

An Insider's Look at How Albany Operates

from NYS Senator
Eric Schneiderman

Tuesday, 1/28 The Mayor delivered his budget requests for the city.

Wednesday, 1/29 The Governor presented his far different plan for New York State and City.

Friday, 1/31 Eric T. Schneiderman, Deputy Minority Leader of the State Senate, offered a close view of the plans and of the realities of the financial crises facing both city and state.

The mayor had called for billions of dollars of state aid for the city. The governor's plan proposed massive service cuts, particularly damaging in two areas: health care and education.

The mayor urged increased state outlays to deal in part with the city's \$3.4 billion deficit.

The governor pressed for tax cuts coupled with reduced services. "The most difficult time in government for the city and state in my lifetime," said Senator Schneiderman, "including the fiscal crisis of the mid-'70s."

How did this impasse arise? Not overnight. The senator spoke frankly of procedures in Albany. Three weeks a year the legislature works on the passage of bills. The rest of the calendar the Senate and the Assembly each pass bills destined to fail passage in the other house.

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What's New and Different in Charter Schools

A Visit with Principals and State and City Overseers on 1/23/03

Bubbling with enthusiasm, school principal Michele Pierce declared that she and her staff care first and foremost about people. They make a point of knowing all the parents and families. They may work late into the evening. "I make house calls and my teachers do also." She had just spent a late evening, in fact, with a mother who had turned to physical punishment in hopes of curing her child's misbehavior. She explained to the mother how children can be taught ways of conflict resolution to cope with the feelings that make them misbehave. Their talk had lasted until almost midnight.

Michele Pierce is the founding director of the Harriet Tubman Charter School in the Bronx. "Now in our second year, what we're doing is different and the children and parents are responding. The possibilities are endless."

The school, with 100 pupils in grades K through 4, is supported by Learn Now, a for-profit management company (a division of Edison Schools). Learn Now has provided financing and administrative assistance.

The school was founded by Judge Hansell McGeen after his retirement from the bench. He and his wife Mildred were appalled upon learning that the children in their district of the Bronx had the lowest reading scores in the nation. They worked for ten years (until his death last year) to create a school with

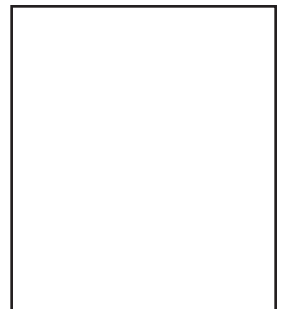
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Eric Schneiderman
NYS Senator



Katherine Lapp,
Executive Director, MTA



Elliot Sander
Director, Rudin Center
for Transportation Policy

INSIDE:

**What's New in
Charter Schools**

**WCC's Priorities
for 2003**

A Date to Save

Civic Spirit Awards Dinner

April 9, 2003
Reception 6:30pm
Dinner 7:30pm
Essex House

The Women's City Club of NY
will honor

JPMorgan Chase, Community Development Group

represented by
Mark A. Willis,
Executive Vice President

Citizen's Committee for Children

Represented by
Gail B. Nayowith,
Executive Director

Kitty Carlisle Hart

AOL Time Warner

represented by
Gerri Warren-Merrick,
Vice President, Corporate
Community Relations

el diario / LA PRENSA

represented by
Rossana Rosado
Publisher and CEO

For invitations call The Women's
City Club at (212) 353-8070.
Special tables may be arranged.

Charter Schools from page 1

high academic standards, based on relationships.

A school with different origins
Monte Joffee, the principal of the Renaissance Charter School in Jackson Heights, oversees the first city public school to house K-12 grades under one roof.

It became a conversion charter school in 2000 after seven years as a Board of Education school. The goal was to take advantage of the talents and energy available among staff members and parents. Under charter law, several key people distinguished by their enthusiasm and brilliance could be named to direct various aspects of the school.

The results, he said, "have really been staggering. In areas of professional development, curriculum, operations, and instructional support services, we've had brilliant ideas that enable us to focus on issues of teaching and learning. Some of our ideas have been institutionalized.

"Other schools will now have a person in charge of management issues so that principals can focus on teaching and learning."

New spirit animates instruction

Ira Schwartz, chairperson of the NY State Education Department School Accountability Workshop and supervisor of the Department's Charter Schools Unit, declared that principals of charter schools are selfless, bold, pioneering, and committed individuals who are taking risks, trying to beat the odds.

