a mile each way. The 10 cents saved was used to purchase tickets at the local movies.

After **P.S. 113**, I passed the entrance exam and was accepted to the **Bronx High School of Science**, which at the time was located on **Creston Avenue** behind the **Loew’s Paradise**. I had always been considered an above-average student, but my experience at **Science** proved otherwise. I had difficulty getting grades above a C. Being 13 and with my hormones in a frenzy while attending the all-boys’ **Science High School**, I decided to transfer to the co-ed **Evander Childs High School** in 1941. After graduating, I enlisted in the Navy in February of 1944.

I served as an Aviation Radio Gunner 3 Class during World War II. During our training on PBY aircraft at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida, we used to fly anti-submarine patrol in the Caribbean, as well as track hurricanes. When the war in Europe was drawing to a close, we were sent to Hutchinson, Kansas for training on the Navy version of the B-24. We were being trained for the invasion of Japan.

I was given a special leave to see my brother, who



4349 Bruner Avenue

I had not seen in over six years. While on leave, the crew I was assigned to went to California and on to the Pacific. During this period, President Harry Truman dropped the atomic bomb and the war soon ended. When I got to California, there was no need for me to go to the Pacific, so I broke a

cardinal rule by volunteering for Shore Patrol in my home naval district, New York City.

You have to understand, I was 17 when I joined the Navy, and a wise-ass kid from The Bronx who was known to his Navy buddies as H.P. This was a name given to me during a training mission, in which we were given basic instructions on how to fly the plane in case the pilot or copilot was injured. I decided to put the plane into a dive, scaring the hell out of everyone, including myself. While my given name was Harold Peter Schroer, from that point on I was called H.P., for “Hot Pilot”, a name still used during my present Veteran Advocacy work.

Getting back to my volunteering for Shore Patrol. When the Lt. reviewed my application and noticed the number of Captain’s Masts I’d accumulated during my brief naval career, he commented: “How can you expect me to approve your application? You can’t keep yourself out of trouble. Why do you think you can prevent others from getting into trouble?”

I explained, “That’s exactly why. I knew what it would take for them to get into trouble, and therefore could tell them how to avoid it.”

I’ll never forget what happened next. The Lt. put his arm on my shoulder and said, “Son, I am going to recommend you for Shore Patrol. My advice to you for the future, ‘Go into sales’.” I heeded that advice and spent over 40 years in the marketing and selling of consumer products. I was instrumental in introducing Halls cough drops to the American market.

As a closing note, while on Shore Patrol duty in New York City during 1945-46, I lived at home in The Bronx and commuted to Manhattan via the subway. One of the areas I was assigned to patrol was the area known as Swing Street. This was the area on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street between 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Before going into service, Jack Duffy and I used to use our

*continued on page 24*



# The Scent of Fear

By Hank Pollard, adrpollard@aol.com

I remember what happened so well because it was the day before my eighth birthday. We were living in a second-floor apartment in the East Bronx at **1819 Clinton Avenue**. My parents were visiting friends that evening, and my brother, who was nine years older, was out on a date. It was not unusual for me to be home alone at night. I listened to my favorite radio programs, which that night were “The Lone Ranger”, “Mr. District Attorney”, “I Love a Mystery”, and “The Eddie Cantor Show”.

Before going to bed, I fixed myself a snack: a thick slice of pumpernickel bread slathered with *schmaltz* (chicken fat), heavily salted, accompanied by a generous slice of raw onion. After brushing my teeth (twice because of the snack), I read comic books in bed until I got sleepy, then turned off the light and fell asleep almost immediately.

I was awakened not long after falling asleep. I knew it was not very late because my brother was not in his bed across the room. What had awakened me was a scraping sound coming from the other end of the apartment. I was usually a sound sleeper; sometimes my parents found me asleep on the floor in the morning after rolling off the bed. But this night, I awoke instantly. I sat up, listening intently, staring at the open door of my bedroom.

Our apartment was a “railroad flat”, meaning that all rooms were off a hallway running from one end to the other. My parents’ bedroom was next to the front door and looked down on the street. Next was the bedroom I shared with my brother. Then came the living room, the single bathroom, the kitchen, and a small bedroom at the far end. This room had been previously occupied by my grandmother, and then

occasionally by a boarder. It had a window onto the fire escape, and below were a vacant lot and an alley leading to the street.

The scraping sound came again. It sounded as if the window to the fire escape was being opened. This window was not always locked. The fire escape was used to store things, and I would sometimes sit out there, reading or doing homework. I then heard footsteps slowly moving through the apartment, and closets and drawers opening. A horrifying realization struck me: someone had come into the apartment through the fire escape window!

I was rigid with fear. I stifled a scream. My legs shook uncontrollably and perspiration soaked my pajamas. I had never been so frightened. I thought of running out the front door but doubted my legs would support me even if I mustered the courage to flee. In a panic, I slid off the bed, pulling the blanket with me, and crawled under. I lay with my eyes shut tight, my head under the blanket. Though I tried to quiet the sound, my breathing roared in my ears. I was really scared. I prayed to hear my parents or my brother coming through the front door.

I heard more footsteps, now outside my door, which slowly came into the room. I panted with fear. I felt dampness beneath me: I had peed in my pajamas. I heard movement near my bed, and then my closet opening. I held my breath and vainly tried to control my quivering limbs. My heart pounded. I lay there, petrified, expecting at any moment to see a hand reach under the bed, rip the blanket away, and drag me out.

Then I heard footsteps leaving the room. Then silence. I lay in my wetness, stone still, barely breathing. It felt like I stayed there for hours. At some



1819 Clinton Avenue

# Reminiscing

point, I fell asleep.

The next thing I remember is being awakened by bright lights, my parents' excited voices, and being pulled out from under the bed. They had come home and found the house in disarray, the fire escape window open, and me asleep under the bed in damp pajamas. An inspection disclosed that a portable radio, some of my mother's costume jewelry, and my father's toolbox had been taken. On the kitchen table were the jar of chicken fat, now empty, and a remnant of the onion. The pumpernickel bread was gone. Apparently, the intruder had fixed himself a snack.

In later years, it occurred to me that the intruder could have been tracked down by his scent.



# The Underworld Knocks at the Alhambra

(continued from page 8)

from the schoolyard of P.S. 105. There was no more Mrs. Melnick. There was no possible Mrs. Melnick substitution or replacement; under us there was only a garage. The world was a better place, though not as elegant.

Who was Mrs. Melnick? What was her life? Did she have a family? What did she do for work? Why did she go out so rarely that our nightmare encounter happened only once in ten years? One might ask the same questions about God. I realize now she was just as mysterious.

I think I saw her once as an adult, in a supermarket on **White Plains Road**, on the other side of the parkway. An old woman crossed my path who slipped neatly into the image graven in my childhood memory. This time, she had on a soiled overcoat, black shoes, and a *babushka*. She shuffled in the same way. She looked mirthless, and mean. I almost accosted her, but I didn't. What would I have said? I suppose I was still afraid. Maybe it wasn't Mrs. Melnick. But maybe it was.



White Plains Road



# The Bronx I Grew Up In

By Morton Newman, mortonnewman@gmail.com

I was born in **Bronx Hospital** in 1942. My parents were living at **1083 Longfellow Avenue**, between **East 165<sup>th</sup> Street** and **Westchester Avenue**, and I lived there with them until they moved to **172<sup>nd</sup> Street** and the **Grand Concourse** when I was 16.

The neighborhood was a typical working-class neighborhood of the time period. Rent control allowed people to stay in affordable housing for many years, and there were often two or three generations of a family in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood provided everything we needed: schools; **Siegelstein's Grocery Store** across the street; **Applebaum's Candy Store** on the corner; a dry cleaner on the other corner; and a drug store down the block. Around the corner was a poolroom, an auto repair shop (where the local bookie set up shop), and a pizza parlor. It was two blocks to the subway station for one line and five blocks to the subway station by **Fox Street** for another line.

My parents never had a car because the insurance was too expensive, and you had to move the car every day since the street sweeping schedule mandated "alternate street parking". The subways, buses, and cabs were more than enough to get us anywhere in the city cheaply.

During those years, I went to the neighborhood schools: **P.S. 75** near **Hunts Point**, and **David Farragut Junior High School 44**, which had a program that allowed me to do the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in two years. This effectively made me the youngest student throughout each of my high school grades. I didn't go to the neighborhood high school, **James Monroe**, but rather graduated from Stuyvesant H.S. in June of 1959 at the age of 16, then started at **Hunter College** the week of my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

My closest friend growing up (and still to this day) was Neil Goldstein. He and his five sisters and

two brothers lived with their parents in a ground-floor apartment at **1099 Longfellow Avenue**. Our side of **Longfellow Avenue** was two blocks in length, with so many kids that it took a long time to make friends "up the street".

As was typical in those days, the girls got married young in order to get out of the house and live in a saner, more comfortable environment.

The neighborhood was considered integrated in the '40s and early '50s, as it was primarily a mix of Irish, Italian, and Jewish (with a few Cubans and Puerto Ricans), as opposed to areas like **Fordham** (Irish), **Allerton Avenue/Belmont** (Italian), **Fox Street** and **Hunts Point** (Puerto Rican and African American), and **Pelham Parkway** (Jewish), which were seen, at least by us, as overwhelmingly one grouping or another.

