ASSEMBLYMEMBER ARAVELLA SIMOTES has introduced legislation that would allow law graduates who have yet to sit for the Bar exam to continue representing clients. First time test-takers were given priority for the exam.

“NEW YORK NEEDS TO BE MINDFUL about who will be immediately affected by limiting the pool of experienced professionals who can assist indigent clients during the COVID-19 pandemic — seniors, tenants being evicted from their homes and immigrants,” Simotes said. “We have an obligation to mitigate the risks to New Yorkers during this health crisis.”

A TEACHER FROM P.S. 122, THE Mamie Fay School in Astoria is under investigation after a video of her calling a teenage Black Lives Matter protestor an “Asian b—h” circulated. The teacher has been involved in other racist incidents, parents say. “When I saw the video, I said, ‘Oh, yeah, of course it’s her,’” one parent told Patch in a phone interview. “This was the teacher everyone had a problem with.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES IS SELLING a 3.5-acre site next to its printing facility in College Point.

NEW DRINKING RULES: NEW YORK state will shut down bars that receive three social distancing violations and watering holes can now only serve alcohol with food orders. Meanwhile, indoor spaces like museums and malls will not reopen in Phase 4.

FINBACK BREWERY, BASED IN GLENDALE, opened a second location with outdoor seating in Gowanacs. “The idea is really to do more experimental and in some ways pilot test batch,” founder Basil Lee told AMNY about the smaller brewing space. “As well as doing some things that we really want to brew that are more difficult from a volume standpoint to brew 60 barrels at a time.”

THE CITY’S LAND USE REVIEW process will resume after a three-month suspension, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Wednesday. The first virtual public meeting is scheduled for August 5.

“PUBLIC OVERSIGHT IS THE BACKBONE of our land use review procedure and it’s key to guaranteeing communities have a say in shaping their future,” said Councilmember Francisco Moya, chair of the land use subcommittee on zoning and franchises. “I look forward to seeing this democratic process pick up where we left off.”

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

Just 2 percent of eligible self-employed and gig economy workers in Queens received assistance through the federal Paycheck Protection Program, an analysis by the city comptroller’s office finds.

Queens residents hung “Cancel Rent” signs from a No. 7 train platform in May.

Queens gig workers miss out on PPP cash as New York trails 48 states in federal loan program

By Victoria Merlino
Queens Daily Eagle

Just 2 percent of eligible self-employed and gig economy workers in Queens received assistance through the federal Paycheck Protection Program, an analysis by the city comptroller’s office finds.

Workers in the so-called gig economy were eligible for the loans, but only 5,629 of Queens’ 266,193 “nonemployer” businesses received money through the Paycheck Protection Program, which passed as part of the federal CARES Act in April. Non-employer businesses include self-employed individuals, independent contractors and sole proprietorships.

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

‘Too Many Requests’

New York’s new rental relief website immediately crashes

A brand new state website that enables New Yorkers affected by COVID-19 to apply for rental assistance crashed less than 10 minutes after going live Thursday.

The COVID Rent Relief Program, administered by the state’s Department of Homes and Community Renewal, will provide certain New York households with a one-time rental subsidy that the state will send directly to landlords. A July 8 report by Bloomberg finds that roughly 25 percent of New York City tenants have not paid their rent since March due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis, which has led to a spike in unemployment.

Queens’ 266,193 “nonemployer” businesses include self-employed individuals, independent contractors and sole proprietorships.
NYC nonprofit now covers rent for families facing COVID homelessness

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

A local nonprofit is helping New Yorkers stave off homelessness as the unemployment rate rises and once stably housed families face dire financial choices.

The Partnership for the Homeless announced plans Monday to cover a portion of the rent for residents and families at risk of becoming homeless during the COVID-19 economic crisis. The agency also provides support services, legal assistance and landlord-tenant mediation.

“COVID-19 has exacted formidable stress and loss on countless low-income New Yorkers living paycheck to paycheck, with little to no savings,” said Partnership for the Homeless President Aine Duggan. “The brunt of its economic fallout will be borne by these same families, living in neighborhoods long since disenfranchised by structural discrimination, racism, and inequality.”

To apply for assistance, visit The Partnership for the Homeless website:

Queens nonprofit now covers rent for families facing COVID homelessness

A 40-year-old Astoria supermarket providing food for community members during the COVID-19 crisis shut its doors and lay off more than 150 employees, according to a notice filed Monday with the state Department of Labor.

The Astoria Food Co-op, which opened in 1980 and is owned by the Astoria Tenants Union, said it is “an automated messaging system, Durét said. The COVID Rental Relief Program reinforces that commitment with direct assistance to those in the greatest need,” said Gov. Andrew Cuomo in a statement announcing the rent relief portal.

Nori and his colleagues were attempting to assist a Spanish-speaking client with their application.

“We applied because this person didn’t have internet access and doesn’t speak English,” Nori said. “What chance does someone who doesn’t speak English, doesn’t have internet, or is using their phone to apply?”

HCR officials worked to correct the issues and by 3:30 p.m., the website was functioning.

“The last week that you seem to prefer to evict Key Food, even as your employees continue to serve Astorians who desperately need nutritious fresh food,” the four lawmakers wrote.