As you visit the schools, he noted, you can't help but be impressed by the young, fresh-faced teachers you encounter in the classrooms. Many of them are products of Teach For America, the organization that recruits

and trains individuals, often recent college graduates, who demonstrate leadership qualities and who commit for two years, or more, to teach in disadvantaged areas. Mostly young and idealistic, they are finding that despite the enormous amount of expertise that goes into our public schools, changes and improvements can be made.

Jonathan Gyurko, director of the Office of Charter Schools in the NYC Dept. of Education, said that Mayor Michael Bloomberg's reforms of city schools included support for charter

Charter School Study

This meeting, which drew a large audience of educators as well as WCC members, was a follow-up to the recent publication of WCC's ground-breaking study of charter schools, *A Snapshot of Charter Schools*. The study, covering all 17 charter schools in operation in 2001-02 may be found on the WCC website: www.wccny.org.

schools. He also noted that the principles and philosophy behind charter schools have been adopted on a national level. The idea of school choice and accountability for results have been embraced in the "no child left behind" legislation.

Question Period

To what extent are charter schools a model for other public schools?

Some of the concepts can be replicated. There is a need to overcome the apathy, cynicism, and anger that presently exist in the system.

To support charter schools, will money be channeled away from public schools, thus undermining them? Charter schools are public schools. They offer another way to deliver public education. The charter models attract different kinds of leaders and

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This meeting took place four days before a strike was expected to shut down the entire bus and subway system. The day's other headlines debated an increase in the bus and subway fare. In spite of this both speakers had good news to share.

"Hundreds of millions of capital dollars infused the system, in the past few years," said Katherine Lapp, "providing 2800 state-of-art subway cars, and about 2400 clean-air buses to address the needs of the riding public."

She also noted that a ride became cheaper. The introduction of the Metrocard in 1995, bringing with it values like 11 rides for every ten bought, Metrocards with 1-day, 7-day and 30-day usage and free transfers between buses and subways were welcome new money-savers. Together these changes brought an average rider's fare down from \$1.38 (seven years ago) to \$1.04 today.

Ridership jumped. In 1994 there were 425 million riders a day; today, over 750 million. Nonwork-related bus riders alone counted for 66 percent of all riders on the system; the previous figure was 55 percent. Bus riding is part of people's daily routine, not just people going to and from work.

The 9/11 fallout. The area was without service. A year later, all subway systems, except Courtland Street, were operational.

Important renovations are making some stations far more user-friendly. A new plan for Fulton Street involves multilevel

What's ahead in NYC Transit?

Katherine Lapp, Executive Director and CEO of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and **Elliot Sander**, Director of the Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management at New York University

11/19/02

design. An underground concourse is to provide easy links to 1 and 9 and N and R lines and also A trains (one block west).

Users will have underground passage to a new PATH station. You will be able to get off a PATH train, she said, walk through the underground and take a #5 bus up to Lincoln Center. This project will take three to five years and cost \$750 million.

Funds are to come from the money Washington made available to the city for transportation, she said.

A second critical project involves the turnaround at the station at the tip of Manhattan island, where only the passengers in the first five cars can disembark. The new plan will eliminate this problem, will cut travel time and make it possible for people from Staten Island and New Jersey to travel conveniently to upper Manhattan.

Where will the money come from? Lapp again cited the Federal funds granted to NYC to improve public transportation.

Other projects

- Providing access to lower Manhattan for LIRR customers: a tunnel under Park Avenue into Grand Central Terminal is planned to connect the two.

- Another extension of the #7 line to the West Side, there being no subway west of 8th Avenue, is seen as essential, whether servicing a stadium, housing, or business development.

Design work on the 2nd Avenue subway is still continuing, to run from 125th Street to the financial district. "MTA takes the project very seriously. Not as a 'pipe dream' Lapp noted. "But costs are still being estimated; there is no money at this time."

Elliot Sander put special emphasis on transportation improvements needed to meet the demands on a city which must compete with other great cities of the world, and maintain dominance of the region it serves.

"Ridership is the 800 lb. Gorilla." A climb in commuter rail ridership can be "bad news," he said, because the system is at capacity and one Washington estimate puts the coming growth in jobs at 400,000.

How do we get people to the central business district where most of these jobs will be?

The city must provide transit for the businesses (and their customers and employees) to the homes and support businesses in the tristate area.

"Airport access is essential as we do more and more international business. Plans must accommodate the tourist business and look ahead also to the Olympics."

