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JERSEY CITY

# HEIGHTS NEWS

Official Newsletter of the Central Avenue Special Improvement District Management Corporation

Winter 2011

## Bizs Welcome Community At Everything Festival

Saturday May 21, 2011

See page 6 for more info



Photo by B. Yun

### 2 New Murals Add to Central Avenue Outdoor Art Gallery

On October 21st, the Central Avenue Special Improvement District (CASID) held a press conference to unveil two new murals designed by local artists Richard La Rovere and Megan Gulick. Their uplifting pieces are located on the sidewalls of .99 Power (387 Central Avenue/ Charles St.) and Daisy Cleaners (426 Central Avenue/ South Street) bringing further arts enrichment to the Avenue and Heights neighborhood.

The ¼ mile Central Avenue business district already had three murals within its limits but CASID is eager to add more. Thanks to assistance from the County through the Local Arts Programming Grant, Central Avenue was able to continue a long-term goal of adding “art destination” to Central Avenue’s distinct resume.

To implement this program, the CASID issued a “Request for Proposal”

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### Heights’ 4th & 6th Graders Discover Nature, Reservoir # 3

It all started with a field trip. In late October, Christa McAuliffe School PS # 28 fourth graders from Room 118 and sixth graders from Room 224 had the opportunity to take a tour of Jersey City’s Reservoir # 3, the “hidden jewel” of Jersey City. Located only blocks away from the school in the Heights neighborhood of Jersey City, none of the students had ever visited the reservoir before. Most of them were unaware there was a reservoir behind the imposing stone walls surrounding the site. Walking through the reservoir’s gate was like entering a fantasy world for the students, one that previously had existed only in books, pictures, and their imaginations.

Steven Latham, president of the Jersey City Reservoir Preservation Alliance, shared the history of the reservoir with

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## Message from the Board of Trustees

Dear Reader,

First and foremost, thank you for continuing to shop local and visiting Jersey City's Central Avenue business district. When shopping local, you support businesses, jobs, and the traditional neighborhood community that makes the Heights such a great place to live.

With the end of the long winter in sight, the Central Avenue business district is eager to get back to business. Many merchants are preparing to make up for lost time this spring by embracing the season's holidays (i.e. Easter, Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day, etc) with much anticipation of an improving economy. Furthermore, businesses are now planning their efforts for the annual "Everything Jersey City Festival" scheduled for Saturday May 21st. Now in its' fourth year, the festival continues to showcase the resilience of our business and neighborhood community.

The Board of Trustee election is upon us and we thank outgoing trustees Joseph Gigante (Goehrig's Bakery - 475 Central Avenue) and Marco LoSchiavo (Nino's Shoes - 344 Central Avenue) who have elected not to seek the next two year term. Marco has served the longest of the two dating back to 2001 thereby volunteering numerous hours over the past ten years to guide the organization and combat the issues facing our district. We wish them both much success in their endeavors and will continue working with them as active members of the corporation.

Central Avenue and the Jersey City Heights remains a desirable location for new businesses and residents alike. As a community, we are capitalizing on neighborhood assets including our beautiful parks, Reservoir # 3 (see page 4), a growing artists population (page 7), and uniting our neighbors and businesses through one of North Jersey's largest main street festivals. These valued resources continue to improve the quality of life for our proud residents and raises the question "Why don't I live and shop in the Heights" among visitors. There is much work to be done in 2011 but as a united community we are confident we will overcome the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

President Michael Yun and Board of Trustees

## Avenue Renews SID Program 2 More Years

The Central Avenue S.I.D. Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that at a Meeting of the Corporation that took place on November 09, 2010, an overwhelming 98% of the votes submitted by CASID members (owners of commercial properties and businesses on Central Avenue between Manhattan Avenue and North Street) were in favor of continuing the Management Corporation and the Special Improvement District on Central Avenue for an additional two years (December 2010 to December 2012). In accordance with our by-laws, CASID members vote every two years to renew the program.

The CASID was founded in 1992 to guide and promote the positive social growth and economic revitalization occurring in the City of Jersey City by providing supplemental management, maintenance, and improvements to the Central Avenue business district. Currently, the CASID oversees the Streetscape Maintenance Operation that helps merchants maintain an orderly business district seven days a week. The CASID also manages a number of successful initiatives to market Central Avenue as an excellent place to live, dine, work and shop, including seasonal decorations, commercial campaigns, a local business directory, quarterly newsletters, the website JCHights.com, and the Everything Jersey City Festival. Finally, the CASID continues to advocate for Central Avenue businesses and the surrounding neighborhood community.

