Holocaust Center expands site

New building opens at QCC campus

by Liz Rhoades
Managing Editor

Sisters Alice Oster and Jane Keibel listened intently Friday at an exhibit where fellow Holocaust survivors told of their ordeal. It is one of several hands-on displays at the new Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives in Bayside.

Both women craved the new space “terrific.” Recalling their flight from Nazi Germany as part of the infamous, “Voyage of the Damned,” the two still count their blessings. “We were on the S.S. St. Louis in 1939, which was not allowed to land in Cuba,” Keibel said. “Nobody wanted us.” Eventually, the 930 Jewish passengers from Germany were taken in by Holland, Belgium, England and France. Oster and Keibel went with their parents to France and emigrated to the United States a year later.

“When we get together for holidays, we think how lucky we are,” Keibel said. “We moved to Kew Gardens, where we still live,” Oster said. They learned English at Richmond Hill High School, went on to marry survivors and had two children each. Keibel, 86, has one grandchild and Oster, 83, has four.

“Nobody wanted us.”

The center also has a lecture and film series, hate crime programs, a student internship survivors project, a freedom seder and more. The building officially opens on Sunday, Oct. 18. It replaces cramped basement quarters in the college’s library where the center was located for more than 25 years.

Flug estimates there are 3,500 survivors living in the Queens/Nassau area and many, like Oster, serve as docents and speakers. For information on programs, call (718) 281-5770.

Graffiti removal upgraded in Gennaro’s district

by Liz Rhoades
Managing Editor

Graffiti vandals take warning. If you deface property anywhere in Councilman James Gennaro’s district, it’ll be gone quickly.

With a $30,000 allocation from his discretionary funds, the District 24 councilman is fast-tracking the elimination of graffiti. “Removing graffiti on a consistent basis breaks the wills of these vandals,” Gennaro said.

District 24 includes Jamaica Estates, Kew Gardens Hills, Fresh Meadows, Briarwood, part of Jamaica, Forest Hills and Rego Park as well as the Electchester and Pomonok areas.

“All neighborhoods are challenged by graffiti,” Gennaro said, “even the Midland Parkway area in Jamaica Estates. No area is exempt.”

In Gennaro’s district, graffiti can be found primarily in commercial areas on buildings and security gates and on retaining walls.

He credits the company hired to carry out the work as being highly professional. “They do an excellent job. It’s better than a once-a-year approach in a particular neighborhood,” the councilman said.

The CitySolve workers make regular rounds of the district to check up on former graffiti sites and look for new ones. The self-contained vehicle they use features equipment to power wash unpainted brick and stucco walls as well as paint over smooth walls.

On a recent Thursday, Gennaro joined the CitySolve workers at 164-01 69th Ave. on the border of Hillcrest and Electchester to paint over a wall at the Corner Deli.

“Aside from being quick and effective, it’s a lot of fun to do,” said Gennaro, who got a chance to help beautify the store’s exterior.

He pointed out the automated spraying apparatus paints over graffiti very fast. “It’s not messy. I did a whole wall in five minutes,” the councilman said.

CitySolve has a similar contract with Councilman Eric Ulrich’s district in the Ozone Park area.

Gennaro said he has already seen an improvement in his district and is working with area civic leaders to report new graffiti for removal. To make a complaint, call Gennaro’s district office in Fresh Meadows at (718) 217-4969.

The service is free to businesses and residents who otherwise would pay between $500 and $1,000 for a private company.