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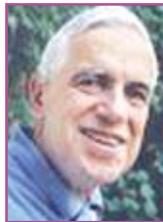


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New York Civic The People Speak: Mon Serrate, Serrate Senate Expelled Him, Voters Keep Him Out



By Henry J. Stern

The Monster Rat has met his match. By a 65 to 27 margin, former Senator Hiram Monserrate, who had the distinction of being

the first State Senator expelled from that august body in over a century, lost his bid to regain his seat to Assemblyman Jose Peralta, who has serious ethical issues of his own, but is not prone to beating up women. Peralta's sins are on the financial side: he is a non-violent offender.

The Republican candidate for the Queens Senate seat, Robert Beltrani, an administrative law judge

see New York Civic Pg. 10

Ed Koch Commentary The New York Uprising Begins



By Edward I. Koch

Last Friday, at the New York City offices of my law firm, Bryan Cave LLP, for a group of us, the New York Uprising began.

A hundred men and women came together to commit themselves to the overhaul of the New York State legislature,

which the Brennan Center for Justice appropriately called "dysfunctional" six years ago, and which has alarmingly deteriorated since. The legislature in Albany is an abysmal failure and a disgrace to the Empire State.

The New York Uprising was convened by Dick Dadey of the Citizens Union, Henry Stern of New York Civic and myself. The purpose for the meeting was a brainstorming session aimed at developing a strategy for reforming the

see Ed Koch Pg. 10

The Hezitorial Pavlovian Mutts on the Loose



By Hezi Aris

Yonkers has served a culture of greed that has become successful by its ability to silence the envious who salivate, like Pavlovian dogs, as they await their turn at the city trough. In the process, Yonkers has lost sight of the remedy over which it wails. Yet the historical backdrop ill

defines the albatross about our collective necks. The malaise that captured us years ago were built upon promises made by people we believed would do us no harm. As a generation of time passed us by, we found the promises unfulfilled despite the patience consumed over all those years. We continue to cling to the old paradigm despite it having been proven impotent.

see Hezitorial Pg. 2

JBFCs' Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Campus Recognizes Hawthorne Fire Department



(L-R) Sal Pennelle, Hawthorne F.D. President and Commissioner, Lenny Rodriguez, JBFCS Deputy Director, David Everett, JBFCS Westchester Divisional Board President

Hawthorne, NY -- The young people of JBFCS Hawthorne Cedar Knolls

(HCK) Campus, an agency consortium of residential
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The discovery period endured a long gestation period. We found ourselves on a treadmill aligning ourselves under various banners of appropriate and accepted conduct. At one time it was ethnically conceived; at another time it was religiously based. It was also defined by culture and language. It would eventually culminate in more and more promises, but became unwieldy in the process. Political affiliation grew out of the “friends and family network” to cap the process that has simply brought us closer to the edge of calamity.

The “words” that beseeched us to trust one another on the neighborly basis were prostituted by the very people who espoused those words when they would run for elected office. The “promises” they promised were based on their word. They did not deliver and when we hit our foreheads in disbelief, we learned their “word” lacked the collateral of a hand shake or a signature. The biggest disappointments revealed themselves when we recognized that those whom we elected did not possess the leadership skills we presumed they had. It is they who must own up to their failures. It was not our fault. They kept on changing the rules. They had us fooled for so long, that we no longer remembered the difference between right or wrong, between truth and a lie. We were befuddled, but did not comprehend why.

Without missing a beat, City Hall espoused that extenuating circumstances brought us to the precipice of financial ruin. In reality it exacerbated Yonkers’ plight; it is not its origin. The origin of Yonkers’ plight is the lack of

leadership by present and past administrations, that is Phil Amicone, as both the failed deputy mayor and the equally uninspired and present aimless mayor, who silences criticism with spin as his “team” attempts to perpetuate and silence questions and critique with an assault comprised of lies, coverup, and continued unabashed spin.

As Yonkers faces the calamity of a \$3.4 million mid-year financial shortfall, and worse still, a \$109 million FY2010-2011 budget deficit, nary a word from City Hall. While city Hall claims it cannot conjecture about the financial mess Yonkers is in, its rationale for divulging nothing is City Hall’s best effort at blaming others for the mess they brought upon the City of Yonkers. While the finger of blame is pointed to wherever it may deflect Yonkersites’ attention, it is nothing more than the on-going plot for “cooking” the financial books. The basic trend and enormity of the gargantuan financial task that falls under the aegis of Mayor Phil Amicone is one he cannot grasp. Worse still, even not comprehending the task before him, he does not possess the leadership skills to extract solutions from an atrophied but hopefully still capable team within his administration. Though some have withered to the point of absurdity; others still possess a flicker of hope for advising and telling Mayor Amicone how to move ahead. The biggest hurdle is none other than Mayor Amicone himself; he is simply too stubborn to see the forest beyond the trees. He is like a deer shocked by strong headlights. He doesn’t know what to do. His staff

is intimidated from telling him, and he is content in believing he can get his way. He may be right; his conduct will thereby continue to drag Yonkers into the gutter. Mayor Amicone is nothing more than a “master” controlled by others.

Mayor Amicone blames others for lacking leadership qualities, yet he exudes no leadership skills of his own. He may blame the wishy-washy, spineless meanderings of Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick but he has not taken control, even though he is the most powerful figure among the “strong-mayor” form of government over which he presides.

The Father Pat Carroll Green housing project that won approval and was completed under his administration is far from what was promised the new homeowners and its financial conduct, vis-a-vis taxpayer funding, is substandard at best.

The temerity of City Hall’s acquiescence to the power brokers of Yonkers to the detriment of Yonkersites is evident by the long list of collapsing projects on the Hudson River waterfront, the lack of fiscal viability of its main developer, Louis Cappelli, the continuing talk of consolidating services between the city and the Yonkers Board of Education undermine the “nice” words pronounced within the moat of City Hall’s White Tower.

