

East Side Democrats Win Large

By George Morin

LEX CLUB candidates ran the table again on the Upper East Side in the November elections helping to return Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Senator Liz Krueger and Assembly Member Jonathan Bing to their respective posts in Washington and Albany.

Add those wins to the victories of Eliot Spitzer and David Paterson in Albany, plus the Democratic take back of both houses of Congress in Washington, and there's no wonder everyone around here is smiling.

Maloney's banking on it

Our Club's Congresswoman, Carolyn Maloney, has been tapped for several important positions in the upcoming 110th Congress. On the House Financial Services Committee, Carolyn will be chairing the powerful Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, whose wide-ranging jurisdiction includes banks, credit and depository institutions as well as the overall safety and soundness of the banking system.

Carolyn has also been named the senior House Democrat on the Senate-House Joint Economic Committee, thus becoming Vice Chairwoman of the chief congressional panel charged with reviewing economic conditions and recommending improvements in fiscal policy.

Keeping NYC numero uno en dinero

Carolyn plans to use her newfound clout in these important posts to continue working to modernize financial services laws, increase accountability and protections for consumers and investors, and help New York City maintain its status as the world's financial capital.

In announcing Ms. Maloney's appointment as the leading House Democrat on the Joint Economic Committee

on December 19th, the then Speaker-Designate Nancy Pelosi had this to say, "Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney has been an aggressive voice in ensuring that strong U.S. economic growth will benefit all American families, not just the wealthy few. America's middle-class families will continue to benefit from her leadership and expertise in working to bring about a New Direction that restores the American dream and provides economic security and opportunity for all."



"Is this a gavel which I see before me?" Carolyn Maloney on election night, ready to take charge of powerful subcommittee.



Publications as diverse as the *New York Post* and the *National Journal's CongressDaily* have noted

Carolyn's ascendancy in the Subcommittee. The *Post* observed, "The move will give Maloney the chance to push long-stalled consumer-oriented legislation while tending to the city's powerful banking interests...."

"She will also push a crackdown on the overdraft fees that banks slap on consumers, a Democratic source said...."

"Maloney also plans to tackle 'predatory lending' – where banks sometimes provide high-interest loans to at-risk borrowers."

The *CongressDaily* reported, "Maloney has drawn raves from both consumer advocates and industry lobbyists for her balanced approach toward banking policy...."

"Maloney has said her philosophy is to provide a 'level playing field' to promote competition between national banks, community banks, brokerage houses, credit unions and money services businesses."

LDC

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State Committee
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Trudy L. Mason

U.S. Congress
Carolyn B. Maloney

State Senate
Liz Krueger

State Assembly
Jonathan Bing

City Council
Daniel R. Garodnick
Jessica S. Lappin



Nothing can dim Alex Tisch's victory smile.



Happy Democrats gathered at the Maloney inaugural celebration in Washington on January 3. (L to R) Mike Carroll, Brian O'Dwyer, Congresswoman Maloney, Dan Ryan and Cody McCone.

Extreme makeover for East Side transit

By George Morin

THE CLUB's transportation forum at Brown Gardens on November 30th evoked visions of a swift new subway that will whisk Upper East Siders to their offices in the West 50s; speedy new buses in dedicated lanes up First Avenue and down Second; and a transportation system that would allow a traveler to enter the subway at 86th and Lex and emerge from the system at JFK.

Headly stuff, even for the least enthused over the many disruptions the construction of the Second Avenue Subway will wreak.

Transportation experts

These visions were presented by a panel of transportation cognoscenti compiled by Trudy L. Mason, a transportation authority in her own right and the panel's moderator.

Arthur Schiff, the chair of the Club's program committee, welcomed the panelists and introduced Ms. Mason.

Broad picture

The lead-off panelist was Elliot "Lee" Sander, Co-Chair of the Empire State Transportation Alliance. Mr. Sander offered a broad picture of transportation challenges facing New York City and the surrounding region.

The first challenge is population growth. In the next 25 years about a million more people will occupy the city, with a half-million more in the surrounding region.

Staying ahead

The second challenge is world competition. The city of Shanghai's goal is to become the financial capital of the world by 2050. London is also striving for the position.