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Queens Daily Eagle

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Record number of LGBTQ candidates running for office

By David Crary — Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The number of openly LGBTQ elected officials in the United States has more than doubled in the past four years — and those ranks could soon grow, thanks to a record number of openly LGBTQ candidates running for office, according to a report released Thursday, tallies 843 openly LGBTQ elected officials affiliated with the Democratic Party and 184 Republicans. Among the LGBTQ candidates with solid chances of winning in November are several Democratic congressional contenders.

One is Gina Ortiz Jones, an Air Force veteran who nearly beat Republican incumbent Will Hurd in a southwest Texas district two years ago, and now is viewed as an even stronger candidate in the mostly Hispanic district because of Hurd’s retirement.

Jones, in a telephone interview, said health care is the dominant issue on the minds of many of the district’s voters, but on the campaign trial she frequently shares her thoughts on the need for equality for LGBTQ people.

When she went to college on an Air Force ROTC scholarship and later served in Iraq as an intelligence officer, the non-deferred Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy was in effect — obligating gay and lesbian service members to be secretive about their sexual orientation.

“If they found out I was gay, I would have lost my scholarship,” she said. “I bringing my entire self to this race — people want to get a sense of the life that you’ve lived.”

In New York state, a gay Black attorney, Mondaire Jones, was this week declared winner of the Democratic primary for retiring U.S. Rep. Nita Lowey’s seat.

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New commander takes over at Fort Hamilton

B’klyn fort is NYC’s only military base

By Jaime De Jesus

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Col. Craig Martin assumed command of the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Hamilton — the only remaining active military base in New York City — on Tuesday, taking over for Col. Andrew Zieseniss.

“Look at this audience and it’s fulfilling for me because this is a diverse population as this city and our nation is,” said Martin at the change-of-command ceremony at the almost 200-year-old fort, which is bordered by Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights. “It proves we can come together as a city in Brooklyn and New York City and at Fort Hamilton and achieve great things.”

“People are the number one business to the Army. They are the number one priority. We take care of our soldiers, civilians and our families. They are critical, and without them we can’t accomplish anything. They make up communities,” he said.

Zieseniss, who held the post for two years, spoke about some of the hardships the area has faced, including the housing crisis last year and the COVID-19 pandemic, along with positives, such as the youth program created on the installation last fall.

“We repurposed our small staff and started to think outside of the box to work through an unprecedented challenge,” said Zieseniss. “We pushed hard to improve programs and infrastructure under fiscal constraints and we made significant progress in protecting this installation. Most importantly, we try to instill a sense of pride for those that live and work on this post.”

“Col. Zieseniss has led Fort Hamilton with great honor and distinction,” said U.S. Rep. Max Rose (D-Southwest Brooklyn-Staten Island).

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“Join the Garrison Fort Hamilton family and our entire community in thanking Col. Andrew Zieseniss for his service and wish him well in his next assignment,” said Assemblymember Nicole Malliotakis (R-Bay Ridge Staten Island). “We welcome Col. Craig Martin to Brooklyn and look forward to working with him.”

Fort Hamilton as we know it today was built between 1825 and 1831, although an earlier, smaller fort on the site helped defend New York Harbor against the British during the Revolutionary War and again during the War of 1812.

Among those who served at the fort were Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, who later fought against the U.S. and for the Confederacy, and Abner Doubleday, who served for the Union during the same Civil War. Indeed, during the 1840s, Lee, at that time a captain serving with the Army Corps of Engineers, was tasked with shoring up the defenses of the fort.

The streets at the fort are named after famous generals, beginning with George Washington, and two are named for Lee and Jackson. Mayor Bill de Blasio and Brooklyn Congressmembers Yvette Clarke and Max Rose have asked for the streets named for Lee and Jackson to be renamed because of their association with the Confederacy.

As for Major Gen. Abner Doubleday, he’s controversial for another reason. In the early 20th century, he was generally credited with inventing baseball in Cooperstown, N.Y., in 1839. Modern scholars discount this idea, which is not supported by evidence.

Col. Craig Martin (center left) is symbolically handed a flag in this ceremony marking his assumption of command of Fort Hamilton. Photo by Scott Cowell, Fort Hamilton

Col. Craig Martin speaks to reporters at the ceremony, with the Verrazzano Bridge in the background. Photo courtesy of Fort Hamilton

More than 22,500 LGBTQ people would need to win the Democratic primary for a congressional seat opening up in New York City’s northern suburbs. It’s an overwhelmingly Democratic district, so Jones has a strong chance of becoming a history maker in Congress — it’s never had an openly LGBTQ Black member.

Jones could have company in breaking that barrier. Gay New York City Councilman Ritchie Torres, who is Afro-Latino, also has a good chance of winning a congressional seat in the Bronx.

“Growing up poor, Black and gay, I never imagined someone like me could run for Congress, let alone win,” Jones said in his primary victory statement.

Among other LGBTQ congressional candidates — all Democrats — are Beth Doglio in California, and Pat Hackett in Indiana, Alex Morse in Massachusetts, and Georgette Gomez in California.

Gomez is currently president of the city council in San Diego, where a gay state legislator, Todd Gloria, is a leading contender in the race to become mayor.