-Ellie King, Infrastructure Committee Chair

Senator from page 1 What is generated is the impression of great activity. In truth the bills that become law are the result of negotiations. A "code of silence" covers the inaction.

One result is that little has been done to confront the expanding fiscal crisis during the last five years. Paradoxically, promises of increased services have been included in bills that called for tax cuts. As it now stands, during the years 1995-2005 over \$100 billion in tax cuts will have been put into effect.

The Problem Makers

Word from the governor's office is that he is doing a good job, that 9/11 brought about the city's problems. Yes, the city was sorely damaged; the state less so. The truth is that the governor's office anticipated a \$2.3 billion deficit before September 11, 2001. Despite the boom of the '90s, that period of greatest prosperity in U.S. history, schools, health care and mass transit declined; the debt was not reduced. "If you don't balance your books, you will end up with a fiscal crisis," concluded Senator Schneiderman. He added that the governor wanted to increase spending and cut taxes at the same time. Not a recipe for fiscal health.

Facing Facts

The senator proposed a specific remedy for the overall situation: "public knowledge of what state government is and is not doing. Expose the electorate through televising the sessions," he said, "demand increased and thorough press coverage."

The treatment for the current

fiscal problem is an equitable distribution of pain to the state as well as the city. The governor's approach is to cut support for local programs with the result that the burden for these programs lands on the cities.

Cutbacks crippling to the city

The proposed cutbacks of critical personnel would cripple New York City more than any other; the city cannot cut its way out of the problems without severe long term results. The fact is that the state should raise state income and corporate taxes. The governor speaks of "job-killing" taxes. Senator Schneiderman pointed out the fallacy of that term. Overcrowded schools and understaffed police and fire departments, the inevitable results of the proposed tax cuts, will not lead to growth. The opposite is true. Further, the fact is that New York is never going to be a low tax state. The competition for jobs is not with Mississippi or Indonesia; it is with Germany and Taiwan, other high tax jurisdictions. New York needs a well-educated, well-trained workforce to attract business.

Revenue Sources

Questions about possible sources of revenue followed the senator's address. He cautioned against the liquidation of assets such as state buildings or airports in an effort for "one-stop" fixes.

As for proposed "commuter and city income taxes, increased property taxes and bridge and tunnel tolls," he acknowledged that all might well come up.

He cautioned of resistance

from suburban and rural legislators to commuter taxes and tolls, of the need for state approval of many proposals. In subsequent days many of the items have been brought forward. The results remain to be seen.

The Big Picture

New York's funding is part of a larger political problem. Demands for smaller government and the label "job-killing taxes" dominate political debate today. The senator warned of the danger of that rhetoric. He called for a return to America's early political debate, to egalitarianism and away from aristocracy. On the other hand he saw in the last 25 years a move to "larger is better" in commerce, resulting in a growing gap between the richest and the poorest in New York state. He called for a renewed understanding that America is about a level playing field. If opportunities are unlimited, possibilities will be as well. New York State and City will flourish because people have more opportunities, not fewer.

As a reminder that the challenges now facing New Yorkers are not new, Senator Schneiderman quoted Abraham Lincoln speaking in November 1864:

I see a crisis approaching that unnerves me and makes me tremble for the safety of my country. Corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow. The money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed.

—Virginia Kassel

Barbara Rochman presided

Update on the 2012 OLYMPICS

Imagine the Olympic Games in New York City is the title of a flyer distributed at the January meeting of the Infrastructure Committee by a delegation from NYC2012, the organization working to bring the games to NYC in 2012. Since the last time NYC2012 visited WCC to explain its vision for fitting the Olympics into the fabric of our city, the first hurdle has been overcome; the U.S. Olympic Committee has selected New York as its candidate for host city in 2012.

Now it is the turn of the International Olympic Committee to choose the finalist. Jerry Colonna, Co-Executive Director of NYC2012, believes that New York will prevail over the other contenders, although he sees strong challenges from Moscow and from the bid made jointly by a number of German cities.

The Olympic Games have three components: the regular athletic competitions; the Paralympics for disabled athletes immediately thereafter; and a multiyear cultural Olympiad showcasing all the arts that have made NYC internationally famous. The Paralympics will use the same facilities as the regular Olympics and the cultural component will take place through the city's already existing showplaces, so the main questions are where the athletic events will take place, how the athletes and spectators will access them, and how much it will cost.

Athletic facilities will be

spread throughout the five boroughs, primarily in venues currently existing. Yet to be built are the Olympic Stadium on the West Side of Manhattan over the Hudson Yards (using private funds), the revitalization of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to make clean lakes for rowing and canoeing and, to house the participants, an Olympic Village in Queens West, where development has already begun.

