

Maltese Extols GOP School Construction Plan

State Senator Serphin Maltese, one of the main targets of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's fight for more school construction funding, extolled the Republican senate's budget proposal last week, especially because it increases the state's investment in education.

The Middle Village/Glendale lawmaker said the senate's proposed budget increases the state's investment in education by \$1.1 billion and provides \$200 million to pay the debt service so New York City can immediately move forward on its \$1.8 billion school construction plan.



The senate proposal covers just one year of the school construction program.

Bloomberg, however, is seeking a \$6.5 billion, five-year construction program and argues that the state has been ordered by a court ruling to provide the funds. However, Governor George Pataki has appealed the court decision, in effect blocking the funds from coming through. Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno agrees with the governor.

Meanwhile, the Democrat-controlled Assembly, headed by Speaker Sheldon Silver, has passed a proposal to give the city \$6 billion over five years. The money would come by floating State Dormitory Authority bonds.

"It's everything they want and more," said Assemblymember Catherine Nolan (D-Ridgewood), Assembly Education Committee chairperson.

Silver says the mayor is not doing enough to pitch in and fight for the Assembly's proposal.

"It's up to [the mayor] to push the governor and Senate on this now," Nolan agreed.

Another Queens lawmaker, Assemblymember Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) also urged the mayor to get more engaged in the fight.

"Maybe now he can join us, and we hope he'll bring his Republican friends along," Gianaris said.

Presently, the Assembly and senate have formed a public conference committee where they'll try to resolve the differences in the two plans and include the result in the budget they hope to pass by the April 1 deadline.

ONORATO, PADAVAN SEE ON-TIME BUDGET: State Senators George Onorato and Frank Padavan were both confident last week that the budget would be passed on time for the second year in a row, following 21 straight years of late budgets.

Onorato (D-Astoria) found some things to praise in the Republican-passed budget, although he felt they could have done much better in terms of supporting

New York City public schools.

All that aside, Onorato said, "If we stay on track, I feel very confident that we will be able to deliver an on-time budget again."

Padavan (R-C, Bellerose), following passage of the senate budget on March 14, stated, "Not only are we on the road to an on-time budget, but the budget being presented by the senate is fiscally responsible and forward thinking."

The budget, he said, included an astounding \$6.4 billion in tax cuts and rebates over three years, while rejecting \$450 million in proposed tax increases.

Generally, Padavan stated, "I'm hopeful that providing a good, on-time budget will become the norm for New York instead of the exception."

GIANARIS PART D FORUM: Assemblymember Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) reports his Medicare Part D forum last week attracted some 100 seniors, many of whom asked questions of Medicare and Social Security experts who were at the HANAC JVL Senior Center.

"The new federal drug plan has created confusion and delay," Gianaris said, "and our seniors need help figuring out the mess created by the Bush administration."

The two experts on the panel clearly

explained the coverage plans available under Part D. Seniors were then able to ask questions involving some of the more confusing aspects.

SEOUL MAYOR HONORED: Congressmember Joseph Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx) presented Myung Bak Lee, the mayor of Seoul, Korea with a congressional proclamation in recognition of his achievements and life in public service in ceremonies at the New York Presbyterian Church in Long Island City sponsored by the Korean American Community Empowerment Council.

Last Sunday, a fundraiser was held for Crowley at the Friends Tavern in Jackson Heights by a lesbian and gay organization called LGBT.

Daniel Dromm, 39th Assembly District, Part A Democratic district leader, said Crowley was getting the campaign aid because, as Chief Deputy Whip for Democrats in Congress, he helped to defeat the federal marriage amendment, which would have made discrimination against LGBT members and other gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people part of the U.S. Constitution.

MALONEY RECEIVES AWARD: Congressmember Carolyn Maloney (D-Queens/Manhattan) described as "a remarkable leader and one of our greatest

allies in the fight against sexual violence," received the Congressional Crime Fighter Award from RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization).

RAINN chose Maloney for the prestigious award based on her "extraordinary contributions in the fight against sexual assault and her efforts to ensure rapists are brought to justice," Scott Berkowitz, RAINN's president and founder, said.

CLINTON, MARSHALL EVENT: U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-New York) will join with Queens Borough President Helen Marshall on Friday afternoon to present the sixth annual African American Heritage Event at the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center, 100-01 Northern Blvd., Corona. Call 212-909-0479 to RSVP or for other information.

WEPRIN'S 50TH/FUNDRAISER: Friends and political supporters of Councilmember David Weprin, council Finance Committee chairman, will combine a celebration of the lawmaker's 50th birthday with a fundraiser on Tuesday, May 2, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Harbour Lights, South Street Seaport, Pier 17, 3rd level. RSVP by April 26 to 212-370-0700.