The Victory Institute says the number of LGBTQ Black people and Hispanic people holding elected positions has doubled in the past three years — from 92 to 184.
We have all seen the alarming headlines: Coronavirus cases are surging in 40 states, with new cases and hospitalization rates climbing at an alarming rate. Health officials have warned that the U.S. must act quickly to halt the spread—or we risk losing control over the pandemic.

There’s a clear consensus that Americans should wear masks in public and continue to practice proper social distancing. While a majority of Americans support wearing masks, widespread and consistent compliance has proven difficult to maintain in communities across the country.Demonstrators gathered outside city halls in Scottsdale Arizona; Austin, Texas; and other cities to protest local mask mandates. Several Washington state and North Carolina sheriffs have announced that they will not enforce their state’s mask order.

I’ve researched the history of the 1918 pandemic extensively. At that time, with no effective vaccine or drug therapies, communities across the country instituted a host of public health measures to slow the spread of a deadly influenza epidemic. They closed schools and businesses, banned public gatherings and isolated and quarantined those who were sick. Many communities recommended or required that citizens wear face masks in public—and this, not the onerous lockdowns, drew the most ire.

In mid-October of 1918, amidst a raging epidemic in the Northeast and rapidly growing outbreaks nationwide, the United States Public Health Service circulated leaflets recommending that all citizens wear a mask. The Red Cross took out newspaper ads encouraging their use and offered instructions on how to construct masks at home using gauze and cotton string. Some state health departments launched their own initiatives, most notably California, Utah and Washington.

Nationwide, posters presented mask-wearing as a civic duty—social responsibility had been bedded into the social fabric by a massive wartime federal propaganda campaign launched in early 1917 when the U.S. entered the Great War. San Francisco Mayor James Rolph announced that “conscience, patriotism and self-protection demanded immediate and rigid compliance” with mask wearing. In nearby Oakland, Mayor John Davies stated that “it is sensible and patriotic, no matter what our personal beliefs may be, to safeguard our fellow citizens by joining in this practice” of wearing a mask.

Health officials understood that radically changing public behavior was a difficult undertaking, especially once many found masks uncomfortable to wear. Appeals to patriotism could go only so far. As one Sacramento official noted, people must be forced to do things that are for their best interests.” The Red Cross bluntly stated that “the man or woman or child who will not wear a mask now is a danger to himself and his neighbors.” Numerous communities, particularly across the West, imposed mandatory ordinances. Some sentenced scofflaws to short jail terms, and others levied fines ranging from $5 to $200.

Passing these ordinances was frequently a contentious affair. For example, it took several attempts for Sacramento’s health officer to convince city officials to enact the order. In Los Angeles, it was scuttled. A draft resolution in Portland, Oregon led to heated city council debate, with one official declaring the measure “autocratic and unconstitutional,” adding that “under no circumstances will I be muzzled like a hydrophobic dog.”

It was voted down. In Scottsdale, the police chief instructed officers to “Go out on the streets, and whenever you see a man or woman without a mask, send names and addresses of violators so they could be charged. When a mask order went into effect in Sacramento, the police chief instructed officers to “Go out on the streets, and whenever you see a man without a mask, bring him in or send for the wagon.” Within 20 minutes, police stations were flooded with offenders. In San Francisco, there were so many arrests that the police chief warned city officials he was running out of jail cells. Judges and officers were forced to work late nights and weekends to clear the backlog of cases.

Many who were caught without masks thought they might get away with running an errand or commuting to work without being nabbed. In San Francisco, however, initial noncompliance turned to large-scale defiance when the city enacted a second mask ordinance in January 1919 as the epidemic spiked anew. Many decreed what they viewed as an unconstitutional infringement of their civil liberties. On Jan. 25, 1919, approximately 2,000 members of the “Anti-Mask League” packed the city’s old Dreamland rink for a rally denouncing the mask ordinance and proposing ways to defeat it. Attendees included several prominent physicians and a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

It is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of the masks used in 1918. Today, we have a growing body of evidence that well-constructed cloth face coverings are an effective tool in slowing the spread of COVID-19. It remains to be seen, however, whether Americans will maintain the widespread use of face masks as our current pandemic continues to unfold. Deeply entrenched ideals of individual freedom, the lack of cohesive messaging and leadership on mask wearing, and pervasive misinformation have proven to be major hindrances thus far, precisely when the crisis demands consensus and widespread compliance.

This was certainly the case in many communities during the fall of 1918. That pandemic ultimately killed about 675,000 people in the U.S. Hopefully, history is not in the process of repeating itself today.

J. Alexander Navarro is director for the Center for the History of Medicine at the University of Michigan.
Isles adjusting their ‘mindset’ in Toronto
First week of training camp about overcoming mental hurdles

By John Torenlj, Sports Editor
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Their bodies are fit, the conditions in the Toronto NHL bubble are bearable and the goal is to advance into the traditional 16-team playoff chase for the Stanley Cup.

But for the New York Islanders, who opened training camp 2.0 north of the border earlier this week, getting their collective psyches back in sync appears to be the biggest challenge of this much-anticipated restart following a four-month layoff due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“The biggest thing is the frame of mind,” Isles team captain Anders Lee said Monday after the team completed its first practice in preparation for a best-of-five qualifier series against the Florida Panthers, which will begin Aug. 1.