Most recently, the Charter School of Education Excellence (CSEE) came before the Yonkers City Council Education Committee to explain their need for a \$12 million financial assistance package. the “indenture” that would describe the

collateral for paying off the issuance of such a bond, as well as the name of the party who will pay off the bond was never divulged. Bond Counsel Sean Griffin explains that the City of Yonkers would not be responsible to the payment of the bond should CSEE default prior to making full repayment of the bond. This is unbelievable; and not true, unless the “indenture” is fully defined before approval is given. But that would not be to the benefit of Mayor Amicone. He doesn’t operate that way. He wants it approved without anyone having a clue. Following Mayor Amicone’s protocol satisfies Mr Griffin, whose firm Harris Beach is the recipient of a fee for facilitating the bond through a new instrument that was devised in 2010 that is now part of the arsenal of financing instruments that are part of the Yonkers Industrial Development Agency (YIDA). Mayor Amicone is the Chairman of the Board of the YIDA and the Yonkers Economic Development Corporation (YEDC) from which the CSEE bonding request is made. Imagine the CSEE using the city’s credit worthiness and rating to enable the bond to be aquired for \$12 million but if there is a default, no one is on the hook to make restitution? Were that the case, is Mr Griffin, Harris Beach, Corporation Counsel Deputy Mark Blanchard, and Mayor Phil Amicone willing to attest to that in writing?

Don’t let anyone hold their breath. There are not enough ambulances available to attend the needs of so many.

The Yonkers City Council must get the proof before it passes legislation. Enough

Hezitorial *From Page 2*

is enough. That means in every situation, not just this one.

When will the Yonkers City Council demand the March 1st quarterly reported to which it is entitled under the Yonkers City Charter before even considering any legislative moves? Are President Lesnick and Mayor Amicone working together to the detriment of the public good? That wouldn't be nice.

Budget talks between Mayor Amicone and the various union membership

took place on Tuesday, March 16, 2010, for the first time this year. Mayor Amicone did not have a plan to discuss with any of the union leaders; he asked them what they could do? In the meanwhile other sources advise Mayor Amicone is speaking of major layoffs among his staff of trusted advisors. Mayor Amicone is clueless on how to proceed. He has no leadership skills. President Lesnick has not divulged anything of these private meetings.

Mr Lesnick has similarly not defined any plans for the financial crisis that confronts the city.

The Albany delegation will want to help but they will not play a game of tricks Mayor Amicone concocted last year. In 2009, Mayor Amicone made public the shortfall of under \$50 million in that year's budget. The Albany delegation came within a few millions of meeting his request. The City was made financially whole. Mayor Amicone moved

the bar; claimed the Albany delegation failed Yonkers; he told a lie then. But he learned not to box himself in with a committed figure. In 2010, he demands more than he would hope to get and will walk away with what he gets. Albany can smell him a mile away. So can Yonkersites. The Vancouver Games are over, isn't it about time Mayor Amicone got it right? The arrogance of it all is that rumors are flying about that he will consider running for New York State senator

against incumbent Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. One just can't make this up.

Imagine Mayor Amicone approaching the voters for any elected office with a resume filled with potholes, yearly budget shortfalls, economic development debacles, a claustrophobic demeanor, failed governance policy, and a lack of leadership qualities.

JBFCS' Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Campus Recognizes Hawthorne Fire Department *From Page 1*

treatment facilities for vulnerable youth, will present a check for \$1,500.00 to the Hawthorne Volunteer Fire Department.

The children of HCK raised this money at their annual walk-a-thon in October. JBFCS Westchester Divisional Board President, David Everett, JBFCS Deputy Director, Lenny Rodriguez and HCK Union Free School District Superintendent, Mark Silverstein will give the check. Hawthorne Fire Department President and Commissioner, Sal Pennelle, will accept the gift on the fire department's behalf. The ceremony will be held at 7pm in the HCK Library, at 228 Linda Avenue in Hawthorne.

The Campus consists of the HCK Residential Treatment Center, the Jerome M. Goldsmith Center for Adolescent Treatment, the Linden Hill Residential Treatment Facility and the Hirschel Alt Westchester Day Treatment Center. For more than 100 years, these facilities have taken a holistic approach to healing, by

providing each child with a therapeutic program that also includes educational and vocational training. Each young resident is put on a path of acceptance and appreciation, learning to deal with problems of family, community and themselves.

"We hope that our efforts will inspire each of these kids to take steps to improve their lives," said Sal Pennelle. "The safety-training program we have implemented at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls reflects the importance we place on setting a good example. Seeing these kids' faces light up, as they climb aboard our fire engines, is all the reward we need.

David Everett adds, "It's great that we can honor the outstanding service these dedicated volunteers have given to HCK youth. Their spirit of volunteerism and goodwill has given our young people hope in the form of positive role models. Their work has made an enormous difference to the children and staff. We want to thank them as we celebrate their

third year of service to our youth."

A recent report in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence found that role models contributed to the resilience of disturbed teens. The report showed that adolescents with an identifiable role model received higher grades and had higher self-esteem than their counterparts who lacked role models.

As Lenny Rodriguez put it, "Young people who have faced deprivation and trauma need role models to help them break the cycle of unhealthy thoughts and behaviors. Working with adults who set a good example encourages teens to reach their full potential."

Jerome M. Goldsmith Center for Adolescent Treatment is a 50-bed residential treatment facility for severely emotionally disturbed male adolescents, 13 to 22. Licensed by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Center provides supervised living units and a program of therapeutic and educational services. The program

provides a secure in-house acute-care unit as part of the continuum of care. A special-education school is located on campus.

Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Residential Treatment Center is a treatment facility for 104 youngsters—boys 8 to 18, girls 13 to 18—who have a wide variety of emotional concerns. Youngsters are provided with comprehensive treatment, special education, and supervised living. Family involvement is an important component of treatment. Residents are referred by the Administration for Children's Services of New York City, New York

State Office of Family and Children, the County Committee of Special Education and Departments of Social Services in New York State.