Transportation for the athletes will be provided along the Olympic axis, meaning that ferries on the Hudson River would be the primary north-south carrier while the east-west route would rely on rail and mass transport, including the extension of the IRT 7 line to the

West Side. Spectators would have easy access to athletic venues because there will be no parking, thus no traffic jams. After the Games end, all facilities would remain, offering recreation and housing to New Yorkers. And the planned budget is balanced; spectator fees, endorsements, and TV will pay for the planned improvements.

Mr. Colonna believes that the Games will be awarded to NYC. About 200 nations will send teams; there are 188 nationalities already represented in this City's population. It is, he said, therefore fitting that the Olympics take place here as well.

—*Marisa Hagan*
Ellie King presided

Have Fun this Spring! Join WCC's Film Club

We are presenting **the Best of Merchant Ivory**. We will discuss films from the internationally renowned team of producer Ismail Merchant and director James Ivory. Their highly acclaimed Oscar-winning movies are beloved throughout the world. We will explore their works and consider what makes these films so memorable.

Monday, March 31, *Surviving Picasso*

Monday, April 14, *Autobiography of a Princess*

(To be viewed at the session)

Monday, April 28, *Heat and Dust*

All meetings are held at 2:30pm at the WCC, 33 West 60th Street, 5th Floor.

This is a mini-fundraiser for WCC. As you engage in lively conversation about these films, you will be helping to support the club.

Film Club members are encouraged to view the featured film on video before the meeting. Our own award-winning producer and writer, Virginia Kassel, will once again moderate the discussion and present movie clips from the selected films.

Cost of the series is \$90 for WCC members, \$100 for nonmembers. The charge for individual sessions is \$25. Reservations are essential. Space is limited; we can accommodate only 30 subscribers.

Please contact the Women's City Club to register: (212) 353-8070 or info@wccny.org.

Women and the practice of law

In 1917 the fledgling Women's City Club issued its first research effort, a pamphlet entitled "Should Women Be Admitted to Columbia Law School?" Recalling this historic act, WCC President Blanche Lawton opened a Nov. 12 symposium on "How Women Have Changed the Practice of Law," organized in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the acceptance of the first few women at Columbia Law School, in 1927.



Professor Black

Only in 1928 did the faculty vote to admit all women on the same terms as men. "To see the door opening just a crack, then a little more, finally wide, is to understand the tenacity with which these men clung to the world they knew," said Professor Barbara Aronstein Black, who was the first female dean, 1986-1991, of any Ivy League law school and is now Professor of Legal History at Columbia. "They tried to keep it inviolate," Black observed, "as if they were able to see that before the end of the century that world was going to be turned upside down."

The '60s and '70s

Judith Thoyer has since 1975 been a partner at the large Wall Street law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, where she is co-head of mergers and acquisitions and a member of the management

committee. A 1966 graduate of Columbia Law, she remarked that from the 1960s into the 1980s the practice of law changed the few women who were in it instead of women changing the practice. The theme back then was "How to Make It in a Man's World." Today it is how the law firm has changed so that talented women can practice on terms that allow a balanced life.

In the 1960s the book *Opportunities for Careers in the Legal Profession* pointed out: "For women to achieve success it is not enough to be a good lawyer. A woman must have economic resources beyond those of her brother, for her apprentice years will be far more difficult ... as well as resources of soul and spirit....A woman entering a courtroom may cause ill conceived snickering."

What Has and Hasn't Changed

As a young associate, Thoyer believed she had to work twice as hard as her male counterparts. Although she was mother of a young child, she never discussed home life at the office for fear she would be stereotyped and that overconcern about her situation would interfere with her advancement.

Wary of sympathetic colleagues, she attributes her breakthrough instead to a very conservative partner who would dump work on her desk at 6 p.m. and expect it to be ready in the morning. Today, she notes, law practice is so competitive that men as well as women have to work extremely hard; and that level

of work is creating problems.

A Social Indignity

Seemingly small issues of business social etiquette and language reveal much about attitudes toward women. While professional women are now assumed to tolerate men's off-color language in a business setting, they are still excluded from certain corporate and club dining rooms.

It was a social indignity which moved Thoyer as a young partner to organize the raising of consciousness at her firm. In the lunchroom, rather than sit down with women, a man would move an empty chair from their table to another spot. That avoidance meant women were not getting the opportunity to socialize professionally with male colleagues. Thoyer's Women's Study Group created a film with scenarios that all partners were required to watch. That group became a standing Women's Committee where women can bring their issues.

