



CITY HALL

City advocates hope for cash from Barack Obama (**Page 4**), **Betsy Gotbaum**, below, grades city schools (**Page 28**) and



Lesley Crocker Snyder, above, makes her case for running again for Manhattan DA (**Page 35**).



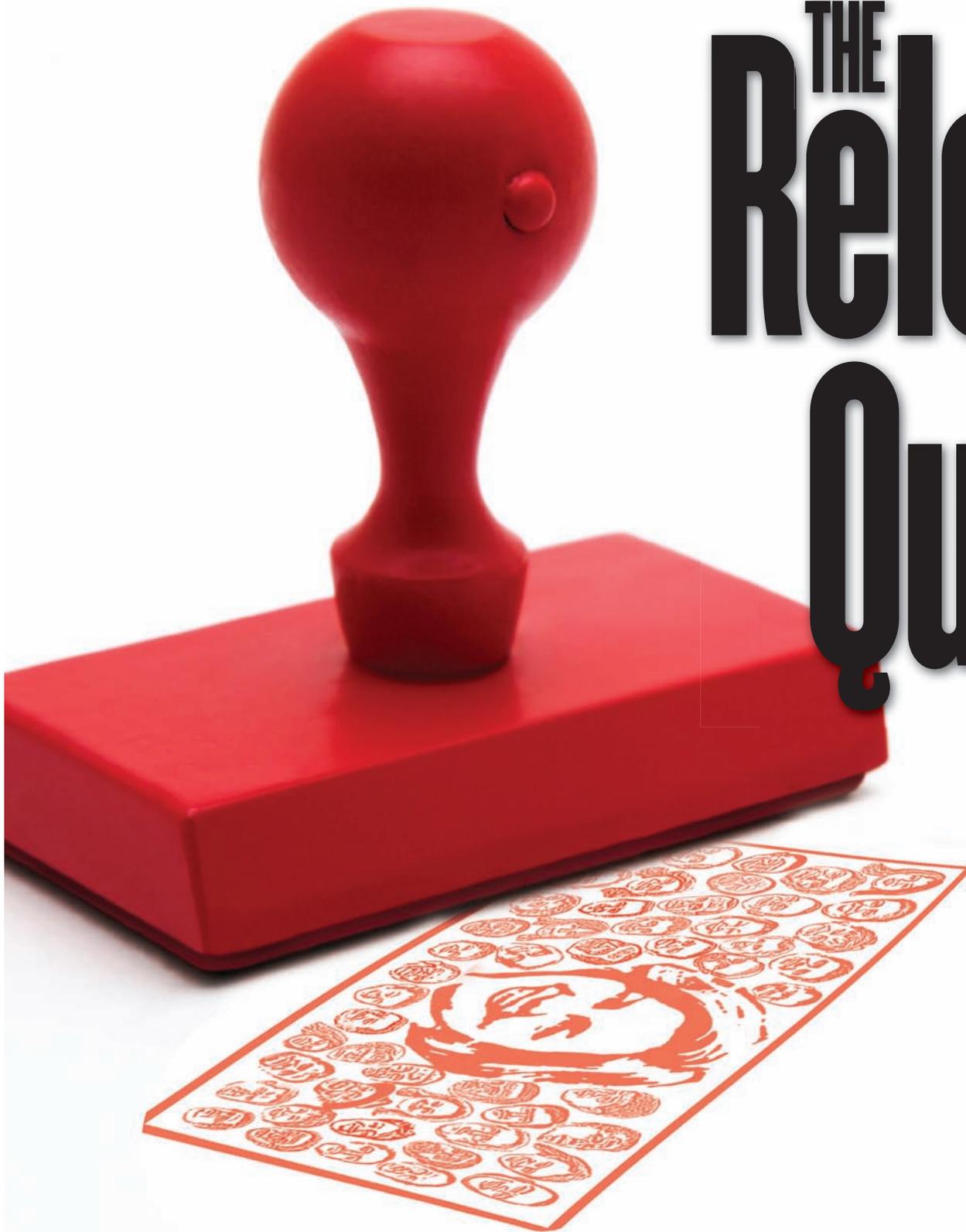
Vol. 3, No. 6

www.cityhallnews.com

November 2008

THE Relevance Question

Sizing up the post-term limits Council



Queens BP.

Helen Marshall

Runs The McCaffrey Group, a lobbying firm. Was hired by Keep New York City Congestion Tax Free, which fought Bloomberg on congestion pricing.

Commissioner of Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Guillermo Linares

In 2003 was convicted of campaign fraud, connected to a 2001 Queens BP run. Sentenced to five years of probation and 540 hours of community service. Now Director of Contract Administration with the Arts in Schools Foundation and the New York Junior Tennis League.

Died March 11, 2007, at age 62.

Howard L. Lasher

State Senate.

John D. Sabini**Walter McCaffrey**

Private attorney, former adjunct professor at Pace and Baruch.

Stephen Dibrienza**Sheldon S. Leffler**

Lawyer with Vallone and Vallone.

Peter Vallone, Sr.

Ran for Queens BP in 2001 and lost. Since then has had knee problems, retired and living in Howard Beach. Will likely run for Queens BP again in 2009.

Alfonse "Al" C. Stabile

Partner in Wolfblock's Real Estate and Environmental & Land Use Practice Groups.

Ken Fisher

Democratic district leader for Springfield Gardens, Queens, as recently as 2006. Has been in and out of the hospital since April of this year.

Juanita E. Watkins

Fundraised and unsuccessfully ran for Bronx BP in 2001. Ran and lost in 2002 for State Senate against Ruth Hassell-Thompson. Now an accountant in the Bronx, had been considering another run for the

Lawrence A. Warden

WHERE are they NOW?

Deputy Queens BP.

Karen Koslowitz

Tracking Down the Class of 2001

One is a school principal. Another retired to Puerto Rico. They are lawyers, lobbyists, judges and elected officials. In short, these former members of the City Council prove that there is life after term limits. A half dozen have even gone on to higher office. While their successors now have the option of running for a third term, these former Council members show that not everyone ends up broke and in the gutter after being forced out of office. Their stories prove that, in America, anyone can make it—even former members of the City Council.

Lost Democratic nomination race for comptroller in 2001 against Bill Thompson. President of Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. during tram failure.

Herbert Berman

Died Aug. 1, 2008 of cancer.

Stanley Michels

Ran against Stabile in Queens BP primary and dropped out. Rumored to be looking into running for Avella's Council seat. Currently works for NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development.

Michael Abel

Runs the Democratic club in St. Albans. Consultant for Greater Jamaica Development Corp.

Archie Spigner

Civil Court Judge in Brooklyn.

Kathryn Freed

After a scandalous tenure as Council member, she has been out of the public eye since she was term-limited and has been fighting back problems.

Lucy Cruz

Has been battling health and financial problems.

Priscilla A. Wooten

Private attorney.

Jerome O'Donovan

Ran in 2001 Democratic Primary for Bronx BP. Owns Eisland Strategies, LLC, a lobbying firm.

June M. Eisland

Host of CUNY TV's Eldridge & Co. Married to Jimmy Breslin since 1982.

Ronnie Eldridge

Private attorney, Morton Povman, PC.

Morton Povman

State Senate.

Martin Malave Dilan

Father of Helen D. Foster. Pastor, retired.

Wendell Foster

State Senate.

Marty Golden

Ran for Assembly in 2006, is now a Democratic district leader in Flushing.

Julia Harrison

Stepped down as city clerk last year. Now retired in Orlando and Puerto Rico.

Victor L. Robles

Civil Court Judge.

Noach Dear

Joined Mercury Public Affairs in 2006, now runs Una Clarke and Associates, a consulting firm.

Una Clarke

Ran for mayor (2005) and Council seat (2008), lost both.

Thomas Ognibene

State Assembly member.

Jose Rivera

State Assembly member.

Annette Robinson

Minister with All Saints Church in Park Slope from July 1, 2002, to Dec. 31, 2004. Now interim principal and deputy headmaster at St. Mark's Day School in Brooklyn.

Rev. Lloyd Henry



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City Politicians See a Friend of the City in President Obama

White House Office on Urban Policy and revised funding formulas will be crucial



There are high hopes that Barack Obama, set to be the first president in modern history to hail from a major city, will help shake up the federal government to bring more money into a New York in need.

BY DAN RIVOLI

Barack Obama is unlike many presidents that have come before him. He has more liberal stances on many issues than most who have won the White House, he will be one of the youngest commanders-in-chief ever and he is, of course, an African-American.

He is also the first president in modern American history—aside from Richard Nixon, who briefly lived in New York before winning the presidency—to make his home in a major metropolis. Though Franklin Roosevelt was born in New York, he grew up and lived in Hyde Park, miles north of that Upper East Side brownstone.

Obama's Hyde Park, meanwhile, is smack in the middle of the South Side of Chicago, a very urban area he represented for seven years in the Illinois State Senate before winning election to the United State Senate in 2004. Even during his four years in Washington so far, this is where he kept

his primary residence, refusing to move his family to the capital.

That, of course, is about to change, with the Obamas starting to pack their bags for the White House. But whether because of his background as a city resident or because of his recognition that an overwhelming majority of Americans now live either in or around cities, Obama has distinguished himself from past presidents by forming a council on domestic policy that touches on urban priorities, including in his campaign platform a plan to create a White House Office on Urban Policy to be located in the West Wing. A director will be responsible for coordinating all federal urban programs and reporting directly to the president.

Obama's presidency also marks the end to the administration of George W. Bush, a president that New York's congressional representatives say have neglected the country's urban population for partisan reasons.

"It's not going to be milk and honey flowing through the streets just because we have a new president," said Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-Brooklyn/Queens), "but we definitely are going to have a situation where some of the battles we had with the Bush Administration are going to be over almost overnight."

One of the constant battles with Bush was the allocation of federal dollars, crucial to New York's infrastructure and transportation expansion projects like the new Second Avenue subway line.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan/Brooklyn), a senior member of the House Transportation Committee, has grown accustomed to fighting Republicans on transportation funding for the city. In 2005, he recalled, \$286.4 billion in federal transportation funds was reauthorized—\$90 billion short of what was necessary to keep the current system in good repair. Every time transportation funds are reauthorized, Nadler said, there is a fight over the allocation formula.

He expressed optimism that this might change.

"A sympathetic Obama administration might weigh into that fight—might," Nadler said.

With Obama as president, Nadler said, New York City will have an ally that looks at investment in mass transit and

infrastructure as a wise use of federal money. That could help small cities and suburbs as well, particularly if Obama undertakes the sort of New Deal-style move to create jobs by focusing on construction of public works, but large metropolises will likely reap proportionally larger benefits.

"The safe thing to say," Nadler said, "is a lot more money for transportation projects."

Beyond sensitivity to those funding formulas, Obama's experience in Chicago gives him hands-on knowledge of issues plaguing big cities like public housing in New York.

Standing at the state Democratic Party's election night reception at the Sheraton New York just before the networks called the election for Obama, Greg Floyd, president of Teamsters Local 237, reflected on a candid conversation the two men had during the 2007 Memorial Day weekend at Chicago's Grand Hyatt hotel. A conversation, Floyd said, he is sure the president-elect remembers as well.

"No matter what happens you are going to be senator or president of the United States," Floyd remembers telling Obama. "And you will be in a position to help public housing."

Floyd, whose union represents about 9,000 public housing employees, said the employees and residents living in federally-funded housing are banking on Obama's understanding that public housing is being "starved to death and we're looking for federal assistance."

The New York Housing Authority (NYCHA), which manages 200,000 units, faces a \$200 million budget deficit, due in part to a vacuum of federal funding.

Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) lamented the federal government's reimbursement of NYCHA, which pays the authority 83 cents for every dollar spent.

"One of the biggest parts of the city's budget, which is running a huge deficit, is public housing," said Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan).

A president that understands and has represented a heavily urban population like Obama is going to be open to New York City's projects and problems, said Lisa Servon, dean of Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy.

But conservative thinkers like EJ McMahon of the Manhattan Institute have argued that a heavy federal influence on cities could hamper economic growth and independence. According to McMahon, federal urban initiatives divert resources away from New York and shower them on smaller cities across the country. Plus, major efforts from the federal government in the past—like urban renewal efforts in the 60's—have had detrimental effects on New York and other urban areas that took decades for them to come out of.

Urbanites were the most populous block of votes until 1992, when the majority of presidential voters resided in the suburbs. Though the urban vote was crucial to Obama's landslide victory, national politicians have focused on rural and suburban middle-class families.

"That's a driving factor in why we haven't had an explicitly national urban policy," said Servon, who volunteered with the Obama campaign in northeast Philadelphia. "Folks in urban areas have not had a voice in 20 years in presidential politics."

Servon believes that a White House office on urban policy, complete with a director that can be held accountable, is the first step in creating the first national urban agenda in three decades.

"You're doing something that's incredibly visible," Servon said. "That creates a mechanism so that if nothing happens, it'll be pretty obvious."

"The safe thing to say," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler, "is a lot more money for transportation projects."

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<p>Kingsborough Community College Roy Zimmerman, music for all ages 3 PM Free</p>	<p>Graduate Center A Conversation on Cultural Power, Tom Stoppard & Derek Walcott 7-8:30 PM Free</p>	<p>Veterans Day</p> <p>New York City College of Technology The World in a City: New York Times' Joseph Berger 1 PM Free</p>	<p>Borough of Manhattan Community College Insurance—Cover Your Assets 2 PM Free</p>	<p>Graduate Center Mendelssohn String Quartet 1 PM Free</p>	<p>Graduate Center Ralph Vaughan Williams Commemorative conference followed by concert 9:30 AM-8:45 PM Free</p>	<p>York College Theater: Jamaica, Farewell 3 PM \$20 adults; \$10 students, seniors</p>
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<p>Kingsborough Community College Kingsborough for a Day 11:45 AM-4 PM Free</p>	<p>Graduate Center Macaulay Honors College Open House 6:30 PM Free</p>	<p>Graduate Center Is it really so strange? Documentary filmmaker William E. Jones 7 PM Free</p>	<p>Hunter College Welfare Rights Initiative's Know Your Rights Training 1-3 PM Free</p>	<p>Thanksgiving</p>	<p>Lehman College Ray Castro's Conjunco 30th Anniversary Concert 8 PM \$45-\$60</p>	
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With Obama Victory, Early Supporters in New York Consider Their Winnings

Primary endorsements may mean political benefits for Foster, Benjamin and Perkins



Two days before the election and fresh off his annual run in the New York City marathon, early Obama supporter State Sen. Bill Perkins held a rally in front of the campaign's Harlem outpost.

BY DANIELLE DOUGLAS

Even as the local black Democratic establishment stood firmly behind Sen. Hillary Clinton (D) at the outset of the primary season, politicians like Karim Camara, Hakeem Jeffries, Eric Adams, Charles Barron, James Sanders and Albert Vann threw their support behind Barack Obama.

The move could have amounted to political suicide. But now that they turned out not just to have been early supporters of the man who became the nominee, but is now the president-elect, some are shrugging off the idea that this could give them more power in their districts. With many of them more junior in their neighborhoods, this could prove important.

"I haven't thought of it that way," said Council Member Helen Foster (D-Bronx), an early leader of the local Obama supporters, "though many people have brought that up to me. What I have thought about is what this election means for so many children of color, especially black boys. They will be able to see all of their hopes and dreams culminate in the election of Senator Obama."

Foster broke ranks with the Bronx political machine, as did Assembly Member Michael Benjamin (D-Bronx)—something of a trend for the two. Benjamin has been involved with the Rainbow Rebellion, which is at odds with José Rivera, and Foster is often talked about as a potential opponent for Rivera's son, Joel, for borough president, either in 2009 or 2013, depending on whether Adolfo Carrión decides to seek re-election next year.

Foster said she endorsed Obama because of the passion of his message and the relationship she had with him. She said she never considered backing her hometown senator, mostly because she never felt Clinton's presence around her home.

"In my seven years as a member of the New York City Council, I've only gotten one phone call from Senator Clinton's office, never from her. And she's been in my district a number of times," she said. "So for me it was a no-brainer."

Kevin Wardally, a former aide to Hillary Clinton and a political consultant, seemed all too familiar with such sentiments.

"Some of the folks that went with Senator Obama early made it a little too much about some of their issues with Senator Clinton," he said.

A rep for many key players of the Harlem base, Wardally said their decision came down to loyalty. Given the Clintons' long-standing relationship with many local black leaders, Rep. Charles Rangel prime among them, a turncoat move would have been out of the question, he said.

"The Harlem political community en masse is very politically sophisticated. It understands you are nothing in politics if you don't keep your word and stand by your friends," insisted Wardally. "I don't think the world penalizes them for standing by a friend of the community, who has delivered year after year."

Rangel was reportedly the first one who urged Clinton to pull out of the fight for the nomination as soon as the last primaries in June, and Wardally said that he along with all the other Harlem leaders quickly moved past their disagreements over who should be the nominee.

"They are very proud of Barack Obama, and the second that he became the nominee they went wholeheartedly behind him," Wardally said.

One person in Harlem who showed no hesitation in rallying for Obama was State Sen. Bill Perkins (D-Manhattan). Perkins said he took a shine to the presidential candidate because of his charisma and progressive politics. Being on the outs with the establishment is nothing new for Perkins—his recent opposition to the Columbia University expansion is just the latest in a series of issues, policy and political, where he has positioned himself resolutely against the other leaders of the community—so he viewed the fallout from his choice as insignificant.

A strong supporter of Obama from the outset, he hosted a number of fundraisers for the Illinois senator, oversaw a voter drive and opened a storefront office to drum up support in the district. Two days before the election and fresh off his annual run in the New York City marathon, Perkins held a rally in front of the campaign's Harlem outpost on Eighth Avenue.

"He's about to win his marathon," Perkins told the crowd. "I finished successfully, as will he."

That paled in comparison to Rangel's more elaborate effort the day before, which featured a number of local performers, a host of elected officials and a crowd gathered at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building.

Perkins raised an eyebrow and smiled at the mention of the post-primary Rangel-Obama posters hugging lampposts and scaffolding throughout the area.

"It was chilly for awhile, but it's nice and warm now," he said. "Everybody is on

board and that's what's most important. When it really matters at this point, everybody is on board."

To some, Perkins' successful political calculation has strengthened his position as the heir apparent for Rangel's congressional seat. But the coy state senator plays down the buzz, noting his benefits from the other big election news of the night: the Democrats' capture of the State Senate. (Perkins was unopposed in his own bid for re-election.)

"To be in the majority in the State Senate is awesome at this point. So that's where my head is because that's where I will be for the time being," he said.

As ranking member on the Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, Perkins is expected to take the reigns of the committee come January. With so much to look forward to in the near future, Perkins insisted designs on Washington are far from mind. "For me to be preoccupied with all this other stuff would be *bochinche*," he joked, using the Spanish word for gossip.

For now, there is no race. Even after being rocked by a series of revelations about his finances and apartments this summer, voters returned Rangel to Washington with roughly 87 percent of the vote on Election Day. The questions about his remaining in place as chair of the Ways and Means Committee also appear to have passed, which Perkins said puts Rangel in a "very opportune place."