"The Board of Trustees would like to thank all members who participated in this very important function of the CASID," said organization President Michael Yun. He noted that vast membership support is largely attributed to holding the SID assessment steady over the years. The self imposed assessment on an average 25 ft commercial storefront property within the district pays an estimated \$375/ year towards the SID program. "The SID assessment had a modest raise only once in eighteen years as the Board of Trustees and our professional staff continue to find creative solutions and do more with less," said Yun. "For this reason, our members are looking beyond the challenges of today's economy with confidence that their investment to improve Jersey City make a difference."

**Note:** The 2010 Fall edition of the Heights News was not published due to personnel changes at the CASID office. We thank our readers for their understanding. Scheduled advertisements and stories have been carried over.

## Central Avenue Storefront Occupancy Better Than National Average

As the national economy begins to pick up, the Central Avenue business district is showing many of the same patterns that business districts across the country are experiencing - a consistent opening and closing of stores.

In the eight months between July 2010 and February 2011, nine (9) new businesses have opened their doors on Central Avenue replacing those that have left. The district welcomed new businesses Computech Experts (257 Central), Kid Zone (255 Central), Golden Money (308 Central), Jazzy Shoes (277 Central), Faded Royalty (481 Central), JC Heights Video (349 Central), Advance Healthcare Services (451 Central), My Bodywraps Fun Factory (298 Central), and Kapricho Salon (516 Central).

CASID wants to see every vacancy filled but Jersey City is not immune to the effects of a depressed economy. Despite the difficulties associated with the recession, the silver lining is that new business ventures continue to find Central Avenue a vibrant and desirable location.

By the end of February 2011, there were exactly twelve (12) commercial spaces immediately available for rent within the business district. Out of 240 storefronts, that accounts for 5% of the Avenue (for a current listing of available properties, click on the For Sale/ Rent icon on the home page of CASID's website).

So what does a 5% retail vacancy tell us about our district? When discussing vacancies in downtown/ main street areas changing market trends, the state of our nation's economy, regional downtown patterns, local property taxes, and even time of year should be considered to put things in perspective. The number of vacancies is not a final measurement but rather an indicator as to the district's overall health.

In an interview with Cranford Patch just this past January, former Downtown New Jersey President and current director of the Cranford Downtown Management Corporation, Kathleen Miller Prunty, said her district had a 5% vacancy while acknowledging some New Jersey downtowns are facing 14-19%. Although current data on the number all of retail vacancies throughout Hudson County's commercial districts could not be found to include in this report, it is safe to say vacancies are not exclusive to Central Avenue. According to Marcus & Millichap Real Estate Investment Services, U.S. retail vacancy rate stabilized last year at 10%.

Central Avenue has been very fortunate compared to other downtown/ main streets in coping with today's challenging market place. These older business districts have to compete with internet shopping, malls, and the dominance of big box retailers, all of which were nonexistent in Hudson County 30 plus years ago.

In the past seven years, Hudson County welcomed two new Target (Jersey City/ North Bergen) and three Wal-Mart (Secaucus/ North Bergen/ Kearny) stores alone adding an estimated 930,000 square feet of retail that draws on the same consumer base that feeds County's multiple shopping corridors. Keeping in mind there is approximately 600,000 square feet of commercial space on Central Avenue, the inclusion of Target and Walmart was like adding a larger shopping district to an already congested area.

Another factor that contributes to vacancies is rising property taxes. Jersey City's property taxes increased almost 25% between 2008 and 2010. Most property owners had to pass the rising cost onto tenants. Some property owners were left little choice but to share in the added cost to keep tenants from leaving.

CASID has tracked the businesses that have open and closed on Central Avenue during the past eight years. In doing so, patterns have been identified such as vacancies are at their highest between January thru March (after the holidays) and at their lowest between October thru December of each year. There was a spike in the spring of 2009 as 8% of the district was available for rent (compared to 12%+ national average reported during the same time). The number has since declined.

If you walked Central Avenue lately you may have some questions as to the number of available storefronts being reported here. Rest assure the number is accurate. CASID did more than observe a closed door - we also knocked and reached out to property owners when researching this matter to be as informed as possible and avoid making assumptions. Looks were deceiving as some doors opened with a greeting from a contractor. At the end of February 2011, there were eleven (11) occupied storefronts along Central Avenue under renovation and/ or contract giving the general public a false impression that it was available for rent.