The JBFCS (www.jbfcs.org) offers the most advanced mental healthcare and social services to help promote well-being, resilience and self-sufficiency for individuals and families. Every year 65,000 New Yorkers from all ethnic, racial, socio-economic and religious backgrounds, across the five boroughs and in Westchester, rely on the JBFCS for help through some 175 programs.

**We Welcome
Your Comments**

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

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White Plains Firefighter John Donahue and NYS Gubernatorial Candidate Warren Redlich On the Level on WVOX-1460 AM

New Rochelle, NY -- On the Level co-hosts Richard Narog and Hezi Aris will open this week's show with Firefighter John Donahue of the White Plains Fire Department who and NYS Gubernatorial candidate Warren Redlich this Tuesday, March 23, 2010, from 10 through 11 on WVOX-1460 AM on the radio dial or by way of Internet audio streaming technology worldwide at www.WVOX.com.

Mr Donahue will speak about the upcoming annual charity hockey game between the White Plains Firefighters and the Yonkers Firefighters. The gargantuan effort benefits the Ronald McDonald House of the Greater Hudson Valley located at Maria Fareri Children's

Hospital. It will take place Saturday, March 27, 2010.

Joining us in the studio will be NYS Gubernatorial candidate Warren Redlich who vies to win the endorsement of the Republican and Liberterian lines. He will give us an introduction to his platform from approximately 10:15 am until 11:00 am.

Some of Mr Redlich's platform will be divulged by the 10:30 am. To participate, please call 914-636-0110. Callers are reminded to stay on topic.

For those craving more news with a Yonkers perspective, consider listening to Hezi Aris Wednesday morning at 8:35 am with Bob Marrone on the *Good Morning Westchester* radio program hosted by Bob Marrone.



State Senator Marty Golden Endorses Rick Lazio for Governor

New York, NY -- State Senator Marty Golden announced his endorsement of Rick Lazio for New York State Governor.

State Senator Marty Golden said, "I enthusiastically endorse Rick Lazio for Governor. He will be an excellent Governor for New York and will be a leader we can be proud of. He has the record of accomplishment and the unique skill set that we need in our elected officials. There is a movement growing in this



country. People have had enough of overreaching government. People are demanding fundamental change, and I look forward

to working with Rick Lazio to bring about this real change."

Rick Lazio said, "I am pleased to have the support of Senator Golden. As I travel around the state, I keep hearing the same things. The people want jobs and opportunity, not taxes and regulation. I'm running for Governor because Albany needs new ideas and new leadership, and with the support of Senator Golden I will make New York an Empire State once again."

Mercy College Sees Surge In Enrollment

Dobbs Ferry, NY -- Mercy College has announced a notable expansion in enrollment for the 2009-2010 academic year, as its total number of quality students approaches 10,000. The current number of undergraduate and graduate students (9,643) represents an increase of more than 12 percent since 2007.

Deirdre Whitman, vice president of enrollment management, cites a number of reasons for this growth even during a period of economic recession. According to Whitman, Mercy College's reputation for affordability and quality is paramount. The scope of more than 90 in-demand degree programs taught by esteemed faculty and offered at five campuses attracts many highly motivated students. In addition, when students are weighing which college to attend, the Mercy College Personalized Achievement Contract (PACT) often is a deciding factor.

The PACT, now in its second year of implementation, is a revolutionary program

designed to maximize student success through a multi-faceted collaboration between the student and the College. The PACT provides incoming Mercy College students with professional, cross-trained mentors who facilitate integrated support for academic, career, and personal growth that continues for their entire college experience. Together, students and mentors create customized plans designed to guarantee academic excellence and skills development that will ultimately translate into career placement opportunities and success.

PACT started with a pilot program of 50 students and has now expanded to more than 500. PACT mentors contact accepted students and their families to assist with financial aid, housing, course selection, and other support needed to make a seamless transition into college. The mentor then continues to develop a close relationship with the student through ongoing meetings and dialogue, serving as the point person for all aspects of the Mercy

College experience.

"The PACT has certainly influenced our rise in enrollment, as well as success for students once they are part of our Mercy College community," says Dr. Kimberly Cline, president of Mercy College. "Students are innately drawn to the idea of having mentors who they can contact 24/7, be it in person, on the phone, or through various social networking mediums and who are dedicated to helping them every step of the way in a highly personalized manner."

Enrollment expansion at Mercy College is also due in part to the wide range of academic choices it presents to students—more than 90 graduate and undergraduate degree programs, including many new offerings that specifically address 21st century academic and employment trends. Ms. Whitman explains, "We often connect with potential students by engaging them to talk about their interests and goals, as well

see *Mercy College* Pg. 5

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Mercy College Sees Surge In Enrollment *From Page 4*

as financial and personal considerations. Then we can introduce them to an array of programs that directly cater to their personal and career aspirations.”

Highlights of recent program innovations include:

- A five-year B.S./M.S. Dual Degree Program in Education leading to New York State teacher certification at reduced time and cost to students;
- A business major in Corporate and Homeland Security;
- An undergraduate specialization in Sports

Management;

- A Doctorate in Physical Therapy; and
- The doubling of hybrid courses offered online and on campus.

Mercy College courses are taught by a top-tier faculty that includes Fulbright scholars, published authors and national experts in their fields. The College also has an Honors Program that offers unique preparation for high achieving students through academic challenges, an enriched learning experience, and engagement in co-curricular activities.

According to Dr. Cline, another reason for the surge in enrollment is the enthusiasm and expertise of Deirdre Whitman and her recruitment team. Since joining the College during 2008, Ms. Whitman has initiated changes in every aspect of the enrollment effort, from streamlining the application system with the latest technology to increasing the number of recruitment visits tenfold. The result is a 100 percent increase in applications from 2007 to 2010.

