

Fare... From page 1

even greater budgetary challenges for the MTA,

is to be commended. All New York City straphangers appreciate the governor's leadership in the face of the ever-rising cost of basic necessities.

"Early this year, my office identified a number of potential revenue sources that would not only keep down the fare, but address longstanding inequities in the distribution of transit subsidies. Many state legislators have expressed enthusiasm over our proposals, and it is my hope that they will make use of them in the coming legislative session to prevent any fare or toll increases in the foreseeable future. New Yorkers deserve nothing less."

"We commend Governor Spitzer's position that the MTA should hold off on fare increases and maintain the current base fare for subways and buses," City Councilmember John Liu, chair of the council Transportation Committee, said. "This really is the right thing to do because it recognizes the fact that a fare hike is a tax increase on working people. In New York City, we're trying to get more commuters to use mass transit. However, all the MTA talk of fare increases has in fact stirred up mounting opposition to the mayor's congestion mitigation proposal.

"Ultimately, it all boils down to the MTA's credibility and New Yorkers simply are not ready to pay the MTA more now when there is a billion dollars of operating surplus.

"There's no need to increase the base fare, nor is there any need to increase the price of weekly and monthly passes. Hopefully, with the governor's stance, the MTA will drop their almost nonsensical effort to hike the fares and get down to the real business of running our mass transit system, of fixing stations, of terror-proofing the subways, of installing communications capabilities, and maintaining the storm drainage systems."

The MTA can still manipulate the fare in other areas. Riders are still likely to see some increase in the cost of weekly and monthly unlimited-ride cards, for example, as well as commuter rail fares and bridge and tunnel tolls.

BY THOMAS COGAN

The Department of Transportation's PlaNYC Parking Strategies Study Workshops on Neighborhood Parking are being held in several city neighborhoods in the next few weeks. One of the first of these two-part workshops was held in mid-month at the Con Edison Learning Center on Vernon Boulevard. The first part of the workshops, Workshop 1, is designed to 1) understand community concerns about parking, 2) identify parking needs and 3) discuss parking management strategies.

The Long Island City meeting had workshops set up at each of three or four tables, where a coordinator guided the proceedings. At one table, coordinator Chris Ryan began by asking for a one- or two-word description of parking in Long Island City at present. Among the words in reply were "impossible" and "chaotic", but the one that got general agreement was "unfair". Members of the table group included Ken Buettner, president of York Scaffold Equipment; Jon Petursson, head of Manhattan Display; Michele Hush, Roxanne Escriout and Paul Camillieri, three Long Island

Borough-Wide Blotter

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

104th Precinct

Ambulette Rider Killed

An 80-year-old man was killed last week when the ambulette he was riding in went out of control and ran into a tree and a light pole in Middle Village, police said.

Police said the driver lost control of the vehicle when he swerved to avoid a car on Juniper Boulevard North. The ambulette careened into the tree and struck the light pole, gravely injuring the man who was taken to Elmhurst Hospital Center where he died a short while later.

Two other elderly patients in the ambulette suffered minor injuries in the crash, police said. The ambulette driver was not charged in the incident.

Driver Charged In DWI Death

Police charged a 25-year-old Queens man with DWI and vehicular homicide last week in the death of a 60-year-old Woodhaven man.

Christopher Rivera, 25, was driving south on Woodhaven Boulevard near 101st Avenue at about 11 p.m. on November 10 when his 1995 Honda went over the center median and ran into a 1999 Maxima. The force of the impact propelled the Maxima into a BMW Suburban carrying a driver and two passen-

gers, police said.

The driver of the Maxima, Carmelo Raspanti, died at the scene. A 60-year-old female passenger in the Maxima suffered back and neck injuries, according to authorities.

Rivera, who suffered minor cuts and abrasions, was arrested and charged at the scene.

105th Precinct

Queens Task Force Rookie Cuffed

A rookie Queens cop was arrested on charges he threatened his girlfriend during a November 10 telephone call.

Police said Thameswar Sharma, 24, was suspended from his assignment at the Queens South Task Force pending the results of the charges. Sharma, of Queens Village, joined the NYPD in July 2006. The perpetrator was arrested at his home at about 11:30 p.m., about one hour after his girlfriend called authorities to report the alleged threat.

108th Precinct

Graffiti Vandal Tagged

Police arrested a 27-year-old graffiti vandal on November 15 after they spotted him scrawling his "tag" on four Woodside locations.

Police said Omar Herrera was nabbed at about 1 a.m. on November 15, while he was

Obama Leads Clinton In Iowa Caucus Poll

BY JOHN TOSCANO

Just when it looked like Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Rodham Clinton's fine performance in the most recent debate had helped her overcome some problems, she got smacked down again as a poll showed Barack Obama sprinting ahead of her in the latest survey on the Iowa caucuses, now just about six weeks away.

The surprising development came as both Democratic and Republican presidential hopefuls are criss-crossing the Hawkeye State trying to notch a win in the January 3 caucuses and build some early momentum in the first of many primaries.

