

## Club hears from VoteVets.org

*By George Morin*

No matter what position one has on the war in Iraq, there is an impregnable wall of support from Club members for the soldiers, marines and veterans of that conflict.

At the Club forum at Brown Gardens on October 19th, VoteVets Executive Director Malea Stenzel and Iraq veteran and VoteVets's senior advisor David F. Everett addressed Club members.

Unfortunately, Jon Soltz, VoteVets's co-founder and chair, who had been scheduled to speak, was detained in Los Angeles.

State Committee Member Trudy L. Mason organized the event and served as its moderator.

### **Veteran of two wars**

David Everett began his remarks by apologizing for Soltz's absence saying, "You were supposed to get the young good looking guy, but instead got the old graying guy."

Everett had served in Operation Desert Storm as a member of the National Guard and volunteered to be recalled to active duty for the current conflict.

### **Cops trained to be crooks**

He related that one of the biggest miscalculations before the invasion was the status of the Iraqi police. "The people from the C.I.A. and Department of Defense said the police were in great shape," Everett said, "but they were a disaster. The cops prior to the invasion had been paid \$5 a month because the police uniform was a license to steal. We had a police force that was basically trained to be crooks."

When the Americans and Iraqis officials finally screened and fingerprinted the new Iraqi police force, they discovered that some 5,000 had criminal records.

### **Arrogance of the administration**

Ms. Mason asked Everett what he thought about the upcoming election. He replied, "The arrogance of the administration still rings in my ear. The secretary of defense saying 'you don't go to war with the army you want...' is pretty lame to me. So people who know differently, have an obligation to speak up."

But Everett's personal position on precipitously pulling out is greatly influenced by his fear that the really dedicated people who have

stuck their necks out to support the American effort, and their families, will be in grave danger.

### **For or against the war?**

District leader Arthur Schiff asked if VoteVets was in support of the war or opposed to it.

Executive Director Stenzel replied, "We don't take a position on the war, per se. We work for those who volunteered for the military – for their safety, their health and their well-being when they're abroad and also when they're home."

"I'm 26 years old, I should not be the one to advocate a policy, it should be the U.S. military to say what we can do and what we can't do. Where we've gotten into trouble is that Washington has been setting the course, not the U.S. military."

### **The mission**

The mission of VoteVets.org, according to its leave-behind literature, is to elect veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to public office, hold public officials accountable for the words they say and actions they take that impact service members, and to support the men and women in uniform.

VoteVets's goal is not only to elect Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to public office – regardless of party – but to defeat those public officials who have failed our troops, veterans and nation on the war and on veteran issues. **LDC**



*VoteVets's Executive Director Malea Stenzel and Senior Adviser David Everett listen as a question is posed by a Club member.*

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**Urgent:  
Vote**

Tuesday, November 7th  
Every vote counts,  
Yours most of all.

# 73rd Assembly District debates

By Meg Laporte

On Sunday afternoon September 7 the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association held a debate for local officials seeking to represent the 73rd Assembly District. Then, the next night, Monday, the Sutton Place Synagogue sponsored a second debate, where the attendance was almost double that of the Sunday afternoon debate.

## Bing vs. Heim

Although attacked in *Our Town* by his challenger, attorney Robert Heim, Assembly Member Jonathan Bing, defended his record of supporting local educational institutions and libraries. Bing has also voted for the on-time budget and to override certain Pataki vetoes that would have shortchanged his constituents. Bing also pointed out that crime has actually decreased in this area.

## Krueger vs. Pidot

State Senator Liz Krueger's opponent, Philip Pidot, considers himself "a cure for the chronic problems that plague Albany...." He also indicated no bipartisan endorsement, alleging "original non-incumbent strength."

Senator Krueger has consistently made reforming the state government her top priority, even going so far as to take prominent political leaders to court. Eventually, her leadership of the D.S.C.C. may turn the State Senate blue.

## Maloney vs. Maio

Although Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney was unable to attend the first debate against Long Island City's candidate Danniell Maio, she was superbly represented by her New York City press secretary, Joseph Soldevere.

Mr. Maio has run for City Council, Queens Borough President and now the 14th Congressional District.

In the second debate, Ms. Maloney discussed her long track record of community service, starting as an adult education teacher, creating the City Council committee on contracts, heading the Democratic task force on 911, insisting on HAVA voting machines that ensure a paper trail, and, most recently, her efforts that led to the F.A.A. banning of private plane flights over the East River after a private plane crashed into an Eastside apartment building. **LDC**

## Krueger pitches for lower college costs in *Times* Op-Ed

By George Morin

In a *New York Times* op-ed piece titled "Too Poor to Graduate" our own state senator, Liz Krueger, made a strong case for increased funding for higher education in New York State at every level of government.

## Greater cost burden in New York

Citing a study by the Department of Education, Ms. Krueger reports that "paying for college is a greater burden for New Yorkers than in any other state. She also reports that the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education "gave New York a failing grade for affordability."

## Perpetuates poverty

Among the results of these failings, according to Krueger, is that lower-income New Yorkers are less likely to attend college and more likely to remain in poverty and dependent on government assistance as a result.