"Transportation is one of the key elements that will attract people to live in New York," Sander said. "Now that we have a Democratic congress we hope that will make a difference in federal transit funding. "We must maintain the system and, as a team with the state and federal governments, make serious progress in expanding and improving the it."

Benefits for generations to come

The next panelist, City Council Member John Liu, chair of the NYC Transportation Committee, noted that before he was elected to the City Council, he served on the transportation committees of both his local community board and the Queens' Civic Congress.

"Transportation was really the key to our recovery after September 11 ... and today it's also the key to economic development, access to jobs, and a good quality of life," Liu said.

Address concerns

"With regard to the Second Avenue Subway, I think it's going to entail short term headaches for some residents, and my colleague, Jessica Lappin, is very mindful of those concerns. They will be addressed head on.



Club members learn how they'll be getting around in the coming months and years from powerhouse panel. (L to R) Andrew B. Albert, Chair, NYC Transit Riders Council; Elliot "Lee" Sander, Co-Chair, Empire State Transportation Alliance; Moderator Trudy L. Mason, Manhattan Representative, Permanent Citizen Advisory Committee to the MTA; John C. Liu, NYC Council Member, Chair, City Council Transportation Committee; Jeffrey M. Zupan, Senior Fellow for Transportation, Regional Plan Association.

"But it will also provide benefits to New Yorkers for generations to come. The Second Avenue Subway is not just good for the people of the East Side, it's good for all the people of New York because that added mass transit capacity will reduce the traffic congestion that's crippling economic development and make the city that much more vibrant."

The never-ending challenge ...

Jeffrey M. Zupan, Senior Fellow for Transportation, Regional Plan Association spoke next.

"The Second Avenue Subway is not just about relieving the overcrowding on the Lexington Avenue Subway, it's also about providing people east of Third Avenue an opportunity to go where they want without using a car or taxi. It will also reduce crowding on First and Second Avenue buses."

... for the new Democratic team

In the face of all the talk about the new line, Zupan cautioned, "We don't have all the money for it, not by a long shot. The funding will be a challenge for the new governor and the city's congressional representatives."

In addition, Mr. Zupan pointed out that the expansion of the Long Island Rail Road into Grand Central will give East Siders easy access to the "air train" to JFK and to all of Long Island.

Zupan also remarked that a new tunnel under the Hudson will make Amtrak more efficient and open up New Jersey to New York City.

Other regional opportunities include expanded ferry service that would help cut back on traffic and relieve overcrowded roads.

Another concept in traffic congestion relief, Zupan reports, is Transit Oriented Development, where planners and developers would expand

around rail stations and bus stops so people would have shorter walks to the transit system.

There are more than 900 rail stations in the metro area that offer opportunities to relieve traffic congestion in this way.

Strap hanger advocate

The clean-up panelist was West Sider Andrew Albert who is the chair of the NYC Transit Riders Council and MTA board member.

Mr. Albert began by praising the performance of today's subway cars compared with those of the past. "We get 700,000 to 800,000 miles from a subway car today. There was a time when we would be thrilled to get 100,000 miles. So they're building better and we're buying better."

Albert's Transit Riders is a group of 15 volunteers appointed by the mayor and public advocate whose only concern is "what's good for the ridership."

Albert believes the Second Avenue Subway will be a boon to the Upper East Side. The initial line will run from 96th Street down Second Avenue to 63rd Street and turn and continue to the West Side, thus relieving pressure on other subway and bus lines.

Albert reports that building the new line will be less of a disruption to the East Side than many people believe. Instead of using the old cut-and-cover method of tunnel construction, the contractors will sink tunnel boring machines at 96th Street and bore out the tunnel under the surface down the East Side.

He also said that in the near future on the M-15 and M-31 bus lines screens will be installed at the major crosstown streets to accurately show riders when the next bus is due.

And when can we expect Bus Rapid Transit? According Albert, possibly next summer. **LDC**

Club's changes and our 2007 election

By George Morin

EVEN before the annual Club election, significant changes in the 73rd Assembly District leadership have taken place.

State committee

State Committee member David L. Cohen moved his residence from the 73rd Assembly District requiring that he resign from the State Committee, although not from the Club or from his many other activities in support of New York Democrats.

District leader

District Leader Conrad Foa stepped up to fill David's position on the State Committee.

