Program aims to boost the borough's brain power

Claire M. Regan | regan@siadvance.com By Claire M. Regan | regan@siadvance.com
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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Strike up a conversation with the guy ahead of you at any supermarket checkout on Staten Island and odds are he didn't go to college.

Neither did the construction foreman who lives next door, or the young woman around the corner who works on Wall Street.

They’re among the overwhelming majority of Staten Islanders – 71.1 percent – who don’t hold college degrees.

Only 136,040 of the borough's 470,728 residents are college graduates with a baccalaureate or higher, according to the latest census data. Those numbers place the borough next to last in the percentage of college-educated residents; only the Bronx has fewer.

Why do so many Staten Islanders skip college? Three local college leaders know best.

"The reason I hear the most often is people say, 'My father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather worked for the police or fire [departments] and they rose up through the ranks without college,'" said William Fritz, president of the College of Staten Island, Willowbrook. "But they don’t realize the world has changed, and this is no longer possible."

"There is a myth that you don't need a college degree to succeed in the new global economy," echoed Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner College, Grymes Hill.
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"There is a myth that you don't need a college degree to succeed in the new global economy," echoed Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner College, Grymes Hill.

"Staten Island has always been very strong in civil service and construction," added James O'Keefe, vice provost of St. John's University, Grymes Hill, the son of a plumber and a homemaker and the first in his family to go to college. "Young people see their parents doing very well in those fields, and figure, 'I don't have to go to college either.'"

THREESOME'S AMBITIOUS GOAL

Fritz, Guarasci and O'Keefe have formed a consortium with the ambitious goal of increasing the number of college-educated Staten Islanders by 30,000 within the next 10 years.

Dubbed 30,000 Degrees by 2025 and modeled after a program in Kentucky, the initiative aims to build and
support a college-going culture at the high school level and all the way down to pre-kindergarten, especially in lower-income areas and immigrant communities where college seems unattainable, unaffordable and even unnecessary.

While the Island’s three college leaders are tasked with building enrollments on their own campuses, they insist their goals are much broader, with Staten Island’s future and greater good as top priorities.

In communities with a strong number of baccalaureate degrees, birth rates are higher and citizens are more likely to vote and be civically engaged, the consortium said, citing national statistics. Higher-paying companies are eager to set up shop, and college-educated workers are more eligible for promotions and better prepared for retirement.

Increasing the number of Staten Islanders with college degrees will create a better educated, work-ready community that is attractive to new businesses and an excellent place to live, work and learn, the college leaders said. For this reason, 30,000 Degrees has won support from the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation.

GOOD JOBS FOR THE COLLEGE EDUCATED

The value of a college degree has been increasing since the economic recovery began five years ago, according to a study by Georgetown University. Good jobs are back and college graduates are first in line, the study shows.

A "good job" pays at least $53,000, tends to be full-time and provides health insurance and a retirement plan, according to the study. Of the 2.9 million good jobs gained since the recession, 2.8 million have gone to college graduates.

On average in 2013, Americans with four-year degrees earned 98 percent more per hour than people without a degree, which is up from 64 percent in the 1980s, according to data published by The New York Times.

A college graduate makes $1 million more in lifetime earnings than a non-graduate, and that pay gap between college graduates and everyone else continues to widen.

"If we want the high-tech jobs here, we need an educated work force here" on Staten Island, said CSI’s Fritz, who wants to see more lucrative job opportunities on Staten Island so young people don’t need to go to Manhattan or New Jersey for them.

Fritz said CSI soon plans to make college classes easily accessible to those who commute to Manhattan by offering them at 120 Stuyvesant Place in St. George, the former site of Richmond College, a CSI predecessor that is steps away from the ferry terminal.

"Get off the ferry and take a class" will be the incentive, he said.
Educatng young people about the range of financial options that make college a worthwhile investment is an equally important mission for the consortium, Fritz said.

Staten Island's three colleges illustrate the range of choices in higher education, he pointed out, adding that "there is no reason for any student in any society to say they can't afford to go to school. Anyone from the lowest income level can afford college."

**PARTNERING WITH HIGH SCHOOLS**

The consortium has joined forces with the principals of four public high schools -- Staten Island Tech, Port Richmond, New Dorp and McKee -- to develop programs that "demystify college," as Guarasci put it, by offering access to college students, college programs and financial aid advisers.

Pedro Santiago, a rising junior at Port Richmond High School, is already a 30,000 Degrees success story.

The strapping 17-year-old with an easy smile has two more years to go before he can enroll in a baccalaureate program for child psychology, the career he dreams about. But there is no doubt a college degree is in his future.

Pedro was one of two dozen Port Richmond students who earlier this month completed a summer session at Wagner College called the Port Richmond Partnership Leadership Academy, a springboard for 30,000 Degrees.

He spent five weeks at Wagner, two of them dorming in Room 811 of Harbor View Hall. He took college-level courses in math and science and traveled to Washington, D.C., for tours of the Newseum and the war memorials. He interacted with faculty members and soaked up life on a college campus.

The son of hardworking parents without college educations, Pedro said college doesn’t intimidate him anymore and he’s ready to be the first in his family to earn a degree.

"I know there will be ups and downs, but I’ll get through it like everything else. And I know you need college to get a good job," the Mariners Harbor teen quickly added.

Mary OniFade, who will be a senior at Port Richmond High School next month, completed her second year in the three-year Leadership Academy. The eldest daughter of college-educated Nigerian immigrants, Mary has known all along that college was part of her future.

"My mom always tells me, 'Knowledge is power,'" she said.

The question for Mary is which college, and the Leadership Academy has helped her sort that out this summer with visits to Vassar College, Rutgers University, Brown University, Princeton University and Boston University. She’s looking at pre-med programs, with plans to be a surgeon.
"If every college would partner with schools of need and use faculty and other resources, think how much better our city, our country, would be," Guarasci said. "Young people succeed when someone believes in their dreams. You've got to start early" to nurture a college-bound focus.

"It's about changing the conversation from 'I don't need a baccalaureate, I can do just fine,'" said Fritz, "to 'In this day and age, obtaining one is a sure-fire way of moving up the ladder.'"

"Staten Island is the only borough where I would try this" initiative, O'Keefe said. "People work well together here. With Cesar Claro [of the SIEDC] and the borough president's office, all our ducks are lined up to make a run for this. We've got the arrow moving in the right direction."

This interactive map shows the percentage of residents in each Island ZIP code with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Click on the outlined ZIP codes in the interactive map above to see more information about your ZIP code. The darker blue the area, the higher the percentage of college graduates there are among the ZIP code's residents.

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Freeing up free speech on campuses nationwide

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Monday, August 24, 2015, 4:05 AM

From the University of Chicago to the whole country.

As colleges prepare for students’ return, a movement is growing to re-enshrine the highest goals of higher learning: unfettered free inquiry and free speech.

Three respected institutions — the University of Chicago, Princeton and Purdue — this year have forcefully repudiated the new American virus of hypersensitivity, which infects schools across the country with walk-on-eggshell speech codes and trigger warnings.

We need that same bold spirit around here, starting at CUNY and SUNY campuses, to protect the fearless flow of ideas.

A crash course on the problem:

The new policy at CUNY’s grad schools is to “eliminate the use of gendered salutations and references in correspondence to students, prospective students and third parties.” Never mind whether, for whatever reason, a professor wants to call his or her students Mr. or Miss.
registering to attend an anti-Israel speech — and then were wrongly removed from the audience.

At Rutgers last year, a complaint by faculty and students prompted the disinvitation of supposed “war criminal” Condoleezza Rice as commencement speaker.

Also at Rutgers last year, a student urged that those preparing to read “The Great Gatsby” should be given a trigger warning about “a variety of scenes that reference gory, abusive and misogynistic violence,” lest they be traumatized.

Yes, people and the ideas they articulate can be challenging, even infuriating (we ought to know). But in places dedicated to opening young minds, it is out of bounds to make some words verboten.

Universities need speech codes that uphold the rights of all. And we just happen to have one.

In January, a committee of scholars at the University of Chicago issued a ringing statement upholding the university’s obligation as a forum for debate and discussion, saying “it is not the proper role of the university to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable or even deeply offensive.”

And: “the university’s fundamental commitment is to the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the university community to be offensive, unwise, immoral or wrong-headed.

“It is for the individual members of the university community, not for the university as an institution, to make those judgments for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose.”

So perfectly did this capture the spirit of open debate that the statement was adopted word for word by private Princeton University in April and by public Purdue University in May.

Don’t stop there. SUNY, with its 64 campuses, and CUNY, with its 24 campuses, should adopt the Chicago model — as should Columbia, NYU, Fordham and St. John’s and all the rest.

New York’s public university systems swiftly implemented questionable policies that seek to reengineer the intimate romantic interactions of young people.

Unequivocally embracing pro-speech regulations is a far less risky proposition. We’re never going to prepare young people for a world of fierce intellectual combat by trying to protect every hair on their pretty little heads.
Ancient Monkey Fossil Could Be First Modern Baboon

Posted By: David DeMar (http://www.newhistorian.com/author/david-demar/)
Posted date: August 22, 2015  In: Breaking News (http://www.newhistorian.com/breaking-news/)
No Comments (http://www.newhistorian.com/ancient-monkey-fossil-could-be-first-modern-baboon/4643/#comments)

According to researchers from the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, an ancient monkey fossil found in Malapa could be the earliest evidence of a modern baboon ever discovered.

