

Briefs

Leno hospitalized with illness, cancels taping

Jay Leno checked into a hospital with an undisclosed illness



Leno

Thursday and canceled the taping of "The Tonight Show," but was doing well and planned to return next week, his publicist and NBC said. They would not disclose what ailed Leno, but said it was mild and that the comedian continued to work Thursday, making phone calls and writing jokes.

Thursday and canceled the taping of "The Tonight Show," but was doing well and planned to return next week, his publicist and NBC said. They would not disclose what ailed Leno, but said it was mild and that the comedian continued to work Thursday, making phone calls and writing jokes.

Bloomberg takes issue with Senate's MTA plan

Mayor Michael Bloomberg objects to the latest proposal to bail out the MTA that includes a taxi fee, half of which would fund upstate and Long Island roads. Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, who proposed the compromise, says he's offended Bloomberg is willing to exclude the rest of the state from the deal.

Man gets 6 years for airing Hezbollah TV

A Pakistani immigrant described by prosecutors as "Hezbollah's man in New York City" was sentenced Thursday to nearly six years in prison for airing the militant group's television station. Javed Iqbal, 45, admitted as part of a plea agreement that he used satellite dishes on his Staten Island home to distribute broadcasts of Al Manar. (AP)

Chelsea Piers makes switch to wind power

Chelsea Piers, the nation's largest public sports complex, announced Thursday it is running on 100 percent wind power. The venue is paying \$100,000 to connect to a power grid supplied by wind farms upstate. The change over to wind power will reduce greenhouse emissions that would be equal to taking 2,856 cars off the road, said the wind farm owner. (NEWSDAY)

Sick with self-love

Book sees new age of narcissism

BY HEATHER HADDON
hhaddon@am-ny.com

Move over obesity, America's next epidemic is all about me, me, me.

Social networking and celebrity role models have contributed to a spate of narcissism, according to a book released by two prominent psychologists in recent days.

And self-absorption isn't just growing among YouTube-hungry teens. Middle-aged adults also have shown their vanity with their obsession over reality TV and plastic surgery, the experts said.

"This goes way beyond college students. It's a change in the whole culture," said Jean Twenge, co-author of "The Narcissism Epidemic."

Narcissism threatens to leave people with little capacity for relationships and unattainable expectations that could ultimately lead to unhappiness, Twenge writes.

"Everyone's now involved in reality television, MySpace, just getting yourself out there," said Safina Bhatti, 32, of Murray Hill, who agreed with the book's findings. "It makes it difficult to have real conversations."

Faces of narcissism?



Alex Rodriguez



Eliot Spitzer



Lindsay Lohan



Nadya Suleman



Paris Hilton



John Edwards

The Internet has made the hunt for fame a more universal obsession in America and other media-savvy nations like Japan, psychologists said.

"It has a lot to do with Facebook and Twitter," said Elayne Rapping, a

popular-culture expert with the University at Buffalo. "The idea that anyone cares what you had for lunch, how much more narcissistic can you get?"

But not everyone believes "American Idol" or

SELF-ABSORBED?

You may have an overblown ego if you agree with some of these assessments of yourself:

- If I ruled the world it would be a much better place.
- I like to be the center of attention.
- I like to show off my body.
- I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
- I'm an extraordinary person.

(SOURCE: THE NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY)

a bit of Botox are so bad.

"You can call it narcissism, but wanting to look good is an important part of someone's self-image," said Dr. Mauro Romita, a Manhattan plastic surgeon.

A survey of more than 35,000 Americans found that 6 percent had suffered from extreme narcissism at some point of their lives, according to a study published last year by the National Institute of Health. In addition, one out of four college students showed signs of narcissism in 2006, according to a study conducted by the book's authors.

And the rise and fall of self-important figures such as Eliot Spitzer, Alex Rodriguez and John Edwards shows that narcissism isn't limited to the young, the book states.

Andrew Brainer and Casey Feldman contributed to this story.

SOME PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR THE YOUNG AND SELF-IMPORTANT:

- "This Little Piggy Went to Prada," a children's book that offers "posh" updates on nursery rhymes
- Personal paparazzi for hire

from companies such as Celeb 4 A Day, which will provide camera-toting fans and a publicist for \$3,000

- Stuffed animals with bling

and a gossip bio available from toy manufacturing company Pawparazzi

- "Bling" pacifiers encased with crystal studs

■ "My Beautiful Mommy," a children's book that explains a parent's sudden transformation after plastic surgery

(HEATHER HADDON)

Whiskey a go-go in NYC

BY JASON FINK

jason.fink@am-ny.com

Bartenders could be serving up Brooklyn bourbon next year if plans go through to open what could be the city's first whiskey and gin distillery since before Prohibition.

Tom Potter, who co-founded the Brooklyn Brewery 22 years ago, hopes to produce gin and whiskey in the borough with his new venture, the New York Distilling Co.

There is one other distillery in the city but it reports only distilling wine.

By selling to liquor stores and bars in the city, Potter wants to capitalize on the growing market for local food and drink.

"The big picture is definitely moving towards artisan-produced food and beverage and Brooklyn is a hotbed of that," Potter said Thursday.

Potter, 53, of Park Slope, is raising money and looking for space, primarily in Gowanus, Red Hook and Williamsburg. The goal is to raise \$600,000 of the needed \$2 million by the end of June and have the distillery open in about a year.

Potter would not say how much he has raised so far. He will also need to apply for licenses.

Patrick Watson, who owns the Smith and Vine liquor store in Carroll Gardens, said a Brooklyn label would help sales.

"The unique thing will be that it is so local," Watson said. "Will people want to buy Brooklyn distilled products in California as well? I'm sure they would."

Daughter can't recover dad after his death in Cuba

BY MARLENE NAANES
mnaanes@am-ny.com

Helen Zagaro suffered one tragedy when her 81-year-old father died March 5, hundreds of miles away while visiting Cuba.

But she has endured another heartbreak ever since. Zagaro, 55, has not been able to bring her father's remains home, or even retrieve his death certificate.

"It's ripping me apart," she said. "I have nothing. I have no answers."

Zagaro's father, Hector Castellano, died while he was visiting family and friends in Cienfuegos. Castellano, a retired Cuban-American businessman, was born in Manhattan but lived in Cuba with his family from age 4 to 18 after they left the United States during the Great Depression.

He returned when he was 18 and joined the Army, serving during the Korean War. He took great pride in his military service, often telling Zagaro he wanted to be buried in a national cemetery.

It's ripping me apart.

—Helen Zagaro

Making his wish come true has become a nightmare. Zagaro has been trading e-mails with the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba, a State Department entity, for the past month but recently hit a wall. The officials there have not been able to locate Castellano's death certificate and Zagaro's Cuban

ID was given to a local funeral home, making it possible for his extended family there to bury him the next day. A swift burial is customary, but once interred, Cuban public-health law dictates a corpse may not be exhumed for two years.

"My dad's gone, and there's nothing I can do about it," Zagaro said.

The office of U.S. Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) offered to help the family.

Rolando Pujol contributed to this story.



Helen Zagaro holds a picture of her father, Hector Castellano.

(ANA R. GUTIERREZ/NEWSDAY)