

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE

AUGUST 2007

CLIPS



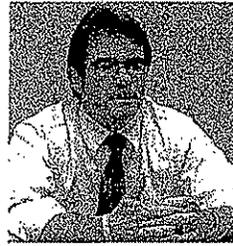
CITY HALL

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In State of the Unions, Ed Ott (right) looks to the future of the CLC and organized labor (Page 3).



SUNY reform gets underway (Page 22) and Public Advocate Elsy Gotbaum (left) talks turkey sandwiches at her Power Lunch (Page 32)

Bloomberg KIDS

Former Bloomberg staffers Silvia Alvarez, Jordan Barowitz, Patrick Brennan, Joe Chan, Jennifer Falk, Jonathan Greenspun and Marc Ricks check in from their new positions and reflect on their time in the Bloomberg administration.

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STEAMROLLER JOE

Bruno's inside track on the big three: he is riding high, Silver is a disappointment, Spitzer should get out of politics

By EDWARD-ISAAC DOVERE

Joe Bruno bets the exacta box. That makes for a harder gamble—instead of just putting his money on one horse, he needs to guess which two will come out on top. As long as one places first and the other second, he wins, and collects a bigger payout for the double bet at the window downstairs.

He has \$4 on the fifth race, hinging on horses 4 and 8. From a distance, the horses seem to be gliding, tearing around the oval track as the baritone announcer narrates their progress.

Bruno watches intently. They start down the stretch. He tenses slightly. One of his picks is ahead, the other one back in third.

"Come on, baby," he says. "Come on."

They whip past. Split seconds before they hit the finish line, he can see that 4 has slipped behind. He shrugs slightly, raises his eyebrows. And then he continues the conversation.

"You go on to the next," he explains. "You play hard

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Turkey Sandwiches and Iced Tea with Betsy Gotbaum

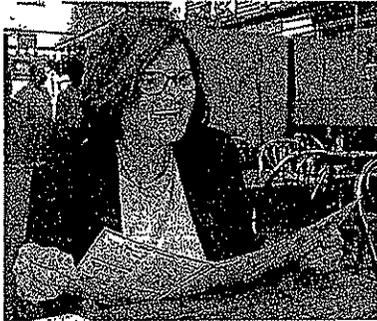
PUBLIC ADVOCATE BETSY GOTBAUM (D) is one of several names often discussed for the 2009 mayoral election. One of her biggest cheerleaders: husband and labor leader Victor Gotbaum, who told *City Hall* in this past February's "Political Power Couples" issue that she would be "the best god-damned mayor the city's ever had."

Gotbaum recently sat down at Everest Diner on Chatham Square to talk about her mayoral hopes, why the city needs an ombudsman and the only dog she could never train.

What follows is an edited transcript.

City Hall: Have you gotten any particularly interesting calls lately?

Betsy Gotbaum: About five years ago, I got on this kick about food stamps. And the reason I got on a kick about food stamps is I got a call from one guy—his name is Eric Wilson—and Eric was in a homeless shelter with his children and he had been denied food stamps. Which is illegal. So that started a whole huge program where, in addition to getting more information out to New Yorkers to know about how you get food stamps, we were able to persuade the powers that be that they should reduce the application to two pages. And then I was able to raise about \$1 million through private money to give to the United Way to do a food stamp outreach project—all from one call.



While perusing the menu at Everest Diner, Betsy Gotbaum discussed the options ahead of her for 2009—and perhaps earlier—in the mayor's race.

[Gotbaum orders white meat turkey sandwich on whole wheat toast with extra mustard on the side and an iced tea.]

CH: How do you respond to people who either don't know what the public advocate is, or worse, are familiar with the office and want to get rid of it?

BG: I totally disagree with people who say they want to get rid of the office. Because I think this is a very important office for one huge reason: the mayor of New York City has an enormous amount of power and control. You need checks and balances. For example, when the school bus fiasco occurred, that was wrong. It was just the wrong thing to do. And somebody had to call them on it.

CH: But a lot of people were calling them on it.
BG: Well I think I was the first one.

CH: Since you're a citywide official, does that make your criticism more powerful?

BG: Sure, I think it does. It makes it more powerful. When I was Parks Commissioner, one of the things that was the most helpful for me was when a Council person or a civic leader would call me and say, "Such-and-such a park is a mess." And I'd say, "Wait a minute. My supervisor told me that it's fine." They'd say, "No, no, no—it's a mess, it's horrible. Come out and see." And I'd go out and see and they were right. Your supervisors want you to look good, they want to look good, but you can't be in every park at all times.

CH: Your husband says you'd be a great mayor. Do you agree with him?

BG: Oh, I agree with him, sure.

CH: Are you interested in running for mayor?

BG: Leaving my options open.

CH: You could actually be mayor since Bloomberg has been making moves to possibly run for president. Which means you could be mayor, briefly.

BG: If he were to step down, I would be mayor for 60 days. Or if he won, I would be mayor for 60 days. And then I'd be mayor for 60 days and of course I'd run then—if you hand it to me. Of course I'd run then.

CH: Do you have any pets?

BG: No. I love dogs. My last dog we got at the pound—the dog from hell. I loved him but I couldn't train him to do anything. He bit me a couple of times. Eight months, trying to make this dog like me. The only funny story with this dog—which isn't that funny, actually—he bit me, and one day I was having a meeting with [Health] Commissioner Frieden. And he had bitten me here [motions to face]. And I came in and he sees blood and—as you know, he's a doctor—he says, "What's that? Are you okay?" I said, "Yes. My feelings are hurt. It's a dog bite." He says, "Maybe you should go and have that looked at." He was wonderful—he took care of it. The dog had all his shots and everything. So a few days later, I got a notice from the Department of Health—this had nothing to do with Tom Frieden—it was a coincidence because my husband had been sitting in the park holding the dog on a leash and the dog had bitten somebody. And I got this notice because the dog was registered in my name: "If your dog bites one more person we're going to have to destroy it." And then we found a Catholic priest who was going to train him, and the priest couldn't train him, so the priest found a home [for him] in Maine.

CH: Do you like to cook?

BG: I love to cook.

CH: What are your specialties? Do you like baking...

BG: I hate baking. I'm terrible at baking. I'm good at fish, vegetables, salads, chicken. I'm not a good baker because I don't measure well.

CH: Does your husband ever cook you dinner?

BG: Oh, please!



The public advocate likes her turkey sandwiches with extra mustard and her mayors with checks and balances.

CH: Does he microwave you dinner? Order out dinner for you?

BG: He can't even use the microwave. He can order dinner. You sort of give up after a while.

CH: What's the last movie you saw?

BG: "Sicko." I thought it was terrific. I don't think everything is perfect in Canada, and I certainly know it's not perfect in England or France, but the exaggeration is very funny and the stories about what goes on in this country were horrific. It just brought home what I really believe—we really have to do something about the healthcare system.

CH: What's the biggest mistake you made in office so far?

BG: Using the car when I shouldn't have—but I didn't know, I didn't do it on purpose. Because it became a big deal and it's so distracting from me and the office. It was a mistake, I made a mistake and I was wrong, but it was a huge mistake. And nobody told us. Why don't they tell us? Give us the policy. We all want to know. I'm not unusual. That's the one that I feel was the most—it caused a lot of anxiety in our office and it caused me a lot of personal anxiety. [E]

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To read more about which side of town Betsy Gotbaum prefers, her thoughts on her grandchildren's behavior and the celebrity with whom she shares a work-out schedule, visit www.cityhallnews.com.

The New York Times

AUGUST 1, 2007, 4:53 PM

A Push to Restrict Tinted Windows in Cars

By SEWELL CHAN



A sedan with tinted rear windows driving near Wall Street. (Photo: Chris Hondros/Getty Images)

The city's public advocate, Betsy Gotbaum, and lawmakers in the State Legislature and the City Council are calling for law enforcement authorities to crack down on the use of illegally tinted windows.

The three men charged in the killing of Police Officer Russel Timoshenko last month were driving a stolen S.U.V. with its rear window and rear side windows tinted. The state's Vehicle and Traffic Law prohibits overly dark windshields or side windows, which must "admit at least 70 percent of available light." Rear windows can be completely dark, as long as the vehicle has side-view mirrors.

State Senator Eric Adams, a Brooklyn Democrat who was formerly a New York City police captain, and Councilman Peter F. Vallone Jr., a Queens Democrat who is the chairman of the Council's influential public safety committee, said they would introduce legislation to crack down on tinted windows. The legislation would, among other things, ban blacked-out back windows on most vehicles, require annual checks of window tint and increase penalties on businesses that install illegal tints on cars. Auto shops on Staten Island, in particular, run a thriving business in tinting windows. The Staten Island Advance recently [noted](#).

"Every time a cop approaches a car with blacked-out windows, he is doing something no cop should have to do: walk blindly into a potentially life-threatening situation," Ms. Gotbaum said.

The lawmakers said that tinted windows are especially dangerous for police officers. "Vehicle stops are one of the most dangerous duties put upon law enforcement officials," Mr. Adams said. "Illegally tinted windows increase that danger."

Mr. Vallone said: "Aside from the dangers that our officers face, they need to be able to see if passengers are hiding drugs or other criminal paraphernalia. They can't do that with a dark window staring them in the face."

Asked about the proposal today, Mayor Bloomberg said that he was not familiar with the subject. "I'd love to tell you that I'm au courant on the proposal to ban illegal tinted windows, but I'm not," he said. "However, I can promise you Stu Loeser will get back with a short, pithy, insightful statement about that if you call our press office." (Mr. Loeser, the mayor's spokesman, said later, in a statement, "Much like the darkly tinted car windows they are trying to limit, we're having a hard time looking into these bills to see what's inside them. But in this case, it's because we haven't seen the actual bills.")

Mr. Adams and another state senator, Martin Golden, a Brooklyn

Mr. Adams and another state senator, Martin Golden, a Brooklyn Republican, are proposing state legislation that would prohibit unlimited tinting of rear windows; require annual inspections to make sure that the current tinting rules are enforced; and increase penalties for violations, including equipping vehicles with illegally tinted windows.

The state law would not apply to most S.U.V.'s, which fall under a federal rule that permits back windows from being tinted.

A related city bill would ban the sale of do-it-yourself window tint film in the city; require auto shops that tint windows to record and maintain license plate and driver license information and the percentage of tint on each window; and require with illegally tinted windows that are impounded by the police to pay a deposit that will be returned once the window is brought into compliance.

Technicians use tint meters to measure the amount of light that passes through the glass. Owners of the 10.5 million vehicles registered in the state would pay a \$1 surcharge to businesses to offset the cost of labor, training and equipment. A current auto inspection costs \$10 for the safety evaluation and \$27 for the emissions evaluation.

Michael M. Grynbaum contributed reporting.

