

CLUB PUTS FEET ON THE STREET

by George Morin and Alex Tisch

Neither wind, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stayed Lex Club petition couriers from their appointed rounds.

With all apologies to the postal service, the Lex Club once again turned out for our candidates and gathered 4,343 signatures to help them qualify for the Democratic primary ballot in September.

The Kickoff

The Club kicked off its petition drive on June 7th at the United Storeworkers' Union.

Committee co-chairs Lillie Balinova, Larry Goodman and Heather Leifer passed out the long green sheets for the two Council districts and the three parts of our 73rd Assembly District, making five petition variations.

We mess with Ma Nature

The following six weeks of petitioning saw every form of summer weather Ma Nature can dish out. Stifling heat, torrential downpours and a rare nice day.

But that didn't prevent petitioners and candidates from appearing at their strategically selected subway stops, supermarkets and street corners.

And the winners are ...

When it was all over and the signatures counted, the Club gave virtual laurels to our Gold, Silver and Bronze winners. The top three club members, not associated with a candidate's campaign, who collected the most signatures are:

The virtual *Gold Medal* goes to District Leader **Arthur Schiff** who collected a total of 257 signatures.

The virtual *Silver Medal* goes to Club President **Alex Tisch** who bagged a healthy 120 signatures.

And the virtual *Bronze Medal* goes to Executive Committee Member **Paul Hellegers** with an impressive 103 signatures.

Final Touch

After the petitioning was completed, the next task was the binding of the petitions. Again a cast of Club stars turned out to help: Meryl Brodsky, James d'Auguste, Larry Goodman, Larry Rosenstock, Arthur Schiff, Alex Tisch and Andy Tulloch. Staff members from the campaigns also helped in the effort. **LDC**

Lex Club Petitioning Honor Roll

Jeff Alexander	Barry Klein
Isobel Aronin	Ben Krull
Michael Asta	Meg Laporte
Lillie Balinova	Robert Levinsohn
Miriam Balmuth	Millie Margiotta
Assemblyman	Trudy L. Mason
Jonathan Bing	John Mills
Peter Borock	Ken Mills
Meryl Brodsky	Sally Minard
Amos Buhai	George Morin
David Cohen	Susan Moss
Ivy Cohen	Lou Nock
Jennifer Coyne	Alfonso Quiroz
James d'Auguste	Reni Roberts
Cathy Finlayson	Larry Rosenstock
Conrad Foa	Jacklyn Rovine
June Goldberg	Arthur Schiff
Larry Goodman	Lisa Sokoloff
Paul Hellegers	Jane Swanson
Leon Heller	Alex Tisch
Susan Heller	Francis Vieta
Heather Leifer	Jeff Wald
Michael Katz	Andrew Wuertele

Officers and Elected Officials

President

Alexander Tisch

Executive Vice President

Lillie Balinova

Vice Presidents

Jennifer Coyne
James d'Auguste
Cathy Finlayson
Andrea Kaufman

Treasurer

Meg Laporte

Recording Secretary

Heather Kim Leifer

Corresponding Secretary

George Morin

District Leaders

Meryl Brodsky
Conrad Foa
Linda Foa
Sally Minard
Lawrence Rosenstock
Arthur Schiff

State Committee

David L. Cohen
Trudy L. Mason

U.S. Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

State Senate

Liz Krueger

State Assembly

Jonathan Bing

City Council

Gifford Miller, Speaker
Eva Moskowitz



PETITIONERS, IN FROM THE RAIN: Arthur Schiff, Jacob Itzkowitz, Dan Garodnick, Barry Klein and Adam Szlachetka
(More petitioning photos inside)

WHERE I STAND BUS RAPID TRANSIT

by Dan Garodnick, for City Council, District 4

While the most important single transit project for the next 100 years is the full-built Second Avenue Subway, I'm supporting Bus Rapid Transit as an interim relief for East Side transit riders.



Fast and flexible

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is an innovative system for New York that has the benefit of combining some of the speed of rail-based rapid transit systems with the flexibility of buses. An increasing number of BRT systems are being implemented across the U.S. and the world, but each one is tailored specifically for the area it seeks to serve.

Real-time information

In the BRT system, stations have a unique identity, and provide real-time passenger information – such as the amount of time until the next bus arrives. Generally, they operate through dedicated lanes and have frequent, all-day service using environmentally-friendly vehicles. In a typical BRT system there are a variety of express,

limited-stop and local service options.

Another important characteristic of some of the BRT systems is that the buses receive priority at traffic signals, provide real-time bus arrival information at stations, provide next stop passenger information on vehicles, and help collect fares more efficiently.

