

Reminiscing

years ago. Her response was, "What business?"

She called Butch's mom and asked if she knew anything about our shoeshine business. His mother replied that maybe she had seen us shining shoes in her apartment on a couple of occasions, but she didn't recall that we did it every week. My mother was very suspicious of my tale, so she quickly involved my dad.

That Sunday morning, I was called into the kitchen. My dad told me that my mother had shown him my bank book and wanted to know how I happened

to have more money in the bank than they did. He also suggested that perhaps I should be paying for my own bar mitzvah. The conversation took a curious turn when my mother asked me if I had been going into

the "dark park", and I told her that I had never heard of such a place. I kept telling her that I had earned all the money from our shoeshine business in **835 Walton Avenue**. I told her to go to people she was close to in the building and ask them if I had been shining their shoes for the past four years, and so she did.

I guess that she was satisfied with my story, as the topic came to an end at that point. I was allowed to



Franz Sigel Park (AKA the "dark park"), 158th Street and Walton Avenue

Park, which was diagonally across the street from my building (you will have to read the book for the details).

As I read the chapter, I was reminded of my mother



Game 3, 1964 World Series ticket stub

asking me about going into the "dark park" back in 1964. It all made sense now. On my next visit to my parents, I brought the book and read them the section of profits being made in the shadows of the "dark park". I asked my mom if she had thought that this was the source of my earnings back when I was a boy. She looked

at me for a moment, laughed, and said, "I don't think so; you were always a good boy."



keep the money, which I used to buy a car when I turned eighteen and to help pay for medical school when I turned 21.

Fast forward to the fall of 1996. I was 45 years old. My mom was 70 and my dad was 74. My friend Beth had read the book, <u>Sleeping Arrangements</u>, by Laura Cunningham and gave me a copy. She thought I would enjoy the story, as it was about an 8-year-old girl growing up in the neighborhood around **Yankee Stadium** in the 1950s. There was a chapter in the book about the exploits of this young girl in the "dark park", AKA **Franz Sigel**





Seeking Son of Sam

To the Editors:

Just finished your Fall Edition, and it brought back some great memories. 1457 Wilkins Avenue is where I started my 22 years with the NYPD, followed by 20 additional years in law enforcement. "Son of Sam" was the last case I was assigned to. I retired the day after his August arrest. They had me sitting in an unmarked car, wearing a wig, for over two weeks. I was not a happy camper. Ahh, the memories.

Mel Waxman nypd220@bellsouth.net

G&Reat Issue!

To the Editors:

I received the Fall issue of *Back In THE BRONX* and read it cover-to-cover, as I always do. I hope you won't mind if I point out a few errors in the article, "A Bronx Food Memoir". The picture and address of the G&R at the top of the page are accurate. However, the reference to 182^{nd} Street is incorrect; all of those references should actually be 183^{rd} Street. I grew up on Valentine Avenue between 183^{rd} and 184^{th} Streets, and my mother would send me to get a rye bread at the G&R all the time (and of course, on Fridays she would send me there to get a *challah*). Dinah's was on the south side of 183^{rd} Street between Morris and Walton Avenues. They had Jewish dairy food, and it was delicious.

I met Steve Samtur at Ben's Restaurant in Scarsdale when he gave his slideshow presentation, "The Bronx: The Way It Was", a couple of years ago. I graduated from DeWitt Clinton in 1959. I've had a subscription to this magazine since 1996, and each issue brings back such fond memories of my childhood.

Elliott Markowitz Yonkers, NY

The Pen Is Mightier

To the Editors:

The "Penmanship" article in the Fall 2020 issue brings to mind a YouTube featurette I've recently seen.

Japanese employers insist that resumes sent to them by jobseekers be handwritten in the Kanji script. The slightest error in penmanship is taken as evidence of carelessness and therefore deems the applicant a risk to employ. The cultural difference from the Western one is so vast!

Morry Jaffe mjnyc@hotmail.com

Kings of Kingsbridge

To the Editors:

I recently wrote to Howard Suer, who had an article in your Fall issue about the Kingsbridge Theater. In 2012, my own article on the Kingsbridge appeared in *Back In THE BRONX*. I faintly recall Howard calling me at that time.

From Howard's article, I see that we either preceded or succeeded each other as ushers (I was not his "trumpet-playing colleague"). I also went to P.S. 86 (then Creston J.H.S., Bronx Science, CCNY, and Columbia Law School). I lived on Morris Avenue at the corner of Kingsbridge Road, across the street from the theater.

My experience working there was remarkably similar to Howard's. I also got to know Carter and remember him as a quiet, gentle man. I too sometimes helped him put the letters on the marquee and visited him in his basement room. We would sometimes watch a movie together, sitting in the first row, enjoying whatever was playing. Eventually, I stopped visiting him in the basement room, but I still have fond memories of our time together.