“There’s nothing to worry about with the guys’ conditioning or anything like that. This is going to be a challenge mentally,” Lee added. “Going into a hub city, staying into a hotel, having that bubble and quarantine life, none of us have been through that so we don’t know what it’s like.”

Lee and his teammates had their season paused on March 12 due to COVID-19, just before trying to snap a season-high seven-game losing streak in Calgary.

They spent most of the next three months isolated from one another before returning to the Northwell Health Ice Center on Long Island for small-group voluntary workouts last month.

So ramping things up for a win-or-go-home series against the Panthers, a team they beat in two of three previous meetings this season, is more about getting their attitudes adjusted for the task at hand, rather than working themselves into playoff shape.

“I think we might’ve had a few more guys in the training room if that were the case. But I think today was a great first step. It’s good to get back on the ice, get into our drills and all those old things, find those old habits. No matter what, it’s going to get your heart going.”

“Going into a bubble environment in the hopes of reaching the Eastern Conference and Stanley Cup Finals, both of which will be held at the NHL’s other hub site in Edmonton, Alberta, can’t be accomplished without getting their minds right.”

“It’s going to be a different thing,” Lee emphasized.

“This is just going to be a mental challenge. The hockey stuff is going to fall into place. When we play our game we give ourselves a chance like anybody else.”

The Islanders are finally back together again, albeit at the NHL’s bubble site in Toronto, in preparation for their Aug. 1 qualifier series opener against the Florida Panthers.

“I know (Pelech) has too,” he added. “He’s been out a little bit longer than me. It’s been about almost six months for me since I’ve been skating with the guys. To be out there was fun - just battling with them, getting to do the drills - it was fun.”

“It will be even more so if the Isles get past the Panthers and seriously begin to challenge for their first Stanley Cup title since 1983, when the team capped a dynastic run of four consecutive NHL championships. But first things first.

The Isles know that training and playing in a bubble environment in the hopes of reaching the Eastern Conference and Stanley Cup Finals, both of which will be held at the NHL’s other hub site in Edmonton, Alberta, can’t be accomplished without getting their minds right.

“Let’s go, let’s get that mindset and go from there.”

ISLE HAVE ANOTHER:

The Isles bolstered their roster, not just for this abbreviated restart but for the future of the franchise, earlier this week when team president and general manager Lou Lamoriello inked Russian goaltender Ilya Sorokin to a one-year contract for the 2020-21 campaign. An eight-year veteran of the KHL in Russia, Sorokin was the Isles’ third-round selection in the 2014 NHL Draft and has emerged as one of the top international netminders in the world. He has an overall record of 134-64-22, a 1.70 goals-against average and a .930 save percentage in 244 KHL contests. Expected to be the Isles’ goalie of the future, Sorokin will receive a reported $1 million and another $1 million in bonus money, making him eligible to join the Isles in Toronto ahead of the restart and keeping him signed through next season, when the team may return to Downtown’s Barclays Center.

“There’s no question that his stats and his resume speak for themselves as far as the success that he’s had in the KHL,” Lamoriello said via a conference call with reporters. “We certainly feel highly of him, but as you know all those records go out the window when you come to the National Hockey League. He has the skills and talent to have success.”

Veterans Casey Cizikas and Matt Martin, who is sprawled on the ice, are enjoying being back in training camp in Toronto after a four-month layoff due to COVID-19.

Head coach Barry Trotz took it a bit easy on the Islanders during the first week of training camp in Toronto, but things will get amped up as the team prepares for its best-of-five qualifier series against Florida.

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NETHERLANDS — Museum day: Dutch King Willem-Alexander toured the “Contagious!” exhibit at Rijksmuseum Boerhave in Leiden on Thursday. 

PHILIPPINES — Locking down: A resident wore a face mask during the start of a lockdown due to a rise in virus cases in Manila on Thursday.

VENEZUELA — Packing lunch: A child wearing a face mask packed a lunch provided by a soup kitchen in Caracas on Wednesday.

CHINA — Staying safe: People wore face masks at a shopping and office complex in Beijing on Thursday.
PHILIPPINES — On the water: A person walked by docked fishing boats in Manila on Thursday.

PHOTO: Aaron Favila/AP

GERMANY — Opening up: A pig arrived at the reopened Toennies meatpacking plant, Europe’s biggest slaughterhouse, in Rheda-Wiedenbrueck on Thursday.

PHOTO: Martin Meissner/AP

MARYLAND — Climbing aboard: President Donald Trump boarded Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base on Wednesday.

PHOTO: Evan Vucci/AP

PORTUGAL — Car kisses: FC Porto fans celebrated a victory in Porto on Wednesday.

PHOTO: Miguel Angelo Pereira/AP
Pro-cop motorists plan ‘honking caravan’ through Central Queens

By David Brand

Queens Daily Eagle

A pro-cop procession will parade through Forest Hills Sunday, with drivers demonstrating their support for the NYPD by revving their engines and leaning on their car horns.

The event, billed as a “honking caravan,” invites motorists to gather at the 107th Precinct in Kew Gardens Hills, cruise along Jewel Avenue and 69th Road into Forest Hills and travel up Yellowstone Boulevard to the 112th Precinct. Drivers will depart at 11 a.m., according to an event flyer shared on Facebook.

“The event will not feature speeches and will be COVID-19 compliant,” the flyer states.