Needed since the EI shutdown

The need for this system on the East Side of Manhattan is great. Before 1942, the East Side had three rail lines – the Second Avenue El, which was closed in 1942, and the Third Avenue El, which was torn down in 1955. Today, East Side commuters rely entirely on the only remaining rail service, the Lexington Avenue subway, which carries 40% of all of New York City's subway passengers.

Better East Side transportation now

Indeed, the need for the Second Avenue Subway line is growing. While awaiting its construction, however, East Siders need smart, efficient transportation alternatives to relieve some of the massive overcrowding on the Lexington line, which is operating at 125% capacity.

Today, the MTA New York City Transit, the New York City Department of Transportation and the New York State Department of Transportation are collaborating on the New York City Bus Rapid Transit Study. On May 11, 2005, that group announced that they had limited

their list of potential BRT corridors to 15.

The study selected these 15 corridors based on parking changes, enforcement issues, street geometry and traffic impacts. Appropriately, the First/Second Avenue (M15), Third/Lexington Avenue (M98/101/102/013) as well as the Fifth/Madison Avenue (M1/2/3/4/5/Q32) corridors were all selected for the list.

Public workshops

According to the MTA, this fall the group will be conducting public workshops on the routes selected and will refine the plans based on public input. Detailed plans will be developed in 2006, and they are set to be implemented in 2007.

The MTA has earmarked \$21.9 million in its proposed 2005-2009 five-year capital plan to fund BRT initiatives in 2007.

In my view, in light of the East Side's transportation challenges, the MTA should accelerate the timeframe for the implementation of this project on the East Side. Specifically, of the 15 routes chosen, the East Side routes should be the first to be implemented.

Second, I support allocating appropriate funding in order to operate this service for the East Side routes no later than July 2006.

As a member of the City Council, I will perform aggressive oversight over the MTA – as the Council has done in the past – to ensure that East Side straphangers get the transportation relief they so desperately need. **LDC**

WHERE I STAND IMPROVING OUR SCHOOLS

by Jessica Lappin, for City Council, District 5

If we want New York City to be a place of opportunity where people with hope and determination have a chance to succeed, then we must provide quality education.

For our children, our city



It's the right thing to do for our children and young adults, and it's the right thing to do for our society. New York City's long term stability and lasting prosperity depend on it.

Shocking results

But the latest results of the State's English exam are not encouraging: only 50 percent of city fourth graders are reading at grade level. As shocking as that is, it is not surprising. Our schools are massively overcrowded and are suffering from years of "deferred" maintenance and neglect.

Our children are expected to learn in overcrowded and crumbling classrooms, in buildings

with leaky roofs and without working bathrooms, gyms, art rooms or science labs.

In such conditions, we can't expect our children to learn or for our teachers to teach.

Shrinking funds

Over the past five years funding for building and maintaining schools has steadily declined an unconscionable 60 percent – from \$7.8 billion to \$4.5 billion.

As we learned in the 1970s, deferring maintenance and delaying investment in our schools' buildings and properties is a recipe for disaster. We must address this crisis before our school system declines past the point of no return.

And the truth is – this sad state needn't be.

Court rules for our schools

Two years ago the State Court of Appeals upheld the lower court's ruling on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, brought by Council Member Robert Jackson. The court ruled that the state failed to adequately fund a decent education for New York City school children, pointing out that "smaller class sizes in the earliest grades correlate with better test results during those years and afterwards."

Where's the money?

But the billions of dollars needed to implement the court ruling have yet to be delivered to New

York City schools, held up in Albany by the State Senate.

State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Eric T. Schneiderman explained one of the reasons why: "I'm fighting every day in Albany to secure the increased funding for New York City schools that the Court of Appeals mandated . . . but our efforts in Albany are undermined when the Mayor and the Department of Education fail to adequately explain their use of funding that has already been allocated."

Failure to reduce class size

One of the issues the senator was referring to was the city's claim of 1,586 new classrooms instead of the 540 actually found by the city's Independent Budget Office. This failure to adequately reduce class size came about even though the Department of Education received \$88 million from the State Early Grade Reduction Program.

Making it happen

I look forward to joining the battle in the City Council to make enhanced funding for public education a top priority – to repair, modernize and build what we need to reduce class sizes, attract and keep excellent teachers and to have a safe, secure learning environment.

Then not only will the test scores improve – so will the learning. **LDC**

Miller's plan for victory

Slowly inching up in the polls, but still a very dark horse, seems to make the Club's candidate for mayor very happy.

"Who wants to be number one in the polls in July?" Gifford Miller recently asked a group of volunteers. "We've got ideas and we've got a strategy that will put us where we want to be in September – and in November."

A key part of that strategy is a new petitioning effort launched the day after the petitioning ended to put candidates on the ballot in September.

