

WESTCHESTER HERALD

Volume 5 • Number 187

WHYTMedia.Typepad.com

May 24, 2010 • USA \$2.50



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Weir Only Human Once Upon a Time in America



By Bob Weir

How did we arrive at a time in our history when the concept of the term “illegal” became a form of ethnic discrimination? The law is clear that it is a crime to enter or remain in the United States in violation of federal law.

In addition, states have always had the authority to enforce immigration laws, but, as we all know, they have failed or refused to do so. Moreover, sanctuary policies are illegal according to federal law, yet they are in effect in many states. Arizona, suffering an enormous fiscal and social burden that caused hospitals and schools to overflow and break the state’s budget, had pleaded with the feds for years to stop the southern invasion. Scores of Arizonans have been

see Weir Pg. x

“Q”

BY I.M. COB

White Plains, NY -- On the day when Westchester taxpayers are voting on their respective school district budgets, its time to reflect upon how the “Stop the Tax Madness” movement is progressing in Westchester County. County Executive Rob Astorino ran an amazing “shoestring” campaign that drew off the fear and frustrations of recession weary Westchester taxpayers. He ran on the promise of tax relief, and government consolidation. He ran on the promise of



of Legislators, but a ninth floor staff that was oddly put together.

Kevin Plunkett, a tall man with a short fuse, leads the team as the Deputy County Executive. Though Astorino claims to have

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Referring to...



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The Hezitorial

Mayor Amicone, It's Not Nice to Dupe the NY Daily News



By Hezi Aris

Yonkers, NY -- *The Daily Politics* column dated May 20, 2010, published in *The New York Daily* stipulates that Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone is staying put. “Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone has decided not to run for state Senate this year, dealing a blow to GOP efforts to re-capture

the chamber, our Glenn Blain reports from the State Capitol”

Ms Katz continues to write, “Amicone spokesman David Simpson just called Blain to alert him that the two-term mayor had decided to remain in his current job and not challenge state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, a Democrat.”

“He doesn’t feel he can see Hezitorial Pg. 2

Learn-to-Swim Registration



Yonkers, NY -- Registration for Westchester County’s Learn-to-Swim program will begin on Saturday, June 19, at 11 a.m., at

Saxon Woods Pool in White Plains and at Sprain Ridge Pool and Tibbetts

see Dear G.A.B. Pg.6

**WESTCHESTER
HERALD
WHYTMedia**

Published weekly
WHYTMedia
@gmail.com
Tel: 914-562-0834
WHYTeditor@
gmail.com
WHYTsubscription
@gmail.com

Publisher
Hezi Aris

Editor

Hezi Aris

Columns

Cam Bock

Lee Daniels

Marilyn Elie

Gail Farrelly

Lisa Fine

Peggy Godfrey

Anthony Greco

Diane M. Grassi

Joe Klock, Sr.

Edward I. Koch

Bob Marrone

Richard Nestro

Martin McGloin

Barbara Barton Sloane

Zuri A. Stanback

Henry J. Stern

Andy Wainer

Bob Weir

Roger Witherspoon

Advertising

WHYTads@gmail.com
or call 914-562-0834

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[WHYTeditor@
gmail.com](mailto:WHYTeditor@gmail.com)

The Hezitorial From Page 1

leave city in the middle of a fiscal crisis," Yonkers Mayoral Spokesman David Simpson told Ms Katz.

Yonkersites recognize City Hall spun Ms Katz. The reality is that Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone conducted a poll in which his negatives far exceeded 50 percent. He is in no shape to run for elected office or to consider rescinding term limits, should he continue to believe he can. Mayor Amicone is a lame duck. He has boxed himself in. He has eviscerated all political options once considered viable for him. Hasta la Vista!

The Hezitorial written in the May 12, 2010 edition of the *Yonkers Tribune*, "Yonkers Budget Hearings Mask Mayor's Mental Paralysis BY HEZI ARIS", divulged the reason for Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone removing himself from contention for the New York State Senate race against incumbent Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

The *Yonkers Tribune* editor wrote the following, "While the Yonkers City Council awakens to the opaque crevices hiding unexplained funding allocations in unexpected and undiscovered places, Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone is wracked with mental paralysis that has invaded his psyche since a poll taken to prove his prowess in challenging incumbent Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins fell short. He is outflanked and stymied by accruing a 50 plus percent negative rating. It seems Mayor Amicone can no longer escape blame every time he stands before a mirror pointing to the man that foiled his options for higher office. Mayor Amicone's slow recognition of his self-destructive behavior has reduced his effectiveness as an elected official to its lowest point. His arrogance and back-stabbing tactics have destroyed his alleged quest to unseat Senator

Stewart-Cousins.

"More importantly, Mayor Amicone's negative standings among Yonkersites are so low the prospect for rescinding term limits, so that he may run for a third term, are also dashed.

Republicans had been pushing Amicone for weeks to challenge Stewart-Cousins, one of a handful of Democrats that are deemed vulnerable this election cycle," concluded Editor Hezi Aris

Yonkers City Council Minority Leader Liam McLaughlin received a lukewarm endorsement at the Yonkers City Republican Committee over a week ago when his name came up for nomination. Mr McLaughlin won approximately 2/3rds of the vote, while former Yonkers City Councilman Jeff Bellancio garnered approximately 1/3rd of the vote.

Mayor Amicone's procrastinating over

whether he is fit to challenge incumbent Sen Stewart-Cousins delayed and hampered the process for a Republican contender against Sen Stewart-Cousins to come forward sooner, though Mr Bellancio attempted to do just that approximately 45 days ago. Mr Bellancio's effort won the ire of Mayor Amicone. Mr McLaughlin's efforts have alas been hobbled by Mayor Amicone's indecisiveness.

Yonkers Tribune / Westchester Herald maintain Sen. Stewart-Cousins will be chosen Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Andrew Cuomo's running mate prior to Monday's opening of the Democratic Convention. For background information read the April 22, 2010 edition of the *Yonkers Tribune* article entitled: Exclusive: Senator Stewart-Cousins Likely to be Andrew Cuomo's Running Mate By Hezi Aris.

Complimentary "Brunch & Browse" Art Event

New Rochelle, NY -- On Sunday, June 13th from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. Westchester artist, art collector and enthusiast Yvonne Wynter will open her home at 52 Nob Court in New Rochelle to art gallery owners, interior designers and the public for "Brunch & Browse", a reception and exhibition of art by the local well-known artist David Tobey. The event marks the closing of a two month showcase held there of Tobey's work that features paintings, sculptures and new prints by the artist, and all are invited to attend. There is no charge for admission.

Ms. Wynter first saw Tobey's art at his solo exhibition in November

of '09 at BID Gallery 542, a gallery established last year by the Business Improvement District of New Rochelle. She fell in love with his work, and purchased a number of his paintings for her own collection. "Once I saw David's work" she said "I knew that many of my friends who were also art enthusiasts would want to see them too. There were only a few days left before David's show at the BID Gallery was closing, so I just decided to offer the walls in my own home for him to show them later in the year." It turned out that Mrs. Wynter was right. Many of her friends who saw David's art immediately fell in love

with it too, and the first event attended by over 100 people was a huge success.

In addition to more than two dozen paintings and welded steel sculptures that visitors to her home saw at the first Tobey reception, "Brunch & Browse" will feature new paintings and sculpture, in addition to more than 50 of the artist's both limited and open edition giclées created over the past five years, available at very reasonable prices. For more information on the June 13th "Brunch & Browse"



see Tobey's web site at <http://www.davidthobey.com>, contact the artist at david@davidthobey.com, or dial 914-632-8226. To speak with Ms. Wynter about the exhibition, or for directions to her home contact her by phone at (914) 235-9813.

Yonkers City Council Republicans Support School Wage Freeze



Minority Leader John Murtagh (left) said that based on estimates he has seen, an immediate freeze on raises combined with a pay cut would result in savings of nearly \$50 million. "We have two options" Murtagh stated, "either every employee sacrifices and we get through tough times together or we have massive layoffs and cuts in services that Yonkers can ill afford".

Yonkers, NY -- The Yonkers City Council Republicans May 18, 2010, applauded Yonkers Public School Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio's call for an immediate wage freeze for teachers and school administrators and proposed that a similar municipal wage freeze as well as a five per cent across the board pay cut for both school and municipal employees is necessary as Yonkers struggles with a \$109 million dollar budget shortfall.

Yonkers City Council



According to estimates provided to the Republican caucus a freeze of school raises and step increases would save at least \$21.5 million dollars. A similar freeze on the municipal side would save an additional \$2 million. An across the Board five per cent pay cut could result in an additional \$25 million in savings.

Yonkers City Councilman John Larkin (center), who initially proposed the five

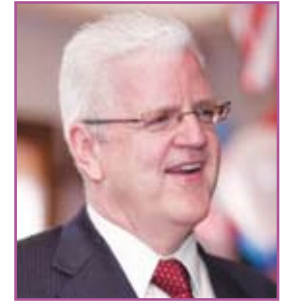
per cent pay cut for all employees, stated that "given the extraordinary nature of the current economic downturn, equally extraordinary measures are necessary to meet the challenge". Larkin noted that the money saved with freezes and cuts, when combined with other cost cutting measures proposed by Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone, new revenues and proper state aid would close the projected gap.

Councilman Dennis Shepherd (right), who has been a vocal critic of

New York State's failure to properly fund Yonkers' schools, added that "due to Albany's failure to act responsibly, the City Council and other local officials have no choice but to make the difficult decisions necessary to keep Yonkers solvent".

Editor's Background

Note: Read the May 12, 2010 article entitled "Yonkers Budget Hearings Mask Mayor's Mental Paralysis BY HEZI ARIS" to find the following: "Inside "acid-tongued" sources familiar with backroom scenarios have advised talk of Mayor Amicone postulating a 5 percent across the board pay cut, as told in various venues by Mr Murtagh, eschewing likewise support by fellow Councilmembers Larkin and Shepherd, is a falsehood. Mayor Amicone is reluctant to



promote this concept. He is simply too paralysed to think. Yonkersites have concluded Mr Murtagh is disingenuous. Were he supportive of the 5 percent pay cut, a press release to that effect would have been issued. None has yet been issued."

A Movement with Momentum!



By Mike Ramondelli

What a difference a month makes!

When my campaign for State Assembly first came to life earlier this year back in my Yonkers living room, I was mindful of the obstacles ahead. I was taking on an entrenched career politician, a powerful political dynasty, and most of all, a long-standing Albany culture that angrily protects incumbents and treats public service as

a bottomless trough of perks, pork, and personal entitlements.

However, I had reason to be optimistic. Regular folks in Yonkers and elsewhere were sounding every bit as fed up with this poisonous, autocratic Albany culture as I was, and were ready to become active in politics (many of you for the first time in your lives) to end that culture and bring reform to our state government. I saw an opportunity to be an agent of reform for the benefit of the city where I was born, raised, educated, and where I still reside and am blessed to have made a good life for myself.

