



Staten Island Advance

Bugging out on Staten Island: 'They're Baack! The Return of the 17-Year Cicadas'



By [Rob Bailey / Staten Island Advance](#)

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"THEY'RE BAAACK!!! THE RETURN OF THE 17-YEAR CICADA"

The nocturnal insects emerge from their underground homes just in time for an exhibit

Where: Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Place, St. George, 718-727-1135. Sun.-Fri. noon-5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$5, adults, \$3, seniors/students; free for kids under 13 and members.

Opening Preview Party: Feb. 15, 6-9 p.m.; food, drink and disco dancing, with tours of the extensive cicada exhibit. \$25/\$15 museum members. RSVP to [Cheryl Adolph](#) at 718-483-7113.

Family Cicada Day: Feb. 16, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; gallery workshops, hands on science lessons, puppet films and more. Regular admission rates apply with an additional \$2 material fee to participate in scheduled activities.

More information: StatenIslandMuseum.org.

STATEN ISLAND, NY – An anonymous post on the Staten Island Museum Facebook page speaks volumes: *"It was the best of swarms ... it was the worst of swarms ... but it is always 17 year olds who need to find love ..."*

Curious? You're not alone. All over the borough and neighboring territories, naturalists are bugging out over an impending natural phenomenon: The reappearance of the 17-year cicada.

This weekend, the [Staten Island Museum](#) is abuzz about the once-in-a-generation happening — and the launch of its aptly named new exhibit: "They're Baaack! Return of the 17-Year Cicada."

Why will millions of Cicadas emerge from their underground hideouts this spring?

Are they poisonous, and can their bite turn us into zombies a la "The Walking Dead"?

Or just maybe, what can these amazing arthropods teach us?

Get the answer to all these questions when "They're Baaack!" opens with a special fund-raising preview party Friday night in the museum at 75 Stuyvesant Pl., St. George. Admission is \$25, general public; \$15, museum members.

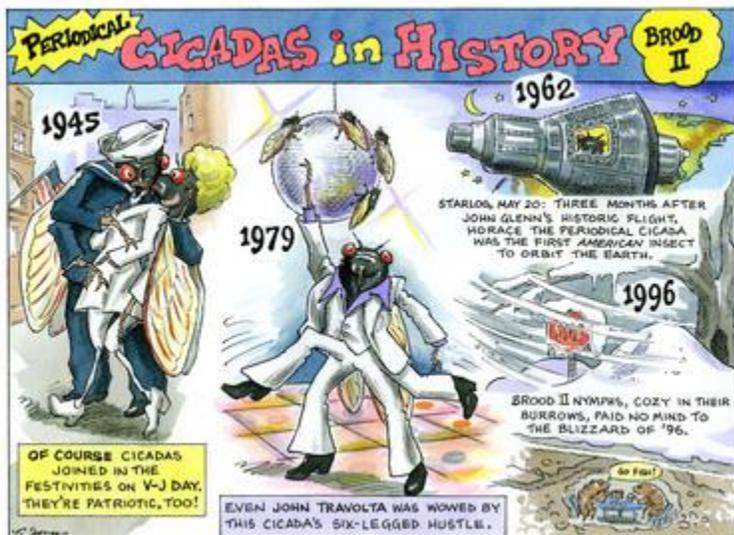


Illustration by Taylor Jones

FRIDAY NIGHT FEVER

Organizers promise "a fun-filled evening of fine fare, drinks, and disco dancing with tours and talks of the extensive cicada exhibit." Tickets for the preview party and more information available by contacting Cheryl Adolph at 718-483-7113 or CAadolp@StatenIslandMuseum.org

"We have some wonderful works of art that are part of this great new science-, history- and art-based exhibit," says Diane Matyas, director of exhibitions and programs for the Staten Island Museum. "In addition to new work by syndicated cartoonist Taylor Jones, we have works by Ann Marie McDonnell, Tom Ronse, Chris Spollen, Everette, Gustavo Galvan, Steve Foust, Robert Bunkin and a mystery guest."

Funded in part by Capital One Bank, Deutsche Bank, Time Warner Cable and NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, "They're Baaack!" features real cicada specimens from the museum's extensive collection, a timeline of past emergences linked to historic events, a time-

lapse video of emerging cicadas, a hands-on video microscope, a Google map showing where cicadas are emerging, big-bug sci-fi fun and unusual Cicada ephemera (chocolates anyone?).



AWE in print ...Illustrations by Taylor Jones

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Saturday brings "Family Cicada Day," a celebration geared toward younger folk and their grownups from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Up first: Junior Science club (limited to 25 people) at 10 a.m.

Gallery Workshops – Cicada Origami, Make a Cicada Headgear, Looking Closely: Microscope & Magnifiers – follow from 1-4 p.m.

Sandwiched in between: "Cicada Talk: They're Coming!" at 2 p.m., the stop-animation feature "Cicada Princess" at 1:30 and 3 p.m. and the Museum Store's Cicada Raffle at 3:30 p.m.



Eco-artist Brandon Ballengee with his MAGICICADA sculpture.

Advance photo by

Jan Somma-Hammel

THIS IS NO ROACH MOTEL

If you've been to the North Shore lately, you've probably spotted a giant glowing bug in the Staten Island Museum courtyard.

Award-winning eco-artist Brandon Ballengée latest work — "The Love Motel for Insects: MAGICICADA Staten Island Variation" — utilizes ultra-violet lights to attract both insects and humans.

Ballengée's series began in the tropical rainforests of Central America more than a decade ago. Since, the sculptures have appeared on boats in Venice, bogs in Ireland, isolated moors in Scotland, bustling Delhi shopping malls, Mexican deserts, New Haven inner-city bus stops, London roof tops, Korean mountain-sides, Louisiana Bayous and others.



"The Love Motel for Insects: MAGICICADA Staten Island Variation" *Courtesy the Staten Island Museum*

At each location community events occur: bioart workshops; eco-action field-trips; trans-species picnics; bug parties; enviro-graffiti jams, citizen science investigations and even insect-themed musical events. (i.e. expect to spend summer nights in our courtyard!)

MAGICICADA glows beginning at dusk, attracting numerous nocturnal arthropods. During the day, insects gather around native flowers planted at the sculpture's base. Related signage will educate the public about the installation, the species of native plants and the ecological importance of insects.

"The primary objective is to create opportunities through technology and ecological art for the public to experience a side of their local environment that many have probably never focused on — insect life," Ballengee says. "Varied public programs will celebrate arthropod biodiversity and inspire participants to gain a better overall understanding of their local ecology."