Many of the buildings within the district are nearly 100 years old, therefore capital improvements are a welcomed investment and step in the right direction for Central Avenue. The work being performed is considered a sign of an improving economy.

While some projects have been in the works since 2008, there is hope to see them completed quickly so new businesses can be officially welcomed to the district sooner rather than later (CASID members involved with commercial renovations are encouraged to contact the office if they encounter setbacks).

Unfortunately, there are five locations along the Avenue that do suffer from absentee landlords. These spaces are not available for rent nor have they seen a commercial tenant in at least 15+ years. The CASID is not in the real estate business therefore property owners are reluctant to seek assistance from the organization as it relates to finding a commercial tenant.

Given the high property taxes, owners may feel pressured to accept a business based on maximizing rent/ lease amounts rather than what the business may contribute to the neighborhood.

Taking all things into account, Central Avenue's 5% vacancy is realistic although it can be improved. The Avenue continues to stay under the national average which is upwards of 10%. Open to debate, the manageable vacancy rate may be attributed to the Special Improvement District and Urban Enterprise Zone programs.



*Coming Soon: Grille Two 74 located at ... wait for it.... 274 Central Avenue. This space has been under renovation since November 2010 and is expected to open the exciting new restaurant in the spring of 2011.*

## Students, Reservoir

Continued from page 1

the students, noting that it was built in 1874, supplied water to Jersey City for almost a century, and finally ceased operations in the 1990s. The site fell into disrepair until nature gradually reclaimed the area. The original Egyptian Revival walls and Romanesque pump houses still stand, as a poignant reminder of our city's past. The Reservoir Preservation Alliance is working diligently to protect the reservoir from development, maintain the area as a natural retreat hidden away in the middle of the city, and promote the existence of the reservoir and the need to save its' lake, meadow, and woods from destruction and misuse. Within minutes of arriving, the Christa McAuliffe School knew they wanted to help.

Students were astonished at the variety of flora and fauna that could be found tucked into the nooks and crannies of the reservoir. Upon passing a wild apple tree, many just had to try one of the tart little fruits, amazed to realize that apples really did grow on trees. Students mapped the location of the numerous species of plants, trees, and shrubs, and noted the invasiveness of plants. They stood at the water's edge, took samples to test for microorganisms back at the school, and drank in the sight of New York City skyline looming beyond the towering trees. The students fell in love with the reservoir that day.

Back at school, the fourth and sixth

graders partnered up and began to re-search the species they discovered at the reservoir. They became "in house" experts who could teach you anything you wanted to know about the plants that grew in Reservoir # 3. As the weather grew colder, and foot upon foot of snow fell on New Jersey, their visits to the reservoir had to be put on hold. Teachers figured, if they can't go to the reservoir, they would bring the reservoir to them, and set about recreating it in the first floor hallway of the school. Students made 3D replicas of plants, trees, shrubs and animals and posted their research nearby. Various teams surveyed the rest of the school to determine if they knew about the reservoir, created a scavenger hunt game designed to test a visitor's knowledge of the wildlife of the reservoir, and designed a website containing an interactive map of the reservoir, complete with research podcasts recorded by students.

"The Heights has many assets but the Reservoir might be the most valuable," said CASID President Michael Yun. "To see local educators using this resource is a sign of change and advancement in the community. A tremendous credit is given to the Reservoir Alliance volunteers, the school's Principal, Dr. Janet I. Elder, and the educators on the Project Reservoir Team (Jennifer Mulewski; Robert O'Donnell; Maria Smagalla; Joel Naatus; Christopher Brown; Lynn Fisher; and Michael Banino) for connecting Jersey City's urban youth with the wonders of nature waiting just down the street."

And they weren't finished yet. With

spring on its way, the students of Christa McAuliffe School will once again be returning to the reservoir. Their plan is to re-sample the waters to observe and analyze microbial changes. They are sponsoring a **Community Education day on June 4, 2011** when students will be stationed at each of "their" plants, ready to share their knowledge with friends and neighbors. They have embarked on a fundraising campaign to purchase signage for the reservoir - both at the entrance to proudly proclaim its existence, and alongside each of the plants they have identified and researched. The next step is to investigate the feasibility of curtailing and/ or eliminating invasive species, and researching the sustainability of introducing native species that are not currently living in the reservoir.