With an age of somewhere between 2.026 and 2.36 million years old, the animal whose partial skull has been uncovered in the dig site just so happens to have been discovered at the very same world heritage site that a brand-new hominin species was revealed in 2010 – a species that was dubbed Australopithecus sediba. It's actually not so surprising to discover the baboon remains in such close proximity to A. sediba, according to City University of New York-Hunter College professor Dr. Christopher Gilbert, the lead author of the research study recently published in the academic journal PLOS ONE; he remarked in a statement accompanying the study that baboons have been documented as co-existing with hominins, based on a number of fossil finds in South Africa and East Africa. In fact, Dr. Gilbert added...
that these baboon species are often used to provide comparative modeling when it comes to studying human evolution.

The partial skull, which was discovered during a dig specifically for additional A. sediba remains, has confirmed previous research that the species it belongs to, known as Papio angusticeps, has a close relationship to modern baboon species living today. In fact, P. angusticeps might actually be one of the very first members of Papio hamadryas, the modern monkey species known as the hamadryas baboon.

Modern baboon populations are routinely divided into several different groups, most commonly referred to as separate species or subspecies, throughout large swathes of sub-Saharan Africa. These modern baboons have also spread into the Arabian Peninsula, easily making them one of the biggest evolutionary success stories of the primate world. However, there are plenty of questions about the origins of modern baboon species when it comes to examples in the fossil record.

Dr. Gilbert says that modern baboons had been thought to have diverged from their closest evolutionary relatives between 1.8 million and 2.2 million years in the past, but evidence in the form of fossil specimens had been rare to nonexistent until this latest find. The scientist added that the Malapa specimen, in conjunction with the analysis conducted by the research team, lends credence to the possibility that early P. hamadryas fossils might have been incorrectly categorized by earlier researchers as P. angusticeps - especially in light of how modern baboon anatomy seems to be consistent with that of P. angusticeps - to the point where experts would be hard-pressed to differentiate ancient specimens from the bones of modern baboons hailing from South and East Africa.

For more information: www.journals.plos.org (http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0133361<br />)

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons user: RADION Imagery / Kamil Wence
Earliest baboon found at Malapa

A two-million-year-old partial skull of the extinct baboon Papio angusticeps has been unearthed at Malapa, in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, by a team of scientists headed by Dr Christopher Gilbert of Hunter College of the City University of New York. The specimen, according to the team, represents both the earliest baboon ever found and the only non-hominin primate yet recovered from Malapa.

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Advice for the ‘other’ new college students

BY RICHARD GREENWALD / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Saturday, August 22, 2015, 4:26 AM

Most words of wisdom addressed to high school graduates about to attend college ring hollow. Too often, writers assume they’re addressing students who are going off to school — as in dorming — while in fact most American college students attend community colleges or regional state colleges as commuter students. They live at home and craft a college experience in the margins.

This advice is to these students, because I was one of them.

Whether or not you have a quad to hang on, and time to hang there, you should get the college experience you deserve. To make that happen, join something, anything. As a commuter, it’s too easy to become a zombie student, who goes isolated and alone to class, to work and back home. A club or group ties you to the college and other students, and puts you in touch with possible mentors. It means that when you hit a wall, and you will, you have a support system to lean on, one that significantly decreases the likelihood you will stall or drop out.

Most of you will have to work. That’s the norm, and never be ashamed of it. But, be careful about over-extending yourself. Taking a full load of classes and working 20-plus hours a week is tough. Manage your time or it will manage you. Stay on top of tasks and due dates. Your smart phone has a calendar — use it!

Don’t count on your part-time job to help launch your post-college career. Make sure you take at least two internships, paid or unpaid. Employers want candidates with some experience, and, as limited as internships may be, successfully completing them shows your ability to juggle and to work in a professional setting.

Pick a major you are passionate about, not just one you think will lead to a job.
you will not enjoy. Remember you will likely have several jobs and even multiple careers in your lifetime, so think long-term. Find your passion.

And minor in something else or, better yet, double-major. Plenty of students major in the sciences with a second major in the arts or social sciences. It will take more planning and work, but it will open up twice the possibilities.

Make sure you also take courses that will help you whatever you end up doing—like economics, accounting and marketing—and ones that hone your communication and writing skills and force you to think and analyze. Think of general education electives not just as holes to be filled on your path to graduation but opportunities to explore and grow. Ask someone who went to college 20 years ago about one course they remember, and it’s often the one that introduced a new perspective or way of thinking.

Do something different. Research from the American Association of Colleges and Universities show that opportunities such as study-abroad, undergraduate research and community-engaged learning have enormous impacts on future success. So, think about how you can take advantage of these opportunities. Work with a faculty member to deeply explore something, travel to an interesting place or tie your classroom experiences to communities. Most colleges offer these things, but you might have to investigate and plan. Do it. Going from a passive to an active learner is a game-changer.

Do something fun on campus. Go to a play, a concert or a lecture. Colleges put a great deal of effort into curating free events, for things you’ll have to pay to attend once you leave—take advantage.

Finally, enjoy college and recognize that you will change. When you graduate, you shouldn’t be the same person you were when you started. Don’t force it, but allow it to happen. You might be the first in your family to attend. I was. You might feel a gulf widening between your family and circle of friends as you grow. That’s normal. You might start feeling like you don’t belong. You do.

You will grow, but your family and community will always be there. Don’t turn away from them. Use your new knowledge to more deeply understand and respect them. Remember your struggles to attend and graduate college will be a gift not just to yourself, but to them as well.

*Greenwald is a professor of history and dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Brooklyn College.*
Kensington teen accused of killing dad granted $1M bail
By Allegna Hobbs
The Brooklyn Paper

A Kensington teen charged with murdering his allegedly abusive father will walk out of his Rikers Island cell and return back to school after a judge granted the 19-year-old bail on Friday, which his lawyer says is a huge win for the teen and his family so early in the court proceedings.

"Everyone is happy," said attorney Michael Cibella. "The mother is beside herself happy — her son is coming home."

A grand jury indicted Hassan Razaq with murder three weeks ago, after he allegedly fatally stabbed his father Mohammad, who Cibella claims physically and sexually abused the teen and his siblings for years and had been on an hours-long rampage the night he died.

Family members, who have rallied around Razaq in the wake of the incident by wearing and selling T-shirts that read "#FreeHassanRazaq," claim he acted in self-defense.

Cibella on Friday entered a plea of not guilty on behalf of his client and made an impassioned appeal to Brooklyn Supreme Court Judge Neil Firetog to grant bail, arguing that Razaq — who appeared before the court via a video call from Riker's — would never flee knowing he has a life in Brooklyn that will go on after the trial.

"He has every intention and every reason to come back to court," he said.

Cibella cited Razaq's reputation as a good student and a conscientious community member, saying one Kingsborough Community College professor placed him in the top 10 students of his 18-year career, and that he had signed up to do community service at the school just two days before his arrest.

Firetog set bail at $1 million, which Razaq's family members insured by signing on their salaries and assets, and the judge okayed the package on the condition that Razaq wear an ankle monitor and stay confined to Brooklyn, except for visits to Cibella's office in Manhattan and to appointments with a forensic psychiatrist and physician.

Razaq faces up to 25 years behind bars if convicted, but Cibella says this is just the latest ordeal in a decade-long nightmare for the teen and his family members, who he claimed suffered for years the hands of their father in their "house of horrors."

"He's been in prison his entire life, in essence," said Cibella. "They all have."

Cibella says Razaq, who will resume classes at Kingsborough in the fall, has a long road ahead as he continues to fight the charges leveled against him, but the attorney remains hopeful that evidence brought to light over the course of the trial will be in his corner.

"The full story will come out and the right results will be reached," he said.

Reach reporter Allegna Hobbs at ahobbs@cnglocal.com or by calling (718) 260-8312.

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Coalition of Student Groups brings Middle East politics to Bay Ridge, takes to the street

By Albin Lohr-Jones
Special to the Brooklyn Daily Eagle

The bloodshed over contested territories in Israel and Palestine may be thousands of miles away, but several dozen protesters sought to bring the debate home with a rally and march in Bay Ridge. Organized by members of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), a national network of campus-based anti-Zionist activists, the preliminary part of the event convened on the plaza of Leif Erikson Park at 67th Street and 6th Avenue.

Aug. 26 will be the first anniversary of the official end of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, which the United Nations Human Rights Commission claims resulted in the death of 2,251 people. To mark the occasion and draw attention to lack of progress made toward defusing Palestinian and Israeli tensions, numerous events are scheduled to occur throughout the city.

But for otherwise sleepy Bay Ridge, far from the customary sites of political demonstration (think Foley Square, Zuccotti Park, etc.), the rally and brief march were atypical. The choice, though, of Bay Ridge — sometimes referred to as "Little Palestine" on account of the sizable immigrant community calling it home — was auspicious. Demonstrators aimed to bring their demand for Palestinian sovereignty home to the very community whose relatives in their native land live with the day-in and day-out reality of armed conflict, and to raise it into action.
Islam Allan, a cousin of imprisoned Palestinian journalist Mohammed Allan and an active Students for Justice in Palestine spokesperson, addresses the crowd at U.S.finson Park.