Today's Options

The attitude toward families has changed. Private law practice today includes an option for part-time and flextime that respects family concerns. That change has come about not only thanks to women but to family-oriented men.

Young women associates continue to raise some of these same issues today, but they recognize that men have to be brought into the discussion. They want to hear how other women as role models manage their lives. And they are pushing for a different partnership track, questioning the magic of making partner at age 32.

More changes will come, Thoyer believes, with more women in the

profession, more women in power, more women clients, more flextime arrangements, more family-oriented men, more nontraditional relationships within the workplace and a more diverse workforce.

Women as Realists

Adriene Holder has been an attorney with the Legal Aid Society, a private nonprofit public interest organization, since earning her J.D. degree at Columbia in 1991. She serves in the Civil Appeals and Law Reform unit.

"Being African-American and female, I look a bit like many folks the Legal Aid Society represents," she says, pointing out that people like her in that organization may or may not reflect the sentiments and ideas of their clients.

Women's sensitivities can serve them well as lawyers, she believes. Women understand sexism in the courtroom, and sometimes use it to their advantage, even though it may be considered demeaning. And, she claims, "It's the women in my organization that get to the point of trying to get the work done."

In the Civil Appeals and Law Reform unit, Holder handles litigation, usually against the government, on federal and state housing, as well as on public benefits. She serves on the New York City Rent Guidelines Board. Legislative advocacy is also on her agenda.

Alternatives to Litigation

"It's great that we can have litigation and that a lot of us can make great careers out of what we consider social engineering," Holder remarks. "But sometimes the immediacy is more important. It comes back to that

client who comes in with her kid saying 'I need you to do something for me now!'"

Women clients have initiated some groundbreaking cases.

A battered woman with a child turned to the Legal Aid Society because public housing was denied her. Anyone with a family member in the household who has a criminal record is ineligible for public housing.

Together, women lawyers and their women clients have initiated some groundbreaking cases.

The woman's batterer had a record but his whereabouts were unknown. However, the New York City Housing Authority assumes a woman with a child under three is living with the father.

The Legal Aid Society asked NYCHA to evaluate applicants on a case by case basis, but still had to sue.

The case was finally settled three years later when NYCHA agreed to a family composition review. Meanwhile a coalition of sympathizers – from other battered women to academics – offered help in educating city agencies about the reality of such situations.

Coalitions and Advocacy

Building coalitions around an issue with religious groups and unions has been a powerful tool. "It may take 10 years to litigate a case; meanwhile clients are suffering so you have to think of other ways to get relief," says Holder. Coalitions bring resources, carry messages, empower the community, and get adversaries to listen, even without litigation.

The Association of Legal Aid Attorneys, the labor union to which legal service groups belong, is affiliated with the United Auto Workers. The UAW's relationship with upstate Republicans has provided entree for Holder to key legislators. This connection was especially helpful in challenging the workfare requirement for college students on public assistance.

When a Hunter College student was told she could not stay in school and draw public assistance, women at Hunter asked the Legal Aid Society to represent them at administrative fair hearings. The issue

became whether school and homework time could count toward the work requirements of workfare.

The women at Hunter proposed legislation to allow students to count such time toward the requirement. Through the UAW Holder and her Hunter clients were able to meet with key state legislators. They got Republicans and Democrats to agree on a bill authorizing class work and homework time for fulfilling the requirement. And a coalition of UAW and church pastors pressed the governor to review the bill.

In conclusion Holder stated: "As people of color and as women at the Legal Aid Society we have understood that there is an immediacy to the services we provide. A majority of clients in the civil division are women and children.

"Although class action lawsuits are exciting and can have an appreciable effect, they are not the only thing we should be dealing with.

"We know that we can be lawyers to coalitions, retained by a group of public housing residents or a group of *Please see next page*

Women in Law from preceding page
college students to work on passage of laws or try to force the government to implement policies already in place."

A Critical Lens

Professor Susan Sturm earned her JD at Yale in 1979, practiced in discrimination cases and taught at the University of Pennsylvania before joining the Columbia Law School faculty in 1998. She specializes in employment practices and public law remedies.



Susan Sturm

Women and people of color have changed the legal profession in two ways, she finds. They have expanded the repertory of roles for lawyers and they offer a critical lens on the practice of law which has prompted institutional change.