When African Americans and Puerto Ricans moved into the neighborhoods in the mid-'50s, some white people began moving out.

The neighbors were almost always a community of shared interests and concerns. I remember a time in the early 1950s when the milk men were on strike. One of our close friends and neighbors, Sidney Maged, was a milk delivery guy. He brought a truckload of milk to the neighborhood so people would have enough milk during the strike.

My years on **Longfellow Avenue** were filled with stickball and basketball. We used to play basketball on the outdoor asphalt courts of the local playgrounds or in **P.S. 75**. I remember several times when we swept the snow from the outdoor courts so that we could play basketball during the winter. I don't remember ever playing basketball indoors in The Bronx.

We played stickball on **Lowell Street**, which was perpendicular to **Longfellow Avenue**. We would hit uphill from the railroad tracks, and a homerun would have to travel up the hill, cross **Longfellow Avenue**,



1083 Longfellow Avenue

# Reminiscing

and go over the five-story roof of **1083** and **1091 Longfellow Avenue**. The neighborhood team would frequently play teams from other neighborhoods; games both on **Longfellow** and on the other teams' streets. For working-class neighborhoods like ours, it was amazing to see the amount of money players and parents would put up in bets against the other teams.

When I was 12, our neighborhood team was recruited to play in the PAL for our local precinct. This was the first time any of us had uniforms and, more importantly, the first time any of us ever played on a dirt-and-grass field. We had always played in the streets or the asphalt of the **P.S. 75** schoolyard. The difference struck home immediately.

At the first practice, one of our guys tried to demonstrate how to slide on dirt, and his cleats caught and he broke his ankle. Despite that awkward start, we did manage to play well, and we even won the Bronx Championship that year, though we lost in the citywide tournament. As an aside, but a commentary on the reality of our neighborhood world, one of our teammates died of a heroin overdose shortly after the PAL season was over. He was 13.

I eventually played baseball at **Hunter College** for a couple of years. Two of the players on our team were drafted by Major League teams. The money they apparently received, in those days, was impressive. John Branchiforte was a shortstop, drafted by The Dodgers. He made it to 3A but apparently hurt his leg playing flag football and never made it to the Majors. Larry Yellen was a terrific pitcher who was drafted by the Colt 45s (now the Houston Astros) and got a \$75,000 signing bonus. He was brought up to the Majors too quickly and was burnt out after a few short years.

When I was 13, I worked in my uncle's store, Murray's Sturgeon Shop, on 89<sup>th</sup> and Broadway, on Saturdays. This was my uncle's effort to help our

family financially, plus he would send me home with a big package of goods from the store. His clients often sent their chauffeurs to pick up packages. When I would ride the subway home after working in the store all day Saturday, I would usually be able to get a seat, thanks to the smell of fish on my clothes.

When we moved to the **Grand Concourse** apartment, which was on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, my friend Neil from **Longfellow Avenue** came to visit; his sister and her husband lived in the same building on the first floor. We went out with her husband Mark to the local poolroom. Mark was a bodybuilder and worked in construction. He had broken his hand in an accident at work and wore a cast on his right hand.

While we were playing pool, a drunk started hassling Mark and eventually started a fight. Mark did his best to just hold him so he wouldn't injure his hand, but the drunk broke free and started swinging a pool cue at everyone. I apparently got hit but didn't notice it until after we left the poolroom. During the course of the fighting, I hit the drunk with a full swing of the pool cue, and he didn't even blink. I realized it was time to bail and, coincidentally, we heard the police sirens coming.

When we finally got outside and away from the poolroom, I realized that my head was bleeding, so we went to the ER at **Mt. Eden Hospital** to get some stitches. Arriving home, my mother started to question why we had moved from the poorer neighborhood on **Longfellow Avenue** to the "nice" neighborhood on the **Grand Concourse**.

I left The Bronx the week of my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. My friend Neil and I left on a boat for Genoa, Italy, intending to spend a couple of years working our way around Europe. We lasted a year, until the Draft Board realized that we weren't enrolled in school and invited us to become part of the Vietnam War.

And that's The Bronx I grew up in.



**P.S. 75, 1999**



## My Early Jobs

By Nathan Reiss, reiss@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

As a child, I lived two blocks from **Yankee Stadium**. It was, and still is, a source of jobs for the local people. My friend Howie and I discovered this at about age nine, when we began by opening doors for people who were arriving in taxis.

About two years later, an older boy who I knew from our neighborhood asked me if I would help him to sell Who's Who in Baseball books around **Yankee Stadium**. He would give me a profit from each book that I sold. He also taught me how to advertise the books by shouting: "Hair Ya Are! Getcher Who's Who in Baseball Hair! Pitchers, Stawries, Rekuds of Awl da Major League Bawl Playahs!"

In the next season, I noticed that, around the **Stadium**, there was a group of middle-aged men who were selling ice cream from small pushcart wagons. I saw that they were coming out of a small store about two blocks away from the **Stadium**. I looked into the door and saw that it was the source of the ice cream wagons. I figured that I could give it a try. They lent me a wagon, and I quickly found that this would bring in more cash than Who's Who in Baseball. I tried it for a few days, but I suddenly found myself being pushed and kicked around by the other ice cream guys. They were much older than me, and it was clear that I was stepping into their territory. I decided that it would be best not to continue with this.

When I was around age 14, my mother asked the owner of a small nearby food store if they could give me a job there. He hired me as a delivery boy, bringing food packages that had been ordered in the neighborhood. The distances were no more than about two or three blocks away. Sometimes I carried a single bag by hand, and other times I would carry a number of orders in a three-wheel wagon. I don't remember how much the owner paid me. It was something like a dime or a quarter per delivery. In addition, I usually got similar tips from the recipients.

A year or so later, I was hired by the owner of a small cleaning and tailoring shop, across the street from where I had been working. The owner, Jack (aka Jacob), was a European immigrant, who a few years earlier had been in a Nazi concentration camp. My job there was similar to the one across the

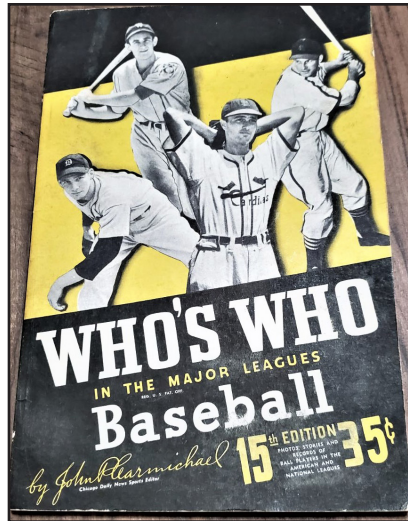
street, except that instead of carrying bags of food, I was now carrying clothes. Jack was always a very decent person, but jumpy and nervous, most likely because of what he had to undergo during the Nazi era. People who came into his store frequently argued with him about the tiniest glitch in the clothes that he had returned to them. He always worked very hard to satisfy his customers. It seemed clear that they were taking advantage of him. After about a year, I was no longer able to continue working there, due to my growing school requirements.

When I reached age 18, I began to work at a full-time summer job, just across the river from The Bronx, on Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan. It was a very small sheet-metal shop. My job there was to operate a device for bending large pieces of metal sheets. It wasn't a particularly difficult job, and it was somewhat boring. The several other workers in the shop didn't speak much English.

The large 4'x8' sheets were stacked on an area attached about a foot from the ceiling of the store, about six or seven feet above the floor. At one point, I was asked to pull down one of the sheets. No one thought to tell me how to do that. The sheets were all covered lightly with oil. I guess that I must have jumped up to grasp or drag it, so that I could bring it down. The sheet started to slip down on its own, its front edge heading straight toward my face! I quickly raised both of my arms to prevent that from happening. Instead, I wound up with a deep gash on one of my arms. At the end of the summer, I was glad to get back to my school activities.

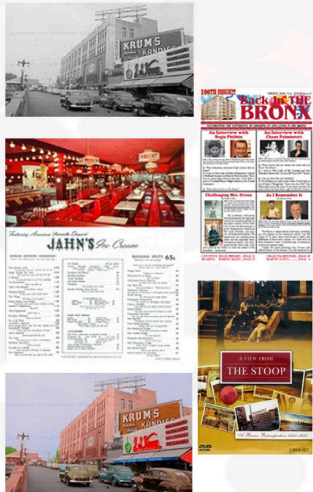
The following year, my father, who worked in a meatpacking plant, suggested that I might be able to get a summer job there. The company had two locations: one in Brooklyn, where my father worked, and one in the Harlem section of Manhattan. I obtained the job in Harlem, not far from where we lived in the South Bronx. It was a pretty good job; mostly packing large boxes of wrapped meat items, and getting the boxes onto trucks.

After a few weeks, I was transferred to another part of the building. I was now working where frozen meat



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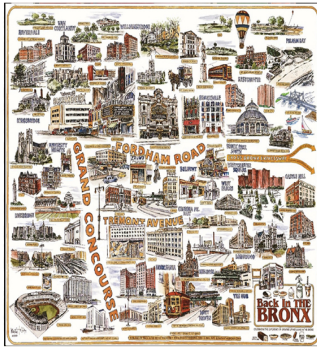
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## My Early Jobs

(continued from page 15)

was brought in double-sized bathtubs on wheels, with an open pipe on the bottom. The meat was brought in, and allowed to thaw, overnight, with the blood flowing out through the hole onto a sloped floor, which allowed the blood to go down a drain. My job was to roll the full tubs to their required locations, and also to mop away any leftover blood.

