

KRISTOF ADDRESSES WCC ANNUAL MEETING

By Nada Westerman

"Gender equity is our moral challenge for the 21st century," declared **NICHOLAS KRISTOF** in his address to the Women's City Club Annual Meeting on May 24th. **Marge Ives**, Chair of WCC's Women's Issues Committee, introduced *The New York Times* Op Ed columnist. With his wife, Sheryl WuDunn, he is author of recently published "Half the Sky." Kristof had just returned from the Congo and said he was "so glad to be here."

With chilling statistics and accounts of individual lives, Kristof described the astonishing scale of discrimination against girls in the third world. From these practices combined he reports that 60 to 110 million have been "discriminated to death." On a positive note, he discussed the "virtuous cycle:" combating poverty, insecurity and violence by putting girls into school and the work force. To this he attributes China's economic boom and a broad impact on society as a whole. "Girls aren't the problem; they are the solution," he remarked.

Kristof outlined his agenda to be addressed: **Human Trafficking** - This is a form of modern slavery where in Cambodia many girls, kidnapped into prostitution, are dead of AIDS by their mid-twenties. Kristof bought two girls from their brothel to save them from this fate. **Micro-savings** - Women are more likely than men to save their wages and use them for education and health care. **Maternal Health** - Currently, 350,000 to 500,000 women a year die in childbirth. For every death another 20 are injured. Obstetric fistulas occur when teenagers, whose pelvises aren't fully grown, give birth and are left incontinent. (A \$400 operation would give these girls their lives back). **Girls' education** slows population growth, generates greater income. And when women have control of the purse strings, money is more likely to be spent on their children.

Relatively small and inexpensive efforts can produce significant results, Kristof showed. A once-a-year 50 cent de-worming pill can decrease anemia and lower school absenteeism by about 30 days a year. A Ugandan recipient of aid from Heifer International was able to buy a goat and use the money from the sale of goat's milk toward a daughter's education. She ultimately graduated from Connecticut College, and headed to graduate school.

In response to audience questions, Kristof explained that while he speaks French, Chinese, Japanese and poor Arabic, typically he works with an interpreter. When asked, people will often relate personal experiences, for example about rape, to a stranger that they would be ashamed to tell a family member or neighbor. In Darfur anger about what had been done to women prompted the feeling that talking is one way of fighting back. "The courage of these women in telling these stories is unbelievably inspiring."

Questioned about micro-financing, Kristof said he is a critic of high interest rates. Humanitarian groups make things sound easier than they are. Micro-loans can get people into trouble. If things go wrong there may be difficulty paying interest rates, which is why he stresses the importance of micro-saving. Building up savings brings empowerment for the family.

When asked about legalizing, regulating and taxing prostitution, Kristof noted that he started out supporting that idea, but the model doesn't work well due to a black market and forced prostitution.



NY TIMES'S NICHOLAS KRISTOF SPEAKS OF STEPS TO IMPROVE GIRLS' LIVES IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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WCC ACTS

- Policy actions taken by the WCC- appear in the sidebar throughout *Agenda*

ENVIRONMENT &
INFRASTRUCTURE

4/26/10 Testified before NYC Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste in support of expanded public recycling legislation and recyclable-only take-out containers, banning Styrofoam. Issued press release; wrote Council Speaker Quinn.

2/12/10 Met with staff in NYC Council Speaker's office on expanding recycling laws.

Result: NYC Council proposed expanding recycling laws to include all plastics.

12/21/09 Urged Gov. Paterson to oppose natural gas drilling by hydraulic fracturing in Marcellus Shale formation underlying NYC watershed; submitted comments to Dept. of Environmental Conservation about hazards of hydraulic fracturing.

HEALTH

4/29/10 Emailed membership on health insurance reform issues, including Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, strengthening Medicare with better benefits at lower cost.

WOMEN LEAD THE WAY

By Mary Ellen Rudolph

LINDA TARR-WHELAN, author of "Women Lead the Way: Your Guide to Stepping Up to Leadership and Changing the World," explained at a March 17 Women's City Club public program that it is the perfect time to focus on women in leadership positions. And it is an opportune year for the U.S. to ratify CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), passed by the U.N. in 1979.

Some might think that we can sit back and congratulate ourselves now that Kathryn Bigelow has won the Oscar for best feature film director -- the first woman in the 82-year history of the

Moving Picture Academy. However, as Tarr-Whelan pointed out, while we may celebrate "firsts," in reality American women have made little progress as leaders in either business or politics. Today women make up only 15 percent of corporate boards and only 17 percent of Congress. Shockingly, the U.S. currently ranks 82nd in the world for women in "seats of power." According to Tarr-Whelan this country has become complacent and stuck in a rut.