"He's going to have the opportunity to work with a Democratic president, a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate and Congress," Perkins said. "The Congressman has an opportunity in this part of his career, which I would say is the end of his marathon, to do a lot to establish a record in a historic time. I support him to that end."

Still, Rangel is 78 years old, and realistically, a race for the seat he has closely guarded and strongly held cannot be in the very distant future.

As the expected contender who early on threw his support behind the presidential candidate many in the community largely supported, Perkins might have gained important recognition for when the Congressional race does materialize. Since potential rival and Rangel protégé Assembly Member Keith Wright (D-Manhattan)—who also faced Perkins in the 2005 Manhattan borough president's race—joined with others in backing Clinton, there are those who believe this could give Perkins a leg up in a campaign.

Wardally, who is an unpaid consultant for Wright, dismissed this idea.

"When the time comes," Wardally said, "people are going to make their decision by looking at the history of this seat and asking who is the best person to continue that legacy. They are not going to ask questions about whether they endorsed Hillary Clinton in February 2008." CH

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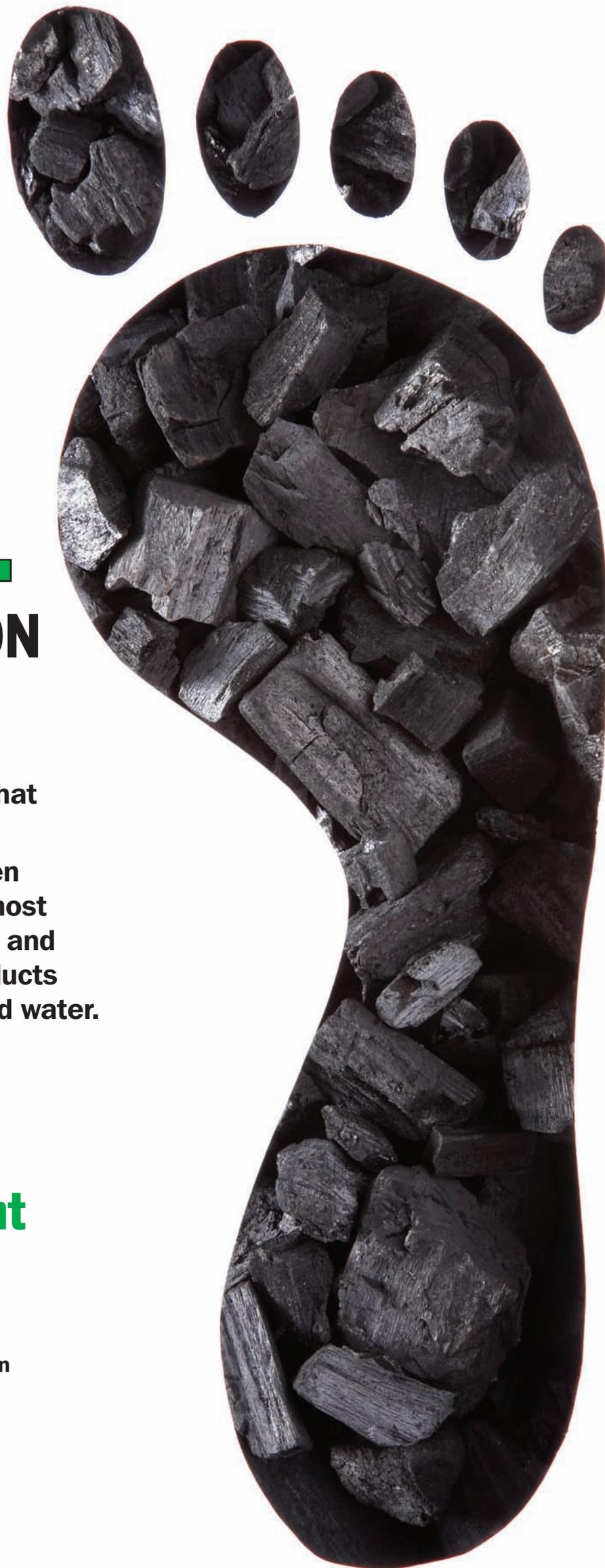
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For First-Time Candidates, Term Limits Present Challenges and Opportunities

A spirit of common purpose, as insurgents lobby for Working Families support

BY SAL GENTILE

Ken Baer had set about the typical tasks of a fledgling candidate: raising startup cash, establishing political connections, building a nascent campaign.

Then, after spending thousands of dollars on a race for City Council in northern Brooklyn, Baer's plans were upended by the term limits debate. And he has since been thrust—as have Council candidates across the city—into a frenzied political world where plans don't seem to last more than a day.

Baer has become something of a fixture at City Hall: circulating in the foyer or on the plaza, conferring with fellow candidates and joining press conferences. He has been asked to testify, join lawsuits, meet with the mayor's opponents and talk to the Working Families Party, which has provided the artillery for much of the opposition.

And, in a quirk of the way the term limits debate has unfolded, he has come together with Council challengers from across the city—corralled, in some cases, by the bill's opponents—to fight the extension of term limits.

"I don't want to call it a storm gathering, but it's something moving along, let's phrase it that way," he said.

They have caucused, joined lawsuits, pooled resources and traded strategies, all of which suggests the possibility that they may run as a slate, backed by the Working Families Party, against Council incumbents next year. There has even been talk of forming a PAC, perhaps with financial backing from billionaire Tom Golisano, who opposed the extension.

That prospect has helped recharge their stalled campaigns.

"This has been very helpful," said Jo Anne Simon, also a candidate for the northern Brooklyn seat held by David Yassky, as she waited at City Hall to testify against the bill. "In a sort of perverse and quirky way, this has been



Yetta Kurland is one of the many Council candidates trying to capitalize on the anti-term limits sentiment in campaigns against incumbents who voted for the mayor's bill.

supported the mayor's bill.

Her role as a sort of unofficial field coordinator for the WFP has made James a popular person of late, and a growing number of Council hopefuls have sought to work with her—and, in turn, each other—by joining her lawsuit against the mayor or testifying at City Hall.

That, they say, is a welcome though somewhat unorthodox development. It has forced them to recalibrate

Kurland, who is running for the lower Manhattan seat held by Speaker Christine Quinn (D), worked as an organizer with the Working Families Party in the run-up to the presidential election and has cooperated closely with James on the term limits opposition, helping corral fellow Council hopefuls for the lawsuit and organizing their collective effort to challenge incumbent members.

She and many of her fellow candidates see the term limits battle as an opportunity, rather than a setback, and expect it to spur a big enough backlash to buoy their campaigns.

The new candidates have already started channeling widespread frustration with the outcome of the term limits fight to court new donors and craft a message that marries their core issues—such as education, gay rights or affordable housing—with the broader message of the term limits opposition.

"I think that the term limits issue is a boiling-over of the substantive issues that we've been talking about for years and years," Kurland said. "It's just that the term limits issue is the most outrageous, bringing it to the farthest degree."

They are even exploring the possibility of holding joint fundraisers and campaign events next year. Pooling resources, they say, will be pivotal to mounting credible campaigns against well-established incumbents.

"I think the excitement is there, and hopefully that will continue," said

Margaret Chin a day before she was to christen her new campaign office in the heart of Chinatown.

Chin is making her third run for the downtown Manhattan seat held by Alan Gerson (D), and has drawn support from a fast-growing Asian-American population that has consolidated political influence over the years.

For Chin, the term limits issue has snaked its way into her campaign in a different way, by reshaping the two pillars of her electoral strategy: turnout and demographics. Chin says she has drawn in first-time voters and small contributions from residents who have never donated to a political campaign before—a trend that can only be helped by the raw intensity of the term limits debate.

"Hopefully, that will translate to people voting next year," she said.

If she can use the term limits issue to marshal high turnout from her base in Chinatown, it may be possible to topple an incumbent like Gerson.

"It is going to be more difficult, but it's not that it can't be done," she said. "I just have to work harder, and I think a lot of other candidates probably feel the same thing. You just have to go out and meet as many new voters as you can. And in a primary, the turnouts are usually not that high, and so every vote counts."

sgentile@cityhallnews.com

They have caucused, joined lawsuits, pooled resources and traded strategies, all of which suggests the possibility that they may run as a slate, backed by the Working Families Party, against Council incumbents next year. There has even been talk of forming a PAC.

an unintentional byproduct."

That close cooperation has already paid political dividends: The Working Families Party has jumpstarted its endorsement process—accelerated by the frenzy of the term limits debate—and designated a point person, Council Member Letitia James (D-Brooklyn), to field Council challengers running against incumbents who

their campaigns on an almost daily basis, providing them with new political opportunities but forcing them to spend precious time glad-handing at City Hall.

"One thing I've been more aware of as I go through with the process is this stuff changes all the time," said civil rights attorney Yetta Kurland, standing on the steps of City Hall as the mayor prepared to sign the bill.

Young, Brash and Mostly Cooling Their Jets Until 2013

With term limits extended, the fresh faces ponder four more years of ripening

BY DAVID FREEDLANDER

Evan Thies used to cut quite the figure in Williamsburg.

The 29-year-old wunderkind and former chief of staff to Council Member David Yassky (D-Brooklyn) could be spotted about a neighborhood sporting a suit and tie and newly shined leather shoes in a part of town more known for sleeve-length tattoos and tattered denim. Instead of sipping Pabst Blue Ribbon and trying his best to look blasé, Thies trudged diligently to local community board meetings and lead efforts to build more parks and affordable housing in the area.

Now his suit has been replaced with blue jeans and tennis shoes, his face sporting a days-old stubble, his looks of earnest determination replaced with one of blank dejection. One of a number of precocious young candidates who had been planning on making a run at a Council seat next year, Thies was part of a group whose 20s were not a time for fun and self-discovery, but Campaign Finance Board filings and evening fundraisers.

But now, with a term limit extension that upended the political world, many are forced to reprogram ambitious career paths and discover that oldest of virtues: patience.

"As soon as the mayor announced it, I started to, no pun intended, come to terms with not running for office this year," said Thies, sipping a glass of beer at uber-hipster hangout Enid's. "It upset the political process in a major way, to the point where it's hard to plan for four years from now. You don't know what they will try to do then."

In politics, there has always been an odd fetishiza-



Twentysomething would-be candidates Evan Thies (L) and Mel Gagarin (R) ponder their political future after term limits were extended

tion with the young in politics, but perhaps never so much as this election cycle, when youth and energy whipped the pants and pantsuits off age and experience.

Young candidates can embody what voters often want to see in an elected official—optimism, idealism and a lack of that old clubhouse corruption. Plus, in a business predicated on predicting the future (2012, anyone?), 20-something politicians are always a fun bet.

Often, early-onset political savvy is in itself enough to earn positive press coverage. Just this past September, right before Bloomberg had his public change of heart, *New York* went so far as to proclaim one, 26-year-old Micah Lasher, who had been planning to run for Council Member Gale Brewer's (D) Upper West Side seat before term limits were extended, as a likely mayoral prospect before he got out of his mid-30s. A former political consultant who entered the public sector as an aide to Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan/Brooklyn) in what many saw as positioning for the seat, Lasher declined to speak on the record for this story.

"The fresh face against the old standby. It's the David and Goliath story, it's the Hollywood story, and it always attracts attention and a debate about who is better to lead a district—someone with experience or someone who has new energy and ideas," said political consultant Austin Shafran, who himself is all of 27 and just helped lead the Democrats to their State Senate takeover as the official political spokesperson for the conference.

The candidates concur.

"It's much easier to be a reformer when you are

Continued on page 10

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For Election Lawyers, a Mountain of Work Awaits on Term Limits Cases

Bloomberg's extension will likely mean booming business for the city's few experts

By Andrew J. Hawkins

With two lawsuits filed and more sure to be on the way, prominent attorneys across the city are beginning to choose sides in the term limits battle. Already, a majority of the city's election lawyers have picked the side of those going up against Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.).

Bloomberg has called the prospect of lawsuits undoing the extension of term limits "preposterous." But Lawrence Laufer, an election attorney who was involved in the previous two referenda on term limits, said the mayor would be wise to start shoring up his legal position.

"Even though the mayor's people are trying to speak with a lot of bravado, frankly, there isn't much of a precedent," said Laufer, a former general counsel for the Campaign Finance Board (CFB) and now a partner at Genova, Burns & Vernoia.

New York only has a handful of election lawyers, several of whom, like Henry Berger and Martin Connor, the soon-to-be ex-State Senator, seem likely to skip the legal showdown over term limits.

To date, lawyers and legal experts opposed to the mayor's plan have met twice to plot their next move. Seventeen lawyers and law professors were present at the first meeting, 13 at the second one, said Norman Siegel, a civil liberties lawyer and candidate for public advocate.

"It's an issue that touched a raw nerve," Siegel said, "both in the city at large and in the legal community."

Jerry Goldfeder, another election attorney who has previously worked for Attorney General Andrew Cuomo (D), said he has been consulted over the last few weeks on term limits, but declined to say by whom or on which side of the issue they fell.

"I'm a lawyer," Goldfeder said slyly by phone. "I enjoy interesting legal issues."

Goldfeder, who works for the firm Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, is currently embroiled in the court battle over the leadership of the Bronx County Democratic Party.

Several attorneys committed to the term limits fight are promising to work pro bono.

"It's a matter of principle for me," said Randy Mastro, a former deputy mayor under Rudolph Giuliani (R) and now a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. "I'm devoting a lot of time and effort because it's such a crucial issue for our local democracy."

The term limits fight has made for strange legal bedfellows. Mastro is partnering with Siegel, the one-time head of the New York Civil Liberties Union who was often at odds with Mastro and the

Giuliani administration over police conduct.

"Half jokingly, I tell people Randy's moving to the left anyway," Siegel said of his alliance with Mastro. "We're both aware we come from different ideological perspectives, but on this issue we have common ground."

Siegel and Mastro will be teaming up with Richard Emery and his firm, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady. Emery is a civil rights and election lawyer who in the late 1980s helped dismantle the city's Board of Estimate. But Siegel said that Emery's firm has yet to decide whether it will be involved in the lawsuit officially.

The mayor will be represented by Michael Cardozo, the corporation counsel, and lawyers from the New York City Law Department.

Lawyers are also getting involved be-

yond the courtroom. Candidates who have been raising money to run for office next year are seeking legal advice on how their campaign financing will be affected, according to Laufer.

The CFB released an advisory Nov. 3 allowing candidates to have a "fresh start" by freezing their campaign funds until 2013. Laufer said there is still some confusion among candidates about what this will mean for their campaign funds.

But before the candidates can begin to assess their own situations, the fate of the mayor's plan still hangs in a legal limbo. The law will be reviewed by the Justice Department, which must turn around an opinion in 60 days. And that means even

more lawyers—in this case federal attorneys who specialize in the Voting Rights Act. Those lawyers will be charged with making sure the law does not adversely impact the voting rights of racial minorities.

The opposition is already eyeing the Justice Department's review for a challenge.

"We're considering it," Siegel said. "It will require an elections expert who can crunch the numbers demographically."

Another approach will be to see whether a provision in the municipal home rule law stipulating that a referendum is needed to alter the term of an elected office might apply in this case.

"These are constitutional issues, these are state and local law issues," Mastro said. "So stay tuned." **CH**

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Young

Continued from page 9

starting out than if you have been a part of the system for 30, 40 years," said David Greenfield, who raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for a now-suspended bid for Simcha Felder's seat in Borough Park. "If you've been doing this for 20, 30 years, you are more used to certain things happening in a certain way. It's harder to break out of that cycle."

For his part, Thies, who bought a used Volvo to better get around Yassky's gerrymandered Council district and spent 40 hours a week on his bid for the seat, opted to suspend his campaign instead of going up against his old boss. Others, though, are living up to the headstrong reputation of the young-and-forging-ahead regardless.

Mel Gagarin, a 26-year-old spokesper-

son for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, is going forward with his plans to run for Melinda Katz's Kew Gardens seat even if that means running against Katz.

"I'm not your typical 26-year-old," Gagarin said, pointing to his pregnant wife and two-year-old son, Micah, as evidence.

"I already know what they are going to say about me: 'How does this guy know what he's doing? I've been in government for a quarter of a century,'" he said. "That's because if they tackle us on the issues, they are going to lose. But I totally understand their argument. I may see politics differently than a candidate who has been around 25 years, who is used to the old politics."

As the city ponders its future, Gagarin

insisted, young candidates like him are exactly what it needs.

"The age thing gives us energy and drive and a long-term view of the city as a whole," he said.

A group whose 20s were not a time for fun and self-discovery, but Campaign Finance Board filings and evening fundraisers, learns to wait.

Many young candidates, however, are choosing to wait, insisting their chances of winning will only increase with time, even though that may rob them somewhat of their baby faces.

"It's four more years of experience and

four more years of meeting people," said one candidate who is postponing a run. "If you are smart and you are a young person who just had your dreams deferred by four years, you'll spend the next four years getting to know more people in the district. If you really are that young and hungry, you'll take advantage of it."

Still, most will have passed out of that crucial under-30 demographic by 2013. Guessing where the political mood of the city will be by then is impossible, as is trying to predict whether some other even younger whippersnappers will have arrived on

the scene, ready to steal attention.

Thies laughed off the possibility. "Thirty-three is basically the same as 29," he said. "I'll still be pretty damn young then, too." **CH**

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Relative Progress for Working Families Gives Hope for Greater Muscle in 2009

Spurred by term limits involvement, grassroots group looks to tip targeted races

By DAVID FREEDLANDER

When word first broke that Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.) and Council Speaker Christine Quinn were considering overturning the city's term limit law, the voices of protest were strangely muted and scattershot. A few earnest good-government types raised their voices in protest and some bizarre ads featuring a crying baby were posted online, but not much of that was heard above the din.

It was not really until the Working Families Party picked up the cause—or as Council Member John Liu (D-Queens) put it, “the cavalry arrived”—and their army of canvassers took to the streets that backers of the mayor's bill had a real fight on their hands.

“When they are committed to something they go to the mat for it,” said Letitia James (WFP-Brooklyn), the only member of the Council elected on the party's line alone (in her 2003 special election) and one of the leaders of the anti-extension fight. “They have done it before and they will do it again. People thought the electorate wasn't paying attention. They didn't realize the hunger the Working Families Party had tapped into.”

If the WFP ultimately lost that round, it was setback from a group of community organizers who have not seen many of them. They had just disposed of Martin Connor, a Democratic State senator not seen as sufficiently progressive or energetic (and had over the summer contributed to the pressure on John Sabini to step aside for Hiram Monserrate), and days later their support would prove instrumental in flipping Senate control to the Democrats for the first time in 40 years.

The final vote on the floor of the Council was far closer than most observers could have predicted. To some, that meant that in a political universe ruled by Planets Bloomberg and Quinn, an alternative power source had emerged, ready to whack back city pols who step out of line.

The results left many wondering who the Working Families Party would target next.

“The terrain has shifted,” said WFP executive director Dan Cantor on the steps of City Hall immediately following the vote.

“Good people will still emerge and want to challenge incumbents, and if we think they are more progressive and more accountable than the people they are running against, even incumbents, they are likely to have a good shot at winning our support,” he said. “I can't predict it. But it's certainly a live option.”

