

KNOCK ON WOOD

Job-seekers need skills, not luck. Training is especially important when working with wood and power tools. Brooklyn Woods in **Gowanus** is helping unemployed and low-income residents with employment barriers get a start in the woodworking and building fields through training and job placement.

Part of Brooklyn Workforce Innovations, Brooklyn Woods offers free, seven-week training in basic techniques, power tools and woodworking machinery, math and measurement, as well as job readiness skills. Students are exposed to Brooklyn Woods' social enterprise cabinet shop, which produces cabinets and bathroom vanities for NYC housing developments.

Brooklyn Woods Program Director Scott Peltzer said, "We're looking for those with some experience or aptitude working with their hands or using tools. We teach the proper techniques for entry-level woodworking and help successful trainees find a job."

Brooklyn Woods welcomes those on public assistance or the formerly incarcerated. Applicants must attend a two hour orientation session, offered every Wednesday at 10:00 am. If admitted, students meet Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm with attendance mandatory. "Think of it as a seven-week job try-out," said Peltzer.

Up to 60 individuals are trained every year; many end up working for custom cabinet-makers, furniture makers, contractors, store display outfits or general fabricators. So if you or someone you know is unemployed, on assistance and motivated to "nail" down some great skills, contact Brooklyn Woods today!

Brooklyn Woods, BWI Sector Skills Center, 125 8th St. (btw 2nd/3rd Aves.); (718) 389-3636; or www.bwiny.org and click on Brooklyn Woods. Visit the site to learn how to apply.



Photo by: Toby Gardner

◆ Brooklyn Woods introduces students to basic woodworking techniques. Lead instructor Chris Cavallaro teaches the class about the chop saw.

SURVIVING SANDY WITH ART



◆ Artist and curator Phong Bui organized *Come Together: Surviving Sandy, Year 1*, an exhibit featuring the work of many artists affected by Sandy.

It was said that "surviving means being born over and over again." A new Brooklyn art exhibit called *Come Together: Surviving Sandy, Year 1*—on view now through December 15th at Industry City in **Sunset Park**—reflects that sentiment and the resiliency of artists whose work was destroyed by the storm.

Brooklyn Rail publisher and curator Phong Bui, the Dedalus Foundation and the Jamestown Charitable Trust wanted to commemorate Sandy's one year anniversary and feature established and emerging artists affected or inspired by the storm.

Superstorm Sandy submerged hundreds of galleries and countless pieces of artwork in Brooklyn (as well as Chelsea and lower Manhattan). Bui didn't want the storm's transformation of New York's art scene to be forgotten. "Roughly half of the exhibit's participating artists were directly affected by Sandy, while the remaining half joined in solidarity," said Bui. "The exhibition is a testament to this creative, courageous phenomenon, and as a monument to all who lost something—and, incredibly, gained something—in the aftermath of this catastrophic event."

More than 300 artists are represented, from well-established names like Chuck Close, Alex Katz and Richard Serra, to younger and not-so-known artists. Paintings, sculptures, musical performances, poetry readings, film screenings and other events fill the 18,000-sq-ft. space donated by Industry City Associates.

The free exhibit closes December 15th so make plans now to visit this impressive salute to creativity and survival.

Come Together: Surviving Sandy, Year 1, Industry City, 220 36th St.; Open Thurs-Sun through Dec 15, 2013. Visit www.cometogethersandy.com.

SINGING CARUSO'S PRAISES



◆ Cav. Uff. Aldo Mancusi, founder of the Enrico Caruso Museum of America in Sheepshead Bay, is looking for a new location for the museum.

Brooklyn is the cultural capital of New York City, proud home to a large Italian-American population, and—for thirty years—home to the Enrico Caruso Museum of America in **Sheepshead Bay**. In fact, Caruso performed 23 times in Brooklyn at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Brooklynite and Cav. Uff. Aldo Mancusi opened the museum in his home in 1990 to showcase his love of Caruso—arguably the most famous operatic tenor in the world—and the thousands of records, phonographs, costumes, unpublished photographs, rare films, letters and Caruso drawings he's collected over the

years. Mancusi needs a new location for the museum and wants interested parties in New York City to contact him.

Mancusi believes a university, existing museum or even an office building with a street level space would be ideal. He estimates about 1,000-sq.-ft. of space is needed and an auditorium for screenings and concerts would be a plus. Although the entire collection will be donated to the new museum, the artifacts must be secure and insured, nothing can be sold and Mancusi will retain control.

"It's important to keep this unique collection together," said Mancusi. "Thousands have visited the museum over the past thirty years, and I am particularly gratified to have inspired many young people to develop a love for opera and even encouraged some to pursue a singing career."

If you know of a new location, contact Aldo Mancusi. Let's keep the great Enrico Caruso Museum of America open for all to enjoy for years to come!

Enrico Caruso Museum of America, 1942 E. 19th St. (btw. Aves. S/T); Open Mon-Sun by appointment only; (718) 368-3993; www.enricocarusomuseum.com.

LOOKING FOR A CLASSIC GIBSON? DON'T FRET!

Today the Brooklyn music scene is hopping, with the Bell House, Littlefield, the **Gowanus** Ballroom, Shapeshifter Lab, Roulette, Knitting Factory and of course BAM and Barclays Center, to name a few, offering performances for every musical taste. But thirty years ago, Retrofret Vintage Guitars was more or less alone in Gowanus, and despite the industrial location, it became the source for vintage, used and rare stringed instruments.

"We were one of the first music-related businesses to put down roots along the Gowanus Canal," said owner—and guitarist—Steve Uhrík. "Gowanus has changed from a warehouse area to a destination neighborhood of hotels, restaurants and a mecca for a cutting edge, thriving music and arts scene."

Retrofret began in Manhattan as New York String Service. In 1983 Uhrík moved the business to Gowanus, renamed the store and began selling electric and acoustic guitars from big names like Gibson, Martin, Gretsch, Fender—and many others—plus banjos, mandolins, ukuleles and other classic instruments, as well as amplifiers and parts.

A "stairway to heaven" for musicians and collectors, Retrofret's second floor showroom has hundreds of instruments available from about \$150 up to tens of thousands. Famous clients include Captain Kirk Douglas, the guitarist for the Roots and Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, as well as country great, Merle Haggard. Retrofret is also famous for its world-class repair service, which—living up to its reputation for being cutting edge—includes two women technicians.

Retrofret Vintage Guitars, 233 Butler St. (btw. Nevins/Bond Sts.); Open to the public Mon-Fri noon-7pm, Sat noon-6pm; (718) 237-6092; www.retrofret.com.



◆ Retrofret Vintage Guitars owner—and guitarist—Steve Uhrík (left) and his merry band of luthiers.