The Mercy College recruitment team conducted

more than 2,000 visits to high schools, college fairs and other venues as well as campus events during 2009—with even greater volume planned for 2010. Ms. Whitman notes, “Creativity in communication is a key to what we do, as well as our commitment to provide individual attention to all students and parents. Having a passion and enthusiasm for the ‘life changing’ benefits of a Mercy College education is important, too. This passion is the magic that motivates and inspires thousands!”

Mercy College is a private, nonprofit institution founded in 1950, more than 90 undergraduate and graduate programs within five schools: Business, Education, Health and Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Liberal Arts, offered at the main campus in Dobbs Ferry, as well as campuses in The Bronx, Manhattan, Yorktown Heights and White Plains. www.mercy.edu, 877-MERCY-GO, on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Why the Projected New Rochelle School Budget Increase is Too Low



By Peggy Godfrey

This year’s proposed New Rochelle public school budget comes with good and bad news. The Superintendent of Schools, Richard Organisciak, stated the latest budget proposal is \$3.56 million (or 1.59%) less than last year’s budget. However, the tax rate is projected to increase 3.8%. In a letter dated March 2, Organisciak said another proposed 15% (\$5.6 million) or more in cuts proposed by the State could “wreak havoc with all aspects of our existing education and service programs.” One solution offered was to identify areas where budget reductions could occur. The School Budget Review session on March 9 gave the public an opportunity to respond to this proposed budget which Organisciak said needed

another cut of more than one million dollars. Sara Richmond, President of the New Rochelle Board of Education, added the budget was “a work in progress.”

Assistant Superintendent John Quinn explained the expenditure detail (pp. 2-37) at this meeting. Lower budget amounts for the new projected year were noted for several items such as district meetings, auditing expenses, and legal services. Reduction in fees for Civil Services administration expenses was also mentioned. Board of Education members raised questions about projected increases in fuel heating oil and gas prices. Quinn replied an energy audit had been made to find areas where they could reduce expenses. In response to a citizen’s comment that there are many Esco’s now which might have lower gas rates than Con Edison, Quinn said he was planning to check into that. Oil companies are selected by

Personnel cuts in

various areas such as maintenance are being reviewed when employees leave or retire. However, a resident suggested the district may have to look at more possible cuts of staff to meet the budget goals in these trying economic times.

Steve Sribnik suggested the reality of the 3.8% budget increase had a severe impact on residents. He felt the taxpayers can’t be continually burdened and that tax cuts were needed because “something drastic has to be done.” He suggested the administrators share in paying for their health costs.

Board member David Lacher reiterated a familiar comment that the assessment base in the City was decreasing and even with an actual cut in the amount of the budget, there was still a need for a tax increase. The loss of 34% of the assessment base over the years has shifted taxes from commercial to residential homeowners. But Monroe Kaufman felt in all fairness when the

School Board claimed an increase of 3.9% as they did last year, it is not a final figure because the actual increase turned out to be over 6%. Lacher agreed but added the actual assessment rolls are not finalized until August after the budget is passed. However, he did not disagree with Kaufman. A parent requested busing for a private school in Mamaroneck. Robert Cox clarified that under state

law busing for private and public school students “has to be equitable,” and that the district may end up litigating this issue.

The next School Budget Review meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 7 p.m. at New Rochelle City Hall.

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Mayor Mary Marvin's Column



By Mary C. Marvin
Mayor of the Village
of Bronxville

Many of you have reached out to Village Hall alerting us that the Census forms have Yonkers 10708 as the address. In light of the fact that most State, Federal and school aid is predicated on the Census tally, we are very concerned about the accuracy of the numbers for our Village. We are under the impression that the bar code pinpoints our addresses as Bronxville and that the mailing or regional center

for organizational purposes only is Yonkers.

However due to the importance of the count, we already have reached out to officials at the Census Bureau, Congresswoman Lowey and State Senator Klein to alert them to the issue. As of press time, we have not received confirmation that the bar code does indeed pinpoint the Village so I will be sending an e-mail alert as soon as we receive an explanation.

Over the past few years, many residents have expressed opinions about the lighting in our Village particularly concerning the level of illumination as it relates to safety and the energy efficiency of the lighting in the business district.

Given the broad based interest, we have been

reviewing our entire lighting grid and learning about options and the associated costs.

The historical, ornamental globe lights throughout our downtown use incandescent bulbs with a wattage of 189 and currently all poles are at maximum illumination. To increase the intensity of light would require a reconfiguration of each fixture.

Though quite beautiful, the globe lights are the most inefficient in terms of both energy and maintenance. Under the best conditions, the bulbs can burn for up to 8,000 hours. However, since they contain a fragile filament, they are often burned out by wind, rain or snow conditions. As a result, a team of our Department of Public Works

staff spends three days per week repairing fixtures and replacing bulbs.

Approximately two years ago, we retro-fitted the fixture base of one of the globes outside of the Post Office. It is a metal halide bulb that emits two times the illumination of the incandescent bulbs at half the wattage with a much longer life than 8,000 hours. Since it is also filament free, it has not needed to be replaced in two years, saving on maintenance as well. However, just in the two years since its installation, there is even more advanced technology to re-fit our fixtures both in terms of energy savings and illumination quality.

As an additional experiment, just last month we fitted two of the standard telephone pole lights on Cedar Street near St. Joseph's with LED (light emitting diode) bulbs. They emit more illumination at 60 watts now than they did with 189 watt incandescent bulbs and have a life of 100,000 hours vs. the 8,000 of the incandescent bulb.

The LED lights have an added advantage because of the multitude of diodes - in our fixtures 30 - that will continue to illuminate even if several burn out. This provides a particularly important safety reason to use LED bulbs in traffic lights and pedestrian walk fixtures.

We are also testing a QL light—which is a system using the principles of induction and gas discharge in a lamp design - on a mounted fixture on a telephone pole on Northwestway. This variety of light is also filament free and energy efficient with a life of 100,000 hours.

We estimate that a change from incandescent bulbs to any energy efficient bulb from the gradient of possibilities would cut our energy costs by 60% yearly translating into a savings of over \$60,000 per year, close

to a full tax point. This savings does not even factor in the additional costs of labor and material for repairs and replacement.

