

Editorial

Reasons Exist To Give Thanks

Tomorrow is celebrated throughout the United States as a day for reflecting on the many things for which we have reason to be thankful. Among them the fact that we live in a country where we are free to think and believe as we choose.

The freedom celebrated by the Pilgrims on that first Thanksgiving Day in 1621 includes the right to worship as we please--or not at all. In many countries around the world, the state religion governs every aspect of daily life. In America, we follow our own beliefs, whatever they may be. We are thankful that we can worship however we choose, alone or with others of our persuasion.

This same freedom lets us determine our own destinies. We are free to become what we will. Success is determined by individual ability, not limited by the strictures of the past. We are thankful that we can be what our talents and skills--and each among us has many--give us the freedom to be.

The most important element of our freedoms, upon which all others rest, was borne out by the mid-term elections of November 7. In many countries, elections, when they are held at all, are a sham. The leadership assumes power by force, often claiming divine right. Here in the United States, each vote counts and we choose

our leaders through fair and free elections. We are thankful that we have inherited and maintain a representative democracy through which, by right, we govern ourselves.

On this Thanksgiving Day 2006, let us appreciate that we live in a country where we can determine our laws and our beliefs and choose our leaders. It is that freedom which assures that we survive, and even prevail, and it is that freedom, from which stems all others, for which we especially give thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you from all of us!



Farmers Hail Spitzer

To The Editor:

With the election of Eliot Spitzer, we can halt the upstate/downstate schism wrought by fear-mongering, solution-void naysayers. The opportunity to make real, positive and substantive change, to move beyond divisive rhetoric, is ours to take.

On all levels, agriculture unites the citizens of New York state. The partnership between the citizens of the great state of New York, and the largest most diverse industry in the Empire State, agriculture, has long roots.

Over the years we have partnered in every way, from greenmarkets, meat markets, fish markets, flower shops, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), food co-ops, the local food in your supermarket, greenscaping in your public and private spaces, the wool and fibers for clothing, and the turf on the ball fields. For those of you who escape to the countryside from time to time, the farmers partner with you at pick-your-own, farm market, local supermarket, restaurant, and outdoor recreation venues.

Equally important, farmers live the agrarian archetype and create the rural landscape and a treasured quality of life. Today these long-time partners and keepers of the rural landscape would like to join with you in welcoming and supporting Governor-Elect Eliot Spitzer.

Mr. Spitzer has a solid history of work-

ing with the stakeholders and getting things done. He is listening; he can accomplish some of the changes that are so desperately needed to give New York and New Yorkers a new breath of life.

Here in the country, the same farmers who create and maintain the rural landscape, who produce and deliver your safe, local food and who play a large role in your quality of life, these farmers have never been more stressed by the status quo. Over the years, Eliot Spitzer has crossed the state, meeting farmers and seeking our opinions and concerns. He has seen dairy farmers intent to stay in business, but powerless to stem the decline in milk revenues. He has picked berries on a farm where the tempting development value of the land exponentially outstrips all projected future farm revenues. And he has gathered a diverse group of working farmers to provide hands-on, experience-based feedback on the issues impacting agriculture.

Thank you for your support in this most important election. We need the help of each and every one of you to make this transformation. Your vote for Eliot Spitzer the person whose attention to detail and positive policies and actions can and will give all of us all the best possible tomorrow. With sincere regard,

Jim Barber, Embar Farms, Middleburgh, N.Y.

Alexander (Sandy) Gordon, Gordon Farms, Berne, N.Y.

Norman Greig, Greig Farm, Red Hook, N.Y.

Larry Lampman, Fox Hill Farm, Ancramdale, N.Y.

Jackie Moody-Czub, WestWind Farms, Schaghticoke, N.Y.

Why Wait For Rezoning?

To The Editor:

The Auburndale Improvement Association, the oldest civic association in Queens, has been actively involved in lobbying for contextual rezoning of our community. We have requested our members to sign a letter which appeared in our newsletter addressed to Queens Planning Commission Chair John Young requesting that contextual rezoning be undertaken in the Auburndale area as soon as possible. Over 4000 of these letters were also hand-

delivered to homes throughout the Auburndale community.

Close to 800 of these letters were signed and returned to our civic association. Thanks to the hard work of our executive board, these letters were duplicated and copies were sent to Borough President [Helen] Marshall as well as to local Councilmembers [Tony] Avella, [John] Liu and [David] Weprin. The original was sent to John Young.

It is clear that the residents of Auburndale are concerned about the overdevelopment of their neighborhood. Contextual rezoning is a positive step toward curbing the proliferation of out of context, oversized construction. It is working in Bayside and other areas where rezoning initiatives have already been passed. The new R2A classification is particularly effective in keeping new construction in character with existing housing stock. It also allows most homeowners to expand their homes if they so choose.

So what is holding back the rezoning of Auburndale and the other communities? We have been told that we had to wait for the Douglaston-Little Neck rezoning to be completed. That rezoning plan had been held up for months despite the fact that the majority of the Douglaston-Little Neck neighborhoods agreed with City Planning's new map and advocated acceptance of the plan through civic association support. Certain forces in the community spread misinformation about the rezoning, causing delays. This worked to the detriment of the other communities awaiting rezoning. Not fair!

We were also told that City Planning is swamped with all the requests for rezoning from all over the city. Unfortunately, every day that we wait is another day of loss. Certain developers are zeroing in on communities that have not been rezoned, taking full advantage of loopholes and regulations that allow them to do as they please.

The latest that we have heard is that City Planning has hired an additional planner to assist in the rezoning in Northeast Queens. We have also heard that Auburndale and other parts of Flushing will be rezoned, first north of the Long Island Rail Road tracks, then the area south of the tracks will be done last. In any event, we are at the ready,

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Business Office and Display Advertising
42-16 34th Avenue, L.I.C. N.Y. 11101
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