Demonstrators begin their march on Fifth Avenue in Bay Ridge.

Rawan Toons and Noura Khatib, principal organizers at the rally, attempt to reason with an NYPD Community Affairs officer after the demonstrators are ordered to turn back.

While mostly composed of college students from local SIP chapters at various CUNY campuses and NYU, the rally drew a group of Southeast Asian children and an unexpected contingent of Brooklyn-based Neturei Karta who, though Jewish, fervently protest against the state of Israel and support Palestinian statehood. Several rabbis from the Neturei Karta addressed the crowd at the rally, declaring their support.

After the conclusion of official speeches by representatives of different SIP chapters and by members of popular action groups such as the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, the demonstrators set off on foot toward Fifth Avenue, chanting pro-Palestinian slogans along 69th Street under the watchful eyes of NYPD Community Affairs officers who drove in a car alongside the group as marchers traveled on the sidewalk.

On Fifth Avenue itself, much to its consternation, the group unfortunately didn’t make it far before NYPD suspended their progress and ordered that they not pass beyond Bay Ridge Avenue. After some verbal wrangling between two of the key organizers of the event and an NYPD officer, the demonstrators retraced their path and retreated to the park, but with a new set of chants vocalizing their frustrations at the NYPD.
Though the protesters themselves did not leave the sidewalks, the mobilization of police vehicles dispatched as a precaution accomplished the same type of disruption to transportation achieved otherwise by bodies in the street at recent political events in the city: rush-hour traffic on Fifth Avenue came to a virtual standstill. As to whether or not the demonstrators were successful at rallying the population of Bay Ridge into political action, one can only speculate. But it was apparent from the number of cheers and smiles cast at them from bystanders, that their message was indeed heard.

Two children held a sign at the rally.

Demonstrators standing in an arc at Leff-Ericson Park listen to a member of the Neturei Karta express his support.

Demonstrators walk past the Islamic Society of Bay Ridge during their march on Fifth Avenue.
NYPD Horse Accused Of Biting Woman's Fingertip Off

by Ben Yakas in News on Aug 21, 2015 3:25 pm

Pernilla Ekberg (via Facebook) and the fingertip in question (Handout)

You probably already know that it's a bad idea to slap an NYPD horse's ass (really, it's a bad idea to slap any horse on the butt), but you might want to reconsider even feeding an NYPD horse in the future: a Swedish woman is suing the NYPD after an equine member of the NYPD Mounted Unit bit off part of her fingertip last year.

According to the News, 28-year-old Pernilla Ekberg was out with friends at Max Fish in November 2014 when they saw an officer with the horse in question on Orchard Street. After Ekberg asked the officer permission to pet the horse, "it chomped down on her hand, bit off the tip and spit it out on the floor," her lawyer, Eliot Bickof, said.

"The police officer panicked and ran away. He just left. He didn't offer her any assistance," the lawyer added. "Her boyfriend put the tip on ice," but she ended up losing the entire fingernail area and suffering nerve damage in her right ring finger. Ekberg is a writer who works as an analyst of marketing campaigns, and her lawyer says she needs her full right hand to type, hold a pen, and interact with people.

On her personal blog, Ekberg previously wrote promisingly of NYC adventures past and future: "The summer of 2006, about a month after graduating High School, I packed most of my belongings and moved across the Atlantic from the far too small country of Sweden to the Big Apple. After a year of wild partying and hard work I entered Baruch College with a dream of a degree in International Marketing. Now, almost 4 years after I entered JFK airport with everything I owned in my hands, the dream of a success career in business is still growing strong!"

In the future, let's all leave the horse petting to the dogs. They seem to get along well.
What is Trinity Real Estate selling?
Stake in 11-building portfolio could fetch $3B, sources say
August 21, 2015 02:52PM
By E.B. Solomon

In 1705, England's Queen Anne donated 215 acres of prime Manhattan farmland to Trinity Church. In the years since, Trinity sold off a large chunk of those holdings, but still owns a sizable portfolio of prime commercial real estate concentrated in Hudson Square. And it's now in play.

Earlier this month, Trinity took bids for a 5 million-square-foot, 11-building portfolio in Hudson Square. Suitsors include some of the city's biggest real estate players such as SL Green Realty and Vornado Realty Trust. Sources familiar with the offering told The Real Deal that Trinity offered a 49 percent stake on 75-year leases for the properties, and said the stake could go for about $3 billion.

While the bidders await news of the prize, TRD took a look at exactly what's up for grabs.

CBRE's Darcy Stacom is handling the marketing, after taking over from colleague Michael Laginestra. Along with SL Green and Vornado, Norges Bank, Brookfield Property Partners and Ivanhoe Cambridge are reportedly in the running.

In March, Trinity offered a smaller portfolio of four buildings that was expected to fetch $1.25 billion. Here's how the 11 buildings now up for grabs stack up:

100 Avenue of the Americas
The 17-story office building measures 381,461 square feet and is 98 percent occupied, anchored by Two Sigma Investments, which occupies 114,815 square feet. NYC Elite Gymnastics occupies the retail space.

155 Avenue of the Americas
Rising 15 stories, the 225,692-square-foot building is 88 percent occupied. Salesforce.com occupies 30,960 square feet while Mototainment LLC is the retail tenant.

1 Hudson Square (75 Varick Street)
Spanning nearly 1.2 million square feet, the 17-story building is 85 percent occupied. Anchor tenant Horizon Media occupies 158,315 square feet and Metro Bicycles and SoHo Made Soups occupy the retail.

10 Hudson Square (160-170 Varick Street)
The 12-story, 349,720-square-foot building is 94 percent occupied, with Hudson Square Market occupying its retail space. Kirshenbaum Bond Senecal + Partners occupies 98,000 square feet of office space. The building is also home to WNYC.

200 Hudson Street
Measuring 368,820 square feet, the 12-story building is 99 percent occupied. Arrojo Studio is the retail tenant, and office tenant Havas
North America occupies 225,474 square feet.

205 Hudson Street

The 12-story building measures 400,996 square feet and is 99 percent occupied, with TriBeCa Rooftop as its retail tenant. The City University of New York occupies 94,376 square feet.

345 Hudson Street

Rising 17 stories, the 984,432 square foot building is 99 percent occupied, including retail tenants Chase Bank and Starbucks, as well as office tenant Viacom, which occupies 398,314 square feet.

350 Hudson Street

The nine-story building has 335,066 square feet and is 97 percent occupied. Gregory’s Coffee and Pret a Manger are retail tenants, and office tenant Medidata Solutions occupies 137,535 square feet.

435 Hudson Street

The nine-story building has 291,064 square feet and is 99 percent occupied. EN Japanese Brasserie is its retail tenant and the anchor tenant is @radical.media LLC, which occupies 27,000 square feet.

225 Varick Street

Measuring 378,749 square feet, the 12-story building is 85 percent occupied. Workman Publishing occupies 63,000 square feet of office space and New York Sports Club is a retail tenant.

16 Vestry Street

The seven-story, 60,800-square-foot building is 72 percent occupied. The largest office tenant is Stella Mains with 8,260 square feet.

(Source: TRD research and CoStar Group)

In all, Trinity owns 5.6 million square feet of real estate. It has lease commitments worth $2.2 billion, on existing leases as of Dec. 31, 2014, according to its most recent financial statements. Its net return from real estate operations last year dropped 1 percent to $82.3 million, down from $83.5 million in 2013, due to rising operating expenses and depreciation, according to the statements. Leasing revenue rose to $206.1 million from $195.8 million.
TELEVISION

What’s on TV Saturday

By KATHRYN SHATTUCK  AUG. 22, 2015

8 P.M. (HBO) DUMB AND DUMBER TO (2014) Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels reprise their roles as the dimwitted Providence pals Lloyd Christmas and Harry Dunne, who set out once again on a cross-country road trip in their tongue-wagging puppy-mobile — this time to find Harry’s biological daughter. Both Mr. Carrey and Mr. Daniels “have slowed down without cleaning up their act,” Manohla Dargis wrote in The New York Times about this comedy from Peter and Bobby Farrelly, which was a critical flop but a box-office success. “To that end, as it were, this sequel is just, uh, packed, or perhaps smeared, with a whole lot of poop jokes. There are diaper gags, lots of them, mostly pretty funny, and a couple of peekaboo looks at a feline rear end.” But, she added, “the Farrellys are still not much interested in film as a visual medium, and when Lloyd and Harry aren’t smacking each other or dropping their pants, you might as well be listening to a radio play.”