Party officials and members predict that the WFP could be involved in as many as a dozen races next fall, and political observers say they could wreak

havoc for Council members who thought the safest thing to do was to go along with the mayor's plan.

The Working Families Party has been careful to pick their spots in past campaigns, and are likely to focus on incumbents who are running in areas where the party is strong and are receiving strong challenges, especially in low-turnout primaries where they can have a proportionally bigger impact.

In the term limits fight, the WFP was methodical and unflagging. On their website, they kept a running tally of where Council members stood, and then flooded the zone with mailers in certain undecided member's districts, storming into district offices and alerting voters to what they saw as a betrayal.

“Aw, that was good stuff, wasn't it?” recalls Cantor, a hint of mischief in his voice. “That was Organizing 101. How do you make decision makers aware of how their constituents feel? It was the kind of thing that happens when you have a bunch of creative, young organizers hanging around.”

WFP Hit List

The Working Families Party is gearing up for the 2009 City Council elections—and getting ready to pick a fight with anyone who voted to extend term limits. There are a few Council Members who seem especially vulnerable, according to political insiders, either because they would make for potential examples or because their voting records have rubbed the WFP the wrong way:

Alan Gerson: The WFP proved that it had a formidable ground operation in lower Manhattan when it helped put Daniel Squadron over the top in his primary challenge to 30-year incumbent Marty Connor in September. Gerson was known as a good-government type until his vote on term limits, making him an especially appealing target. And the WFP has experience going up against Gerson: the party endorsed one of his opponents, Rocky Chin, in 2001. He came within 700 votes then, and the Chinese-American community—which also went for Squadron this year—has only grown as a political force since then.

David Yassky: The WFP has already targeted Yassky once this year, with mailers in his district urging constituents to contact his office about term limits. Their point person—and the only WFP member on the City Council—Letitia James has been openly coordinating with some of Yassky's potential opponents on her lawsuit against the mayor's bill. And the WFP has proven its strength in North Brooklyn, where its progressive and labor-friendly issues resonate especially well.

One-by-one, they picked off undecideds, hardly endearing them to opponents on the Council.

Weighing in on the term limit dispute was something of an odd battle for the WFP to pick. Most of their energy up until now has been focused on achieving tangible results on major policy issues like a living wage and rent control reform at Albany, where tangible results on these issues can be easier to come by.

“We think term limit rules are silly and undemocratic, but we have much less money than the other side, so we want clean elections,” Cantor said. “At the end of the day, what was clear to us was that the water was warm and that the public was really on our side here and our job was to make the public's incipient views find expression.”

If they are successful in this fight, say close observers, their advantage will be twofold. The party has grown in its decade of existence—an enormous climb over the years in prominence and power since the first city race it weighed in on, a February, 1999 election in which they

helped propel a former chief of staff named Christine Quinn to her old boss's Council seat—and they expect that more open elections will mean more of what they want to see passed becoming law, which, they believe, will add to their power in the city and state.

“They like to have these incremental kinds of victories, but ultimately they want to get people elected and become kingmakers,” said Alyssa Katz, a professor of journalism at New York University who has written frequently about the party. “Instability is good for them. They can come in then and wield power and tip it to one side or the other, which ultimately helps their agenda.” Party officials know that in the city they could never yield as much influence as the mayor or some of the entrenched party players. But still, members are quick to point out, the WFP made out okay on Nov. 4. Not counting Daniel Squadron, the one candidate they agreed with the mayor on, Bloomberg's boys were 0-4. **CH**

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James Sanders: The WFP essentially made Sanders a City Council Member in 2001, when he failed to get the backing of the Queens Democratic Party. But Bertha Lewis, the national chief organizer for Acorn and a leader in the Working Families Party, publicly called him out in *The New York Times* in September for his prolonged indecision on the term limits issue. He was also a target of the WFP's term limits mailers, and once he voted for the bill, one of his main opponents—Marquez Claxton, who has won the endorsements of some of Sanders' fellow Council members—began courting the WFP.

Darlene Mealy: Mealy is another Council member who owes much of her success to the WFP. She defeated a much more established candidate, former Assembly Member William Boyland, in 2005 with the WFP's strong organizational support. But she made herself one of the most public figures in the term limits debate when she came out strong against the mayor's bill—only to reverse herself, and cross the WFP, in the final vote. The WFP may want to make an example out of her as well.

Kendall Stewart: Stewart was viewed as vulnerable even before he voted for the mayor's term limits bill, after the indictments of two of his staffers on charges of fraud and embezzlement. That ethics cloud crippled his campaign for State Senate this year, in which he was defeated by Sen. Kevin Parker, who won the WFP endorsement. Stewart's district is two-thirds black, and the WFP is particularly strong in the predominantly black communities of Brooklyn. Stewart has shown difficulty raising money and institutional support, so

the WFP may see him as an easy target. Not to mention that one of his opponents—Rodrick Daley, a teacher—is a member of the United Federation of Teachers, which also opposed the mayor's bill.

Larry Seabrook: Before term limits were extended, Seabrook's Northern Bronx seat had already attracted one of the more crowded fields in the city. He was one of the more prominent players in the behind-the-scenes drama that unfolded over term limits, reportedly helping convince Darlene Mealy to change her vote. The WFP has never backed Seabrook, and may look to make inroads in his district, which is predominantly black. Plus, Seabrook has attracted a lot of criticism for his financial dealings over the years—he was fined by the campaign finance board for abuses of campaign funds, and was implicated in the slush fund scandal for his use of discretionary funds. He has not been charged.

Helen Sears: Should she run for re-election, Sears will face two well-established challengers who have said they will go ahead with their campaigns regardless of the term limits extension. Daniel Dromm, a longtime gay rights activist and teacher, was expected to get the backing of the Queens Democratic Party before term limits were extended. And Alfonso Quiroz has raised a sizeable war chest for his Council campaign. Sears has kept a fairly low profile in the Council, and the demographics are changing in her district—there are growing Hispanic and Asian-American communities there—both of which might make her a prime target for the WFP, should it back one of her opponents.

—Sal Gentile



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Facing New Challenges, Allies Emerge from Term Limits Battle Emboldened

Natural partnership hits its stride during confrontation with mayor

By SAL GENTILE

Council Members Bill de Blasio and Letitia James (D-Brooklyn, both) like to joke that they are politically married.

If so, James said, "He has to continue to court me and not take me for granted."

As political husbands go, de Blasio is an especially skilled bread-winner. His political savvy and connections to labor lend credibility to their campaigns together—even the underdog fights they often gravitate toward.

She, meanwhile, infuses a sort of understated ferocity into their campaigns that manages to pull in valuable media attention, while avoiding the charges of radicalism that have dogged some of her colleagues.

"She's eloquent, she's a lawyer," de Blasio said. "Tish is a pretty decisive person when she's in battle."

They have crafted an image as the "loyal

opposition," as de Blasio put it, forged for the most part in the fires of the term limits debate, during which they became the public faces of a consistently aggressive opposition.

The task now is to identify fresh political opportunities where that strategy will work.

As she sat in an airport waiting for a flight back to New York, for example, James was firing off emails to de Blasio about assembling a "coalition" to push back on the mayor's proposed budget cuts, which they both see as the next battleground.

They have extracted a considerable reservoir of political capital from their very public face-off with a popular, even intimidating, administration. That battle—and the bitter back-room dealing that sometimes spilled out into public view—has burnished their image as scrappy, progressive underdogs.

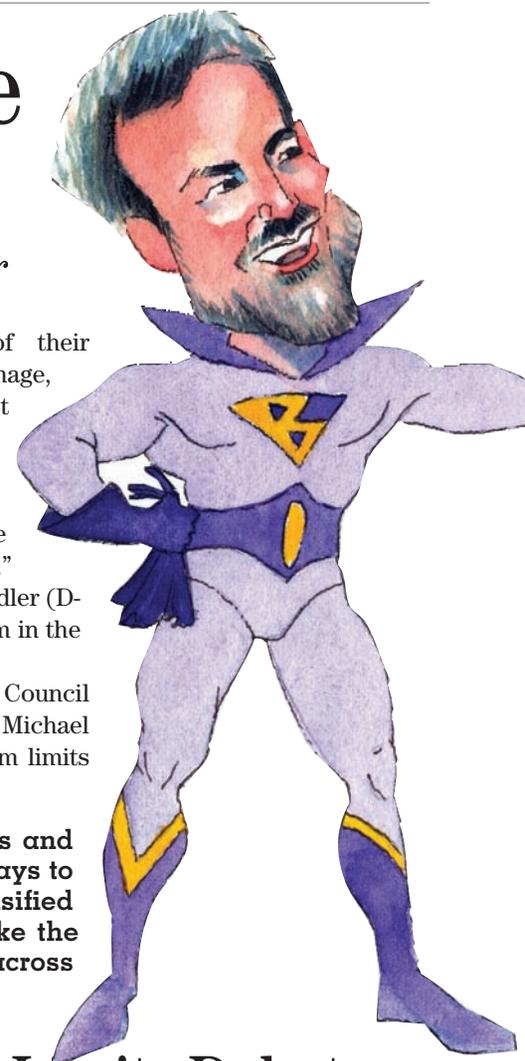
But the image they sometimes present of themselves as the politically pure,

disadvantaged crusaders, some of their opponents say, is only that: an image, and one that does not always reflect reality.

The idea that they were not pressuring or even threatening some of their colleagues during the term limits debate is "just horseshit," according to Council Member Lew Fidler (D-Brooklyn), who works alongside them in the Council's Brooklyn delegation.

Fidler and other members of the Council who fought rather publicly for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's (Ind.) bid to extend term limits

Council Members Letitia James and Bill de Blasio are looking for ways to have the partnership they intensified during the term limits fight take the form of an ongoing coalition across many issues.



Goo Goos Look for Direction and Purpose in Wake of Term Limits Debate

Sights set on charter revision, '09 races and giving the cold shoulder to Yassky

By ANDREW J. HAWKINS

Minutes after the Oct. 23 vote to extend term limits, Dick Dadey, executive director of Citizens Union, and Council Member David Yassky (D-Brooklyn) had a heated exchange in the stairwell of City Hall.

"He told me two weeks ago he was going to vote against the mayor's bill," Dadey said to Council Member Lew Fidler (D-Brooklyn), as Yassky looked on, standing to the side.

"Bullshit," Yassky replied. "You're wrong."

Regardless of what Yassky told Dadey, the extension of term limits was a serious blow to the good government movement in New York. Groups like Citizens Union, Common Cause and the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) were vehemently opposed to the extension, held dozens of rallies, made phone calls, cobbled together petitions and testified against the bill during public hearings—somewhat ironically, since this same coalition had largely been opposed to term limits in the first place, but took strong issue with the hurried process the mayor and Council pursued.

And yet the bill passed.

As a result, alliances between several Council members at the good government

faction have been frayed and Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.), who was once praised by good government groups for his nonpartisan style of governing, has become an antagonist rather than an ally. And cynics who believe that the good government rhetoric is just a cloak for politicians in sympathetic districts to wrap themselves in when there is nothing on the line were given another reason to doubt.

One of the most stinging losses to good government groups was Yassky, a legislator many saw as one of the public faces of good government in the Council.

Yassky defended his decision to vote for the bill in a lengthy, policy-heavy email to supporters following the vote, saying it had been the most difficult decision he has made in his seven years on the Council. But Dadey, who also happens to be one of Yassky's constituents, insisted his Council member had betrayed him and his claim to the mantle of reform.

"This hypocritical vote by Yassky today is at odds with his self-proclaimed reform image," Dadey seethed. "It will forever be a dark stain on his image and it cannot be removed."

Asked whether the vote was likely to tarnish Yassky's reformer image, Assembly Member Vito Lopez (D), the chair of the Brooklyn Democratic Party, was unsure.

"Maybe a little bit," Lopez said. "I don't know."

Council Member Gale Brewer (D-Manhattan), who along with Yassky and Alan Gerson (D-Manhattan) proposed an amendment requiring a referendum on term limits, said that many of her colleagues could still lay claim to good government credentials, regardless of how they voted.

"A lot of people who voted 'yes,' like Fidler and [Simcha] Felder and [Leroy] Comrie, they are fabulous people and they have fantastic records in terms of how they handle their offices and their beliefs and policy," Brewer said, who voted "no" on the bill.

Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause New York, said there are still many opportunities to increase transparency in city government, even after the term limits vote.

"The issues we work on still remain important," Lerner said. "But I think the fallout from the term limits extension fight is far from over."

Now that the mayor has signed the bill, Lerner is looking ahead to the creation of a charter review commission, which Bloomberg has vowed to create to review the efficacy of term limits—though he has so far said he will do so in 2010, putting off the process for a year and working

under the assumption that he will be re-elected. Good government groups will be closely watching the whole process, keeping in mind reports that a deal has been struck between Bloomberg and cosmetics billionaire Ron Lauder to roll back the extension for future legislators.

Mark Green, the former public advocate who opposed the extension, said that while Bloomberg's gamble paid off in the short term, it could end up backfiring later, setting the stage for a resurgence of good government candidates in 2009.

"This could encourage people in the next round to support more independent candidates who don't kowtow to the political elite," Green said.

Council members who voted for the bill may also end up going out of their way to support the good government positions as a way to assuage their guilt, Green said.

But Yassky may have to do more than most to repair his reformer image.

At the Citizens Union awards dinner held at the Waldorf Astoria, when asked whether an olive branch could be extended to Yassky, Dadey paused briefly to consider the question.

"It would have to come from him," Dadey said. "Because clearly I didn't do anything wrong." CH

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have accused de Blasio and James of the same bare-knuckled tactics used by Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan), threatening to amass labor and grassroots organizations against members who voted for the bill.



Several members of the Council have indeed reported feeling threatened or intimidated by the sprawling political coalition—labor unions, the Working Families Party—hastily assembled by de Blasio and James. Some of those bruising tactics may impair their ability to bridge political divides in the future.

James and de Blasio dismiss those claims, but clearly what makes them formidable as a pair is that they have married their activist values with a hard-nosed ability to build coalitions, craft a convincing

message and—if necessary—apply considerable political pressure behind the scenes.

The strategy has so far proved effective, at least in making them credible powerbrokers. The question now is how they apply that strategy—molded by the frenzied intensity and breakneck pace of the term limits debate—to other items on their agenda, such as the mayor's proposed budget cuts.

"You take a budget battle as an example, some of the same speed dynamics exist toward the end of the budget process," he said. "I think we will see a very intense final few weeks of the budget process."

De Blasio and James both see the term limits battle as having strengthened their hand and proven to people that they are capable of at least challenging Bloomberg on some of his signature issues, such

as mayoral control of schools and management of the financial crisis.

They are actively engaged in building a "progressive coalition," as James calls it, pulling in likeminded Council members, labor organizations and the Working Families Party, and applying their own distinct political flourishes.

When asked who might belong to such a coalition, de Blasio rattles off a few likely names: Council Members Melissa Mark-Viverito (D-Manhattan/Bronx), Rosie Mendez (D-Manhattan), Charles Barron (D-Brooklyn).

But successfully squaring off with the mayor and his allies will involve more than just identifying other progressives

Board of Elections the weekend before Election Day, but pulled back from that after talking with staff there and being reassured that enough provisions were in place so that polling place hours would not need to be extended to give seniors more time to vote.

"The more we've held public forums and town halls and did a lot of grassroots organizing," he said, "the stronger we became. And I think that's going to be the model going forward."

He added: "If the discussion occurs only at City Hall, it's a losing equation."

"If people feel uncomfortable whenever they see us together, to me, it's a compliment," Letitia James said of her partnership with Bill de Blasio.

in the Council willing to vote against Bloomberg's priorities.

The real task of the coalition will be to apply the model James and de Blasio forged during the term limits debate, fueled by the political capital they earned, to future confrontations with the administration—hopefully, of course, with more success. Even at the height of the term limits battle, the two held a joint town hall on education. They came close to doing an event criticizing the

There will inevitably be setbacks, and perhaps even some breakthroughs. But de Blasio and James are unlikely to see themselves as anything but relentless, battered crusaders—now with some political muscle to flex.

"Whenever you do that which is right, there are no regrets, none whatsoever," James said. "If people feel uncomfortable whenever they see us together, to me, it's a compliment." **CH**

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ON/OFF THE RECORD BREAKFAST

Breaking Bread With the New Leader

Three days after Democrats took the majority in the State Senate, apparent incoming Majority Leader Malcolm Smith joined *City Hall* and *The Capitol* for an On/Off the Record breakfast sponsored by Finklestein, Newman Ferrara LLP and held at the TD Bank on 42nd and Madison in New York City.

In his first at-length interview since the election, Smith discussed many topics, including his views on the leadership struggle within his conference, some specific items on the agenda aside from budget cuts, and why he believes having a wife named Michelle is the secret to success for political advancement.

Q: It's been quite a week. Can you sum up what this week meant to you as an American, as a New Yorker, as a Democrat, as a New York state senator, as an African-American?

A: This was a memorable week. It actually brought back to mind some things that my father used to say to me when we were growing up, and he used to always say to me, you know, "No matter what happens in life, just know: if you keep your faith, if you maintain your integrity and your honesty with people, they will trust you and believe in you," and I say that because I believe what happened with Barack was just that. Against all odds, a senator, then a U.S. Senator, and now President of the United States of America, the greatest country in the world—I believe a lot of that had to do with how he got there, and I believe the same is true of myself in terms of my colleagues, in terms of what I represent to them and, hopefully, what I will represent to each and every one of you in this audience, that I pledge to you as I pledge to my colleagues and my friends that I will always be honest with you, I will always tell you what we can and cannot do—but most importantly, we're going to need all of your help, because it's a very challenging time for this state, but it's always a time laced with a lot of opportunities. So, this was a great week for me, one that I'll remember. I must tell you, it probably won't be the first chapter in the book but it will be the largest chapter in the book.

Q: There has been a lot of speculation out there about the leadership situation. Why is it that it is still floating? Is it that this is just part of being a Democrat, that you can't get everything together?

A: I don't look at it as floating out there. Listen, notwithstanding present company and some of my other friends, you know, you're reporters. You have to sell newspapers, you have to sell, so you write stories that are exciting and titillating and causing people to pick up the paper.

Q: It looks like a 32-30 margin, at least for the moment. Do you think the close divide will be a problem for governing? Dean Skelos has pledged that the now-Republican minority will be a very vocal minority. Do you think that's going to be a problem at all, and what will you do as leader to get around that?

A: Well, vocal is good. And I will tell you, I don't know if they can be any more vocal than we were in the minority. We were very vocal. But there will be bipartisan activity in this Senate. Whether you're a Democrat, Republican, conservative, independent, rank-and-file members will have input in committees, they will have the ability to move bills throughout the floor, and we have no problem,



ANDREW SCHWARTZ

and I will have no problem, working with them. I think that is part of why the state has its challenges today. We allowed ourselves to be so divided as opposed to recognizing that, you know, we have a lot of intellectual resources around the state, from Watertown to Suffolk County, and when we don't use them we have what we have now: an upstate economy that over the last eight years has lost over 195,000 manufacturing jobs, 47,000 people have left the upstate region. And I think what we will learn from this chapter in New York State is that we have to diversify our portfolio as it relates to how we use your tax dollars. We put a lot of our eggs in one basket down at Wall Street, and that's a good thing. I had a nice ride in Wall Street, for a while. But what we learned is that now that Wall Street, which will never be the same again, has faltered, the rest of the state, the upstate cities, have no ability to assist us in making up for that loss of revenue. So we are going to change that. We will never, and I stress, we will never be in this situation again.