Dark-tinted car windows a boon to lowlifes, pols warn

BY PETER KADUSHIN and DAVE GOLDINER
DAILY NEWS WRITERS

Thursday, August 2nd 2007, 4:00 AM

A group of lawmakers yesterday declared war on dark-tinted car windows, calling them a danger to police who cannot tell whether drivers are reaching for a gun or their license and registration.

The group pushed for tougher enforcement and stiffer fines for drivers who hide behind darkened windshields and chop shops that install them.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum paid tribute to slain Brooklyn Police Officer Russel Timoshenko, who was killed when an ex-con opened fire during a routine stop of a car with tinted windows.

"Every time a police officer walks up to a car, his life is in danger," Gotbaum said at a Manhattan news conference.

New York laws prohibit front and driver's side windows that allow less than 70% of light into cars.

But darker-tinted windows are allowed on passenger and rear windows, and do-it-yourself window-tinting kits are widely available.

Officials called for tint checks to be included in state inspections. They want \$250 fines imposed for violators and a ban on home-tinting kits.

"The criminal element does not use tinted windows to protect themselves from dangerous UV rays," said state Sen. Eric Adams (D-Brooklyn), a retired police captain. "They use them to protect their illegal activity."

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With Ernie Naspretto

The Sun

Bills Target Tinted Windows To Protect Officers

8/2/07

By SARAH GARLAND
Staff Reporter of the Sun

Local elected officials are pushing for legislation that would increase oversight of tinted car windows in an effort to protect police officers and fight terrorism.

Two bills, one introduced yesterday in the state Senate and the other in the City Council, would increase the fines for vehicles with illegally darkened windows and require tests for window opaqueness during regular safety and emissions inspections.

The legislation follows the recent death of a police officer, Rus-

sel Timoshenko, who was fatally shot last month as he approached the window of a stolen sport utility vehicle. The SUV had tinted windows, police said.

"Every time a cop approaches a car with blacked-out windows, he is doing something no cop should have to do: walk blindly into a potentially life-threatening situation," Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum said in a statement.

New York law already prohibits windows that block less than 70% of available light. The state legislation would increase fines for businesses that tint windows ille-

gally, while the city bill would ban the sale of do-it-yourself tinting film and require businesses to keep data on cars they tint.

New York car owners also would be charged an extra dollar for inspections to help cover the costs of tinting tests, which would involve the use of meters that measure the opaqueness of auto glass.

Lawmakers said increased enforcement of the tinted window laws would help law enforcement to observe suspicious behavior inside vehicles.

"If they're approaching an

opaque window, it's the same as breaking down the door of a crack house with a blindfold on," City Council Member Peter Vallone Jr. said. "They need to be able to see if passengers are hiding drugs or other criminal paraphernalia."

The legislation could also help officers who are trained to approach cars from the rear to see what is going on inside before they get there, he added.

Representatives of the police department said yesterday that they would have no comment on the legislation, which they had not seen yet.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

Parks Watchdog Group, Public Advocate Visit Brighton To Check Out Problems

by Brooklyn Eagle (edit@brooklyneagle.net), published online 08-03-2007

Broken Glass, Shortage of Lifeguards, Poorly Maintained Bathrooms, Garbage

Check out

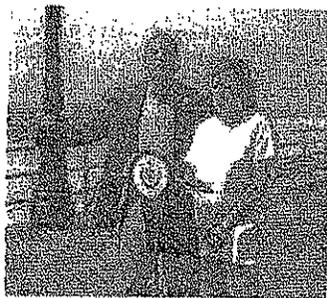
Add to Cart

By Odelia Bitton

In cart

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BRIGHTON BEACH — Lina Ramsey strolls on the sand on Brighton Beach, often collecting shards of glass as she goes. Glass collecting is neither Ramsey's hobby nor her vocation. "I pick them up, because I don't want people to cut themselves," she said yesterday on the boardwalk.



New Yorkers for Parks, an independent watchdog group, wants the beaches less speckled with glass and better maintained. In an evaluation conducted last summer and released now, in which New York's seven beaches were reviewed on various issues of safety and cleanliness, Brighton/Coney Island Beach ranked second worst.

Beaches received bad ratings because of problems such as glass and litter on the shoreline and the sand, badly maintained bathrooms, broken water fountains, and beaches closed for swimming due to a shortage of lifeguards.

In the report, Wolfe's Pond Beach on Staten Island fared poorest. Manhattan Beach in Brooklyn as well as Orchard Beach in the Bronx, two beaches on Staten Island and one in Queens were all graded as "challenged." Only Midland Beach on Staten Island received a "satisfactory" grade.

Out of roughly 21 million people who flocked to the city's beaches last summer,

Christian DiPalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, speaks on the Brighton Beach boardwalk alongside Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum. New Yorkers for Parks recently released a report of New York's seven beaches, in which Brighton/Coney Island Beach ranked second to the worst on issues of safety and cleanliness. Eagle photo by Odelia Bitton

1/1

15.6 million settled themselves on Brighton/Coney Island Beach. Indeed, this beach, which stretches for 2.7 miles from West 37th Street to Corbin Place, is a legendary home to countless attractions, such as the Brooklyn Cyclones at Keystone Park, the Mermaid Parade and the SirenFest music festival.

The report, sent to the Mayor's Office, the City Council speaker and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, is intended, according to the group, "to garner the public's attention."

Gotbaum has recently mobilized on the issue. "We all want New Yorkers to be safe and have a clean beach," she said yesterday at an outdoor press conference on the Brighton Beach boardwalk. Standing beneath a scorching sun, Christian DiPalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, explained his stance before the conference began.

"We need to invest more resources to put more workers on the beach itself to clean up the litter and the glass," DiPalermo said.

After taking a short stroll with DiPalermo along the boardwalk, Gotbaum offered her findings, in addition to the "excessive amount of glass" she observed.

"The bathrooms are repulsive," she began. "On this beach, there are no signs in Russian. I want to ask the Parks Department to make sure there are signs in Russian and also in Spanish [to tell people to clean up]."

Gotbaum, a former parks commissioner, admitted, "The Parks Department can't do it all." She did, however, offer her own services. The public advocate said that she would look into the possibility for legislation that would require people to put their drinks into plastic cups before heading to the sand. "We'd like to support that piece of legislation," DiPalermo responded. "If you can't have [glass bottles] in Yankee Stadium, you should not have them on the beach."

Lack of Lifeguards, Damaged Boardwalks

DiPalermo also emphasized the need for more lifeguards along the beach's perimeter to avoid closing off portions of the beach. Cheryl Huber, the group's research director, said that 32 percent of the beaches citywide were closed last summer due to a shortage of lifeguards.

DiPalermo said that the city has not met its goal, outlined in city records from 1998, of recruiting a total amount of 1,200 lifeguards to be positioned at its beaches and pools. As it stands, said DiPalermo, there is a reliance on international lifeguards. "Children aren't being taught to swim. It affects lifeguard recruitment," he said.

Another concern mentioned at the meeting and shared by many beachgoers is damaged boardwalks. DiPalermo said that was not a major problem for the boardwalk where he was standing. Indeed, a couple of feet off, there were visibly bright and new planks set in alongside the older ones. But beachgoer Ramsey, who is concerned about the issue of safety, said that she just saw someone in front of her who tripped on wood that was jutting out from the boardwalk.

Rif Hakag, who comes to the beach from Borough Park, said, "You could knock your head out if you don't look."

Hakag had additional observations of his own. Pointing to a nearby resting place on the sand, where tables and chairs are shaded by a concrete structure, he said, "It stinks." There are flies and garbage there all the time, he said.

Hakag, who said he visits the beach "as much as I can," did observe one improvement. "The bathrooms are a lot better than they used to be 10 or 15 years ago."

Offering its own perspective on the beach report, the Department of Parks and Recreation said in a statement: "By every measure, New York City's beaches are in better shape now than at any other time, with more than \$50 million invested in capital beach improvements and surrounding recreational resources since 2002, stronger performance measurement systems, better technology, close partnerships with the NYPD, dedicated community partners, expanded waterfront recreational opportunities and ADA access."

With several weeks left to summer, DiPalermo has faith that the Department of Parks and Recreation will improve the general cleanliness of these seven beaches.

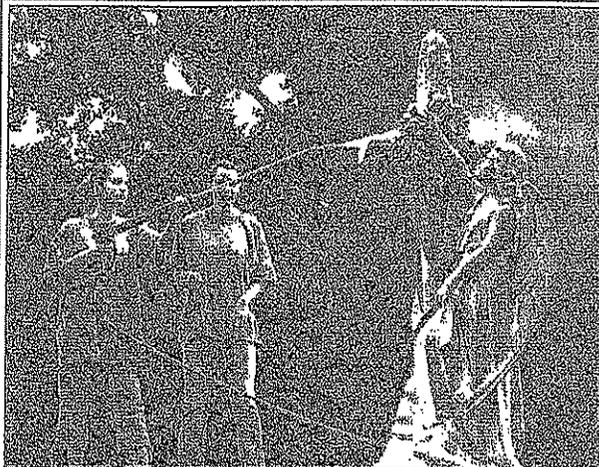
"It's unique for such a city," DiPalermo said. "It's 14 miles of coastline. It's just a gem for us to have. We have to keep it safe and clean."

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Brooklyn Daily Eagle

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Some young French volunteers hose down the monument to Civil War Gen. Edward Bragg Foxler of Brooklyn's 14th Regiment, also known as the "Red-Legged Devil," at Green-Wood Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Green-Wood Cemetery

BROOKLYN TODAY

FRIDAY
AUGUST 3, 2007

Good morning. Today is the 135th day of the year. It is the birth anniversary of John Scopes, Tennessee science teacher and football coach who was the center of the famous Scopes Trial in 1925. The trial centered on Scopes' right to teach evolution in class. As for Scopes, he continued as an educator and turned down an offer to lecture about evolution on the Vanderbilt stage.

Other well-known people who were born today include singer Tony Bennett ("Rags to Riches," "I Left My Heart in San Francisco"), mystery novelist F.D. Jones, actor Martin Sheen ("The West Wing"), and football player Tom Brady.

WADING BIRD WALK at Marine Park. On Saturday at 1 p.m., the Urban Park Rangers are sponsoring a Bird Walk through Marine Park. Explore the salt marsh, and discover the herons and egrets that hunt along its grassy shores. Meet at the Salt Marsh Nature Center (see page 2)

Vacant Firehouses To Become 'Cultural Institutions' In Williamsburg, Cobble Hill

Where Protests Once Ruled, City Now Solicits Bids For Properties



By Evan Barlow
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BROOKLYN — The city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is making plans to convert the now-vacant firehouses on Wythe Avenue in Williamsburg and DeGrass Street in Cobble Hill — not for fire engines, but as nonprofit "cultural institutions" designed to serve the community.

Engines 204, which served Cobble Hill, and Engine 212, which served the Northside section of Williamsburg, both closed in 2003 as a result of Mayor Bloomberg's decision to close six firehouses in a cost-cutting move. Many of the firehouses in New York, including Engines 212 and Engine 204, were built in the late 19th century.

