

# Next meeting: Jan. 8 at 8:00 PM

This Meeting is held at Living Hope Christian Church, Braddock Avenue at 241<sup>st</sup> Street



## Creedmoor Civic News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CREEDMOOR CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.  
Founded 1927, Incorporated 1938

JANUARY, 2018 ★ "UNITED EFFORT REAPS UNITED GAIN" ★ Website: [www.creedmoorcivic.org](http://www.creedmoorcivic.org) ★ VOL. 87, NO. 1

### VAN BUREN OFF STRUGGLING SCHOOLS LIST

What a difference a change in principals makes. The appointment six years ago of Sam Sochet as principal of Martin Van Buren High School has turned around a school at risk of being closed.

On December 1, the New York State Department of Education announced that Martin Van Buren High School is one of 27 schools statewide that has been removed from Priority School status, a state designation given to schools with low graduation rates and poor scores on state testing. According to the Dept of Education website, the MVB's accountability status has been changed from "Priority School" to "Good Standing."

Struggling schools are evaluated by several metrics. For high schools, graduation rates are key. The four-year graduation rate must have been at least 60 percent for the past year and either the four-year or five-year graduation rate must have been at least 60 percent in the year prior to that. During the 2014-2015 school year, the four-year graduation rate at Martin Van Buren High School was 55 percent, which is below the 70 percent average citywide and 73 percent average for Queens. For the 2016-2017 school year, the MVB brought its four-year graduation rate up to 67 percent and its six-year graduation rate to 68 percent, up from 62 percent in 2014-2015.

Congratulations to Principal Sam Sochet and Martin Van Buren faculty and administrators for this significant accomplishment

#### CONGESTION PRICING AGAIN!

The governor has renewed the idea of congestion pricing. Queens Civic Congress fought this idea in the past and is vowing to fight charging cars for entering Manhattan.

### CREEDMOOR CIVIC'S NEW YEAR'S PARTY

January 8, 2018

**Free admission, hot and cold home-made food, live music. All welcome.**

#### ST. GREG SCHOOL COLLECTS FOR P.R. AID

Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Academy in Bellerose continues its tradition of community service. After Hurricane Irma devastated Puerto Rico, Grade 4 students organized a school-wide collection of the most needed items. These items included diapers, flashlights, batteries, water, baby food, as well as many other necessities. The response from the school family was as always, overwhelming. Grade 7 students packed three truckloads of items which were delivered to Immaculate Conception Center in Douglaston, one of the designated collection sites. St. Gregory the Great Catholic Academy families are always willing to open their hearts for those in need and truly exemplify the school's motto, "A Community Where Great Things Happen". For more information about the school, all are invited to visit their Open House on Sunday, January 28th from 10:30-12:30. They're saving a seat for you!



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Published Since 1931

Published 10 times per year by the Creedmoor Civic Assn., Inc.  
PO Box 260143, Bellerose Manor, NY 11426  
Tel. 718-464-3369  
Member: Queens Civic Congress, Inc.  
Web page: [www.creedmoorcivic.org](http://www.creedmoorcivic.org)  
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## President's Message

Our hearts go out to the families of those lost in the tragic Bronx fire that claimed the lives of 12 people, including 4 children. Although that fire took place in an apartment building, there are some lessons that also apply to residents of one and two-family homes.

An open apartment door allowed smoke and fire to spread up the stairway like it was a chimney. A closed door temporarily contains a fire and provides more time to escape. Close bedroom doors when sleeping. Close a door to confine a fire as you leave the building. We also need to have two ways out, in case one is blocked by smoke or fire, as happened in the Bronx. For instructions on how to make an escape plan for your family, search the internet for FDNY Plan Your Escape.

Please join us for our annual New Years/Holiday Party, after a very short meeting this Monday, Jan 8 at 8 pm. As usual, we will have live music, home-made food and plenty of fellowship. If bad weather requires us to cancel the meeting, we will announce cancellations by email, Facebook and phone message.

Your neighbor,

Michael O'Keeffe

## Around the Town

**Condolences to:** the family of Howard Erichson of 240<sup>th</sup> Street on his death in late December.

### SYNOPSIS OF SECURITY DISCUSSION AT DEC. MEET

Our discussion about security devices yielded some good information. Thanks to all who participated: Here is a summary:

Several doorbell video systems are available. One member uses Skybell, and he likes it a lot. It is important to do your own research. Most of comments below pertain to the Ring Doorbell system. Several said it was easy to install. When someone rings your doorbell, you receive an alert to your mobile device and video is recorded. You can answer remotely. This is important, since burglars often ring a doorbell first to see if anyone is home. Several people advised not to say you are not home; instead, you might say you are home but can't come to the door. Even if the doorbell is not rung, a motion detector in the bell takes video footage. Video is transmitted to your mobile devices or computer, and is recorded on the cloud. With Ring, cloud storage is free for 30 days, after which there is a monthly charge. Skybell does not charge a monthly fee.

Other components can be added, such as combination lights/video recorders that are activated by motion. One working mom said that she uses Ring to be sure her kids get into the house safely after coming home from school. The Ring video camera can be adjusted to cover a wide view of the front of a house, so that anyone entering driveways could be seen. Ring can be wired

to existing doorbell wires, or powered by batteries. "Ring Neighborhood" is a feature where neighbors can alert each other.

One member spoke about a perimeter camera system he purchased at BJ's for \$199. He and his son installed it in a day. It is hard wired, which he thought was better than a wireless installation. It has a digital recording device. Twice, his cameras captured footage of someone puncturing a neighbor's tire across the street, leading to an arrest. They also caught a person opening car doors on his block (the guy got scared away from his car because a neighbor's motion detector light went on).

There was discussion about do-it-yourself vs. professional installations. Installs need to be done correctly, but there is a lot of information available on the internet. Make sure cameras are aimed correctly. They need to be set at the right height, with coverage overlap between cameras. Get a digital system with as high a resolution as possible. Excess data use on wireless plans may be an issue. Using wi-fi at home may prevent this problem, but if you frequently download data remotely, an unlimited data plan might be advisable. One member reported he was having problems with a neighbor. He installed a fake camera and the problems stopped. Even just having a sign saying that security cameras were in use helped to stop unwanted activity near one member's yard. Lights with motion detectors and LED bulbs are economical and easy to install.

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