At the beginning of the month, Clinton had overtaken John Edwards, who was leading the field, and Illinois Senator Obama was a close second. On Monday, however, a new ABC/Washington Post poll showed Obama with

30 percent, Clinton second with 26 percent and Edwards fading at 22 percent.

On the Republican side, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has a slight lead over another former governor, Mike Huckabee of Arkansas. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who's been the steady frontrunning leader among GOP hopefuls, is a non-threatening third at this point.

Although Giuliani leads the national polls, he trails in Iowa and also in New Hampshire, another early primary state.

In the Democratic race, Clinton attacked Obama as an unexperienced candidate, but he countered that so was the former First Lady. Obama needled Clinton, saying, "My understanding was that she wasn't Treasury Secretary in the Clinton administration, so I don't know exactly what experience she's claiming."

Giuliani was overlooked last week as two

Parking Workshop Has Few Answers

City residents; Santiago "Sam" Vargas, community liaison for Assemblymember Catherine Nolan, and Joseph Conley, chairman of Community Board 2.

Most participants deplored the increase of parking on the streets in Long Island City and Hunters Point, making note of the pollution also: Hush described the section where she lives, between the Queensboro Bridge and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel as "particulate city". She said she has bypassed her own parking problem by renting space at the Court Square garage, behind the courthouse, but that expedient is quite expensive, and despite the cost, there is a three-year waiting list for those wishing to get in. (She added that 40 parking spaces in the garage were recently seized—by the DOT.) Escriout, a mother of schoolchildren, said that parents delivering or coming for their kids at P.S. 78 in the City Lights building are at risk of ticketing, with no consideration given to their situation. Buettner said his employees have been

forced to come in earlier than before, lest they arrive at work to find that park-and-ride commuters have taken all spaces near the York plant at 41st Avenue and 21st Street. Some of these workers have told him that if the situation gets much worse they'll have to look for work elsewhere. Petursson said that parking has had such an impact on his business at 12-15 Jackson Ave. and on neighboring businesses that they are all over each other. Conley observed that the huge increase in residential construction necessitates residential parking, but some new high-rise buildings are providing garage facilities for no more than 40 percent of the apartment units being built.

The current situation and the prospect of a population increase in the tens of thousands when the many high-rises on the shores of the East River and the projected Hunters Point South buildings are completed draw a dark picture for the future.

The parking management strategies that the DOT provided for discussion included parking

scribbling the letters "CMS" with black spray paint behind a building on Roosevelt Avenue near 63rd Street.

According to sources Herrera is suspected of vandalizing three other locations in the same neighborhood with the same tag, which he also has tattooed on his back.

Herrera was charged with four counts of criminal mischief, three counts of making graffiti and one count of possession of a graffiti instrument.

112th Precinct

Propane Truck Blast Rocks 'Hood

Authorities said an explosion that shook a Forest Hills neighborhood on November 8 was likely the result of human error, when workers loading a propane-laden grill onto a truck, leaving a burner turned on.

Police said the blast occurred at about 8:20 a.m. at a loading dock behind a row of shops along 108th Street near 64th Road.

Inspectors at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said a spark of unknown origin, possibly from the truck's ignition, set off the explosion that destroyed the rear of the truck. It shattered windows and caused structural damage to nearby properties and sent chunks of gnarled aluminum onto the street outside the alley.

No one was injured and no charges were filed in the incident, authorities said.

endorsements were made. In one, Giuliani's strong 9/11 credentials were not enough for former 9/11 Commission Chairman Tom Kean, who instead endorsed Arizona Senator John McCain, citing his Vietnam War experience.

In the other, a major anti-abortion group swung its support to Fred Thompson, the former Tennessee Senator whose campaign has been rather quiet lately. The group, the National Right to Life Committee, chose Thompson over Romney and Huckabee.

In another campaign development, the Commission on Presidential Campaign Debates selected nearby Hofstra University on Long Island as the site for a debate next October 15. It will be the first general election presidential debate held in New York state since John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon squared off in a televised debate in Manhattan in 1960.

meters and residential parking permits. The parking meter choice was increased meter rates, timed rates that increase after a certain period or different rates for different blocks. Meters that allow parking for relatively short periods are favored by businessmen, and two-hour meters in such commercial areas as Vernon Boulevard or 21st Street were seen as a check on commuter parking on those streets. The residential parking permits menu was a choice of a) restrictive, being 12- to 24-hour restrictions on street parking without permits; b) flexible, allowing one- or two-hour parking without permits, and c) restrictive with a twist, that is, restricting parking without permits to one hour per day. Of the three, b) was most favored, but that was simply because it elicited the least amount of scorn. Permits might seem an interesting idea at first, but some participants saw the plan breaking down as the demand for permits grew and parking spaces became fewer. Besides, these parking permits would be for spaces on public streets, and their legality would be challenged immediately. Petursson said that permits would "never happen".