Jersey City's Reservoir # 3 has been called the "hidden jewel" or the "hidden oasis" of Jersey City but not if the students of Christa McAuliffe School, PS # 28 have anything to do with it. Their goal is to increase awareness of this unique natural resource among the people of Jersey City, develop curriculum and activities that can be used by schools throughout the city and county for on-site field trips, and assist the Jersey City Reservoir Preservation Alliance with developing the reservoir as a haven for city residents. With this project, they are on their way.

The Project Reservoir Team contributed to this report. For more info, please contact Principal Dr. Janet I. Elder at [jelder@jcboe.org](mailto:jelder@jcboe.org) or call 201.714.4360. | <http://new.jcreservoir.org>



Above: Jersey City Reservoir Preservation Alliance volunteers (L to R) Vincent McNamara, Laura Skolar, and Steven Latham stand with Christa McAuliffe School's fourth grade teachers Maria Smagalla and Lynn Fisher alongside their students. Right: Fourth grader explains some of the plants and wildlife he found in the reservoir.



## Bower's Bench Dedicated in Honor of AARP President Doris Stoldt



On a warm Saturday afternoon this past fall, longtime Jersey City Heights resident and esteemed citizen Doris Stoldt celebrated her birthday in style. Just off the intersection of Central Avenue and Bower Street dozens of friends, family and citizens came together as Doris was honored and thanked by Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy for her decades of service to Jersey City. A proclamation explaining Doris' good deeds and lifetime of service was presented and a bench near the intersection was dedicated to her. Joining Mayor Healy were Jersey City councilman Steven Fulop, the

Heights' own Councilman Bill Gaughan, CASID Chairman Michael Yun and others who recognize the enormous positive impact Doris Stoldt has had on our community.

Born and raised in nearby Union City, Doris came to Jersey City when she married a Jersey City boy. At the age of 16 while out walking to the bakery Doris was recruited by a family friend to play the piano at a church at 21st and Palisade. Through a mutual friend at the event she met Philip Stoldt, a young man from just south of her in Jersey City. Despite her strict and concerned mother, he courted her persistently and they were married four years later. She moved to Jersey City and has been here ever since.

In 1950 Doris graduated from the exceptional Jersey City Medical Center's nursing school. She worked at Christ Hospital here in the Heights for over twenty years and with her husband raised five happy children. A self-described "wheeler and dealer", Doris is one of Jersey City's finest examples of engaged and active citizenship. She is president of the Jersey City chapter of the AARP, Hudson County's only chapter, and leads by example. She has organized benefits for groups as diverse as The Animal League, the Boy Scouts, The Shriners Hospital for

children in Philadelphia, and The Cancer Society and continues to organize a biannual trip to Atlantic City.

Several years ago, when many Heights' community members and organizations were advocating for the preservation of the Reservoir #3 for public use Doris was front and center, fighting for this special place she has lived for most of her life with grace and tenacity. As Councilman Gaughan says with his trademark sense of humor, "In my 18 years on the Jersey City Council, I have never seen a community leader outwork her! You can be sure that having her own "Bench" is a great honor but trust me, you will never "bench" Doris Stoldt."

"I like people for who they are, not what they have," Doris says and she commits herself to personal accountability and responsibility. She loves the convenience and accessibility of the Heights, where without a car she can get anything she needs and continues to "Do as much as she can while she can." As one of our neighborhood and City's shining lights, Doris has contributed immeasurably to the Heights community and on behalf of CASID we congratulate her on her many achievements and thank her for her years of service to the keep the Jersey City Heights great.

## Ending U.E.Z. Program Could Devastate Zones, Jersey City

On February 22nd, Governor Chris Christie released a proposed State budget which will withhold \$92 million in UEZ funds statewide for a second year in a row. Shortly after, a report commissioned by the his office was released recommending an end to the UEZ. The report concluded the program delivered a limited economic impact on the zone economies and produced a negative return on State investment. The report is now being debated and discredited by program administrators and City officials. "Any report that questions the success of New Jersey's U.E.Z. program ignores reality," said Assemblywoman Joan M. Quigley (D-Hudson).

Officials are reporting Jersey City stands to lose \$12 million annually. Of those economic development dollars, nearly \$1 million was previously granted to the City's four Special Improvement Districts (Central Ave, Journal Square, Historic Downtown, and McGinley Square) to match their SID assessments bringing them much needed public and private investment. The CASID is confident this portion of the State budget will be reversed by Legislators before being finalized by July 1st. To follow this issue, join "Save the New Jersey UEZ Program" on Facebook.