The downside is that in order to achieve this savings, we would need a capital outlay of approximately \$400,000 to retro fit all of our existing light sources. This number does not assume any additional fixtures or poles beyond the 420 existing in the Village.

Given the current economic climate, this capital expenditure is not on the immediate horizon but is a project that must be addressed given the current costs, safety concerns and the need to be prudent stewards of our energy use.

We will address the business district first but our residential lighting is also incandescent bulbs of 100 watts with the fragile filament subject to weather conditions. Our police officers on the night shift compile a written report of bulb outages that is delivered to our Department of Public Works crew daily. If you do not see a bulb replaced within a few days, it means there is an additional problem that requires a Con Edison crew because we are very diligent about bulb replacement due to the important safety factor.

We have applied for stimulus money through NYSERTA, the State energy agency and we have put in a project request with Congresswoman Lowey for the \$400,000 outlay.

I invite you to share your ideas/reactions to what we are currently testing as well as offer suggestions for lighting options going forward or direct us to communities that we may want to emulate. Just e-mail me at mayor@vobny.com. We are always looking for best practices and equipment especially in this ever evolving technology.

The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park presents...

Hike-a-Thon

Saturday May 1st, 2010

Starting at 10am



Get out for a hike and help us raise funds for the restoration of Van Cortlandt Park's spectacular hiking trails. Like a Walk-a-Thon, Hike-a-Thon participants will be asked to seek out supporters to sponsor their hike.

All participants who register and raise at least \$25 will receive a Friends t-shirt. The first 100 participants to register and who raise at least \$50 for children, \$100 for adults will receive a goody bag.

Registration deadline is April 7th.

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To register or for more information

call 718-601-1460 or visit

www.vancortlandt.org.

Assemblymen Latimer and Spano: Legislation Would Increase Transparency, Accountability in Government

Albany, NY--Assemblymen Mike Spano (D,C,WF-Yonkers) and George Latimer (D-Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle) announced that a package of legislation which will increase accountability of state and local governments passed the Assembly, helping to shed a brighter light on the practices of government.

This legislation is so important because it makes tremendous strides toward the partnering of people and elected officials who represent them. The bills' passage coincides with the fifth annual, mid-March Sunshine Week – the national, non-partisan commemoration that stresses the importance of open government and freedom of information.

“This legislative package will increase transparency in government in a way that would provide



people a greater awareness and knowledge of how their government is working for them,” said Assemblyman Spano. “Especially today, where the front page story of every paper is some political scandal, it is imperative to reassure the people we represent we truly are working for them. Many people seem to have lost a sense of confidence and trust in government and I believe it is critical that government do everything possible to gain that trust back.”

This year’s package of legislation includes bills that would:

- ban government agencies from claiming copyright protection whenever the materials don’t reflect artistic creation or scientific or academic research (A.5726-A);
- shorten the time state agencies have to appeal judgments against them for Freedom of Information Law violations from four months to 30 days (A.6484);
- allow courts to overturn government decisions done in violation of open meetings laws and require public officials who disregard the law to attend compliance training sessions (A.10196);
- increase public awareness of government by clearly allowing the recording, broadcasting and photographing



of government public meetings (A.10093);

- require public meetings, if practicable, to be held in facilities sufficiently sized to accommodate the number of people who wish to attend (A.5873); and
- authorize state agencies to waive fees related to the reproduction of records requested by a member of the public (A.6371).

The Assembly has long been a champion for comprehensive government reform laws. In 2008, the Assembly helped pass a law allowing individuals to get

a copy of a public record in a form other than paper (Ch. 223 of 2008). That same year, the Assembly helped pass a law requiring that subject-matter lists maintained by state agencies be posted online (Ch. 499 of 2008). Last year, the Assembly helped pass a law requiring public bodies to post notices of the places and times of public meetings on their Web sites (Ch. 26 of 2009) and requiring agencies to accept and respond to requests for records under the Personal Privacy Protection Law (Ch. 27 of 2009).

“I remain committed to providing for and protecting the public’s right to a government that is open and accountable to the people it represents,” Latimer and Spano said. “These bills we passed are important actions that speak to the true meaning of Sunshine Week.”

Sen. Stewart-Cousins Announces Three Libraries to Receive Over \$160,000

Albany, NY -- March 16, 2010 -- State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D/WF – 35th District), Chair of the Local Government Committee, announced today that Ardsley Public Library, Mount Pleasant Public Library, and Warner Library have been awarded construction funding for a variety of much needed renovations.

The grant funds were provided by the New York State Legislature in the 2009-2010 State budget and will help local libraries and library systems to build new libraries, create additions, update technology, meet energy efficient standards,

and improve handicap accessibility.

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “Our public libraries are more than repositories of books, they are vital community centers offering an array of programs and services for all of us. Investing in maintaining and upgrading our libraries benefit young and old alike.”

The Ardsley Public Library has been awarded \$118,184 for the construction of conduit between a new addition and original building, renovation of lighting, roofing, and siding, as well as reconfiguration of existing



space to accommodate Internet access.

The Mount Pleasant Public Library will receive \$45,644 to replace walkways at both entrances and replacement of exterior lighting system.

The Warner library in Tarrytown will receive

\$4,776 to enhance handicap access by installing automatic sliding door at its side entrance.

“It is crucial that we, as lawmakers, support not only the programs that our libraries provide,

but lend the necessary financial support to help maintain and improve their infrastructure. I was pleased to advocate for this funding in last year’s budget,” concluded Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

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Senate Passes Klein Bill to Generate Vital Revenue Expected to Generate \$100 Million Annually

Albany, NY -- State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) announced on Wednesday, March 17, 2010, that the Senate passed legislation to expand hours and types of games for video lottery terminals (VLTs). Klein's bill (S.706-D) is expected to generate an additional \$100 million annually for state aid to education. There are currently more than 13,000 video lottery gaming machines at horse racing tracks across the state.