The next year, I returned to the same company, but in the Brooklyn plant. My job there included helping to remove frozen meat which arrived in railroad cars just behind the building. This was difficult work because the meat was all frozen together and had to be pulled apart. On most days, I was at the head of the meat's travel line. My job there was to wash the large chunk of meat at a sink, and then push it down a slide to a row of other workers, who did the cutting and government stamping, etc.

The worst part of my job there was something that I had to do twice during my summer: the building had what seemed to have been an elevator shaft at some time. In this case, it was being used to hang large pieces of meat, with a wood fire at the bottom. This gave the meat a fine taste. Over a period of time, the inside of the shaft walls would become a gooey mess. A helper and I were given raincoats and hats, and hot power hoses to clean the shaft. This job lasted several hours and had to be done at nighttime, so as not to disturb the daytime work. The worst part was getting back to The Bronx on the subway. I smelled *awful!* People on the subway were clearly staying far away from me.

I found my first do-it-yourself summer job by going to Warren Street, a section in lower Manhattan, where there were lots of tiny offices with windows plastered with possibilities of job offers. I went into one of the offices and told them that I was interested in just about anything. They made a phone call and gave me an address. It was yet another sheet-metal business, located in lower Manhattan. Their operation consisted of cutting and bending sheet-metal into various sizes and shapes, as needed for their clients. I quickly learned how to use their mechanical devices, and prevent my fingers from being chopped off.

After a few days, I went along on a truck with two other workers. Our job was in the basement of a very old building. It had a small group of toilet seats that were separated by wooden walls, which were no longer allowed in New York bathrooms. The toilet seats now had to be separated by metallic walls. In

our store, we had created the correct sizes and shapes that were needed, and we finished the job very quickly. I really enjoyed being able to help in removing something rotten, and turning it into something that turned out to be pretty decent!

Another interesting job involved a very large floor of a brand-new concrete building. We needed to create a large number of U-shaped metal tracks, upon which a large number of vertical partitions could be mounted and moved around. A ton of people were sitting all over the place, clicking away at their typewriters. They apparently had no idea what was about to happen. We arrived and laid the tracks onto the concrete floor, using gunpowder devices to shoot screws into the concrete floor. Throughout the day, we added tracks around each of the groups of people sitting at typewriters. They must have been very aggravated.

At the end of the summer, I returned to school. By the beginning of the next school year, I had already become deeply interested in science and, particularly, meteorology. I had earned some small jobs at CCNY, where I was now in my last year.

My favorite job was to take care of the college's weather equipment on the roof of the main building. Having been interested in electricity and electronics for several years, I was amazed that devices on the roof required daily attention. I was certain that all of those rooftop devices could be connected via electrical routes to the Meteorology Department downstairs. Unfortunately, I never got far enough to make it all work, but I had a good time trying!

In addition to the meteorological work, I had a job with the Geology Department, which operated a device for finding earthquakes and other geological activities. My job consisted of snapping pictures of the readings in the basement of the building.

My very last job while finishing CCNY was at Muzak Corporation. A friend of mine who had worked there had become ill, and due to my amateur radio documents, I was able to substitute for him for a couple of months. Muzak transmits music and other information to specific audiences. My evening job there, after all the other technicians had gone home, was to carefully watch the various transmissions that were going out, to change audio tapes, to answer phone calls from people who wanted to hear a particular musical item, etc. I was able to complete my homework while doing this. Very convenient!

Having made my way through all of these jobs, I then decided to try something completely different: I joined the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era, and after a four-year term, finished as a Captain.



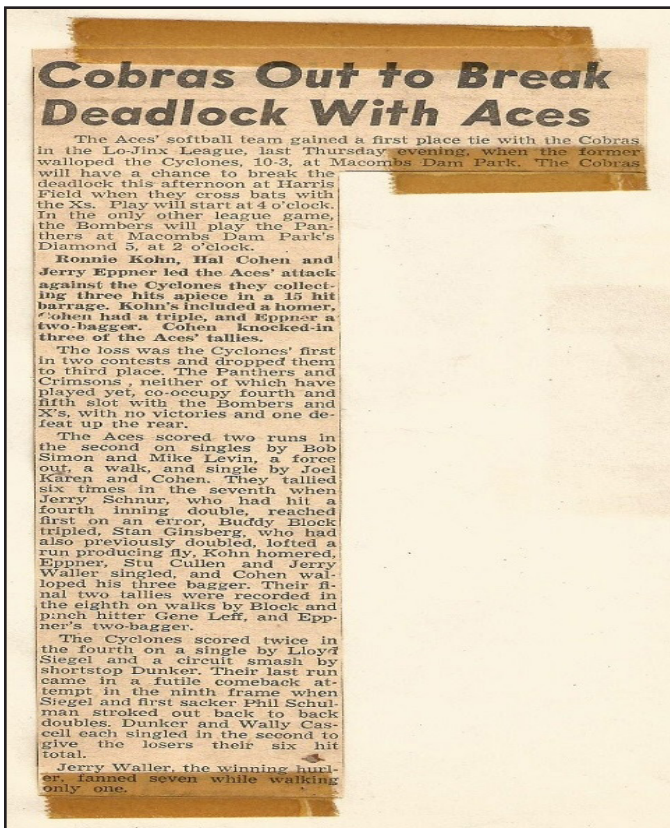
# The 1954 Lo-Jinx Softball League

By Mike Levin, mikelevin@bellsouth.net

At the ages of 16 and 17, in 1954, my friends and I were all seriously into softball. We lived in the West Bronx, in the area surrounding **Harrison, University, and Tremont Avenues**, the area monopolized by **Macombs J.H.S.** and its large schoolyard. We had all attended **Macombs**, were now in assorted high schools, and had developed our love for softball through the intramurals at **Macombs**, which were played in their huge cement schoolyard.

Now in assorted high schools, but still living within a block or two of **Macombs**, my close friends and I were playing pickup games as a "team" in the **Macombs** schoolyard, both after school and on weekends. We decide to name our team "The Aces", and we started looking for other semi-organized teams to play. It wasn't easy, but we did find a little competition.

However, after watching the Yankees, Dodgers, and



Giants play almost every day on TV on beautiful grass/dirt fields in two organized Leagues, I began searching for more than what we had. Why couldn't we play in an 8-team League for a championship, on grass/dirt fields?

So I took my best friend, Hal Cohen, and we went up the street to the corner sports store, **Lo-Jinx Sporting Goods**, and spoke directly with their owner about: forming an 8-team softball League; playing a two-month schedule on public softball fields; purchasing team jackets, bats, balls, etc.; and calling it the "Lo-Jinx Softball League". They instantly went for it, and the League was born. During that same meeting, we purchased a few bats and balls, ordered our specially-made team jackets, and promised to secure other teams to play, suggesting that they also purchase their team equipment from **Lo-Jinx**.

Subsequently, several did. We were in business.

We then found two older guys willing to umpire the games for a small salary. Hal and I then set out to find and secure seven other local teams for the





## Panthers Win Title Of Lo-Jinx League

The Panthers won the Lo-Jinx Softball League championship Sunday by defeating the Aces in a playoff, 6-2, at Harris Field. The Panthers concluded their schedule with six victories and one defeat. The team was led by Jerry Luftman.

The Aces were a game behind. Led by Hal Cohen they had five wins against two losses. The Cobras and the Crimson finished in a third place tie with four triumphs and two setbacks. The Cyclones, with one win in six games, were fifth, with the Bombers and the Xs trailing, winless in six games.

Jerry Lange hurled for the Panthers. He scattered six hits. He walked five and struck out seven. It was Lange's fifth victory. Jerry Waller opposed Lange and suffered his second defeat in five starts. Waller fanned two and walked four.

Ivan Goodman and Stan Friedlander led the Panthers' 10-hit attack with three safeties apiece. Goodman had a triple and Friedlander a double. Walt Greenstein, Paul Cataldo, Jerry Luftman and Bernie Rydzeski added a hit apiece to the Panthers' total.

Goodman drove in two tallies and with Greenstein scored twice.

Waller and Buddy Block made two hits apiece, one of Waller's being the only extra base blow and was good for a triple. Manager Cohen of the Aces was the only other Ace player to hit.

Mike Levin, co-founder and president of the league, presented each of the Panthers with an 11-inch trophy.

## Lo-Jinx Softball Champions



Members of the Panther Softball Club, winners of the Lo-Jinx League championship. Top row, (l. to r.) Coach Peter Cataldo, Manager Jerry Luftman, Coach Charles Alzava and Bernie Rydzeski. Middle row, (l. to r.)—Walter Greenstein, Irv Cutler, Jerry Lange, Howie Brown and Paul Cataldo. Front row—Buddy Block, Stan Friedlander and Ivan Goodman.

## Lo-Jinx Loop Cites Top Trio

Three outstanding players in the Lo-Jinx Softball League were awarded trophies for "meritorious achievements." It was announced by league co-founders Mike Levin and Hal Cohen.

The three are Lew Eppol, Jerry Lange and Stan Friedlander. Eppol won the batting title, collecting 12 hits in 37 plate appearances for a .324 average. The Panther shortstops three doubles and five RBIs were tops in those departments.