Both Engines 204 and Engine 212 closed despite a series of protests (most notably, perhaps, when Williamsburg

This drawing of Williamsburg's Engine Co. 212 on Wythe Avenue first appeared on the web site nyc.gov.com.

Parks Watchdog Group, Public Advocate Visit Brighton To Check Out Problems

Broken Glass, Shortage of Lifeguards, Poorly Maintained Bathrooms, Garbage

By Odeta Ditton
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BRIGHTON BEACH — Lisa Ramsey strolls on the sand on Brighton Beach, often collecting shards of glass as the great Ocean collecting is before Ramsey's lobby for her vacation. "I pick them up, because I don't want people to eat them," she said yesterday on the boardwalk.

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Beaches received bad ratings because of problems such as glass and litter on the shoreline and the sand, badly maintained lifelines, broken



Christian DiPalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, speaks at the Brighton Beach boardwalk alongside Public Advocate Betsy Gohbaum. New Yorkers for Parks recently released a report of New York's seven beaches, in which Brighton/Coney Island Beach ranked second to the worst on issues of safety and cleanliness. Eagle photo by Odeta Ditton

ly maintained lifelines, broken were found, and beaches closed for swimming due to a shortage of lifeguards.

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Out of roughly 21 million people who flocked to the city's beaches last summer, 15.6 million walked themselves on Brighton/Coney Island Beach. Indeed, this beach, which stretches for 2.7 miles from West 37th Street to Coney Plaza, is a legendary spot to quantify atmosphere, such as the Brooklyn Cyclones at KeyStone Park, the Mermaid Parade and the

Mermaid Parade and the

Principal Reprimanded On Abuse Allegations

A Brooklyn elementary school principal has been reprimanded for failing to report allegations of sex abuse by a janitor, according to NYJ news. The Special Commissioner of Investigation's office released a report yesterday on an inquiry into SCHMIDT, a long of P.S. 91 in East Flatbush. Schmid was originally removed from his job in March, after charges were filed against the janitor. It was later determined that the sex abuse claims were false.

B'klyn Fugitive To Be Profiled On 'America's Most Wanted'

Police Say Neverson Killed Sister, Ex-Girlfriend, Then Fled

BROOKLYN — A Brooklyn fugitive wanted for two murders will be profiled on "America's Most Wanted" this Saturday at 9 p.m. on Channel 5. The fugitive is Andre Neverson of Crown Heights, on the U.S. Marshall's Top 15 list. According to Evan Marshall, a producer for the show, Neverson is believed to have shot his sister and his ex-girlfriend, whom he picked up near the school she was attending, within a few days of each other in the winter of 2002.

Since then, he has been on the lam, although there have been several reported sightings of him. Several years ago, the NYPD intercepted a laptop that was sent in the mail to one of Neverson's other girlfriends. Photos of a man believed to be Neverson, wearing a hooded jacket, were on the laptop, but police were unable to track him down.

Other leads have put him in Newark and in Florida, according to Marshall, who thanks Brooklyn's 74th Precinct for the information.

Brooklyn Gets Blanked



Brooklyn reliever Tim Stronach fired three scoreless innings Wednesday night, but the Cyclones were unable to complete a three-game sweep in Lowell, suffering a 2-0 loss to the Spinners. For more on the Cyclones and other local sports news, turn to John Trenti's "Straight from the Bleachers." Photo by Danny Wild

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EL CAMPEON DE LOS HISPANOS

EL DIARIO

Latinos no acceden a contratos de la ciudad

JUDITH TORREA/EDLP

NUEVA YORK — A pesar de que la ciudad de Nueva York aprobó una ley en el 2006 para asegurar la máxima participación de pequeños empresarios en el programa 'Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise' (M/WBE), sólo 202 compañías de hispanos, de las 120 mil de NYC, han logrado formar parte del departamento de pequeñas empresas y servicios (SBS), que administra este programa, según un reciente informe de la defensora pública de NYC, Betsy Gotbaum.

La burocracia y la falta de información y comunicación fluida con la agencia, son algunos de los motivos por los que los empresarios latinos y las mujeres no pueden acceder al programa M/WBE.

“Los números no engañan, tampoco las montañas de papeles para realizar la aplicación. Deberían haber hecho mucho más para ayudar a navegar por el

proceso”, dijo Gotbaum.

Por la oficina de Rick Miranda, presidente de Brooklyn (Kings County) 'Hispanic Chamber of Commerce' pasan decenas de personas buscando orientación para solicitar la solicitud.

“Si lo arreglan yo creo que es un buen programa, pero si sigue así ninguna compañía minoritaria lo va a solicitar porque es una pérdida de tiempo. Para las personas que no entienden inglés, es una tragedia”, afirmó Miranda.

A este problema, se une una vez registradas las compañías, a la dificultad de que las nuevas compañías accedan a los contratos. “Tienen que dar más contratos a las nuevas, introducir un método para que te conozcan y te den

la oportunidad”, agregó Miranda, que participó activamente en el informe.

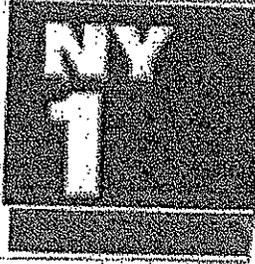
Para la empresaria Dulce Ramos, que llegó embarazada a este país y sin saber una palabra de inglés, mantener una empresa es más difícil que comenzarla.

“No estamos pidiendo limosna, sino que nos abran las puertas. Estoy a favor del concepto del programa M/WBE pero con todo el papeleo de 18 páginas, más documentos, simplemente lo dejé, y la cuestión está en buscar cómo puede ser eficaz”, afirmó Ramos, que fundó una compañía de enseñanza de idiomas y entrenamiento de recursos humanos, en la que trabajan más de 45 empleados.

El SBS, que ha recibido en este informe varias recomendaciones, señala que el reporte es “incompleto y distorsiona los logros de este departamento, de la ciudad y organizaciones no lucrativas para expandir oportunidades a las empresas en manos de las minorías o mujeres”, dijo la vocera Kara Alaimo, de SBS.

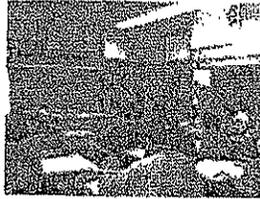
Judith.torrea@eldiariomny.com

EL DIARIO/LA PRENSA SABADO 4 DE AGOSTO DE 2007



Education

TOP STORY



Study Finds NYC's School Breakfast Program Is Failing Low-Income Kids

DIMEN / ERIC AD
SUPER BRAND

August 07, 2007

Breakfast may be one of the most important meals of the day, but many of the city's low-income children aren't getting it.

According to a study by the Food Research Action Center, 80 percent of the city's low-income students are not getting breakfast at school. Advocates say that one in five city kids lives in a home that cannot afford a sufficient supply of food. The study examined other school breakfast programs in various big cities.

Only 29 percent of those who get school lunches in New York also get school breakfasts. That's compared to 98 percent in Portland; 94 percent in Newark; 64 percent in Boston; and 55 percent in Los Angeles.

"The fact that we have a 29 percent record, versus Newark, New Jersey, which has a 94 percent record is really something we should be embarrassed about," said Council Member David Weprin.

"I think of a child who goes to school and doesn't eat breakfast, how can that child concentrate, how can he or she really learn?" said Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

Lawmakers want to move the breakfast into the classroom, which has shown to work in Newark. The city has already started experiments doing just that.

The Bloomberg administration also adopted universal school breakfast, and has seen participation increase by six million meals over the last three and a half

DAILY NEWS

25¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Brooklyn

8/19/07

Downpour swamps subways, stranding thousands of riders

THE MTA DIDN'T go your way.

A raging storm overwhelmed the subways' water pumps and city sewer system yesterday — knocking out service and causing long delays on every subway line in the underground network.

The deluge was the third this year to cause significant service disruptions and forced the MTA to admit it failed commuters.

"We clearly need to sharpen our response," MTA CEO Elliot Sander conceded last night. "We lost basically every single line at New York City Transit."

"We were not prepared," Sander said on New York 1, before arguing that the agency "did not have notice" of the severity of the storm.

The massive problems were similar to those suffered in a September 2004 storm that led the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's inspector general to sharply criticize the agency's emergency preparation and response.

Yesterday's flooding was so bad that the MTA was forced to take drastic measures: For the first time in recent memory, its officials told riders to stay away.

"We're telling people not to use the subway," NYC Transit spokesman Paul Fleuranges said yesterday morning on the TV news well after the rain had stopped.

"Right now ... it is not the place to go," he said. "People can stay home, so stay home."

But it was too late for millions of subway riders and hundreds of thousands of commuter train passengers who already had left home. They were stranded or forced to endure delays as long as four hours as they attempted to navigate the soaked transit system.

The evening rush hours were still a mess. Several lines — the E, F, G, V, R and W — were still partly or totally shut down late yesterday.

"They can send a man to the moon, but they can't fix this problem," Julie Vasquez, 43, of the Bronx fumed at 33rd St. yesterday morning when her No. 2 train stopped running. "Every year, it's the same thing."

Transit officials conceded the network of pumps, city sewers and drains that protects the city's subways from flooding is flawed.

Gov. Spitzer directed Sander and his engineers to report back in 30 days on the causes and possible solutions. The inspector general will also investigate.

Sander said the subway system is designed to handle 12 inches of rain in a hour, but it fell

BY PETE DONOHUE
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

at twice that rate yesterday.

After the massive mess in 2004, the MTA inspector general said transit officials failed to keep drains leading to "pump rooms" clear of trash and muck.

The agency also failed to conduct adequate maintenance on drainage equipment and some workers took too long to get to flooded areas, the report said.

Investigators found no failures at the roughly 300 pumping facilities in 2004 but said much of the portable pumping equipment owned by the agency wasn't used because it was too heavy and cumbersome to move quickly.

Spitzer said all the recommendations in the report were implemented, but added, "Clearly they were not sufficient."

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum demanded answers.

"This is unacceptable. We cannot have a situation where every time there's a significant rain, the subways go completely out of whack," Quinn said.

Mike Lombardi, head of subway operations at NYC Transit, said city sewers were overwhelmed, then backed up into subways, leaving nowhere for workers to pump the water.

Since 1992, \$357 million has been invested to improve 269 pump rooms. An additional \$115 million has been earmarked to upgrade the remaining 18 pump rooms. The work is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

Water can cripple the subways by knocking out underground signals. Officials also must cut the power when water gets close to the electrified third rail. Delays linger because after the water is pumped out, workers must remove debris, test equipment and make repairs, officials said.

On average, a single pump room can handle about 1,900 gallons per minute, officials said.

NYC Transit pumps 13 million gallons of water out of the system a day — even when it's not raining — because of groundwater in the system, Lombardi said.

"Our pumps are always working," he said. "We're in the business of moving water — but not in business of moving water when it comes down like a river."

nydailynews.com

DAILY NEWS

Thursday, August 9, 2007

pdonohue@nydailynews.com

The world's largest global newspaper

metro

Heard
How bad was your commute yesterday?