Club president Alex Tisch has been endorsed by the executive committee to fill the vacancy.

Officers

Running unopposed to replace Alex as Club president is the Club's current recording secretary, Heather Leifer.

Also, Club treasurer Meg Laporte has become a candidate for vice president. Club member Jim

Clynes is running unopposed to replace Meg as treasurer. Mary Odomirok is running unopposed to replace Heather Leifer as recording secretary.

Current officers running for re-election are Executive Vice President Lillie Balinova; Vice Presidents Jennifer Coyne, James d'Auguste, Cathy Finlayson and Laurence Goodman; and Corresponding Secretary George Morin.

Executive committee

There will be 27 candidates to fill 20 executive committee seats. Since there are five candidates for vice president to fill four seats, the fifth place finisher will become one of the 27 candidates for the executive committee. A notice to all current Club members was mailed on December 27, 2006 detailing the time dates and location of the election with short biographies of all candidates. If you are a current member and did not receive your mailing, email the corresponding secretary at gmorin@aol.com with your mailing or email address. **LDC**



DEAR LEX CLUB MEMBERS:

As most of you know, I am not running for another term as your president. It has been a great two years and I am proud of the things we have accomplished together.

Amid significant political transitions we have been able to keep the Upper East Side solidly Democratic. We elected Jessica Lappin and Dan Garodnick to our two council seats after the incumbents moved on.

We re-elected Carolyn Maloney, Liz Krueger and Jonathan Bing with overwhelming margins this past year.

We have given strong support to state and city candidates, such as Eliot Spitzer, Andrew Cuomo, Chuck Schumer, Hillary Clinton, Scott Stringer, Bob Morgenthau, Betsy Gotbaum, Bill Thompson along with several judges. Nobody after the past couple of years can say that the East Side does not pull its weight in borough, city, state and national Democratic politics.

We also reinvigorated the Club itself by hosting regular speakers and forums on important issues, participated in community service, produced this wonderful newsletter and held successful fund raising dinners.

I have full confidence this will all continue under our new president, Heather Leifer, who was a huge part of our prior successes as recording secretary and chair of the Campaign Committee.

The Democratic takeover of Congress was a huge accomplishment that I am still excited about months later. Carolyn Maloney has new influence chairing important committees in Congress.

As I watch the President give his speech on Iraq while I'm writing this, I can't help but think that if we can do something about that disaster everything would be perfect.

Actually, for perfection we need to elect a Democrat to the Presidency in 2008 and keep control of Congress. Something I will enjoy working on with all of you once again.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead this Club, it is an experience I will not forget.

Sincerely yours,

Alex Tisch
President, the Lexington Democratic Club

From Council to Congress: Maloney exposes waste and fraud

By George Spitz

EXPOSING waste, fraud and corruption, and devising remedial laws for the federal government, is a continuation of the work that Carolyn Maloney did as a member of the New York City Council.

Sludge money

In 1991, Maloney exposed a number of wasteful city contracts, including a notorious one involving payment of \$120 million for sludge removal when other municipalities were paying \$40 million for doing similar work.

As a consequence, Maloney successfully sponsored a local law, VENDEX, a computerized management system providing the city with information about contractors that would help avert waste and fraud. Carolyn Maloney was elected to Congress the following year.

Recently, the Project on Government Oversight (P.O.G.O.) issued a statement saying, "Three Cheers to Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-New York) for her legislation which would commission a technical study of how the government collects gas drilling payments. Maloney's investigations and oversight in the late 1990's helped bring oil royalty payments to light."

Government should work for people

The Project on Government Oversight was founded in 1981 by a courageous woman named Dina Razor, starting with a borrowed phone and desk in Washington. Ms. Razor was motivated by the idea that government should work for the people, not for special interests.

Today, the Project on Government Oversight is a highly respected and feared organization, exposing examples of government fraud and waste, including the notorious "Big Dig" in the Boston area.

Maloney never stopped

A search of the Project's website reveals that Congresswoman Maloney has been involved in numerous other exposés of waste and corruption since becoming a Member of Congress and has sponsored corrective legislation.