Q: Budget is priority number one, but can you tell us where your feelings are about passing gay marriage and legalizing gay marriage in the state?

A: Well, I support gay marriage, and everybody

knows that. But we have a job in front of us that, it won't matter if we don't rebuild the economy of this state. If we don't bring jobs back here, if we don't get businesses to understand that we can offer some incentives to them, whether by virtue of tax credits for job creation, I think we won't manage to keep the people in this state. So, our priority right now is rebuilding the New York state economy. We have to deal with a budget deficit that you all know has grown, we have a projection of about \$1.66 billion, the department of budget has it slightly less than that, and the state, the Assembly has one a little bit less than that. So we have to deal with that first, and once we build this economy, we build your faith that we can right-size the State of New York's government and get us moving again—nothing else matters.

Q: But why are decisions on that and other issues mutually exclusive to doing things on the budget? Is it possible to function on doing the budget things and then doing the other issues at the same time?

A: There are a number of other issues. There's paid family leave, there's campaign finance, there are a number of other issues that we're going to address. What I am simply saying is that the budget is critical to us,

and that's our number-one issue. We will have committees, maybe have members, they will be reviewing a number of pieces of legislation. Business will go on. But I'm just telling you right now, as a body, our focus will be on this economy, and what the committee chairs will do, they will do within their committee. Any bill, as you know—legislation has to go through a process. The budget is going to go through a legislative process, but it's one that's done by the whole body.

Q: For years, the excuse for why things did not move quickly in Albany was that there was a divide in the government. Either the Assembly or the Senate wasn't in the same hands as the governor. Will the budget situation be the excuse now for why other things do not get done and why there is not faster movement on other issues in Albany?

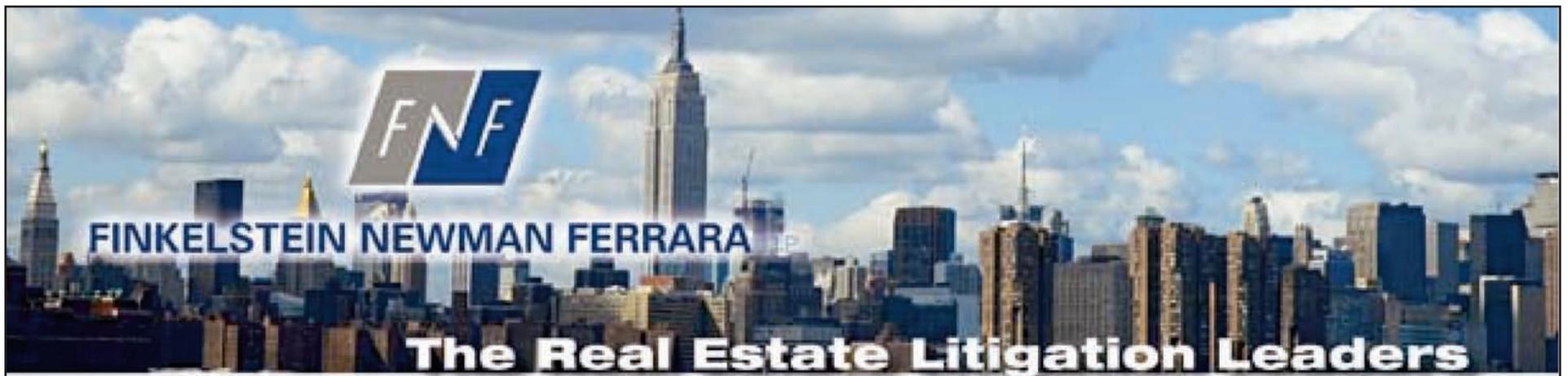
A: No, I wouldn't say that the budget would be the only reason why. I mean, let's put it in perspective. For 40 years, barring nine months, which is 70 years, we were in the minority. We now have 45 to 50 days to get ourselves ready for that. We have been getting ourselves ready. Last year, as you reported, we began to train ourselves to be chairpersons, we started training ourselves to deal with the media, financial issues, so I believe we are ready to move forward. However, we now have to deal with a transition. And I'm not sure if the transition will be a friendly transition. I don't know if the Republicans are going to give all the information at the right time that we need. They may have landmines out there so that they make the Democrats look strange. So, you have to also be aware of that as well. We know that our interest

I'm not sure if the transition will be a friendly transition. I don't know if the Republicans are going to give all the information at the right time that we need. They may have landmines out there so that they make the Democrats look strange.

is the people of the state, and restoring your faith that government is working for you. What we don't know is where everything is, so you're definitely going to have to give us some time.

Q: Back in July in The Capitol, we did a cover feature we called the Obameter, and asked a number of consultants to say what they thought of some of the members of the New York State Senate compared with the president-elect who, all of four years ago, was a state senator himself. We have one state senator who's our president-elect, we have another state senator who's the governor of New York. What do you see in your own political future?

A: Well, let me, I'm going to give you, I'm going to give all of you the inside track. And this is a secret just between us: Barack Obama, state senator, now president, David Paterson, state senator, now governor, Byron Brown, state senator, now mayor of Buffalo, Malcolm Smith, state senator now soon-to-be majority leader. The one thing we all have in common? All of our wives are named Michelle. So, the idea is, find a Michelle and you're good to go.



Daniel Finkelstein



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Senator Malcolm Smith greets Jannette Greene, FNF Director of Public Relations, and Humberto Baez, FNF Government Affairs Liaison

for his selfless dedication to the people of the State of New York and
congratulate him on becoming the
New York State Senate Majority Leader



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THE Relevance Question

By Edward-Isaac Doveve

Sizing up the post-term limits Council

Another close vote, and still the mayor and speaker prevailed. Another highly charged, emotional vote, and still the mayor and speaker won. Another whip count down to the wire, and still the mayor and speaker came out on top.

Just about every opponent of extending term limits had a press conference at City Hall after the vote on Oct. 23. Meanwhile, Joel Rivera (D-Bronx), the majority leader of the Council, and one of the first to voice his support for the extension, stayed off to the side, quietly praising the charter change as a proud moment for the Council.

Though Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.) had initiated the debate, supplied the Council with an administration bill to pass and spent many of his own hours pushing undecided members to his side of the fence, Rivera dismissed the idea that the Council had simply done what the mayor had wanted. Instead, he repeated the argument made by Helen Sears (D-Queens) on the floor during the debate that their 22 veto overrides since 2002—among them bills on several major issues, like tenant discrimination and public employee whistleblower protections, but also three dealing with suspending alternate side parking for the Asian new year, Diwali and Purim—showed that the Council had a history of standing up for itself.

Rivera was interrupted when Bloomberg himself made a surprise appearance at the top of the stairs, walking quickly through the crowd of protestors to his SUV.

“Bloomberg, you don’t own New York!” one started screaming, rushing across the plaza.

Rivera’s aide, Mike Nieves, called out to the man.

“Yes, he does,” Nieves said, laughing. “Sorry!”

Rivera struggled to regain his train of thought.

“What was I saying?” he said. “The Council is a check and balance.”

Asked what he thought of Nieves’ comment, Rivera relented.

“Well, he’s the mayor of New York City,” Rivera said. “Whenever you’re the leader of the city and you run agencies, you are technically in charge of the city.”

Several feet away, Council Member Charles Barron (D-Brooklyn) seemed incredulous that anyone could argue that real independence existed.

“I just want to know what they’re smoking, drinking,” he said. “They absolutely are under control of the speaker and the mayor.”

That, of course, is Charles Barron, whose railing against the mayor and speaker has become a fixture in local politics. But he is not alone. Members and other insiders are wondering if the Council finally proved that it is little more than an administration lapdog—whether by enabling more experienced legislators, the institution is about to become much, much stronger.

Barron’s take is clear, others’ are not. With varying degrees of optimism and pessimism, many members see the truth about the Council going forward from Oct. 23 as much more complicated.

John Liu (D-Queens), another frequent critic who had said his faith in the political system was being shaken by the term limits extension process, looked dejected



standing at the foot of the steps. Asked about his take on what had happened, he returned to the point that he had just a few minutes earlier pressed on the floor: going forward from the vote, the Council needed to commit itself to developing into a more substantive body, standing up for itself as a more effective counterweight to Bloomberg’s proposals. As of now, Liu said, “the Council has not been the separate branch of government that we should be.”

Asked then what purpose he believed Council members served at City Hall, Liu paused a moment.

“It’s becoming increasingly unclear,” he said.

A week later, Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) and six other Council members stood somberly with the mayor in the Blue Room to announce 18 initiatives geared to ease the pain of the economic situation. Bloomberg outlined his steps toward crisis management under headlines of “support” and “relief,” all of them reasonably simple and common sense. The capital infrastructure plan

will be stretched to five years from four. The tax payment schedule for properties valued at less than \$250,000 will be spaced quarterly instead of semi-annually. More money will be pumped into soup kitchens, food assistance programs for seniors and a debt management awareness campaign.

There was little that even edged toward the controversial, and the Council members who said anything signaled their wholehearted agreement with the plans.

For his part, Bloomberg did his best to radiate magnanimity. Asked to detail the specifics of which of the 18 initiatives had come from his administration and which from the other side of City Hall, he laughed as Quinn joked that the Council could claim ownership for 17, then took pains to spread the credit around.

“I think it’s fair to say that there’s none of them that weren’t a product of both,” Bloomberg said. “None of these things are done in a vacuum, none of these things are done without cooperation. And anybody that tries to take the credit for it, not give credit to others, isn’t very smart, because you have to do these things together.”

This is the image Quinn and her staff would like to project, the justification after the fact. She and the other Council



members will be the sober managers who put their experience to work for New Yorkers, helped by established relationships with the mayor and top aides which will enable the type of collaboration necessary to get results. This, they say, is why they decided to hold off on political campaigns. Without competing agendas, they can get more done together.

In a later interview, Quinn explained she did not see the term limits vote as a turning point for the Council's identity or an acquiescence to the mayor. Instead, she called the extension "a moment to be seized, an opportunity for us on the Council to really take our work and our advocacy to, hopefully, a higher level of effectiveness and accomplishment."

Quinn cited the example of the universal pre-kindergarten enrollment outreach campaign she undertook in the week following the term limits vote, arguing that more time will help her raise awareness among New Yorkers and push Albany to provide greater flexibility in funding possibilities.

Quinn shrugged off the idea that the term limit vote would lead to any dramatic changes with her relationship

with Bloomberg, or the Council's with the administration. Her closeness with the mayor is no secret, nor is the fact that she felt forced to wait for him to make up his mind before changing term limits. At any point over the last three years, she could have passed her own bill creating a referendum on term limits and, judging from the statements made during the debate, would likely have had enough votes to override a mayoral veto. But instead, she waited for him to take the lead, then once he did, let his bill be introduced without changes openly made by the Council in a process that was one of the fastest in legislative history. (The bill was passed 38 days after Lehman Brothers collapsed, sparking the heavy economic crisis which was the stated reasoning behind the extension; by contrast, Congress took 42 days after the Sept. 11 attacks to pass the Patriot Act.)

Going into the vote, Quinn admitted, some administration officials already disregarded the importance of the

Council. Some might be more tempted to now. That is what executives do.

"Sometimes folks in administrations are dismissive of legislative branches—you see it at all levels," she said, but added that she has made sure that behind closed doors, "anybody who decided to go down that path with this City Council fairly quickly gets their comeuppance and realizes that that's not the right way to go."

Then again, as Quinn proudly pointed out, there have been moments when the Council has rejected the mayor's plans, like his bid to get PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) money to finance the West Side Stadium, which would have been in her district. Notably, though, she was a leader of the opposition and this occurred before she was speaker. However, the project was actually stopped by Albany and the Council ultimately approved the administration plan to rezone the surrounding far West Side. In most observers' minds, that willingness to butt heads has faded since she was elected speaker. And with her and a majority of members owing their extra time in office in part to the mayor, some members worry that the prospects for the Council actually checking the mayor seem increasingly dim.

But for the Council to have even this much of a role, Quinn will need to keep the Council united. For now, she herself seems safe politically: she goes into her re-election campaign next year as a heavy favorite, and even though some members grumbled in the spring about her initial reaction to the slush fund scandal, few expect that she will have any deep trouble being re-elected as speaker.

Rebuilding the cohesiveness which kept her and previous speakers so strong, however, may prove more challenging. Though Quinn and other extension supporters talk about the term limits vote as an isolated experience—a "once-in-a-Council-lifetime event," as

"We had a tight vote," Quinn said. "The bigger question is: why have we become so accustomed to always having votes that are almost unanimous? We should be having more votes that are 29-whatever, 28-whatever, 30-whatever."

Peter Vallone, Jr. (D-Queens) put it—many of those who voted "no" describe that day and the raucous three-week process that preceded it as completely upending the natural order within the

Council. Every traditional bloc was split: Queens, Brooklyn, minority members, even those in the good government minicaucus which sponsored the last-minute referendum amendment ultimately came down on different sides of the vote.

Chaos theory had arrived in City Hall, and Bloomberg, the steady and institutionally powerful hand, stands to benefit.

"The effects are unpredictable," said one Council member. "You have a lot of hurt feelings and broken alliances. The opposition has been crushed. But it does seem that this will be a more manageable Council for the mayor and his staff."

At the same time, the number of independently-minded Council incumbents will be much lower come January 2010. Hiram Monserrate, a consistent critic, will leave to take his State Senate seat at year's end, while Barron, Bill de Blasio, Liu, Tony Avella (D-Queens) and Eric Gioia (D-Queens) are all set to pursue campaigns for other offices. Even Council Minority Leader James Oddo (R), who has generally collaborated with Quinn but is technically the leader of the opposition, may be gone, off to seek the Staten Island borough presidency. And with Anthony Como losing to Elizabeth Crowley in their Election Day rematch, the total number of Republicans in the chamber is down to two. Quinn's antagonists in the chamber may be down to zero. "I think that a combination of this vote and all the senior opposition leaders leaving—it's every executive's dream to have a completely gutted legislative branch," the Council member continued. "A legislative branch without that organized opposition and with Chris' total obedience becomes less than a rubber stamp."

That may leave room for Council Members Letitia James and Lew Fidler, two able and willing Brooklyn Democrats with a proven record of opposition, to capitalize on a divided Council and weakened speaker. Alternatively, the fragmentation many feel exists might strengthen Quinn's hand, enabling her to consolidate power in the wake of the divisions. This could make her and the Council more powerful—provided she knows who her friends are, which some members question. If she chooses to start exercising this power, she could push back harder at the mayor than she has to date.

Quinn said she was confident that most members still nursing wounds from the debate will soon get over them.

Still, she said she would like to see more nail biters as the Council develops further in the years ahead.

"We had a tight vote," she said. "The bigger question is: why have we become so accustomed to always having votes that are almost unanimous? We should be having more votes that are 29-whatever, 28-whatever, 30-whatever."

But Quinn deferred specific discussion of structural changes to her rules reform



ANDREW SCHWARTZ

Council members wonder: will Christine Quinn always have Michael Bloomberg's back?

working group, declining to back anything for the moment beside a move that would alter the agenda structure for stated meetings to dispose of general orders and have specific times set aside for debate of each different bill.

And that, many on the Council say, is the rub. There has been little movement to enable dissent. Dissatisfied members have their suggestions: restricting the speaker's power to determine capital money and discretionary funds, eliminating the speaker's choice of committee chairs, allowing bills to come to the floor without the speaker's pre-approval, doing more hearings, determining major agenda items without waiting for the mayor to take the lead, introducing more of their own bills on significant issues, overriding more vetoes if and when they come and, perhaps most of all, doing something about the 2006 court decision which renders their veto overrides moot if the mayor chooses not to enforce them.

If the rhetoric is to be believed, the institution should easily be strengthened by having members spend more years in their seats. Speakers would then not immediately become engulfed by questions about whether they will indeed run for mayor (the last two speakers did and Quinn was expected to, but speakers before did not). Staffers would remain in place for years.

Now that they have given themselves more time in office, the question is whether Council members can match the record of the one that was forced from office in 2001, which took a real lead in land use decisions, broadened recycling and campaign finance restrictions and passed legislation on smoking bans, Safe Streets and the framework for the Civilian Complaint Review Board. Whether having more experience will give them the strength and boldness to stand up to the mayor, as the veterans on the Council did in 1998 when they stopped then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani from using the income from an eight-year surtax to move Yankee Stadium to the West Side.

Extenders say the answer is yes, and people will begin to see that almost

immediately.

Now, very quickly, will come the test.

In the days after the extension vote, Bloomberg called all 51 Council members, supporters and opponents, to pledge that there would be no hard feelings and ask for their help in tackling the budget problems. For the first time in his seven years in office, he sat with each of the borough delegations. Most were cordial conversations, leaving some who had rarely spoken with the mayor at length hopeful that the outreach might be the beginning of a working relationship.

Others were less convinced.

"He did say that the phone is a two-way deal, and you can just pick it up and call," said Council Member Gale Brewer (D-Manhattan), reflecting on her conversation, "but you don't get the feeling that there'll be much more discussion."

Bloomberg's approach to the mid-year budget reassessment, his first real action since signing the extension bill, only accentuated that feeling. Budget director Mark Page spend just 45 minutes briefing the Council, while the mayor spent almost two hours talking to the press. Adding insult to injury, Page allotted just a few minutes for questions at the end of his presentation, in contrast to the many questions the mayor himself took from reporters after walking them through the plan. And while Bloomberg said at his press conference that he welcomed the "lively discussion" he expected he would be having with Council members over the proposals, he also made very clear that he wants to do as much as possible without seeking Council input.

Council members fumed.

"You think that they understand where they are in the world, then they go do the opposite," said Fidler.

Still, Bloomberg spoke in diplomatic terms about how he would proceed.

"There's a lot that the mayor can just do, but I don't think if you want to have everybody cooperate, you say, 'This is

what we're going to do,'" he said.

Then he laid on the guilt.

"In the end, everyone is going to be a little disappointed and a little bit unhappy, but deep down inside they're going to recognize that given the realities of what's gone on in the world and the country and state and city, we're doing it responsibly," he said. "And in the past, the Council has acted responsibly and really does deserve a lot of credit."

That appeal has so far not been enough to sway many Council members, including Domenic Recchia (D-Brooklyn). One of the extension's most ardent defenders, Recchia followed his collaboration with the mayor by starting an online petition campaign against cancelling the \$400 homeowner tax credit that until just a few weeks ago 311 operators were saying had been delayed because of a computer malfunction. Recchia collected over 1,000 signatures, four of them from fellow Council members, in the first 24 hours. Resolute that Bloomberg was "legally and morally" wrong to cancel the checks, Recchia expressed confidence that he will convince the mayor to relent. Even Quinn joined the revolt, more diplomatically expressing her "concerns."