Paul Carter, 57, law firm administrator, Manhattan

"It normally takes me a max of 55 minutes. Today it took me two hours and forty-five. I took three trains and one bus. But the bus driver was fantastic!"

David Jeffrey, 23, office services, Queens

"It was horrible. I left at 8 and I got to work at a quarter to 1. When the E train stopped, I took the express bus."

Owen Hourican, 37, account manager, Manhattan

"It was bad, but the attitude of everyone commuting was great. Everyone was thinking, let's just get to work. There was a sense of solidarity. It's just a bad weather situation, you can't control it."

Whose water is it?

City, MTA spar over flood



A commuter leaves a crowded 2 train and tiptoes through the flooded platform as the train is delayed at Grand Army Plaza.

PATRICK ARDEN and **JOSHUA RHETT MILLER**

CITY HALL While a bad storm qualifies as an act of God, previous rain-related shutdowns of the subway system have been used as opportunities to learn and improve.

Last year a report by the MTA's Inspector General concluded "it would be wrong to dismiss the service

sewer pipes. Some of these devices hadn't been repaired in decades.

Since then, NYC Transit has redoubled its efforts to bring the system's 289 pump rooms into a state-of-good-repair. The last 18 are scheduled to be rehabilitated by 2010.

But the subway's pumping system was faulted for yesterday's flooding by Gov. Eliot Spitzer, City Council

Speaker Christine Quinn and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum. Quinn and Gotbaum even sent a

letter to outgoing MTA Chairman Peter Kalikow, demanding technical information on the pumps.

"We are concerned that the age and maintenance of the pumps may be contributing to the flooding that is plaguing the system," they wrote.

"All of our pump rooms, except for one that had a

blown fuse because of all the water, worked as designed," responded NYC Transit spokesperson Paul Fleuranges.

He pointed to the city's combined sewer system, which handles both waste and rainwater. The city is currently spending \$300 million a year to upgrade pipes and build a new stormwater drainage system. But for now the sewers can't handle a deluge of more than a couple of inches.

"Generally the system can accommodate rain if it's spread out over time, but when it's so much, so fast, it puts a strain on," said Michael Saucier, a spokesman for the city's Department of Environmental Protection. "The infrastructure and systems are heavily taxed by severe storms."

NYC Transit pumps water from the subway into those same sewers.

"We pump into the city sewer system, and if the city is dealing with flooding and overwhelmed sewers, our water can't go anywhere either," said Fleuranges. "It's unfortunate, but it's that simple."

"It's like a dog chasing its tail. Where's the water going to end up? In the basement. Who's the basement? We are."

BAY News

Your Neighborhood - Your News

50 cents

SERVING PENNSYLVANIA: BRIGHTON BEACH, CONEY ISLAND, GERRITSEN BEACH, GRAVES END, MANHATTAN BEACH, SEAGATE & SHEERS HEAD BAY

Aug 9, 2007

Can it, if you visit the beach

Officials say cleanliness is key

By Michèle De Meglio

The public is just as responsible for keeping local beaches clean as the city is, the public advocate asserted.

Standing on the Riegelmann Boardwalk at Brighton 6th Street, Betsy Gotbaum advised beachgoers to do their part to keep the sand and water clean - and free of glass.

"The community," she said, "they too have to help. The Parks Department can't do it all."

Christian DiPalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, which recently released a report about the cleanliness of the city's beaches, also called for the community's involvement in "pitching in and making sure they don't have broken glass on the beach."

Although the boardwalk and sand in Coney Island and Brighton Beach are littered with trash, piles of garbage is still scattered on the ground. In worst case scenarios,



Christian DiPalermo of New Yorkers for Parks and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum say Brooklynites must help keep beaches clean.

beer bottles are broken and small glass shards line the sand walked by barefooted visitors.

A Manhattan Beach resident said he was enjoying a day at the beach when he stepped on a piece of glass and cut the bottom of his foot.

"The beach really needs better maintenance. It seems like the city can't do anything for the public anymore," said the resident who asked that his name be withheld.

Before the start of Gotbaum's press conference, DiPalermo said a



Trash piled up on the boardwalk.

staffer walked a short stretch of Brighton Beach and discovered a two-inch-long piece of glass buried in the sand. The glass came from a broken beer bottle.

"Having glass like that is dangerous," Gotbaum said.

"We want New Yorkers to be safe," she continued. "We need to educate people that they have to clean up after themselves."

She suggested the city launch a campaign to encourage people to toss their litter in trash cans.

Continued on page 6

Can it when you visit the beach

Continued from page 6

rather than in the sand. Gotbaum said she is interested in crafting legislation to prohibit people from taking glass bottles bought from local vendors onto the sand.

Phil Abramson, a spokesperson for the city Parks Department, said such a ban is already in place.

"Parks already prohibits glass bottles on the beach and we hope that by educating the public we will eliminate the broken glass that often results," he said. "For example, large signs are posted at Coney Island next to trash cans stating 'Glass and Litter Go Here, Not on the Beach.'"

Since Brooklyn is such an ethnically diverse borough,

Gotbaum said, signs should be posted in several different languages.

"There are no signs in Russian and we have an enormous Russian-speaking community [in Brighton Beach]," she said.

Some vendors have tried to help out by not selling glass bottles.

Litter isn't the only problem plaguing local beaches.

New Yorkers for Parks' report said many beaches have dirty bathrooms and broken water fountains.

At Brighton Beach, Gotbaum said, "The bathrooms are really repulsive."

The Parks Department says it's working to keep city beaches in good condition and that they "are in better shape now than at any other time."

BAY News

Your Neighborhood -- Your News

50 cents

SERVING BENSONhurst, BRIGHTON BEACH, CONEY ISLAND, GERRITSON BEACH, GRAVESEND, MANHATTAN BEACH, SEAGATE & SHEEPSHEAD BAY

The broken boardwalk must be fixed, says Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

Aug 9, 2007

Under the boardwalk - private funding

By Michèle De Meglio

If you want to play, you've got to pay.

That's the message Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum sent to Thor Equities developer Joe Sitt. While holding a press conference in Brighton Beach, Gotbaum said she is in talks with Sitt and will ask him about the possibility of paying for repairs to the crumbling boardwalk.

The idea of involving a private developer in a public space has evoked mixed feelings from local residents but the city Parks Department says it's open to the possibility of financial assistance.

Department Spokesperson Phil Abramson explained, "A complete restoration of the entire boardwalk is required and we need a multimillion dollar allocation of capital funds for this to happen. While we hope to obtain public funds, we would also welcome donations from private individuals or businesses for this purpose."

Any such financing would be run by the public.

"Since the boardwalk is a public property, any potential reconstruction would still be subject to community review, open bidding among contractors, and the rest of the

city capital project process," Abramson noted.

Coney Island residents said they'd back a developer's involvement - and cash - as long as there's no ulterior motive.

"If someone wants to repair the boardwalk and pay for it in full, that's fine," said Todd Dobrin, chair of the Coney Island Friends of the Boardwalk. "If they want something in return for it, that's a whole other story."

"I think it's a good thing getting different people, different entities involved," said Community Board 13 member Brian Gottlieb. "I don't think it would lead to the privatization of the beach. Even if there was an attempt at privatization, I can say the community would never allow it to happen."

Dobrin said the boardwalk is deteriorating so quickly that the city can't afford to wait for a developer to pay for repairs and emergency funding should be allocated.

The city may ultimately become involved, as Thor Equities' \$1.5 billion plan to bring amusements and hotels to Coney Island is reportedly stalled.

A spokesperson for Thor Equities did not respond for comment.

Continued on page 13

Officials cool for boardwalk funding

Continued from page 3

Regardless of which developer begins construction in Coney Island, those involved should pay for repairs to the boardwalk, said City Councilmember Domenic Recchia.

"Whoever develops - he's going to probably have to knock down part of the boardwalk for development," he said. "I would like to see the developer contribute to the community by putting in a brand new boardwalk."

In the meantime, Abramson said the Parks Department is trying to fix the raised and rotting boardwalk planks.

"Parks maintenance crews are on the boardwalk every day, performing spot repairs as they are reported to us," he said.

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B

DAILY NEWS

25¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Brooklyn

City trade school courses don't make grade - study

BY CARRIE MELAGO
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

THE CITY'S vocational classes aren't up to snuff, a new report from the Independent Budget Office charges.

Only 12% of career and technical programs are certified by the state, meaning the courses taken by about 110,000 high school students could be lacking.

And only nine of the 22 vocational schools — 41% — meet federal No Child Left Behind standards, compared with 65% of city public schools overall.

"It's time for the [Department of Education] to invest in these programs, so we can give students the skills they can use in the classroom and in life," said Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, whose office called for the report.

The city's Career and Technical Education programs enable students to earn a high school diploma while learning a trade — from agriculture to construction to cosmetology — they can pursue after graduation.

But just 12% of the 484 programs offered in 161 high schools underwent the rigorous state certification process. Attending a noncertified program could hamper a student's ability to get certification in an industry or find an entry-level job, the report said.

There was encouraging news, though. Graduation rates are higher at vocational schools, with 63% of students graduating on time in 2005, compared with 58.2% in the city overall.

And the mayor's new funding formula is redirecting money to 12 previously underfunded vocational schools, the report found.

The Education Department touted the graduation rates at vocational schools and said it was working with the state to offer more certified programs.

"We are proud of the programs we offer in CTE schools and will continue to work to improve their quality," the department said.

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The New York Times

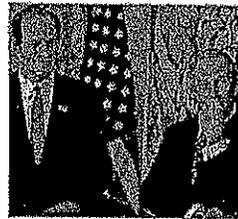
AUGUST 9, 2007, 3:19 PM

M.T.A. Girds for Possible Flash Floods

By SEWELL CHAN

Updated 5:31 p.m.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority sent employees fanning out across the city, put buses on reserve, rechecked storm drains and postponed virtually all construction this afternoon, as meteorologists forecast strong thunderstorms for tonight and early Friday morning. At 4:12 p.m., the National Weather Service issued a flash flood watch for New York City and northeast New Jersey, in effect from midnight tonight until Friday afternoon. The weather service said the city could receive from an inch to an inch and a half of rainfall.



Earlier today, Gov. Eliot Spitzer and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg criticized the M.T.A.'s performance. (Photo: Oscar Huidalgo/The New York Times)

"Soil moisture levels are already high, which will increase the amount of rain that results in runoff," the weather service warned. "This will tax local sewer systems and result in significant rapid rises on small streams and rivers, and could result in flash floods across the watch area."

This morning, Gov. Eliot Spitzer and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, on a visit to a community health center in Hell's Kitchen, faced a barrage of questions about the destructive storm that flooded the subway system on Wednesday and stranded legions of frustrated commuters.

"Nobody is satisfied with what happened yesterday and the M.T.A.'s performance," Mr. Bloomberg said. "The bottom line is the subway system is pretty reliable."