Friedlander turned in a .407 batting average and was among 10 home run leaders. He was also among the league's 200 club which includes Eppol, Cohen (364), Stu Cullen (233), and Jerry Luftman (131).

Lange, ace of the Panther mound staff, excelled in wins (9), strikeouts (30) and ERA (1.94). He also had a no-hitter in the season.

## Softball Pitcher Honored



Jerry Lange (center) of the champion Panther SRC of the Lo-Jinx Softball League was honored by Hal Cohen (left), vice-president, and Mike Levin, president of the league, with a trophy for being the top pitcher of the league during the season.

League, and several other close friends and team members joined in the search. Amongst the foremost were "Friend for My Entire Lifetime" Jerry Schnur, and close neighbor Stan Ginsberg.

Scouring throughout my high school (**Bronx Science**) and several others, as well as the immediate neighborhood, we quickly found six interested teams, and we then set everything in motion.

Within a few weeks, I had obtained permits from the Park Department to play, for the next two months, at **Macombs Dam Park** (grass/dirt softball fields). And, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1954, "The Lo-Jinx League" became real and functioning.

Hal and I approached April 11<sup>th</sup> with much trepidation. We had purposely not scheduled the Aces for the first group of games so that we could actively participate in starting off the other teams and umpires, and making sure that there was no confusion or difficulty in using our Park Department permits to access the fields at the appointed times.

Just before this, I had contacted the Sports Department of the *NY Post/Bronx Home News Edition* and secured their agreement to publish short summaries of each of our games, which I would write and submit. They certainly did follow through. We were hopeful that there would be no hitches in their willingness to cover the games.

They did not disappoint us. Before our first game started, they featured a story: "The Lo-Jinx League is Starting Play Today". The article was being read in the newspaper as the Cobras and Bombers took the

field. I was ecstatic. Amazingly, both umpires, Irv Raskin and Milt Stasiuk, showed up on time, and we were ready to go!

The League started, and summaries were published in *The Bronx Home News*. I was in heaven! I could not believe that I was achieving this.

The Cobras walloped the Bombers, 12-6, in the first ever Lo-Jinx game. Ultimate League Batting Champion, Lew Egol, got three hits in five trips, Fred Altman tripled, and Art Siegel homered to lead the Cobras to the first League victory. Paul Bank hit the only round-tripper for the losing Bombers.

In the second game of Day 1, the Cyclones and X's also played a 12-6 game, with the Cyclones winning. Lloyd Siegel and Hal Deutschman both homered for the winners.

Our team, the Aces, got to play their first game the following week, against the League-leading Cyclones. The latter scored three runs, but our Aces were victorious, 10 to 3. Cohen and Kohn, Hal and Ronnie, both led the attack, with three hits each. Ronnie K's three included a homerun, while Hal's included a triple.

The season continued: it ran into May and then June, and everything was going great! Our team, the Aces, was alternately in first and second Place.

And then, in June, the Panthers beat us 6-2 in a playoff game. Ivan Goodman and Stan Friedlander led the Panthers' attack, with three hits each. Ivan's included a triple, and Stan's a double. Goodman knocked in two runs. Pitcher Jerry Waller and



## A Great Neighborhood

By Susan (Stamm) Kaplowitz, Ed.D CPT, skaplow1@comcast.net

I lived in the Northwest Section of The Bronx growing up. My two addresses were **2749 Webb Avenue** and **2754 Claflin Avenue**. I moved out of The Bronx to New Jersey in 1970 when I got married. I look back with great fondness and nostalgia to all the things this area had, which made my growing up so very special.



**2754 Claflin Avenue**

I lived about a block from a park, which every summer was my “summer camp” as well as my “go-to” on most days. The Parkee would put out all the table games, carom (my forerunner to pool), etc., and in bad weather we would play in the Park House. Living in a fourth-floor walk-up apartment on a block without any trees, I loved what I thought was “the country”, with all the grassy areas and the yellow flowers which I would pick for my Mom. I found out much later that these “flowers” were actually dandelions, i.e., weeds.

**St. James Park** was a short walk or a quick ride on my bike, and where I went to play tennis. At **Poe Park**, I went to dances as a teenager. **Van Cortlandt Park** was a distance away, but either I biked there, or I was driven when my parents finally got a car. I played tennis and handball on the “wall”, and in the winter, ice skated on the pond.

I had a great education. I went to **P.S. 86**, **John Peter Tetard J.H.S.** (a brand-new school at the time), and **Walton High School**. I went to **Hunter College** in The Bronx (now called **Lehman College**). I needed no public transportation. I walked to each and every one of these schools.

I walked to the **Kingsbridge Movie Theatre** on **Jerome Avenue**, sat in the children’s section, and kept my eyes out for the Matron, who walked around to make sure that we were quiet. Bon Bons were my favorite movie treat. When I got older, I would walk to the **Dale Theatre**, the **RKO**, and the **Loew’s Paradise**. Along with the movies, I loved to go to **The**

**Bronx Zoo**, either with my friends or my parents. Saturday was children’s day, and it was free!

As a teenager and young adult, I got on a bus or subway (all within walking distance) to go to **Orchard Beach** or Manhattan (which we called “the City”). In the City, I went to the Wollman Rink, walked up Fifth Avenue, went to the

42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Donellen Libraries, and ate at Horn & Hardart. I would go with friends to Coney Island, get on the **Kingsbridge Road D train** and go to the last stop: Surf Avenue. One year when I was 13, I took my brother (age 9) to the Brooklyn Paramount Theater to see one of Alan Freed’s shows. What adventures for a young Bronx girl!

My family loved sports. My Dad actually played softball into his 70s. He was the star player on the **Shore Haven** team that played each weekend. I swam, and played tennis and basketball. I put many miles on my English Racer, many of them biking around the **Reservoir**. We attended many baseball games at either **Yankee Stadium** or the Polo Grounds.

And the restaurants! We took out or ate at the **Towers**, **Leo’s Deli**, and the **Hebrew National Deli**, all on **Kingsbridge Road**. We ate Chinese food at **Yee’s** on **Kingsbridge Road** or at **Hom and Hom** on **Fordham Road** (an extra walk for us). We would go to the **Brighton Cafeteria** on **Fordham Road** or the **167<sup>th</sup> Street Cafeteria** (a trip for us), where we would go down the food aisle and select the food, and the server would give it to us and punch a ticket which we got when we entered.

As for treats: we would eat (or bring home) the most delicious pastries from **Sutter’s**; then there was **Zaro’s Bakery** on **Kingsbridge Road**, and **Philip’s Bakery** on **Sedgewick Avenue**, which I would ride to on my bike and bring back jelly doughnuts for my family on Sunday mornings. It was worth it to walk to **Fordham Road** to have delicious sundaes at **Jahn’s**

# Reminiscing

and **Krum's**.

It was not necessary to have a car to shop. For food, there was a small food market (**Diathe's**), many fruit and vegetable stands, appetizing stores, and delis. For clothing, a nice walk through **St. James Park** would bring us right to **Alexander's** on **Fordham Road**. On the first day of school, my Mom, brother, and I would line up to finally get into a very small store, **Shirley's** on **Kingsbridge Road**, to get all of

our school supplies.

Years ago, I took my sons to show them the places I lived, the schools I attended, the park where I hung out, etc. To them, these were just physical places. But to me, it brought back the wonderful childhood I'd had.

The expression "You can't go back" is half true. You surely can, in your memories. I did, as I remembered my great neighborhood in my mind and heart, so many years later, and I always will.

## Weatherproof Halloween

(continued from page 4)

We never considered the trick part of the equation. Why would anyone refuse us? Yet, the response to our door-knocking was not always welcoming or positive, especially in apartments where no children lived. Some elderly residents were Holocaust survivors. When they looked through the peep hole and saw a raucous gang outside, our knock might go unanswered. Now, as an adult, I picture them turning off the lights and cowering in the closet. If they dared to open the door, we saw fear in their eyes. We didn't understand what they were afraid of. How could we? The survivors we knew were silent about what they'd been through; the word "Gestapo" was not part of their children's vocabulary.

Other tenants were irascible and screamed at us to "Get outta here!" or threatened, "I'll give you what-for." My next-door neighbor, an elderly Catholic widow, smiled and gave us money, but no candy. Another woman gave us candy canes and colored sucking candies that may have been left over from the previous year's Christmas. A well-meaning Jewish neighbor, who hadn't been briefed on Halloween, might fish for coins in a battered purse and offer us homemade *babka* or a slice of honey cake. We'd decline, politely. As we got older, and our memories lasted from year to year, we learned to avoid risky or unproductive apartments.

One place we never visited was the Super's apartment in the basement. We avoided the basement period, whose point of entry was down an alley past his door, unless we had to retrieve our bikes, which fortunately were in a room close to the entrance, not the dark, inner depths. Our parents whispered that the Super "drank" and warned us to keep out of his way. I suppose he unclogged drains, ran the incinerator

when we lowered our garbage down the dumbwaiter, and kept the boiler running, but the only encounters we kids had with this unshaven and bad-smelling man was being chased away from the stoop and yelled at to play in the **Oval**. We went gladly.

Other than scary places like the basement, and scary people like Barky and the Super, our building was a safe place to grow up. Holidays like Halloween were one means by which we kids were assimilated into American culture. What did first and second generation immigrant children learn? Collecting coins for UNICEF presumably made us grateful that we were in a position to give to charity, just as those who preceded us to this country were its recipients. We felt the relief of being like "them", i.e., children from the dominant culture.