That impulse to serve, to reform, and to take political power out of the hands of complacent influence-brokers in the capital and return it to

you where it belongs drove me to announce my candidacy formally on Tax Day last month. Since then, the outpouring of support -- the turnout at the announcement event, the kind financial support from civic-minded citizens, even people waving to me on the sidewalk with smiles and shouts of "The Right Mike!" -- has been overwhelming! Early this month I was honored to accept the official nomination to stand for State Assembly, and our campaign to take our fight for reform to Albany will now advance to its next level.

It's at times like this that I need your support more than ever! The obstacles I listed above haven't gone away, and our grassroots reform movement has the establishment politicians nervous enough that

they'll be dragging out the heavy artillery to hold onto the seats they've come to consider their personal possessions. Take a moment to visit our campaign website at www.ramondelli2010.com and see how you can help: you can find out how to volunteer, donate, find out more about me and my positions, and look for upcoming events.

Scroll down to the end of this email to follow us on Facebook and Twitter as well.

Thank you for all you've done so far; let's bring this fight for Yonkers across the finish line!

Mike Ramondelli is the Republican nominee to represent the 93rd Assembly District.

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Jenkins, Gronowski, and Field *On the Level* on WVOX-1460 AM with Hezi Aris

New Rochelle, NY -- Jeff Field, Director of Another power-packed java Communications for the jolted *On the Level* radio Catholic League. Up to show to awaken the challenge your sensibilities will be heard this Tuesday, May 25th, on WVOX-1460 AM and www.WVOX.com, from 10:00 through 11:00 am. The show opens with Westchester County Legislature Chairman Ken Jenkins brings us up to speed on what has transpired the night before. Then, Yonkers City Councilwoman Joan Gronowski (3rd District). We close the show with



Bob Marrone discuss hyper local issues on the *Good Morning Westchester* radio program hosted by Bob Marrone

For those who crave more news with a Yonkers perspective consider listening to Hezi Aris Wednesday mornings at 8:35 am when he and

“America’s great community radio stations!”

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Bronxville Holds Memorial Day Blood Drive

Bronxville, NY --- The Village of Bronxville will hold a blood drive on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31, 2010. Healthy individuals are encouraged to donate blood between the hours of 9:30 AM and 3:30 PM at Bronxville Elementary School, 177 Pondfield Road, Gym, Bronxville, NY 10708.

Memorial Day honors those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country and freedom. Please give blood in honor of those who serve to keep us healthy and safe. Nearly



everyone knows someone who serves in the military, or maybe an officer, firefighter, first responder, or someone who works in healthcare. Or, maybe

you know someone whose life was saved by these individuals. Please donate blood on Monday, May 31 at Bronxville Elementary School, in honor of those who respond to the call of duty and give of themselves to help others. A single blood donation can help save the lives of three people. People can give blood every 56 days.

To donate blood, please call: 1-800-933-2566, or visit www.nybloodcenter.org.

Mother Teresa Campaign Continues

New York, NY -- Catholic League President Bill Donohue comments on Day 8 (May 21, 2010) of the protest campaign on behalf of Mother Teresa:

“Today I am writing to the U.S. bishops in the Midwest notifying them that Anthony Malkin, the owner of the Empire State Building, has decided not to overrule those who have chosen to deny a tribute to Mother Teresa: our request to have the towers shine blue and white, the colors of her congregation, on August 26th, the 100th anniversary of her birth (and the day the U.S. Postal Service is honoring her with a commemorative stamp), was denied without explanation. Yet the same persons who chose to stiff Mother Teresa decided to honor the Chinese Communist revolution last year, even though 77 million innocent men, women and children were murdered under Mao Zedong.

“Everyone is being asked to sign our petition (click here), and to write



to Anthony Malkin. His address is Malkin Properties, One Grand Central Place, 60 E. 42nd St., NY, NY 10165.

“Also contact Melanie Maasch at the Empire State Building: mmaasch@esbny.com.”

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Sound Shore Medical Center Receives Gift of Artwork

New Rochelle, NY -- Recently Sound Shore Medical Center's Emergency Department received a much-anticipated gift from the New Rochelle Jewish Coalition.

The colorful, six-panel canvas depicting a mother and baby giraffe is on display in the pediatric waiting area of the Emergency Department. The handsome gift is not only a nice addition to the décor and a pleasure for the children, but also a lovely reminder of the caring individuals who painted it.

Marcia Assor of the New Rochelle Jewish Coalition applied for and received grant monies to

assemble artwork to benefit New Rochelle. With the funds, Ms. Assor chose to purchase designs from the Foundation for Hospital Art and solicit student and adult volunteers from six of the area synagogues to help complete the hands-on art pieces. The volunteers would bring the art to life.

After many hours of work on three murals and 35 volunteers later, Ms. Assor contacted Sound Shore Medical Center with the offer of one of their completed pieces – an eye-catching mural. In addition to providing pleasure and camaraderie for the volunteer artists and spreading joy through art,



Marcia Assor, New Rochelle Jewish Coalition; Erica Leventhal, Director of Youth Activities at Beth El Synagogue; Joseph Ponticello, MD, Director of Emergency at SSMC; Volunteers Daniel Hoffman of Temple Israel and Isaac Assor of Beth El; Rabbi David Kosak of Beth El; Volunteer Heather Herman, Beth El; Barry Shainker, Youth Director at Temple Israel; Lila Campbell-Gardener, RN at SSMC; and Volunteer Ari brown, Beth El.

the Coalition's project will have far-reaching impact. It will now brighten the day for children who visit the Emergency Department at Sound Shore Medical Center.

For additional information on Sound Shore Medical Center's Care. For Life. services, visit www.soundshore.org.

New Seafood Restaurant to Open on Yonkers Waterfront

Yonkers, NY -- Restaurateur Elio Rugova will open the Dolphin Restaurant in the Yonkers Waterfront Development at the site of the former Pier View restaurant located at 1 Van Der Donck Street, in Yonkers, NY. His son Jimmy will join him as general manager. Award-winning chef Anthony DeMarsico, who garnered rave reviews from the *New York Times*, *The Bergen Record* and *The Greenwich Times*, will be oversee the kitchen.

Yonkers native Rugova was a three star chef at Captain's Table in Manhattan who went on to be the chef/partner of a seafood restaurant, also

called Dolphin, in the 1980's in New York City. He has spent the last two decades working at the ever popular Mulino's in White Plains. Jimmy Rugova honed his restaurant skills working at the Las Vegas location of Smith & Wollensky Steakhouse among many other venues.

Jimmy will be assisted by his brothers Skel, Agron and D. Mr. Rugova and his sons are busy renovating the former Pier View location, which is located at the edge of the Hudson River. They have done an extensive job redesigning the bar to accentuate the international wines they will serve. They have also redesigned certain aspects



of the kitchen which go toward improving kitchen efficiencies. The renovated décor will include various stone, wood and glass finishes, as well as up to date LED lighting. They hope to open sometime time in May.

Chef DeMarsico has created a new menu that

will feature a wide variety of fresh seafood with a diverse international flair that will extend the range from oven roasted sea base, whole fish to Lobster DelFano. The kitchen will also offer a panoply of small plates and meat dishes to compliment the large wine element that the

restaurant will offer.

The owner of the property, Dwight Collins, said he "was very impressed when he met the Rugova family." "This is truly the America Dream. When Elio Rugova arrived in The United States he did not speak a word of English, now he and his sons are opening their own restaurant." Dwight Collins, one of the principals Collins Enterprises LLC and Hudson Park also said "This restaurant location is critical to the vibrancy of the Yonkers Waterfront revitalization and we are confident that the Rugova's will be a resounding success."



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New Rochelle Neighborhood Association Members Question Development



By Peggy Godfrey

The City of New Rochelle's new Development Commissioner, Michael Freimuth, while admitting to being a "novice on New Rochelle," also stated that he does not see the present development projects in the same way "as residents do." Most recently he was employed in high-level planning and development positions in Stamford and Bridgeport, Connecticut. He said that he has a "host of things" on his agenda, including reorganizing his office and restructuring his staff's duties. In his view, the Comprehensive Plan of 1996 needs to be readdressed in 2010. Since every time City Council meets a zoning change is presented, he felt the "zoning code needs to be

rewritten." He cited new proposals for Church-Division lots and the future use of Davids Island. For example, a plan should "do the job" without having the public "fight everything in the plan." Developers, he said, want long-term commitments.

The train station is New Rochelle's link to places from Newark to New Haven, and the city is in a strategic location. He felt the overall goal should be practical and strategic and questioned "How do you remain competitive?" He asked how do we play into business growth and wanted to know if the training in the schools was adequate. Freimuth proposed "tinkering with certain ideas, such as the Transit Center as a growth center."

Steve Mayo had the first question, asking if cost was a factor in why the Comprehensive (Master) Plan had not been changed since 1996. The plan would be completed in-house without outside

consultants, but Freimuth warned the New York State Quality Review Act (SEQRA) law is different from the other 49 states. Leroy Grayson wanted to know what happened to the New Rochelle bus terminal (for long distance buses) that was supposed to be at the New Rochelle Transit Center. Friemuth said he doesn't understand why the train station is "in a ditch." The flooding on several streets and the inadequate sewage plant were brought up by Ward Henderson. Omar Small, Assistant City Manager, answered the flooding and back-ups are being addressed in a Hazard Mitigation plan. There is a City survey for citizens on the web site, www.newrochelleonline.com which he encouraged everyone to complete. When questioned by Patricia Zaffo about how the public is supposed to know about this survey, Small felt the Neighborhood Associations could help with this especially since many people "don't know

how to ask questions."

The Echo Bay and Cappelli developments are still in progress and Marino Michelotti wanted to know if Freimuth had the freedom to dispute what the developers are doing. Freimuth answered that the agreements have to be honored. When questioned further about the proposed 700 apartments in Echo Bay which could bring in "a gang of kids" to the schools, Friemuth felt one and two bedroom apartments would not bring in children. Charles McLaren felt development near the railroad cannot be supported because there are four apartment buildings in the area which have low water pressure and their residents cannot take a shower in the morning. He felt the water pipes were not big enough. George Imburgia wanted to know how all this development is going to support the average person. When Freimuth replied he wanted to look at growth, Imburgia suggested looking at New

York City and their big deficit in 2007. Questions continued to be raised about how much is too much growth in the City. Mitch Spalin felt Friemuth seemed open to new ideas but told him that the citizens' groups have suggested many ideas but they find that whatever a developer says, the City Council approves. Freimuth answered that the "only way I can survive is to be in rooms like this to listen and argue," when it has legitimacy. After the meeting of the Confederation of Neighborhood Associations and New Rochelle Citizens Reform Cub Imburgia felt after listening to the new Commissioner, some people thought they had answers to their questions. "It seemed to some people Freimuth did not have a free hand to do what counts. His talk appeared to echo the Mayor's views on development in the City of New Rochelle."