Local police officers will staff the parade route, but will not participate in the event, said 112th Precinct Community Affairs Officer Keith Tilly. Uniformed officers joined similar marches and rallies in Brooklyn and Manhattan Wednesday, in violation of the police handbook.

“We’re not involved. We’re basically setting up some man power,” Tilly said, adding that officers welcome so-called “Back the Blue” events.

“It’s always good to have support,” he said.

The event flyer indicates that the parade will continue along congested Austin Street and Continental Avenue, but Tilly said that idea was nixed because of outdoor dining in the area.

“When they do come through the 112th, they’re going to continue on Woodhaven, not Austin and Continental,” he said.

Pro-police rallies have been organized throughout the city in response to massive Black Lives Matter protests touched off by the police killing of George Floyd in May. NYPD officers have been widely criticized for using excessive force in response to demonstrations across the city. NYPD supporters at a Blue Lives Matter rally in Middle Village June 22 said officers are being harassed and disrespected.

The event planned for Sunday morning has encountered mixed responses on social media, especially after pro-cop demonstrators beat and injured counter protestors during rallies in Southern Brooklyn last weekend.

But not all opposition to Sunday’s event relates to the controversial politics and racist undertones of Blue Lives Matter activism.

“Whoa, just as the constant fireworks started to die down, now we having a parade of honking cars in addition to the drag racing/muffler cut-outs I’ve been listening to for months,” wrote one user in a local Facebook group.

Community Board 6 Chairperson Alex Weitzman said she worries about the use of cars.

“My concern about a ‘honking caravan’ is that cars are potentially very dangerous to others using the road especially pedestrians, older adults, children and cyclists,” Weitzman said. “I hope drivers are careful while caravanning on the busy streets of Forest Hills and Queens.”

Queens gig workers miss out on PPP cash as New York trails 48 states in federal loan program

Continued from page 1

Eligible employer businesses — companies with between two and 499 employees — fared better, with 48 percent of Queens’ 50,657 eligible employer businesses receiving some PPP assistance, which was designed to help small businesses continue paying employees during the COVID-19 economic slowdown.

Citywide, about 50 percent of eligible employer businesses received PPP loans, but just 12 percent of New York State’s 1,186,728 eligible employer and nonemployer businesses.

New York trailed every state but North Carolina in the rate of eligible businesses receiving PPP loans, the comptroller’s report found.

“Washington has made it too hard for small businesses to access these PPP dollars, which means the small businesses that need help the most are getting shut out,” said Comptroller Scott Stringer.

“Our analysis proves New York City’s workers and entrepreneurs have been shortchanged — especially nonprofits and outer-borough businesses that were hardest hit.”

“The federal government must step up to the plate and help New Yorkers get back on their feet — enough is enough,” he said.

Different industries and economic sectors had markedly different rates of PPP assistance. While 90 percent of eligible Queens hotels received some money, just 20 percent of eligible social service providers got assistance.

Information released by the federal Small Business Administration and analyzed by the Eagle showed that 21,480 companies with Queens zip codes received PPP payments of less than $150,000. The businesses ranged from a South Ozone Park information services firm that received $2 to a Whitestone construction firm that took $149,990, according to the data.

The average loan amount was about $28,072 and the median loan was $16,710, according to an analysis of the data, but some of the data may be flawed, said Tom Grech, president of the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

Extremely low loan amounts, like the $2 listed for the South Ozone Park company, may have been typos by the SBA, Grech said.

Stringer’s report reveals just how many Queens businesses were left behind by the PPP, especially at the start of the program when the SBA saw a surge in applications.

Companies that lacked a chief financial officer or an accessible accountant struggled to complete the complex paperwork, Grech said last week.

“At the Queens Chamber of Commerce, the majority of businesses have 10 or fewer employees. They don’t have expert financial folks on staff,” Grech said.

“The documents they needed to submit might not have been handy. And then there’s the language barrier,” he added. “Those put Queens businesses at a distinct disadvantage.”

Eagle file photo by David Brand

Queens residents pass a Department of Labor Office on June 11. Unemployment has surged, but federal Paycheck Protection Program loans have not reached the vast majority of eligible businesses and gig workers in Queens.
NYC schools can open if local infection rate stays below 5 percent

By Reema Amin and Alice Zimmerman

Gov. Andrew Cuomo laid out strict benchmarks for New York City schools that must meet before reopening schools this fall and will require buildings to shut down if there is a resurgence of the coronavirus in the city.

New York school districts will be allowed to reopen if the surrounding region has reached the fourth and final phase of reopening and the daily infection rate is below 5%, based on the proportion of tests coming back positive and based on a 7-day rolling average, Cuomo said Monday. State officials will determine if New York City, which counts as its own region, has met that threshold in the first week of September.

But if the city’s infection rate surges past 9% later in August or after the school year starts (based on a seven-day average), schools will be forced to shut down again. Fewer than 2% of coronavirus tests in New York City have come back positive in recent weeks, state data show, though the city has not yet reached phase four of reopening.

“We’re not going to use our children as guinea pigs,” Cuomo said during a press conference, repeatedly criticizing President Donald Trump’s stance that schools should reopen across the board. “You can follow the number — that’s what’s going to drive this. There’s no politics, there’s no vagary.”