The Bronx was a cocoon which our grandparents and parents didn't have when they emigrated to escape poverty, pogroms, and fascist regimes. Halloween, in particular, with its promise of sweets, was indeed the American Dream. The streets weren't paved with gold, but we got bags filled with candy. Children were free to attend what were then excellent public schools. Families had the freedom to worship, even oddly, to celebrate holidays born of other religions, not out of coercion, but by choice.

Our self-contained apartment building protected us from more than the vicissitudes of weather. It sheltered us from the anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic abuse that our grandparents and parents had endured. We were not aware, as the older generations undoubtedly were, that The Bronx and the greater metropolitan area had places where Jews and Catholics were not permitted to live. We would all encounter overt and covert discrimination later in life, but in the bubble of our apartment building, we didn't worry about who or what we were. Halloween proved that we could dress up, pretend to be rulers and champions, and be rewarded merely for asking.



## Big Stu

By Harvey M. Abrams, harveyma@optonline.net

In my early years, I, along with my younger sister and my parents, lived in a beautiful courtyard building on **Wallace Avenue** at the corner of **Brady Avenue**. After I attended Kindergarten at **P.S. 105**, my father decided to join his brother-in-law in a business in Hialeah, Florida, and we moved.

After a year, my father decided the drive-in restaurant business he had joined was not for him, and we moved back to initially live with his parents (my grandparents) on **Bronx Park East**. I found myself way behind the class I joined in 1<sup>st</sup> grade at **P.S. 105**. The teacher took me under her wing and worked with me to bring me up to par with the class.

About halfway through 1<sup>st</sup> grade, another student joined our class, and he, like I had been, was way behind the class. The teacher assigned me to work with him and bring him up to the level of where the class was. The student's name was Stuart, and because he was much bigger than the kids in the class, he was called "Big Stu". I tutored him and it went very well.

As I went through subsequent grade levels, I lost track of Big Stu. When I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I was involved in a softball game in the schoolyard. I was playing 1<sup>st</sup> base when the ball was hit to me and the player from the other team, who had been on 1<sup>st</sup> base, took off for 2<sup>nd</sup> base. I scooped up the ball and threw it to second for what I thought would cause a force-out. The runner was called safe, and I put up a forceful argument that the runner was out.

As I argued, I was surrounded by a bunch of guys from the other team, and it looked like I was going to get beat up. All of a sudden, there was a loud voice from behind us, which asked: "Harvey, are these

guys bothering you?"

When the guys from the other team took one look at "Big Stu", the group dissipated. Although the "safe" call stood, I was spared, and "Big Stu" had repaid me.

This reminds me of a short film which I saw recently, in which a bear cub's mother is shot by hunters and the cub is left on his own. A cougar decided that the cub would make a tasty meal and chased after him. The cub jumped on a log and was carried down-

river, and the cougar followed. When the log got jammed, the cub jumped off and swam to the opposite shore, but the cougar followed him. It was about to attack the scared and shivering cub, when it looked up and stared at the cub's father, who just happened to be there. The cougar slinked away, and the cub was saved. After I was "saved" by "Big Stu" so many years ago, I can certainly identify



P.S. 105

with that cub!

When I was in the fourth grade at **P.S. 105**, I began playing the trumpet and taking private lessons. By the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I was 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet in the school's orchestra. Because **Junior High School 135** was still being built when I graduated 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I had to take 7<sup>th</sup> grade at **P.S. 83** in the **Morris Park** section. To get there from **Pelham Parkway**, I would have to take two buses by transferring at the right angles where they crossed each other, or by walking the hypotenuse. Mostly, I walked to save time and carfare.

At **P.S. 83**, I played in both the band and the orchestra. I joined up with a fellow a few years older than me whose father was a society orchestra leader, playing the hotels downtown when he wasn't practicing being a pharmacist. We played lots of gigs, like the new rock-n-roll dances, private parties, and eventually, when he went



P.S. 83

# Reminiscing

to **Fordham University**, the reunion parties of recent graduates.

After one year at **P.S. 83**, I was able to go to 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the new **J.H.S. 135** across **Pelham Parkway**. There I was in both the band and the orchestra and, because of my name, was listed first in the first graduating class of **J.H.S. 135!**

I then went on to **Christopher Columbus High School**, where I joined the orchestra as 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet.

An assistant to the orchestra leader ran the school's band and wanted to enlist me into the band as 1<sup>st</sup> Trumpet. That would mean giving up my lunch and study periods. I agreed, as long as I did not have to play and march in Manhattan on Columbus Day; but I said I would play in the band for all the school concerts.

Graduation from **Christopher Columbus** was so huge that it could only be held at the **Loew's Paradise Theatre** on the **Grand Concourse**. I can't begin to count the number of times I played *Pomp and Circumstance* as the graduates marched down during the four years I played for the graduations.

Finally, I too graduated and left school in The Bronx to attend Baruch

College on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Manhattan. I graduated with a B.B.A. degree, having majored in Accounting, became a CPA, and had a career in financial management. I had also resurrected my playing the trumpet much later on and was accepted to play with some famous jazz musicians in New York City. I am now finally retired from my profession and my avocation.

I still wonder whatever happened to my savior, Big Stu.



**Christopher Columbus High School**

## In the Navy

*(continued from page 10)*

forged ID cards (we were 16 at the time) to visit the famous jazz clubs in the area. Swing Street was truly a gourmand's musical feast.

Though the vitality of the city is created by its occupants' diversity of color as well as its physical and cultural components, its heart and soul beats to the sound of music throughout its streets. While many of its residents sleep, during the era of its popularity "Swing Street" is awakened by the flashing colored neon signs above. It plays its own melody and sings to its own tunes. The sandwich signs aligning the sidewalks provide menus to feed the crowds of music gourmants, hustling to their favorite clubs: The Onyx, Three Deuces, and Jimmy Ryan's. There were traveling chefs, including Dizzy Gillespie, Buddy Hackett, Roy Eldridge, Fats Waller, Charlie Parker,

Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, Louis Prima, and the incomparable Louis Armstrong, serving their famous dishes during the period when the Charleston and Lindy were popular dances. It was cool to be cool and to be invited to the back room, where weed was a cigarette and Lucky Strike green had gone to war. A reefer was marijuana, and you delighted in inhaling both the swirling smoke and the beat of Swing Street, whose cocktail of sex, booze, drugs, and music served as an inspiration to some, and demise of others.

After getting discharged from service and with the aid of the GI Bill, I attended Long Island University in Downtown Brooklyn. I got married in my sophomore year and lived in a one-bedroom apartment at 650 East 231<sup>st</sup> Street. Our rent was \$45 a month.

While I have not lived in The Bronx for many years, those cherished memories will always be part of my DNA. And to this day, I still greet people with "How ya doing!"



## Poe Park

(continued from page 1)

certainly part of the **Poe Park** experience.

I was a regular attendee of the **Poe Park** concerts and hardly missed a Wednesday. It was the highlight of my week. I could show off my latest fashions, usually a dark skirt, fitted top, and silky neckerchief, chat with my friends and share in some history by visiting Poe's house. My main goal, however, was to meet boys. The young men, from about 16-20, looked they were in a uniform, dressed alike in chinos and button-down shirts. You never knew who would come up, ask you to dance, and flirt with you.

The summer just before I turned sixteen and was entering high school as a senior, I met two promising guys: Jeff and Lenny.

Jeff was the quintessential bad boy. He was good-looking, with a wide swoop of blonde hair falling over his forehead, twinkling blue eyes, and tall with a slim, mean, and lean physique. He dressed in more fitting clothes than the other boys, showing off his muscles.

Jeff liked the ladies, and he also liked having fun. He flirted with me like crazy, and I was won over despite my fear that he could break my heart. Our dates were always fun because he was both a comedian and a tease. He made me laugh.

Although Jeff didn't have a car, someone in his crowd usually did, and we would drive up to Westchester County, just north of The Bronx, or out to **City Island**.

Sometimes we'd go to **Orchard Beach**, the only sandy beach area fronting water in The Bronx. Other dates included a subway ride downtown to Manhattan, where we would go to a concert or just hang out.

One of the Wednesdays when Jeff wasn't there, Lenny asked me to dance, and also did some serious flirting with me. Lenny was tall and had olive skin; he had very dark brown hair and eyes. He was almost the complete opposite of Jeff in looks and demeanor. Lenny was a very serious guy. Although he wasn't a great student, he was determined to get an education, do well, and make it as a professional. He loved his family, even introduced me to his kid sister, and had a part-time job to help his family. Since Jeff wasn't always available, I began dating Lenny too.

Dates with Lenny consisted of going out for pizza,

taking a walk to **Fordham Road** (a main Bronx shopping street), going to the movies, or hanging out at his friends' homes. He was very sweet and very serious about me, although he was only 18. Jeff, on the other hand, was unpredictable. You never knew what he'd be up to. He was fun and free-wheeling, a real charmer.

I dated both for a while, and when the time came to bring a date to high school senior events, I realized I had to make a choice. Both of them knew of each other, since there were times both were in attendance at **Poe Park**. I mulled over what to do, and finally invited Jeff to attend events with me.