Transactional lawyers all know that you can't just follow legal doctrine, she says, that you have to understand the way organizations work, the structure of the transactions, the economic analysis that helps explain why your clients want to do what they want to do. This is a relatively new insight for public lawyers and litigators.

New entrants into the profession can question the adequacy of lawyer as gladiator as the sole definition. And they can take a proactive approach to reduce litigation.

Critical questioning of how lawyers interact with one another in the workplace addresses not only women's participation but questions decision-making in general on hiring practices, work assignments, promotion and definition of success.

To illustrate this second point, Sturm cited a situation at DeLoitte & Touche, comparable to what happens in some law firms. The CEO observed that women who constituted about 50% of the best talent were leaving the firm at a higher rate than men. The firm employed Catalyst, the consulting firm specializing in women's employment, to identify and solve the problem.

The Catalyst study found that women were not leaving to have children, as the CEO assumed. It revealed that women felt the firm was inhospitable and that there was a lack of opportunity because the randomness of work assignments made that hard to predict. The women's attitude was "if this is a crummy place to work and there's no way of knowing whether you will get ahead, why not stay home with the kids?"

The firm's senior management, all white men, largely responded, "if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." Then a woman, whose success in the firm lent her credibility, said to a partner, "if you are a woman this is sometimes a crappy place to work." That prompted management to take the study

seriously, and institute some changes not particular to women: accountable assignment practices, retention of accountants with the same client to reduce turnover, shorter travel time. Hence the firm both addressed conflicts and moved to manage more effectively.

The "Is" and the "Ought"

Thus, says Sturm, the role of women and people of color, as signifiers of broader patterns of dysfunction that need to be addressed, permit effective participation and also enable a firm to function in a changing world.

"I think about law not only as rules that punish but as an opportunity to think about the 'is' and the 'ought.' It doesn't happen only in the courtroom; it happens in the workplace. Women's participation prompts and joins with the need to continually reflect critically about the adequacy of our institutions to achieve law's greatest mission, which is social justice, and to enable those institutions to be truly inclusive."

—*Marilyn Wellemeyer*

Susan Alt presided

This meeting was held at the White and Case Law Offices.

WCC's Role in Changing the Law School Policies

The general acceptance of women in the law was long in coming. Past WCC President Susan Alt told of the first woman graduate of Columbia Law School, her political science professor at Hunter College. Alt herself was one of only seven women in the class of 1957.

The WCC had made its case for admitting women via a compilation of newspaper editorials urging admission and a letter signed by 40 leading lights of the New York Bar, including federal Justice Learned Hand. The president of WCC was Mrs. Learned Hand. And WCC Vice President Virginia Gildersleeve, dean of Columbia's female undergraduate institution, Barnard College, was engaged in a protracted effort to get the Law School dean, Harlan Fiske Stone, to admit Barnard students. Instead he proposed an independent law school for women. Stone retired in 1924, and finally in 1926 the Law School faculty resolved to admit Barnard students. Two of the three women admitted were not Barnard graduates, but held Columbia graduate degrees. Only in 1928 did the faculty vote to admit all women on the same terms as men.

Arts Education in The Public Schools

A virtual "cultural revolution" has occurred since the 1993 publication of WCC's position paper: *A Call to Revitalize Art Education in New York City*, said Joan Firestone, Special Advisor to the Chancellor on Arts Education, at an October meeting of the Education Committee. She noted, however, that sequential arts education and an equal distribution of arts education throughout the school system have yet to be achieved.

The 1996 Annenberg Foundation grant to the city was one factor in bringing an end to a 21-year period during which arts education in the public schools all but evaporated. Moreover, existing programs were not equally accessible to all children.

The Center for Arts Education, created by the grant to administer the funds, implemented the requirement that schools form partnerships with arts organizations to provide programs of arts instruction.

A new license established for arts teachers in the elementary schools and arts education is now firmly in place. Some 1400 arts teachers have been hired since 2000.

A Career Placement Education curriculum is currently being developed jointly by the city and state departments of education to replace the current vocational education sequence.

Ms. Firestone also described the Parent-Arts Workshops that have been established by the Department of Cultural Affairs at the Center for Arts Education in which small grants are awarded for after school programs that involve parents, children and teachers. Now in 98 schools, the number is expected to rise to 150.

-Mignon Sauber

The Commission on Women's Issues

Speaking on Dec. 2, Anne Sutherland Fuchs, Chair of the Commission on Women's Issues, presented topics that would engage the organization for the coming year.