Learn-to-Swim Registration *From Page 1*

Brook Pool in Yonkers.

The program offers swimming lessons for all ages and ability levels from toddlers to senior citizens. Classes will be held during July and are conducted by American Red Cross certified swimming instructors and lifeguards.

The schedule for classes is as follows:

* Pre-schoolers ages 3-5: classes meet Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. or from 10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., and run July 7 through July 30. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

* Children ages 6-8: classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., and run July 6 through July 29.

* Children ages 9-12: classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., and run July 6 through July 29.

* Adults and teens (13 and up): classes meet Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., and run July 6 through July 30.

Registration fee is \$75 and you must register at the pool at which you would like to take classes. All

registration takes place on a first-come, first-served basis. Pool admission fees are included in the registration fee for the participant. Adults and teens participating in the Learn-to-Swim program must present a valid Westchester County resident Park Pass; children under 12 registering for the lessons must be accompanied by a Park Pass-holding parent or adult guardian.

The Learn-to-Swim program is sponsored by Westchester County Parks in cooperation with the American Red Cross,

Westchester County Chapter.

For more information, call the pools directly: Saxon Woods at (914) 995-4480; Tibbetts Brook Pool at (914) 231-2867; and Sprain Ridge at (914) 231-3450.

For more information, call (914) 864-PARK or go to www.westchestergov.com/parks.

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It's Time for Mayor Amicone to Scarf it Down

By Hezi Aris

Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone asserts of late that the school funding formula has caused Yonkers' financial plight. Casting blame upon anyone and everyone, yet absolving himself, Mayor Amicone now points his accusatory finger upon Albany, specifically in his admonition of the Albany Delegation representing the City of Yonkers (COY). Those on Amicone's hit list are Deputy Minority Leader Senator Jeff Klein, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Assemblymen Mike Spano, J. Gary Pretlow, and Richard Brodsky.

The school funding formula has been skewed to serve northern communities with subsidies greater than for cities such as Yonkers and Mount Vernon predicated on the disparity of employment and income. In contrast to the plight elsewhere, Mayor Phil Amicone's FY 2010-2011 Budget shoulders a 109.5 million deficit. Since it was divulged, the deficit has grown, yet Mayor Amicone chooses to be silent about that fact.

Mayor Amicone had hoped to escape the responsibility of contending with an ever ballooning budget deficit crisis that has been nurtured throughout his tenure as former deputy mayor and present mayor by challenging Senator Stewart-Cousins for her seat. Mayor Amicone's plans were dashed by a poll he will not disclose that revealed his negative numbers exceed 50 plus percent, a death knell that has been surely difficult for Mayor Amicone to scarf down. Former Yonkers City Council Minority Leader Liam McLaughlin,

has stepped in, winning support by the Yonkers City republican Committee to challenge for Sen Stewart-Cousins seat. Yonkers tribune still maintains Sen Stewart-Cousins will be designated Lt. Governor status upon Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's announcement of his candidacy for Governor of New York.

Mayor Amicone's backroom plot to unseat Senator Stewart-Cousins was premised on reviving the outcry first heard from former Mayor John Spencer, when Mr Amicone was then deputy mayor. When acceding to office, Mayor Amicone lacked the ability to articulate the demerits of the school funding formula. He did not understand then, and likely still, there is no formula. It is a ruse; rather than a formula, Albany delivers to the most powerful.

Mayor Amicone was spared contending with the school funding formula because Senator Stewart-Cousins' predecessor, former Senator Nick Spano, during his last three terms, which overlapped Mr Amicone acceding to mayor from deputy mayor, by fighting for his political survival delivered one-shot infusions of funds to COY that satisfied COY's needs over then senator Spano's last years in office.

Once City Hall realized they could squeeze "Santa Claus" for more, they squeezed harder and harder; got more and more, but did not credit Sen Spano's accomplishment. In fact, they chastised him publicly and kissed his derriere in the closet. The chatter about a rift between Nick spano and Phil Amicone is nothing but an act. Having smitten "Santa Claus", City Hall would first castigate,

and then shun Sen Stewart-Cousins, defining her as incompetent, lazy, and simply not up to the task.

When Ms Stewart-Cousins finally defeated then Sen Spano, voter disgust of incumbents changed the demeanor of the once Republican majority in the New York State Senate to one dominated by Democrats. Ms Stewart-Cousins became one of the bright stars among the majority leadership.

Not quick to adapt or adjust to the new political reality, Yonkers City Hall hurled political epithets at Sen Stewart-Cousins. All they while, Sen Stewart-Cousins star was rising as a legislator. She proved herself capable, assertive, focused, and competent to deliver. Her will won over the plotting tactics and the political dogs Mayor Amicone unleashed upon her. He lost.

Mayor Amicone, desperate for more funding now, continues his harangue against Sen Stewart-Cousins, though less so, her New York State Legislature colleagues.

One must wonder if Mayor Amicone believes he is entitled to "bully" women about. To a lesser extend, Mayor Amicone believes he is permitted license to do just that to Assemblyman Mike Spano. With regard to Sen Stewart-Cousins he does believe he is entitled to bully her about; with regard to Assemblyman Spano, it is all show.

Mayor Amicone has worked over-time to estrange himself by ridiculing and denigrating the Albany Delegation, the only conduit for resolution to COY's financial crisis. Mayor Amicone first relented to the new reality when over two hundred

people came to 28 Wells Avenue, Sen Stewart-Cousins' district office, to voice their hopes Sen Stewart-Cousins was doing all possible to remedy the plight Yonkers was suffering among her colleagues in Albany. An impromptu march toward Yonkers City Hall, attended by Yonkersites, union leaders and members, and Assemblymen J. Gary Pretlow, Richard Brodsky, and Mike Spano, was surprisingly met by a face to face talk among all the protagonists. At the invitation of Mayor Amicone. Present were labor, the State Delegation, Mayor Amicone and media. It was a 90 minute discourse that will require greater insight, focus, accommodation, and leadership.

The shout for a fair and equitable school funding formula continues. The reality is that is is nothing more than a blame game now. Were the concept to earn credibility in Albany, it must first earn its credentials in Yonkers and Mount Vernon.

The argument made by John Spencer as mayor, then dropped by his successor Mayor Amicone, has been nothing more than an accusation to demean those outside Yonkers' inner circle, the infamous "Family and Friends Club". The argument for a fair and equitable school funding formula has won hearts but not minds. Ask any Yonkersite or Mount Vernon resident, among other communities, if the formula is well defined, and they will tell you it is not. Dig a little deeper and they cannot tell you why it is unfair, if there is another solution, and if so, whether it could find support among the NYS Legislature.

Were one to listen to Mayor Amicone his conceptualization of the school funding formula one immediately recognizes his being played for a fool or his perpetuating a lie; there is no funding formula, it is simply a will of power over the will of someone else's power. If one were to allow Mayor Amicone passionate definition of the school funding formula, why has he not translated his passion and concepts to an amenable document worthy of being presented to Sen Stewart-Cousins? Is he not proficient enough to rewrite a formula right? Is Mayor Amicone too proud to scarf it down?

Why does Mayor Amicone stand on ceremony? If he is so sure his cry for a fair and equitable school funding formula will glean the funds necessary to satisfy his \$109.5 million plus deficit for FY2010-2011 alone, why does he retreat from going the distance. Let him put his resolution before the Albany Delegation in formal document form at a forum open to the public, open to the media, and televised to win the hearts of Yonkersites, the Yonkers City Council Membership, The Yonkers PTA, The Yonkers Board of Education Trustees, Yonkers Public School Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio, and most importantly, the People of New York State.

His failure to go the extra distance, shows Mayor Amicone to be nothing more than a talker, not a doer, at a time when good enough is NOT good enough.

Despite having lost and wasted an opportunity to avoid the calamity we now face, Mayor Amicone

It's Time for Mayor Amicone to Scarf it Down *From Page 7*

still has the time to assign Yonkers Corporation Counsel to resurrect the lawsuit dropped against Albany first brought to court by the City of Utica which Yonkers came to join. This lawsuit, paid for by funds meant to school Yonkers' student population

cost over \$2 million dollars employing legal eagles who were for all intent and purpose "Friends and Family". The legal suit was withdrawn at the behest of Thomas Weibrecht, present Yonkers Program Administrator for Capital Improvements. The \$2

million were squandered to the benefit of the "Friends and Family Club", to the detriment of Mayor Amicone's argument to the contrary today.

If the school funding formula is not a "formula" but rather the will of power over the will of

someone else's power over another, it behooves Mayor Amicone to choke down on the scarf and muster the forces to draw a plan ready for presentation to Sen Stewart-Cousins with the enthusiastic support of those mentioned, among others, to arm Sen Stewart-

Cousins and her NYS Legislature colleagues the appropriate ammunition that will be credible to the entire NYS Legislature.

That is the task of a true leader Mayor Amicone, anything less is... enough said.

Yonkers Mayor Amicone: 'Smooth Operator' - An Engineering Feat

By Dr. Ed U. Cator

Yonkers, NY -- The changing of the "guard" at the Yonkers Board of Education (YBoE) from Bernadette Dunne to Andy Api is about the continuation and prolongation of the Phil Amicone regime at City Hall. Api is, and will be, the personification of Phil Amicone at the YBoE; this will extend Phil Amicone's term and influence and serve to protect Phil's interests at the YBoE.

Let's be clear about one thing.... This has nothing to do with the educational side at 28 Wells Avenue; it has everything to do with the business side.



Where Bernadette Dunne served at Phil's altar, Andy Api will now continue in the role of acolyte. Amicone, Dunne, and Api all have Manhattan College connections. Only the venue has changed. Mrs. Dunne served herself and Manhattan College on the

educational job placement side. Andy Api will make sure "projects" on the capital side, under the aegis of his friend Mr John Carr, are implemented through the "Family and Friends Club".

The assumption is that Mrs Dunne is retiring from her "position" at Manhattan College and therefore is no longer in need of the opportunities presented to her at the YBoE. Mr Api, recently retired as the head of the Engineering Department at City Hall, also a close personal friend of Mayor Amicone, and clearly one of the founding members of the "Family and Friends Club", can



be trusted to protect and implement the Mayor's "vision" at the YBoE.

After all, Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio will soon be leaving and the reappointed Rt. Rev. Gerald Sudick has readily acquiesced in his first term as a Trustee to be the perfect

foil for Mayor Amicone. None of these Trustees spend any real time at the YBoE!

Actually, Bernard's Pierorazio's superintendency should benefit immensely from the fact that with Mrs Dunne's departure no one will challenge him educationally, and for that, the entire school system will suffer the consequences.

In his final year in office, Mayor Amicone will be able to accomplish what he wanted to do seven years ago, that is, to take over the YBoE and transform it into a city department. With Api's appointment, that will come to bear.