Katz, Parkway, Atria Sponsor Concert

On March 4, The New Parkway Hospital, in conjunction with Councilmember Melinda Katz and Atria Senior Center, sponsored a concert for the community at Shaare Tova Synagogue in Kew Gardens.

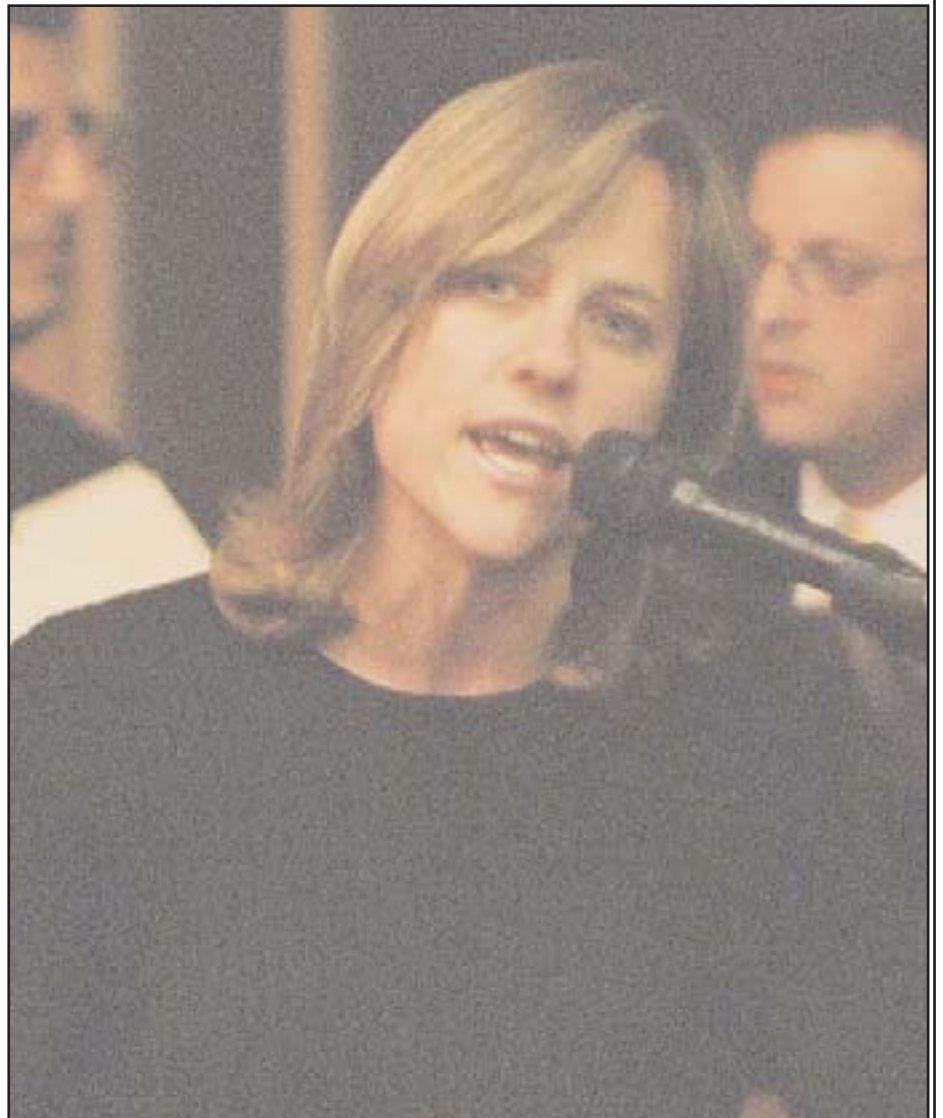
JCC Board members Dr. Daniel Norowitz, Aaron Cyperstein, Lisa Lederer, Rabbi Leib Roberts and Rabbi Avrohom Hecht organized the event.

More than 600 people enjoyed the concert by the Shalshelles Singers, accompanied by the Neginia Orchestra. Special solo appearances by community members Shabsi Fixler and Shaya Greenfield added a personal touch to the concert.

Katz spoke of how proud she is to be associated with the Kew Gardens community, and her admiration for the members of the JCC "whose warmth, concern, and devotion are an integral part of the neighborhood's growth". She also thanked The New Parkway Hospital for its continuing support for the community.

Rabbi Respler delivered a congratulatory address honoring Rabbi Yaakov Rosenblum and his family. He expressed gratitude for their unstinting contributions to the Kew Gardens community for more than 50 years. "At any given time, the Rosenblums extend over \$90,000 in credit to their customers in need. As a result, families in Kew Gardens know that their children will never go hungry. The Rosenblums are an inspiration to all who know them," Respler declared.

The New Parkway Hospital's Shevach volunteers sold candy at the concert to raise money for other charitable causes



City Councilmember Melinda Katz was a co-sponsor of the March 4 JCC Concert at Shaare Tova Synagogue in Kew Gardens.