I stopped seeing Lenny, since I was so taken with Jeff. It soon became apparent to Lenny that I had chosen Jeff over him. Needless to say, Lenny was very hurt. After I stopped taking his calls and making dates with him, I received a letter, telling me that he had been on the verge of picking out an engagement ring for me. "You mean a lot to me, and I am very hurt."

I blew off his letter. In the first place, I was too young to consider getting married. I had people to meet and places to go. I planned to go to college and become a teacher. Marriage could wait for years. I dismissed him and made no attempt to respond to his note.

Jeff and I continued dating, until one day he didn't call. Back then, it was the custom for a guy to call a girl, always. I waited and waited, feeling heartbroken, knowing in my heart that he had moved on. Finally,

I found the courage and called him. I wanted some answers. He was sweet and charming, as he'd always been, but in essence, he confirmed that he'd moved on. He'd found a new lady and was now dating her. He said her name was Gail.

At first, I was devastated. They do say that time heals, and in my case, it was true. After a while, both boys were a dim memory. Initially, I thought about calling Lenny, but decided that his ship had sailed. I went ahead with Plan A and attended the **City College of New York**, where I met my husband in my freshman year.

I thought of both Jeff and Lenny over the ensuing years, wondering what had happened to them. Where were they living? Did Jeff marry Gail? Did Lenny make it through college? Of course, those years were before the internet, so I had no way of knowing their



Poe Park, 1938

# Reminiscing

fates.

After a while, I forgot all about them, until about five years ago. By then I was on Facebook and was also adept at googling. Neither man appeared on Facebook, but both names came up through a Google search. It surprised me how much you can find out.

This is what I learned. Lenny had gone to a community college and later moved on to a New York City College. He wound up going into retail as a manager and then as an entrepreneur. He had gotten married and now had two grown daughters, and three grandchildren. And of all things, he had relocated and lived in Dallas, Texas. I found a photo of his house on Zillow; very elegant. I couldn't find a photo of him, but the one I found of his elder daughter looked just like him. The resemblance was striking.

Jeff had married a woman named Connie and had two daughters. It appeared he'd attended college briefly, but had to drop out when he was drafted and

sent to Viet Nam. I found that out because it said on Google that he had just attended a reunion for Viet Nam vets.

I also learned that he is now on his second wife, a much younger lady. His first wife had made some comments about what a creep he was. He was a charmer and player back in the sixties. I guess leopards don't change their spots.

A photo of him at his daughter's wedding popped up on a photo album she shared. His blonde hair was now gray, considerably thinner but still poufy. He was no longer lean and mean; but was now paunchy and plump. He looked tired and wasn't smiling, even though he was at a milestone event in his daughter's life. While his family still lived in New York, he and his new wife lived in a condo in Waikiki, where she was from.

Life is like drawing without an eraser. It's not where you start, but where you wind up.

## Lo-Jinx Softball

(continued from page 20)

shortstop Buddy Block had two hits each for the Aces, in the losing cause.

It was bittersweet. We had lost, but we had won. Two-plus months competing against other teams in an organized League. Wow! We were happy, even in losing the Championship to the Panthers.

The "Proud League Leaders" were Batting Champ Lew Egol (Cobras), who hit .444 and had twelve hits; Stan Friedlander (Panthers), who had eleven hits and led with three doubles; Art Siegel (Cobras), leading with two triples; and Friedlander again, with nine RBIs. Four players shared the Homerun Championship, with one each. They were Hal Cohen and Ronnie Kohn, both on my Aces, Jay Szuran of the Cobras, and the League's Championship Pitcher, Jerry Lange (Panthers), who also led all pitchers with five wins and a 1.94 ERA.

In early July, Hal and I presented trophies (purchased from **Lo-Jinx Sporting Goods**) to the Panthers and their League-leading pitcher, Jerry Lange, and to the League Batting Champion Lew Egol (recruited from **B.H.S. Science**), of the Cobras.

That was truly a fabulous senior and junior year of high school for all of us. We really "hit it out of the park"!

LO-JINX SOFTBALL LEAGUE FINAL STANDINGS-1954

TEAM	W	L	PCT.	G.B.
Panthers	6	1	.857	-
Aces	5	2	.714	1
Crimsons	4	2	.667	1 1/2
Cobras	4	2	.667	1 1/2
Cyclones	1	5	.167	4 1/2
F's	0	6	.000	5 1/2
Bombers	0	6	.000	5 1/2

OFFICIAL BATTING RECORDS  
(based on 15 at bats)

PLAYER	TEAM	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	B-AVG.
Egol	Cobras	27	8	12	2	1	0	5	0	2	.444
Friedlander	Panthers	27	7	11	3	1	0	9	1	3	.407
Cohen	Aces	22	3	8	0	1	1	5	3	4	.364
Cullen	Aces	15	3	5	0	0	0	3	2	0	.333
Luftman	Panthers	22	5	7	2	1	0	7	2	4	.318
Schnur	Aces	17	4	5	2	1	0	4	0	5	.294
Waller	Aces	17	5	5	0	1	0	2	1	3	.294
*Dutler	Panthers	18	8	5	1	1	0	3	1	4	.278
Block	Aces	18	4	5	1	1	0	2	2	5	.278
Siegel	Cobras	22	6	6	0	2	0	3	4	2	.273
Herman	Cobras	22	4	6	0	0	0	2	2	2	.273
Zasky	Cobras	23	7	6	1	0	0	2	2	6	.261
Szuran	Cobras	24	4	6	2	0	1	6	1	2	.250
Kohn	Aces	20	1	5	0	0	1	2	3	3	.250
Greenstein	Panthers	20	7	5	2	0	0	6	3	11	.250
Rogers	Crimsons	16	2	4	2	0	0	1	1	1	.250
Cataldo	Panthers	25	2	6	0	0	0	6	0	4	.240
Simon	Aces	18	2	4	1	0	0	5	2	2	.222
Goodman	Panthers	23	9	5	0	1	0	4	2	3	.217
Mindich	Panthers	24	7	4	2	1	0	2	3	5	.167
Lange	Panthers	25	6	4	0	0	1	4	1	3	.160
*Bppner	Aces	21	4	6	1	0	0	5	1	1	.286

OFFICIAL PITCHING RECORDS  
(based on 25 innings)

PITCHER	TEAM	IP	BB	R	W	L	WL%	H	SO	ER	ERA	
Lange	Panthers	41	2	33	17	5	1	.833	20	30	9	1.94
Egol	Cobras	47	43	36	4	2		.667	38	25	26	4.98
Waller	Aces	42	1	31	17	3	2	.600	34	24	10	2.12
Schuman	Crimsons	34	11	27	2	2		.500	37	11	15	3.97

/ denotes league lead.





## Home Sweet Home Ec.

### To the Editors:

I enjoyed Marion Pollack's story "Model Apartment" in your recent issue. But I don't think she did her Home Ec. class at P.S. 36. It is still located (last I checked) at the intersection of Castle Hill Avenue and the Cross Bronx Expressway. I attended second through sixth grades there in the 1950s.

As far as I remember, there was no eighth grade, nor shop classes for boys or Home Ec. classes for girls. These were in junior high school, and the one most pupils from P.S. 36 went to was Henry Hudson Junior High School (J.H.S. 125), on Pugsley between Haviland and Watson. I attended seventh and ninth grades there, and I do remember taking a typing course (for which I am grateful to the present day). Perhaps Ms. Pollack's Home Ec. adventures took place there?

**Henry R. Cooper, Jr.**  
Emeritus Professor, Indiana University

## The Bronx Civilization

### To the Editors:

I truly enjoyed Steve Samtur's presentation on Zoom of "The Bronx: The Way It Was". It was a great presentation (thanks, Steve!) and it got my mind "mined". I started thinking about what a blessing it was to grow up in The Bronx of the '50s. It still lives within me. I started focusing on friends that I had, and girls I had dated just in the West Bronx only, for some reason. Even though I didn't live there (my grandmother, two aunts, and an uncle did), I felt right at home.

I also felt comfortable with the Fordham Roller Rink, Poe Park (where I met my wife), the 170<sup>th</sup> Street tunnel under the Concourse, the bowling

alleys, the ice skating, the hills that let me have so much fun with my bike, and the Woodlawn Jerome line (#4) that was fun to ride. Yankee Stadium was a great experience too. Fordham Road has plenty of memories, as do other streets.

The Bronx in those days, including Parkchester, of course, was a *civilization*, rivaling that of Ancient Greece and Rome in greatness. All we have to do is look at the people who came out of it and who grew up there (including us). That is why I go back to Parkchester, and certain other streets, every year. It is also why I leave that area, depressed, every year, as anyone who studied ancient history would about Athens and Rome.

One more thing: I never found out who the beautiful blonde was who lived in the building opposite 15 Marcy Place between Walton and Jerome Avenues. I never got to talk with her, but I realize that today she is probably a grandmother, around 75-76 years old, and I am sure she doesn't live in the same building. No complaints.

**Jay Becker**  
Bronxjay@optonline.net

## Quail Man

### To the Editors:

I was born at Hunts Point Hospital on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1938. I was blessed to be raised in a more gentle time in our nation's history. As a child, my brother and I could walk to school (P.S.71) and even go home for lunch. It was after the Second World War, and times were good. Dad worked as a machinist at Sperry Rand and mom kept our family home spotless. We lived downstairs in Grandpa Rizzo's two-family home. I loved the outdoors even at an early age, as my dad loved to hunt and fish, and I yearned to go too!