## Interest rates double

Not only has the fixed-interest rate for federal Stafford Loans more than doubled in two years, the Bush administration's proposed

budget for next year eliminates Federal financing of low-interest Perkins Loans and has again frozen Pell Grants at a maximum of \$4,050.

## Pataki's cuts foiled

Senator Krueger lauded the Legislature for rejecting Governor Pataki's efforts to cut funding for vital education programs, including needed increases for SUNY and CUNY.

These state expenditures are more than justified, in Krueger's opinion, because students who benefitted from the Education Opportunity Program, SUNY or CUNY, and stayed in New York after graduation, have returned more than \$330 million in revenue through income and sales taxes.

"The state's investment in these programs has been a small fraction of our return," she reports.

## Incentive for public service careers

Other proposals made in her article include creating loan forgiveness programs for students who commit to much-needed public service careers like teaching, nursing and firefighting.

**LDC**

# GENERAL ELECTION

NOVEMBER 7

PLEASE VOTE FOR THESE CANDIDATES

**Governor Eliot Spitzer**  
**Lt. Gov. David Paterson**



**State Comptroller**  
**Alan Hevesi**



**Attorney General**  
**Andrew Cuomo**



**United States Senator**  
**Hillary Clinton**



**Justices and Judges**  
**All the Democrats**



**United States Congress**  
**Carolyn Maloney**



**State Senators**  
**Liz Krueger**  
**or Jose Serrano**



**State Assembly**  
**Jonathan Bing**



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# The Golden Opportunity

By Alexander Tisch

The year 2006 represents a golden opportunity for the Democratic Party to make a national comeback. The latest polls show our statewide candidates heading towards landslides of epic proportions. Spitzer leading Faso for governor by two to one. Hillary Clinton leading John Spencer by 25 points or more. Andrew Cuomo beating the hapless Jeanine Pirro by 20 points. This should be a remarkable election night for New York. Locally Congressman Maloney, Senator Krueger and Assemblyman Bing look to be heading to victory.

Of course, we should not take any of these local or state elections for granted, but things are certainly looking good in a way most of us have not seen in recent memory.

## What a difference a year makes

A year ago it seemed hardly possible that the Democrats could take back either chamber of Congress. President Bush was performing respectably enough that his party would not suffer too bad in the polls. In addition, the GOP had the House gerrymandered that made a Democratic comeback difficult – plus their ever-present money advantage.

## Republican slide

Things started going downhill in 2005 with the Terri Schiavo and Social Security privatization fiascos. Things kept on deteriorating in Iraq, and we found out more about the lies and deceptions which led us to war in the first place. Gas prices hit obscene highs over the summer. At that time many analysts were still saying that it was impossible for the Democrats to take the Senate and that the House was only an even bet.

The Republicans were counting on the fifth anniversary of 9/11 to be a segue into a national focus on terrorism, generally considered to be their best issue (notwithstanding Bush's inability to capture Bin Laden or prevent the 9/11 attacks in the first place). In addition, hot-button issues such as legalizing warrantless wiretapping and creating military tribunals at Guantánamo Bay

## editor's opinion

If we Democrats regain a major role in the federal government on November 7th as the polls indicate we might, we should all go home early from our celebrations and get a good night's rest, because on November 8th we must start pulling ourselves together if we want to celebrate on November 4th, 2008.

Our founder, Thomas Jefferson, called ours "the party of the common man." But today our party has morphed into the party of the middle ground, selling our principles and values out to the elusive "swing voter," the darlin' of the researchers who tally up what appealed to people yesterday to predict what they'll vote for on elec-

would be used to make the Democrats, if they voted against these things, look soft on terrorism.

## Democratic rise

The Republicans gained in the polls in September, but the Foley scandal erupted which blunted and reversed their momentum.

Now most of the experts are saying that the Democrats have a better than even shot of taking back the House and an even chance in the Senate.

## The races to watch

Here are the races nationally to watch as we head to November 7th. In the Senate the Democrats need six seats to take 51 seat majority. Currently eight seats are considered competitive of which only New Jersey is currently held by a Democrats. Democrats have leads in four Republican seats. Casey is leading Santorum in Pennsylvania by a decent margin. A defeat of Santorum would be a huge coup for the Democrats and a real defeat for the conservative movement.

Whitehouse is leading Chafee in Rhode Island. Brown has a growing lead over DeWine in Ohio. Tester is leading the Abramoff connected Burns in Montana. That is four seats.

The Democrats need to take two of the following three states to take the Senate: Tennessee, Missouri and Virginia. The Democrats need to hold closer than expected New Jersey. The Democrats are either tied or currently trail in Virginia and Tennessee and have slight leads in New Jersey and Missouri.

Most pundits are predicting a four- to six-seat Democratic pickup.

## Madame speaker?

The Democrats need 15 seats to make Nancy Pelosi Speaker of the House. There are over 40 Republican held seats in varying degrees of vulnerability and less than ten Democratic seats.

The following states have multiple tight toss-up races. Connecticut has three, Pennsylvania four, Indiana three, and Ohio three. Democrats look to take over several seats where scandals

tion day. It's like driving your car while looking through the rear-view mirror.