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Statement Regarding State Overtime Cuts



By Jeff Klein
Deputy Majority Leader,
New York State Senate,
34th District

Albany, NY -- The State Senate's Task Force on Government Efficiency, chaired by State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader Jeff Klein, commended NYS Director of State

Operations Valerie Grey and NYS Budget Director Robert Megna Wednesday, May 19, 2010, for placing a moratorium on overtime in all Executive Branch agencies.

"Nearly six months after the release of the first investigation by my office which found egregious and unnecessary overtime being spent at a rapid rate by a state agency and nearly three months after the State Senate launched the Senate Taskforce on Government Efficiency which continued to uncover tens of millions of dollars in wasteful overtime spending, I am

pleased to see state Budget Director Robert Megna and Director of State Operations Valerie Grey have recognized this is a practice we simply cannot afford. New York State spends more than \$400 million each year in overtime, putting an immediate end to unmandated overtime during this tough fiscal time is a difficult decision but a smart one - it's time for New York to get smart about spending abuses, and stop writing checks we can't cash," said State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).

Mayor Marvin's Column



By Mary C. Marvin
Mayor of the Village
of Bronxville

This beautiful spring weather signals a new season in the Village and with it a host of worthwhile activities.

This past weekend the Women's Club hosted a tribute to our Village veterans incorporating their stories and photos in a poignant display organized by Villagers Kathy De Russo and Mary Westmoreland, USA Colonel Retired, with the assistance of the Bronxville Historical Conservancy. They have collected the names of over 1,500 residents who have served in the Armed Forces. Not only are we grateful to them as a group, but if you see a veteran, especially at this time of the year, a personal thank you is certainly in order. We do have heroes among us.

Our Farmer's Market will officially open on May 29th with a season extending until November 20th. The Market is located at Stone Place and Paxton Avenue adjacent to the paddle courts from 8:30AM to 1PM every Saturday, rain or shine.

Our Market is so popular that new vendors ask to join weekly. In addition to the fruits, vegetables and meats from only Hudson Valley farms, new products include ice pops made with fresh local fruit, organic baby food and homemade candles, soaps and lavender products.

In its ninth year and ably run by former Chamber of Commerce Director, Mary Liz Mulligan, the market is a joint venture between the Village and the Chamber.

The Market keeps expanding because its philosophy of "growing local and buying local" resonates with the customers. One of our fruit vendors still works the orchard that has been in his family since 1712 and our produce supplier is the fourth generation to work on the family's black

dirt farm. As a result, the products sold are fresher and healthier than what is traditionally offered. Mary Liz Mulligan is also a member of the Village's Green Committee which dovetails nicely with both our missions.

In the theme of healthy and organic, our very own Bronxville Beautification Council is sponsoring a Garden Tour, rain or shine, from 10AM to 4PM on Saturday, June 12th. This is a self-guided tour, beginning in front of Village Hall, of some of the most beautiful gardens in our Village followed by a wine and cheese reception. Tickets are \$20 in advance and may be purchased at Tryforos and Pernice, Kensington Paper, East India Designs, Mrs. Morgan's Flower Shop, Pete's Park Place Tavern, Isabel's Hair Salon and Womrath's Bookstore. Tickets may also be purchased outside of Village Hall on the day of the event. The Garden Tour is the Bronxville Beautification Council's major fundraiser and all proceeds go directly back

into making the Village resplendent with flowers and new landscaping.

In stark contrast, the signage and walking advertisements for Swoozie's detracts from the standards of our Village and has added an unattractive storefront to our streetscape. Our Building Department has issued violations and I have spoken to the liquidation company. However, they refused to comply with Village ordinances and our counsel has advised that the language in the Federal Bankruptcy decree from the Federal Court in Atlanta effectively trumps our local Village Code. The language in the ruling specifically mentions/encourages this kind of marketing with the theory that it will aid in maximizing the return to investors. Our only recourse was to hire a Georgia-based attorney to argue our position. We did not believe we could win on the merits and with the store scheduled to close on June 3rd, we did not

believe it was a wise use of resources.

Finally, in an effort to generate new non-property tax revenues for the next budget year, we have elected to enforce our parking meters starting at 8AM instead of the traditional 9AM. We are legally allowed, given current code, to charge from 8AM to 9PM but we have only chosen to add the one morning hour. We expect to generate over \$80,000, or the equivalent of one percentage point in taxes, by adding this one hour to our enforcement policy. Since it is a change from the norm, we will be alerting parkers with flyers and e-mails and will give ample time to adjust to the new regulations.

We are starting to see some positive signs in the revenue sources that affect our budget and we hope the trend continues.

Happy Spring and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Memorial Day Parade on May 31st at 9AM on Pondfield Road.

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“Q” *From Page 1*

had a long relationship with Plunkett, he was never seen during the campaign. Conventional wisdom leads us to believe that theirs was a relationship forged during Astorino's days as a school board trustee. The reality is that Plunkett could further the "Friends and Family" network of movers and shakers. However, movers and shakers are who you need when you want to broker deals.

Also sitting on the ninth floor are Christine Sculti and John Cerino, formerly of Mayor Phil Amicone's office in Yonkers. To hear Sculti is to believe it was she and Cerino who orchestrated Astorino's campaign and catapulted him to victory. For their heroic efforts, Sculti was rewarded a position as Plunkett's right hand and Cerino the scheduler for the new CE. While the men and women who work at Yonker's City Hall are all breathing a sigh of relief to be rid of Ms. Sculti, one has to wonder what the holdovers from the Spano regime think of her. If Christine Sculti has been elevated to a management position within the administration she must be a capital "Q", while John Cerino, who has a clerical position, is merely a small "q". It seem size matters!

Ned McCormack is another interesting addition to the ninth floor. Hired as the media director, he was suddenly elevated to

the ultimate title of senior advisor and was granted an 18K salary adjustment. Upon reflection, he wasn't around during the campaign either. Astorino claims that McCormack has been a trusted advisor for years yet other than being a custodian of the controversial Westhelp money given to Valhalla Schools for being good neighbors to a homeless shelter, what has McCormack done?

At least Laurence Gottlieb has an impressive resume with Entergy.

Perhaps the oddest acquisition to the ninth floor has been Dina Balestri, assistant to the long suffering Chief of Staff George Oros. A Facebook friend of Rob Astorino's from high school, Ms. Balestri resides in Pennsylvania and commutes to White Plains on a Monday morning and returns back to Pennsylvania on a Friday afternoon. Good thing that the county doesn't have a residency requirement or Ms. Balestri would be out of luck.. But one must wonder, what did she do for Astorino to have gained such a lofty position in a county government where she doesn't even reside?

Rounding out the new faces on the ninth floor are Rob Alberty who managed Astorino's Campaign Headquarters, but now conducts low level intergovernmental affairs,

while texting others on his county issued Blackberry.

Then there is legal eagle Mary Mahon, a loyal Westchester County Republican Committee Chairman Doug Colety soldier who is overseeing the housing debacle with her assistant Barbara Tubiolo, who just so happened to be elevated from the Westchester County Board of Elections when her husband Justin delivered a winning ward to Rob Alberty in Yonkers. Ms. Mahon holds the crucial position of being the individual who must dance with the Federal Monitor, the municipalities, the developers, and Kevin Plunkett simultaneously, all while getting this housing project off the ground. Poor Ms. Mahon; she had no idea that she would have to learn to dance the Virginia Reel when she accepted this position. It was believed that Mahon would be assisting Westchester County attorney Bob Meehan on this project or visa versa, but as witnessed by numerous residents, Bob Meehan can be seen walking down Main Street, with his wife a few steps behind him, looking up at the Ritz Carlton Towers like the forlorn tourist he has turned out to be.

The most interest protagonist in this interesting cast of characters is Chief of Staff George Oros. Mr. Oros, a longtime former Westchester County

Legislator is known as a common sense sort of guy who doesn't thrive on chaos or bad language. Aiding him is his trusted assistant Katy Delgado whom he brought up with him from the 8th floor. That was the last staff decision Mr. Oros has made; he has since lost any further say in picking his staff. He is saddled with two women who are holdovers from the days of former CE Andy Spano. One takes phone calls from constituents and the other answers emails. Mr. Oros also has Ms. Balestri in his department; rounding that group is Brendan Murnane, the boy Friday intern from Astorino's campaign days. Murnane is mutating his campaign role to accommodate the pay afforded on the 9th floor. He is the individual who drives Astorino to fundraisers, funerals, and other photo ops. When he's not doing that, he may be recognized in public acting the ambassador for the CE or on the 9th floor posting on his Facebook account. George Oros must drive home every night with a headache from this screaming madness.

Where is the County Executive in the midst of all this personnel jockeying? He's out doing exactly what Andy Spano did... attending fundraisers, and building his war chest for his next term. As a matter of fact, the May 18th

event was advertised as a low level fundraiser and invitations were mailed out to his volunteers. Someone should remind Mr. Astorino that his volunteers were volunteers because they couldn't afford to be donors and that 150.00 is not low level in this economy. His former volunteers are not earning the big bucks the ensemble cast on the 9th floor are making.

It seems Rob Astorino has forgotten about moving the ball down the field in order to score a touchdown with the taxpayers of Westchester County. He's delivered a watered down version of a health care package, and taken credit for reducing Westchester County Police overtime by 25% during the first quarter. He has held two staff meetings with County Employees to inform them of impending layoffs and has imposed a hiring freeze. He's driving himself to work as promised, albeit in a 5-months old county-owned SUV, and strolling about Mamaroneck Avenue on nice days.

Sadly, Rob Astorino has delivered little to the residents of Westchester.

I.M. Cob will be checking in every now and then to see if Rob and the 9th floor collective ever look down the street to realize we spotted them first.

We Welcome Your Comments

Tell us if we are doing something wrong, and what we are doing right.

WHYTEditor@gmail.com

Departmental Investigation vs Criminal Investigation Over Pilfered Gasoline

By Hezi Aris

Yonkers, NY -- Three Yonkers fire houses dispense fuel. Of those three, two dispense diesel fuel, and one dispenses gasoline. The use of any of those fuel dispensers require the use of a key and code consisting of a specific number of digits gleaned from one's social security number. A highly secure method, but not foolproof. Among the Yonkers Fire Department (YFD), it would likely take less than 30 seconds for any of the YFD personnel to get a hold of any other firefighter's social security number, and if inclined, knowing the number of digits required to activate the firefighter "gasboys", would be able to pilfer almost unnoticed. In reality, incongruities had been noticed over the last three years yet mention of the pilfering concern was only brought to the union's attention about mid April of this year.

What was to be a departmental investigation, a contractual formality

stipulated between the union membership and City Hall, was instead eclipsed by a criminal investigation conducted solely by the Yonkers Police Department (YPD).

