

## Conservative Sen. Backs Rudy; Clinton 'Recruits' Crowley, Weiner



BY JOHN TOSCANO

Based on their belief that, if elected president of the United States, Rudy Giuliani will appoint conservative federal judges, two conservative Republicans, one of them a Congressman, endorsed Giuliani for president in the 2008 elections.

Meanwhile, United States Senator Hillary Clinton was reported to have enlisted Congressmembers from New York, including Queens Democratic Leader Joseph Crowley, to try to lock up the support of other Democratic congressmembers from around the country.

Besides Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx), others involved in this effort are Congressmembers Anthony Weiner (Queens/Brooklyn), Nita Lowey (Westchester) and Ed Towns (Brooklyn).

Giving Giuliani a big boost with the conservative faction, where many see major problems

for the ex-New York City mayor, were Republican Senator David Vitter of Louisiana, and Ted Olson, who was President George W. Bush's solicitor general.

Vitter, a conservative Southerner, said he didn't agree with Giuliani on issues like abortion rights, but he feels sure that Giuliani will not pursue any liberal social agenda.

"Obviously, I disagree with Rudy on some significant social issues," Vitter said. But he said he's backing Giuliani because "Rudy has the strong, unwavering leadership and sound judgment that we clearly need in this time of war and terror."

It is also significant that Vitter picked Giuliani over fellow Senator John McCain (R-Arizona) in the 2008 presidential race. Giuliani's comfortable lead over McCain who is considered a conservative stalwart, had led some conservatives to try to get other candidates in the race. Among the latter group are former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and former Senator Fred Dalton Thompson, now a television actor.

Clinton's plan to line up the support of members of Congress is part of a larger plan to have their firm backing at presidential convention time.

At the convention, congressmembers are usually designated as "superdelegates" and as such, they can use their influence to steer other delegates to a given candidate, in this case Clinton.

Under Clinton's plan, Crowley will concentrate on mid-Atlantic



lawmakers and Wiener will concentrate on those from Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois. Lowey is coordinating this effort. Towns said Clinton has also asked delegation members to share their lists of national contributors and power brokers.

Meanwhile, Clinton, who once could count on black support going her way, now has to extend her energies in that direction because her opponent, Illinois Senator Barack Obama, is making substantial inroads among black supporters. According to two recent polls of black Democrats, where Clinton led Obama 60-20 in December and January in a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, in February, Obama led Clinton 44-30.

In a Zogby International poll in January, Clinton led Obama, 43-16, but more recently, Obama overtook Clinton to lead her by 36 to 27 percent.

## Hunt On For Thug Who Robbed, Beat Senior Citizens

More than 1,000 calls and tips have come in to police after surveillance video of the mugging of a 101-year-old woman who uses a walker to get around was released to the public last week. Centenarian Rose Morat was assaulted and robbed of her purse in the lobby of her Jamaica Estates apartment building as she was on her way to church March 11. The mugging took place approximately half an hour before another senior citizen, 85-year-old Elizee Solange, was also attacked and robbed. Solange lives in Jamaica and the same suspect is believed to have committed the attack on her.

Morat's cheekbone was fractured in the attack and her purse, containing some \$33, was stolen. The attack left Morat hospitalized for four days, but according to reports, she was back doing calisthenics in the hallway outside her apartment the following week.

Solange also suffered facial injuries and was robbed of \$45, but what she said hurt her most was the loss of her wedding ring and another ring which had been given to her by her son. In her case, the mugger got on the elevator in her Jamaica building with her, got off at the floor below hers and attacked her at the door of her apartment.

A *Gazette* staffer reported that the superintendent of another Jamaica Estates building actually ejected the suspect, described as a black man in his 30s or early 40s weighing about 160 pounds and some five feet, 10 inches tall, from the building lobby, but did not realize he was confronting the much-sought mugger. The suspect was apparently undeterred by—or ignorant of—a heavy police presence in the neighborhood.--Linda J. Wilson



Photo DCPI

Surveillance video of the suspect in the mugging of 101-year-old Rose Morat caught the crime on tape.

## FDNY Issues Fire Safety Rules

BY LIZ GOFF

Queens fire officials last week dubbed electric space heaters the "No. 1 Winter Killer", saying they are the leading cause of fires during the winter months.

Sparks from electric heaters set off the majority of fires each year from December to March, an FDNY spokesperson said.

"They are, without a doubt, the main cause of house fires during the winter months," the spokesperson said.

Fire officials said Queens residents have the right to demand that their landlords install smoke detectors in apartments. "Landlords are required by law to provide and install smoke detectors," the officials said. "After that, it's up to the residents to check batteries in the smoke detectors and to replace them when needed."

FDNY officials said homeowners should install a smoke alarm on each floor of a home. Test and clean the alarms each month and check batteries to determine that they are working, the officials said.

Following last week's deadly Bronx blaze, caused by a faulty space heater, which took the lives of nine children and one adult, FDNY officials offered the following tips for residents who use electric heaters:

- Never connect space heaters to extension cords because the heater can overload electrical circuits, sparking a fire.
- Do not use space heaters for long periods of time. Space heaters are designed to provide temporary warmth, fire officials said. When not in use, the heaters should be unplugged.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet from furniture, cleaning products and any other combustible materials.
- Keep space heaters away from water. Never use the heaters in bathrooms or other rooms where they might come in contact with water.
- Always open a window slightly when using space heaters to improve ventilation.
- Check heater cords to determine if they are frayed or damaged. Heaters with defective cords should never be used.
- Never use space heaters to dry clothing. Clothing can ignite and spark a blaze.

If your smoke detector goes off or if you notice a fire at home or in a home or apartment in your neighborhood, FDNY officials urge you to stay calm, follow these suggestions and **never try to fight a fire on your own.**

- If your clothes catch on fire, stop in your tracks, drop to the floor and roll over and over to smother the flames.
- If a fire breaks out in your home, or in a non-fireproof apartment building, get out as quickly as you can.
- If you live in a multiple-family dwelling and the fire is not in your apartment, stay in your apartment. Do not run into smoke-filled halls or stairwells.
- Call 911 from your apartment, if you can.
- If you must leave, feel doors with the back of your hand before you try to open them. If they are hot, find another way out. Keep as close to the floor as you can. Smoke and heat rise, and the air is clearer and cooler near the floor.
- Always close doors behind you!
- If you are unable to get out, stay near a window and near the floor. Close the door and stuff a towel in the gap at the bottom of the door to prevent smoke from entering the room. Signal for help if you can—wave a cloth or sheet out the window, and yell for help. Make someone on the street know you are there!
- When leaving a burning home or apartment, do not stop to take any material possessions with you.
- Always try to take your pet(s) with you, if you must leave a burning building.
- Never use the elevator.

Fire officials suggest that you keep a home fire extinguisher handy, and learn how to use it.

A note for renters: contact your insurance carrier to discuss available renters' insurance plans, which will provide coverage for losses caused by fire.

For additional information, call 311 or visit [www.FDNY.nyc.gov](http://www.FDNY.nyc.gov).

Queens residents who cannot afford to buy a smoke alarm are urged to call the Queens Borough President's Office for information on how to obtain the devices at low or no cost. Residents can also call their local community board or 311 to learn how to obtain free smoke alarms, FDNY officials said.