6:45 A.M. (El Rey) ‘SHAKEN NOT STIRRED’ MARATHON Robert Rodriguez, the network’s founder and chief executive, presents James Bond films in this weekend-long marathon. Saturday’s lineup begins with “GoldenEye” (1995), in which Bond (Pierce Brosnan) tries to recover a stolen stealth helicopter and a lethal space weapon. “From Russia With Love” (1963), in which Bond (Sean Connery) is lured into a trap involving a beautiful woman and a top-secret encoder, follows at 9:45; “Goldfinger” (1964), in which Bond (Mr. Connery) unveils a plot to commit the gold heist of the century, at noon; “Thunderball” (1965), in which Bond (Mr. Connery) is sent to the Bahamas to find two stolen nuclear missiles, at 2:30 p.m.; “You Only Live Twice” (1967), in which Bond (Mr. Connery) goes to Japan to investigate the disappearance of American and Soviet spacecraft, at 5:30; “On Her
Majesty's Secret Service" (1969), in which Bond (George Lazenby) fends off the threat of biological warfare, at 8; “Live and Let Die” (1973), in which Bond (Roger Moore) finds himself immersed in heroin, Voodoo and black magic, at 11:15; “The Spy Who Loved Me” (1977), in which Bond (Mr. Moore) and his Soviet counterpart negotiate for a tracking system that has lost nuclear submarines, at 2 a.m.; and “Moonraker” (1979), in which Bond (Mr. Moore) heads into space, at 4:45.

1 P.M. (OWN) OPRAH WINFREY PRESENTS: LEGENDS WHO PAVED THE WAY In memory of Julian Bond, the civil rights leader and former N.A.A.C.P. chairman, who died last Saturday, OWN presents this encore presentation of a January gala honoring the 50th anniversary of the voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

8 P.M. (Lifetime) THE UNAUTHORIZED FULL HOUSE STORY (2015) No Reebok pump, tapered jean or heartthrob shag is overlooked in this latest installment in the “Unauthorized” franchise. The re-enacted journey, which begins in 1985, touches on why Bob Saget, who starred in the original ABC sitcom as the corny-but-loving father Danny Tanner, traded blue stand-up for family comedy; the intricacies of Dave Coulier’s love life; John Stamos and Rebecca Romijn’s clumsy first meeting; and how that phenomenon known as the Olsen twins came to be.

9 P.M. (CUNY) WALLANDER: THE TRICKSTERS When a stable owner is found lifeless in his barn, Inspector Kurt Wallander (Krister Henriksson) is at a loss for suspects, since the man seemingly had no friends, no social life and no enemies. But a little sleuthing unearths something sinister, and with it a list of people who might have wanted the victim dead.
Kratos Announces Yonah Adelman Will Lead Microwave Electronics Division

SAN DIEGO, Aug. 24, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. (Nasdaq:KTOS), a leading National Security Solutions provider, announced today that Yonah Adelman has been appointed President, Microwave Electronics Division, where he will be responsible for the Company’s U.S. and international microwave and electronics business. The appointment of Mr. Adelman marks an important strategic step in support of Kratos’ commitment to building a technology and products based business that supports strategic international security programs.

Kratos’ Microwave Electronic Products business includes operations and manufacturing facilities in Israel that provide Solid State Power Amplifiers (SSPAs), Integrated Microwave Assemblies (IMAs), beam forming modules, waveform and signal generators and other electronic subsystems for missile, electronic warfare, radar, satellite communications, precision guided munitions, unmanned systems, navigation warfare and other platforms, primarily for international defense customers. Major programs supported by Kratos’ Microwave Electronic Products business include Iron Dome, BARAK, SPYDER, David’s Sling, Arrow, and Eurofighter.

Eric DeMarco, Kratos’ President & CEO, said, "The opportunities that Kratos has in the microwave and electronics business are significant, and we believe that we have the potential for significant international sales growth if we successfully execute our strategy over the next few years. I am extremely pleased to announce Yonah Adelman as President of Kratos’ Microwave Electronics Division, where his leadership, experience and vision for Kratos’ microwave and electronics business and strategy align with our important customer relationships and the market opportunities we are pursuing.”

"I am excited about this new challenge and the opportunities it provides for Kratos to expand into new areas and markets internationally," said Mr. Adelman. “I am looking forward to building Kratos’ Microwave Electronics Products Division into a significant business unit of the Company.”

Mr. Adelman began his professional career as a Research and Development Microwave Engineer at General Microwave Corporation (GMC) in Amityville, New York, subsequently moving to Israel where he took part in the establishment of General Microwave Israel, a subsidiary of GMC. Mr. Adelman served as Chief Microwave Engineer, Assistant General Manager, and since 1990 was General Manager of General Microwave Israel, which Kratos acquired in 2011. Mr. Adelman received a Bachelor of Science degree with summa cum laude honors in Mathematics and Physics from Brooklyn College and a Master of Science degree from New York University in Applied Mathematics, where he subsequently performed doctoral research in magneto-fluid dynamics. Mr. Adelman is a longtime member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and in 2008 received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Microwave Chapter of the Israeli IEEE.
IBM’s School Could Fix Education—and Tech’s Diversity Gap

It’s a sea of black graduation gowns in the belly of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn one rainy Tuesday evening in June. On the floor of the stadium, where the basketball court should be, sit thousands of students awaiting the start of the 75th Commencement of the New York City College of Technology, better known as City Tech. Everywhere, students are snapping selfies, craning their necks to find family members in the upper decks, and fastening last-minute bobby pins to caps bearing messages like “Thanks Mom!” and “Dream Big” scrawled in glitter and puff paint.

A procession of City Tech professors in robes and doctoral hoods file past the rows of students on their way to the stage. The line is moving slowly but steadily when an accounting professor students call Dr. Singh stops short after spotting six of his students seated in the row to his left. He smiles wide, throws his arms in the air, and gives each of them a handshake or celebratory clap on the back before pulling out his phone to snap a
would not be without reason, and he certainly would not be the only one. For starters, they are all 17 and 18. Few expected them to graduate this early. Given their backgrounds, few people probably expected them to graduate at all.

These six students are not the kind of boy or girl genius types who are accepted to Mensa at age 4 and master calculus by age 6. In fact, back in 8th grade, none of them were accepted into their first choice high schools. Many are the first in their families to attend college—a fact that, statistically speaking, makes them far less likely to graduate at all, let alone several years early.

But four years ago, these six students were among the first to enroll in a new public high school called P-TECH, short for Pathways in Technology Early College High School. The program, backed by IBM, aims to prepare mainly minority kids from low-income backgrounds for careers in technology. The idea is to earn a high school diploma and a free associate degree in six years or less. The students sitting in Barclays tonight—P-TECH’s inaugural graduates—plowed through the program in just four.

Since it opened in 2011, the likes of New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and President Obama himself have praised the school as a potential solution to the nation’s high youth
students. It's a milestone for the model itself. From this day forward, Cletus Andoh, Gabriel Rosa, Kiambu Gall, Michelle Nguyen, Radcliffe Saddler, and Rahat Mahmud will be held up as irrefutable proof that this solution might actually work.

(L-R) Cletus Radcliffe Saddler, Michelle Nguyen, Gabriel Rosa, Kiambu Gall, Cletus Andoh, and Rahat Mahmud hang out backstage before the P-TECH graduation ceremony. ANDREW WHITE FOR WIRED

Supply And Demand
Tech companies are long on excuses about why they’ve been so slow to diversify their ranks, even in the face of constant criticism. But by far the most frequently cited reason is they can’t hire diverse employees en masse until the country builds a diverse pipeline of skilled tech workers.
what they do best: scale it to the millions of people—in this case kids—who need it most.

For young people in the US, work is scarce. According to the group Opportunity Nation, one in seven young adults between 16 and 24 is neither working or in school. Those figures are even higher for black and Latino youths.

At the same time, the demand for so-called middle skill tech workers is spiking. P-TECH isn’t the first school that’s tried to bridge this gap by giving kids college credit while they’re still in high school. But what separates the P-TECH model from other dual enrollment schools is how it has been embraced—even spearheaded—by businesses.

The concept for the original P-TECH school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn was dreamed up back in 2010 by New York’s former Chancellor of Education Joel Klein and IBM’s then-CEO Samuel Palmisano. Just scratching its way out of the worst of the financial crisis, the city was looking for new ways to connect education to employment, and IBM volunteered to help by launching a school that would do just that.
Led by IBM’s vice president of corporate citizenship, Stanley Litow, the IBM team joined the Department of Education and the City University of New York to design a six-year high school that would give kids a well-rounded high school education while also equipping them with the same skills and degrees that IBM demands of its own employees. IBM would provide the students with mentors, paid summer internships, and give the kids special consideration for jobs at IBM after graduation. It would funnel kids directly into associate degree programs and ensure that they walked away from the school as debt-free college graduates. If IBM and other tech companies had a stake in educating students early on, the thinking went, maybe the gulf between employers and the young and unemployed wouldn’t stay so wide.

Just five years later, that first school in Brooklyn is now home to 434 students, and their list of achievements is already long. Nearly 50 percent of them are enrolled in at least one college course. More than 80 percent of the fourth-year students
were offered full-time jobs at IBM.

But what's even more noteworthy is just how fast this model has grown. By fall, 40 schools across the country will be designed in P-TECH's image. IBM backs four of them, but they're also run by tech giants like Microsoft and SAP, major energy companies like ConEdison, along with hospital systems, manufacturing associations, and civil engineering trade groups. They go by different names and are geared toward different career paths, but they all follow the IBM playbook, an extensive guide the company publishes online.

It explains everything from how to distribute funding for the school to how to plan the curriculum year by year. It all boils down to a few essential elements: Every P-TECH school has an employer partner. Every employer partner promises to guide the curriculum and put P-TECH grads first in line for jobs. And every student—no matter their backgrounds, test scores, or academic record—is welcome.
Not A World Apart

P-TECH's founding principal, Rashid Davis, wears dreadlocks on his head and electric blue sneakers on his feet. He uses the term “other realities” to refer to the knotty web of societal traps that can ensnare low-income kids before they reach college age. Walking through the front doors of P-TECH, it's clear this school is not immune to those realities.