A departmental investigation demands an appearance and testimony of those called upon to testify and permitting union representation. A criminal investigation inculcates constitutional rights, legal representation, a right not to incriminate oneself, to plead the Fifth Amendment, among other protocol. Despite the disparity formalized in various writings, and contracts, the YFD believes their union contractual rights and agreements have been usurped by a criminal investigation that is not yet called for. City Hall is in fact claiming it is conducting a departmental investigation yet is in fact conducting a criminal investigation. Therein lies much contention and growing animosity and mistrust.

In fact, when the YFD presented their oral arguments before the

Honorable Supreme Court Justice Orazio Bellantoni, he agreed. This was after Justice Bellantoni asked if the YFD was intent on thwarting a criminal investigation. Assured that the preliminary action of a departmental investigation must be the first step, and if warranted, moved to a criminal investigation, was a reasoned approach, Justice Bellantoni yesterday ordered a Restraining Order against the City of Yonkers (COY) for a two weeks time period that does not preclude COY from pursuing a criminal investigation thereafter.

Rather than a cooling off period, Yonkers City Councilman Dennis Shepherd adept at mimicking Mayor Phil Amicone's accusatory finger pointing proclivities, and Yonkers City Council Minority Leader John Murtagh's ability to regurgitate Mayor Amicone's in kind sentiment with the use of prolific verbal calisthenics, an attempt to demean every member of the YFD by allegations yet to be proved have mesmerized Yonkers

in a manner reminiscent of a Salem witch hunt.

In life and in politics, there are no coincidences. It is curious that a three year investigation should only in mid April come to a "conclusion" not fully disclosed, and that rather than bring the allegation before the public, is instead a kangaroo court styled to deflect Yonkersites from their gravest of concerns over COY's paralyzed budgetary state of affairs that have soared beyond the divulged \$109.5 million deficit.

Mayor Amicone is mad at everyone. He believes he can bully his staff to derisive and illegal action upon Yonkers Firefighters. He cannot. He must stop his out of control rantings and "chill"!

Mayor Amicone has anointed Commissioner of Human Resources Brian Lucyk to do his dirty work.

At most, the findings regarding this situation will fall upon a few people who will or will not be found to have pilfered fuel for their use or others. Those found guilty will be punished to the letter of the law.

There is no law that can demand civility, prudence, patience, wisdom, and leadership from Mayor Phil Amicone. His very conduct in light of this issue demands the strong mayor form of government must be recalibrated to assume a balance commensurate with the Yonkers City Council.

For that, I thank Mayor Amicone to make such an eloquent and long awaited case for equality among the branches of government. Perhaps come January 1, 2011, Yonkers Inspector General Dan Schorr will garner the intestinal fortitude he requires to be the inspector general he envisioned for himself and which he professes to be.

This legal situation must be permitted time to be resolved through the courts and be demanded to be open to the public specifically because the public has had its face rubbed in it by the antics and histrionics heard from City Hall.

Mayor Amicone definitely needs a plan, this one is not working.

Sen. Stewart-Cousins Announces Legislation to Empower Law Enforcement Against Vehicle Thefts

Albany, NY -- On May 18th, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th SD) announced passage of legislation (S1899A) to provide law enforcement with new tools to prosecute career car thieves. This bill, introduced by Deputy Majority Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx) makes it easier to bring felony auto theft charges against suspects previously convicted of a broader range of vehicle-related crimes, assisting police and prosecutors in

their efforts to break up auto theft rings.

Under current law, suspects may only be charged with felony auto theft if they have a prior conviction for auto theft, but convictions for other prior vehicle related crimes do not apply. Car thieves often operate in organized rings that include auto strippers, or "chop shops," and auto identity theft specialists, who change a vehicle's unique identification number, making it easier to

sell stolen cars to unwitting buyers.

Senator Klein's legislation will enable prosecutors to bring felony auto theft charges against suspects convicted of a wider range of offenses, including unauthorized use of a vehicle, grand larceny, criminal possession of a vehicle, auto stripping, or illegal possession of a vehicle identification number.

"Approximately 350 auto thefts occur each year

in the City of Yonkers," said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "Senator Klein's legislation changes the current approach to address a broad range criminal offenses and will enable law enforcement to fully prosecute the numerous organized criminal rings involved in auto theft."

"Repeat car thieves have a serious and costly impact on the quality of life in multiple New York neighborhoods. By making it easier for law enforcement

to target and prosecute these career criminals, we can catch repeat offenders faster and prevent future crimes from happening. I urge the Assembly and the Governor to join me in my effort to protect New Yorkers from auto theft," said State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).

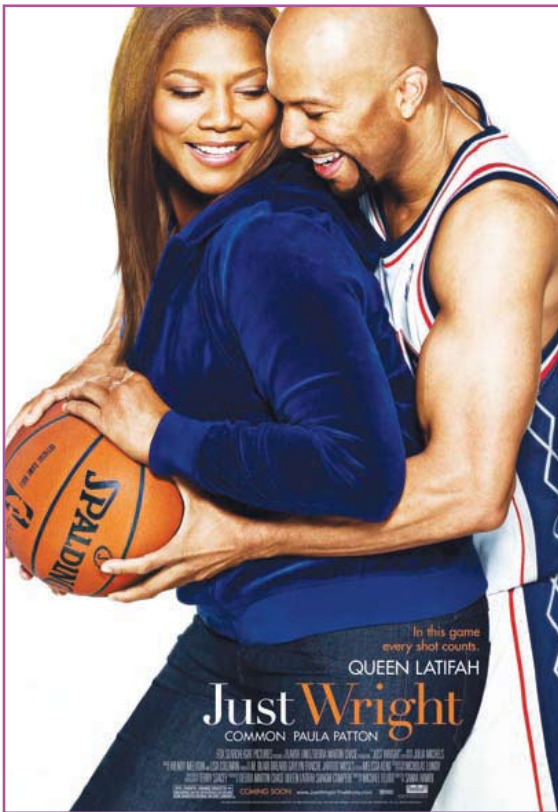
Ed Koch Movie Reviews



By Edward I. Koch

“Just Wright” (+)

This film is an updated version of two fairy tales: “Cinderella” and “The Ugly Duckling.” Queen Latifah exhibits the persona of both characters in her role as the single,



35-year-old Leslie Wright. The charming, handsome prince in the movie is Scott McKnight (played by the rapper known as Common). Pam Grier and James Pickens, Jr. portray Leslie’s devoted parents. All are excellent in their roles.

I have always

enjoyed watching Queen Latifah on the screen. She has a beautiful face, an extraordinary smile, and for a big-boned woman, she carries herself so naturally and unaffectedly across the screen. I don’t know the derivation of the “Queen” in her stage name, but she certainly deserves the title.

Leslie, an excellent physical therapist, has given up on meeting Mr. Right. Her godsister, Morgan (Paula Patton), is slim, gorgeous, and knowledgeable about men. Scott first meets and is

charmed by Leslie but is even more captivated by Morgan when she makes her move. Unexpected incidents enter their lives, including Scott suffering a knee injury while playing basketball and Leslie becoming his physical therapist. The plot is nothing to write home

about, but the film provides a feel good evening of entertainment.

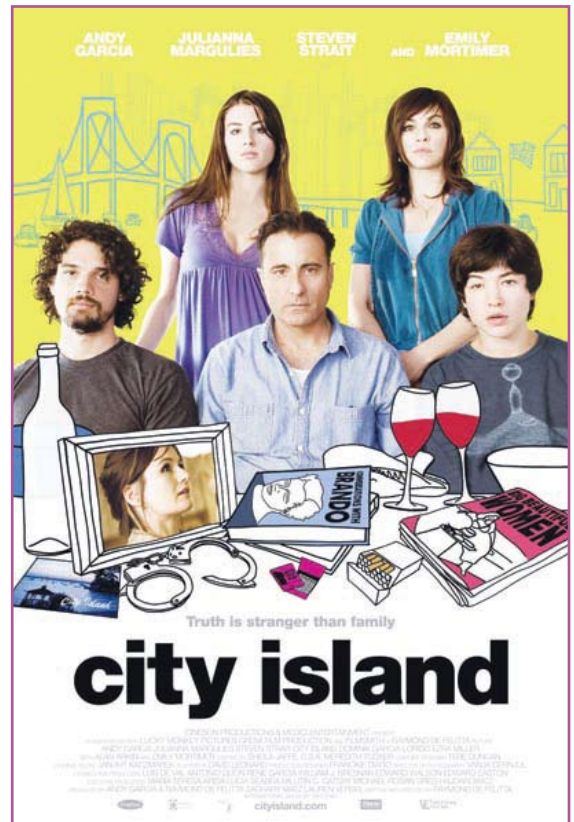
I saw the movie at the AMC Loews 34th Street Theater at 8th Avenue, and the audience was almost 90 percent African American. When I sat down a young woman to my left said, “Are you Mr. Koch?” When I told her I was she asked why I was seeing the film and if I liked Queen Latifa. I told her I did and that I would send her a copy of my review by e-mail. The audience loved the film, applauding loudly when it ended. I believe you will enjoy it as well.

“Cinderella” and “The Ugly Duckling” are moral tales that will be told again and again. Their lessons span the centuries: good overcomes evil, and that is a happy ending.

Henry Stern said: “This is a formulaic romantic comedy which will make everybody who watches it feel good. The novelty is its largely African American cast in a crossover movie intended to appeal to white audiences as well. The background is professional basketball with both ladies seeking to land a LeBron James. One is full figured and kind hearted. The other is slim and beautiful, greedy and manipulative. Which one gets the star? You figure it out.”

“City Island” (-)

The movie was generally well received by other critics who overwhelmingly gave it the equivalent of three stars. I, on the other hand, am giving it a minus. I thought it was a mawkish soap opera and that the performances of the principals were over the top.



The Italian family featured in the film lives on City Island, a narrow strip that is part of the Bronx and the site of several seafood restaurants. Vince (Andy Garcia) plays a loutish but sensitive prison guard who, unbeknownst to his family, is taking acting classes in the evening. He sees himself as a second coming of Marlon Brando, voice and all, conjuring up Brando’s portrayal of Stanley Kowalski in “A Streetcar Named Desire.”

Other characters include a convict, Tony (Steven Strait), who is allowed to leave prison if he has a sponsor. Vince becomes his patron. At acting school, Vince enjoys the social company of another student, Molly (Emily Mortimer), but no intimate relationship is involved. Vince’s wife, Joyce (Julianna Margulies), believes he is having an affair and seeks to betray

her husband by taking up with Tony. Vince’s teenage son, Vinnie (Ezra Miller), is attracted to overweight women, and his daughter, Vivian (Dominik Garcia-Lorido), has secrets of her own. She’s a stripper.

The entire script is like an Italian opera performed buffoon style. In the end, I left wondering if Andy Garcia recognized this picture for the dog that it is.

The Honorable Edward I. Koch served New York City as its 105th Mayor from 1978 to 1989.