New leaders must emerge to supply "fresh air and creative ideas" and these can best be found amongst our pool of talented women. Only with "balanced leadership," which according to Tarr Whelan happens when women occupy 30 percent of the seats at any table, will we begin to move forward again. She hopes her benchmark "30 percent solution," which she applies to corporate directors and politicians, will be achieved by 2020.

Looking overseas, Tarr-Whelan has found numerous examples of where the "30 percent solution" has become a reality. Norway was a pioneer in 2003 when legislation was passed that required all public companies to have 40 percent women board members or face the threat of closure. In Britain, 43 top male CEOs of FTSE 100 companies are mentoring talented women to become corporate directors outside of their own companies.

Studies show that European companies, where women have equal pay and are equally represented in the company's leadership, are 9 percent more profitable than companies where this is not the case. In France and Denmark companies with a critical number of women in top management were better able to survive the 2008 economic downturn. Tarr-Whelan attributes this to women having a "longer time frame" and being more "risk aware". She believes their management skills are better suited to the 21st Century.

Having stated her case for the "30 percent solution" Tarr-Whelan turned to what can be done to achieve greater equity. First, Tarr-Whelan insisted that the "confidence factor" has to change. Women must believe that they have the answers and take on new challenges. Second, Tarr-Whelan firmly believes in "the power of one." She listed what each person in the audience might do: hire women; make sure girls are given tough things to do; help a woman polish her resume; take a young person to lunch and share past work experiences with her; speak at an elementary school about her work experiences and generally help raise awareness. Third, Tarr Whelan stressed the importance of social networking.

Finally, Tarr-Whelan turned her attention to CEDAW, saying this is the year when we might have the best chance of securing the 67 votes in the Senate necessary for ratification. CEDAW is a way to make a difference, since it sets goals, not mandates, for eliminating discrimination against women and would provide us with benchmarks for comparison with other nations. As long as we don't ratify CEDAW, we will be perceived as not doing what we preach. And we are in very poor company with the few other nations that have not signed to date. One problem is getting attention for ratification as the mainstream media tend to believe everything in CEDAW has already been achieved and that we do not need it anymore.

Fortunately, many women's groups have joined together in support. Tarr-Whelan was gratified to learn that WCC, with a history of advocating for CEDAW, is mounting a strong push for ratification.



WCC BOARD MEMBER MARY MURPHREE (L)
AND GUEST SPEAKER LINDA TARR-WHELAN

WHAT'S ON AT CITY COUNCIL

By Nada Westerman

The series, "Lunchtime with Legislators," was reintroduced on April 9th when newly-elected City Council member **MARGARET CHIN** visited Women's City Club offices for an informal question and answer session. Ms. Chin, who represents District 1, encompassing most of lower Manhattan, joined the City Council following a 30-year career in public service dedicated to advocacy for immigrants and working families.

In her introduction, **Barbara Zucker**, Chair of Public Policy, noted that in Ms. Chin's short Council tenure she had already introduced five pages of resolutions. Chin reminded the audience that the Council controls the disposition of only \$400 million of a \$63 billion budget.

In response to questions, the Council member commented on a broad array of issues:

Charter Revision: Mayor wants something on the ballot in November. The Democratic caucus had just met to formulate a set of issues.



NYC COUNCIL MEMBER
MARGARET CHIN AT WCC

City Council/Budget Reform: There is need to strengthen the role of the City Council especially in the budget-making process and to require that the Council receive more, and more timely, information with which to make determinations. It is important to stabilize budget allocations and to uncover new revenue sources. The Progressive caucus is working on these issues. Concerning a Citizens Union recommendation: in actuality, Council already consumes full-time attention from its members. The Office needs to be full-time to be effective. Lulu [stipend] transparency already exists. There are committees that could be cut or merged. This Council member serves on seven committees.

Education: The space issue dominated discussion. Obviously, the City did not anticipate growth in school age population, leading to the conclusion that the Department of Education does not have good data on which to base decisions. This issue, and MTA cuts, has spurred greater public activism. It is difficult to get any information from the Department. One-third of the City budget is allocated to the Department of Education over which City Council has no oversight. Developers cannot be required to include schools in their projects unless they are asking for concessions from the City. The future of physical education is vulnerable. New schools often don't have PE facilities. City Council will hold hearings on how to put this back on the agenda. Concern was expressed about the Department's moving more and more to privatization.

Housing: One of Chin's priorities is to stem the loss of housing and support creation of more affordable housing. District 1 has a large percentage of middle income housing. Low income housing is needed on the Lower East Side and she is supporting development of a Seward Park area site. There is a need for regulation to control speculative buying as subsidized housing is sold off to private equity firms. She plans to work with tenants to create opportunities for affordable home ownership.

