

# Editorial

## Congestion Pricing Deserves Its Demise

The City Council last Tuesday passed Mayor Michael Bloomberg's congestion pricing plan by a vote of 30 to 20. On Monday, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, bowing to the wishes of Assembly Democrats in conference, refused to let it come to the floor for debate. Congestion pricing is dead.

We hail the legislators' perspicacity. Few worse officially promulgated ideas have come to New York City in the 110 years since Queens, Brooklyn, The Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island were consolidated into one municipality in 1898.

We applaud and share the desire of the powers that be to alleviate some of the traffic and its attendant problems such as pollution, that chokes the city. All congestion pricing would have accomplished, however, would have been to impose a greater burden on the other boroughs. In Queens, for example, congestion pricing as it was presented, would have added to pollution and parking problems and placed a greater burden on an already crammed-to-the-rafters mass transit system.

The monies realized from the \$8 per car and \$21 per truck fee imposed on vehicles driving into Manhattan below 60th Street from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on week-

days were touted as being earmarked for mass transit. Indeed, those who mourn congestion pricing's demise have already adopted the hortatory attitude of parents chastising toddlers. "When the people don't have their new busses and they have to wait longer for the subway that congestion pricing would have paid for, they'll realize how wrong they were," some politicians—mostly representing Manhattan constituencies—are saying.

We quote them another adage we were raised with: "Experience is a wise teacher". Experience has taught us that almost without exception every time some new scheme to raise money for public purposes comes along, the monies raised seldom, if ever, are applied as they were meant to be. Congestion pricing would not immediately provide funding to the city's mass transit system, which is already underfunded and by rights ought to receive a major cash infusion before it can take on more commuters. It would be years before funds generated by congestion pricing bought one new bus or realigned one wheel on a subway car. The city missed out on \$354 million in federal funding when the congestion pricing plan failed to pass by the Monday deadline. That seems like a lot of money—and it is, no doubt about that—but measured

against the city's multi-billion-dollar annual budget, it is inconsequential and in actual fact, would not have helped implement congestion pricing or alleviate the strain on an already jam-packed mass transportation system to any great extent.

We know of no—repeat, no—Queens residents who drive into Manhattan during the morning or evening rush hour for the fun of it. We no of no—repeat, no—Queens residents who would welcome fleets of cars parking on already crammed streets so their drivers could pack onto already jammed subways and busses to ride into Manhattan. We can think of no circumstances under which more traffic would alleviate the pollution that already afflicts Queens neighborhoods.

Congestion pricing would penalize everyone who has to drive into Manhattan, but would offer no compensation in return. It was a thinly disguised commuter tax that would have been imposed on residents of the other boroughs. It would have allowed easier use of the central business district only to those so fortunate as to live there. It had no merits whatever.

Congestion pricing is dead—for now. For the sake of the entire city, let's hope it stays that way.

run a clean campaign. Yet rabid supporters of McCain and those who hate any Democrat will denigrate the rhetoric with messages of innuendo and hate. Obama and Clinton will confront swift-boaters that will make John Kerry's experience a walk in the park.

McCain's photos with President [George] Bush and his commitment to Iraq for up to a hundred years will be fertile grounds for Democratic attacks. The senator's confession of being weak on the economy will haunt his candidacy. Fear provoking attacks based upon his age will be aired questioning his qualifications to be Commander in Chief.

If left to their own, the nominees would be served best by a shortened campaign season peppered with debates. The nation needs an honest debate that is dignified and respectful. Unfortunately operatives on both sides are preparing commercials that decent Americans will view with disdain and anger. This should be a campaign that is respectful of the voters. Facing the complexity of threats and issues which demand consensus Americans deserve nothing less.

Edward Horn  
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### Parade Missed The Point

To The Editor:

Concerning the annual Inclusive St. Patrick's parade, which celebrated its ninth year: Inclusive perhaps; but absolutely insensitive to Catholics. Inclusive? No military were represented—only veterans against the war.

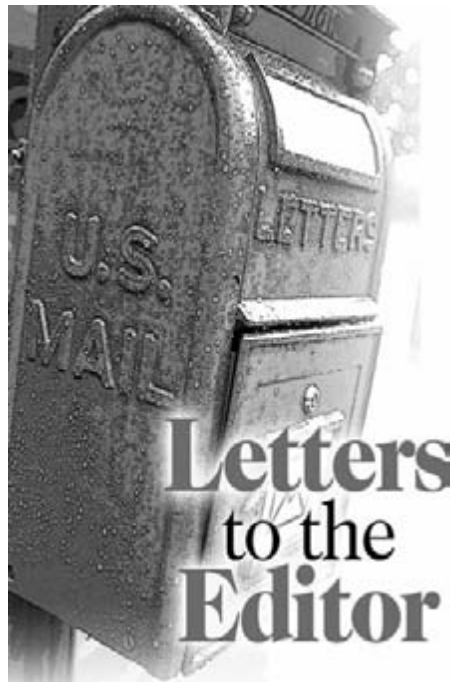
For the ninth year, the marchers outnumbered the spectators. Paradoxically, the largest

group of spectators was at the Dutch Reformed Church, hardly Irish Catholic, but at least inclusive as to spectators. I did see a group of Irish people saying the rosary. For nine years some marcher has carried a placard reading "Free Abu Mumia", the Philadelphian convicted of murdering a cop. For nine years I have wondered what is so inclusively Irish about "Free Abu Mumia". A travesty.

Insensitive to Catholics during worship, the parade is disrespectful of Catholic rights. It has insisted on marching past two Catholic churches during Catholic religious services, with beating drums, skirling bagpipes, bugles blaring, and amplified music from a truck. The disrespect was intensified this year. Last year we remonstrated that the parade disrupted religious services and chaotically gridlocked traffic between Masses and Baptisms. Our suggestion of a 3 p.m. start for this year's parade was totally ignored. A 1 p.m. start was scheduled again, totally insensitive and intentionally antagonistic to Catholics. Thankfully, as informed by C.O. Kavanagh of NYPD 108th Police Precinct, the NYPD issued a permit for a 2 p.m. start.

I have news for the parade sponsors. St. Sebastian's is no longer as [white] Irish as you may think. At any 5 p.m. Saturday Mass, I am surrounded by Filipinos, ditto for the 9 a.m. Mass, the 12 noon is in Spanish. I discern no brogues at that Mass. This year's insensitive climax occurred when marchers offered condoms to Filipinos outside St. Sebastian's.

Neighborhood inconvenience. Thanks to "no parking Sunday" notices for a 2 p.m. parade, at 7 a.m. the police started to remove some 350 cars from Skillman and Woodside



### Unique Presidential Race

To The Editor:

The three presidential candidates are unique for different reasons. Gender, race and age define them. There are advantages and disadvantages each must confront. Each will be defined by their uniqueness. Regardless of the winner, our next president will be historical.

Supporters find justification for their choice based upon novelty of each candidacy. At a time of national tension, stress, threat and confusion one would hope that voters would be swayed by the competency of any candidate to serve the welfare of the nation.

Senator McCain can be counted upon to

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