

Editorial

MTA Ignores Queens-Brooklyn G Line

Last week the City Council Transportation Committee castigated Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials for systematic, intentional neglect of the G subway train line. The G line currently operates between the Smith and Ninth Streets Station in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn and the Court Square Station in Long Island City, with the exception of weekends and evenings, when the service extends to the 71st Street-Continental Avenue Station in Forest Hills.

No subway line in the city of New York is perfect. However, committee members castigated the MTA for adding improvements to other lines which needed them less and ignoring the needs of G line riders. Among the deficiencies cited are four-car trains that force riders to run down platforms, a northern terminus on weekdays at Court Square in Queens instead of service along Queens Boulevard, overcrowding at stations in Greenpoint and above ground transfers.

In January 2008, the MTA announced plans to increase the G line service during peak commuter times as part of its 2008 Service Enhancement Program. By the end of March, however, the plans to increase frequency on the G line service was postponed indefinitely by the MTA. To accommodate rehab work, transit officials say they are going forward with a plan to extend the G past its current southern terminus at Smith and Ninth Streets to Church Avenue. Sometime in late 2008 or early 2009, riders at F-only stations in Brooklyn, such as Seventh Avenue, 15th Street, Fort Hamilton Parkwy, and Church Avenue, will see their rush hour wait shrink by a few minutes with the added G service. Transit has yet to decide if the Church Avenue extension will be perma-

nent. Peter Cafiero, chief of operations planning for New York City Transit, told the committee that the agency was "leading rather than following ridership growth". However, it was noted, there is no plan to add more train cars in the near future.

Transit officials blamed the defeat of congestion pricing for forestalling other planned improvements to the G line. However, some councilmembers who use the G line themselves, do not accept the demise of the plan, which would have allocated some of the monies collected by levying fees on vehicles driven into Manhattan below 60th Street on weekdays to mass transit, as the sole cause of the neglect of the G line.

"In grade school, 'G' stood for 'Good' But now, 'G' stands for God-awful, gridlock, and a system, that is unfortunately being treated like a ghetto," Councilmember Letitia James (D-Brooklyn) commented at the hearings. "Though many may refer to the G line as a stepchild of the NYC subway system, I often refer to it as the forgotten child, often abused and neglected."

"Voluminous and vociferous complaints that the G train is neglected...suggest that the MTA should reexamine how resources are allocated to the various subway lines," Councilmember John Liu, Transportation Committee chairperson, stated. "The kinds of decisions overlooking the process utilized by the MTA, relying almost wholly on ridership numbers, results in a downward spiral in the quality and frequency of service. City ridership statistics are inadequate, particularly when ridership declines are clearly correlated to adverse changes to the subway lines."

Among the reasons for the longstanding neglect of the G line is the fact that the G, which serves the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Fort Greene, and Clinton Hill, and runs along the R and V lines in Queens, is the only line in New York City which does not enter into Manhattan at any point. It seems apparent to us that a Manhattan-centric MTA does not feel the G train is worthy of significant attention.

Eight years ago we pointed out that cutbacks in G line service would have a deleterious effect on the neighborhoods served. The MTA decided to keep G train service to 71st-Continental Avenue in Forest Hills on weekends, which, according to Councilmember Diana Reyna, accomplished very little. "Forty-four out of 52 weekends in 2007, there was no G train service in Queens," Reyna (D-Brooklyn) added. "The addition of the V line did a disservice on my community in both Brooklyn and Queens while conveniencing riders from Manhattan." It seems to us that Reyna has it right: "An already viable transit system in Manhattan gets yet another upgrade while marginalized portions of the system are overlooked once again."

Reyna and her colleagues call for the MTA to implement the recommendations they call for immediately, among them extending the G line to the Queens Plaza station and making sure that weekend service really exists. We agree. A subway line that serves two boroughs other than Manhattan is nevertheless a part of the New York City Transit system and deserves to be held in the same regard. It is more than time for the MTA and New York City Transit to realize that fact.

Vote Congress Out

To The Editor:

Approval ratings for Congress have never been lower, yet how do we account for the reelection of 98 percent of the incumbents in the House of Representatives and 92 percent in the Senate? Does anyone really think the Congress is doing such a wonderful job that it deserves to be reelected over and over and over again, ad infinitum?

Incumbents promise but cannot bring about "change" since they are participants in a long-established, semi-covert practice of incentives and rewards and will continue to vote as their moneyed interests tell them to vote. They know few voters care and even fewer will bother to vote them out of office. Sadly, only half the people eligible to vote actually vote. Only 40 percent of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 24 vote, yet they have the biggest stake in effecting positive change for their future.

The lack of urgency to protect and secure our borders, permitting the printing of American passports and transfer of sen-

encompassed both World War II and the Korean conflict.

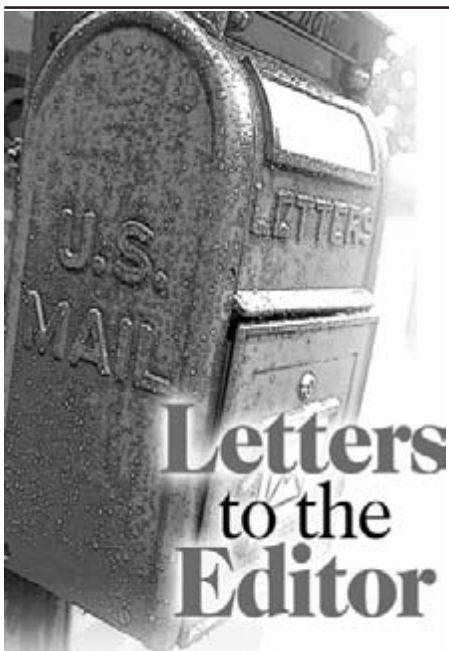
We are all saddened by the death of Jack Fein; his passing marks the end of an era. Jack Fein kept the memories alive. Now it's up to us to ensure that his dedication and contributions are not forgotten. He represented the best of what has rightly been called "The Greatest Generation". As is only fitting, Jack Fein will be interred with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on May 19.

Long after retiring from active duty, Jack Fein remained at his post. Visitors to Fort Totten could always take comfort in the fact that Chief Warrant Officer Fein was on guard. The fort was definitely in good hands.

An appropriate tribute would be to name the Fort Totten Visitors Center in honor of Jack Fein. It's hoped that everyone will support the efforts of the Bay Terrace Community Alliance to make the "Jack Fein Visitors Center" a reality.

Warren Schreiber
President

Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc.



Salutes Jack Fein

To The Editor:

Jack Fein's name always comes to mind when we think of Fort Totten. He proudly preserved the fort's history and secrets. His 36-year military career

The Queens
Gazette

PUBLISHED BY THE
SERVICE
ADVERTISING
GROUP INC.



Publisher/Editor Tony Barsamian
Community Liaison Julie Wager
Production Manager Denise Gallo
Art Director Ed Husser
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(718) 361-6161

Display Advertising Copy Deadline
Friday 5 p.m.

Camera Ready Deadline Monday 4 p.m.
Editorial Copy Deadline Friday 12 noon

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a name and address on all
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The Queens Gazette ISSN: 1547-3538 is published weekly on Wednesday for \$26 per year by Queens Gazette Newsprinting Service Advertising Group Inc. 42-16 34th Avenue. Long Island City, N.Y. 11101. Periodical postage paid at Long Island City. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Queens Gazette 42-16 34th Avenue Long Island City N.Y. 11101.

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