Bars line the windows of the monolithic, 112-year-old school building on Albany Avenue in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. The words “Paul Robeson High School for Business and Technology” still mark the entryway, a reminder of the promising career-focused school housed within these walls before it became infamous for its violence and low performance and shut down. Inside the front doors, students file through a metal detector as a security guard barks threats at students who look at her sideways.
education for the city of New York before joining IBM. That’s where he saw how detrimental it could be for a school to be a little too perfect, a little too well-funded, a little too set apart.

“If you’re trying to create an example for other schools but you have different admissions criteria or spend more money or do it in a new school or in a high income neighborhood, people will always say, ‘Okay, that worked, but it worked because of all these things,’” Litow says. “We wanted to make sure there would be as little barrier as conceivable to replicate to another site.”

The beauty of P-TECH is the way it mines the natural resources of the existing school system and forges them into something altogether new, starting with its student body. Its students are 96 percent black and Hispanic, and around 80 percent of them receive free and reduced lunch. This means P-TECH is starting with the kids the education system too often brands least likely to succeed and making the bet that they will. “If you can achieve for these kids, the model really works,” Litow says.
local budgets. While IBM doesn’t make a straightforward monetary donation to the schools, the company estimates it’s spent well over $1 million on things like curriculum development, new school training programs, student internships, and employee time.

P-TECH also bends and molds time to its advantage by allowing kids to advance on to college courses as soon as they’ve passed the college readiness benchmarks on state tests, which measure students’ English and math skills. To get kids to those benchmarks faster, P-TECH offers only English, math, technology, and workplace learning freshman year. By stripping away courses like science and history, the thinking goes, students will be able to master their literacy and numeracy skills early on. “A lot of times there’s a perception that a student’s not ready for college, and in fact they are,” says Will Ehrenfeld, a former teacher who is now IBM’s full-time liaison to the Crown Heights school. “So we push the student in as soon as they’re ready.”

**Competitive Spirit**

That’s how kids like Radcliffe Saddler and the other five students who graduated at Barclays Center with him this year, ended up taking their first college courses during their freshman year.
as “like winning the lottery.” So it’s no surprise he’s become something of a poster boy for the P-TECH system.

In fact, a wall-sized poster of Saddler standing next to President Obama hangs inside the school. It’s a snapshot of the day in 2013 when Obama spoke at P-TECH and declared, “The country should be doing everything in our power to give more kids the chance to go to schools just like this one.” Saddler was the lucky student chosen to introduce the president that day.

Saddler says attending P-TECH has been like competing in a race to see who could finish college first. “I was in this accelerated group, and I noticed certain kids were driven like me, so
P-TECH works hard to foster that competitive spirit. It’s why posters of students who have been declared college-ready, including Saddler, line the cinderblock walls of the school, serving as not-so-subtle reminders to students that you, yes, you, can do it too. “When I first started, we always asked kids, ‘Why are your faces all over this school?’” remembers ShuDon Brown, who’s now entering her fourth year at P-TECH and is also on track to graduate early. “When they told us, it really was a motivator like, ‘I want my poster up there!’”

Principal Davis is counting on that drive. “In order to make sure more students complete at year six, students have to see some kids complete at year four,” he says. “It’s about motivating their peers.”

It’s also about ensuring that the model itself doesn’t become a “budget buster,” as Litow puts it. As long as a student is still technically in high school, city budgets can be used to pay for college courses, too. But once students are off the high school’s register, covering those costs requires outside funding. That means the more courses
Jobs Versus College

Getting kids a degree at P-TECH is only a means to an end. The end is the job itself. Students spend their student careers at P-TECH preparing for professional careers at IBM, from the workplace learning course freshman year to their IBM internships, which typically take place between junior and senior year. But Litow balks at comparisons between P-TECH’s approach and traditional vocational education.

“People are always looking for a way to drag down success,” he says. “These kids are not tracked for less opportunity. They’re empowered with more.”

As IBM interns, students have taken on roles as researchers, marketers, and bloggers, among other things. This year, all six P-TECH graduates were offered full-time jobs after graduation at starting salaries of at least $50,000. Three of the students, including Saddler, accepted the offer, while the other three, including Cletus Andoh, accepted full scholarships to four-year colleges.
Andoh, who is heading off to Syracuse University this fall, says the pull of a full-time job—and more importantly, of a paycheck—was strong, but ultimately, his parents convinced him to stay in school. “We didn’t get that opportunity,” Andoh’s mother, Helena Asaah, says, referring to herself and her husband Augustus, who both come from Accra, Ghana. “I said, ‘No. You finish school for me, and then do your job.’”

Now, Andoh agrees with his mother. “I’ll have more opportunities with a four-year degree than with a two-year degree and will probably end up with a better job,” he says.

Andoh is within earshot of Saddler and other classmates who did accept the gigs, but they’re not surprised or offended to hear him say it. They’ve had the same conversation with their own parents since receiving the job offers. It’s the same conversation that is playing out in school districts around the world as they consider models like this one and whether they’re setting kids up for something less than the maximum amount of success.
students. “What is the choice for the students who drop out of community college, take their high school diploma, and get a minimum wage job?” he asks, a flicker of agitation in his voice revealing just how often he’s had to answer this question. “What choice do they have? They have no choice.”

Litow isn’t the only one who feels that way. Larry Miller is a leading researcher at the Center for Reinventing Public Education and the dean of education at Florida State SouthWestern State College. He’s studied the impact of dual enrollment projects for years and agrees with Litow. “Given that they’re targeting this high-need population, I wouldn’t be concerned about the value of the two-year degree,” he says. “The biggest risk is that those kids are highly unlikely to complete their two-year degree at all.”

Nationwide, around 70 percent of students who attempt a two-year degree fail to finish in three. So far, the opposite is true at P-TECH, where Litow says around 70 percent of kids are on track to graduate with a high school diploma and a degree in six years or less.
Evidence shows that low-income students who get a college degree are about half as likely to stay in the bottom fifth of income distribution. "These are young people who perhaps otherwise wouldn’t be gainfully employed in the future," says Kathy Hochul, Lieutenant Governor of New York State, where there are now 33 P-TECH schools either in operation or development. "That’s the kind of investment we might not see an immediate return on, but it’s something that, philosophically, Governor Cuomo believes in."

Rahat Mahmud walks backstage before the graduation ceremony.

ANDREW WHITE FOR WIRED

Proving Out
Still, not everyone is on board. There are those who worry creating even high-quality schools
educational model expanding as fast as P-TECH has when, in reality, it has only actually graduated six students. Some analyses of the limited data that does exist on P-TECH suggest that the school still has a long way to go in terms of proving its worth.

Last fall, for instance, teacher, author, and blogger Gary Rubenstein published the blog post, “Is P-Tech a Miracle School or a Failing School?” It compared the Algebra II and Geometry state test scores of P-TECH students to student scores at other schools across the state and found P-TECH's to be among the lowest in New York City. According to Litow, that’s because P-TECH administers the tests to all students, not just the ones who have taken a given course. P-TECH does this as a means of figuring out which kids are ready for college level classes, no matter what grade they’re in. Rubenstein says that fact alone shouldn’t cause so steep a decline in scores. He also takes issue with the idea of making kids who have never studied a subject endure a three-hour test.

“There’s no reason to make a ninth grader take an 11th grade test. It’s a slight form of educational child abuse,” he says. Rubenstein argues these scores, and not whether six bright kids finished the program early, ought to be the true measure of whether P-TECH is succeeding and worthy of
And yet, even as educators openly doubt the model, new schools open every year. That, too, could create a challenge for P-TECH, by making it even tougher for its leaders, who are still figuring it out, to maintain quality control over the model they created. SAP, for instance, runs a school in Queens that’s similar to P-TECH. It’s even called B-TECH, short for Business Technology Early College High School. But it also runs completely different programs in Oakland, Boston, and Vancouver, British Columbia, which are modeled after P-TECH, but operate as tracks within existing schools.

And not every corporate partner is as willing to hire graduates as IBM is. Kate Morgan, SAP’s head of corporate social responsibility, for one, is candid about the fact that some work still needs to be done within SAP to make sure that the company is prepared to hire these students. “As you can imagine that requires a lot of change within SAP, and within a lot of major corporations, to look at that associate degree as something that’s really valuable,” she says. “It’s really about changing the conversation from, ‘Oh this student went to community college,’ to, ‘This student has all these specialized skills, they’re
P-TECH: ensuring the tech world actually has the appetite for the pipeline of college graduates this model, if it works, will create. It’s a tall order for an industry stubbornly unwilling to change its ways when it comes to diversity and hiring.

And yet, there are some signs cracks are beginning to form in the walls that surround these companies. Intel, for one, has committed $300 million to promote workplace diversity. Facebook, Pinterest, and other companies recently started piloting a program in which hiring managers must consider at least one minority candidate for every position, a practice the company co-opted from the NFL’s so-called Rooney Rule. And even major venture capital firms have committed to increasing diversity at their organizations, as well as within their portfolio companies.