But Bloomberg already had his corporation counsel working on the analysis of how he can legally sidestep the Council, and his administration has made clear that only if he absolutely has to will he go to Council for approval.

But some worry that the threat to the rebate checks is a red herring to divert attention from the proposed property and income tax hikes which the mayor will himself yank off the table.

"The Council has not been the separate branch of government that we should be," said Council Member John Liu.

In the meantime, the Council has scheduled oversight hearings to question and complain about the cuts. Whether they institutionally have the power to do anything or whether enough of them would actually say no to the mayor when push came to shove remains unclear. After all, for all the talk from most Council members as committed stewards of the city economy and all the griping from those who attended Page's presentation, only about a dozen Council members actually attended.

One of those who did not was Council Member James Vacca (D-Bronx), citing a scheduling conflict. But not being in the room for that presentation should not be read as a willingness to roll over, he said.

Vacca switched his vote after being one of the first to object to the extension. Four more years, he said, will help the

Council be fiercer in their opposition, exactly what he insisted is needed at this moment.

"As we go forward with the bad budget years, I think the Council has to perform its role as probably it has not," he said. "I feel the Council in the past two and a half years could have asserted itself in a lot more directions."

The budget will occupy the most time and have the most effect on New Yorkers of probably anything that city government will do in the years ahead. But who will actually be willing to go to the mat for it? Who will push back on the mayor long-term? Who will take on Quinn if she continues to remain close to the mayor, or lead a push for alternative bills?

Bill de Blasio, a leader of the extension opposition who has since announced a run for public advocate because he says the mayor needs a more effective check, is ready to find "a silver lining," in the extension's outcome. As he sees things, the 22 members who were willing to vote no "certainly suggests the Council is maturing and getting stronger," even while in the same breath he said that the 29 members who voted in the majority "suggests a Council that no longer has independence—and that's not acceptable, and that has to change."

Others see the fact that Quinn could only muster 29 "yes" votes, sharply down from the 35 "yes" votes which Rivera was originally projecting, as a sign that she is weak. And though there has been speculation about Quinn exacting vengeance on the "no" voters, questions remain over whether the speaker could really punish nearly half of her members without seeming corrupt. Pulling committee chairs or member items from opponents at this point would likely seem pretty transparent, leaving those who stood up to her with at least most of the same amount of power they had before.

In any case, Fidler said, there is something afoot in the Council. After two extremely close votes this year—not as many people raised the question about the Council's role after the congestion pricing approval, he argued, but that 30-20 vote made almost as much of a difference within the Council as the 29-22 extension vote—the day when the Council does actually stand up for itself may soon arrive.

Maybe.

"When the next issue comes along and people say, 'Well, you can't beat the mayor,' I think there'll be a sense that maybe you can. We may eventually come to the point where he puts something on the table and we do vote it down," Fidler said. "The possibility that 26 members will vote against the muscle is much realer today than it was six months ago."

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Searching for PlaNYC, 2035 Edition

Possibilities for the third term encore appear on the horizon

By DAVID FREEDLANDER

Dan Doctoroff spoke to students in a concrete bunker of a lecture hall at Columbia University earlier this month about how hard it is to get anything done in government, and to relay lessons he learned along the way. He took them through the battles of trying to get new newspaper kiosks in city streets, of the sticky wicket that is Ground Zero rebuilding. He took them through a PowerPoint presentation of the failed plan to build a football stadium on the Far West Side and compared it to the Bloomberg administration's PlaNYC initiative to show how they had learned the error of their ways—how they had learned to be more inclusive, how they catered to the players' pet interests.

At the end though, the centerpiece of PlaNYC, congestion pricing, failed as spectacularly.

"So what's the moral?" Doctoroff asked, looking up at a slide that had both plans side-by-side. He paused a moment. "Well, I don't know."

Doctoroff has not served in the administration for nearly a year, but there are still some lessons that can be gleaned from his slide projector. Looking back over the battles of the first two terms of the administration, and how the mayor fought them, it's possible to construct how they might go about a third.

When PlaNYC was launched in 2006, it caught many political observers by surprise. Sure, Bloomberg was as green the next guy, but nobody thought he would transform himself into some kind of municipal Al Gore overnight. People who have worked with the administration, though, say that the plan grew out of the failures of the first term, in particular the doomed plan to build a stadium on the West Side. And, many add, that failed stadium plan led in a direct line to plans to deck over Hudson Yards, pave over Willets Point, and build new baseball stadiums in Flushing and the Bronx.

In his first term, within a year of being elected by the slimmest of margins, this is a mayor who set about outlawing smoking in bars and disbanding the Board of Education, and then proceeded to try to build a mega-sports complex on the West Side, rezone 1/6 of the city's land, outlaw transfats and try to get motorists to pay a fine to drive into Manhattan, all the while presiding over an unprecedented surge in building construction and becoming a national advocate for stricter gun laws and climate change and government reform.

It is this penchant for big thinking (if not, according to the mayor's critics, necessarily big *doing*) that leads political observers and current and former administration



Getting the Olympics was Michael Bloomberg's first term project. PlaNYC defined nearly everything about his second term. But what would be the great white whale of a third Bloomberg term?

officials to say there is almost certainly to be some kind of "PlaNYC 2035"—a big, over the top initiative that cuts across city agencies and consumes most of the oxygen of the next few years.

"This is a guy who thinks big," said Ed Koch, the city's last three-term mayor. "He would not be satisfied without having some real home run in the last four years, I'm sure."

No one is willing to dare guess what such a plan could focus on yet, but the smart money is that the mayor will likely reach back into the letdowns over his previous

two terms to craft a plan for a third one.

The most glaring failure of the Bloomberg era, the one that still stumps Doctoroff, was congestion pricing. In his lecture, Doctoroff told the students, "It will be back, I promise you that," but in what form is anybody's guess. It's unlikely the mayor will try to drive down the same road he did last time, especially since the city council put their necks out for the plan last time only to watch it fail, and the plan's biggest supporters, the Senate Republicans, are now in the minority in Albany.

But with the MTA expected to post record deficits, something that can both raise funds and mitigate traffic is likely to be in the works. Tolls on the East River bridges are widely rumored recommendations to come out of the Ravitch Commission when they release their findings next month.

And the mayor may try to ram through a big project that can be done relatively easily.

"I think it's not impossible that you see a big capital project by the city that can be used to rally people's spirits," said Jordan Barowitz, a former administration spokes person and now Director of External Affairs at the Durst Organization. He cited the Empire State building, which topped out in the nadir of the Depression, as precedent.

"The downturn makes things more challenging, but the mayor is not going to stop swinging for the fences," Barowitz said.

For the foreseeable future, the economy will consume most of the mayor's attention—think of it as the Global Warming of 2006, if you will—and the mayor may decide that time has come for a fiscal PlaNYC. The city will almost certainly expand its push for even more television and film production to happen here. Economists say that deepening

ties to the city's institutions of higher learning will help the city pull out of a recession and will pay off even more down the road. Paying close attention to what is happening in Washington and around the world in order to best exploit vulnerabilities in global finance may also provide opportunities.

"New York never really got ahead of the biotech thing when that got going, so it will be important to get out ahead of whatever the next thing is," said one former administration insider. "It's probably going to be something with energy and there will be major

investment in that part of the economy happening globally. New York is going to have to capture some of that.”

Likewise, if Barack Obama decides to do the kind of massive, New Deal-style national infrastructure that many have urged him to, the mayor could attempt a similar program here. Doing so would align the mayor’s transportation and environmental interests with the city’s desperate need in a few years to provide jobs and diversify the work force after the collapse of the financial sector and all the jobs it will take with it.

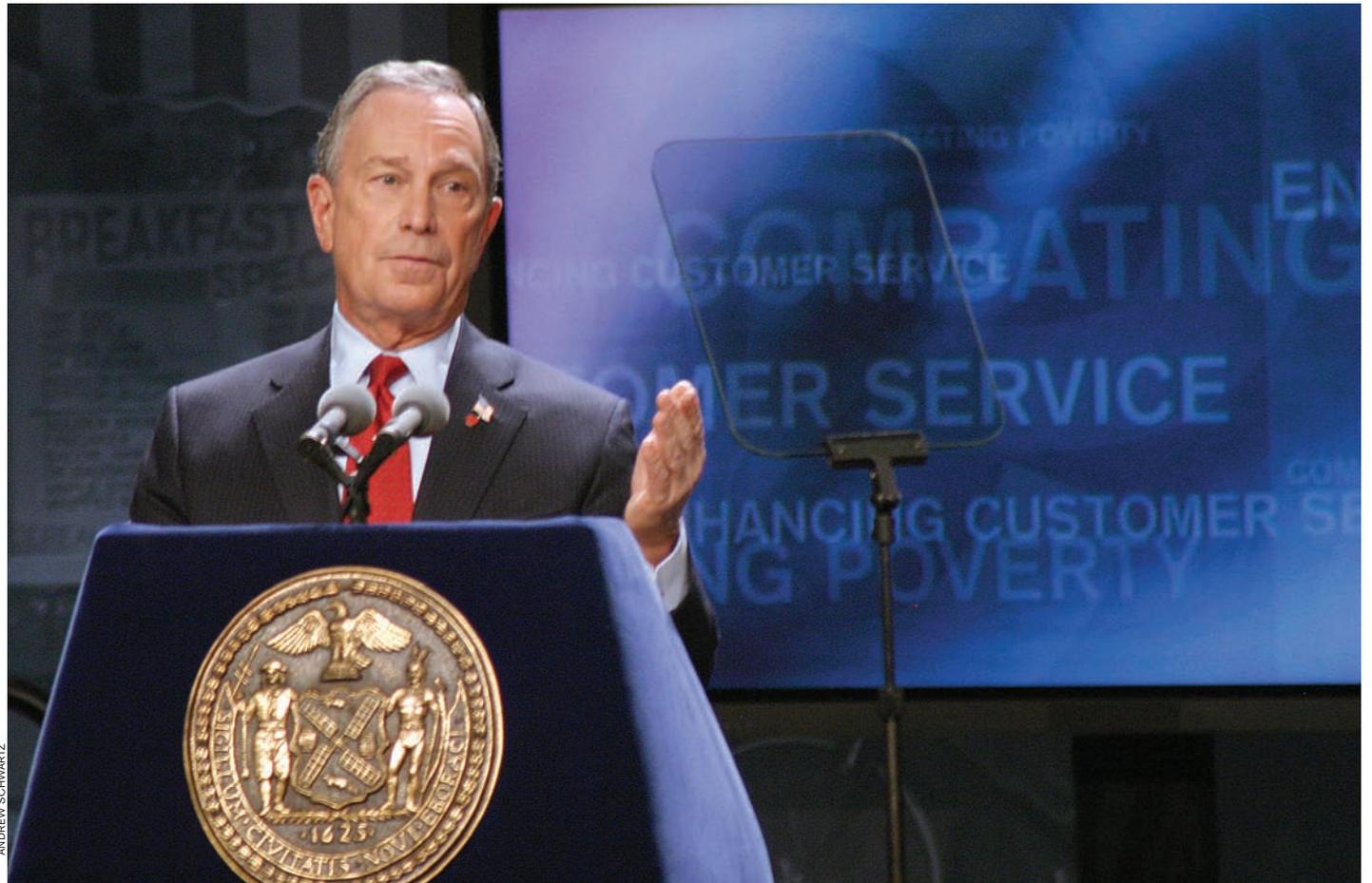
Another way to reprime the city’s economy would be to turn up the heat even louder on immigration reform and to make the city more of a hub for foreigners.

“Bloomberg has been a tremendous advocate from a government perspective and from a business perspective about the need to completely overhaul the nation’s immigration laws and what they mean for a municipality,” said Andrew White, the director for New York City affairs at the New School. “I could see him trying to map out a model on a local level for what a truly reformed immigration system would look like and then pursue it and speak out vigorously about it.”

Likewise, the teetering economic situation could spur the mayor to further action on another oft-stated principle: government reform.

“The fiscal crisis can in some ways be helpful,” said Barowitz. “There is no way during a flush time you could reorganize an agency. Now there is the opportunity to do some innovative things and go after some sacred cows.”

Every few years the mayor has proposed some kind of massive public health initiative. With cigarettes all but



Insiders project a raft of new initiatives in a third Bloomberg term, if he wins one.

in the city. This kind of move, though, depends largely on what happens now that Democrats are in control of Albany, but it has a certain Bloomberg stamp on it: big, sensible, and most of all, a near-certain revenue-raiser.

There is also the chance, though, that after a successful eight-year-run, the mayor will hit a prolonged rough patch. Doctoroff was the energy behind the biggest plans of the last seven years, and he’s gone now, as is Bill Cunningham, the

A few more years would net the administration a solidified grip on mayoral control of schools and give them a chance to see if some of their reforms have led to sustained improvement.

Reformers have praised Bloomberg for daring to shake up a bloated system, but the results have been mixed, and spending has ballooned to a level that will be unsustainable in tight financial times. If substantial progress can be made, however, Bloomberg will have achieved something many said was impossible, and will have vindicated his bid for mayoral control of schools and for a third term.

“Any organization in which you have more than a million children is going to require sustained commitment and leadership,” said Mitchell Moss, professor of urban policy at New York University and a Bloomberg adviser. “It’s not a matter

of completing it or not. It takes time to deal with a system so large. God may have taken six days to build the earth, but it’s going to take a lot longer than that to turn the New York City school system around.”

Most mayors, and New York City mayors especially, like to have their legacy solidified in concrete and granite before they exit the stage. The pockmarked cityscape today symbolizes for many the holes in the mayor’s legacy. For him to cement it, he will try to realize some of the city’s more grandiose projects. One place to start is Ground Zero, a project whose rebuilding has spanned the entire length

of Bloomberg’s time in office, and, though not his fault alone, has made only the slightest progress and come to represent bureaucratic inertia and infighting. City officials expect to have at least the Sept. 11 memorial and the Freedom Tower completed by the time a third Bloomberg term would end, but a shaky economy could slow down progress even further. Likewise, across the river, the Mayor spent a lot of political capital trying to lure a basketball team to Atlantic Yards to anchor a downtown retail and office hub. Those plans have been scaled back considerably, and if no one is willing to take a risk on a major new project with credit markets frozen, then five years of haggling could end with little more than a series of parking lots to show for it.

Other major developmental initiatives—like Willets Point and Hudson Yards—are not likely to see a lot of tangible progress in the next four years regardless of who is mayor or which direction the economy heads, but getting them off the ground will take up much of the energy of a third Bloomberg term, people with knowledge of the real estate industry say.

The rest of the city is littered with half-built projects like Queens West in Long Island City and unrealized plans like those in Coney Island. And city officials fear that another administration could permit much of the Bloombergian vision of the city to fall into abeyance, especially with the excuse of the crisis.

And if they really only do need a few more years, his ambitions for what he can do at City Hall could be all but wrapped up by 2012.

So don’t throw away those “Bloomberg for President” bumper stickers quite yet. [CH](mailto:dfreedlander@cityhallnews.com)

One unstated reason the mayor seems to have pushed for a third term is a feeling amongst administration officials that they need a few more years, not even necessarily a full term, to see substantial progress on a host of issues—progress that no successor will be unable to undo.

banned or taxed out of the five boroughs, and transfats booted too, and with it now being impossible to order a Whopper in blissful ignorance of its calorie content, there may be little left to prohibit or post. Some have suggested that the mayor would pursue an insurance initiative similar to ones undertaken in San Francisco and Massachusetts. Such a plan would be on the scale that the mayor likes to operate on, but with money tight it would be difficult to pull off.

And speaking of San Francisco, some crystal-ball readers say they could see the mayor trying to do some big social initiative like legalizing gay marriage

mayor’s former communications director and the man responsible for keeping the mayor on message and selling many of his ideas to the public.

Close observers say that without both men, the mayor already seems less engaged and disciplined than he once was, though neither have been around the bullpen much for a while.

One unstated reason the mayor seems to have pushed for a third term is a feeling amongst administration officials that they need a few more years, not even necessarily a full term, to see substantial progress on a host of issues—progress that no successor will be unable to undo.

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Shelving Council Run, Farrell Will Back Wright for County Lead-

By EDWARD-ISAAC DOVERE

The term limits extension redefined the political landscape in New York, causing many Council candidates to shelve or reconsider their races for next year. Most were new to the process, making their first foray into electoral politics.

Then there are Assembly Members Herman D. Farrell (D-Manhattan) and Michael Gianaris (D-Queens), both of whom were expected to seek Council seats next year, trading in their lower salaries and Albany commutes for a desk at City Hall. (Both had at one point been rumored to be seeking to come in as speaker, though only Farrell had taken himself out of the running for the top job.)

Farrell, who was all set to run for the seat of Robert Jackson (D-Manhattan)—and had suggested in turn that Jackson subsequently seek his Assembly seat in a switch like that of Albert Vann and Annette Robinson in 2001—said that his plans to run for Council ended the moment Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.) signed the bill extending the time he and the Council



Denny Farrell plans to stay in the Assembly.

could spend in office. Jackson, a vocal supporter of the extension, plans to run again for his Council seat.

Farrell said that means he will not run for Council in 2009, 2013 or any point afterwards.

"I'm going to stay in Albany and run for re-election," he said. "I like the place and I'm going to stay here."

Farrell said he had no regrets about starting to put together a campaign that never came to fruition.

"It didn't do me damage. It did me a lot of good—I got a lot of exercise," Farrell said, adding that he relished the chance to explore new playgrounds with his six-year-old daughter, who often accompanied him as he campaigned in parts of Upper Manhattan that are in the Council district but outside of the Assembly district he has represented since 1974.

But continuing to have the two-and-a-half hour drives back and forth to Albany in his sports car was definitely an upside, Farrell said, as was having a role in helping deal with the state budget crisis as chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

"Though I would have enjoyed being in the city a little more," Farrell said, "I enjoy being on the road."

Gianaris, who told *City Hall* in April that he was seriously considering running for Peter Vallone, Jr.'s (D-Queens) seat but had not made any final decision,

said he would not challenge Vallone but declined further comment.

Both candidates had opened accounts with the Campaign Finance Board for officially undeclared races. Farrell had raised \$73,000 as of July and Gianaris nearly \$56,000. (Gianaris also has an additional \$2 million scattered in three state accounts, some of it raised for an aborted 2006 attorney general run.)

In another major political development, Farrell confirmed he will not seek re-election as Manhattan Democratic chair, a position he has held since 1981. Had he run for Council, Farrell would have been legally required to give up the post, but he said the time has come to move on from that job—though he will seek another term as district leader.

He said he does indeed want to see Assembly Member Keith Wright (D-Manhattan) succeed him, but will not engineer a victory.

"I am supporting and will vote for Keith Wright, but the determination will be made by my colleagues," Farrell said. "I don't want to create a situation where the boss is selecting the next boss." **CH**

With Mealy in Question, Tracy Boyland Begins Move to Retake Her Old Seat

Brownsville dynasty daughter eyeing another run against embattled Council member

By DANIELLE DOUGLAS

When City Council Member Darlene Mealy (D-Brooklyn) flip-flopped and voted for Mayor Michael Bloomberg's (Ind.) term limits extension, she not only left herself open to criticism but also to an ironic political challenge. Tracy Boyland, whose seat Mealy captured three years ago running as an alternative to the Boyland machine, is reportedly eyeing her old office. And whether or not she will face Mealy in that race remains an open question.