I also enjoyed the prestige of the epaulets, the trousers with the stripe, and the flashlight. I remember having the uniform jacket fitted for me in the tailor ship across the street, which Mr. Sterns paid for with movie tickets.

Those were the days.

Hank Pollard adrpollard@aol.com





The Whole Nine Yardsticks

To the Editors:

First, let me say how much I enjoy reading *Back In THE BRONX* magazine! As the saying goes: "You can take the girl out of The Bronx, but you can't take The Bronx out of the girl!"

The article entitled "Club Maccabees" in the most recent issue really hit home. Not only did I know most of those boys, but all of the streets were "my" streets! Even the author's reference to Herman Ridder Junior High School was relevant. I couldn't go there because it was too far for an 11-year-old to travel daily. And so, when P.S. 93 became a 6th-grade school, we were sent to P.S. 77, across the street from James Monroe High School, the next destination (graduated January 1954).

Recently, after reading an article which pictured the Bronx Savings Bank, I just happened to notice that my yardstick (which I have had forever) is from, of all places, the Bronx Savings Bank (I previously sent a picture). Small world!

Thanks again, Steve, for a great job!

Arlene Langdon Lazar ahlazar@aol.com

Let's Go, Metz!

To the Editors:

I was happy to read your letter in response to the "My Neighborhood Candy Store" article in the Fall *Back In THE BRONX* issue. I too grew up on Webb Avenue, specifically 2715 Webb Avenue, from 1947 until 1963. During this time, I went to P.S. 86 (walked down 195th Street to get there) and De Witt Clinton H.S. (by way of two buses, one was the #20 I think).

The author is right in placing Metz's north of Kingsbridge Road on the west side, as well as the tailor and shoe store. I lived about three buildings up from there. If my memory serves, there was a drugstore on the eastern corner of Kingsbridge Road and Webb Avenue, and next to that was a relatively large grocery store. I don't remember what was on the western corner of Kingsbridge and Webb, but I think it was a bank (in the later years).

Also along Kingsbridge Road heading west was a butcher shop, a couple of green grocers, and a Jewish deli, where almost daily I had the best pastrami sandwich for 65 cents and a side order of potato salad or a square knish for 15 cents. Further down, almost on the corner of Sedgwick, was a large candy store. There was a fancier deli east of Webb Avenue called the "Tower Deli" but it was more expensive and not as good.

My building was close to Eames Place where, because of the lighter traffic, we played stickball, curbball, and stoop-ball on the steps of the "Kingsbridge Heights Jewish Center" synagogue. We played them all with a pink Spaldeen ball, which everyone had in those days. We also played "Heads or Tails" by flipping sports cards that came in chewing gum packs (probably bought at the Metz Candy Store) to the ground.

My neighborhood friends were Vic Feld (and his sister Dottie), Neil Bloom, Davey Schoenfeld, Doc, and Leo Cimini. Leo and his family were newly arrived from Italy, and I was from Austria. Somehow, we met and became friends. There were others who I am sure I will remember after you receive this.

As it is said: "Those Were the Days, My Friend."

Martin Weil kwam@comcast.net

YIK

To the Editors:

Somehow, in approximately 1954, our group of Kingsbridge Road area teenage boys became members of the Amsels, a social and athletic club located at the Young Israel of Kingsbridge Synagogue. Using the first letter of the synagogue name, it became known to us boys as YIK for short. There were eight of us in the club: me, Ron Barnett, Matt Berliner, John Fremed, Edson Darer, Marvin Anzel (not to be confused with Amsel), Steve Fisher, and Richy Housner. All are still alive and in their early 80s. There must be some magical stuff in Bronx water. After graduating from DeWitt Clinton High School in 1957, six of the eight Amsel club members joined the U.S. Army in the special active duty sixmonth reserve program.

Mr. Amsel was our generous "invisible" sponsor. None of us ever met Mr. Amsel. Why? I don't know. He bought us club jackets and basketball uniforms. There were lots of juvenile delinquent gangs in The Bronx at the time, like the infamous Fordham Baldies, so maybe it was Mr. Amsel's way of trying to keep some nice teenage kids from becoming delinquent gang members (even though our group was not predisposed to that). If there are any of Mr.





3 Amsel members in the U.S. Army. L-R: Ron Barnett, Matt Berliner, Marvin Anzel.

Amsel's descendants out there who can shed some light about him, please contact me.

We had a club coach, Jimmy Fontek, who took care of us and taught us various sports. Being the tallest of my friends, I was the center of our basketball team. I only remember playing one game at Jacob Schiff Center on Valentine Avenue. I think I fouled out. Jimmy also gave us fencing lessons. None of us were very adept at fencing, and we were lucky we didn't scar or kill each other.