## New Directions on Multi-space Parking Machines: Now Must Place Receipt Visibly On Dashboard

Already in effect, the multi-space parking meter machines along Central Avenue now require users to display the ticket on the dashboard. The Jersey City Parking Authority administers these machines and made the change in an effort to simplify use. Central Avenue is currently the only district in Jersey City to use this parking meter system. Parking Machine Directions:

1. Insert Quarters or \$1 Bills
2. Press Green Button
3. Take Receipt and Display on Passenger Side Dashboard.

As a reminder, parking meter rates increased last summer from \$0.50 per hour to \$0.75 per hour throughout Jersey City. There are twenty six (26) multi-meter parking space machines throughout Central Avenue's business district. Anyone who wishes to express a concern regarding the multi-space parking system should email: [casid@jcheights.com](mailto:casid@jcheights.com)



# Business Community Welcomes Residents, Shoppers, and Visitors At Everything Jersey City Festival: Saturday, May 21, 2011



Central Avenue's Annual Everything Jersey City Festival (EJCF) is set for Saturday, May 21, 2011. Last year, the festival grew to an estimated 23,000 people in attendance. Rain or shine, the 2011 will bring the Jersey City community even closer together as we build on the success of the previous three events.

The festival area will include Central Avenue between Hutton and Congress Street

(same as previous year). CASID will again coordinate a One Day Sale among participating Central Avenue retailers aiming to attract shoppers and bargain hunters.

Festivalgoers can look forward to the return of the "Taste of the Heights" program, four stages of FREE music and entertainment, and nearly 200 street vendors (a mix of local businesses, artists, crafters, festival food, and community based organizations).

The EJCF is a family oriented event filled with kid's attractions that include a bounce house, super slide, rock climbing wall, and petting zoo.

To view our list of headliners and obtain vendor applications, please visit our website at [www.JCHeights.com](http://www.JCHeights.com) or call: 201.656.1366. CASID members can contact the office for special rates. This is one event you do not want to miss.



*PERSHING FIELD GARDEN FRIENDS' STUDENT VOLUNTEERS participated in National Make a Difference Day on October 23, 2010 cleaning & beautifying Pershing Field. First Row (left to right): Katerina Kostadimas, Parth Vora, Brijeshkum Naik, Shruti Patel, Anajali Patel, Pinali Patel, Alisha Mandlewale, Drashti Pandya, Agatha DeBorja, Nirali Patel, Noemi D'Silva, PS 27 Teacher Susan Blanchard Back Row (left to right): PFGF member Debby DeVenezia, Khaled Fawzy, Mayor Jerramiah Healy, Prigish Shah, George Kourmousis, Nilay Vora, Nergis Mamur, Marina Zaki 9.Orpha Bernal 10. Samantha Jaigobind 11. Dipika Patel*



## Murals on Central

Continued from page 1

out to the artist community in search of mural designs that would complement the Avenue. The designs submitted were presented to several business/ property owners for their consideration and eventual selection. The CASID did receive a number of submissions but only two were chosen in this round.

“The addition of these works boosts morale within the business district,” said CASID President Michael Yun. He continued, “The growth of arts in the Heights will help energize our district as it adds a unique feel to the shopping experience. We thank the artists for sharing their talents and the participating businesses for lending their wall space and contributing significantly to Jersey City’s artistic tradition.”

Each new mural reflects the surrounding Heights neighborhood and were carefully thought out by the artist making sure their design stood out. La Rovere’s mural, “A Salute to Central Avenue,” depicts a contemporary bustling Central Avenue scene and will serve as a time capsule for the future. His ability to reproduce building facades with such fine details allows the piece to truly make a statement.

Gulick’s piece, “Urban Inner Peace Zone,” is a spunky design. With vivid colors and unique characters she compliments many signature landmarks in the community including Jersey City’s Reservoir # 3 and the famous Bear and Buffalo statues found in Leonard J. Gordon Park (Manhattan Ave and Kennedy Blvd).

Without a doubt, the Heights is a close-knit neighborhood that takes much pride in the appearance of its main street community. The addition of these murals is not only a way to continue arts enrichment but to also discourage graffiti and provide an outlet for the community to celebrate the rich culture in Jersey City.