Ed Koch Commentary

Questioning Sexual Orientation of a Candidate; Stop and Frisk Incident; Revising Miranda Warning; and Urging the Boycott of Arizona



By Edward I. Koch

Questioning the sexual orientation of a candidate for the United States supreme court or any other public employee or official is out of bounds

Solicitor General Elena Kagan's sexual orientation is the subject of much discussion in blogs and mainstream newspapers. The White House response denied Ms. Kagan is a

lesbian. Instead, shouldn't the White House have denounced the speculation and conveyed that such inquiries are improper?

By denying she is lesbian instead of denouncing the inquiry, the White House is implicitly stating sexual orientation is a legitimate issue of discussion in the confirmation process.

On the positive side, raising the issue of Ms. Kagan's sexual orientation may give more support to Barney Frank's bill with 198 co-sponsors in the House and Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon with a similar bill and 45 co-sponsors barring employment discrimination by the federal government

against people because of their sexual identity. Only 20 states in the Union – New York being one of them – have such legislation. The current debate regarding Ms. Kagan's candidacy demonstrates the imperative of passing such legislation. How many U.S. Senators now considering Ms. Kagan's nomination will vote for such legislation? Write to yours and let's find out. Also, ask your member of Congress.

♦♦♦♦

On May 13th, *New York Times* reporter Al Baker wrote a column on the data revealed in a 2009 police report describing stop and frisk incidents in

New York City. According to the *Times*, a Supreme Court decision permits police officers "to detain someone briefly based on 'reasonable suspicion,' a threshold lower than the probable cause necessary for a formal arrest." Pursuant to a City Council law, since 2001 the NYPD has provided public reports listing the number of stops on a quarterly basis, and the reasons for those stops.

The Times reported on the analysis done by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the organization which secured the raw data on which the 2009 report was based after instituting a lawsuit: "In examining

the stated reasons for the stops...the center found that about 15 percent of the stops last year cited "fits a relevant description... but in nearly half the stops, the category called 'furtive movements' was cited. Nearly 30 percent of stops cited a category called 'casing a victim or location,' nearly 19 percent cited a catchall category of 'other.'"

The most important statistics to bear in mind are that of the 575,000 stops made in 2009, 490,000 of the stopped were blacks and Latinos, compared with 53,000 whites. According

see Ed Koch Pg. 14

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Ed Koch Commentary *From Page 13*

to the Times, blacks and Latinos were “nine times as likely as whites to be stopped by the police.” Following the stops, reports The Times, the “arrest rates were virtually the same. Whites were arrested in slightly more than 6 percent of the stops, blacks in slightly fewer than 6 percent. About 1.7 percent of whites who were stopped were found to have a weapon, while 1.1 percent of blacks were found with one.”

What did these indignities especially imposed on New York City minority residents produce? 762 guns, compared with a gun buy back program referred to by the Center in the Times article “conducted by the police at several Bronx churches one day in January [which] yielded 1,186 guns.” On the other hand, according to *The Times*, “the stops led to 24,000 arrests and the seizing of 6,000 weapons, other than guns.”

The conclusion that I draw from all this is that stop and frisk may help in reducing crime, but it is in need of reform in order to remove the obvious racial bias reflected in statistics. Such bias would be intolerable in any city, but in New York City, which is 35 percent non-Hispanic white, 24 percent black, 28 percent Hispanic and 12 percent Asian, it is especially abhorrent.

I want my readers to know the arguments of those who support stop and frisk in New York City as it is enforced today. One defender of the practice is Heather Mac Donald, contributing editor of *City Journal*, published by the Manhattan Institute. She defends the disparate racial and ethnic statistics which are part of the police report on the stop and frisk program of 2009. In her May 14 column, she wrote:

“Here are the crime data that the *Times* doesn’t want its readers to know: blacks committed 66 percent of all violent crimes in the first half of 2009 (though they were only 55 percent of all stops and only 23 percent of the city’s population). Blacks committed 80 percent of all shootings in the first half of 2009. Together, blacks and Hispanics committed 98 percent of all shootings. Blacks committed nearly 70 percent of all robberies. Whites, by contrast, committed 5 percent of all violent crimes in the first half of 2009, though they are 35 percent of the city’s population (and were 10 percent of all stops). They committed 1.8 percent of all shootings and less than 5 percent of all robberies. The face of violent crime in New York, in other words, like in every other large American city, is almost exclusively black and brown.”

Those statistics are indeed alarming and a legitimate cause for concern. I see them as relevant to how the police should direct their energies and budget towards crime control, including deterrence, apprehension, conviction, punishment and rehabilitation. In my opinion, those horrifying statistics do not provide a defense to the racial disparity in New York City’s stop-and-frisk program, because the results of that program in 2009 show that blacks stopped were arrested at a lower rate than whites and found to be carrying proportionately fewer guns. This convinces me that the program, as currently administered, is racially discriminatory.

We have a great police commissioner in Ray Kelly and a superb police force in the NYPD, and instead of engaging in recriminations, all interested persons and organizations should look for a positive and constructive solution to the discriminatory enforcement of stop and frisk. If they cannot find a remedy, then it is likely that the courts will.

♦♦♦♦

Miranda warnings are now the topic of great discussion as a result of U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder’s push for the law to be revised to allow more questioning of terror suspects before those

warning are given. Holder apparently is concerned that treating terror suspects like anyone else would give them an opportunity to stop talking and cooperating and would require the police to quickly present the suspects to a judge.

I believe not only in cases involving terror charges, but in all criminal cases, the Miranda rules should be abolished or sufficient exemptions added, as to allow law enforcement and society the benefit of a human reaction, which often is to confess to the crime committed. Our judicial system has decided not to take advantage of that human emotion and instead to warn suspects that they have the right to remain silent and to receive free legal representation if they cannot afford it. To sum up, they are told “for heaven’s sake, shut up.”

Currently, if Miranda warnings are not provided in a timely way, the confession given by the suspect is not useable at the trial, nor is any information obtained as a result of the confession. Sheer folly. I also believe all interrogations of suspects by the police should be videotaped.

♦♦♦♦

Los Angeles’ government and some in New York City’s Council are urging a boycott against Arizona because of its recently-enacted

law enabling cops to stop those they believe to be illegal aliens and ask for identification. Some who disagree with that law -- according to the Pew Research Center survey, 59 percent of Americans support the intent of the Arizona law -- think they should impose their views on the citizens of Arizona by engaging in a boycott of that state, including its products, sports events, and tourist attractions, unless or until it rescinds the law.

I believe that we should rely on lawsuits and education rather than boycotts to reform domestic actions we disagree on. If California and New York City go the way of boycott, shouldn’t California be boycotted for having supported Proposition 8 which took away the right of same-sex couples to marry? Forty years ago, New York State voted down the Equal Rights Amendment, which constitutionally would have provided women with all of the rights accorded to men. Should women then throughout the nation have boycotted New York State?

Let me know your thoughts by directing email to eikoch@bryancave.com. *The Honorable Edward Irving Koch served New York City as its 105th Mayor from 1978 to 1989.*

Kagan a Lesbian? Why it Matters



By J. Matt Barber

I don’t see how liberal media-types can write, what with those uncalloused, milky-soft little digits all bundled in bulky kid gloves and all. Oh, when the target of their “reporting” is a conservative politico, or even Tea Party Joe, off

come the gloves. But when it’s one of their own – when circumstances require that a fellow liberal undergo a modicum of journalistic scrutiny – its simpatico most sublime. Out with the inquiry; in with the Huggies and tushie powder.

Media, here’s your question: “Solicitor Kagan, do you identify as a lesbian?” Ms. Kagan, your answer is simpler still: “Yes” or “no.”

Pipe down, lefties. Yes, it is relevant. Most liberals would disagree, but despite

“progressive” protestations to the contrary, character does, in fact, matter. A majority of Americans still consider sexual morality – or a lack thereof – a pertinent factor in contemplating one’s fitness

see Kagan Pg. 15

Kagan a Lesbian? Why it Matters

for any public service – chiefly, perhaps, a lifetime appointment to our most supreme earthly court.

Every major world religion, thousands of years of history and uncompromising human biology have established that homosexual conduct is among other volitional behaviors rightly filed under “sexual immorality.” Indeed, the majority of folks around the world – billions, actually – count this a timeless truth.

But the controversial nature of homosexuality is but one point of concern. Another involves potential conflicts of interest, “real or perceived.” If we had a judicial nominee – widely believed a compulsive gambler – tapped to preside over gambling cases, would it not matter? If we had a nominee credibly rumored to use medical marijuana who might someday rule on the legality of medical marijuana, wouldn’t such information be germane?

And before you liberals throw out that favorite red herring: “By this logic, Clarence Thomas shouldn’t rule on cases involving race or sexuality because he’s a black heterosexual male” – remember: skin color is a neutral, immutable characteristic. Being black is what someone is.

On the other hand, being “gay” is what someone does. It involves feelings and changeable

behaviors. Homosexual conduct is more akin to the aforementioned gambling or pot smoking behaviors than it is to skin color (and for those in the lifestyle, especially men, sodomy most definitely involves rolling the dice). To compare “black” or “heterosexual” to “gay” is to compare apples to oranges. Understandably, many African Americans find this disingenuous comparison tremendously offensive.

Moreover, “heterosexual” is the state of sexual normalcy. It’s our God-given design. There remains no credible or replicated scientific evidence to the contrary. Homosexual conduct is but one of many sexually deviant behaviors. Even Darwin’s theory of evolution, which imagines “survival of the fittest,” would seem to bolster this self-evident truth. You can choose political correctness. I choose moral and biological correctness.

Still, Kagan’s “sexual orientation” remains the pink elephant in the room: Can a sitting justice, potentially engaged in the homosexual lifestyle, be trusted to rule on cases that might well grant special preferred government status to some—including that very justice – while, at the same time, eliminating certain free-speech and religious-liberties rights enjoyed by others? (i.e., hate-crimes

laws; the Employment Non-Discrimination Act; constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act; constitutionality of “don’t ask don’t tell,” etc.)

In April, CBS News published an online column identifying Kagan – should she be confirmed – as the “first openly gay justice.” The White House pounced, demanded CBS remove the article and called the assertion “false charges.” CBS dutifully complied, tail twixt legs, whimpered away and curled-up behind the rest of Obama’s slobbering media lapdogs.

Whereas every liberal hack on the planet tripped over one another to demand Mark Foley, Larry Craig, Ted Haggard and, most recently, George Rekers divulge the most intimate details of their own bizarre (allegedly) sexual appetites, with Kagan, they’ve suddenly lost interest.

Although the mainstream media refuse to do their job, some in the homosexual-activist press are stepping-up to fill the vacuum.

Homosexual blogger Andrew Sullivan, for instance, writing in *The Atlantic*, opined: “In a free society in the 21st century, it is not illegitimate to ask [whether Kagan is gay]. And it’s cowardly not to tell.”