Begun in 1975 by Mayor Abraham Beame as the Commission on the Status of Women, its first chair was WCC member Edythe First. Subsequently renamed the Commission on Women's Issues, it has had seven chairs before Mayor Bloomberg's appointment of Ms. Fuchs. Because the commission had not yet held a first meeting, Ms. Fuchs could speak only about their goals.

New York City— Mecca for Women She stated her belief that the commission can tap into a new energy with a mission to brand the city as a mecca for women with unique programs.

Priorities She targeted three issues as major priorities: health, childcare, and economic development. They want to reach women who need subsidies and to ensure advancement of women working in nontraditional fields.

Plans include forming a committee of private sector corporate leaders, working with the Commission on Domestic Violence, and cooperating with the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation.

Ms. Fuchs spoke with enthusiasm about the commitment of commission members to set a time line for achieving quantifiable results.

She introduced the commission's Executive Director, Carmen Torrent, and promised that, though limited in staff, the commission was set to expand the scope of activities to broaden the horizon of women.

-Dorothy Wilner
Marge Ives presided

Dates to Save

March 27, 12:30pm

*The \$3.4 Billion Budget Gap:
Who Will Bear the Burden?*

Arthur Cheliotis, Pres., Local 1180, Communications Workers of America; Diana Fortuna, Pres., Citizens Budget Commission; Glenn Pasanen, Adjunct Prof., Political Science, CUNY.

Church of St. Paul the Apostle Parish Center, 405 W. 59th St (off Columbus Ave.) \$10. No charge for WCC members.

April 3, 12:30pm

*Who Wins, Who Loses in the
Albany Health Care
Financing Battle?*

Also at the Parish Center of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle. See above.

May 8

Dr. Jeannette Takamura, Dean, Columbia University School of Social Work. Time and Place TBA.

ANNUAL MEETING

May 20

Alice M. Rivlin, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, the Brookings Institution, will deliver the annual Marie S. Neuberger Memorial Lecture. Details TBA.

June 12, 5:30pm

Joel Klein, Chancellor of New York City Department of Education. Details TBA.

To reserve, call 212-353-8070.

Charter Schools from page 2 resources. There is no one kind of school that is a "silver bullet" for one kind of community or student. There will be a mixture of schools.

How do you mesh the individualization of charter schools with the formal new curriculum being promoted for the public school system?

Charter schools are autonomous and their autonomy will be respected and supported. Charter schools become even more important because of the standardized curriculum. They give parents another option.

Charter schools are given five years to prove themselves. Don't other schools have to prove themselves right away?

Unsuccessful charter schools can be terminated before five years are up. Charter schools are held to the same standards as other schools. There are mechanisms that can intervene when schools are not successful.

What is a charter school?

It is a public school. Instead of reporting to a superintendent it has to report to the city or to the state. It has its own board of trustees who are responsible for the fiscal safe-guarding of the school and for ensuring that the school meets the stipulations of its charter.

(To Monte Joffe) **Why did your school choose to become a conversion school?**

We were ready to take on a new challenge.

Is it difficult to find space for a charter school?

All public schools have space problems. For charter schools there may be creative solutions in the private sector.

To what extent are charter schools dependent on private philanthropy?

They rely heavily on private support.

How is success measured?

The extent to which each has fulfilled agreements they made as well as performance of students on state tests. Each of the entities (Board of Regents, SUNY, City Dept. of Education) has different criteria. SUNY has a specific accountability agreement within one year of the school's operation.

Is there a problem with the best and the brightest being siphoned off from other public schools?

No. Children are chosen through a strict lottery system. If applications exceed open slots, a lottery decides who is admitted. Many charter schools are in the lowest income areas.

What happens when parents starting a charter school can't get their own children in because of the lottery system?

The lottery rule is strictly enforced. Diversity may suffer if, for example, there are 15 girls and five boys in a given class.

When the mayor's plans for standardization are implemented will people flee to charter schools?

The lottery system limits the number of children in a charter school.

How do you cope with special education kids who have special needs?

(Michele Pierce) We work closely with the family and with local institutions to find special teachers (e. g. speech therapists) as needed. We do whatever it takes. (Monte Joffe) They can be a drain on resources. If necessary we can help the family to find another school.

How does the mayor intend to support charter schools in view of the tight budget?

The funding for charter schools in

mandated by state law. They are somewhat protected and have a guaranteed stream of revenue. We want to make sure that the schools we authorize are good ones and we want to put resources and technical assistance into them to ensure that.