P-TECH’s leaders, including Davis and Litow, are hoping that these groups will put action to these words sooner than later. Launching 40 schools in five years may seem fast, but to make a dent in the problem they’re trying to solve, they say, it’s not nearly fast enough.

**Moving Faster**

Principal Davis is standing at a podium in IBM’s
to the Barclays Center, where they will be recognized for the first time as college graduates. But for now, they’re high school seniors, sitting dutifully alongside their families and teachers, nodding and laughing while their principal tearfully shares one of his favorite stories about one student, Gabriel Rosa.

P-TECH graduate Gabriel Rosa.  
ANDREW WHITE FOR WIRED

Rosa learned to program at an early age, and by the time he got to P-TECH in ninth grade, he had figured out how to prank other kids by hacking into their computers. It started off small, one device at a time. Then, one day, Principal Davis says, “He chose to use his talent to hack into the school’s main computer system.”

At this, Rosa chuckles. Sitting in the front row,
Jamaica High School, in Queens, was once the largest high school in the United States. For most of its history, it occupied a majestic Georgian Revival building on Gothic Drive, designed in the nineteen-twenties by William H. Gompert, who had begun his career at McKim, Mead & White. With east and west wings, granite columns, and an elaborate bell tower, the building looked like a state capitol that had been dropped into the middle of a residential neighborhood; it sat on the crest of a hill so imposing that planners would have been guilty of pretense had it housed anything other than a public institution.

One evening in June of last year, Jamaica students wearing red and blue gowns gathered with their families and teachers and with members of the school staff at Antun’s, a catering hall in Queens Village, for the senior-class commencement ceremony. Accompanying the festivities was the traditional graduation boilerplate—about life transitions and rising to new challenges—but it carried a particular significance on this occasion, because it was as applicable to the faculty and the staff, some of whom had been at the school for nearly three decades, as it was to the students. After a hundred and twenty-two years, Jamaica High School was closing; the class of 2014, which had just twenty-four members, would be the last.

The New York City Department of Education had announced the closure three years earlier, citing persistent violence and a graduation rate of around fifty percent. Accordingly, the department had begun to “co-locate” four newly created “small schools” in the old building. Advocates argue that small schools can best resolve many of the ills associated with urban education, but the reorganization produced a logistical problem. The schools tended to operate like siblings competing for bathroom time. Access to the building’s communal spaces was at a premium. Unable to secure the auditorium for a graduating class of two dozen, Jamaica High School found itself, both figuratively and literally, pushed out.

Underscoring the indignities that attended the school’s last days was a difficult irony: for much of its time, Jamaica was a gemstone of the city’s public-education system. In 1981, the schools chancellor, Frank Macchiarola, decided to take on the
additional role of an interim high-school principal, in order to better appreciate the daily demands of school administration. He chose Jamaica, and was roundly criticized for picking such an easy school to lead. Four years later, the U.S. Department of Education named it one of the most outstanding public secondary schools in the nation. Alumni include Stephen Jay Gould, Attorney General John Mitchell, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Walter O’Malley, Paul Bowles, and three winners of the Pulitzer Prize: Gunther Schuller, Art Buchwald, and Alan Dugan. Bob Beamon, who set a world record for the long jump in the 1968 Olympics, graduated with the class of ’65. The school’s closure felt less like the shuttering of a perennial emblem of stagnation than like the erasure of a once great institution that had somehow ceased to be so.

Jamaica had become an institution of the type that has vexed city policymakers and educators: one charged with serving a majority-minority student body, most of whose members qualified as poor, and whose record was defined by chronic underachievement and academic failure. Even so, word of the school’s closure angered students and their families, the community, and alumni. I was among them—I graduated with the class of ’87—and for me, as for many former students, the school was a figment of recollection, frozen in its academic glory. George Vecsey, the former Times sports columnist and a member of the class of ’56, accused Joel Klein, Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s schools chancellor, of “cooking the books,” to make schools slated for closure appear worse than they were, and compared the Department of Education’s closure policies to the nihilism of Pol Pot. Vecsey later apologized for having slighted the suffering of Cambodia, but he held to his contention that Klein ruled by dictatorial fiat. He wrote, in a blog, “The city destroyed a piece of history because of its own failure.”

There are two broadly competing narratives about school closure. The one commonly told by teachers, students, and many parents at underperforming schools centers on a lack of financial and material resources, which insures that the schools will be unable to meet even minimum standards. Strongly connected to this version is a belief that closure functions as a kind of veiled union-busting: shutting a school allows reformers to sidestep contracts and remove long-term teachers.

Reformers view closure as a necessary corrective to what they see as bloated bureaucracies, inept teachers, and unaccountable unions. They argue that urban schools are often too large to give students the attention they need. In 2000, the Gates Foundation began funding education reform, with an emphasis on reducing school size. Nine years later, in an annual newsletter, the foundation reported that its efforts had not met with significant success, particularly with schools “that did not take radical steps to change the culture, such as allowing the principal to pick the team of teachers or change the curriculum.” The foundation also said that it “had less success trying to change an existing school than helping to create a new school.” The reform movement nationwide increasingly saw closure and the creation of new institutions—as opposed to funding and reorganizing existing
Joel Klein, who as chancellor closed seventy-four schools, disputes the notion that institutions like Jamaica failed owing to a lack of resources. Nor does he believe that size is the only issue. "Where there were thriving large schools, we didn't try to replace them," he told me. The real problem was that the schools had "started getting many kids who were low-performing and entering high school a couple of years behind." The solution was to create "a much more intimate and personalized setting for them"—a phrase at odds with the disruption and the discord that often greet the end of a long-established community institution.

Jamaica's demise became part of the litany of resentments voiced by opponents of school closure across the country. Rahm Emmanuel's shuttering of nearly fifty schools in Chicago angered black voters and became a major issue in the city's recent mayoral election. In 2010, Adrian Fenty, the mayor of Washington, D.C., was dispatched in an election that was also a referendum on his schools chancellor, Michelle Rhee, who had closed two dozen schools. Yet that reaction raises another confounding question: Why do communities most in need of strong schools oppose shutting down institutions that are failing them? In demanding that a school remain open, are alumni hewing closer to nostalgia than to current reality? Or is the conversation about school closure really a proxy for something more subtle, complex, and intractable?

The impulse to reform public schools in the United States has existed nearly as long as the impulse to build them. The tides of immigrants arriving at the turn of the twentieth century, and the nativist hostilities that greeted them, imbued educators with an assimilationist mission. At mid-century, schools were instilled with Cold War anxiety; the subtext of films like "Blackboard Jungle" and "Rebel Without a Cause" was not only the perils of dissolute youth but also the dangers posed by families and schools that were seen as failing to meet the Soviet challenge. In the civil-rights era, American classrooms were called on to propagate racial equality in the broader society. But no mission completely displaced the one that preceded it, so that, by the end of the century, we expected public education to assimilate students, equalize them, and prepare them to compete globally.

The history of Jamaica High School roughly correlates with the evolving demands placed on public education in New York City. The school was founded in 1892, and, five years later, moved into a small building on Hillside Avenue, with an enrollment of eighty students. Rural Queens County was formally incorporated as a borough of the city in 1898. During the next fifteen years, the Queensboro Bridge opened and the Long Island Rail Road's Jamaica station was expanded, becoming the largest in the system. Commuting presented a novel alternative to life in the uncorralled bedlam of Manhattan; Queens was transformed into a kind of suburb within the city, and the population boomed. Schools citywide struggled to keep up with the demands created by both immigration and population
In 1925, construction began on the new building, the school's last home, on Gothic Drive. Jamaica took its name from the Jameco, or Yameca, Indians, who once inhabited the area where Kennedy Airport now stands. The name meant "beaver," and the animal, a symbol of industriousness, was chosen as the school mascot. (When I enrolled, students were grumbling that it was time for a new mascot—particularly the cheerleaders, whose sweaters were emblazoned with the word.) The grand structure, completed in 1927, accommodated thirty-four hundred students.

Over the years, the walls of the east wing became an evolving exhibit of the school's history, adorned with photographs of generations of students, faculty, and staff. Those from the first decades showed stern-faced young men in football uniforms; genial, avuncular-looking teachers in suits; and earnest Second World War-era teen-agers, many of them from the growing Greek, Italian, and Jewish neighborhoods to the north and the west of the school. Though racially homogeneous, the student body drew from a cross-section of economic backgrounds. Kids from middle-class Flushing and Kew Gardens sat with students from working-class areas south of the school and others from more affluent enclaves, like Jamaica Estates. By 1950, the No. 7 subway line had attracted families to the formerly sparse expanses of northern Queens, and the school's enrollment grew to forty-six hundred.