New York City schools, which announced a reopening plan for the fall last week, have not yet said how it would screen students or how it would address positive cases of the coronavirus at its school buildings. Last week, city officials said they don’t believe they will have to close schools down — as they did before buildings closed in March — if a positive case pops up.

All school districts across the state are required to submit their reopening plans by July 31, which education officials must simultaneously make public. A spokesperson for the governor, Jason Carroll, said the state does not anticipate providing districts with more funding to aid their reopening plans, as the coronavirus has blown a hole in the state’s budget. Cuomo has previously warned that education cuts could be in the offing without federal stimulus money.

And on Monday, the state education department gave a preliminary look at what reopening plans should address in New York’s 712 school districts. While the full guidance won’t be released until Wednesday, the state spelled out some specific requirements, including masks for students and staff, and social distancing for students with virus symptoms, and regular disinfection of buses. State guidance will address various aspects of daily school life, including in-person instruction, transportation, instruction, and social-emotional support.

“This will continue to be a work in progress,” said Vito Scannapieco, the state’s chief education officer. “We have no doubt that additional issues and problems will arise and the field will require guidance, and we’ll continue to provide that guidance.”

The state Department of Health also released more health-related rules for schools Monday. That will include creating a “core planning team” to make sure every school has a plan that follows the state’s guidance. That plan will have to be shared with the state department of education.

New York City last week said that students would have a combination of in-person and remote learning. Schedules will vary based on the number of students and space within each school, allowing for social distancing. That plan falls in line with the new state guidance, which asks districts to consider various learning models. All districts must make sure that state guidelines are New York City’s plan to require students and staff to wear masks. Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza has emphasized the importance of not wearing them, rather, they will be “encouraged” to pull them on — raising concerns among some educators and parents who are wary of returning to the classroom, Pico Kassell, a public pre-K teacher at Roosvelt Island Day Nursery, worries about the various challenges masks can pose for the city’s youngest learners, such as conveying their needs to a teacher as they’re still learning word pronunciations.

“I was talking to other teachers and we were wondering, well, how many masks would they have to have because we’re sure they’re gonna need in them, and do they have to change their mask after snack?” she said.

As state guidance will require, New York City schools will have an isolation room for any student who feels ill during the school day. The city also plans to disinfected school buildings every night.

But the state requirements also underscore many questions that city officials haven’t yet addressed for the fall.

Districts will be required to train staff on how to screen students for illness. School systems must also provide transportation for all students who need it. The city has not yet said how it will handle either of those issues. On Friday, Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city will announce “shortly” how it would address entry into school buildings.

The city is “currently assessing ways to provide safe transportation options this fall,” said Miranda Barbot, a spokesperson for the city’s education department. Officials are considering a plan that would provide busing only to special needs students whose education plans require busing, the New York Post reported over the weekend.

On instruction, state education officials said districts must provide all students with “clear opportunities for equitable instruction” with curriculum grounded in state standards. Teachers must interact with students daily in a “substantive way.”

There must also be “clear communication” between schools and families, state officials said. Officials did not elaborate on how districts should tackle any of these points, but more detailed information could come when the full guidance is released.

No matter the learning model, schools will be required to provide physical education classes in some form, officials said. Educators should plan a “menu” of activities for students to complete, even if that means students completing work on their own time.

Districts should provide devices and technology support for students, families and teachers. They should also offer teachers professional development focused on “best practices” for remote instruction, state officials said.

Schools should also be required to spell out how they’ll provide high-quality instruction to students who are learning at home, according to Ian Rosenblum, executive director of Education Trust-New York, an advocacy and civil rights organization that joined several groups in calling for specific instructional policies as districts reopen.

That instruction should include culturally relevant and anti-racist curriculum, he said.

“Either we are coming back to school with the widening inequities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, or we are going to take steps to start addressing those inequities,” Rosenblum said. “So these questions about curriculum and support for students can’t be an afterthought. They need to be right there alongside health and safety issues as we think about a way to reopen in a way that supports all students.”

Social-emotional support should be the highest priority for districts, state officials said. They made clear that districts should offer “multi-tiered systems of support,” but on Monday did not provide specifics about how districts should do that aside from reevaluating their counseling practices.

Several Regents raised concerns about how districts would pay for resources tied to the mandated health guidance, such as thermometers for temperature checks or masks, as cities are grappling with the pandemic’s financial aftereffects. Officials in New York City, which cut the education department’s budget by $773 million this fiscal year, have not yet disclosed how much personal protective equipment will cost. The education department said costs won’t be clear until closer to the start of the school year.

“It is clear that in a number of places, resources are necessary and are not givens that can be taken for granted,” said Regent Luis Reyes.

The state education department has raised those concerns with the governor’s office, state officials said.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said New York City schools can open if the infection rate remains below 5 percent, but he will shut them down again if the infection rate increases.

“It’s a difficult fiscal environment right now, so I envision this is going to be a challenge, but certainly it’s not going to stop us from advocating for the needs of the students in the district in meeting those expectations,” said Phyllis Morris, the department’s chief financial officer.
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BRITAIN — Empty seats: Seats sat empty during an English Premier League soccer match in Manchester on Wednesday.

Photo: Peter Powell/Pool via AP

INDONESIA — New looks: A store displayed face masks in Jakarta on Thursday.