Organized by CASID and Councilman Ward D, Bill Gaughan, this program was made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/ Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, administered by the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, Thomas A.

DeGise, County Executive, and the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Another round of mural installations will be taking place in the summer of 2011 with an unveiling at the next Jersey City Artist Studio Tour scheduled for October 1st and 2nd. An RFP method will be again employed to partner with local artists with businesses.

The CASID would like to also thank the artist organizations that partnered with us to carry out this project including the Jersey City Pro Arts, Jersey City Museum, The Distillery Gallery and Artspace, Art House Productions, and Heights Artist Initiative.



Above: Artist Megan Gulick (center) poses in front of her mural with (L to R) Sung P. Lin, Tina Maneca (Assistant), Greg Brickey (Jersey City Cultural Affairs), Bill LaRosa (Hudson County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs), Emily Palmer (Assistant), Councilman Bill Gaughan, Young Lee (Daisy Cleaners), Gilbert Mendez (CASID Vice President South), Sammy Lee (Daisy Cleaners), and Michael Yun (CASID President). Top of page: Artist Richard LaRovere (center) stands proudly by his mural.

## Local Artist: Richard LaRovere



Longtime Jersey City artist and Heights resident Richard La Rovere is a Hudson County institution whose artwork is literally all over the place. Though he was born, raised and continues to live in The Jersey City Heights, his art has hardly stayed put. Over the course of his career his work has been featured at places such as the Upstairs Art Gallery here in Jersey City and the Newark Landmark Commission. His geometric, architecturally savvy drawings and paintings also provide fantastic images on the

websites of numerous Hudson and Bergen county institutions.

A unique artist whose talent is widely recognized and honored, La Rovere has produced dozens of drawings and paintings of historical Jersey City sites and buildings for a diverse clientele of public and private groups in what he calls his "labor of love." From baseball stadiums to gardens, train stations and statues, his distinct eye for the beauty and power of realistic detail is fueled by a keen appreciation

for the history of architecture. This has helped him to immortalize many of the landmarks and scenery that make Jersey City and Hudson County a hub for historic and classic buildings. Richard's prolific talent has not gone unrecognized, as his paintings and drawings have been added to the permanent collections of the Jersey City Museum, the Community Development Corporation, the Newark and Jersey City Public Libraries

and the NJ Transit Corporation, who all recognize his unique role as an artist especially focused on Hudson and Bergen county's long and distinguished history as a center of art, commerce, and the people and events that continue to shape New Jersey and the region.

His meticulous commitment to style and accuracy make Richard the perfect artist-historian for Jersey City, a place with hundreds of years of history built into its walls, streets, parks and people. His paintings show a deep love and appreciation for the buzz and passion of urban life and landscapes and he takes pride in what he describes as "the thrill of recognition" that people have when they see his highly realistic illustrations and paintings. Richard imagines a Central Avenue that hosts art and gallery shows all along the Avenue and hopes his recent mural on Central Avenue, which he tried to make "charming and cute" has "inspired people." Given his long and prominent role in the Jersey City art world, it is perfectly fitting that Richard La Rovere's mural complements and expands the Heights and Central Avenue mantra, "A Tradition Reborn."

Contact Richard La Rovere at 201.659.0662 or Email: r.larovere52@gmail.com

## Local Artist: Megan Gülick

Since moving to Jersey City and joining its increasingly talented and dynamic arts community, standout painter and illustrator Megan Gülick has been making waves on both sides of the Hudson River.

By the time she arrived here in Jersey City, Gülick had already had her vivid, energetic portraits of people and animals featured at exhibitions in Chicago, Dallas, and Toronto, Canada. In the two short years since she has thrived and proven herself to be a noteworthy addition to the rapidly growing arts community in Jersey City and her work has been featured at shows in Jersey and various galleries in New York. If you have been to any of Megan's recent shows or seen her mural on Central Avenue you know that the bright colors and zany characters she uses create attractive and inviting paintings that leap out at you.

A native of Texas, Gülick explains that while there is overlap with the various New York City art scenes, Jersey City "is a welcoming art scene [and] stands on its own [with] a lot of talented, creative, community-oriented people." Her visions of humanized animals that she refers to as "Battered Bunnies", "Fresh Fish" and other "Miscellaneous Beasts" have demanded the attentions of an increasingly appreciative and impressed Jersey City and New York art world. Though

she says that she "only ever wanted to paint pretty pictures," her bold and playful images also communicate a dark and witty sense of a humor. You won't be the first or last person to crack a smile while looking at one of her paintings.