Yearbooks from the fifties show only a few dozen Latino and black students. In 1948, the Supreme Court struck down racially restrictive housing covenants, and a handful of African-American celebrities, including Jackie Robinson, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, and Roy Campanella, bought homes in the exclusive Addisleigh Park section of Queens. (Fame provided only partial insulation from racial resentment; in 1952, a cross was burned near the homes of Robinson and Campanella.) Still, eighty-five per cent of the new housing developments in the borough were closed to blacks. Today, the name South Jamaica includes any number of mostly black neighborhoods south of Liberty Avenue, but at that time it was a well-defined sliver of real estate between the more middle-class areas of St. Albans and Ozone Park. It was where most of the African-American population, including the students enrolled at the high school, lived.
During the nineteen-forties, in a series of landmark tests conducted around the country, the psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark demonstrated that black children associated virtue and intelligence with whiteness, and had correspondingly internalized racist stereotypes of inferiority. Robert Carter, an attorney with the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund, heard of the Clarks’ work and brought it to the attention of Thurgood Marshall, who was then the legal fund’s director-counsel. Marshall made the Clarks’ findings central to the argument for school desegregation in the Supreme Court case of Brown v. Board of Education. The decision made Kenneth Clark famous (while largely overlooking his wife’s role in structuring the experiment). Clark, who had grown up in Harlem and was a professor at the City College of New York, then turned his attention to the city government, which, he charged, had fostered segregation in the schools.

Arthur Levitt, then the president of the New York City Board of Education, responded that the schools merely reflected residential patterns: children who attended overwhelmingly black schools lived in overwhelmingly black neighborhoods. A Commission on Integration was set up to examine the issue, with Clark as one of the commissioners, and Levitt as co-chair, and it issued recommendations, which were never quite translated into policy. (Clark resigned, but continued to push for integration throughout his career.) In 1959, the Board of Education experimented by sending four hundred students from overcrowded black schools in Brooklyn to under-attended white schools in the Ridgewood and Glendale sections of Queens. The move was met with rancorous opposition and a brief boycott that anticipated the riotous response to busing in the seventies.

In 1949, John Ward, an African-American student whose family had migrated to New York from Virginia after the Second World War, enrolled at the school. Ward’s father was a bus mechanic, and his mother worked as a domestic; between them, they earned enough to buy a home in Jamaica. Ward recalls the area as a place where Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans, African-Americans, and Jews lived in peaceful proximity. His house was not far from the grocery store that Mario Cuomo’s parents owned, and Ward, who played baseball as a boy, remembers the future governor from games in the neighborhood sandlots. The area had not yet entirely shaken its rural roots. “There were still people farming there,” Ward told me. “I remember seeing people butcher hogs on Linden Boulevard in the forties and fifties.”

Ward wanted to be a teacher, but Woodrow Wilson, the high school that most blacks in the area attended, was a vocational trade school. So he applied to Jamaica, which had acquired a reputation as one of the city’s strongest academic high
schools. Ward initially found the rigor daunting. "My first semester, I failed about three major classes," he told me. "My father said, 'If you're not going to work at school, you'll have to get a job.'" Ward studied hard and spent an extra semester earning enough academic credits to apply to college. He played baseball well enough to be selected for the All-City team in 1954, his senior year. "I don't really recall there being much racial tension," he said of the school. "The blacks mostly hung out with other black students, but, being an athlete, I interacted with a lot more of the white students." For a few years in the fifties, Jamaica's integrated athletics teams, with their winning records, were a point of pride for the school. In 1954, Ward was elected the school's first black class president.

He was accepted at Morgan State University, a historically black institution in Baltimore, but his family couldn't afford the tuition, so he played D-League baseball for a few years, then applied to the New York City police academy, and, in 1960, became one of the first black members of the motorcycle corps. Of the more than three hundred graduates in Ward's police-academy class, fewer than two dozen were African-American. In 1974, he was promoted to a plainclothes unit working out of the 114th Precinct. "Out of sixteen guys, I was the black on the street-crimes unit," he told me. His career on the force was, at least demographically, a replay of his experiences at Jamaica, and Ward later credited the school with giving him not only an excellent education but also the skills that allowed him to navigate primarily white environments. "Jamaica being integrated in the fifties was something unusual," he told me. "But it was also a place where I felt I belonged."

South Jamaica's black population continued to grow in the fifties and sixties, though not all of it was as economically stable as Ward's family. In 1947, when the Olympian Bob Beamon was still a baby, his mother died, and he was eventually sent to live with a guardian in a rough part of the neighborhood. After a troubled childhood and a brush with juvenile court, which resulted in his being sent to a remedial, "600" school, Beamon became convinced that if he could get into Jamaica he could turn his life around. Four decades later, in a memoir, "The Man Who Could Fly," he wrote of the school in nearly ecclesiastical terms:

"Mr. Louis Schuker, the principal at Jamaica High, had a long talk with me and Coach Ellis. He said the odds of a 600 school student making it in a regular school environment were next to zero. His admonition to me was reminiscent of the one given by the judge who had sentenced me to the 600 school.

"Beamon, any trouble out of you and you are out of here," Mr. Schuker said. "Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, sir," I answered firmly and clearly. I knew that I wasn't going anywhere but Jamaica High. This was where I wanted to be. This was where I belonged.
It's easy to wax nostalgic about the happy spaces of one's childhood, but in Beamon's case the assessment can't be so easily dismissed. He traced his desire to compete in the Olympics to a visit that the track-and-field star Wilma Rudolph, a triple gold medalist in the 1960 Games, paid to Jamaica during his sophomore year. The school was a place where someone like him, who grew up poor in a crime-plagued neighborhood, stood a chance of encountering someone like Rudolph.

Beamon and Ward could have been case studies for Kenneth Clark's advocacy of integration. Political salesmanship warranted that advocates speak of integration as a removal of racial strictures and a kind of democratic communion, but, at its core, it was meant to achieve a redistribution of wealth or, at least, of opportunity. If advantage tended to accrue in places inhabited by whites, integrationists like Clark hoped that by placing black students in physical proximity to whites the benefits would be spread around.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 insured that race could not be used explicitly to prohibit access to public institutions, but there was a big difference in the public's mind between outlawing discrimination and engineering racial diversity. By 1974, when the Supreme Court ruled, in Milliken v. Bradley, that school districts could not be compelled to participate in busing programs, the push for integration had already begun to lose momentum. School districts across the country fell back on voluntary integration programs. (A 2007 Supreme Court ruling greatly weakened the ability to do even that.)

Meanwhile, successive tides of immigration in the seventies and eighties transformed Queens into the most ethnically diverse county in the United States. Greek enclaves in Astoria saw an influx of Brazilians, Colombians, Bangladeshis, Chinese, Guyanese, Koreans, Ecuadorians, Romanians, Indians, Filipinos, Albanians, and Bosnians, in addition to Lebanese, Egyptians, Tunisians, Yemeni, and Moroccans. The working-class white areas along Jamaica Avenue became home to Haitian, Jamaican, Dominican, Puerto Rican, Indian, and Pakistani populations. A South Asian community took root south and east of the school. Jamaica High School did not become "integrated" as a consequence of the implementation of a particular set of policy prerogatives. Rather, the school was something more uncommon and more notable: an institution whose diversity simply reflected the entirety of its surrounding communities.

My family moved to Queens about twenty years after John Ward's did, as part of a nascent civil-rights-era black middle class. By 1967, my father, who was an electrician, was earning enough to buy a home. He and my mother left a tenement in Harlem for a yellow two-story house in Hollis, far enough into Queens that people referred to Manhattan as "the city." The nearest subway stop was a twenty-minute bus ride away. My father considered the move a validation of his decision, at the age of seventeen, to leave his native Georgia and head north.
My mother, who had left Alabama for New York as a teen-ager, and took jobs in
the city as a domestic and a hotel telephone operator, now no longer needed to
work, and she enrolled in night classes, studying for a B.A. at Queens College. Her
American-history class was taught by Herb Sollinger, an adjunct professor who
was also a full-time social-studies teacher at Jamaica High School. Tall and
fortyish, Sollinger was a brilliant, quirky figure who wore red socks every day and
had an encyclopedic grasp of world affairs. My mother, who deeply resented how
limited her educational opportunities had been in Alabama, decided that my sister,
who was about to start her freshman year, should attend the high school where
Sollinger taught. Hollis was not in the district, so my mother filed a less than
accurate change-of-address form with the Board of Education, and, the following
year, my sister enrolled at Jamaica. Three years later, my older brother did, too.

The narrative of individual ascent in America often elides the many frail
contingencies that make success possible. In the late seventies, my father found it
increasingly difficult to compete with larger electrical contractors. Then, in 1981,
my oldest brother—who had served in Vietnam, had come home addicted to
heroin, and had been clean for several years—died, one of the earliest victims of
AIDS. My father's business collapsed amid the grief that followed. The
contingencies piled up. We moved from the yellow house into a second-floor
apartment on a dead-end street in Bricktown, a forgettable stretch of South
Jamaica alongside the Long Island Rail Road. That part of Liberty Avenue, the
northern boundary of the neighborhood, was home to automotive yards,
laundromats, bodegas, and a significant number of bad reputations. Bob Beamon
recalled seeing, as a boy, one teen-ager stab another to death there. But Bricktown
was zoned for Jamaica High School, and I enrolled as a freshman.

Up to that point, I'd been the type of student who is frequently urged to "apply
yourself," but, in a fit of geekdom my freshman year, I developed an obsession with
physics—specifically, quarks. A classmate and I started staying behind after science
class to discuss subatomic particles with Mr. DeFelice, a wry, mostly gray-haired
man who spoke in deliberate cadences that crescendoed at the end of each
sentence. He began assigning us additional reading, and eventually recommended
us for the honors science track. His affirmation of our potential, coming amid the
normal adolescent anxieties and a host of socioeconomic ones, still stands out in
my memory.

