Gizmo Snatch & Grab

Maya J. Pope-Chappell
Catholic schools to merge

By Michéle De Meglio

Two Catholic schools in Windsor Terrace may merge. That’s if the Diocese of Brooklyn approves its proposal to close or merge 29 schools in Brooklyn and Queens. Locally, Immaculate Heart of Mary at 3002 Fort Hamilton Parkway and Holy Name at 241 Prospect Park West could become one school. It would be located at Prospect Park West.

Holy Name referred calls to the diocese. Immaculate Heart of Mary’s principal could not be reached for comment by press time.

Many — if not most — of the 29 schools in jeopardy of closing or merging are now formulating busi-

Preservationists rally against the proposed 18-story Dock Street DUMBO building, saying it will block their view of the Brooklyn Bridge.
GIZMO SNATCH & GRAB

Nabe is ground zero for thefts

By Maya J. Pope-Chappell

A pocket of Brooklyn has the highest juvenile crime rate in the city — and police say robberies of iPods, fancy cell phones and other expensive electronic devices are at least partly to blame.

“That’s the new thing,” said 84th Precinct Crime Prevention Officer John Kenny. “They just snatch it off your ear. The era of cell phones, BlackBerrys, iPods — that’s the source of a lot of these robberies.”

Police are targeting youth crime in Community District 2, which includes Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene and Boerum Hill.

A 2007 New York City Police Department Statistical Report found there were 28.7 arrests per 1,000 youths age 16 and under on felony and misdemeanor charges in Community District 2. That’s more than double the juvenile crime rate for New York City, and the highest rate of any district in the five boroughs.

Youth Officer Julius Hudson, of the 84th precinct, said that most juvenile crimes occur when students get out of school. The community district has 32 public schools and 16 private institutions, many of which are close to one another.

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Teen gizmos targeted

"As for now, we do have a little rise in student incidents in the area but it's mostly attributed to an influx of students being dismissed at the same time," he said.

Hudson said that the hot spots for juvenile crime shift from year to year, normally occurring when students from neighboring schools cross paths on their way to subway stations. Jay Street has proved a trouble spot in recent months, he added.

"We've heightened our police presence this year," Hudson said. "Our precinct is so flooded with officers. Almost anywhere you turn, there's someone in a uniform."

Jamall Merrimon, 13, a Prospect Heights resident and ninth-grade student who was walking down Jay Street after school one recent afternoon, said he has noticed the increase in police.

"I'm seeing a lot of patrol cars and more cops," he said. "A lot of investigations [are] happening and a lot of attacks. People starting fights and getting threatened with knives and things like that have been happening downtown lately."

In addition to boosting patrols, 84th Precinct cops have been picking up truants and giving speeches at various schools about safety and crime prevention.

"We work very closely with the NYPD," said Margie Feinberg, spokeswoman for the Department of Education. "We take school safety extremely seriously. And that's why we have a lot of programs for students so that we can address problems before they escalate."

The Department of Education banned cell phones in public schools in 2005. But Kenny said the ban should be more strictly enforced.

Vic Earl, 17, a senior at Urban Assembly School of Music and Art, disagreed.

"Some kids need it [cell phone]," he said. "The school be acting like they [students] can't use the office phone and sometimes you need it. Especially in an emergency."

But Tykese Simmons, 14, welcomed stronger enforcement of the ban. His limited edition Dwayne Wade T-Mobile Sidekick 3 was robbed over the summer by a group of teenagers. Although he was not hurt, Tykese is now out $400.

"Kids that don't go to school wait outside to see what phone and money you have," he said, "and if your phone is in the house, it can't get stolen."

Term limits and allowed the voters of this opportunity to elect officials of their choice. Corporation Counsel Michael A. C. Kitzinger agreed. "We asserted from the beginning that this case had no merit and we have agreed. Their true complaint was their First Amendment rights of political association were violated, but rather that they do not prevail."

James countered, "Obviously it's a sad day for democracy, but this is not the end, but the beginning of a campaign to realize term limits in the ballot box in November."

"No one is above the law including the judge and we should not amend or tailor the constitution to meet the needs of individual no matter how popular they may be," she added.

James, who along with Vincent Darlene Menley and Sara Gonzalez, is the fourth Brooklyn junior City Council member not affected by the term limit extension, another lawsuit should Bloomberg accede roll back the third term law if and after re-election.

The junior council members will not additional term based on what Bloomberg likely stated, and if the law is rolled back they will generate another lawsuit because it is the senior and junior council members' distinct classes, she said.