What does your school do that is different from regular public schools?

(Michelle Pierce) There are several things that are unique to our school. For example, our school day runs from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

We also have particular courses and routines that we do each day. For the first half hour we have a session called "learn to learn". It's like a giant pep rally to get the kids ready for their day.

Is there money for expansion?

Not now, in light of the state's current \$20 billion deficit. The current governance law covers how monies flow to charter schools but that does not include money for capital construction.

Is there a dress code?

Sometimes. The schools decide themselves.

What is the rationale behind giving charter schools two-thirds of the budget that normal public schools receive?

The formula was determined by the state legislature. What charter schools receive is the average operating aid that includes food, transportation, and other services. There are some additional costs to having charter schools. They need to be funded to represent that additional cost.

—Beth Gleick

Clara Hemphill, author of several books on the best NYC public schools, was the moderator. Dorothy Wilner, Education Committee co-chair, presided.

WCC POSITIONS

voted at recent meetings

Extending to assisted living facilities the same restrictions imposed on entities like hospitals, nursing homes, adult homes and enriched housing facilities under NYS law.

Rationale: The existing law prohibits publicly traded corporations from operating health facilities. It has for 25 years required that the operators of such facilities have total responsibility for all aspects of a facility's staffing finances and administrative and operational policies. Corporations are frequently headquartered out of the state, and residents or their families do not have ready access to the real decision-makers, and even the state may not be able to hold such operatives in the state accountable for poor care or other issues, such as fraud or mismanagement.

Opposition to new tuition hikes and the withholding of tuition assistance money.

The board moved to oppose the jump in CUNY's senior college tuition from \$3,200 to \$4,400 a year. Along with this change in Governor Pataki's Executive Budget came the governor's plan to restructure the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) so that needy students would receive only two-thirds of the assistance for which they are now eligible while they are in school. The remaining third would be paid only after students had completed their degree programs. The Education Committee pointed out that about 60 percent of CUNY students have families with incomes under \$30,000 per year.

WCC Priorities For 2003

BARBARA ROCHMAN

WCC Vice President; Chair, Public Policy Committee

New York's innumerable problems are enough to encourage any civic minded person seeking solutions to "ride off in all directions at once" (like a fondly remembered Stephen Leacock character).

Each year the WCC concentrates on a prioritized list of initiatives undertaken by our five civic committees and three task forces.

Here is the list approved by the Board of Directors for 2003 – the civic issues proposed by our civic issue committees, our task forces and the Public Policy Committee.

They are based in three major program areas:

Making Government Work Building a More Livable City Meeting Human Needs

For the very civic minded volunteers at WCC it is a challenge to narrow these priorities down to manageable proportions, and we may not have truly achieved that goal. However the items below do represent a consensus of the current issues that top WCC lists.

Making Government Work

Here we are focusing on New York City budget changes (both tax increases and spending cuts), the reform of our public education system, New York City election processes and methods, and continued support for campaign finance reforms. We intend to take a position very soon on nonpartisan elections.

Building a More Livable City means monitoring proposals for rebuilding downtown, supporting public transportation options, advocating for more affordable housing, and preserving landmarks.

Meeting Human Needs encompasses a great deal. We support a moratorium on the death penalty until it is abolished; we seek universal health insurance; the regulation of health care and long-term care facilities, and the availability of health care to immigrants. We examine the impact of the welfare laws; we work for reduced class sizes and for pre-kindergarten programs in the public schools. We want increased opportunities in non-traditional jobs for women and reduced harassment and violence against women.

We work on these issues through study, issuance of reports, hearing experts speak at committee meetings as well as public programs. We write and talk to legislators and public officials. We join with other organizations, and participate in coalitions, because it is clear that our priorities can best be achieved with the work of many members of the community.

Many of these aims will take a very long time to be realized, and some may never be achieved. But this is more than just a wish list. WCC activists work steadily on these priorities. and we need your participation and help. We hope you will become involved.

Agenda

Women's City Club of New York

WCC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational and activist organization founded in 1915. For inquiries please call (212) 353-8070, fax (212) 228-4665 or email info@wccny.org. Please visit our website at www.wccny.org.

President:	Blanche E. Lawton
Vice Presidents:	Beverly Gross Barbara Rochman Rita Zimmer
Treasurer:	Joan Fabio
Editor:	Geraldine E. Rhoads
Executive Director:	Susannah Sard
Production:	Adelle Fay

Agenda

33 West 60th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10023-7905