"Providing adequate funding for our children's future is non-negotiable, even in difficult fiscal times. Video Lottery Terminals provide a vital source of revenue for New York State. By allowing these facilities to operate at extended hours and

with more types of games, New York can generate significant and much needed revenue for local school districts," said State Senator Jeffrey D. Klein.

Klein's bill provides for VLT facilities to extend their operating hours from the currently allowed 16 hours per day (or 112 hours per week). Under this legislation, Yonkers Raceway, which has more than 1,500 VLT machines would be permitted to operate for about 140 hours per week. All other VLT race tracks in the state, including Saratoga, Vernon Downs, Tioga Downs, Buffalo Raceway, Monticello, Batavia Downs, and Finger Lakes Raceway, would be permitted to extend their operating hours to 128 hours per week.

Video lottery gaming has seen a robust increase in



revenues in recent years with a growth of about 12%, or \$73 million during 2008-2009. In fiscal year 2007-08, video lottery gaming produced \$875 million, of which more than \$480 million was allocated for education.

Klein's legislation also calls for the expansion of video lottery gaming to include electronic table games. Senator Klein stressed that this particular expansion is crucial if New York is to stay competitive

with other states, like Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which routinely attract gamblers across borders. In 2007, nearly a quarter of the more than 26 million visitors to Atlantic City were from New York State, each spending on average \$550, with a total estimated negative economic impact on New York of \$3.3 billion.

The New York State legislature approved video lottery gaming in 2001. In 2004, the state Court of Appeals upheld the law and video lottery gaming began at New York's horse racing tracks, commonly referred to as racinos. Video lottery gaming machines resemble slot machines in appearance and players bet on the outcome of a video game. The machines are programmed so that all players are able to

participate in the same game at the same time, just as lottery players have for decades been able to buy lottery tickets and participate in games, like Lotto and Daily Numbers, wherein the outcomes are determined by a random drawing. Examples of new games would include baccarat, roulette, and blackjack among others.

The new electronic table games will operate in the same way and, therefore, satisfy the legal requirements for a lawful lottery game. Each play in a video lottery game will represent an electronic version of a lottery ticket, multiple players will be able to participate at the same time, and the results will be decided by chance.

Ed Koch Movie Reviews



By Edward I. Koch

"Brooklyn's Finest" (+)

This is a well-done film about a corrupt New York City police department. Although it takes place in the present, the corruption depicted is so massive that it reminded me of what went on in that department before the Knapp Commission conducted its investigation of the New York City Police Department in 1970.

The Knapp Commission established that an enormous number of cops were corrupt,

on the take, and on the pad (paid off primarily by drug dealers for allowing them to conduct their illegal activities without fear). Ultimately, because the corruption was so substantial and involved a huge number of people in high positions, the city was forced to provide amnesty for many of them or find itself without a functioning police department. It shook the Lindsay administration to its core.

Today most people believe, and I'm one of them, that since the Knapp Commission's investigation, the NYC police department has reformed itself and overall is made up of professional men and women of integrity. Commissioner Ray Kelly has earned the respect of the citizens of New York City as well as the members of the police force.

Now to the film. Sal

(Ethan Hawke), a detective who is overwhelmed by financial problems and family obligations, resorts to killing and stealing drugs and money from the dealers. Tango (Don Cheadle) is an undercover cop who appears to be honest. He is asked by a tough, cruel, and racist federal agent, Agent Smith (Ellen Barkin), to set up a drug dealer, Caz (Wesley Snipes), who has just been released from prison.

Tango is conflicted about the assignment, because Caz once saved his life when Tango was working undercover in a prison. Eddie (Richard Gere), an alcoholic police officer seven days shy of retirement, has avoided encounters with criminals throughout his long career, preferring to keep his head down and do the minimum to get by. All the actors are excellent in their portrayals

of their characters.

The film contains a lot of violence and includes situations that some cops deal with during their patrols, e.g., a white officer shoots a black undercover cop who has a gun in his hand after apprehending a criminal, another rescues a kidnapped young woman sold into prostitution, and a fracas between a child and a storekeeper leads to a shooting.

"Brooklyn's Finest" was directed by Antoine Fuqua. It is a good, entertaining film, similar to Fuqua's earlier film, "Training Day."

Henry Stern said: "Since I began writing codas to Mayor Koch's reviews, this is the first picture I have seen which is a piece of trash. The title, 'Brooklyn's Finest,' is sarcastic, since most of the characters are drug dealers, their henchmen, and

crooked, lazy or brutal police officers. You can guess what the women are. The body count is over a dozen, but the shooters, both cops and crooks, have good aim, because their victims usually drop on the spot rather than writhe around in protracted agony. The blood-red titles give away the movie, which is close to being an exploitation film. The most suspense came when the drug dealers were holding a buddy over the edge of the roof in a housing project, because they wrongly suspected him of snitching. The picture is a disservice to Brooklyn in 2010. Avoid it."

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

Weir Only Human

All in a Day's Work for a Cop



By Bob Weir

One of the toughest jobs for any police officer is the issuance of traffic tickets for minor violations. It's one thing to stop someone traveling several miles per hour over the limit and remind him of the dangers of speeding as you cite him with a costly document that will reinforce the advice. But the idea of stopping some guy on his way to or from work, to hit him with a summons for not using his turn signal or for an expired inspection tag, makes the officer appear petty toward someone who is not exactly a menace to society. Yes, even minor laws must be enforced, but it's not the best public relations opportunity for cops. Firemen generally

have a better image because whenever you see them they're carrying a child out of a burning building or posing with local kids on a fire truck and letting the little tykes wear some of the uniform equipment. Although both jobs are public service oriented and exist for the safety of the people, most drivers recoil at the sight of a police cruiser, but experience no such trepidation when that red engine is spotted heading back to the firehouse.

