Queens Gazette
The Gazette Is Proud Of Over 35 Years Of Dedicated News Coverage
The Weekly Community Publication Dedicated To Bringing Our Readers A Vital Locally-Oriented View Of The News

IT'S IN QUEENS

2017-06-07 / Features

New Mobile App Makes It Easy To Share Memories

Whether you're a recent arrival in the borough or a long-time resident, no doubt you've captured some vibrant memories of your Queens life in photos, news clippings, and other materials.

Thanks to an improved website and new mobile app, it's now even more convenient to send your personal materials to Queens Memory, a program at the Queens Library. Queens Memory was begun in 2010 as a community oral history project by Natalie Milbrodt while she was conducting independent study and earning her master's degree in Library and Information Science at Queens College. Supported initially by a grant from the Metropolitan New York Library Council, the Queens Library project was the only one of its kind among the three New York City public library systems.

Queens Memory empowers borough residents to record life, past and present, in their own families and communities. To date, the project has collected over 300 oral history interviews, from teens to residents in their 90s, hailing from 23 countries and now living in more than 50 Queens neighborhoods. In addition, approximately 17,000 digitized items are available for viewing on the library's digital archives website.

Hired by the Queens Library in 2012 to oversee Queens Memory as a permanent program, Milbrodt is proud that the unique collaboration with her alma mater continues. "The Queens Memory team is committed to supporting students who wish to learn while creating something innovative in the field," she said.

The library found that talent in three interns from the NYC Tech Talent Pipeline's TTP Residency @ Queens College program. Managed at the college by Ying Zhou, TTP Residency @ Queens is a semester-long program designed to deliver qualified tech talent to local employers and short-term professional opportunities to competitive NYC undergraduates. A partnership between the NYC Tech Talent Pipeline, Queens College, and The New York Code + Design Academy, the program gathers valuable feedback from host businesses to better align tech education with the workforce needs of city employers. It is expanding to Lehman College in the Bronx this summer.

"We're thrilled to have provided the technical training necessary to the interns who developed the Queens Memory website and mobile app. NYCDA focuses on bettering the communities it serves and projects like Queens Memory provide a direct benefit to the community while allowing programmers to further hone their craft," said Jeremy Snepar, CEO of NYCDA.

TTP interns Jongbu Sherpa and Andy Yu worked primarily on the website redesign, and Aniqa Wahid developed the mobile app. Sherpa, a native of Nepal who now lives in Corona, graduated with a computer science degree last year. Yu, a resident of Flushing, graduates in 2018. Wahid, who grew up in Astoria, will graduate this fall with degrees in computer science and neuroscience. Sherpa and Wahid are now working in technology jobs at the Queens Library. "Aniqa, Jongbu and Andy epitomize the creativity and intelligence we look for in students we bring into this work," said Ankaj Patidar, the library's software development manager.

For Sherpa, who had some earlier web development experience, "The TTP internship particularly helped me to know how the application development process works within an organization," he said. "Guided by Mr. Patidar, I'm sure I acquired most of the skills I needed to become a better software developer."

"This internship was a great learning experience," said Wahid. "Giving Queens Memory a portable aspect—the ability for patrons to send personal histories, photographs and other records from smart phones—allows them to conveniently contribute to the library's permanent archival collection."

Those who want to send materials using an Android phone can access the free Queens Memory app from Google Play, and users of iPhones and other Apple mobile devices can find the app on the iTunes store. This app developed by the students is also live on the main Queens Memory website.

Queens-related materials—digital and older, scanned photos, along with printed materials, manuscripts and even audio files are welcome submissions. For example, Queens Memory received a sound recording that was made during an entire Queens bus route. The different languages heard as passengers boarded along the way reflect the changing ethnicities of the neighborhoods through which the bus traveled.

Library personnel will review the materials for visual and/or audio quality, copyright ownership, relevance, and other factors, and will send feedback to the sender. All would-be contributors will know if their submissions have been accepted for posting. If approved, the materials are posted on the DigitalArchives.QueensLibrary.org website. Said Milbrodt: “At that point, anyone can publish them to the Queens Memory site in an album with a title and description. They can also select related materials from the digital archives to publish with their personal photos.”

Queens Memory actively engages community volunteers and partners and continues to work with Queens College, especially departments such as history, sociology and anthropology that can access the archives to enrich their curricula. And Queens Memory Outreach Coordinator Lori Wallach works at QC to help faculty and staff contribute every semester to the project.

“This community involvement leads to a heightened appreciation of shared experience and the value of history and preservation,” said Milbrodt. “At the heart of this work is the idea of democratizing the process of history-making, empowering people to contribute to and define their local history.”

Return to top

Copyright 1999-2017 The Service Advertising Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

On Flag Day
I salute our
great
American
symbol of
freedom
ASSEMBLYMEMBER• 34th A.D.
Michael G. DenDekker
75-35 31st Avenue, East Elmhurst, NY 11370 • 718-457-0384

Mark Your Calendars!
Flushing House will Host Three Free Elder Law Seminars & Open House
HOW THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IMPACTS OLDER ADULTS
The Future of Medicare & Medicaid in New York
Flushing House
OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, June 10th 2pm-4pm

Happy Father's Day!
Since 1967
Great Food
With Love!
Sam's
EST. 1967
Relax-Sam's
Cooking Tonight
HOME DELIVERY
(MINIMUM ORDER $12.00)
(718) 335-3800-1-2
89-06 Northern Boulevard
Jackson Heights, NY

Please join me as we honor
our flag on June 14
Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.
New York State Senator • District 15
Ranking Member of the Veterans, Homeland Security,
and Military Affairs Committees
DISTRICT OFFICES:
159-53 102nd Street
Howard Beach, NY 11414
718.738.1111 • Fax: 718.322.5760
66-85 73rd Place
Middle Village, NY 11379
718.497.1630 • Fax: 718.497.1761