Photo: Achmad Ibrahim/AP
MEDICAL BOARD DETERMINED THAT INJURY WAS NOT WORK-RELATED

On Aug. 12, 2014, Robert Giuliano allegedly injured his right hip while working as a firefighter with the New York City Fire Department. An MRI taken on Aug. 28, 2014, revealed bilateral hip osteoarthritis, degenerative bilateral labrum tears, with parabial articular cartilage damage on both sides and bilateral hip joint effusions. On Aug. 27, 2015, Giuliano underwent right hip resurfacing surgery. After July 27, 2015, Giuliano applied for accidental disability retirement benefits. On Aug. 27, 2015, the Board of Trustees of the FDNY Pension Fund (the medical board) evaluated Giuliano and reviewed medical records and determined that, although Giuliano was disabled due to his right hip injury, the disability was causally related to chronic degenerative joint disease, not a work-related injury. The medical board determined that there was no evidence in Giuliano’s medical record that the new injury exacerbated a pre-existing condition. Thus, the medical board recommended that Giuliano be granted an ordinary disability retirement. On Nov. 21, 2017, the Board of Trustees of the FDNY Pension Fund adopted the recommendation of the medical board and denied Giuliano’s application for ADR in a tie vote.

Guiliano then filed a petition in Kings County Supreme Court, Civil Term seeking review of the determination of the board of trustees. In response, Hon. Peter Sweeney denied the petition, and dismissed the proceeding, finding that the determination was supported by credible medical evidence. Guiliano appealed the Supreme Court’s decision and the justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed. The justices explained that the medical board’s determination that Giuliano’s right hip disability was causally related to chronic degenerative joint disease was supported by credible evidence consisting of the operative report and notes from Guiliano’s right hip replacement procedure, which included a diagnosis for degenerative arthritis, and an MRI report from Aug. 28, 2014, which described degenerative “bilateral superior labrum tears.” In addition, the justices also noted that the medical board provided an “articulated, rational and fact-based medical opinion” for how it came to its conclusion. They also found that the medical board’s findings differed from those of Giuliano’s surgeon, who found that it was likely that Giuliano’s condition was causally related to work injuries and that Giuliano may have exacerbated a pre-existing condition. However, the justices explained that “where conflicting medical evidence and medical reports are presented to the medical board, it is solely within the province of the medical board to resolve such conflicts.” Therefore, the justices concluded that it was not arbitrary or capricious for the board of trustees to find that Giuliano did not establish that his disability was the natural and proximate result of his line-of-duty accident.


COMPLAINT DISMISSED IN FAVOR OF MORE APPROPRIATE FORUM

The justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department reversed an order by the Kings County Supreme Court, Civil Term in a proceeding seeking damages for wrongful death upon an appeal by the defendants, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Port Authority Police Department, United Airlines, Inc., and Champlain Enterprises, Inc. In response to the complaint, which was filed by Theresa Sikinyi on behalf of the deceased, the defendants moved to dismiss the complaint on the ground of forum non conveniens, meaning that New York was not the right forum for the proceeding. The burden was on the defendants to demonstrate the relevant private or public interest factors that militate against a New York court’s acceptance of the litigation. In their decision, the appellate justices noted that the court must consider the following factors: the domicile of the parties, the potential hardship to proposed witnesses, the availability of an alternative forum and the burden which would be imposed upon the New York courts. In addition, the justices also noted that the medical board provided an “articulated, rational and fact-based medical opinion” for how it came to its conclusion. They also found that the medical board’s findings differed from those of Guiliano’s surgeon, who found that it was likely that Giuliano’s condition was causally related to work injuries and that Giuliano may have exacerbated a pre-existing condition. However, the justices explained that “where conflicting medical evidence and medical reports are presented to the medical board, it is solely within the province of the medical board to resolve such conflicts.” Therefore, the justices concluded that it was not arbitrary or capricious for the board of trustees to find that Giuliano did not establish that his disability was the natural and proximate result of his line-of-duty accident.

—Skirvy v. Port Auth. of N.Y. & N.J., 2019-05177, July 1, 2020
Queens agencies continue to offer chances to enjoy the Great Indoors this week. Live music, dance, author talks, films, workshops, science experiments, and tours are a few clicks away this upcoming week.

**July 17**, Reverse Shot Happy Hour, 5 pm.
The editors and writers of the Museum of the Moving Image’s “Reverse Shot” magazine discuss cinema. Co-editors and founding editors Michael Koresky and Jeff Reichert host with longtime contributor Farzad Zaman.

**July 17**, Judy Carmichael, 7 pm.
The Queensboro Performing Arts Center streams a concert with this Grammy-nominated pianist/vocalist who does favorites from the Great American Songbook and jazz. She loves to tell stories so expect to hear why Count Basie nicknamed her “Stride.” A Q&A session follows.

**July 18**, Classic Indian Choreography, 4 pm.
The Queensboro Dance Festival continues with Vivarta Arts-Priya Patel doing traditional Kathak dance.

**July 17**, Engineering with Paper, 1 pm.
Lewis Latimer House Museum’s Summer STEM program continues with a workshop on engineering with paper, tape, and scissors. Transform ordinary supplies into fun projects.

**July 18**, Boulevard Film Festival, July 25.
Fourteen selected shorts on a wide range of topics with a concluding Q&amp;A with filmmakers on July 25 at 7 pm.