But Kagan ain’t tellin’, and the media ain’t askin’. Of course, even if they were inclined to ask, they’d

have a difficult time doing so. The White House has Kagan wrapped-up tighter than Barney Frank in a bustier.

The question is important for context. The answer, for instance, might explain why Kagan drop-kicked our brave men and women of the armed services in the solar plexus, during a time of war, by banning military recruiters from Harvard while dean of the law school. She did so in protest of the military’s “don’t ask don’t tell” policy, calling it “a profound wrong” and “a moral injustice of the first order.”

As it turned out, Kagan’s actions were illegal, and the very Supreme Court upon which she hopes to serve slapped her down with its 8-0 decision upholding the Solomon Amendment, which would have allowed the Department of Defense to withhold federal funding to Harvard if it failed to reverse its discriminatory policy.

Ed Whelan, head of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., said of Kagan’s activism: “At a time of war, in the face of the grand civilizational challenge that radical Islam poses, Kagan treated military recruiters worse than she treated the high-powered law firms that were donating their expensive legal services to anti-American terrorists.”

Newt Gingrich took

his criticism a step further. While addressing the controversy, he bluntly said of Kagan’s nomination: “That is an act so unbecoming of an American that she should be disqualified from the very beginning.”

I agree.

Indeed, whether or not Elena Kagan self-identifies as a lesbian, she has proven herself a radical anti-military, pro-homosexual ideologue and activist. There’s little doubt that she would take this activism with her to the high court.

So, Ms. Solicitor General, if in fact you are “totally not gay,” as some of your friends and your president claim, then it’s my hope that a few Republican U.S. senators might take the time to introduce you to a nice fellow by the name of Phil A. Buster. Believe me, it’s a match made in heaven.

Matt Barber is an attorney concentrating in constitutional law. He is author of the book “The Right Hook – From the Ring to the Culture War” and serves as Director of Cultural Affairs with Liberty Counsel. Send comments to Matt at jmattbarber@comcast.net. (This information is provided for identification purposes only.)

New York Civic: Incumbents Imperiled

An Abbreviated Almanac

The gold rush to California in 1849 inspired the name of the San Francisco football team, the 49ers. The East Coast equivalent is the Philadelphia 76ers basketball team, which recalls the signing of the Declaration of

Independence on July 4, 1776 in a place also called the City of Brotherly Love.

The 49th state to be admitted to the union was Alaska. Statehood came in January 1959, just 92 years after the United States, through Secretary of State William H. Seward,

purchased the land from the Russian Empire under Czar Alexander II for \$7.2 million, which is a trifle less than two cents per acre. The state’s area is 586,412 square miles, which is more than twice the size of Texas. The Census Bureau estimated its population in

2009 as 698,473. That is about 1.2 people per square mile.

We report to you on intercontinental visibility, which has been a public issue. On a clear day, it is possible to see across the

see New York Civic Pg. 16



By Henry J. Stern

New York Civic: Incumbents Imperiled *From Page 15*

Bering Strait from Alaska to Russia, but only from Little Diomed Island, which is 2 1/2 miles from Big Diomed, part of Russia.

The Diomedes are located in the middle of the strait between the two countries. Little Diomed is home to about 170 Inuits of the Inupiat tribe. Big Diomed had an Inuit population as well, but they were deported by the Soviet authorities to the mainland, and the larger island now has a military presence. So saith Wikipedia.

Voters Show Their Discontent

As the mainstream press has reported, the voters in primary states showed their discontent with incumbent politicians by the defeat of Senator Arlen Specter in Philadelphia and the victory of Dr. Rand Paul, son of Congressman Ron Paul of Texas, a former Presidential candidate. The relatively poor showing of Senator Blanche Lincoln in the Arkansas Democratic

primary has been called another example of the unpopularity of officeholders, although other issues were involved in her contest. Nationwide polls have repeatedly shown a low level of confidence in public officials, as well as a desire for change.

What about New York?

For years, we have known that New York State has one of the most dysfunctional legislatures in the United States. The mutiny in the Senate last summer left no winners; the month-long spectacle, ending with victory for the pirates, was an embarrassment to both parties. This year the Assembly appears unusually supine. The inability of both houses and the governor to agree on a budget is but the most recent example of failure to transact business in a timely and reasonable manner.

One would think that with the failures of the legislature and the wave of discontent with the incumbents, there would be many newcomers

challenging the status quo. However, there appear at this time to be relatively few, which means that most incumbents, unpopular as some may be, are likely to be re-elected.

The ballot access requirements in New York State are formidable, and designed to exclude competitors who do not have the support of political machines. To run for the Assembly, one must collect 500 valid signatures of voters in the party and in the district, and for the State Senate the requirement is 1000 signatures. In the past, many signatures have been excluded on technical grounds, or on some defect in the witnessing of the signatures. People who sign petitions can be dragged into court by hostile attorneys to explain the circumstances of their signing. The expensive and time-consuming process of defending petitions works a hardship on candidates with limited resources who are less well known than

incumbents.

Although the facade is one of democracy and free and open elections, the reality is that it is difficult and costly to challenge an entrenched politician. Nonetheless it can be done. Many people would vote for change if they had an alternative to the incumbent.

It is said that incumbents are difficult to defeat, but in most cases this is conjecture. In fact, we do not know how vulnerable the majority of incumbents truly are, because no one attempts to run against them. If incumbents are impossible to topple, why do party machines across the nation go to great lengths to deter candidates from challenging their officeholders in primaries?

We do not endorse candidates or urge specific individuals to run or not to run for public office. But in America, people do have the opportunity to compete to try to effect change. The work of Mayor Ed Koch and New York Uprising in

securing pledges to support reform from candidates for public office is an example of what can be done by individuals who unite to seek change.

The first day to collect signatures this year is June 8; the last day to submit them to the Board of Elections is July 15. Candidates are advised to collect at least twice as many signatures as required, preferably three times, because names may be challenged and signatures invalidated by opposition attorneys and operatives. If you are inclined to run for public office, and you have enough friends to help you, the stars are aligned.

Now is the time for all good people to come to the aid of their state.

Henry J. Stern writes as StarQuest. Direct email to him at StarQuest@NYCivic.org. Peruse Mr. Stern's writing at New York Civic.

Ed Koch Commentary: Jerusalem: We Must Not Forget You

By Edward I. Koch

Over the years I have written extensively about Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Islamic terrorism. I support a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the Jewish State of Israel and the State of Palestine living side by side in peace.

In a recent commentary, I wrote that I believe the 3,000-year-old City of Jerusalem could remain undivided, while having within it the capitals of the two states. Jerusalem would be open to everyone, insure religious freedom to all, and allow each religion to control and operate its holy places with maximum authority, under one mayor and a city council elected in districts by

the city's inhabitants.

I received numerous responses to that commentary, many from people who are Jewish. Most of them supported my position, but about ten percent said it was unrealistic. Those who challenged me do not believe that the Palestinians would accept a Jewish state in their midst. They believe the Palestinians would prefer that Israel just wither away with the passage of time or as a result of wars and terrorism.

I don't doubt that a significant number of Palestinians and other Arabs hold those views. Indeed, most bothersome for me is the fact that since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Palestinian leadership and

Muslim states have never recognized the legitimacy of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. Their refusal to do so raises legitimate suspicions as to whether they are really interested in peaceful coexistence with Israel. The claim that a state should not have a Jewish character is nonsensical. Being Jewish can refer to either religion or ethnicity, or both, e.g., I am both. Some Muslim countries use Islam to describe their nation, e.g., the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. I am also troubled by the fact that Egypt and Jordan -- the only Arab countries to enter peace treaties with Israel -- have refused to normalize relations with

the Jewish state. Egyptians and Jordanians don't travel to Israel as tourists, and occasionally when professionals such as lawyers or writers do, they run the risk of expulsion from their professional organizations. In contrast, Israeli tourists go to Jordan and flock to the Sinai in Egypt.

For these reasons and others, there is understandable skepticism about whether Palestinians and Israelis could ever share Jerusalem in the manner that I envision. I imagine a time when Palestinians and Israelis will elect a common mayor and will elect borough presidents to oversee day-to-day municipal issues such as housing and sewage, and a city council that will assure fair representation of the

city's population which is roughly one-third Muslim, two-thirds Jewish, and two percent Christian.

I want it to be clear that I believe my proposal should not be considered unless and until the Palestinian Authority and the Arab countries unequivocally accept the presence and legitimacy of the Jewish State of Israel. Before that happens, the status quo in Jerusalem should be maintained.

Let me know your thoughts at eikoch@bryancave.com.

The Honorable Edward I. Koch served New York City as its 105th Mayor from 1978 to 1989.

Weir Only Human: Once Upon a Time in America *From Page 1*

murdered by illegal aliens in the last few years. Perhaps it took the recent murder of a prominent rancher by illegal alien drug dealers to make state leaders decide they had enough. Hence, the legislature enacted a law that does what the feds refuse to do; protect legal citizens from illegal aliens. The idea is astonishing in its simplicity!

Once upon a time in this country we'd never have allowed a situation to get so out of control that it would imperil our national security. That was a time when common sense ruled the day. Not anymore! Now we find ourselves debating with people who tell us that we're bigots if we expect our laws to be obeyed. Arizona passed a law to stop the illegal invasion and they find themselves being threatened with boycotts from some states and lawsuits from the national government that didn't do

the job in the first place. No sooner did the law pass than it began to be attacked by liberals across the country, led by the president and his attorney general, who, by the way, admitted that he hadn't read the new law. What has happened to this once great country is that we have systematically been conditioned to become pushovers. We are, by any objective standard, the most prosperous country in the history of the world. We didn't get where we are by being timid, but that's precisely the posture that will cause us to lose it all.

There was a time when the bad guys were afraid to break the law because of the severe consequences that would follow. Not anymore! Liberal judges with too much discretion at their disposal and too much political correctness in their philosophy, have too often disgraced their role in the justice system. Many

of our elected officials have been similarly intimidated by organized groups whose only interest is in the creation of an open border policy that would undermine our sovereignty. The lack of respect for our laws is embarrassingly evident when we see how many people climb over our walls, burrow under our fences and brazenly stroll across our borders with impunity. If we tried the same thing in their country we'd be lucky if we didn't get shot for our effort. Yet, if someone were to merely utter the word "shot" when referring to a solution for this destructive invasion, he'd be pilloried by the media as a violent reactionary and probably become the subject of an FBI investigation.

American citizens have found themselves in the absurd position of explaining why they are opposed to the invasion

of their country and then they're forced to defend themselves against charges of racism from the invaders. Furthermore, we're being told not to refer to them as illegal aliens; we should use the term, "undocumented workers." So, it's not enough that these crimes are being perpetrated against us; we must also soften our language when we refer to the criminals. Right now, there are people reading this who are aghast at my reference to them as criminals. That's just another absurdity that has gripped this nation and started us down the road to ruin. From the beginning of recorded history it's been understood that any country unable to control its borders will soon be destroyed by the invaders. We are in the precarious position of being a prosperous nation that abuts an impoverished one. There are millions of envious eyes looking

northward and craving the lifestyle we enjoy. In a perfect world we could absorb the masses and still have a flourishing economy. But in the real world, we must either fight for our way of life, or go into decline like every other nation that failed to learn the lessons of history. I suppose we can be thankful that we don't share a border with China.