After I graduated high school (DeWitt Clinton), I decided to enter the Air Force. I trained as an Aircraft & Jet Engine Mechanic in Amarillo, Texas. I was then assigned to the 49<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron in Savannah, GA as an Assistant Crew Chief on B-47 jet bombers. The B-47 was the Air Force's first all-jet bomber, and it was state-of-the-art at that time.

Under the command of General Curtis Le May, "The Strategic Air Command" was the main deterrent to keep Soviet Russia and China at bay. The B-47, at its inception, did not even have defensive



guns aboard, as there was no fighter in the world that could catch it at the altitude it flew. It was called the Strato Bomber.

Then, the Soviet's Mig 17 came on the scene and that all changed. As with the first of anything, the aircraft was plagued with many problems, and as the Cold War progressed, the tactics for deploying the bomber changed, employing methods and maneuvers which structurally the aircraft was never designed to do.

After the Air Force years, I fell in love and married the love of my life (as young men do), and we made our home in Savannah, GA. The outdoor life was available here, with abundant fishing and hunting opportunities. My father-in-law introduced me to quail hunting, and I acquired an English Pointer. The breed scents game birds, and freezes up on "point" to indicate where the birds are. All of a sudden they flush, with as many as 15-20+ birds in the air. The flush comes with a loud sound of wings, and if you let it, it can unnerve you.

I quickly became a conservationist hunter and worked with many organizations, providing habitat improvement and additional wild game food sources, nesting, and escape cover for the quail and other wildlife.

Whoever would have imagined a boy from The Bronx becoming the President of The Savannah Chapter of Quail Unlimited? A very southern gentlemen's sport, a gentleman farmer that grows Long Leaf Pine trees for future generations, and a provider of wildlife food plots for all game and non-game species. It has been a good life.

I worked in the paper mills as a maintenance supervisor, and coached Little League Baseball and Football with kids of all different races and backgrounds. Even now, I have to admit that when they stop me in a store or in the street and show me their kids and families, I do cloud up a bit (the Lord put my bladder too close to my eyes). I do not get to go back to Pelham Bay as often as I did when I was younger, but I remember sitting on the stoop and watching the ducks fly south in the fall, thinking, "They must know something I need to learn. Maybe I should follow them!"

**Anthony L. (Tony) Calandra**  
**bucktote@comcast.net**

## Bronx Botany

### To the Editors:

By the age of ten or twelve, we could name our world: every street, train station, bus stop, candy store, ethnic church, ghetto, and gang, even the individual drunks leaning on the lampposts outside the weathered doors of the dark bars.

Urban kids with city smarts, we walked and went to sleep with the mental maps of the neighborhoods we needed to know, a kind of pre-adult cultural competence that even our parents did not command or give us credit for, locked as they were in their larger-yet-limited grown-up world of work and home.

But for all our nuanced knowledge of people, places, religions, and safe routes home, at that stage of life our childhood botany was even simpler than what we knew of sexual anatomy: grass, bush, flower, and tree filled our total inventory of what grew in the local park: an egg-shaped former reservoir since filled in to make playgrounds, tennis courts, ball fields, a quarter-mile track, and a circuit of benches. There, in late afternoons at her favorite seat, I'd find my grandmother to walk her home across the busy road that ringed the park's walls. In the heart, flanks, and curves of "The Oval", the essential, but largely unnoticed, plants served, for my friends and I, as backgrounds, pathways, frames, borders, or zones that we hid behind, ran through, skirted around, rolled in, or climbed over.

One day, a friend's mother asked us, "What do you do for so many hours in that hedge, the one with all the forsythia?" It had never occurred to me that flowers had names, much less one that sounded like the dark-eyed Italian girl in my sixth-grade class.

By full adolescence, running cross-country for my high school team, my terms for the landscape I jogged through were almost as elemental as those of my elementary school days: meadows, hills, ditches, rock faces; these were the features that the course snaked through at Van Cortlandt Park, the third largest in the city, an oasis from concrete canyons and sweaty asphalt, with a long-forgotten African-American burial ground itself buried somewhere among the woods and their other wounds.

Not much over five feet tall, with a short stride and only a modicum of motivation, I never had a chance of placing well, much less winning, in a race, which was a relief before these events even started, as I saw



the two-and-a-half miles ahead of me as an outing, not a test; a half-day in urban country, far removed from the moods and measures of my family's tiny apartment. I was happy to fill my lungs, feel my small body grow itself, taste the salt of exertion, and know the ecstasy in exhaustion, a kind of sex for the soul, whose embrace made me cry in relief for the onliness of a long-distance runner, grateful for the solitude, and never lonely in the crowded field.

At those times, I could step deeper into the pulsing chambers of the park's green heart, the arms of its

trees, the angled, warm rocks of its thighs and groin, and for a brief score of breaths displace even lovely, red-haired Roberta Nadel of Cruger Avenue from my private realm of desire, letting the stony curves, the dust and dips and green scrim of the course take over the place where the poetry of those moments would plant itself, where what had once been freedom's backdrop now became its reason for being.

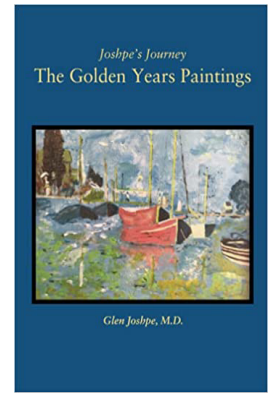
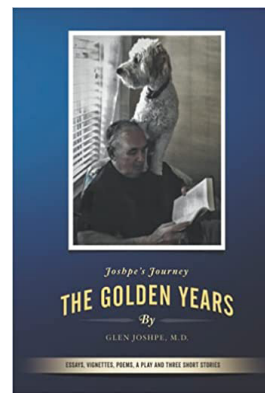
**Joel Savinsky**  
savishin@gmail.com



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**Glen Joshpe, MD**, Monroe '61, has published two new books available on Amazon. The first, Joshpe's Journey: The Golden Years, includes humorous vignettes, essays, a play, short stories, and poems. The second volume is called Paintings from the Golden Years. For more information, contact the author at [gjoshpe@hotmail.com](mailto:gjoshpe@hotmail.com).



**Playing cops & memoirs**

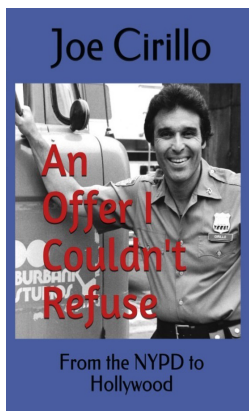
**JOE Cirillo**, a cop, once handled red-carpet security. Knew every celebrity and VIP. Now he's written the autobio "An Offer I Couldn't Refuse."

He was assigned to high crime's 20th Precinct in the turbulent '60s and '70s, when the NYPD was respected. I cringe reading about hatred for law enforcement and our nation's police officers. Something must be done to return respect to police officers in New York, the greatest city in the world."

A F.S. I remember 1964's riots. Six consecutive nights of vandalism and looting and shooting in Harlem and Bed-Stuy and Brownsville. Thousands of rioters. Some led attacks on the New York Police Department. New Yorkers beaten. Hundreds injured. More hundreds arrested. One dead.

A REASON the infrastructure bill is stalled is because way-out-of-towners sniff that New York is getting too much money. The fact that our infrastructure links the entire northeast corridor, which supports half the country's economy, they forget. But they'd remember to approve funds for the Tallahatchie Bridge on Choctawhatchee in Mississippi.

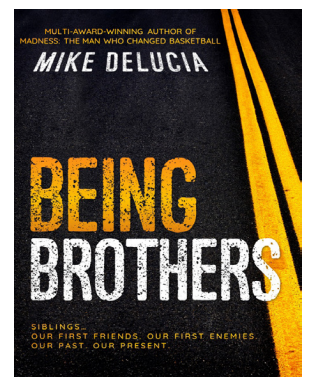
Only outside New York, kids, only outside New York.



Born and raised in The Bronx, **Joe Cirillo**, "The Kid from A-hun Forty-Eight Street", writes about his love of movies while growing up during the Great Depression and World War II, in his new book, entitled An Offer I Couldn't Refuse: From the NYPD to Hollywood. The book has been receiving number positive reviews on Amazon and beyond. After serving in combat during the Korean War, he returned to The Bronx, married his fiancé, and served as a patrolman for 20 years in the NYPD. While a police officer, he befriended Producer/Director Mike Nichols, who made him an offer he couldn't refuse: become an actor in the movies and fulfill his childhood dreams. Read about Cirillo's early childhood and his relationships with many stars, including

Frank Sinatra, Tom Hanks, Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, Sophia Loren, Jackie Gleason, Telly Savalas, and many more. The book is available on Amazon.

Being Brothers by **Mike DeLucia** is a multi-award winning novel which takes place in The Bronx in 1973. It's the time of street games, riding bikes without helmets, drinking from hoses, and the wonderful world before cell phones. It explores family, friendship, and the profound impact of our past. It's available on Amazon as paperback, eBook, and audiobook. Go to Amazon and search "Being Brothers by Mike DeLucia". <https://getbook.at/beingbrothers>



# Classified

**DEADLINES** for ad submissions are **Mar. 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15.**

**MP 9859 – DeWitt Clinton H.S. Alumni:** A 65-year reunion of the Class of 1957 is planned for May, 2022. Contact: lewaaronson@ca.rr.com for details.