Jacob Schiff's daughter, Dorothy, owned the *New York Post*, and from 1960 to 1968, I worked in the *Post* advertising department. In June of 1968, at the age of 28, I moved to Florida, not wanting to be one of those New Yorkers who waited until they were 65 to make that move. Four of the eight Amsel members now live in Florida.

The Amsels were expected to attend Saturday morning *Sabbath* services, which we did most times, except for the Saturday mornings we decided to stay at Marvin Anzel's apartment at 2693 Morris Avenue



L-R: Marvin Anzel, John Fremed, Herb Hirsch, Edson Darer, Ron Barnett, all wearing Amsel club jackets



Matt Berliner in Amsel YIK basketball uniform, 25 years later

and play pinochle or poker. Barnett and Darer also lived in the same building. Six of the eight members lived on Morris Avenue, in fact. We were somewhat unruly at synagogue services, and older, more serious worshippers would say to us (in Yiddish), "*Sha Shtil*! Quiet!" Of course, that would just make things worse by setting off uncontrollable giggling.

I recall a girl/boy party that was set up in the social hall. One of the girls accompanied me into the synagogue sanctuary, where we sat on the president's chair on the altar and necked. To this day, Ron Barnett doesn't let me forget my sacrilegious behavior. At another social, one of the girls asked if anyone could dance the tango, and I said I could. I had never danced the tango in my life (or since), but that night you would have thought I was Rudolph Valentino.

The Amsel club jackets and basketball uniforms had the letters YIK on them. I don't know whose idea that was, but the word YIK has stuck with me all these years. I don't know what happened to my jacket and uniform. I wish I had them, just as I wish I had my army uniform and many other of life's lost treasures. Somehow, these lost items only become more important as the years go by and we no longer have them. But luckily, the good memories linger on almost 70 years later.

Herb Hirsch condoherb@aol.com





Fond Memories

To the Editors:

My name is Herman Kunes, age 96, a WWII Marine Air Corp Vet, and still in good health. My fondest memories are from The Bronx, where I was brought up from ages 8-17. Born in Trenton, N.J., I moved with my family to The Bronx in 1933. My family at that time included my parents, a brother (age 11), sister (age 5), and another brother (age 2). We lived at 1402 Prospect Avenue.

Two years later, my father passed away at Lincoln Hospital, as a result of a fall while cleaning windows on the second floor of an apartment on Jennings Street. That, of course, was a terrible time for our family; we required assistance from the Board of Child Welfare. Nevertheless, we managed to get by, as my older brother and I sought jobs of all kinds to assist the family. I shined people's shoes, delivered WetWash, delivered telegrams for Western Union and Postal Telegraph, and did whatever else I could to earn the nickels I would bring home to Mother. My older brother did the same.

As for schooling, I attended P.S. 54, J.H.S. 40, and Morris H.S. I believe General Colin Powell may have also gone to my high school. For some reason, my older brother attended Monroe. I still recall swimming in the nude as one of the class requirements at J.H.S. 40. But at Morris, my interest was in gymnastics, with my teacher Mr. Von Kemp instructing. Around Christmas time, we gymnasts would put on a show in the Auditorium for all the students and teachers.

Our family moved to 1338 Stebbins Avenue, an apartment complex, when I was around 13 years of age. We lived there until I entered the Marine Corps in 1943. After the Service, I moved with my family back to Trenton.

I recall playing stickball and Johnny on the Pony, roller-skating, cooking "mickies" (potatoes) on fires set on the street, and visiting Orchard Beach, City Island, Crotona Park, and so many other enjoyable excursions. Of course, riding my Columbia bicycle was a daily event as well.

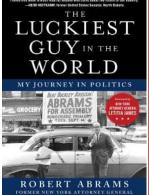
My future as a 96-year-old is now somewhat limited, but I can say that my Bronx days will always be foremost in my memory.

Herman Kunes chuckmm@aol.com

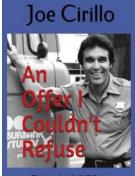


Bob Abrams, who grew COME BLOW YOUR HORN up in Pelham Parkway and became Borough President of The Bronx and then Attorney General of the State of New York, has just written a memoir, Accomplishments • Works In Progress The Luckiest Guy in the World: My Journey in Politics. He

recounts his going to P.S. 105, P.S. 34, and Christopher Columbus High School, as well as his first campaign for state assembly, with his grandmother giving out political leaflets and shopping bags on the corner of Lydig Avenue and White Plains Road.



Bob worked in his mom and dad's luncheonette at 2000 Holland Avenue opposite



From the NYPD to Hollywood

the old Bronxdale Swimming Pool. The book is filled with great nostalgic photos. You can get more information about the book and how you can order your own copy by going to the book's website: luckiestguyintheworldbobabrams.com.

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. 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.