Boyland, who was term-limited out of her Council seat covering Brownsville, Ocean Hill and swaths of Bedford-Stuyvesant and East Flatbush, has been largely off the radar since her failed attempt to unseat State Sen. Velmanette Montgomery (D-Brooklyn) in the 2006 primary. And though she did not return multiple calls for comment nor has she officially declared her candidacy, the buzz around the neighborhood is that she will step forward for next year's race.

"Mealy will have a serious opponent," said Major Owens, who represented Central Brooklyn in the House for 25 years before retiring in 2007.

Owens himself once nurtured the Boyland political dynasty, but had a falling-out in 2004 when Tracy challenged him for a Congressional seat. Many in Brooklyn deemed that move underhanded, given that Owens had already announced that the 2004 race would be his last.

The Boylands have already shown

a feeling of ownership over the seat—former Assembly Member William F. Boyland, Sr., Tracy's father, was the favorite going into the 2005 election for the open seat. But when the votes were counted, Boyland, Sr. captured just 19 percent of the vote, 30 points behind Mealy.

Mealy has kept a low profile since then, and has avoided introducing any significant legislation, though she did make headlines earlier this year for trying to float her sister's nonprofit \$25,000 from the Council's slush fund. Some insiders argue Mealy was a bit too green for office and now, especially with the term limits vote, is perceived in some quarters as having become part of the machine she rode to City Hall as an alternative against.

"She may not be the most efficient or competent person, but her sincerity is there," said Owens of Mealy. "She's trying to respond to people's needs and not manipulating or using them to enrich herself."

Political consultant and longtime Boyland family friend Hank Sheinkopf concedes that unseating Mealy will be difficult.

"A lot of it depends on where the unions are, because that's where Mealy got her power from in the first place," he said. "If they are not with her this time, it will be easier for Ms. Boyland to win, but incumbents are not often defeated."

Indeed, there is some reason to suspect Mealy's core institutional supporters from the 2005 race may not be there for her in

2009. Both 1199 SEIU and the Working Families Party, who backed her insurgent campaign, strongly opposed Bloomberg's term limits proposal. Neither entity would comment on Mealy's vote, or whether they intend to abandon her.

But some suspect their ties will weaken.

Many close to Mealy say she agonized over the decision and was coerced into backing the bill.

"The political pressure put on her by the speaker's office and the mayor needs to be investigated," said Council Member Charles Barron (D-Brooklyn). "She was under a tremendous amount of pressure."

Barron, who represents a neighboring district, said he likes Mealy personally, but will by no means help her next year.

"The only people that should come back to City Hall are the 22 that had enough guts and the spine to stand up to the Mayor and the Speaker," he said.

After the vote, rumors emerged that Mealy would not seek re-election. Mealy, who recently broke her collarbone in a car accident, did not return calls for comment. But she has just \$7,838 in contributions for the 2009 election cycle, according to the NYC Campaign Finance Board.

If Tracy Boyland does take another shot at the seat, she will have the advantage of coming from a family synonymous with Brownsville. Owens protégé Thomas S. Boyland first won office in the 1970s. When he died in 1982, his brother William F. Boyland took his assembly seat, where

he remained until engineering a takeover by his son William F. Boyland, Jr. in 2003.

Their influence on the neighborhood is no secret: mini-monuments to the family stand at nearly every corner. Head down Sutter Avenue to find the William F. Boyland Early Childhood Academy. Scattered along Sumpter Street, Saratoga Avenue and Marion Street are the Thomas S. Boyland Homes. And the Thomas S. Boyland Democratic Club on Pitkin Avenue is right around the corner from Junior's Assembly office, right on Thomas S. Boyland Street.

But the Boyland brand does not resonate with everyone. Barron and others complained of the family's cozy relationship with developers, and a number of limited liability corporations and real estate developers have donated healthy sums to Tracy in the past.

But he and Owens agreed that there are not enough alternatives to the Boyland brand in Brownsville, though they both expect that to change, with Barron hinting at a possible run from Tulani Kinard, the wife of Stanley Kinard, a candidate whom Mealy also defeated in 2005.

Owens is hopeful that the national political sea change will find its way to Brooklyn. "This is the age of Obama, and I imagine that we are going to have some stimulation of the political process at every level," he said. "We may have some stirrings in the Brownsville area that have been inspired by the Obama campaign and success." **CH**

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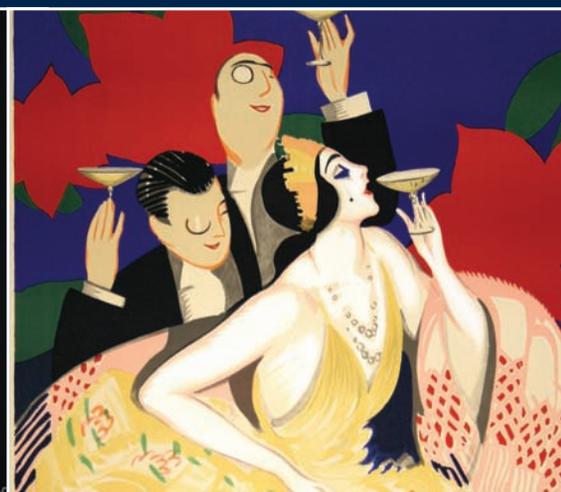
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ISSUE FORUM: **NONPROFITS**

When It Rains, It Shouldn't Pour

By COUNCIL MEMBER DAVID WEPRIN

New York City is home to over 6,000 nonprofit organizations. They provide services such as food for seniors, after-school programs and a myriad of cultural and social programs.

Their services are provided to over eight million residents and their pivotal community role fills the void in services where the government either falls short or does not provide any particular services to residents.

Nonprofits rely on and are able to successfully operate with the donations from private and corporate entities that share a group's particular cause. Although these donations may be sufficient for some organizations, many rely on additional funding through government subsidies.

During annual budget seasons, organizations jockey with the intent to get

noticed and stand out to Council members with the hope for their support.

This support is oftentimes translated into subsidies. But the hardest aspect of this process is the deliberations of which organization to support and which to bypass.

Since nonprofits are greatly impacted by business cycle declines, it is imperative to provide these smaller organizations with opportunities to survive when the tide changes. A policy that should be greatly considered is adding provisions to the current Internal Revenue Service tax code for these nonprofit organizations to create a "rainy day fund."

When the economy slows down, this "rainy day fund" can absorb some of the negative impact the economy brings to an organization. Those negative impacts translate to reduced or eliminated services.

Without many of these nonprofit



organizations, thousands of recipients of their services will be left to reacquaint themselves with other nonprofit organizations that are subjected to the same volatility sooner or later.

This "rainy day fund" will not only save many nonprofit organizations, it will also prevent a ripple effect of recipients to turn to other means of their required services that the organizations are currently meeting.

In a healthy economy, as in a weak economy, a reserve account serves to only benefit nonprofit organizations and the people they serve without much overhaul in the system. This added provision may mean the survival of thousands of nonprofit organizations. **CH**

David Weprin, a Democrat representing parts of Queens, is the chair of the City Council Finance Committee.

Key to Nonprofit Transparency Is Robust System of Financial Disclosure

By ASSEMBLY MEMBER RICHARD BRODSKY

The Public Authorities Accountability Act of 2005 was the first fundamental reform of public authorities in over 25 years. It was designed to help improve oversight, accountability and transparency at our state public authorities and not-for-profit corporations by establishing a new public authorities office within the executive department and creating an independent inspector general. It has provided a necessary reform that enhances services while increasing effectiveness, accountability and openness. One key aspect of this law requires full transparency and disclosure of a whole host of quasi-governmental entities associated with government, namely nonprofits. A key element to ensure transparency is a robust system of financial disclosure of board members.

Recently, the City of New York has exempted many of these organizations from filing disclosure forms. Their argument is technical in nature, clearly ignoring the spirit of the law. In one example from a recent story in *The New York Times*, the city exempted the Fund for Public Schools, a not-for-profit that provides private financing for the city's Department of Education.



Despite the fact that the Department of Education operates out of City Hall, its chairman is the city schools chancellor and it shares the city website, the city believes that the Fund is exempt from filing requirements because the "fund's affiliation is to a school district, which is empowered by state law and not to a county, city, town or village as referenced

in the authorities law."

The reform act's intent was clear—these very nonprofits were designed to be captured as "local authorities" and subject to the various requirements of the law. There was no explicit definition of public authorities prior to the law and the inclusion of nonprofits such as the Brooklyn Public Library and the Gracie Mansion Conservancy, the inclusion of Industrial Development Agencies and other quasi-governments is a clear indication that the law cast a wide net, not a narrow one. If you perform roles that are generally considered governing in nature, then you should be treated like government. The same oversight and accountability found in State Government should be found in Public Authorities and not-for-profit corporations. The Department of Education of the City of New York is an agency of the City of New York and should be treated as such, as should entities like the Fund that are intimately connected.

Furthermore, this is an issue of fairness for the citizens in the state. In the past, the general trend of not-for-profit organizations was for average citizens within our communities to serve as members of the board. Somewhere

along the line these policies changed, and now many of these boards are full of some of New York's richest and most elite. For too long, matters of public policy have been hidden from the public while being implemented by and for the few who control the vehicles of power. The use of public authorities and not-for-profit corporations is at times a necessary thing, but if matters of public policy are going to be affected by these institutions, the public deserves to know exactly who these non-elected officials are.

As chairman of the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, I intend to hold a hearing to discuss compliance with the Public Authorities Accountability Act, in relation to the disclosure of not-for-profit entities. We will listen very carefully and with an open mind to arguments that we have captured the wrong types of organizations. However, we're not going to accept a flawed technical analysis of broad measures intended to increase transparency in our government. **CH**

Richard Brodsky, a Democrat representing Westchester County, chairs the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions.



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ISSUE FORUM: **NONPROFITS****Strengthening the City's Nonprofit Sector by Utilizing the Resources We Have**

By COMMISSIONER NAZLI PARVIZI

Every year, the Mayor's Volunteer Center (MVC) links tens of thousands of city residents to volunteer opportunities. As a program of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, MVC allows even the busiest New Yorker to volunteer.

The Bloomberg administration has long recognized the value of volunteers and the need for nonprofit organizations to have the support and resources they need to succeed. In addition to being a resource, MVC works with community organizations and nonprofits in all five boroughs to encourage civic engagement and support programs and services that enhance the quality of life of New Yorkers.

New York City is home to thousands of nonprofit organizations working for the common good across the city, country and around the world. From social services and the arts to education and health care, the breadth, diversity and dynamism of the city's nonprofit community is immeasurable.

But nonprofits do more than just provide services; they have a tremendous economic impact on this city. Not including hospitals, nonprofits account for more than 300,000 jobs, nearly \$15 billion in wages and \$15 billion in cultural visitor spending.

Though we are all feeling the burden of tough economic times, the nimbleness of the nonprofit sector allows it to adapt to hardships such as this. After Sept. 11, many nonprofits were challenged by an increased need in services and an unstable economic environment. With this current fiscal crisis, nonprofits are facing—for the second time in this decade—the challenge of doing more with less.

By cultivating and maintaining partnerships, many nonprofits are able to maximize limited funding streams. Rather than competing for resources, partnering allows for collaborations that are beneficial to nonprofits, corporations and communities. Collaboration can also strengthen the sector and create a resiliency that allows organizations of all sizes to benefit.

There is a wealth of resources available to nonprofits, including organizations like the Foundation Center, which offers programs and services to strengthen nonprofits, or the United Way of New York City and Taproot, which provide free or low-cost assistance in areas such as board management, budgeting, marketing and branding.

Many nonprofits have been adapting smarter—and more creative—business strategies. An emphasis on partnerships and utilizing available resources both externally and internally can strengthen organizations, large and small. In fact, one of the most potentially rewarding resources is often one of the most underutilized: volunteers.

Volunteers can often be an organization's greatest asset, especially during difficult times. Now more than ever, the



Mayor's Volunteer Center finds itself in the unique position of bringing together individuals and corporations who want to help. There are a number of resources available to help nonprofits build a strong volunteer base at nyc.gov/volunteer.

In addition to reaching out to MVC and visiting volunteernyc.org, a website created by MVC in partnership with United Way of New York City, nonprofits can find a list of other organizations that can help with volunteer recruitment and management. Nonprofits who think creatively about volunteers will find an energetic, engaged and unexpected addition to their organizations.

The Mayor's Volunteer Center is doing its part to support the nonprofit sector. During these unsettling times, I encourage nonprofits to think creatively, collaborate and take advantage of programs like MVC.

CH

Nazli Parvizi is the Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit.

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ON/OFF THE RECORD BREAKFAST

Considering the Lessons of Mayoral Control of Schools

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum was the featured speaker at the On/Off the Record breakfast held Oct. 23. Over the course of the morning, Gotbaum discussed the findings of her Commission on School Governance, which released its report on mayoral control in September, and many other aspects of the breakfast's official topic, "The Future of City Schools," a theme that has been close to her heart and her work in office over the past seven years.

What follows are selections from the on-the-record portion of the morning.

Q: Mayor Bloomberg is, not surprisingly, a big fan of mayoral control. You and others have been, to various degrees, not as impressed with the success of mayoral control. Where do you see the disconnect?

A: We actually felt that mayoral control was good for the system, the focus on education is important, the fact that the budget has increased so much is important. The fact that one person is responsible is important, but, and that's a big but, there needs to be more checks and balances. This is what we heard from 99 percent of the people that came before us—everybody felt there needed to be more checks and balances.

Q: What do you think is the metric to measure progress in the schools? Is it graduation rate?

A: First of all, you need some standards. You have to have a standard by which you measure how we're doing. On the other hand, I think there is overemphasis on testing to come up with the standard. I don't think that's quite the right way to go. I think that the way you measure is you look at the individual school and the individual kid and see how that child is progressing from year to year—measure that. I think it's more than just testing. I think it is how the kid is socializing, how the child is able to do certain things, is he or she reading better? How is he or she reading better? I spend a lot of time in schools. I am very impressed by the work the teachers in this city do. And how they, under very difficult circumstances in many instances, are able to work hard and bring the standard of the kids up. I believe and I feel very strongly that testing—the overemphasis on testing—is wrong. When you take a kid in third grade and you test them 13 to 14 times, that just doesn't go. We're finding that all over the system. Teachers, parents are very much against that. I am not against testing and I think we do have to have a standard, but 13, 14 tests for kids in the third grade, who are 9 years old?

Q: Parent participation is another place where you see the tension of looking at the system as a whole and individual parents obviously con-



cerned with what is going on with their children specifically and their children's schools. Is there a danger of over-participation of the parents because they're not looking at how this affects the school as a whole?

A: You've hit probably the most difficult task the commission looked at, that all of us feel that we can't legislate how parents can be involved and how the parents can interact in the schools. It is probably the most difficult issue of all, as I've said. I think that there has to be some standard where at the school level you can have parental input, whether it's the school leadership teams that have it on the district level, you have to have some way in which parents can get information at a district level, they can let it be known what they are upset about. And then on a larger level, I do think that you have to have some kind of independent panel which is made up of people who are educators or parents who are very involved in the system who also can have, get information, but also have wishes known. Right now all the parents that we talked to, we interviewed, said they have no way of getting their input into the system. That's what they've told us.

Q: You've spoken about the creation of a number of additional panels or groups or oversight organizations. At what point does it become too much? Isn't it a problem to keep submitting the idea for a panel on one thing and a special independent commission on another thing?

A: I think you have the basis for it now.

You have the structure now that can just be added to and enhanced and listened to. You have the school leadership team, that's in every single school, that's made up of parents—and teachers and administrators. So that should be strengthened. Then, on a district level you have something. But that should be strengthened, those groups should have direct access to the district superintendent. That's something the commission talked about and recommended. And then on a larger level there should be one panel, it's called a panel on education, and that panel should have, the mayor should have eight appointees, a borough president or some other elected official should have appointees. Again, we're not saying how it should be done. We were suggesting ways. So that's really only three different entities, by

the way that panel, the citywide panel, should have fixed terms so that if the person who is appointed by the mayor or by the borough president disagrees with one of the policies being presented, he or she cannot be fired. We felt that was a way of ensuring independence. I don't think you're layering bureaucracy. This is an enormous city. You're at school level, district level and citywide level.

Q: Do you think funding should be tied to evaluations? More funding goes to the schools that are doing better?

A: Yes, but they have to get the system right. So if you have some principals who are using the system and you have others who aren't using it at all, how are you going to decide who gets the bonus? I have a lot of problems with the way it's being worked right now. Again, there are kinks in any new system. One has to accept that, but I think it's been a while now and it doesn't seem to be working as well as one would expect.

Q: Overcrowding is something that could be solved or mitigated by the construction of new schools and expansions of existing schools. Here we are at the outset of what we expect to be a tough period for the world financially, economically—and the city as well. What's the honest answer of the type of impact this is going to have on the school system?

A: Well, I think it's a very serious and important question to look at. We're going to be in a terrible time. I think we have

to be very careful on how the money is spent, which is why I question again the expenses on some of the evaluations of the schools. I really question that seriously. I think that we need new schools. It's going to be impossible to do it. It's very hard to site a school, there you can't really criticize because a lot of communities don't want schools in them. So the department of education has done a pretty good job of trying to figure out where to put schools. And it's a very difficult question. What's going to happen in the next four years? Again, I think we have to look at how the money is being spent—and be very careful, because to me, spending that much money on evaluations as opposed to teaching, more teachers, lowering class size, all of those things, are something that I think we need to watch very carefully.

Q: Do you think there's going to be a real slowdown in school construction because of this?

A: I think so, sure. And I think people are going to be doubling up, and all of that's going to happen and I think we need to be prepared for it.

Q: Have you spoken with the mayor about your report since it came out?

A: Well, first of all, I have to make very, very clear that the commission's report wanted to come up with a blueprint for the discussion and something that would be available no matter who is the mayor. The report is not about the mayor. It's not about this mayor. It's not about personality. It's not about Joel. It's not about Mayor Bloomberg. It's a blueprint for how we can look at what happened with mayoral control that was given to him in 2002. I compliment him for that. That was a very brave and powerful thing to do, but it's having some problems. And what the commission did was come up with recommendations for the legislature that is going to, for those of you that may not remember this or know it. The legislature is going to change in 2009, they're going to change the legislation that brought about mayoral control. And so what the commission did was put out recommendations, the things we suggested that the legislature look at going forward to make their changes in the legislature. There will be changes, my friend. Anyone who thinks there won't be changes is just wrong. Now, have I talked to the mayor about it? Uh, no. The mayor has made it very clear that he doesn't think there should be any changes. And we have not had that conversation. I don't think we'll have it for a while.

CH



To view the video of this interview, go to www.cityhallnews.com.