At a 4:30 p.m. news conference, Elliot G. Sander, the chief executive of the M.T.A., announced that Christopher P. Boylan, the authority's deputy executive director for corporate and community affairs, will oversee a task force that will examine what went wrong on Wednesday. The task force will include the authority's inspector general and the city's commissioner of environmental protection.

Mr. Sander announced:

We will be strategically placing pumps throughout the system at potentially flood-prone locations, strategically placing management and customer personnel at key stations throughout the system to help our customers navigate in case of service disruptions. We'll be adding additional support personnel — such as signal ventilation and drainage maintainers — so that we can immediately address any situations that may arise.

The authority put hundreds of buses from New York City Transit, Long Island Bus and its express and suburban bus fleets on reserve in case they are needed to move stranded subway passengers on Friday. The authority also "rechecked drains to ensure they are free of debris from yesterday's event," Mr. Sander said.

"We're prepared to postpone any unnecessary construction for the duration of the inclement weather, if necessary," he added.

Mr. Spitzer blamed the flooding on an unusually heavy rainfall that defied historical probability and on a transit system that did not communicate effectively and was caught by surprise when torrents of water deluged the tunnels.

The transit system was supposed to be able to withstand rainfall of up to an

inch and a half per hour, Mr. Spitzer said, adding that up to three inches of rain in one hour had entered parts of the system on Wednesday. It was the third time in seven months that rains had caused significant subway disruptions, and Mr. Spitzer said that under normal circumstances, such voluminous downpours occur only about once a decade. (Mr. Spitzer's source for the statistic of three inches of rain in one hour, which he also made on Wednesday, was not quite clear. The National Weather Service says that more than three inches of rain were recorded on Wednesday morning at Kennedy International Airport, but that appeared to be over a period of several hours.)

"There was a cascading effect in which water could not be absorbed into the sewer system," Mr. Spitzer said. "The subway became in essence the residual reservoir for water flowing off the streets." The governor has ordered the M.T.A. to conduct a 30-day investigation into preventing systemwide disruptions. The review will also address internal communication within the M.T.A. and communication between the authority and riders, as well as ways to better anticipate heavy rain and stop water from entering the system. For instance, Mr. Spitzer said, with adequate notice, transit workers can place sheets of plywood over sidewalk ventilation grates to prevent water from flowing into tunnels. The authority's failure to anticipate the force of the storm contributed to the insufficient response, he said.

"We are asking the very hard questions," Mr. Spitzer said. "Was there sufficient attention being paid?"

Part of the review will examine the authority's relationship with the meteorologists it hires. "Clearly there was either a breakdown in what they knew or what they conveyed to us or what we did once we got it," he said.

Christine C. Quinn, the City Council speaker, said that she and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum had asked the M.T.A. for an examination of pumping and mechanical systems in the subways. Last year, a report that analyzed flooding during Hurricane Frances in 2004 identified drainage problems within the subway system. "Clearly what was found in that report must not have been implemented," Ms. Quinn said. "The prior M.T.A. and the prior governor failed to heed any of the recommendations that had been made."

As predictions of another turbulent storm loomed, Ms. Quinn reminded a group of reporters that certain forces of nature are beyond the control of human beings. "We give a lot of responsibility to the speaker of the City Council," Ms. Quinn said. "But being a meteorologist isn't one of them."

Colin Moynihan contributed reporting.



HS summer 'vocation'

By YOAV GONEN

Public high-school students in career-training courses are being short-changed, according to a report released yesterday by the city's Independent Budget Office.

Only 12 percent of the Department of Education's nearly 500 career and technical course offerings meet stringent state certification standards, and only one in three students in the city's 22 vocational high schools is enrolled in a state-certified program, the report says.

State requirements call for schools to use certified

teachers, get approval from local industry representatives and follow instructional guidelines.

The findings prompted Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum to chastise the Department of Education.

"It's time for the DOE to invest in these programs so we can give students the skills they can use in the classroom and in life," she said. Although the city is not obligated to seek state certification, only state-approved training programs provide industry certification, which boosts a job applicant's qualifications, the report said.



Staten Island Advance

Public advocate calls for state agency for children's welfare

Posted by Staten Island Advance August 10, 2007 1:15PM

Categories: [News](#)

In the wake of this most recent report on the shortcomings of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum has reiterated her desire to have the state create an independent Office of the Child Advocate.

"ACS has shown us that they are simply not capable of protecting all of our children," Gotbaum said in a statement. "Every time a fatality makes front page news, ACS apologizes and promises change. But their mea culpas have not resulted in enough improvement to keep all our most vulnerable people safe."

This statement from Gotbaum comes just a day after a [dampening report](#) outlined the many mistakes of ACS caseworkers investigating claims of child abuse and neglect after 10 children died as a result of mishandled investigations.

That number may rise, as [Staten Islander Hailey Gonzalez is clinging to life](#) at Richmond University Medical Center, West Brighton, after allegedly being beaten by her mother, Marlene Medina and her boy friend, Edwin Garcia.

Hailey's biological father, Manuel Gonzalez, is currently serving a two-year prison term for beating her in a Brooklyn apartment earlier this year.

A few weeks before the beating Hailey sustained, Ms. Medina, a New Brighton resident, canceled an appointment with an ACS representative. Ms. Medina also has a two-month-old child with Garcia, who is currently in the ACS's custody.

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DAILY NEWS

AUGUST 16, 2007

SCOURGE OF THE REGGAE ROGUES

On eve of concert, activists take artists to task for anti-gay songs

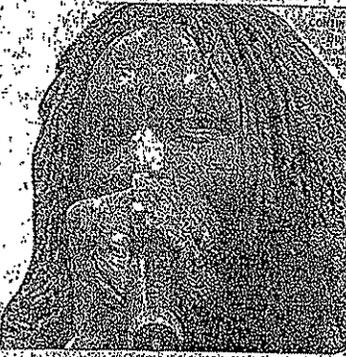
BY JIM FARRER

Two of reggae's top artists are set to play a major festival celebrating the genre on Randall's Island one week from Saturday. But if local gay activists, and New York politicians like state Sen. Tom Duane, have their way, stars like Buju Banton and Bounty Killer won't come anywhere near the place — at least unless they sign a controversial paper known as "The Reggae Compassionate Act."

The one-page document, drawn up earlier this year by the gay activist group Stop Murder Music, asks reggae artists to renounce the genre's long and well-documented history of lyrics advocating violence against gay men and lesbians. Stop Murder Music has documented at least three songs by Bounty Killer that encourage burning, drowning and "wiping out faggots." Killer has also released a song ("Dat Ah True")

via the internet that asserts his right to his beliefs and vows not to bow to the "bigot majority." Activists say Killer has refused to sign the paper. A spokeswoman at his American record company, V2, said she could not reach the artist's manager to confirm that, or to comment on the lyrics.

CONTINUED INSIDE



COVER STORY
 In July, the Guardian newspaper in London reported that Banton had signed the pact, but activists say the star later claimed it was a forgery. Banton's manager, Donovan Getimble, did not answer e-mails from

The News for comment. Mark Robinson of the local activist organization Queer Justice League says, "The fact that Buju signed it and that he didn't is trying to play both sides." For that reason, Peter Titchell, who heads up the London-based gay activist group Out Rage!, wanted Banton to re-sign the document before a U.K. show last week. Titchell says, "Buju and his management tricked the London police and the venue management into believing that he would sign. But at the last minute, he refused to [sign] and indicated that he would

never sign it." "All they care about is getting on stage," Milano says. "They don't care about being honest or about the impact of the bill." Senator Duane, who is sponsoring the bill, says he is "disappointed" that Banton's manager cannot get the artist to sign. He says he is "disappointed" that the music industry is not doing more to protect the safety of many New Yorkers. Public Advocate Hiram Rivera also echoed Duane's view in The News. And while City Council Speaker Christine Quinn issued a written statement condemning the artists' lyrics as "repugnant," she also urged the artists to sign the pact.

LYRICS UNDER FIRE

BUJU BANTON "BOOM BYE BYE"

(with slang translated)

Boom (as in gun sound) goodbye, goodbye
 (as in you're dead) / Inna batty boy's head (in a queer's head) /
 Rude Boy no promote no nasty man (Rude boys don't promote
 no queer man) / Dem haffi dead (they have to die) ... / Guy come
 near me / Then his skin must peel / Burn him up like
 an old tyre wheel

BOUNTY KILLER "ANOTHER LEVEL"

t Man (queer man) must be drowned and that's a yard man
 (Jamaican ghetto man) philosophy
 BADMAN" You know we don't need no promo to rub out dem homo
 "LOOK GOOD" Mi ready fi go wipe out this fag
 wild pure laser beam

the Act, her statement said that she would continue to support the bill if it can be passed. "No all gay activists agree with the signing stipulation, or with the involvement of politicians. Longtime activist Bill DeBruin says, "The effort to use the government to interfere with a message, however offensive, is despicable. It's censorship and that's the last thing we need." Alfonso Brooks, promoter of the show, says he feels confident he can get the two artists to sign the document before next Saturday's event. "In the past I've been able to accomplish things that have never been accomplished with these artists," he says. "It might be a little difficult, but not impossible."

But two of the show's biggest stars won't be performing if they don't give their signatures. "Government is trying to put a limit on me," he says. "I will not be signed." That isn't acceptable to the activists, who say they plan to stage a protest at the event if the signatures aren't forthcoming. If so, they also plan to protest a concert by Banton and E-Jobbin' Man at Hammerstein Ballroom on Aug. 21. "Until the artists begin saying 'oh,' Milano says, "they're not going to sign." "We don't want to destroy their careers," he adds. "We just want them to stop doing these songs."

EXCERPT FROM THE REGGAE COMPASSIONATE ACT

...the Reggae Compassionate Act...

The Chief

Civil Service LEADER

THE CIVIL EMPLOYEES' WEEKLY

Marketplace: General Display • Schools & Instruction • Legal Services • Legal Notices • Classifieds

8/11/07

Riders Vented Their Frustration

Transit Workers Felt Post-Storm Heat

By ARI PAUL

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Web site was temporarily down. The messages on station public address systems were typically indecipherable. When nearly every subway line came to a halt Aug. 8 during rush hour after heavy rains flooded tracks, confused commuters depended on New York City Transit workers to aid them in finding alternative travel options.

Train Operators and Conductors working on the numerous non-operating lines that morning were on standby, awaiting orders to resume service. They were paid their regular wage, which is the normal practice. But one 4-line Train Operator, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, was ordered to the Brooklyn Bridge station on the 4, 5, 6 line, where he was giving directions to passengers.

A Tough Audience

It was "rough and hard," he said, because "they don't know where they are going."

An NYC Transit worker since 1988, he believed he should be paid overtime for doing work that was outside of his job title.

On the station's uptown platform, weary straphangers vocalized their frustration as an empty express train crawled north, out of service. A transit worker directing passengers threw up his arms and replied, "I don't want to be doing this."