On July 15 Miller's volunteers were all over the city with a new, blue petition. It was the *Smaller Class Size Independent Nominating Petition*.

The petitioners sought registered New York City voters of any party to sign the petition to reduce class size.

Veteran petition carriers were delighted at how easy it was to gather signatures. All a signer had to be was a registered voter from any borough of the city.

How will one petition help capture the

Democratic nomination for mayor and prevail in the November election?

First, the vast petitioning effort will introduce thousands of voters to Gifford Miller whose public profile in many parts of the city has been hidden under the proverbial basket.

As many Club members can attest, once you meet Miller and hear his ideas on smaller class size, improved subways, more jobs and all the other issues that touch our lives – you like him.

Second, the petition aims at the heart of one of Mayor Bloomberg's most treasured claims: the "education mayor."

Miller points out that "Mike Bloomberg has driven more than 8,000 teachers out of our schools over the last

three years. In a Miller administration we will treat teachers like the professionals they are."

Miller's education plan does far more than reduce class size, it also retains high-quality teachers and provides a universal after-school program.

– George Morin



Gifford Miller explains his plans for better education to a voter as she signs the Smaller Class Size petition.

VOLUNTEERS: URGENTLY NEEDED:

Gifford Miller

(212) 587-8087

www.millerfornewyork.com

Dan Garodnick

(212) 260-0126

www.garodnick.com

Jessica Lappin

(212) 988-2270

www.jessicalappin.com

Scott Stringer

(646) 403-9916

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Betsy Gotbaum

(212) 571-5167

www.betsy2005.com

See it all at www.lexclub.net

SIGNING IN THE RAIN!

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Jessica Lappin with East Sider Arlene Tough; Senator Liz Krueger directs traffic to Dan Garodnick at 86th & Lex; a happy Arthur Schiff collects signatures in Part A; Amy Martinez points to where Scott Stringer is greeting voters; and a rain-stained petition braves the elements.



INSIDE:

- Club's petitioning results
- Two "WHERE I STAND" articles by City Council candidates Dan Garodnick and Jessica Lappin
- Petitioning photos
- Miller's plan for victory

ABOVE THE FOLD:

"Replacing Justice O'Connor" by District Leader Arthur Schiff

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THE Lexington Democratic CLUB NEWS

REPLACING JUSTICE O'CONNOR

by Arthur Schiff, District Leader, Part A

"It's the Supreme Court, stupid," read the T-shirt I received as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2000.

That phrase attempted to highlight the increasingly important role of the Supreme Court and therefore the importance of electing Al Gore who had promised to appoint only justices with a progressive or mainstream judicial philosophy.



Fast forward to November 2000.

In its 5 to 4 decision, the Supreme Court stopped the vote counting in Florida and gave the White House to George W. Bush.

Now it s happening.

And now, five years later, President Bush's first Supreme Court appointment replacing Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has gone to a conservative, Judge John Roberts.

If confirmed, Roberts could have a

dramatic impact on the Court's direction. This is so because currently there's a remarkable balance between the Court's conservative and progressive wings, with Justices O'Connor and Kennedy "swinging" between the two sides, often to form a majority.

Tilting the balance

Should Roberts turn out to be a hard-right conservative, it will mean that the Court's balance would shift somewhat to the right. But that shift could make for profound changes in the Court's decisions in the most controversial areas, such as reproductive freedom, where O'Connor voted in favor of reproductive choice in *Roe v. Wade*, as she did in *Stenberg v. Carhart*, providing the fifth vote to strike down Nebraska's attempt to ban so-called "partial birth" abortions.

Substantial burdens

A conservative replacement could make the Court more likely to impose substantial burdens on access to abortions, including parental consent and restrictions on abortion methods.

Affirmative action

In affirmative action, O'Connor provided the fifth vote in *Grutter v. Bollinger* which upheld the affirmative admissions policy of

the University of Michigan's law school.

The addition of a conservative could lead to the reversal of that decision or new decisions that will make affirmative action more difficult in practice.

Equal rights

On gay rights, in 2003 O'Connor and Kennedy joined the progressives in a decision declaring unconstitutional any State's law that criminalized sex between persons of the same sex. The replacement of O'Connor by a doctrinaire conservative could certainly threaten those rights as well as the right to same sex marriage and adoption.

Similarly, the replacement of O'Connor by a hard-line conservative will also make a substantial difference in the issues involving religion, the death penalty, campaign finance and free speech.

What can we do?

So, what can progressive Democrats do?

We can urge our U.S. Senators, especially Senator Schumer, a member of the Judiciary Committee, to fully explore Roberts's views to be reassured he is a conservative in the mold of O'Connor rather than one who seeks to move America sharply to the right.

And we can work with all our might to elect Democrats this year and in 2006 and 2008. **LDC**