Senior Centers: Cuts in senior centers are due to a change in the State formula which has supported centers. City Council will seek to protect City's programs for the aged.

St. Vincent's Hospital: This is a "sad story." Government will try to save what it can. The Health Committee and the speaker are seeking a way to keep health services in that part of Manhattan. There is need for an investigation to understand why the hospital failed.

Jobs: Chin advocates that out-of-state corporations "give something back" by raising the standard of job creation through higher wages and benefits. City should "put on the table" what is expected.

Sex Trafficking: It is important to increase enforcement of laws that are on the books.

Campaign Finance: Council member Chin accepted matching funds to run her election campaign. Her fundraising efforts began two years before the election by soliciting family, friends and local associations. Her fundraising was informal yet she was able to amass many small contributions making her eligible for 6 - 1 in matching funds. There are extensive requirements for reporting data.

HEALTH Cont'd

3/29/10 Emailed membership heralding passage of federal health care reform legislation, explaining key points.

3/16/10 Supported NYC Dept. of Health one cent excise tax proposed on sugar sweetened drinks to reduce risk of diabetes and obesity.

3/18/10 Signed an organizational letter supporting legislation that would enable school based health centers to receive reimbursement for children in Child Health Plus program.

2/22/10 Mobilized WCC members to call NYS senators and ask them to vote for Family Health Care Decisions Act.

Result: NYS Senate passed FHCDA on 2/24/10 following NYS Assembly's passage on 1/20/10. Gov. Paterson signed it on 3/16/10.

SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

By Amy Selwyn

4/26/10 Asked Mayor Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Quinn to support Paid Sick Time Act to protect New Yorkers from having to choose between their jobs and health needs or needs of close family.

3/22/10 Wrote President Obama and Senate Foreign Relations Committee urging ratification of U.N.'s Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

3/5/10 Called on CUNY trustees to include in sexual assault policy provisions to make sexual assault education a permanent, mandatory part of curriculum and to keep names of assault victims confidential.

3/12/10 Mobilized WCC members to ask NYS senate members to endorse the Reproductive Health Act to bring State law on abortion in conformity with Roe v. Wade.

Of New York City's 1.3 million people over 85 years of age, most are on a fixed income and about 20 percent live in poverty. Women account for 60 percent of the senior population and 68 percent are poor. As elsewhere, seniors 85 and over are the fastest growing segment of the population. There is greater need for appropriate community services enabling our elders to continue an independent life at home, connected to family and friends, rather than endure high-cost institutional care.

The Commissioner of the NYC Dept. for the Aging (DFTA) since December 2008, **LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI**, provided insights and numbers at a December 1, 2009 WCC forum on What's Happening with Services to the Elderly? An anthropology graduate of Universidad Iberoamerica in Mexico City, Dr. Barrios-Paoli holds Master's and Ph.D. degrees from the New School for Social Research in Manhattan. In her introduction, WCC board member **Elizabeth Lubetkin Lipton** noted that in the Koch and Giuliani administrations Barrios-Paoli was

Commissioner of the departments of Employment, Personnel, Housing Preservation and Human Resources.

DFTA is essentially a monitoring and contract management agency. Programs and services are delivered by nonprofits whose staff members qualify in having hands-on experience with seniors. Among approximately 700 contracted agencies, 335 are full-time senior centers; myriad part-time centers offer case management and services.

"My first day at work happened to be the day chosen for implementing home meal delivery for seniors," the Commissioner recalled. "Some were expected to eat lunch at 9 am, others at 3 pm. Uneaten meals were tossed away." The contractor had difficulty getting deliveries under control, until his territory was reduced. "When your agency delivers some 20,000 meals a day there are going to be happy campers and unhappy campers," the Commissioner noted. "The most important consideration is quality. Are seniors eating food they should? Do they like it? What would they like more of?" A customer survey is underway.

Case Management is geared to the most vulnerable seniors. Typically the senior has no supportive network and is unable to negotiate services. The agency has to take over.

Problems surfaced quickly: Officials underesti-



COMMISSIONER LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI
SPEAKS AT WCC

mated the number of seniors in need; accordingly providers were swamped. Many programs had case loads well in excess of DFTA's initial forecast. Case management now has better stability. Smaller communities help too, reducing responsibility for providers.

"The most important consideration is quality. Are seniors eating food they should? Do they like it? What would they like more of?"