Across the Country, Other Cities Cope with Their Own Economic Crises

Dallas builds, Beantown buckles and Baltimore thrives with biotech growth

BY MICHAEL VENTURA

Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.) has been outlining the impact he sees the current economic downturn having in Lower Manhattan on New York's budget, but across the country, other mayors are finding the distance between Wall Street and their Main Streets is shorter than ever.

Take Dallas, Texas, which is 1,400 miles away from the New York Stock Exchange but where Mayor Tom Leppert (R) is nonetheless bracing for the blowback.

So far, though, the bad news streaming from New York City in the form of the current credit crunch and economic meltdown has, for his city, been minimal. Leppert feels Dallas is in good shape to weather the crisis. He knows, though, that it could be fleeting.

"What we're trying to do is be cautious," he said.

That means prudent municipal hiring practices and keeping a close eye on a softening retail market, causing sales tax revenues to slide. Though this has been partially offset by lower energy costs, the problems, he said, are very real.

Nonetheless, he remains optimistic, citing new infrastructure improvements to the city and the arrival of new corporations, such as AT&T, which recently announced plans to relocate to Dallas from San Antonio.

"In that sense, we're probably on a rela-

tive basis much better off than a lot of cities," he said.

Exactly how other cities across the country will be affected by the Wall Street crisis will vary. Cities that had poor budgeting practices will likely be exposed.

"It's pretty easy to hide not doing a good job budgeting in times of fat, but going into times of famine, that's when you learn about who's really been paying for current expenses with current revenues," said Alec Ian Gershberg, associate professor of urban policy and management at the New School.

On top of that, variations in bond ratings, whether a city can draw revenue from the surrounding area and the industry and labor markets of a city will determine how well it rides out this down market.

"Cities are going to be hit differently according to the sectors they rely on. And the taxes they rely on," Gershberg says. "Cities that depend on the financial sector will have a hard time."

No city depends more on the financial sector for jobs and tax revenue than New York, the financial capital of the world and the monetary and geographical epicenter of the current crisis. Few other cities are getting hit as hard. Bloomberg recently revealed that the city faces a \$4 billion budget gap over the next two years, forcing a property tax hike, a potential halt to property tax rebates, municipal layoffs, police academy

class eliminations, cuts to school and cultural institutions and much more.

And, after all that, New York will still be \$1.3 billion in the hole.

But the Big Apple is not the only city coming up short.

In Boston, Mayor Thomas Menino (D) has ordered a hiring freeze and has left non-essential open positions unfilled.

"We have been thoroughly reviewing our budget and expenses," Menino said. "We've gone through similar difficult periods in the past, and we are taking all the prudent steps to make sure that we're in the best position possible."

Currently, Boston anticipates a \$16 million drop in revenue from its investments alone—the equivalent of its entire Parks Department budget.

Not every city is hurting as much, though. Baltimore, not traditionally regarded as a shining beacon among America's urban centers, seems set to weather the storm better than most, said Sterling Clifford, spokesperson for Mayor Sheila Dixon (D).

Baltimore has seen its share of fiscal crises. As the steel industry and manufacturing began to wane years back, the city was forced to reposition its economy. Now, biotech companies and nonprofits based there are bolstering the budget even as other industries falter.

"Baltimore has done well with a lot of homegrown businesses," Clifford said, not-

ing that there is already one office park open and another on the way focused specifically on biotech, an industry that will not be slowed much by the credit crunch and which many have been eager to see grow in New York as well.

Perhaps that has helped catch the eye of Bloomberg, a Johns Hopkins alumnus. He said in the Nov. 5 press conference detailing his mid-year budget review that attracting biotech and more film and television to the city were two ways the city can rebound from the loss of so many Wall Street jobs.

Of course, Baltimore has also been helped by factors particular to the city, like all the federal spending that flows from Washington, D.C., thanks to its proximity to the capital, as well as the restructuring of the U.S. military, which has shifted army research once at the Aberdeen Proving Ground to the Baltimore area.

While Baltimore has many things going for it, the city is not totally out of the woods.

So is Clifford glad he does not work in New York?

"We try hard to avoid comparisons like that," Clifford says, acknowledging that New York's financial picture looks bleaker than Baltimore's. "From what I know it's a city with a limitless capacity to rebound." **CH**

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City Hall is published monthly.
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City Hall is a division of Manhattan Media, LLC, publisher of *The Capitol*, *Our Town*, the *West Side Spirit*, *Chelsea Clinton News*, *The Westsider*, *New York Press*, *New York Family* and *AVENUE* magazine.

EDITORIAL**For the Sake of Democracy and a Better New York, Run Anyway**

The real measure of just how deep a gash the extension of term limits left on democracy in this city will be the number of competitive races next year. If, in fact, they develop as the sleepy affairs most expect, everyone will understand how empty the rhetoric of increasing choice used to defend the extension really was.

But now, though lawsuits and potential intervention by Albany still loom, the time has come to consider what comes next. And what comes next should be affirmations from all those who had been laying the groundwork to run for other offices next year that they will indeed be running, no matter what. Whatever good or bad there may be to say about them otherwise, Tony Avella and Eric Gioia deserve praise for the consistency of their conviction to run for the offices they had been aiming for already. On a basic level, theirs is the example that the rest of the expected 2009 field should follow.

Some people have already decided to stay put in their current offices rather than try for something else next year, arguing that this is exactly what a sense of civic duty demands in these tough times for the city. That is a decent argument. But for those who had been seeking new positions on the Council, borough president, comptroller, public advocate or mayor with the argument that they could truly bring something new to these positions, the burden is on them to actually make the races. When better than at this moment of extreme challenges to have the kind of conversation about the inner workings of these offices

that can only be initiated by a lively political campaign?

Those who had declared their candidacies, or all but declared their candidacies, began this process because they supposedly had positive ideas about what they could bring to the offices they were set to seek. If these were anything but convenient slogans or website banners, now is the moment to put them on the marketplace. Running primary or general election campaigns against incumbents may be difficult and even impolite, but for those who want to make the case that they were looking at the 2009 elections out of a sense of civic duty and not plain career ambition, running these campaigns is no doubt the moral and consistent thing to do. If they win, they will bring these new and better ideas into government. If they lose—provided their campaigns are serious and substantive—they will help shape the winner's approach to governing for the better. One need only look at how much better the campaigning and policy positions of Barack Obama got as he survived the crucible of the Democratic primaries, Hillary Clinton and John McCain for proof of how important tough campaigns can be even for those who win overwhelmingly.

This is a call to Democrats, but it is also a call to Republicans, whose performance at the polls in recent years has been ever more pathetic. While some of the blame, no doubt, goes to demographic shifts and a national party identity which is largely alien to residents of the five boroughs, if Republicans want to be taken seriously as an organization, they

need to put the time, money and effort into real campaigns for every office. That 159 of 168 local offices are held by the Democrats and that almost all of these are uncontested in November means that any reasonable person should be asking why the GOP bothers to still exist in New York. The party needs to start answering that question by running serious candidates engaged in active campaigns, not jokers who happen to petition their way onto the ballot or placeholders from the party faithful, as has too often become the case. Even in a town that is so Democratic, making those in the party work for their power will make them govern better. The primaries should not be the only elections that matter.

And if they are, then the onus is on the Democrats to make the primaries real competitions, not pro forma events. In the many parts of this city where Republicans have no real hope of winning, the Democratic Party has a responsibility to encourage races among its own members, for the good of party dynamism, the democratic process, voter engagement and better results once in office.

Especially at the local level, political positions should not be lifetime appointments, nor jobs held for as long as those in them feel interested in holding them. Competitive races lead to better governing, keeping incumbents on their toes and elected officials deeply in touch with the needs of their districts. And when the incumbents do not respond accordingly, there is hope even for the long-shot challengers. Just ask Marty Connor and Daniel Squadron. **CH**

New York Should Not Be Palin' on HIV Protection for Rape Victims

By JENNIFER MERCURIO

Gov. Sarah Palin's entrance into this year's vice presidential race unleashed a flurry of news stories about her record as mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, not all of them flattering.

One that leapt off the page was about rape kits.

According to some reports, it seems that sexual assault victims from Wasilla, during her tenure as mayor, had to pay for their own forensic exams.

The story caused outrage in the victims' rights community here in New York and across the country. How could sexual assault victims be asked to pay for the forensic medical tools used to prosecute their assailants, we questioned. How could Palin ignore the injustice of this? How could she sleep at night?

In New York, we have the Forensic Payment Act which requires the state to pay for rape exams. But, before we finish congratulating ourselves, we might want to consider a recently vetoed piece of leg-

islation in Albany that penalizes rape victims in a way not unlike those in Wasilla during the Palin administration.

The New York State bill in question would provide all victims of sexual assault with a streamlined payment plan to receive the full course of HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), a treatment critical in helping to prevent a victim from contracting HIV after an assault.

Victims today are provided with an anti-HIV starter pack as part of the acute care rendered in the emergency department. In order to receive the rest of the month-long treatment, a victim has to be seen by a physician who will provide the rest of the prescription. If that prescription is to be paid for by the New York State Crime Victims Board (CVB), which compensates crime victims for costs associated with the crimes committed against them, the victim/survivor has three choices: lay out the money and be reimbursed by CVB after filling out a claim form; use private health insurance if she or he has it and then submit reimbursement forms to the CVB for

compensation, or apply for an emergency award from the CVB. But the victim/survivor must travel to a CVB office in Buffalo, Albany or Brooklyn in order to receive the award.

The current system is arduous, at best, for a person of means who can lay out the money or who has health insurance. For poor and uninsured New Yorkers, it represents a roadblock to life-saving treatment.

The streamlining bill passed in both the Assembly and the Senate, but on Sept. 8, the bill was vetoed by Governor Paterson.

Governor Paterson's veto message cites fiscal restraints as a reason for the veto. That's exactly how the Wasilla Police Chief justified his decision.

The Governor's veto message reads: "It is impossible to know its precise fiscal impact, but it is clear that it would entail significant new costs that the State cannot now afford to incur. As our fiscal situation has become increasingly clear and increasingly grave, we have had to take strong measures to address it. This bill would be a step, and a large step, in the wrong direc-

tion. It is estimated that these new costs could reach as high as eight million dollars."

That figure is widely disputed. Most experts estimate the additional expenditure to be a third of that cost annually. Plus, the federal government reimburses 60 percent of all claims made by the CVB. So now we're talking about a figure closer to \$1.5 million for preventive care that would not only save the state from incurring much higher costs should these victims actually contract HIV, but that also would save lives.

We are all aware of the historic budget restraints facing New York State. But at a likely cost of just \$1.5 million annually, this bill is certainly worth another look.

Otherwise, the people of Wasilla might rightly voice outrage about how sexual assault victims are treated in New York. **CH**

Jennifer Mercurio is a former chair of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault and a past president of the National Women's Political Caucus of New York State.

OP-ED

To Promote Cleaner Energy and Cheaper Rents, Realign Building Incentives

BY NANCY BIBERMAN

Rent-stabilized affordable housing could well be the next casualty of the faltering economy.

The economic tsunami flooding the country has already begun to erode the foundations of housing affordability in New York City:

- Last June, the city's Rent Guidelines Board enacted the largest rent increases in rent-stabilized housing in two decades.

- Expiring Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings are entering the open market at whatever rents a landlord can collect.

- Predatory equity is on the rise: after quietly acquiring hundreds of rent-regulated apartment buildings by private firms over the last several years, private firms are promising investors returns that can only be achieved by deregulating apartments through tenant vacancy—often by outright harassment.

- Some Low Income Housing Tax Credit

syndicators estimate that, due to the credit crunch, the number of affordable housing deals will halve by next year.

- The number of families in the shelter system is at a new all-time high, with today's residents arriving after leaving apartments they can no longer afford.

- Out of this grim picture, however, there are some nuggets of opportunity.

The city and state can reduce tenants' financial burden and in the process reduce the city's carbon footprint by requiring multi-family rental property owners to retrofit buildings for energy efficiency. A first step toward this requirement is to realign the incentives around building investments and rent increases.

Investing in energy-efficient systems for existing buildings is clearly the right thing

to do: in New York, buildings are responsible for significantly more carbon emissions than automobiles, and the Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability has

New York has a program to pay for building-wide energy upgrades that would reduce both emissions and expenses. The problem is that as laws are currently written, landlords have an incentive to do nothing.

called for fully one-third of the city's planned carbon reduction by 2030 to come from buildings.

New York State has a well-funded and thoughtful program already in place to pay for building-wide energy upgrades that would reduce both emissions and expenses.

The problem is that as laws are currently written, landlords have an incentive to do nothing, because they can simply pass along rising utility expenses to tenants as the Rent Guidelines Board annually authorizes. Alternatively, they can invest in energy-efficient building-wide upgrades and pass on the expense to tenants twice—first through annual rent increases, but, more worrisome, through the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) provisions of the Rent Stabilization Law and Code.

Under MCI provisions, when an owner of a rent-regulated building buys a new boiler or invests in waterproofing, for example, the rent can be adjusted upward based on the cost of the improvement. The MCI law is designed to encourage landlords to keep their buildings in good condition. But in effect it is allowing landlords to lower their energy bills while raising the rents, instead of passing on the savings to tenants.

If the city and state were to remove energy-related building improvements from Rent Stabilization's classification as MCIs, how might it affect a property owner who wants to install a new efficient boiler costing \$270,000 in an affordable building with 130 apartments?

Rather than passing the cost on to tenants, that landlord would participate in New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's Multi-Family Performance Program for existing buildings. NYSERDA provides owners with consulting services and cash incentives to develop an energy reduction plan aimed at reducing overall building energy usage at least 20 percent. The program is divided into four incentive tiers; for our hypothetical landlord, it would add up to almost \$1,700 per unit, the bulk of which would be available for the initial investment cost of upgrades.

Correctly sized, high-efficiency boilers for this building would save the owner about \$29,000 in the first year alone, with a payback period of 9.4 years. In other words, it would take 9.4 years for the boilers to pay for themselves through energy cost savings. Considering that the lifespan of a boiler can be 20 to 30 years, it's clear that the boilers will continue to save the owner money well after they pay for themselves.

With the NYSERDA incentives and some initial capital investment by the owner, annual operating expenses would be reduced and these savings might even roll back prior rent increases the Rent Guidelines Board had authorized based on higher utility costs. Imagine: a rent decrease! **CH**

Nancy Biberman is the president of the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation.

Paterson and Bloomberg Should Get on Board Early as Obama Leads on Transportation Funding

BY SAMUEL SCHWARTZ

I can't recall the last time a presidential candidate had a well thought-out transportation platform position prior to candidate Barack Obama. Now, as President-elect, he has the opportunity to follow through—and this could be terrific for New York if we act now.

The cornerstone of President-elect Obama's transportation policy is the National Infrastructure Bank funded by the federal government to the tune of \$60 billion over 10 years. The intent is to leverage the investment through bonds and private sector participation to about a quarter trillion dollars. He also proposes using some of the revenue associated with winding down the war in Iraq.

The Bank has broad bipartisan support and has been introduced by Senator Chuck Hagel and Senator Chris Dodd. It is also consistent with the call by many economists for a large public works program to stimulate the economy, much as the Works Progress Administration did during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency. A recent Moody's economy study showed that infrastructure spending has five times the economic benefit of a tax cut.

A formula Obama is likely to follow is that put forward by Felix Rohatyn, so that any project seeking over \$75 million in federal support would be required to submit a proposal to the Bank. The submission would include the contribution to be made by the state and local governments, user fees and a plan for maintenance. The bank would then decide to fund the project outright, or through credit guarantees for state bonds or

loans against future revenues from user fees and other sound financial strategies.

Our mayor and governor should anticipate the structure to be followed by the Bank. This means getting projects already designed in the queue. Start designing much-needed transportation facilities so that we are poised for early submission—a formula successfully followed by Robert Moses.

I am worried that the opposite is happening. The city's capital budget has been stretched from a four-year program to five years. There's been little or no activity on new transportation design from the state.

Governor David Paterson's Commission to Study Public-Private Partnerships (P-3's) should get cracking and get a report to the governor and Legislature by Jan. 1, if not sooner. We have some catching up to do: Illinois, Indiana and, just this week, Florida have issued multi-billion dollar contracts to private firms to design, build, finance, operate and maintain transportation facilities. While P-3's are no panacea and need scrutiny and monitoring, they do offer money up front (sorely needed now) and a much faster track for implementation. They are also likely to be well-received by the Bank.

Obama is a supporter of Amtrak and has called for high-speed rail between urban centers as well as strengthening our domestic rail freight capacity. This is an opportunity for the state to propose an upgrade of our inter-city rail system between New York, Albany and Buffalo with stops in key cities. Californians just approved a \$10 billion bond to build high-speed rail between San Francisco and San Diego; you can be sure they will try to be at the head of the line at

the Bank. Senate (soon-to-be) Majority Leader Malcolm Smith told me this is a cornerstone of his agenda; we must get this to the drawing boards ASAP.

President-elect Obama is in favor of federal support for urban transit; our transit projects should be more fundable than ever. Again, get them ready to go!

Obama has called for reforming the tax code to give transit riders equal benefits to drivers. This is a real plus for New York City; New York's two senators and 29 Congress members should ensure passage.

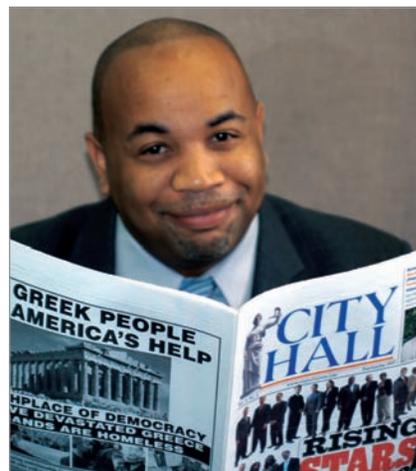
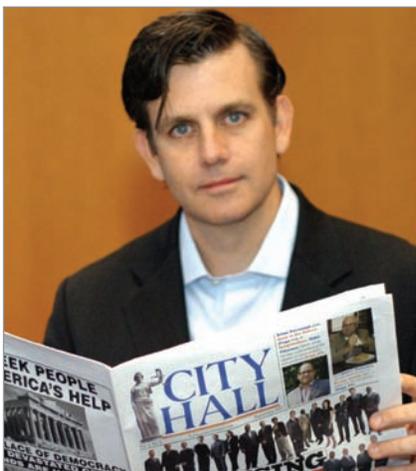
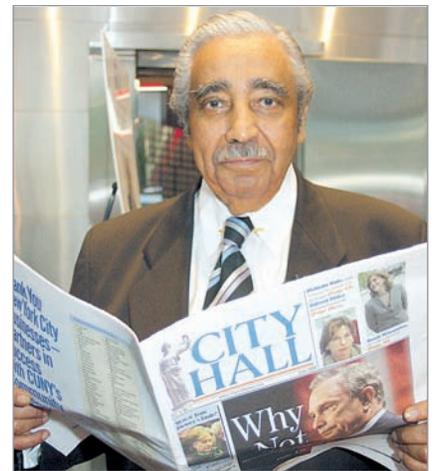
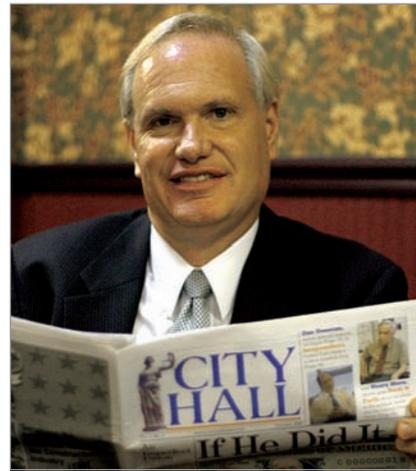
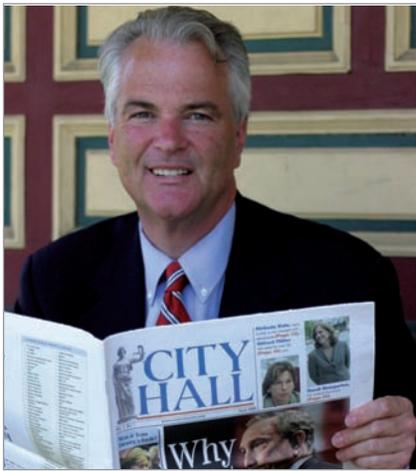
Obama would require energy conservation considerations as a condition of receiving federal dollars. Again, this is a formula that favors cities, and is consistent with Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC. It is time to resurrect road pricing. But this time it should be a state-of-the-art plan that provides a defined "value" spelling out the benefits to transit riders and the public at large. I've written before that to make this more palatable to the boroughs outside Manhattan there should be immediate benefits to the public such as lowering tolls that have nothing to do with Manhattan's congestion. For more on this plan go to www.samschwartzcompany.com.