How often have you spied one of those marked units in your rearview mirror and not quickly glanced at your speed? If you notice that you're a bit lead-footed, you're reluctant to step on the brakes because the officer will notice the red warning lights in the rear. However, if you're casually driving along and suddenly notice a unit coming your way or parked on the side of the road, you might have a sudden impulse to tap the brakes a little just in case you had been a bit heavy

on the gas pedal. Then your eyes keep a close watch on the actions of the uniformed driver as you anticipate your possible fate. Will those roof lights go on, signaling for you to pull over? It's an image that could ruin anyone's day. During 20 years as a cop in New York City I don't ever remember making a driver happy about getting a ticket. In fact, sometimes the motorist felt motivated to tell me what he thought about a public servant who has nothing better to do than to annoy decent hard-working taxpayers, instead of locking up drug-dealers.

Well, most cops would rather lock up felons than chase after drivers who might have an inoperable tail light, but if that's all they did, how long would it take before every car on the road would look like a reject from the demolition derby? How safe would you feel on the roadways if hot-footed speedsters had no fear of those public sentinels with their radar equipment? It's axiomatic

in police work that nobody wants us around until they need us. And Heaven help us if we're not around when they do. The guy whose home was burglarized while he was away on vacation is likely to wonder why the interlopers weren't arrested. "I got 5 speeding tickets last year from you guys, but when my house was broken into, you cops were nowhere to be found," he might say with biting sarcasm. Perhaps that's because cops are kept busy with jerks that refuse to observe speed limits. I spent most of my police career doing detective work, but during those early days in uniform I used a lot of time chasing the bad guys.

One hot day in Brooklyn, my partner and I were alerted to the sounds of a woman screaming about a block away. We pulled up to the scene of a bare-chested man holding a machete and moving stealthily toward the frightened young woman, who was lying on the sidewalk with her hands raised to ward off

an imminent attack. While my partner got on the radio, I pointed my gun at the would-be butcher and gave him a warning. His attention turned toward me and he took a few steps in my direction. I cocked my weapon, warned him again and told him his future didn't include a third warning. After acknowledging that my weapon was more formidable than his, he sneeringly put the long-bladed instrument on the ground. As was common in such close encounters with homicide, the guy discovered his girlfriend was less than faithful, so he had decided to dismember her. He was arrested and she was grateful to us for keeping her from going all to pieces over the guy. Later that same day, I stopped a driver for zooming past a red light. As I wrote out the ticket, he exclaimed, "Why don't you guys do some real police work instead of always harassing people?"

New York Civic

The People Speak: Mon Serrate, Serrate Senate Expelled Him, Voters Keep Him Out *From Page 1*

who is neither a thug nor a crook, received seven per cent of the vote in the largely Spanish speaking district. Peralta will resign from the Assembly to become a Senator, and his newly vacated seat will be filled in another special election, to be held in a month or so.

We assume the Democratic machine will put up another candidate against Monserrate, should he decide to run for Peralta's old seat. Monserrate committed a cardinal act of political

treason by conspiring with the ethically challenged Senator Jose Espada to put the senate in chaos for a month last year. He was no more loyal to the Republicans than he was to the Democrats. He deserted them in about a week, and was rewarded for his return by reinstatement as Chair of the Consumer Protection Committee, a sinecure which is accompanied by a \$12,500 lulu to ease the burden of chairing the committee, one of the least demanding tasks in the legislature.

Here is the scoop on Peralta, the Queens Democratic organization's alternative to Monserrate. It is a story by Juan Gonzalez, which appeared in the Daily News on December 9, 2009. We quote: "ASSEMBLYMAN JOSE PERALTA SCORED \$500,000 IN TAXPAYER FUNDS FOR INACTIVE NONPROFIT"

"Queens Assemblyman Jose Peralta landed more than \$500,000 in taxpayer money for a nonprofit that never filed federal tax records, has no employees

and has been inactive for more than two years.

"Peralta helped organize the Corona-Elmhurst Center for Economic Development after joining the Legislature, and for years it was located in the same building as his campaign office.

"This year, he and his chief political consultants have continued to lobby state and city lawmakers for additional grants for the dormant group, the Daily News has learned.

"Until a month ago, the Corona-Elmhurst group

maintained an office at 104-01 Roosevelt Ave., in a two-story commercial building, where Peralta rents space for his election committee.

"The building is owned by Dr. Mercedes Mota-Martinez, a dentist who runs a clinic on the building's upper floor and who also employs Peralta's mother, Rosa Hernandez, as an office manager.

"The dentist, Peralta and Hernandez share another connection: All were listed

see New York Civic Pg. 10

New York Civic

The People Speak: Mon Serrate, Serrate Senate Expelled Him, Voters Keep Him Out *From Page 10*

for years on voter rolls as living at the same address - a multifamily house a few blocks from the clinic.

"Peralta moved out of the house in 2005. His mother continues to live there with Mota-Martinez. She and the dentist also co-own another Queens property.

"In 2005 and 2006, according to Peralta's campaign reports, Hernandez provided his committee monthly in-kind contributions of \$1,300 - a total of almost \$30,000. She also donated another \$6,000 in cash, while Mota-Martinez gave nearly \$5,000, making the two women his biggest individual contributors.

"Peralta said yesterday the \$1,300 monthly contributions from his mother represent the market value of his campaign's free office space from the health center. The Board of Elections requires all such in-kind help to be listed.

"But his mother is not the actual owner of the building, just a worker there, he was reminded.

"She's the office manager, so we put her name down as the contributor," Peralta said.

"As for the Corona-Elmhurst group, Peralta secured its first \$125,000 grant in 2004 from the state's Economic Development Corp., for technical assistance for neighborhood businesses. The money was an earmark from the fund for pet projects of individual legislators.

"That year, he swore in the group's board of directors. Since then, its storefront sign has proclaimed: 'Sponsored by NY State Assemblyman Jose R. Peralta.' The sign came down last month.

"More than \$350,000 in federal and state funds followed the first big grant. The group's director Fernando Fernandez resigned in late 2006. After that, questions arose about the lack of financial reports, several community leaders say, and the group ceased to function.