Station Agents darted in and out of their booths to assist riders. Inside the Brook-



CHAOS AND CONFUSION: A Station Superintendent, left, offered advice to stranded passengers at the Brooklyn Bridge station on the 4, 5, 6 line Aug. 8 after track flooding brought nearly all subway traffic to a halt.

lyn Bridge station, a Station Superintendent also directed foot traffic.

That afternoon, Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum held a press conference to discuss a letter addressed to MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow expressing outrage at the system's inability to deal with heavy rain and requesting information on the MTA's pumping system, which failed to remove water quickly enough to keep the trains running at rush hour.

"It's going to rain in the five boroughs," Ms. Quinn said. "We're going to need a subway system that can deal with it."

Deary Lack of Info

Ms. Gotbaum charged that the MTA failed to properly and quickly disseminate information to riders, adding that the MTA's Web site was temporarily inoperative during the crisis. She commended Train Operators and Conductors for stepping out-

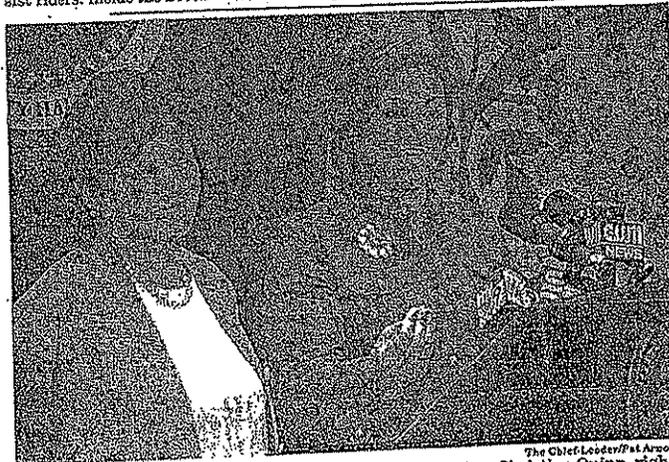
side of their job titles to alleviate the morning's confusion.

"I think it's great that they're there," Ms. Gotbaum said, while lamenting the inadequacy of the subway's public address system. "Thank you, Mr. Conductor and Mr. Train Man."

Council Transportation Committee Chairman John Liu later signed their letter. In it, they implored the MTA to improve its services and said "a more effective public communication system needs to be developed, to better alert commuters to any delays that do occur. New Yorkers deserve better and should not expect that anytime it rains they will experience the inconvenience they did today."

Spitzer Wants Answers

Governor Spitzer asked for a review of the system in the wake of the crisis. At a press conference with him Aug. 8, MTA Executive Director and CEO Elliot C. Sander stated, "The timing and intensity of the storm took us by surprise, because it was not predicted by the National Weather Service. The storm then hit right around high tide, putting further pressure on our infrastructure. Finally, the intensity of the storm brought torrential rainfall, as the Governor was saying, in a short period of time, overwhelming both our pumps and the sewer system that is needed to accept the pump water. As a result, we had water conditions throughout our system."



NEW YORKERS DESERVE BETTER: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, right, and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, expressed outrage over the subway shutdown in a letter to MTA Chairman Peter S. Kalikow Aug. 8. They demanded information on the age of the pumping system and asked for improved public communication.

City foster kid abuse leaps 57%

☆☆☆

ACS: Spike due to more children being put in care after '06 Nixzmary murder

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BEING ABUSED or neglected in foster care skyrocketed by at least 57% this year, an alarming jump raising concerns about the quality of the city's foster homes.

"You expect a child to be safer in a foster home. These are kids who have been abused, and you don't want to see them abused again," said one watchdog.

Investigators at the Administration for Children's Services found that at least 300 foster care children were abused or neglected this fiscal year, which ended July 1, according to statistics obtained by the Daily News.

That's up from 191 in 2006. ACS attributes the spike to a rise in overall reports of child abuse and neglect and more children coming into foster care since January 2006, when the horrific death of 7-year-old Nixzmary Brown triggered heightened awareness of battered children.

"We are focused on rooting out any foster family who is not fulfilling their responsibility to provide these vulnerable children with a safe and secure home," ACS Commissioner John Mattingly said, adding that "while no abuse is tolerable or tolerated, the rate of

EXCLUSIVE
BY KATHLEEN LUCADAMO
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU

abuse in foster care — 1.8% — is very small."

While the city experienced a surge in the number of child abuse charges and kids in care in the wake of Nixzmary's death, those figures are starting to taper off.

ACS predicts 6,800 children will enter foster care in 2007 — down from 7,600 last year but up from 4,800 in 2005. Similarly, reports of abuse are expected to hit 61,000 this year, down slightly from last year's 63,000 but up from 48,000 in 2005.

Some officials fear that in the city's zeal to find foster homes for the extra children entering the system last year, officials didn't screen and monitor foster parents carefully enough.

"If you rush to fill a demand, sometimes you are going to get people who are not ready to do the job, and it is a tough job," said Councilman Bill de Blasio (D-Brooklyn), who heads the Council's Child Welfare Committee.

The majority of substantiated charges in the foster care cases involved physical abuse — 66 cases — while nine were for educational neglect, 11 were for sexual abuse and many were filed as overall neglect.

ACS officials could not immediately say how many children had been removed from those homes but said that foster parents are held to higher standards than birth parents and are more carefully monitored, allowing caseworkers to detect problems quicker. Birth parents are legally allowed to hit their children while foster parents who do so can be charged with assault.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum argued the jump in abuse of foster care children is further proof that an independent government monitor is needed to oversee ACS.

"The quality of foster parents has to be looked at, particularly if there are more kids coming into the system," she said.

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Woman stabbed outside E. Side flat

A 30-YEAR-OLD woman was stabbed during an apparent robbery outside her lower East Side apartment early yesterday, cops and relatives said.

Bleeding from her stomach, Jamie Davila stumbled into her Columbia St. home about 1 a.m., her nephew said.

Three men had robbed her of two rings and a set of bracelets, police said.

Davila begged a neighbor to call 911. Paramedics sped her to Bellevue Hospital, where she was in critical condition yesterday afternoon.

"My daughter was the one that called the ambulance," said neighbor Raquel Cortez, 41, a medical assistant. "[Davila] was coming into the building holding her stomach, bleeding, asking for help."

Warren Woodberry Jr. and Nicole Bode

nydailynews.com

DAILY NEWS

Sunday, August 19, 2007

DAILY NEWS

25¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

NYDailyNews.com

A courthouse or a light-house?

Building's June electricity bill was \$114,762

BY ETHAN ROUEN

Tuesday, August 21st 2007, 4:00 AM

Justice may be blind, but you can certainly find your way around the new Bronx Hall of Justice 24 hours a day.

The courthouse has been lit up like Times Square all night for months now - and the building isn't even being used yet.

"While the city is encouraging New Yorkers to save energy and make our city cleaner and greener, an empty government building has all of its lights on," said Betsy Gotbaum, the city's public advocate. "That's absolutely unacceptable. Here's a simple tip to the city: turn off your lights."

In April, the Daily News discovered a slew of city buildings that had their lights on overnight, including the vacant Hall of Justice, which is labeled a "green building."

The front-page article elicited promises from eco-friendly Mayor Bloomberg and the state Dormitory Authority to look into the wasted electricity, and the city Department of Education's headquarters was going dark by the end of the week.

But a recent investigation by the Public Advocate's Office found that the lonely midnight oil still burned bright in several buildings, including the courthouse, where the electricity bill for June was \$114,762, according to the state Dormitory Authority, which is constructing the building for the city.

Marc Violette, a spokesman for the Authority, said a computer system is supposed to dim the lights by half from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. every day, but some lights remain on all the time for security reasons.

Several city and state officials are planning to visit the courthouse one night this week to examine the system and make sure it is working properly, Violette said.

"We will do what is necessary to ensure that the Bronx Hall of Justice, including its lighting system, operates as designed," he said.

For years, construction problems have plagued the new courthouse, built on a three-block site at E. 161st St. near the Grand Concourse.

By one estimate, the building is two years behind schedule and \$75million over budget.

Earlier this year, City Councilman Oliver Koppell called for an investigation into the problems with the \$390million complex.

erouen@nydailynews.com

The New York Times

AUGUST 22, 2007, 8:61 AM

A Threatening Phone Message, Firefighting Lessons From 9/11, Vomiting Cormorants and More

By SEWELL CHAN

A front-page [article](#) by Danny Hakim details explosive allegations that could add to the fractious political turmoil in Albany. Lawyers for Bernard Spitzer, Gov. Eliot Spitzer's father, say that investigators traced an anonymous, invective-laced phone message left on the father's answering machine to Roger J. Stone Jr., a political operative who has been working for the State Senate Republicans.

Mr. Stone said the number from which the call was alleged to have been made was indeed his, and that it was also shared by a Florida law firm for which he does public relations work. But he denied that he made the call or that it was his voice on the message. He asserted that allies of Governor Spitzer may have gained access to a phone in his Manhattan apartment to make the threatening call. The audio of the call is [here](#).

Articles on the alleged threatening calls are also in [The Daily News](#) and [The New York Post](#).

In other Albany developments, [The News](#) reports that Richard Baum, the governor's top aide, had agreed to answer questions from investigators with the Albany district attorney's office. Mr. Baum had declined to answer questions from the state attorney general's office about the Spitzer administration's misuse of the State Police to gather information damaging to State Senator Joseph L. Bruno.

Meanwhile, the district attorney, P. David Soares, denounced as "wholly untrue" a report in [The Times Union of Albany](#) that his office had found no criminality in the matter, according to an [article](#) in [The New York Post](#). Mr. Soares said his investigation is continuing.

In Deutsche Bank Fire, Similarities to 9/11

Al Baker [reports](#) that some have begun to question the response to the fire in the former Deutsche Bank building on Saturday. At one point, more than 100 firefighters were inside the building even though the fire was out of control and wildly unpredictable; those men had to be called out. Unlike the fires that raged in the twin towers of the World Trade Center on 9/11, no workers were trapped. A McKinsey & Company study conducted after 9/11 urged the Fire Department to use more caution and preparation when approaching a major, complicated fire. It found that too many men rushed into the buildings before anyone realized the danger they were in, contributing to the staggering death toll.

Michael Wilson [describes](#) the wake for Firefighter Joseph Graffagnino, who is to be buried on Thursday. The wake for Firefighter Joseph Beddia begins today; his funeral is scheduled for Friday. Accounts of the first day of the wake are also in [The News](#) and [The Post](#).

Juan Gonzalez, a columnist for [The News](#) notes that the estimated cost of dismantling the building had risen to \$177 million, four times the original estimate, before the fire.

[The Post](#) reports that the Manhattan district attorney, Robert M. Morgenthau, has opened an investigation into the fire.

[The Sun](#) reports that the fire may slow the dismantling of another building, Fiterman Hall, a 14-story tower at 30 West Broadway that is owned by the Borough of Manhattan Community College and was also badly damaged on 9/11.