**MP 9860 – Diane Kraemer,** lived in Yonkers but schooled in The Bronx, **St. Barnabas Elementary School, Spellman '69** – Looking for these friends: Christine Iacobacci, Mary Pia. Contact: dakraemer@aol.com.

**MP 9861 – Joe Bales,** Fordham & Walton Avenues, **P.S. 33, P.S. 79, Machine & Metal Trades '56.** Contact: joebales39@yahoo.com.

**MP 9862 – Marlene Spitz Silverstein, P.S. 109, P.S. 82, Taft '67** – Looking forward to finding Joyce Falco, Murray Michaels. Contact: newgelt@optonline.net.

**MP 9863 – Nora McCarten Cooper,** 2430 Marion Avenue, **Our Lady of Mercy, St. Catherine Academy '59** – Looking for Patricia Murphy. Contact: noco23292329@gmail.com.

**MP 9864 – Dolly Powers Curtis, NYU '66.** Contact: dollycurtis72@gmail.com.

**MP 9865 – Cliff Brenner,** Mosholu Parkway & 204<sup>th</sup> Street, **Grace Lutheran School '67** (2930 Valentine Avenue) – Would like to share memories with fellow alumni. Contact: cbrenner@pace.edu.

**MP 9866 – Robert Wolchik,** Burke Avenue, Gun Hill Road area, **Immaculate Conception, Mt. St. Michael '67** – Searching for Dennis Urzo, Cary Soccia, Peter Milio. Contact: wolchikr@gmail.com.

**MP 9867 – Barbara Luna Johnson,** 2600 Creston Avenue, **P.S. 46, P.S. 115, Science '62** – Looking for Eva Gottlieb (P.S. 115, M&A) and Paulette Fialkoff (Science '62). Contact: bvjohnso@gmail.com.

**MP 9868 – Judy (Siegman) Thorburn, Evander '68** – Wanted! I am looking for a copy of the 1968 Evander Childs High School yearbook. I have checked numerous websites, including classmates.com, eBay, and others, and nothing shows up as available for that year. I am willing to pay a reasonable amount for a reprint. Contact: judythorburn1@gmail.com.

**MP 9869 – Shel Merr, Bronx Community College '70-'73** – If you hung out in the Puerto Rican corner of the Fordham Center lounge and remember me, please write. Contact: Box 180, Carmel, NY, 10512.

**MP 9870 – Larry Epstein** – Looking for Alvin Appel & Eli Levine, or anybody who lived between 176<sup>th</sup> Street & Tremont Avenue (1940s). Contact: 386-931-7488.

**MP 9871 – Norma Friedlander Gates,** 1330 Intervale Avenue, **P.S. 40, Monroe '50** – Anyone still around? I now live in Newington CT. Contact: 860-521-3000 or kipperroo@icloud.com.

**MP 9872 – Linda Sussman** (now Linda Hunt Beckman), 2764 Creston Avenue (197<sup>th</sup> Street), **P.S. 46, E.B.B., Walton H.S. '59, Hunter College** – Trying to find Carole Hamlin, Charlie Perillo, Jaqueline Heller, Richard Isaacson, Phyllis Altschuler, Lona Gilbert. Contact: lindabeckman42@gmail.com.

**MP 9873 – Dorothy Zanelli,** 1603 Hobart Avenue, **P.S. 71** (1940-1953). Contact: skyedot40@gmail.com or 817-744-7282.

**MP 9874 – Peter Bloch, J.H.S. 44, Science '62** – Let's have a J.H.S. 44 Reunion (classes of 1950-1952)! Contact: peterann@nj.rr.com or 862-243-0225.

**MP 9875 – Charles Ludwin,** 1675 Andrews Avenue, **Macombs J.H.S., Taft '59** – Looking for Julius Simon, Jay Ashkenazy. Contact: cludwin315@aol.com.

**MP 9876 – Ann Progler** – Lived in The Bronx, 1946-1956. Went to H.S. in Richmond Hill, Queens. Came back in 1962 and have been there since. Would love to see old friends again. Contact: ann\_mariel@verizon.net.

**MP 9877 – Susan Gilbert** and her friend **Leo Stadt,** Mosholu Parkway, **J.H.S. 80** – Would love to hear from some beloved friends: Larry Blum, Stan Newman, Rosalie Bronstein, Alan Rosenberg, Big Marty Newman, Barry Spiegler, Georgia Korhan. Contact: BAL1998@aol.com.

**MP 9878 – Philip Zimbardo,** South Bronx, East 151<sup>st</sup> Street, Southern Boulevard, Avenue St. John, **P.S. 25, P.S. 52, Monroe '50** – Looking for any Monroe grads 1948-1951. Contact: drzimbardo@gmail.com or 415-999-4998.

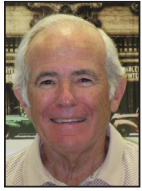
**MP 9879 – Richard Wagner,** 2821 Briggs Avenue (corner of 197<sup>th</sup> Street), **Our Lady of Refuge** – Looking for Richie Birch & Danielle Dwyer. Contact: rwagner2006@hotmail.com.

**MP 9880 – Thomas Molnar,** Kingsbridge and Van Cortlandt Park, **P.S. 86, Tetard J.H.S. 143, DeWitt Clinton '75.** Contact: campalot@mail.com, 201-522-9206.

**MP 9881 – David Stolls,** 1155 Gerard Avenue, **P.S. 114, J.H.S. 22 (Jordan Mott), Bronx H.S. of Science** – Looking to find old acquaintances from my block on Gerard Avenue, as well as the guys by 1240 Walton Avenue (where I spent most of my days playing Johnny on the Pony, Stickball, and Touch Football right against Morrisania Hospital). Contact: linedancr@aol.com.

**MP 9882 – Jocelyn Lewis-Evans,** Longfellow Avenue, **P.S. 47, I.S. 84, Adlai E. Stevenson H.S.** – Don't have a specific person I'm looking for because there were so many friends (some I see on Facebook). Contact: jocabri1969@gmail.com.





Stephen M. Samtur



Susan J. Samtur

# From The Editors . . .

(continued from page 2)



Stan Lee Way street sign

Stan Lee now has a street named after him in The Bronx, where he grew up. Lee received many awards and honors in his lifetime, and this one is extra special, as it not only honors the neighborhood Lee grew up in, but also the Marvel Universe he helped create. Lee is one of the most influential comic book creators of all time, having created the Marvel Universe that fans know and love today, and he sadly passed away on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at the age of 95. Two and a half years later,

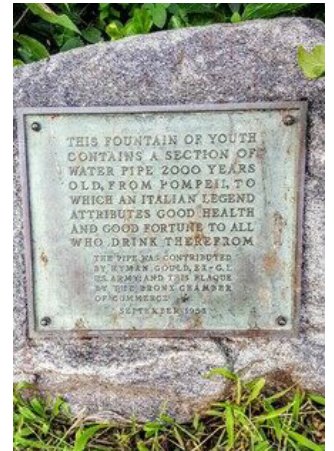


1720 University Avenue

Stan's hometown has named a street in his honor, and the city recently held a dedication ceremony.

Named "Stan Lee Way", the street is located on University Avenue between Brandt Place and West 176<sup>th</sup> Street. Lee attended DeWitt Clinton as a teenager, and it was there that his love of writing developed and was nurtured. Although he would spend his later years in Los Angeles, New York always held a place in Stan Lee's heart. A good portion of the characters he helped create live in the Big Apple and help keep it safe. Naming a street after Stan makes sense, in light of his love of the city and his cultural contributions.

Of the more than two million visitors who visit the Bronx Zoo each year, few pass through the gorgeous Art Deco Rainey Memorial Gates. Fewer still notice the plaque marking a "Fountain of Youth" located just down the path inside the gates, promising "good health and good fortune to all who drink there from," attributed to an Italian legend. Is this a true holy grail, hidden in plain sight? Or is there more to the story?



Bronx Zoo's  
Fountain of Youth  
Plaque

It seems an enterprising Bronx resident, Hyman Gould, returned home from a trip with a special souvenir, a 12-inch piece of lead pipe, which he was told came from an ancient fountain that granted all its drinkers good health, good looks, and good fortune. Working with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce and The Bronx Borough President, they concocted a tourist trap in the form of a drinking fountain to come and sip the rejuvenating waters springing from the Pompeii pipe. It seemed, in the end, that this tall tale never took off in the way Gould had hoped, and only the plaque remains to tell the story. However, The Bronx still attracts its fair share of concession-consuming visitors thanks to the beloved Bronx Zoo.



Reimagining the Cross-Bronx Expressway decked over to create green spaces

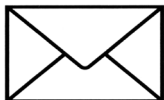
It may be our region's most-hated highway: The Cross-Bronx Expressway, considered by many to be an unhealthy scar on the landscape. Now, a proposal is gathering momentum to "cap" the highway, creating open space and parkland. Decking would cover the sunken roadway to create green space on top. Special vents would clean exhaust from vehicles on the newly-covered road. This has been done on a smaller scale in Dallas and elsewhere. At 2.5 miles, the Cross-Bronx proposal would be the biggest on the East Coast.

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