More to come

And despite her having been a member of the Democratic minority since 1995, some of the bills and amendments which she drafted actually passed. One can only imagine what she will accomplish as a high-ranking member of the majority. **LDC**

ELECTION OF CLUB OFFICERS

Thursday, January 18, 2007

7 p.m.

Speeches by candidates

6 to 9 p.m.

Secret ballot drop-in vote

Annual Meeting Notice

BROWN GARDENS
225 East 93rd Street
(between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

6 to 9 p.m.

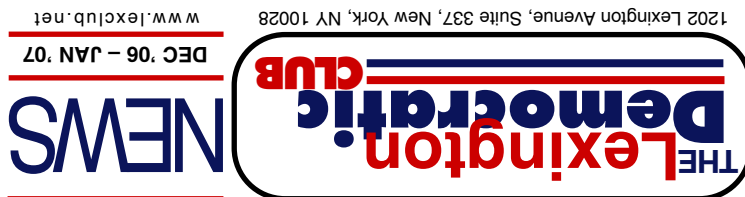
Secret ballot drop-in vote

MUST BE PAID UP MEMBER OF CLUB TO VOTE

INSIDE: East Side victory, transportation forum, Club elections, George Spitz remembers when, and Alex Tisch signs out.

ABOVE THE FOLD: Pew polls reaction to Democratic win.

<p>Annual Meeting Notice</p> <p>ELECTION OF CLUB OFFICERS</p> <p>Thursday, January 18, 2007</p> <p>7 p.m.</p> <p>Speeches by candidates for all positions</p> <p>6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Secret ballot drop-in vote</p> <p>ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT LARGE</p> <p>Tuesday, January 30, 2007</p> <p>6 to 9 p.m.</p> <p>Secret ballot drop-in vote</p> <p>BROWN GARDENS</p> <p>225 East 93rd Street</p> <p>(between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)</p> <p><small>MUST BE PAID UP MEMBER OF CLUB TO VOTE</small></p>



BIG DEMOCRAT VICTORY CHEERS PUBLIC

PEW RESEARCH DETECTS NO BUYER REMORSE AFTER DEMOCRATIC TAKE BACK

ACCORDING to a survey conducted after the November election by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 60% of Americans report happiness that the Democratic Party won control of Congress.

Take the lead

In addition, over half (51%) want Democratic leaders, instead of President Bush, to take the lead in solving the nation's problems. And 59% of respondents believe that Democratic leaders will be successful in making their programs law.

Can we just get along?

On a dimmer note, only 29% think relations between the Republicans and Democrats will get better in 2007.

About half of the Democrats want party leaders to "stand up" to Bush on important issues. Only 30% of Republicans believe their party leaders should stand up to the Democrats.

Bush ratings

Bush's own job approval ratings have reached a new low. Less than a third (32%) approve of his performance while significantly

more than half (58%) disapprove.

How goes the war?

On the war front, the findings have gone from bad to worse. Sixty four percent feel the effort in Iraq is "not going well," the highest percentage since the war began, according to Pew. Only 32% said the war effort is going well or fairly well.

"As recently as September, the public was almost evenly split between those who felt the war was going well and those who saw it going poorly," the report stated.

More specifically, the number who say the U.S. is making progress in establishing democracy in Iraq has fallen by 19 percentage points since the beginning of 2006 – from 62% to 43%.

In addition, only 34% believe there's progress in defeating the "insurgents" and even fewer (22%) believe there's progress in preventing an Iraqi civil war and reducing civilian casualties (20%).

Who knows when and where?

But despite the negative views about progress in Iraq, there's been no significant

increase in the number of Americans calling for troop withdrawal. Forty-eight percent believe troops should be brought home as soon as possible, while 46% believe troops should remain until the situation has stabilized.

Most of those who support bringing troops home as soon as possible say the pullout should take place gradually over the next year or two. While Democrats overwhelmingly believe troops should be removed, only 21% say the troops should come home immediately.

Looking back ...

In the hindsight department, the number of Americans who believe going to war in Iraq was a mistake is the highest it has ever been.

In November 2006, 51% said the decision was wrong, up from 43% in September 2006.

Not surprisingly, Democrats scored the highest percentage of those who believed going to war in Iraq was wrong: 71%.

The poll was conducted in the period of November 9 through 12 among a random sample of 1,479 Americans.

– *George Morin*