The school was by then a far more polyglot institution than it had been when Ward
or Beamon attended. I played right field on a baseball team that included a Jewish
third baseman, a Dominican pitcher, a shortstop from Colombia, and an Indian
utility outfielder. We took the field looking as if team tryouts had been held at the
Census Bureau. Jamaica remained academically rigorous, and was initiating an
impressive array of programs designed to prepare students for careers in science and
engineering, business and medicine. It was during my sophomore year, when
Eileen Petruzillo was principal, that the Department of Education cited the school
for its excellence.
In my senior year, the father of my friend Sherman Brown encouraged me and a classmate, Mark Mason, to apply to his alma mater, Howard University. Sherman played first base on the baseball team and lived in Jamaica Estates. His father owned a travel agency. His mother, who held a doctorate in psychology, was the first person I’d ever met with a Ph.D. Mark was the senior-class president and, like me, the first in his family for whom going directly from high school to college was a possibility. Sherman, Mark, and I wound up as roommates at Howard. My four closest black friends at Jamaica, including Sherman and Mark, earned master’s degrees, and two of them were later awarded doctorates. Mark, now a chief financial officer at Citigroup, summarized Jamaica’s impact: “We came from neighborhoods where very few people went to college, but went to school with a set of people almost certain to go to college, and the school had a bigger influence.”

My high-school years had coincided with a train of racially charged events in the city: the death of Eleanor Bumpers, a sixty-six-year-old woman who was shot in her apartment by a police officer; the death, from injuries sustained in police custody, of the graffiti artist Michael Stewart; the arrest of Bernhard Goetz, in the shooting of four young black men who he claimed had attempted to mug him in the subway; and the death of Michael Griffith, in Howard Beach, Queens. Griffith’s death brought a rolling racial subcurrent to the surface: he was fatally struck by a car as he fled onto a highway to escape a mob of whites who were chasing him. Adults in my neighborhood who had grown up in the South called Griffith’s death a lynching, and warned me to stay out of white working-class enclaves like Howard Beach. Three days after Griffith’s death, I saw a group of black teen-agers attack a white teen-ager on Hillside Avenue, and rage through the streets shouting “Howard Beach! Howard Beach!” Yet neither I nor any of the teachers and alumni I spoke to recall those tensions as being particularly prominent at Jamaica. The school continued to represent an educational idyll. But it could not stand entirely outside the times.

Students usually gathered in the first-floor auditorium before the start of classes, but, on the morning of Wednesday, November 5, 1986, Principal Petruzillo announced over the P.A. system that the auditorium was off limits, owing to a construction emergency. Her story held up for just as long as it took for the police and ambulances to arrive. Earlier that morning, Gregory Evelyn, an almost fragilely small sixteen-year-old junior, with whom I had taken swimming class, had shot a sophomore named Stanley Pacheco, following what was said to have been a dispute over a girl. Leo Greenfest, a gym teacher certified in first aid, tended to Pacheco, but the bullet had severed his spinal cord, and left him paralyzed below the neck. Evelyn ran out of the building and was arrested at his home a short time later.
School shootings were not yet recognized as a common feature of American life, which meant that the incident generated an enormous amount of news coverage, and also that there were no established safety or emotional-health protocols with which to respond to it. The shooting and its aftermath hung over us the rest of the school year; for the graduating students, they remained a set of emotional ellipses never quite resolved. Outside the school, the shooting came to be seen as a vector of ill tidings, definitive evidence of an institution in decline. But to the teachers who returned the following year, and the years after, the shooting was a tragedy that presaged the coming violence in American schools more than it spoke to any particular trouble at Jamaica. On the morning of the shooting, Susan Sutera, a gym teacher, was leading a combined class with Leo Greenfest. She continued to teach at the school until the year before it closed. “The shooting was a crazy, tragic day,” she told me. “But, terrible as it was, it didn’t really define Jamaica as a dangerous place. It was something that we recognized we had to move on from.”

As late as 1998, Jamaica held a respectable standing among the city’s large high schools. Though it was no longer the elite institution of earlier years, more than seventy-five per cent of the students graduated on time. But, by 2009, the graduation rate had tumbled to thirty-nine per cent. A confluence of events brought about the decline. In that period, talented students in northern Queens were given the option of attending two other high schools, both based on college campuses. In 1995, Townsend Harris, a magnet high school on Parsons Boulevard, moved onto the campus of Queens College. With roughly half the number of students as Jamaica, Townsend Harris had graduation rates that fluctuated between ninety-nine and a hundred per cent. During the eighties and nineties, Jamaica allowed students to enroll in courses at York College, a liberal-arts institution about a mile south of the high school. In 2002, York became the location of Queens High School for the Sciences, which granted admission based solely on standardized-test scores.

In 2004, in the name of greater choice, the Bloomberg administration revised the districting rules to allow students to attend any high school in the city. Given the realities of residential segregation, and of school quality as a determinant of real-estate values, there was something almost radical in that idea. It’s even possible to see the Bloomberg plan as a long-awaited response to Arthur Levitt’s claim, in 1954, that the problem in New York was not segregated schools but segregated neighborhoods. But it also meant that students whose parents—owing to language difficulties or work demands, immigration status or a generalized fear of bureaucratic authority—could not or would not pursue other educational options for their children found themselves relegated to increasingly unappealing schools.

The demographic balance that characterized Jamaica during my years became impossible to maintain. In 2011, the year that the city formally decided to close the school, fourteen per cent of the student population had disabilities and twenty-nine per cent had limited English proficiency. In the year before the school closed, it was ninety-nine per cent minority, a demographic that would not in itself be a
James Eterno taught social studies at Jamaica from 1986 until it closed, and was also a representative of the United Federation of Teachers. A trim, voluble man in his fifties, he speaks in a rapid-fire cadence and with precisely the accent you'd expect of someone who'd spent all but two years of his life in Queens. Eterno agrees with Joel Klein's description of the school's enrollment during its last decade. "We still had plenty of smart kids, but we had many more higher-needs kids, English-language learners," he told me. Concentrations of high-needs students place a strain on schools, and, Eterno said, "We didn't get the support. We were not prepared to deal with the changing population." The tacit belief that large schools were unformable meant that Jamaica's sliding numbers looked to some experts like predictable educational failure; to the faculty, those numbers looked like what happens when a school is asked to educate a challenging population without the necessary tools. (This is what George Vecsey was referring to when he wrote about "cooking the books.") In the battle over the school's future, many came to see those changing demographics not as happenstance but as a purposeful way of insuring that the creation of small schools in the building would be a fait accompli.

In a way, the protests over school closure are a bookend to the riots that broke out over busing four decades ago. Like "busing" and "integration," the language of today's reformers often serves as a euphemism for poverty mitigation, the implicit goal that American education has fitfully attempted to achieve since Brown v. Board of Education. Both busing and school closure recognize the educational obstacles that concentrated poverty creates. But busing recognized a combination of unjust history and policy as complicit in educational failure. In the ideology of school closure, though, the lines of responsibility—of blame, really—run inward. It's not society that has failed, in this perspective. It's the schools.

In 1954, Kenneth and Mamie Clark's arguments about the pernicious effects of racism on black children implicated white society. Sixty years later, arguments that black students associated studiousness with "acting white" were seen not as evidence of the negative effects of internalized racism but as indicators of pathological self-defeat among African-Americans. The onus shifted, and public policy followed. The current language of educational reform emphasizes racial "achievement gaps" and "underperforming schools" but also tends to approach education as if history had never happened. Integration was a flawed strategy, but it recognized the ties between racial history and educational outcomes. Last year, a study by the Civil Rights Project at U.C.L.A. found that New York has the most segregated school system in the country, a reflection of the persistence of the housing patterns that Arthur Levitt talked about in 1954 but also of the failure of the integrationist ideal that was intended to address it. From that vantage point, the closure of Jamaica seemed to be less about the interment of a single school than about the impeachment of a particular brand of idealism regarding race and, by
Ninety years ago, the City of New York broke ground on a huge, beautiful building as a symbol of its commitment to public education. Last year, it closed the school that the building housed, purportedly for the same reasons. The people who gathered angrily outside Jamaica High School weren't really protesting its closing; they were protesting the complex of history, policy, poverty, and race that had brought it about.

When I visited the old building on Gothic Drive, a few months ago, it was undergoing renovation and was obscured by scaffolding and tarps. It looked as if it were draped in a shroud. Then I drove a mile southeast to my old apartment building in Bricktown. The area had never been beautiful, but now it sagged in a way that it hadn't done in the early eighties, when I lived there. Rows of boarded-up properties lined the street. Our building was now windowless and abandoned. For the first time in many years, I understood myself to be from Bricktown, even as the glare from a man across the street, as subtle as an eviction notice, told me that I no longer belonged there.

Education was central to the gamble at the heart of my parents’ migration north. My mother began her adulthood cleaning houses for whites in Alabama; she ended it as a holder of two degrees from New York University—a trajectory that said as much about the possibilities she found in Queens as it did about her own determination. Bricktown's declining fortunes said everything about what is at stake in public education—about what happens when a place like Jamaica ceases to be great and then ceases to be at all. It was obvious that a good portion of the homes in Bricktown had been foreclosed. What was less apparent was that so had a key route—the one I took thirty years ago—to get out of there.

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