

Mayor's Black Support Helps Keep Tempers In Check

Hopefully, Mayor Michael Bloomberg's good relations with many black leaders in Jamaica and elsewhere in the city will help maintain calm and order while the death of Sean Bell outside a strip club in Jamaica on November 25th is investigated.

The reciprocal good will which exists between some black leaders and the mayor is far different



from the relationships past Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Edward Koch and John V. Lindsay had with some members of the black community.

Bloomberg's relations with many community leaders in Jamaica and other black areas of Queens didn't just happen. They are the result of his strategy prior to the 2005 election, when he courted these constituents with frequent visits to their communities and their churches.

The first sign of success from the mayor's approach to those communities was their support of Bloomberg, who ran as a Republican, which helped to propel him to an easy victory.

In the present instance, following Bell's tragic death, many of those same black leaders who helped to swing the election to Bloomberg emerged again in the days following the November 25 encounter in which undercover police officers fired 50 shots at Bell's car, killing him and wounding two of his passengers.

His allies flocked to Bloomberg and supported his efforts to keep the tragedy from escalating, helping to soften more aggressive stances taken by

other black established leaders, such as the Rev. Al Sharpton and City Councilmember Charles Barron of Brooklyn.

Barron, always a fierce critic of the New York Police Department, upbraided his colleague, Councilmember Tom White, who represents the area where the shooting took place, for expressing confidence that there would be proper investigation of the matter.

Barron also took issue with newly elected state Senate Minority Leader Malcom A. Smith, whose district includes the location of the shooting.

Barron derided both as "black officials you don't normally see on these issues", according to one report.

Another leading black public official, city Comptroller William Thompson Jr., the city's highest elected black official, also complimented the mayor for developing relations with Southern Queens officials and communities, saying the mayor's past actions were rewarded with the loyalty he was shown in the aftermath of the tragic chapter that was played out in Jamaica.

But despite all the good will and respect shown to the mayor in the past two weeks, the real test in keeping the city on an even keel may still lie ahead.

MAYOR'S KIND WORDS ABOUT PARSONS: Richard D. Parsons, chairman and chief executive officer at Time Warner, usually answers a clear "no" when asked if he has any aspirations to run for mayor of New York City. But last week, when the question was asked for the umpteenth time, he responded, "Currently, I don't have any plans to do that."

But when asked if he had ruled out running, he responded, "Why would you do that?" according to one newspaper story, and "Why would I rule anything out?" according to another.

One thing was sure, however. Parsons wasn't

saying a flat no, or that he had no plans, but was now hedging.

That was good enough for Bloomberg. When Parsons' last encounter with the press was related to him, the mayor answered, "I would be hard pressed not to support him."

There are now two possible black candidates who might join the pool of candidates for mayor, since Thompson is considered a good bet to be in the field in 2009.

GET READY FOR BUDGET MOBILE: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Finance Committee Chairman Councilmember David Weprin (D-Hollis), the council's budget maven, have announced plans to conduct town hall-type meetings in every borough to discuss the budget process and new initiatives taken up by the council.

consider fare increases as a last resort; people are happy the MTA is doing its job this time, but it would be a stretch to call this the 'MTA's holiday gift' to transit riders."

JENNINGS' BAD BEHAVIOR COSTS CITY: Two members of former Councilmember Allan Jennings' staff have tentatively settled their harassment lawsuits against the one-time Jamaica representative and ex-Speaker Gifford Miller for \$150,000 each.

Their suits against Jennings and Miller are still unresolved.

The women, who worked in Jennings' district office in Queens, had charged Jennings in a federal court suit with making unwanted advances and other misconduct and then forcing them to quit their jobs.

Miller was charged by the pair with failing to

Gianaris Brings DMV Mobile Unit To Astoria



Assemblymember Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) recently brought the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Mobile Outreach Unit to the Peter J. Dellamonica Senior Center in Astoria. Dozens of Queens residents received such valuable services as having learner permits issued and renewed and obtaining driver licenses and non-driver identification cards. Gianaris is shown helping a local resident obtain a non-driver identification card.

Gallagher Launches Shuttle Service For C-Town Patrons



City Councilmember Dennis P. Gallagher has launched a shuttle service for patrons of the former C-Town on Fresh Pond Road in Maspeth. When the store closed, many seniors in the Maspeth area found themselves without access to transportation to other grocery stores. Gallagher, along with the Glenridge Senior Center and Stop-N-Shop, instituted a special Senior Shopping Transportation Program. Shuttle service will be available to seniors on Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Seniors wishing to participate in this program can call the Glenridge Senior Center at 718-386-5136. Gallagher (c.) is shown with seniors participating in the Senior Shopping Transportation Program outside the former C-Town.

According to their announcement, Quinn and Weprin hope to educate their audiences about the nuances of the budget by leading informative discussions about the budget process and encouraging civic activism by all New Yorkers.

On November 20, they appeared before an Italian Federation of Queens meeting in Astoria. Their schedule will be announced shortly.

LIU HAPPY WITH 'NO FARE HIKE' NEWS: City Council Transportation Committee Chairman John Liu (D-Flushing) feels the MTA's decision not to raise the fare this year was not a holiday gift—just a case of the agency doing its job.

Liu said, "For many years now, city commuters have been confronted with the MTA's perennial threat to hike fares and cut services. The surplus confirmed today by the MTA board is not news to anyone and it's only right that the MTA forego any fare increase next year.

"The MTA should, in its fiduciary duty, always

act after they complained about Jennings' behavior.

PATAKI BUSY: Governor George Pataki, fresh home from a trip to Iraq and Afghanistan, has hired a national finance director for his 2008 presidential campaign and appointed Long Island Republican Patricia Acampora as chairperson of the New York State Public Service Commission (PC).

Appointed to the campaign job was Kara Ahern, a former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney. Ahern will serve as Pataki's chief fundraiser. She previously worked with Pataki when he was the Northeast Finance Director for President George W. Bush's campaign in 2004.

Acampora has been serving as a PSC commissioner since 2005 and before that had been elected to the Assembly from 1993 to 2005. Acampora also served as Suffolk County's first female Republican Party leader.