**July 18**, Concert for Cuba, July 19.
Flushing Town Hall co-presents a two-day Facebook watch party with Orquesta Aragon, Susana Baca, Los Van Van, and other great Latin performers.

**July 18, Radioactive, July 19.**
Free preview screenings of this movie on Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie and a conversation with actress Rosamund Pike and filmmaker Marjane Satrapi, July 18 at 1 pm and July 19 and 8 pm.

**July 18**, Jim Henson’s World: Creature Makers, 7 pm.
Museum of the Moving Image Director of Curatorial Affairs Barbara Miller leads a discussion on the shop that created characters from Sesame Street, The Muppets, Fraggle Rock, The Dark Crystal, and other productions.

**July 20, The Past, Present and Future of Space Flight, 4 pm.**
To celebrate the 51st anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, NASA Solar System Ambassador Jessica Cinni-Samuels hosts a virtual program on the history of manned space flight, including the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and Shuttle programs.

**July 20**, Victorian Paper Blooms, 4 pm.
King Manor Museum streams a workshop on making Victorian paper flowers for a garden bouquet or garland, using whatever is at home. The program includes a live, interactive, family-friendly Q&amp;A with a historian and educator on 19th century handicrafts and social culture.

**July 20, Movement, 4 pm.**
The Queensboro Dance Festival continues with Barbara Mahler Dances and her “Movement Research.”

The Alley Pond Environmental Center zooms into interactive discussions, science experiments, animal encounters, and a daily nature connection that focuses on female scientists who are making the world cleaner, greener and healthier. Sessions run from 11 am to noon.

The Alley Pond Environmental Center leads a workshop on critters from Africa, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America. Sessions are from 10 am to 10:30 am.

Alley Pond Environmental Center employees teach about the different types of senses that animals have. Classes run from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm.

**July 21**, Jug Music, 7 pm.
The Live at the Gantries concert series continues with The Salt Cracker Crazies and their bone-rattling, floor-shaking, gut-thumping jug music. They sing about unicorns, fireworks, and all sorts of party-related themes. Expect audiences to dance in their living rooms.

**July 22, Laura Ortman, 7 pm.**
Live performances accompany the “Monuments Now” exhibition at Socrates Sculpture Park. In this case, Ortman, who is of White Mountain Apache heritage, performs violin on Instagram, Zoom, and Facebook.

**July 23, Apollo and the Odyssey, 7 pm.**
This Museum of the Moving Image conversation explores the cultural and scientific points of intersection, influence, and competition between the U.S. space program and Stanley Kubrick’s film “2001: A Space Odyssey,” supplemented by rare archival footage and images.

**July 23**, Ripped From The Headlines, 4 pm.
Queens Public Library hosts a talk with Harold Schechter, a crime writer and Queens College English professor emeritus. His new book is about real-life, headline-making serial murderers, thrill-hungry couples, and lady-killers who inspired a century of classic films.

**July 23**, Artist Conversation, 1 pm.
SculptureCenter Director of Exhibitions and Programs Kyle Dancewicz moderates a conversation with artists Quo Asuoli and David De Hannay and filmmaker Jose Luis Benavides.

**It's in Queens** is produced each week by the Queens Tourism Council.
NYC Bar to host Loretta Lynch for police reform panel

By Rob Abruzzese  Queens Daily Eagle

Loretta Lynch, the U.S. attorney general under President Barack Obama and the former U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, will sit on a panel with the New York City Bar Association to discuss police reform at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, July 22.

The discussion is organized by NYCBA President Sheila Boston, who will moderate a panel that includes Lynch; Nicole Austin-Hillery, the executive director of Human Rights Watch; Paul Fishman, a former U.S. attorney for the District of New Jersey; and J. Scott Thompson, the former chief of the Camden County Police Department.

The discussion is meant to contribute to the national conversation over police abuse of Black and Latinx people and contribute to reforms that many local and federal legislators are considering. The discussion leaders hope to identify key issues, provides how policing and law enforcement should be carried out and consider ways that the legal community can contribute.

Lynch, who recently took part in Attorney General Letitia James’ two-day public hearing on police and public interactions during protests, will sit down with members of the New York Bar Association to talk about police violence reforms and potential ways the legal community can contribute to change.

New city law compels NYPD to explain surveillance tools and strategies

By David Brand  Queens Daily Eagle

A new city law, signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio Wednesday, will compel the NYPD to explain how it uses facial recognition and other surveillance technologies to track New Yorkers.

De Blasio signed the Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology, or POST, Act into law during a special ceremony at a Black Lives Matter mural in the Bronx. The new law was first introduced in March 2017 and picked up 38 council sponsors before being brought to a vote last month.

It was one of several police reform bills the city enacted Wednesday. Other measures include criminalizing the use of banned police chokeholds and forcing officers to display their names and badge numbers while on duty.

“The Black Lives Matter movement has been at the forefront of change in New York City and across our nation. I’m proud to sign these sweeping reforms into law,” de Blasio said. “As we continue to respond for mental illness, homelessness and school safety, New Yorkers should not have to give up their Constitutional protections in order to feel safe, and/or cross-movant will be required to submit a Motion Submission Form by Monday, July 20 at 4 p.m. to the assigned Part’s e-mail address.