We should suck it up and take a tip from Richard Wirthlin, Ronald Reagan's chief strategist in 1980. Wirthlin discovered that even though voters didn't agree with Reagan on many issues, they still voted for him because he talked about his *values*. In doing so, he appeared authentic and voters *felt* he could be trusted.

"*Felt*" or feeling is an *emotional* thing.

And as an advertising copywriter and sometimes creative director for over three decades, who made his bread by enticing consumers to "vote" for clients' products and services, I'd like

to offer some advice: *It's all about emotion.*

have taken place. Tom Delay's (TX-22) seat, Bob Ney's (OH-18) seat, Foley's (FL-13) seat and Don Sherwood's (PA-10) seat.

There are several open seats where Democrats are favored in Arizona, Colorado and Iowa. It looks entirely possible that the Democrats can win upwards of 30 seats. Most pundits are estimating about a 20 seat pickup (enough to give Carolyn Maloney a gavel).

## A governor majority, too?

Democrats are also on the path to pick up enough governorships to have a majority for the first time since before 1994. The Democrats currently have 22 governors.

In addition to New York State, Democrats are also very strong favorites to win Republican held open seats in Ohio, Colorado, Massachusetts and Arkansas. Democrats are in tight races against incumbent Republicans in Minnesota and Rhode Island. There are vulnerable Democrats in Oregon, Maine, Wisconsin and Michigan as well as the open seat in Iowa. However, the latest polls show Democrats leading in all of these states. In Massachusetts the Democrats have a chance to elect Deval Patrick to be the first African-American governor since Douglas Wilder in Virginia.

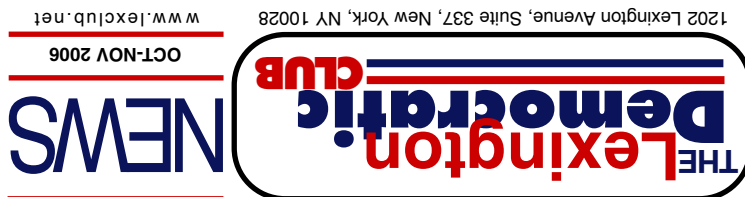
## Don't let up

Things look good but we must stay vigilant. The last thing we want is to wake up on November 8th to find that we have come close once again. Still, try to enjoy the next couple of days – they may be historic. **LDC**



Alex Tisch, President of the Club

**INSIDE: Report on Club forum with VoteVets.org, candidate debates, Liz Krueger's NY Times Op-Ed, an expert election analysis, and an editor's opinion. ABOVE THE FOLD: Officials' Roundup.**



## OFFICIALS' ROUNDUP

### RECENT NEWS AND VIEWS FROM CLUB'S ELECTED OFFICIALS

With the election just days away, our three Club candidates who are facing the voters are working overtime to help get out the vote.

But, as usual, they're not neglecting their day jobs. Here's a rundown of recent developments:

#### **Carolyn Maloney follows up on 9/11 health and benefit issues.**

Working with her Republican counterpart, Vito Fossella and other New York Democratic officials, Ms. Maloney has been successful in getting the distribution of \$40 million for medical treatment of those exposed to Ground Zero toxins expedited. The funds are the first federal dollars spent for treatment of 9/11-related illnesses. Millions more have been promised.

Ms. Maloney and her Republic counterpart are working to get the City to reconsider excluding Felicia Dunn-Jones from its list of 9/11 victims. The late Ms. Dunn-Jones was trapped in a dust cloud on 9/11 and died from the effects two years later. Her family has

been awarded \$2.6 million from a federal fund, but the city still declines to consider her a victim.

#### **Jonathan Bing cited as "rising star" hosts annual Health Fair.**

The *City Hall* newspaper included Assembly Member Bing as one of the top 35 Rising Stars under 40 in NYC politics and government. (He was joined on the list by Jessica Lappin and Dan Garodnick.)

One of the reasons he made the list, perhaps, is his Annual Seniors Health Fair where free flu shots, health screenings and other input from health organizations like NYU, Lenox Hill, Beth Israel and New York Presbyterian hospitals.

On another front, Bing hosted a forum on the effort to pass a same-sex marriage bill in the State Legislation. The panel included Senator Tom Duane, Assembly Member Dick Gottfried, Chris Cormier of the Empire State Pride Agenda and Susan Sommer of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund.

#### **Liz Krueger's concerns about voting machines persist.**

As states have moved to implement HAVA, the rush to adopt technology as taken precedence over ensuring that voting machines are reliable, verifiable and easy to use.

Senator Krueger supports the recommendations recently laid out by the Brennan Center. They include a verified paper trail, random testing, no wireless technology, accessible to people with multiple disabilities, must be easily understandable and must clearly notify voters of errors.

To meet those criteria, Krueger supports the adoption of Precinct Count Optical Scanned ballots as the most reliable and easy-to-understand technology.

As these decisions are being made, it's crucial that voters pay attention and express their opinions. Lobbyists are reaping millions so the rest of us will need to be extremely vigilant to counter their influence. **LDC**