Classified

DEADLINES for ad submissions are Mar. 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15. MP 9856 – 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 more details.

MP 9857 – Denise Sullivan, 3139 Perry Avenue, 3210 Bainbridge Avenue, 91 East 208th Street, St. Brendan, Simon Stock '60. Contact: dcs61261@gmail.com.

MP 9858 – Millie Mazzarella Klein, 189th Street & Hughes Avenue, Concourse & Mt. Eden Avenue, P.S. 32, J.H.S. 45, Grace Dodge '69. Contact: mnjklein@att.net.

MP 9859 – Joanne Bavolar Priolo, University Avenue in Highbridge, Sacred Heart, Spellman '73. Contact: jopriolo@sbcglobal.net.

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 & 204th Street, **Grace Lutheran School '67** (2930) Valentine Avenue) – Would like to share memories with fellow alumni. Contact: cbrenner@pace.edu.

MP 9866 – 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 9867 – 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 9868 – 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 9869 – Sher 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 176th Street & Tremont Avenue (1940s). Contact: 386-931-7488.

MP 9871 – Philip Zimbardo, South Bronx, East 151st 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 9872 – Norma Friedlander Gates, 1330 Intervale Avenue, P.S. 40, Monroe '50 – Anyone still around? I now live in Newington Avenue. Contact: 860-521-3000 or kipperroo@icloud.com.

MP 9873 – Linda Sussman (now Linda Hunt Beckman), 2764 Creston Avenue (197th 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 9874 – Dorothy Zanelli, 1603 Hobart Avenue, **P.S. 71** (1940-1953). Contact: skyedot40@gmail.com or 817-744-7282.

MP 9875 – 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 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 marie1@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 – **Richard Wagner**, 2821 Briggs Avenue (corner of 197th Street), **Our Lady of Refuge** – Looking for Richie Birch & Danielle Dwyer. Contact: rwagner2006@hotmail.com.



into a global movement, and our museum will celebrate that journey along with The Bronx's place in its history. For all those who rose with us and followed in our footsteps, this museum will be for you, forever. We can't wait to open our doors and welcome visitors from around the borough, the city, and the world to Bronx Point and the new home of hip hop!"

The Universal Hip Hop Museum also made the announcement on Instagram: "To our loyal supporters, we have officially started construction. Hip Hop will finally have a home to call its own in the birthplace where it all started. The biggest and the most amazing groundbreaking ceremony fundraiser is being planned for the Spring. You do not want to miss out. More information about how to watch/attend will be provided soon. A special press announcement about our Phase 2 capital campaign will be shared later this month." The new construction will also house an early childhood space run by BronxWorks and an outdoor science program operated by the Billion Oyster Project.



Vaccinations available at Yankee Stadium

Opening Day is closing in, but the New York Yankees are going to bat for The Bronx, as Yankee Stadium will open its doors as a COVID-19 vaccine hub. The site at 1 E. 161st Street will operate strictly for qualified Bronx residents on an appointment only basis from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week; 15,000 appointments will be available for the hub's first week, according to Cuomo's office.

"The New York Yankees recognize the devastating effect COVID-19 has had on our borough, and it is our privilege to have Yankee Stadium as a host site for providing vaccines to Bronx residents," the Yankees

organization released in a statement. "These vaccinations will make an immediate difference in improving the health of our local community, which has been so overwhelmed by this pandemic," the bombers added.

The governor's office stated that Yankee Stadium was selected to "directly address The Bronx's concerning positivity rate," the highest of all five boroughs. It also looks to close the vaccine inequality gap that has developed citywide. "It's abundantly clear that Black, Latino, and poor communities have been hit the hardest by COVID, and The Bronx is no exception," Cuomo said. "Our efforts to target vaccinations by locations with higher positivity rates have been working to not only keep the infection rate down, but to help ensure equity in our vaccine distribution process, and opening a mass vaccination site at Yankee Stadium, The Bronx's most iconic landmark, is the perfect solution to helping this borough get vaccinated and defeat COVID once and for all," he added.

De Blasio reiterated a similar message to the governor, saying, "Yankee Stadium has always been known for its World Series banners, but now it'll be recognized as a place where the people of the surrounding community in The Bronx can receive the vaccine doses that they need and deserve," adding that the site is about "justice" to the communities hardest hit by the virus. Those Bronx residents who are eligible for vaccination can schedule appointments by visiting Somosvaccinations.com or by calling 1-833-SOMOS-NY. Proof of Bronx residency is also required and must be brought to an appointment by way of the following: state or government-issued ID, statement from landlord, current rent receipt or lease, or mortgage records. Residents can also bring two of the following: statement from another person, current mail, and school records.

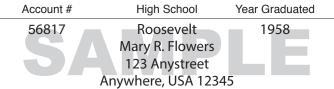


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| Signature | | |

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