MARBURY SHOE DONATION VIOLATES TITLE IX: GOTBAUM

KNICKS GUARD GIVES 3,000 PAIRS OF SHOES TO BOYS

By YOAV GONEN

August 22, 2007 -- The Department of Education is coming up a few thousand feet short in providing as many sports opportunities for girls as it does for boys.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum charged yesterday that the Department of Education has done little if anything to seek resources for its girls basketball teams to match last year's unprecedented donation of kicks by New York Knicks guard Stephon Marbury.

In December, Marbury provided 3,000 free pairs of his Starbury One sneakers to all public school boys varsity basketball teams in the city.

Since then, Gotbaum said, the Department of Education has attempted through its inaction to sneak around federal Title IX requirements that it provide equal resources to its boys and girls athletic programs.

"The DOE is shortchanging female athletes, pure and simple," said Gotbaum, who reported last year that the sports gender-equally problem went beyond shoes to general resources, opportunities and scheduling.

The report found that only 44 percent of the city's Public School Athletic League teams were for girls, and that certain girls' sports were relegated to off-season periods.

A year later, Gotbaum says, little has changed.

"They haven't provided a plan to increase sports opportunities for women," she said. "They haven't created a fair scheduling system."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Education countered that gender equality among athletic teams has been a priority for the city.

She noted that the Cal Ripken Foundation recently donated softball equipment to 20 girls teams and that Nike donated sneakers for 20 girls basketball teams.

"We have worked hard towards securing sneakers and other equipment for girls programs," said spokeswoman Marge Feinberg. "We are continuing to talk to companies and organizations about donations."

Attempts to reach Marbury were unsuccessful.

Gotbaum's office claims that the Department of Education has barely lifted a finger to find a match for Marbury's donation, and that it failed to provide specifics as to what it was doing to address gender inequities.



Betsy Gotbaum wants a donation for girls like Stephon Marbury's (above) mass handout of Starbury shoes to boys.



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NORWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BY MOSHOLUPRESERVATION CORPORATION

Group Enlists Council in Battle to Add School Seats

By ALEX KRATZ
Aug 23, 2007

In late July, on a hot Wednesday morning, organizers and youth from the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, lamenting chronic overcrowding and its effect on education, stormed City Hall to demand more school seats in the Bronx and citywide. "What do we want?" an organizer shouted.

"More schools!" an assembled group of northwest Bronx youth shouted back for a gaggle of reporters and cameramen.

"When do we want them?"

"Now!"

The chanting gave way to a press conference where the Coalition announced its SEATS (Schools Exploding at the Seams) initiative, which is designed to pressure the Education Department, using the City Council as a lobbying arm, into adding more school seats for the current Five-Year Capital Plan, which is up for revision in November.

The City Council has an opportunity to weigh in on any capital plan revisions when it approves the city's budget next June.

Taking a leadership role in this fight, Bronx Council Member Oliver Koppell and his staff recently completed an overcrowding survey in District 10. The results were disturbing and contradicted the city's line that schools are either at capacity or underutilized.

Koppell's education specialist, Eleanor Edelstein said that according to the survey, PS 8 in Bedford Park is running at 181 percent capacity, meaning the school was built for 750 seats, but is housing 1,164 students. At the Walton High School campus, which houses five schools, all of the principals said they were suffering from overcrowding. Edelstein also mentioned PS 56, PS 280 and PS 94 in Norwood as schools feeling the strain of overcrowding.

The goal of SEATS, Coalition president Teresa Anderson said, is to make overcrowding a citywide issue. Anderson added that they were already getting a very positive response from Council members, many of whom had already pledged their support for SEATS.

The goal is to have each Council member survey their district's schools, like Koppell did.

"We need to get a real picture of what's going on in all the boroughs, so we can tell them they're wrong when [the DOE] says, 'We don't need anymore seats,' or when they tell us, 'we'll just add another teacher,'" Anderson said. "We need to get the stories from the people who are on the ground dealing with this problem."

The overcrowding issue reached a boil last fall when the DOE announced it would be eliminating 1,700 Bronx seats from the capital plan. And recently the DOE announced that no schools were planned for the Kingsbridge Armory, whereas the Coalition has demanded 2,000 seats there.

The DOE and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein have repeatedly said that they are confident the new capital plan will ease overcrowding in the Bronx and citywide, but Anderson and other critics aren't buying it.

They say the DOE's projections for school seats are skewed and contradictory. For example, when calculating the need for high school seats the DOE projects that only 36 percent of Bronx students will graduate. Meanwhile, Klein says he wants the graduation rate to reach 70 percent by 2010.

The DOE says the graduation rate is only one of several factors it uses to determine school seat needs. It also uses demographic changes. If that's the case, wonders Jamin Sewell, a staffer for Coalition ally Koppell, then why the DOE taking away seats if the mayor is predicting the city to grow by 1 million people in the next 20 years.

"It's like the mayor is speaking out of both sides of his mouth," Sewell said.

The Coalition spent the morning before the press conference pitching Council members and imploring them to survey schools in their district to find out exactly which ones and to what extent they are overcrowded.

Manhattan Council Member Robert Jackson (head of the Education committee) and Brooklyn's David Yassky joined the Bronx's Koppell and Joel Rivera on the steps of City Hall in speaking during the press conference. Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum also pledged her support for the SEATS initiative.

Gina Ortiz, a Bronx student, paraphrased Frederick Douglass in imploring the public and council members to keep up the pressure on the DOE. "Power concedes nothing without urging," she said.

Rivera agreed, telling the assembled youth, "You must keep the pressure on us." He added, "These kids are asking for something that is basic. These are the future leaders of the City of New York."

Then the sweaty youth began chanting again in the hot mid-morning sun.

"Build more schools! Build more schools!"

Your Boroughwide Newspaper

BRONX NEWS

12 • BRONX NEWS • AUGUST 16-22, 2007

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Navy Airman Apprentice Sean J. Williams, son of Yolanda V. Williams of the Bronx, recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill.

During the eight-week program, Williams completed a variety of training which included classroom study and practical instruction on naval customs, first aid, firefighting, water safety and survival, and shipboard and aircraft safety. An emphasis was also placed on physical fitness.

The capstone event of boot camp is "Battle Stations." This exercise gives recruits the skills and confidence they need to succeed in the fleet. "Battle Stations" is designed to galvanize the basic warrior attributes of sacrifice, dedication, teamwork and endurance in each recruit through the practical application of basic Navy skills and the core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. Its distinctly

"Navy" flavor was designed to take into account what it means to be a Sailor.

Williams is a 2004 graduate of Harry Truman High School of Bronx, N. Y.

Army Staff Sgt. Alfonso G. Albright has arrived for duty at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany.

Albright, a flight medic with 12 years of military service, is assigned to the 214th Aviation Company.

He is the son of Mary A. Conway of E. Gunhill Road.

The sergeant is a 1990 graduate of Graphic Communication High School, Manhattan, N.Y.

Army Pvt. Peter J. Bracero has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C.

During the nine weeks of training, the soldier studied the Army mission, history, tradition



Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum (Right), joined by the Bronx River Alliance and Bronx residents and family members went on a paddling tour of the Bronx River. The canoeing trip was part of a larger campaign to encourage New Yorkers to take advantage of the city's waterways. Gotbaum said, "The Bronx River Alliance has worked decades to protect and restore this River and transform it into the great recreational space. Initiatives like Green Roofs and grassroots cleanups are important to help protect this vital community resource. We need to continue to support organizations and initiatives that improve the health of our children and make New York more beautiful place to live."

and core values, physical fitness, and received instruction and practice in basic combat skills, military weapons, chemical warfare and bayonet training, drill

and ceremony, marching, rifle marksmanship, armed and unarmed combat, map reading, field tactics, military courtesy, military justice system, basic first aid, foot marches, and field training exercises.

He is the son of Andrea Diaz of Donizetti Place.

Army National Guard Pvt. Jessica Alicea has graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson, Columbia, S.C.

During the nine weeks of training, the soldier studied the Army mission, history, tradition

and core values, physical fitness, and received instruction and practice in basic combat skills, military weapons, chemical warfare and bayonet training, drill and ceremony, marching, rifle marksmanship, armed and unarmed combat, map reading, field tactics, military courtesy, military justice system, basic first aid, foot marches, and field training exercises.

She is the daughter of Raisa Arias of E. 208th St., Bronx, N.Y.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick J. Moynihan, son of Mary

and Patrick Moynihan the Bronx recently reported for duty at Naval Support Activity Bahrain. Moynihan is a 1995 graduate of Immaculate Heart Preparatory High School of New Rochelle, N.Y. and joined the Navy May 2000.

Navy Seaman Recruit Giselle Rodriguez daughter of Gri Rodriguez of the Bronx recently completed U.S. Navy basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Ill. Rodriguez is a 2006 graduate of Christopher Columbus High School.

DAILY NEWS

Ed. Dept. fixes busing rules

August 28, 2007
EDUCATION officials are tweaking several of the school bus eligibility rules that turned last year's route shakeup into a full-blown fiasco.

A much-criticized rule requiring students to live a quarter of a mile from a bus stop to receive service — suspended during the debacle — will be scrapped starting this school year.

And to prevent young kids from riding public transportation by themselves, students in second grade or under who receive MetroCards can request yellow bus service instead.

"For those students in grades K to 2 who are eligible for MetroCards, they should not ride subways alone," said Department of Education spokeswoman Marge Feinberg. "Their parents can request yellow bus service."

It's unclear how many students could be affected by these changes, which come six months after 114 routes were slashed in an effort to eliminate unused routes.

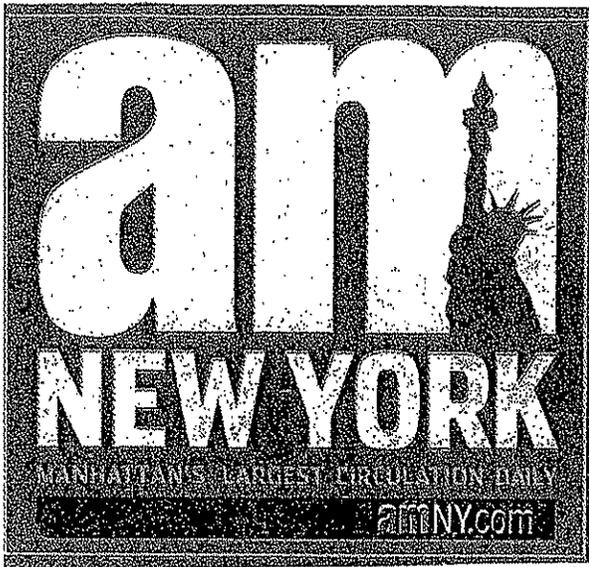
Though the Education Department says the cuts saved \$5 million last year, there was an outcry from parents and politicians

when hundreds of children who had been riding the bus were denied service last February, during one of the coldest weeks of the winter.

While Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum questioned why parents weren't being notified about the changes, other critics were pleased to hear about the concessions.

"They've made some improvements," said state Sen. John Sabini (D-Queens), whose office fielded complaints from many constituents. "I congratulate them for listening."

Carrie Melago



August 28, 2004

Knick catches heat for shoe donations

By Justin Rocket Silverman
jsilverman@am-ny.com

Knicks star Stephon Marbury wasn't trying to be controversial when he donated 3,000 pairs of his branded Starbury One shoes to city high school basketball players last year.



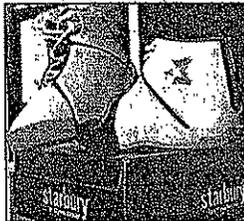
Yet by giving the shoes only to boys' varsity teams, the Coney Island native drew attention to what some say is a glaring in-

equality between boys and girls athletics in New York City public schools.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum said that because the Department of Education did not obtain 3,000 pairs of basketball shoes for the girls, it is in violation of federal rules that require equal sports resources for both sexes.

"The Department of Education is shortchanging female athletes, pure and simple," Gotbaum said yesterday.

The department yesterday pointed to a recent donation by Nike of sneakers



Marbury donated 3,000 pairs of shoes to city high schools. (Getty Images)

for 20 girls basketball teams, and said in a statement that it has "worked hard towards securing sneakers and other equipment for girls programs."

Some observers said

Gotbaum's position is off the mark.

"Have we come to expect so much that we don't embrace acts of kindness?" asked Brandon Tierney, a sports talk show host on 1050 ESPN Radio. "Give me a break. I mean, take the 3,000 sneakers and be grateful that you got them."

A report by Gotbaum's office last summer found that most public schools had more sports opportunities overall for boys than for girls, and that some girls sports were held in the off-season, when fewer college recruiters were working.

The NEW YORK Sun

August 29, 2007

SAT SCORES SAG, CONFUSION IN CLASSROOMS

By ELIZABETH GREEN
Staff Reporter of the Sun

With lawmakers warning about the possibility of mass confusion in the city's schools and with SAT scores having plummeted to their lowest levels since 2003, Mayor Bloomberg could be facing his worst case of back-to-school jitters yet.

Six days before classes open, hundreds of New York City students do not know where they will attend school, many teachers do not yet have complete class rosters, and one high school is out a principal after he was removed days ago, to teachers' astonishment.

In an interview at The New York Sun's offices this week, Rep. Yvette Clarke, a Democrat representing Brooklyn, said she has "serious concerns" about this year's school enrollment, saying her office has been flooded with calls from constituents nervous about where their children will start school Tuesday. "School is less than two weeks away, and they don't know where they're going to go," she said.

"Expect chaos," Council Member Robert Jackson, the chairman of the council's Education Committee, said. "Expect the worst and hope for the best," he said, summarizing his advice for the schools chancellor, Joel Klein.

Enrollment has often been a struggle in the city's public schools, whose 1.1 million students are marked by higher transience rates than in most other municipalities, yet experts say this year the ordinary hiccups will be magnified by widespread confusion about how to address them, following Mr. Bloomberg's latest restructuring of the school bureaucracy.

The shake-up abolished the
Please see EDUCATION, page 3

It's Back to School Jitters With Confusion in the Classroom

EDUCATION from page 1
item's 10 regions, which were used to determine where teachers, principals, and parents could ask questions and seek support. Schools are now grouped into community school districts, as they were when Mr. Bloomberg took over the schools in 2002.

When investigators at the office of the city's public advocate called new community districts this month, they got responses to one of 100 phone calls, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum announced yesterday, a record she denounced. After one office in Brooklyn returned no phone calls at all, investigators knocked on its door and found that it had not yet been staffed, a spokesman for Ms. Gotbaum, John Collins, said.

Ms. Gotbaum yesterday also announced she has opened a private line of her own to help parents sort out the new Department of Education hierarchy. The toll-free phone line was already ringing yesterday, Mr. Collins said. A spokesman for the Department of Education, David Cantor, said back-to-school concerns are being blown up. "People predict mass chaos every year, and in some respects, that's a good thing, because it takes everyone more vigilant," he said. "But we have a more responsive family engagement effort than we've ever had, and we're probably better-prepared generation than we've ever been." Mr. Cantor is president of the city teaching union, Randi Weingarten, said she has set her expectations high for Mr. Bloomberg and Mr. Klein.

"After five years of being chancellor, one should know how to open schools," she said.

Ms. Weingarten compared assurances that school will open smoothly to promises Mr. Klein made about new bus routes released this winter, which resulted in a debacle that Mr. Klein has said he regrets. "We gave them an early warning: if you cut the bus schedules like this, some students will be left out in the cold. But they said, 'Don't worry, we've got it covered.' Now they're saying the same thing," she said.

Ms. Weingarten said the recent removal of the principal at the Jamaica High School in Queens, Jay Dickler, is an example of last-minute disruptions that make teaching difficult.

The school's union representative, James Eterno, said he was preparing for a new school year when Mr. Dickler called him Monday night to say he had just been removed. "God knows how they make decisions down there," Mr. Eterno said, referring to the Department of Education's downtown headquarters.

A spokesman for the city principals union, Brian Gibbons, confirmed that Mr. Dickler is being reassigned but could not name his replacement.

Across the city, parents have been filling the auditoriums at schools designated as registration centers, waiting to learn where their children will go to school. A Manhattan mother, Luz Collado, waited at a center in Chelsea yesterday to find a school for her

daughter, Melanie, who is on a waiting list for the Bard Early College High School, a list Ms. Collado said is 1,500 students long. Ms. Collado said she had tried to register her daughter for school in the summer, but was surprised to

"Be happy a child is not falling through the cracks of the system and wanting to go to school," she said. "If it's a school I'm not comfortable with, then why can't I transfer?"

Meanwhile, the Department of Education early yesterday announced that this year's SAT math and reading scores are at their lowest since 2003, even as state tests show rising math and English proficiency.

Public school seniors who graduated in 2007 scored an average of 903 out of 1600 on the college entrance exam's math and reading sections, down from 911 last year. The eight-point drop, the biggest in recent years, is double the decline in national math and reading scores, which fell to 1015 from 1019, though just one point below the average drop for public school students, a Department of Education spokesman, Andrew Jacob, said.

The discrepancy follows reports from local colleges that graduates of the city schools are poorly prepared for university work, particularly math classes, despite rising graduation rates touted by Mr. Bloomberg.

Mr. Jacob said the drop follows national trends. A fellow at the Manhattan Institute, Sol Stern, said the scores are an indicator of Mr. Bloomberg's poor progress in turning the public schools around. "This is social promotion," he said. "Kids are graduating without the necessary academic skills to go to the next level."

'Be happy a child is not falling through the cracks of the system and wanting to go to school. If it's a school I'm not comfortable with, then why can't I transfer?'

learn registration began only this week. "I don't understand why they wait so close to when school starts," she said.

A 15-year-old sophomore from Spanish Harlem, Dolly Camacho, was also waiting for news on a transfer she said she hoped would move her out of her old high school, where she said she did not feel safe after being hit in the face by a rival in February. But she said she did not yet know whether her requested transfer would go through, putting her in a limbo she said several of her friends also face.

She called the enrollment process "ridiculous."



School 'hot lines' go cold: Gotbaum

nypost.com

New York Post, Wednesday, August 29, 2007

By YOAV GONEN

The Department of Education's July transition from 10 regional support centers to 32 district-based offices has been a bumpy one — and parents are bearing the brunt of it, according to a new report.

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum said employees at district offices, which are designed to serve as one-stop information centers on issues like transportation and enrollment in public schools, were largely unavailable or unresponsive to nearly 100 calls from her office last week.

At nearly half the districts her team contacted, phone calls went unanswered or were not returned, according to the report.

As a result, Gotbaum said she is launching an education hot line, at (212) 669-7250, to fill in the information gap.

"The start of the school

year can be a stressful time for parents and students. The DOE makes matters worse by providing very little information and support," she said.

DOE spokeswoman Dina Paul Parks countered that Gotbaum's report lacked detail about when and what type of messages were left.

"We are confident that parents and families who contact our parent support network will receive the help they need," she said.

While critics charged that the return to the district format was an admission of error, Parks said the function of the district office has changed considerably.

"The geographic confines of the district didn't change, but what a district means and what it's supposed to do and how it interacts with parents is certainly an evolution," she said.

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Calling Education Dept. help line? Good luck

Wednesday, August 29th 2007, 4:00 AM

Answers can be hard to come by at the city's community school district offices, a survey by Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum found.

Fewer than a third of daytime calls to the city Education Department's help centers were answered by a person, and just 10% of voice mails left at the offices were returned, according to the survey.

"The start of the school year can be a stressful time for parents and students. The DOE makes matters worse by providing very little information and support," Gotbaum said yesterday.

Staffers called each of the 32 offices three times in the past two weeks, once in English and once in Spanish during the daytime, and then once in English during the evening. The callers posed as parents trying to enroll their kids.

Just three school staffers were able to provide services in Spanish. One Brooklyn office's phone number was disconnected and seven daytime calls were never answered.

Gotbaum said she has set up her own education hotline: (212) 669-7250. A recording on her hotline last night noted the office was closed. It instructed callers to phone back during "regular working hours, which are 9a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday."

The Education Department defended its "family advocates."

"We are confident that parents and families who contact our parent support network will receive the help they need," said spokesman David Cantor.

Carrie Melago

DAILY NEWS

AUGUST 30, 2007

N.Y.ers on next mayor: Bizmen need not apply

BY KIRSTEN DANIS
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF

THE NEXT mayor of New York better know how to kiss a few babies.

New Yorkers say in a new poll that they would rather see a politician — not a businessman — take over City Hall in 2009.

By a 42%-to-31% margin, voters told pollsters with Quinnipiac University that they'd prefer someone with a government background over someone

from the private sector. But don't read the numbers released yesterday as a slap at Mayor Bloomberg.

He still has sky-high approval ratings, with 70% of voters saying he is doing a good job as mayor, down just slightly from his 75% record in January.

"They like him, they like what he's doing, but they're not ready to make a habit of it," said Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute.

Asked an open-ended question about what the

mayor's good qualities are, 26% of voters are fans of his "effective, businesslike style."

On the downside, 17% think Bloomberg is arrogant, cold and too rich to care about people, and 11% believe he's stubborn and opinionated.

The numbers bode well for the slew of politicians

who are jostling to replace Bloomberg, including Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-Brooklyn, Queens), City Council Speaker Christine Quim (D-Manhattan), Controller William Thompson and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, another possible contender, has a 62% approval rating — higher than anyone other than Bloomberg.

One businessman who's thinking about running for mayor, Gristedes supermarket mogul John Catsimatidis, said the poll doesn't deter him.

"I don't think people want to go back to the days when politicians were running the city," he said.

Plus, Catsimatidis said, "I'm very warm."

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See the full
poll results on
NYDailyNews.com