Megan developed her artistic talents at the world-renowned School of the Art Institute in Chicago and also spent time at Amsterdam's Gerrit Reitveld Academie where she studied under noteworthy Dutch artist and public art authority Hank de Vroom. After graduating from the Art Institute she first moved back to Texas and eventually made her way to Toronto, Canada where she met her husband. She moved to Jersey City with her husband and dove headfirst into the Jersey City arts scene, joining Pro Arts Jersey City and helping to coordinate the Not Yo Mama's Craft Fair. After a particularly enthusiastic response to her work during a group show at hip downtown Jersey City restaurant and art gallery LITM, she earned her first Jersey City solo show, which further increased her profile and paved the way for shows in Soho, Brooklyn and Chelsea. She has been interviewed in the Jersey City Independent and her work has been highlighted by numerous magazines and websites and she is currently at work



on a graphic novel and is collaborating with Jersey City punk-artist Ken Bastard on a project.

Megan's clever use of popular art forms like comic books and cartoons for inspiration combine with her oddball sense of humor to give her art broad public appeal and immediate accessibility to a wide range of viewers. There is a certain eye-popping charisma recognizable in her work that makes Megan Gülick an ideal artist and partner in the Central Avenue S.I.D.'s ongoing mural and art initiatives. As her career continues to blossom we hope many more talented artists follow Megan's lead and partner with us to add their creative visions to the Central Avenue and Jersey City Heights community.

Contact Megan Gülick by visiting her website: [www.megangulick.com](http://www.megangulick.com)



## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Renato's Pizza Masters Restaurant



Don't let the pizzeria exterior on Central Avenue fool you. At Renato's Pizza Master Restaurant, you will find not only a great slice of pizza but also one of the best kept secrets in the Jersey City Heights.

Renato's dinner crowd comes in search of fine Italian cuisine and keeps the staff very busy on most nights. Staged with soft lighting and elegant interior design, the dining area welcomes patrons with plenty of elbow room to spare.

Established in 1959, the business was transferred in 1963 to the De Marchi family who have owned and operated the restaurant ever since. "I started working with my uncle at the restaurant," recalls Anthony "Rich" De Marchi who currently heads the business alongside his sons Mark and Lorenzo. For those keeping track, the original business was located at 274 Central Avenue before moving two doors down to 278. Rich didn't have full control until 1976.

Jersey City has gone through plenty of changes since 1959 but the De Marchi's good business sense and ability to evolve with the neighborhood has made Renato's a staple of the community. When asked about the recipe that made the business succeed, Rich

was happy to share. "Quality, Service, and Price. In that order. If you don't have the quality, you have nothing," explained Rich. "We started in 1959 so we must be doing something right." And right they are.

Their business has grown substantially over the years. In 2004, Renato's Restaurant underwent a dramatic renovation

giving it the elegance it has today. Their brand has now grown to include the Point Restaurant at Port Liberty and Cafe Bello in Bayonne. Renato's continues to expand as they now also cater events.

The De Marchi family has roots in Jersey City and take pride giving back to the community they do business with. Over the years, Renato's Restaurant has sponsored numerous little league teams, donated to local causes, gotten involved with local church functions (i.e. St. Joseph's, St. Anne's, and St. Nicholas) and organizations like The Dante Alighieri Society and Police Benevolent Association.

The business is being passed to a second generation that maintains that the restaurant industry is like no other. "It is a lifestyle," says Rich. Of his four children his oldest sons, Mark and Lorenzo, are integral parts of Renato's operation. Mark

has been involved with the business since 1996 and holds an Associates degree from the award-winning Culinary Arts Institute of Hudson County Community College.

Many of Renato's customers are from the old neighborhood that keep coming back for a visit and great meal. As new residents move into the area, Rich says "Renato's is there when you are hungry." You can walk in from Central Avenue or dive to their parking lot via Cambridge Avenue.

Note: For complete transparency, contributing writer and CASID District Manager David Diaz had a blind date with a Jersey City Heights' girl named Maria at Renato's on January 23, 2004. Today, she is better known as Mrs. Diaz to most and Mommy to our seven month old daughter Sara. Thank you Renato's for a perfect date that led to finding my better half - David Diaz.