In short, this is a rare moment for New York City. We will have a President who gets it: urban life is the most sustainable form of living—and good transportation is what keeps it healthy. **CH**

Samuel Schwartz, P.E., is CEO of Sam Schwartz Engineering, PLLC. He served as a Department of Transportation Traffic commissioner under Mayor Edward Koch.

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Opening Up the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce to Foreign Investments

Former Swiss trade commissioner is group's first global business director

By JOSHUA CINELLI

Last year, foreign investment accounted for roughly one out of every 20 jobs in New York City. As the economy lurches along and elected officials predict an even larger budget deficit, analysts and experts are calling for greater overseas investments.

Ally Gunduz, 44, the first global business director at the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, is a connector. Her task is to match the needs of foreign companies with what is available in New York City.

As a former trade commissioner for the Swiss Federal Ministry, Gunduz herself has attempted to navigate the international business waters.

"Most trade commissioners don't have the human resources or the time to be able to assist with services," said Gunduz. "The Chamber is about partnerships and referrals. There's only so much the government agencies can do."

One of the challenges facing Gunduz in the newly created position is to convey to international companies that New York City is still a great place to do business,

even amid the current economic turmoil.

Many large international companies already have a branch or store based in New York City, but it is the small- and medium-sized companies from Europe and elsewhere that are looking to make the jump. The New York economy hopes they do.

The Partnership for New York City released a report over the summer prepared by DTZ, the London-based international consultants, which stated that \$58 billion worth of foreign direct investment flowed into New York in 2006. This amount continues to increase, adding to the local economy and bucking the nationwide trend where globalization has frequently meant job loss.

"The Chamber's focus on providing resources that link small- and mid-size businesses to foreign international companies is exactly the kind of program that is needed to accelerate New York's recovery from the current economic downturn," said Kathryn Wylde, CEO of the Partnership for New York City.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg (Ind.) has from the beginning of his tenure stressed the need to diversify business not only to all

five boroughs, but also by industry sector to prevent the city from being too dependent on the financial service industry. Bloomberg's plan has called for an expansion of the biotechnology, media and fashion industries, among other talent-driven sectors. The city is working to drive knowledge-based businesses to New York in a joint effort with the Empire State Development Corporation, the state's economic development agency, which operates 12 overseas offices in countries like China, Israel, Brazil and South Africa.

"When international companies want to expand, they think of New York City first," said Ann Li, vice president for business development for the New York City Economic Development Corporation. "However, that doesn't mean that it's easy. Companies face many questions when they first start operations here, ranging from real estate to tax."

To confront this challenge, Gunduz is in the process of creating a list of business specialists in New York City with accounting, legal and financial services to match the needs of foreign companies and foreign countries that require a little assistance to ease the transition.

The Chamber recently presented the new internationally minded services to 65 trade commissioners from around the globe. Ronald Paltrowitz, an attorney who represents small businesses and is general counsel of the Chamber, attended the event.

"The major concern is the present economy and whether they can raise finances here," said Paltrowitz, "but they also have questions about tax on consumables and whether businesses should set up on their own or begin as a joint venture."

The global business initiative has already paid a dividend for Paltrowitz, who obtained a new client from Dubai who had requested assistance with legal matters. His new client, a Saudi businessman, is starting a business to purchase used autos at auctions and needed a legal connection.

A quarter of the Chamber's 1,400 members do business internationally, including large companies such as Citibank, Chase and HSBC. Nearly three-fourths of the six million members' employees are international. While Gunduz said the first priority is driving business to the members, she stressed that the overall goal was economic development.

"In Europe, you have to join a chamber once you become incorporated and the chamber provides very specific purposes," said Gunduz "We are trying to move in that direction."

jcinelli@manhattanmedia.com

IMAGE MAKERS

Putting Out Fires and Igniting Interest from Their Office at Firefighters Union

Now ranked among city's top 25, Butler Associates continues to expand

By MICHELLE FRIEDMAN

When Butler Associates opened 12 years ago, they secured a small office on the third floor of the Uniformed Firefighters Association's headquarters. At the time, the UFA was their only client. Today, they are the nation's second fastest-growing independent public relations firm and ranked among the top 25 in New York City, according to O'Dwyer's PR report, commonly used as a standard in the industry.

Their home office remains at the UFA, a commitment which they say belies their focus on relationship-building and quality over expanding their client-base.

"We've turned down a number of clients that we don't feel are the right fit," said president and founder Thomas Butler. "I like to come to work every day knowing there will be a challenge. That a client is going to come to us with a problem and we are going to give them a solution. It might involve media, it might not."

"I never want to be in a situation where I'm not dealing with the media," deadpanned vice president Stuart Miller

The two met in the early 1990s at Howard J. Rubenstein and Associates, where they remained officemates even as desks were continually shifted around.



Butler Associates is the nation's second fastest-growing independent public relations firm.

They both transitioned to PR after starting off in other fields. Miller spent the early part of his career on various broadcast news desks, and made the switch when he became tired of waking up at 3 a.m. to go to work on the early-morning news shows. Butler started out in the City Council's communications department while Ed Koch was mayor, after which he decided to cross over to the private sector.

Their backgrounds in politics and media have enabled them to influence the political conversation despite working with underdog clients.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the firm represented the UFA in a vicious fight with the city to stop building at Ground Zero that was to include a performing arts center, theatre and other facilities. In six weeks, "The Truth About the World Trade Center Memorial" campaign put an end to a project endorsed by the Governor and Mayor and backed by the *New York Times*.

The two also dedicate a significant amount of time developing opinion and editorial pieces for clients.

"I learned from my days in City Hall that if you are an elected leader, you look

at what's on the front page, and next you go right to the editorial page to see what the leaders are saying," Butler said.

C. William Jones, president and executive director of BellTel Retirees Association, said that the firm has helped them grow from 3,000 members locally to over 100,000 members in all 50 states.

"We never would have been able to reach people in the magnitude we did if it wasn't for their work," he said. "They helped us grow from seven members to what we are today; all of the media coverage we receive is a result of their work."

More recently, the firm has ventured into English- and Spanish-language marketing and advertising campaigns aimed at reaching the increasingly diverse demographic of the city. They also continue their work with the UFA on campaigns to promote a favorable image of New York firefighters.

UFA President Steve Cassidy said that he consults with Butler on a near-daily basis.

"Having Tom in the same building," Cassidy said with a laugh, "is very beneficial to us."

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In a Rare Sighting, Stein Casts His Vote

Even with a bad cold, **Andrew Stein**, the last man to hold the office of City Council president, was dedicated to casting his vote at the Robert F. Kennedy School on East 88th Street. Before entering the school, he mingled with City Comptroller **Bill Thompson** (D) and Assembly Member **Jonathan Bing** (D-Manhattan), who were stumping on the corner.

Though Stein correctly predicted a victory by Sen. **Barack Obama**, he was guarded about his choice.

"It's something I never tell," Stein said. "It's like one of the American privileges."

But though Stein, a once rising star who all but disappeared after pulling out of the 1993 elections, was eager to talk about the presidential election, he shrugged off talk of local races for Assembly, State Senate and Congress.

"I don't follow local politics like I used to," he said.

On Election Day, Como Denied More Time on Council and Lunch

Maybe it was a bad omen.

Just hours before his defeat at the hands of **Liz Crowley**, Council Member **Anthony Como** joined State Sen. **Serphin Maltese**, State Sen. **Martin Golden** and former Mayor **Rudy Giuliani** at the Fame Diner in Maspeth, Queens,



Comptroller Bill Thompson, Deputy Comptroller Eddie Castell and Assembly Member Jonathan Bing share a light moment with former City Council President Andrew Stein on election day.

about nine hours later, when Crowley, whom Como had edged ahead of in the June special election for what was once **Dennis Gallagher's** seat, won the rematch by a nearly 20-point margin.

New 'Dos for Senate Dems

In perhaps a symbol of these changing political times for New York, two State Senate Democrats who were very much in the news have been sporting new haircuts of late. Outgoing State Sen. **Martin Connor** (D-Brooklyn/Manhattan), who lost his primary to Daniel

Squadron in September, was spotted at the State Democratic Party's election night bash at the Sheraton with his comb-over clipped and his baldness proudly presented. State Sen. **Jeff Klein**, meanwhile, may have shelved his plans to go for majority leader for now, but he had the barber take out the scissors and give him a closer cut than the somewhat puffy hairstyle that had for so long topped his head. Asked about it at the election night party after the results had come in which put his party over the top, Klein laughed.

"New Albany, new haircut," he said.

Green Reflects on Battling Bloomberg Again

Former Public Advocate **Mark Green** has stayed mostly out of politics since the end of his 2006 attorney general run, and has even used his new post as president of Air America to mend fences with Michael Bloomberg, who beat him in the 2001 mayor's race, and who joined Green on the air last year for a much-publicized mutually-admiring interview.

But the debate over the term limits

extension put him front and center again, with Green criticizing Bloomberg and testifying in front of the Governmental Operations Committee against the change.

But Green dismissed the idea that his involvement in this issue will bring him back into city politics in any active way.

"I am a disinterested party, yet an experienced party," Green said shortly after his testimony. "This is a no-expense hobby."

Bloomberg Wins Media Battle With Smith

Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** (Ind.) may not have the warmest relationship with Senate Minority Leader **Malcolm Smith** (D-Queens)—the two notably disagreed over congestion pricing and who should be in control of the State Senate—but when it comes to competition for the media's attention, Bloomberg always seems to have the upper hand.

At an Oct. 27 press conference in City Hall Park to promote the addition of 43 new recycling bins in the city, Bloomberg allowed reporters to ask at least a dozen off-topic questions. Meanwhile, Smith and a host of Democratic leaders from across the state waited patiently a few yards away on the steps of City Hall for the press to eventually migrate over to their rally.

"Unbelievable," fumed **Austin Shafaran**, a spokesperson for the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee, standing behind a bank of television cameras that were trained on the mayor. "Has he even said anything about sanitation?"

Bloomberg eventually wrapped things up (and received a few cheers from a man sporting a **John McCain** button on his jean jacket), leaving reporters and

cameramen to make their way over to Smith's press conference.

Asked if he thought the timing of Bloomberg's press conference was at all suspicious, Smith laughed and said, "He's stealing our time!"

Gianaris and Gioia to Push for Same-Day Voting

This was a year of record voter turnout, but Assembly Member **Michael Gianaris** and Council Member **Eric Gioia** believe even more people would have turned out in New York if state law allowed same-day voter registration. Gianaris is sponsoring a bill in the Assembly to change the rules, which Gioia will try to boost by passing a supportive Council resolution.

The weekend before the election, the two gathered at City Hall for a press conference lamenting New York's status as 43rd of the 50 states in voter turnout and dismissed claims that changing the laws to allow same day voter registration would lead to fraud.

Gianaris also voiced his support for early voting.

"Not only in New York can we not vote early, but we can't register late," he said.

Two Rising Stars Unite

Daniel Squadron was apparently looking to his right in the photograph he took in front of City Hall as part of his inclusion on the 2008 *City Hall* 40 Under 40 list. The incoming state senator has hired fellow Rising Star **John Raskin**, who stood next to him in the photo, as his chief of staff. Raskin leaves his post as a community organizer with Housing Conservation Coordinators. **CH**

By **Edward-Isaac Dove**, **Sal Gentile**, **Andrew J. Hawkins** and **Dan Rivoli**.

CHatter

for a brief break from the campaign.

After a hearty round of glad-handing with Giuliani throughout the dining room, Maltese, Como and Golden took their seats for what they expected, at least, would be a quick meal.

As Golden rattled off a list of Senate races he was keeping his eye on—most of which would turn out badly for the Republicans—a waitress came to take their orders.

Giuliani passed, saying he had already eaten. Maltese ordered an omelet, Golden a sandwich.

And Como? He did not get the chance.

Before he could get in his order—trying to cut through the frenzy of admirers and reporters crowding the table—the waitress left the table to ring up the orders of his fellow campaigners. Even when Como tried to get her attention a second time, she remained strikingly unresponsive.

Giuliani jokingly suggested she was ignoring him on purpose.

"I think she's trying to send me a message," Como quipped.

The message from the voters came in

BACK and FORTH:

Double Jeopardy

Leslie Crocker Snyder is hoping her second run for the Manhattan District Attorney's office is a charm. Undeterred by her loss to the long-serving incumbent, Robert Morgenthau, in 2005, Crocker Snyder plans to run again in 2009.

This race, she feels, will be different.

A former prosecutor and judge, Crocker Snyder has already begun racking up endorsements from law enforcement unions, while other candidates in the D.A.'s race wait to see whether the 90-year-old Morgenthau really will run, despite his repeated assertions that he will.

Crocker Snyder talks about how an economic downturn can lead to an upswing in crime, why the D.A. needs to be seen in the community, and how to talk about her opponent's shortcomings without talking about his age.

What follows in an edited transcript.



ANDREW SOWARTZ

City Hall: Why are you running again?

Leslie Crocker-Snyder: Well, I think the need for change is going to resonate this time with Barack Obama, and the unfortunate economic turmoil which is going to have a major impact on the criminal justice system. I think I have a totally different vision of the criminal justice system than the current D.A. My vision is an extremely proactive one. Obviously, the first point for any D.A. is to keep everybody safe. My record on that I don't think I really have to discuss. I take a very strong position on violent crime. I have a very proactive vision, which is: the D.A. should be out in every community, should form a partnership in every community with law enforcement, social service agencies, with community groups, with health organizations, with businesses and colleges. In other words, that partnership is designed for really one basic reason: my goal will be to break the cycle of crime to the extent that it possibly can be done.

CH: These are all things you think the D.A. should be doing but is not doing right now?

LCS: An awful lot of it is not getting done. I think the D.A.'s office right now is extremely stale and reactive. It's not that they don't have someone who goes and gives a lecture at schools. But this is a very different image. It's actually the D.A. herself going into these communities and becoming part of them, really, with this partnership. I don't really believe the current D.A. is really running the D.A.'s office. I believe his senior staff—and when I say senior, they have been there, many of them, for 25-30 years themselves—I believe they're running the office, and those were not the people who were elected to run the office.

CH: Do you feel anything has changed between when you last ran in 2005 and now?

LCS: A lot of the ideas are the same but they have developed further. And I think also the times have changed.

Repeat Manhattan DA candidate Lesley Crocker Snyder.

And that's what's important to talk about, too. I don't think there's any question that the economy has placed us in many ways in a state of crisis. Unemployment is going up, the deficit is going up, opportunities are going down, and that's going to create great turmoil as we've seen already on a national level, and a city and a state level. I personally believe it means only negative events for the criminal justice system. So what does that mean? I think it means a very aggressive prosecution of financial crimes and economic crimes where it makes sense. And what I mean by that is, resources will always be limited. We need to cooperate with other prosecutorial agencies so we don't just prosecute crimes just to get headlines. So that if there's one case and several jurisdictions who want to prosecute it, we should pool information and the agency that has either the better laws or the better case should proceed on a cooperative level. That's something this office has never been, is cooperative.

CH: Crime has also changed over the past few decades, with increases in high-tech crimes and identity theft concerning many. How will you focus on that?

LCS: I think the office has always been extremely backwards technologically. And it will have to be updated a great deal. So that certainly will be

one point. Whenever there's something in the paper, he then immediately claims he's doing something about it. And I'm not at all convinced that he necessarily puts real resources behind it.

CH: Age has been a theme in the presidential race. It can be tricky running against an opponent so advanced in age. How do you do that?

LCS: I don't think age is really the point that is significant. I hear a lot of other people discuss it. And certainly most people know how old he is and they consider it to be relevant. But to me what is much more relevant is the

staleness of the office. And I think that reflects much more of how long he's been there than any specific numerical age.

CH: Should there be term limits for this office?

LCS: I don't mind term limits. I'm not an advocate per say. I would have no problem abiding by term limits.

CH: If you were D.A., what would be your approach to a spike in crime?

LCS: It would mean putting more resources behind the prosecution behind any violent crime, and also trying to initiate something analogous to what the police department has done. They have this impact program. We have to examine a lot more carefully where the crimes occur—are there pockets here and there?

We would use technology to analyze this much more carefully and precisely than has been done in the past. One thing that has never been done in that office is to hold people accountable. I want to meet with each of my bureaus if I'm privileged to win, once a week at least. Are we going after the important cases? Are we doing it seriously?

CH: What do you make of the other candidates for D.A. who are waiting for Morgenthau to retire before officially announcing their campaigns?

LCS: I feel like anyone who wants to should run. Hopefully, the people would be qualified. I tried to debate Morgenthau over and over again and he refused. He sent a surrogate to most of the meetings. Of course, he picked a woman about my age. I thought it was ridiculous because he's the person who was running. So if there are other people, I hope for the opportunity to debate and discuss my ideas.

CH: What will you do differently than in 2005?

LCS: I didn't know what I was doing before because I never ran for office. I think I've learned a little bit. But the one thing, you're not supposed to say this, but I actually pride myself on not being a politician. I feel like I've spent my life being a public servant, and sometimes when you're a public servant and not a politician you don't always do what politicians are expected to do. You actually answer questions directly and try to be truthful.

CH: Morgenthau has been very public about his disagreements with you. Do you think he continues to run just to prevent you from taking over?

LCS: No. I don't know why he's running. To get inside his mind is not something I could possibly do. This is a democracy, anyone who wants to run should be able to. I don't think he agrees with that. His whole attitude since he was challenged was, "This is my job for life." Whether he'll really run, who knows?

CH

—Andrew J. Hawkins
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I didn't know what I was doing before because I never ran for office. I think I've learned a little bit.



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