Bob Weir is an accomplished writer having penned seven novels: "Murder in Black and White," "City To Die For," "Powers That Be," "Ruthie's Kids," "Deadly To Love," "Short Stories of Life and Death" and "Out of Sight." Bob Weir is a contributing columnist to Yonkers Tribune and Westchester Herald. BobWeir777@aol.com.

The Spoof: Elena "Shorty" Kagan Nixes Nickname



By Gail Farrelly

"Don't want no short people . . ."

"Sure it's an honor to be nominated for the U. S. Supreme Court," Kagan admitted yesterday to a reporter, continuing, "but I hate all the stuff that goes with it."

Standing only three inches over five feet, Kagan had been nicknamed "Shorty" by the late Justice Thurgood Marshall, and

nobody will let her forget that. It's been nothing but Shorty this and Shorty that, as Kagan moves through the long process of Presidential nomination and Congressional approval. "Would you believe," she said, "that when the President was working on a list of nominees, he had the nerve to call it the Short List."

There was more to come. When Kagan visited the offices of Congressional leaders for the requisite 'chats' this week, they were all playing on their stereotypes Randy Newman's song, "Short People." The part of the chorus that goes "Don't want no short people . . ." infuriated Kagan.

But even worse is this section of one of the

verses:
They got little hands
Little eyes
They walk around
Tellin' great big lies

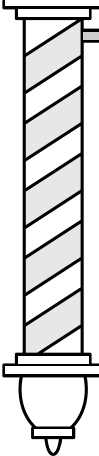
Now Kagan worries that her short stature may interfere with confirmation chances. Just to be on the safe side, she bought herself a pair of platform shoes. Also, at her confirmation hearings, she'll be sitting on high pillows and wearing a nice 'tall' Uncle Sam-type hat that will add several inches to her height.

Gail Farrelly is the author of three mystery novels. The latest is "Creamed at Commencement: A Graduation Mystery." One of her short stories is published online: "Get Yourself a Face"

(about a Mafia princess who buys herself a face transplant and a lot of trouble). Her story "Even

Steven" was a finalist in the 2007 Derringer Award competition.

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Shifting Gears: Two for the Road, The Hybrid and the Sports Sedan



By Roger Witherspoon

There are some songs which seem made for road trips.



The sun was high, the road was dry and, at 120 miles per hour, the Connecticut landscape was a kaleidoscope of spring floral prints which seemed to throb in time with the bass line of the Temptations' Runaway Child pounding from the 15 speakers in the Harmon-Kardon sound system.

It was warm enough to have the windows down and the panoramic sunroof fully open, yet the air flow around the sleek silhouette of the Mercedes S-550 kept enough of the wind noise out of the car that I could pretend I was a teenager again and sing loudly off key along with the storied Motown group.

Back in the mid-60s, of course, I was driving a Nash Rambler with red bucket seats. Forty-five years later I could hardly fit into trim seats like that and,

fortunately, I didn't have to. The 2010 S-550 has the ultimate in adjustable seating. Drivers and front passenger have a choice of massage settings, heating or cooling, seat lengths, lumbar supports, and side supports, all at the touch of door-mounted buttons. In addition, every time the car goes into a turn, the side of the chair opposite the turn inflates to keep you firmly in your seat like

push of a button, rolls a sunscreen across the back windshield. Each of the rear passengers controls their own window screen.

The S-550 is near the top of the Mercedes luxury line, offering modest speed – it tops out at 130 miles per hour – with its trademark sleek styling and handling. It looks and feels like a car costing \$120,000.

It's propelled by a V-8 engine cranking out a respectable 382 horsepower, and is mated to a seven-speed transmission which shifts seamlessly in automatic mode or manual utilizing the paddle shifts behind the steering wheel.

As you might expect, a car like this comes with a \$1,000 gas guzzler tax. The EPA estimates the car gets just 14 miles per gallon in city driving and 21 MPG on the highway. The test car had a mixed average of 15 MPG – which means in mostly city driving the sedan was hanging close to single digits.

If you want the same car with better mileage and no sacrifice in amenities or performance, Mercedes has the S-400H, its first luxury hybrid. According to the EPA, the S-400H gets 19 city, and 26 highway miles per gallon – which is respectable for a large sedan. In addition, the hybrid costs \$10,000 less than the standard model, the S-550. That is an unusual price switch which earned the S-400H plaudits from the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The UCS (www.UCS.org)

rates hybrids from the standpoint of their

of money: on the Lexus 600 the difference was



greenhouse gas reductions, and their value in terms of the amount of "forced features" they may have. Don Anair, the UCS engineer who maintains the Hybrid Center Scorecard (<http://www.hybridcenter.org/>), explained that "when you purchase a hybrid, they often come with features which are otherwise options. The value score we created looked at the cost of the hybrid system vs. the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and

about \$20,000."

The UCS gave Mercedes high marks putting the same amenities in both the S-400H and the standard S-550, and the price is lower because the gasoline engine on the hybrid is a V-6 producing 275 horsepower – about 100 less than in the all gasoline version.

But its ecological improvement was just marginal because the S-400H has what is called a "mild" rather than full hybrid. "You can't drive on

a parent cradling a child. It is surprising at first, as if there is an unseen presence in the car reaching out to you. But you get used to it really fast.

The passengers in the back seats don't have all those bells and whistles.



But their seats can be heated or air cooled and recline. And to make up for the lack of personal massagers, each rear passenger has a personal DVD screen built into the back of the front seats and wireless headsets and controls for personal viewing. And if it's a really sunny day the driver, at the



determined how much you are paying for a percentage in reductions.

"The Ford Escape's base model has three trim levels. But you only get the hybrid at the mid trim level – you're forced to buy the features which are optional on the standard Escape. It can run to a lot

the electric motor alone," Anair said. "You get a 14% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, but you benefit from the idle-off feature which shuts down the gasoline engine whenever you stop.

see *Shifting Gears* Pg. 19

Shifting Gears: Two for the Road, The Hybrid and the Sports Sedan *From Page 18*

“Mercedes has talked about developing a full Harman/Kardon LOGIC-7 system bathes you in



hybrid, and we hope they move in that direction. What you get with the S-400H is beneficial but not powerful enough to propel the vehicle.”

The major cost difference between the S-550 and its hybrid sibling stems from the larger engine and a \$6,000 facelift. The all gasoline model has a sleeker silhouette and 19-inch, five-spoke AMG sport wheels.

Inside they are the same. Both vehicles feature six-disc CD players, XM satellite radio, Bluetooth cellphone interface and iPod and USB port connections. There is also a 40-gigabyte

adaptive cruise command. During the first 20 minutes of driving above 35 miles per hour, the camera records eye motions and the safety system’s computer monitors how the driver responds to lane changes and sudden swerves and turns. Using that as a baseline, the system then monitors the driver’s attention span.

If you are drifting outside your lane or the camera’s computer notices what appears to be inattention and your eyes closing, a warning sound is produced and a message pops up in the midst of the speedometer asking is it “time for a rest?” accompanied by the image of a steaming coffee cup. It is not quite the computer system governing the automated, interactive Audi driven by Will Smith in I Robot – but it’s heading in that direction

smooth waves of sound without overwhelming and battering you with noise. If there is a downside to the technology in these luxury liners, it’s that the computerized command system is not user friendly and there is a steep learning curve for functions which should be intuitive, such as the radio or navigation system. One should not have to read a manual to locate the FM radio. But once learned, the technological innovations can be impressive.

On the safety side the cars are equipped with a small camera on the dashboard facing the driver

The driver monitoring system is augmented with an infrared night vision camera which pops a thermal image of the road ahead in the middle of the dash in place of the speedometer – which becomes a digital readout at the bottom of the screen. The infrared screen can see images 500 feet in front of the car and pedestrians are bracketed to make sure the driver notices them. The ability to

detect body heat is a serious advantage in places like upstate New York, where Bambi and her cousins run into more than 1,200 cars each week. And while Mercedes doesn’t advertise this, the infrared beam can spot the heated engine of a police car waiting behind bushes with its lights out long before the car is in range of a radar gun.

Slowing down, staying awake and avoiding tickets are very good things.

Roger Witherspoon writes *Shifting Gears* at www.RogerWitherspoon.com

2010 Mercedes Benz

wheels; dual chrome exhausts; active bi-xenon headlights and cornering lights; driver safety system; night vision; dual stage front airbags; front and rear side airbags; head curtain airbags.

Interior / Comfort:

AM/FM/XM satellite and HD radio; 6-disc CD player; iPod and USB port; 40-gigabyte hard drive; 15-speaker Harman/Kardon Logic-7 surround sound; power sunroof; power sunscreens; leather, adjustable seats with massager; wood trim; rear DVD players.

2010 Mercedes Benz S-400H



hard drive to store your own tunes or movies. Whatever your musical tastes, the 15-speaker

and connecting to the side radar used in monitoring lane control and the

feet in front of the car and pedestrians are bracketed to make sure the driver notices them. The ability to

S-550

MSRP: \$116,995

EPA Mileage: 14 MPG

City 21 MPG **Highway**

As Tested Mileage: 15

MPG **Mixed**

Performance / Safety:

0 – 60 MPH: 5.4

Seconds

Top Speed: 130

MPH

5.5-Liter, 32-valve,

aluminum V-8 engine

producing 382 horsepower

and 391 pound-feet

of torque; 7-speed

transmission with

automatic and manual

mode with paddle shift;

all wheel drive; electronic

traction control; rack-

and-pinion steering; air

suspension; internally

ventilated disc brakes;

19-inch AMG 5-spoke

MSRP: \$105,230

EPA Mileage: 19 MPG

City; 26 MPG **Highway**

As Tested Mileage: 21

MPG **Mixed**

Performance / Safety:

0 – 60 MPH: 7.2

Seconds

Top Speed: 130

MPH

3.5-Liter, 24-valve,

aluminum V-6 gasoline

engine producing 295

horsepower and 284

pound-feet of torque;

3-phase, mild hybrid,

120-volt electric motor

producing 20 horsepower

and 118 pound-feet of

torque.

BRONXVILLE

sidewalk sale

SATURDAY, JUNE 5

**Park Place
Family Festival**

LIVE BANDS, CHOIR,
MARTIAL ARTS PERFORMANCE

For Kids

FACE-PAINTING, KID'S TATTOOS

PARK PLACE WILL BE CLOSED TO VEHICULAR TRAFFIC.

**FREE
PARKING**
on Kraft &
Garden Ave. lots
& Paxton Ave.