"The director got sick

and we had to put the organization's work and its funds on hold till we can find a replacement," Peralta said.

"Meanwhile, the Audubon Partnership for Economic Development, a northern Manhattan nonprofit founded by Peralta's political consultant and mentor Luis Miranda, stepped in and applied for several state and city grants in the name of the Corona-Elmhurst group.

"We are assisting them because we do the same type of work," Audubon's

executive director, Carmen Diaz-Santiago, said.

"But Corona-Elmhurst has no staff, no phone, and no visible presence in Queens, Diaz-Santiago was told.

"My understanding is they are in the process of relocating," she said.

This Daily News story should be appalling to you. It is to us. It is a sad example of how the State Legislature deals with member items, which are ladled out to individual members as rewards for political servitude. It is one

of the principal ways the legislative leaders secure the fealty of their members. Money is a language with which the least literate legislator has some acquaintance. Its judicious dispensation goes a long way to insuring submission by senators and assembly members. Verily.

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

The New York Uprising Begins *From Page 1*

state legislature, both the Assembly and Senate.

Compounding New York's government problem is its non-functional governor who is beset with allegations that he may have committed a crime by swearing falsely before the New York State Commission on Public Integrity, as well as allegations of possible obstruction of justice now being investigated by the New York State Attorney General. The latter recused himself from the investigation -- he is a perceived candidate for the office of governor in the November election -- and selected Judith Kaye, retired Chief Justice of the New York Court of Appeals, to oversee the investigation by the Attorney General's staff.

Attending the March 12th meeting were Frank Baraff and Brian Keeler, leaders of a coalition of New Yorkers called "Reboot New York," who are organizing upstate and Long Island citizens to push for reform in

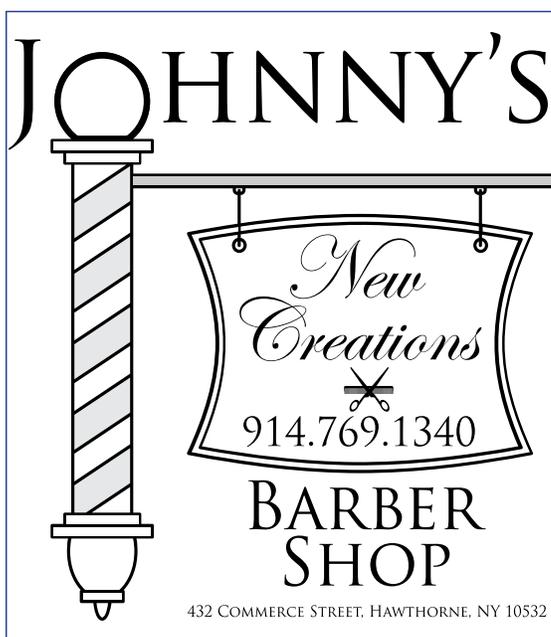
Albany. Other citizen-based organizations are being established around the city and state, including Unshackle Upstate, headed by Brian Sampson, as well as various reform-minded groups of business people. Five respected good government groups -- the Brennan Center for Justice, Citizens Union, Common Cause NY, League of Women Voters/NYS and N.Y. Public Interest Research Group -- have organized to address Albany reform. The Westchester County Association, led by former Lieutenant Governor Al Del Bello and Bill Mooney, is taking up the effort in Westchester.

By the November election, my hope is that literally millions of New Yorkers who have had it with the status quo -- dysfunctional government -- will join the uprising and become involved in these reform efforts. New York, according to the last census has 19,460,000 residents. My belief is that

a huge number are fed up with their representatives in Albany and want to change New York politics.

At the meeting last Friday, a suggestion was made that our group adopt a number of good government objectives and make them known, not only to the legislature, but to all New Yorkers. In 1977, a similar approach was taken by Reverend Leon Sullivan, whose anti-apartheid principles were adopted by millions of people in the U.S. and thousands of businesses. The so-called Sullivan Principles helped bring down the South African all-white regime and bring about the election of Nelson Mandela as president of that country.

I have said in the past, "throw the bums out -- the good and the bad -- because the good aren't good enough and the bad are evil." Regrettably, that goal is simply not doable. Instead, an effort should be



Ed Koch Commentary

The New York Uprising Begins *From Page 1*

made to get incumbents to publicly agree to implement a code of good government principles. Those who will not agree or those who agree, but unjustifiably fail to take necessary action, will be held to account.

Selecting those principles will not be an easy task. The most effective campaign is waged when there is a single principle to fight for, but that is impossible when so many good government advocates are involved, a number of whom have different priorities. I believe the three most important principles

are: (a) redistricting; (b) balancing the budget; and (c) ethics oversight and enforcement. In my view, the state legislature must create an impartial board to draw the lines of the new election districts required as a result of the 2010 census. Unless this is done, the Assembly and Senate will draw lines that will all but guarantee the election of incumbents over challengers and the continued control of the legislature by the party in power in each House.

A second and perhaps the most favored reform

proposal of most New Yorkers -- Democrat, Republican and Independent -- relates to the budget. The State of New York currently has an estimated \$9.5 billion deficit in the budget required by law to be adopted by April 1st. New Yorkers now accept that you can't spend money you don't have, and they believe that imposing new taxes on already overtaxed individuals and businesses is not the way to go, particularly while we are trying to recover from a deep recession. So we should be urging the

adoption of a balanced budget, on time, now and in the future, without the imposition or increase of burdensome new taxes.

Third, we should demand stronger ethics oversight and tighter enforcement. The legislature is rife with conflicts of interest, inappropriate outside employment, and relationships with companies doing business with the state

Throughout my career in government, and now out of government, I have always believed that public service is the noblest

of professions, if done honestly and well. Our legislature fails on both counts.

The uprising has begun. Our progress will be demonstrated this November in the election. If you or your friends want to join the citizen army and participate in this important work, let me know at eikoch@bryancave.com. If you do, we will be in touch.

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



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