Renato's Pizza Masters Restaurant is located at 278 Central Avenue. Pictured above, Anthony "Rich" De Marchi (center) poses alongside sons Lorenzo (Left) and Mark (Right).

## Annual Meeting & Trustee Election Reminder: March 15th.

On Tuesday March 15, 2011 the Central Avenue Special Improvement District Management Corporation (CASID) will be conducting its Annual Meeting of the Corporation scheduled for 6:00 PM at the CASID Office (366 Central Avenue 2nd Fl, Jersey City).

We invite all our members (commercial property and/ or business owners on Central Avenue between Manhattan and North St.) to join us at the meeting as we present, discuss, and vote on our proposed Fiscal Year Budget

(FYB) July 1, 2011- June 30, 2012. Upon approval from the general membership present at the meeting, it will be forwarded to the Jersey City Municipal Council for a public hearing and adoption. The meeting is open to the public. Also, votes will be taken for our Bi-Annual Board of Trustee Election. All candidates who have accepted a nomination are on the official ballot. Additional nominations can be made at the meeting only if the nominee is present and willing to accept. The seven candidates receiving the most votes

will serve the next two (2) year term. Please note, there is NO increase to this year's SID tax assessment collection.

The Board of Trustees will answer all questions regarding our operation and the budget before a vote is taken. All CASID members are welcomed to join us as we continue to push forth on Central Avenue in the coming fiscal year. We all feel the financial strain on our national economy and will continue working towards the better days ahead.



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- ✓ Medicaid
- ✓ Food Stamp Program
- ✓ General Assistance (GA)
- ✓ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ✓ Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- ✓ Lifeline Utility Credit/Tenants Lifeline Assistance
- ✓ Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)
- ✓ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families/  
Work First New Jersey (TANF/WFNJ)

**OR** if you are age 65 or over and are not participating in one of the above programs and your annual income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty income level.



**HOW TO SIGN UP...** Call NJ SHARES at 1-888-337-3339 or visit [www.NJSHARES.org](http://www.NJSHARES.org)

# STREETSCAPE MAINTENANCE OPERATION

ASSISTING CENTRAL AVENUE MERCHANTS IN KEEPING A CLEAN AND PRESENTABLE MAIN STREET ENVIRONMENT



During and after winter snow falls, the CASID Street Maintenance Operation (SMO) carries on with regular duties that includes snow removal from public spaces; clearing of passages to fire hydrants, garbage cans, benches, mail boxes, and cross walks.

To the disappointment of many CASID members, our staff does not provide snow removal services for private businesses or properties. They do, however, assist business and property owners by reminding them of their responsibility to remove the snow in a timely fashion. Sidewalks that are not properly maintained are reported to the City for code enforcement.

According to Jersey City Code Chapter 296 (Streets and Sidewalk Maintenance) it is the duty of every owner, occupant, or person having charge of a commercial building to clear the sidewalk of snow to the extent of one (1) foot outside the curb in front of

the building with removal finishing within four (4) hours after snow has fallen. Each building owner or ground floor merchant is expected to do their part. Violators will immediately face fines of a \$100.00 or more as enforced by the City with the passing of each snow fall.

Please note that it is not only unlawful to throw snow onto the street after a snow-storm, it is completely counter productive to the snow removal process. Snow should be piled on the sidewalk within three feet inside the curb.

The CASID thanks its SMO staff for continuing to care for and take pride in their main street community. This winter has been exceptionally difficult with the large amount of snow in January but our staff came to work every day to clear cross walks and assist our businesses in their effort to maintain a safe business district for our valued senior citizens and shoppers.

## Central Avenue Trash Collection Schedule & Reminder:

### Monday and Thursday Nights

place trash at curb Mondays (for Tuesday pickup) & Thursdays (for Friday pickup) evening between 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m. and ONLY in front of your OWN property.



### Central Avenue Recycling Schedule



### Tuesday Nights

place recyclables at curb Tuesday evening between 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m. only. Paper must be tied in bundles. Other recyclables (plastic, glass, cans, etc.) are collected in large plastic containers, NOT plastic bags.

## Jersey City Incinerator Authority

- Main Phone Number: (201) 432-4645
- Report Illegally Dumped Garbage: x631
- Refrigerator/AC Pickup: x600
- Neighborhood Cleanups: x620
- Container Rental: x620
- Graffiti Removal: x634
- Mechanical Street Cleaning: x67
- Bulk Waste Pickup: (201) 435-1345
- Recycling Collection: (201) 435-1345

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