Broadway bar closes after troubled two years
By Alejandro Lazaro

A North Riverdale bar with a history of building violations, noise complaints and vandalism complaints recently closed.

Its owners blamed increased crime in the area and the harassing visits by the 56th Precinct police for factors in its failure.

Scott's, on 697 Riverdale Ave., opened two and a half years ago and featured live bands and 24-hour service as well as jazz music. It was occasionally featured in the Stepping Out section of The Riverdale Press.

But the bar also had a darker side, including some incidents of violence, like one last December in which an owner, Scott Cate, was shot in the right arm. Police arrested a Yonkers man for the shooting almost two months later.

In March 2003, three Yonkers men were stabbed repeatedly in the stomach and back outside the bar, but no charges were filed.

Despite these incidents, 56th Precinct police denied the bar was targeted with extra patrols. One officer said police visit neighborhood bars on nights and weekends to make sure things don't get out of hand.

Exceeding capacity

But Scott's had its bad problems, too, it was issued violations by the city Department of Buildings on three separate occasions, officials said.

One of the violations had to do with the city's public assembly rules, which requires an establishment to have a permit to allow more than 250 people.

On another occasion, the bar exceeded its capacity, while the proper permit, and on a third occasion, it did not provide building plans for an inspector to check.

Neighbors also complained about loud music and general noise, a behavior, said 56th Precinct Community Affairs Detective Luis Romano.

Although Mr. Scott could not be reached for comment, there are plans to reopen the bar in the future, according to an e-mail sent to The Press by the Scott family. No specific date was mentioned in the e-mail.

Public meetings

- Community Board 6's housing committee will meet on Monday, Nov. 22, at 7:30 p.m., at the South Riverdale office, 838 Riverdale Ave., Room 100.
- Board 6's parks and recreation committee will meet on Monday, Nov. 22, at 8 p.m., at Riverdale Manor hall, 6676 Riverdale Ave., second floor. There will be discussion about the future of a high school baseball at Soldier Park Field and the potential impact to current tenant businesses and the community. There will also be a discussion about fund-raising for neighborhood parks.

State-of-the-art biology lab opens up whole new world
By Mario Villani

For years students at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School were dapped by captains, tiny veterinarians known as "water boys." Charged with the task of locating the organ-ism's heart and counting the beats, students would peer into the lens of a standard microscope, and would, in between the rhythmic strains of their own eyelids, glimpse a palpitating, ou-tdated organ. And so they counted and took note.

The feeling of accomplishment didn't last long, however, when they learned — many of them did — that it wasn't the heart they had just observed, but the digesting stomach, the larger organ located well above the heart, which can be too fast at times to see.

But thanks to a state-of-the-art upgrade in the school's biology lab this year, students will get a much easier said Paul Church, a Fieldston biology teacher.

The lab has been fitted with digital microscopes that can project the image onto laptop screens, in some rare cases even magnifying the heart and its beat clearly visible.

There is also an array of new wood cabinets and extra counting space in the new lab.

Completed over two summers, the project included updating all four rooms of the lab. The main room, where classes are held, has 20 working wet labs, each equipped with desktop computers that help with lab experiments.

A computer program, "PASCO Experiments," enables students to insert a sensor into an interface and begin to measure everything from light to density to velocity.

In recent years, the other three rooms were unused, serving as storage for among other things a live lizard preserved animal specimens that were once part of a museum at Fieldston and a series of organs dating back to the 1940s.

Two of the rooms have become prep spaces, while the third — the former museum — has been transformed into a cell culture lab.

The cell culture lab, teachers said, will allow the advanced students, mostly seniors and those doing independent research projects, to delve much further into the study of cells, genetics and DNA.

"We wanted students to see science as something you do not just listen to," said Compton Mahoney, chairman of the school's science department.

And Mr. Church said his students are already dreaming up logistic projects now that the equipment is in place.

However, the laboratory has not only received rave reviews from students for its technological upgrades, but for its charm as well. The cell culture room, for instance, has one benchmark of its former self: a jalapeño chile-mustard snail stretching across the top of the four walls.

In the main room, where students gather, wood floors complement the wood beams and there are arches everywhere and brick-faced walls. Rockwood cabinets dapple the opening of the school, 27 years ago, now grace the room, as does the bird and macaw spec-imen that used to be showcased in the museum.

"My first reaction was I was walking into Thomas Edison's studio," Mr. Church said. "It's just gorgeous."

"Bronx named of boro"

Hector M. Aponte, a Puerto Rican who grew up in the Bronx, was named the borough's new parks commissioner on Tuesday. He will officially begin on Monday, Nov. 22, and succeed Dorothy Lewandowski who left in September to oversee parks in Queens.

Mr. Aponte has nine years under his belt with the city Parks Department and currently serves as the chief of operations in Staten Island.

Before that, he served in a variety of positions, including acting deputy chief of operations in Manhattan and parks manager in Manhattan, where he was responsible for the daily operations and management of playgrounds in Community Board 8.

Borough commissioner is his first position in the Bronx, though he grew up running at Macombs Dam Park and Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. Through his efforts, he earned an athletic scholarship at the University of Puerto Rico.

He added, "I am so pleased to Parents request bus stop for kids

By Evan Wernberger

More than a dozen parents of students at PS 360 — who live in the area — say they urgently need a school bus stop for their children, many of whom have special needs.

But because they live in a gated neighborhood, they say they rarely see buses for students.

"The kids can't get to school in bad weather," she said, adding that families occasionally have to put children into cars to cross the street without a bus stop.

One parent, Barbara Lauray, is leading the charge. She says her son, Kevin, a kindergartner at PS 360, and about 18 other children in the building who attend the school, are eligible.

Right now, parents and grandparents walk the children to school, but down steps and across nearby street.

"A lot of the kids can't get to school in bad weather," she said, adding that families occasionally have to put children into cars to cross the street without a bus stop.

Too far for some

To make matters worse, many of the children suffer from asthma, and the five-block walk after school can be too much for kids with special needs.

Ms. Lauray estimates that Kevin has already missed five days of school due to his respiratory issues. But school has been especially difficult since his asthma.

The nearest school bus stop is on Sedgefield Avenue, which Ms. Lauray says is three blocks in the opposite direction. "We might as well walk the children to school," she said.

She has gone to PS 360 for help. 