



COMMON SENSE

By Jerry Kassar

The local vote in the New York State Assembly on the issue of legalizing same-sex marriage in the State of New York was as follows:

- Alec Brook-Krasny (D-Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Coney Island)- Yea (for same-sex marriage).
- Bill Colton (D-Bensonhurst, Gravesend)- Nay (against gay marriage).
- Dov Hikind (D-Borough Park, Dyker Heights)- Nay.
- Peter Abbate (D-Bensonhurst, Dyker Heights, Borough Park)- Nay.
- Felix Ortiz (D-Sunset Park, Bay Ridge)- Yea.
- Janele Hyer-Spencer (D-Bay Ridge, Staten Island)- Yea.

Overall, the bill passed the Assembly by an 89-52 vote. The legislation, which is strongly opposed by the Conservative Party and a wide range of religious leaders, as well as a majority of the electorate if polling is any indication, appears not to have enough votes for passage in the state Senate. Locally, Republican-Conservative state Sen. Marty Golden has made clear his intention to vote against legalizing same-sex marriage.

The Dyker Heights Civic Association chaired by Fran Vella-Marrone had one of the more interesting meetings of the season recently at St. Philip's Church Hall. The entire evening was devoted to issues relating to animals. The two-legged member of the NYPD canine unit came in with a four-legged partner and gave a little talk on their work. Several individuals who volunteer with their dogs to provide therapy for the sick and infirm made presentations. An

ASPCA officer, who you can see on the cable show "Animal Precinct," talked about cruelty to animals, as did a representative of District Attorney Charles Hynes's office.

There were military who volunteer with "wounded warriors" by getting to learn to ride horses through the Jamaica Bay Academy. Of course, there was a discussion on the importance of adoption. There was even a presentation by attorney Jan Foshee of the law firm of Connors and Sullivan on setting up an animal companion trust in order to provide for a pet after you pass. Not surprisingly, these trusts are becoming more and more popular.

Fran and association member Jennifer DeFrank, who came up with the program, deserve a lot of credit for one of the more informative community gatherings.

The United States Army has announced that the Fort Hamilton Army Garrison will be hosting the Military Twilight Tattoo at 6 p.m. on Saturday, June 20 at Bay 8th Street, just outside the fort's fence within Dyker Park.

This is the first time this colorful pageantry tracing the history of the United States Army with song and march will be held at this location. The fort will temporarily remove a fence separating them from the park in order for the military participants to use the base for staging.

The military tattoo is being conducted by the Military District of Washington, which includes Fort Hamilton. Elite units, including the troops that guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, participate in the event.