

MEN'S CLUB UPDATE

The Bronx USA...and a Bit of Brooklyn Too



BY HOWARD ARKIN

On October 15th the North Shore Towers Men's Club sponsored its second presentation on Channel 995. Events chairman Jerry Siegel hosted the 2019 HBO documentary, "The Bronx USA," which chronicles the lives of "Bronxites" both past and present. Some of these former Bronx residents have become quite successful, while a group of current De Witt Clinton high school students hope to write their own success stories. The documentary explores situations experienced by some notable Bronx residents such as Colin Powell, Alan Alda, Robert Klein, Hal Linden, Melissa Manchester, Chazz Palmenteri and Carl and Rob Reiner. The parts of "The Bronx USA" documentary that resonate most with me are those of George Shapiro and North Shore Towers Residents Carl Golub and Jay Schwartz visiting their old



Bronx



Wonder Wheel

neighborhood and reminiscing about "the good old days."

I found Carl Reiner advising a group of Clinton seniors about adversities that they will face in their futures very compelling, as was the advice Colin Powell received years ago from the owner of the toy

store where he worked as a teenager. Chazz Palmenteri's return to a bakery on Arthur Avenue had me yearning for one of the cannolis named in Chazz's honor. Hal Linden recalling the ritual of Sunday night Chinese dinners also brought back some happy memories. Alan Alda tells a story about dating his wife Arlene who lived in the Bronx, heading back home to Manhattan, falling asleep on the subway and ending up in of all places, Brooklyn! Another interesting segment has Carl, George and Jay returning to Clinton High and introducing some of the senior students to the long forgotten Bronx game of stickball.


In a few segments of the documentary, George Shapiro is shown wearing a Brooklyn Dodgers cap. He is asked about it by Carl, and as I suspected, he is told that George was an anomaly being a Dodgers fan from the Bronx. Hooray for George! Being from Brooklyn myself, I think I've always had some hidden

animosity towards the Bronx. I assume that must have come from the annual fall beatings inflicted by the Yankees on the Dodgers. Of course as the years went by, maturity took hold of me and I forgave the Bronx. I even married a girl from Washington Heights. I know, I know, but it's close enough!

Today I'll even concede that a lobster dinner on City Island is as good as any in Sheepshead Bay. The veal parmigiana at Mario's rivals that served at Bamontes in Williamsburg. And who can really tell the difference between a corned beef on club at Schweller's delicatessen or one from Junior's? But one thing that Brooklyn had and still does have is Coney Island. Attractions included the Wonder Wheel, Cyclone and Parachute Jump and most of all, the boardwalk, under which one could spend many happy summer hours. But that's another story for another day.

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