Hon. Lilliam Barrios-Paoli

Senior Centers need modernization of meal delivery, nutrition, programs in well-being, health and exercise. The Mayor made a commitment when he announced 'age-friendly' New York, starting an \$18 million fund for this purpose. At DFTA, the Commissioner's task was to help with fund raising. But the situation is complex; the Mayor's FY 2010 budget proposal would double cuts to \$22 million, including DFTA cuts.

There is positive news. The Council of Senior Centers and Services will create some charter centers, allowing program expansion. Like charter schools, the idea is to bring new energy and money. "This year we had a gain in funding for elder abuse services. Seniors are reluctant to ask for help. New York is one of four states where reporting on elder abuse is not mandated." Mental health services are lacking at senior centers. Another DFTA priority has to be obtaining rent subsidies via the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program or SCRIE.

In her conclusion, the Commissioner spoke up about her commitment to aging-in-place, as in the Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities. "Better connection between the nearby NORCs and senior centers has to be addressed. Finally, a goal is streamlining the system of care for the aging to bring down costs and improve services and programs."

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

By Marjorie Kelleher Shea

The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Citizens United v Federal Election Commission* provoked a flurry of media discussion on campaign finance laws. At a March 3rd program WCC was fortunate to have an expert speaker on this topic. **AMY M. LOPREST**, Executive Director of the NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB) since September 2006, is a graduate of the Wharton School of Business and of Fordham Law School where she is now an adjunct professor of Political Science. She was introduced by **Barbara Rochman**, Esq., former chair of WCC's Public Policy Committee.

The case involved a documentary film made by a conservative nonprofit organization called Citizens United. The movie, critical of Senator Hillary Clinton, was to be shown in theaters and on-demand cable during the Presidential primary season. After many months of consideration and a re-argument before the court, on January 21, 2010 limits on corporations' independent spending during campaigns for the Presidency and Congress were declared unconstitutional.

"The decision [*Citizens United v FEC*]... does not disturb the prohibition of direct contributions from corporations to candidates." *Amy Loprest*

Loprest issued a press release saying: "While today's decision may have a critical impact on the next federal elections, it addresses a specific provision of federal law that has no direct parallel in City law. The decision addresses independent spending by corporations and supporting candidates; it does not disturb the prohibition of direct contributions from corporations to candidates."

Loprest said that the ban on direct contributions by corporations to candidates still exists; it has been in place since 1907; labor unions have a similar ban in place since 1947. Controversy surrounding the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision has renewed interest in voluntary public financing programs

such as that of New York City.

Before getting into a discussion of what the Supreme Court did and didn't do, Ms. Loprest summarized the NYC campaign finance program. It has been in existence for a decade having been signed into law in February 1988 and later that year approved by voters in a referendum on the new City charter. She characterized it as "small donor democracy" as it matches every dollar raised by the candidate with six dollars of public funds up to certain limits. The key element of the program is public disclosure -- it provides real-time information on contributions and spending for City elections. The law also provides for non-partisan education by mandating a Voter Guide mailed to every voter and a debate program. Good government groups advocate for similar laws at state and federal level elections with little success, and reform is unlikely given current budget shortfalls.

Loprest cautioned that the decision does not explicitly mention labor unions, nor does it deal with foreign corporations with operations in the U.S. She indicated that some of these topics need to wait for the next generation of lawsuits. In commenting on possible changes to federal law now being considered, Loprest said it's tricky because there are for-profits and nonprofits such as WCC.

Senator Schumer is writing legislation that would require for-profit corporations to disclose political contributions as part of their regular SEC filings. It might also be possible to require shareholder approval for such spending of corporate funds. Loprest thinks it unlikely that a constitutional amendment could be passed.

In her final words, she asks us to use the City Campaign Finance website: www.nycffb.info. "Go spread the word -- use the net database to find out who's giving, getting and where spending."

3/9/10 Applauded President Obama and Senators Schumer and Gillibrand for support of paid family leave and encouraged them to ensure that funding for state programs remained intact in the federal budget.

2/26/10 Mobilized WCC members to call NYS senators and urge their support for Equal Rights Amendment.

12/16/09 Applauded U.S. Senators Gillibrand and Schumer for voting to table the Nelson / Hatch amendment to health care reform bill which sought to restrict insurance coverage for abortion.

CHOOSING A PUBLIC SCHOOL

By Eleanor Stier

On Monday, April 12, 2010 **Dorothy Wilner**, Co-Chair of the WCC Task Force on Education, introduced **ELIZABETH SCIABARRA**, Chief Executive Officer for the Office of Student Enrollment at the New York City Department of Education. She noted that Ms. Sciabarra has spent 35 years in New York's public education system, beginning as a teacher, and has held many different positions including principal, deputy superintendent, and superintendent.

Ms. Sciabarra said that she has been involved in the transition of the school system, emphasizing that students are now given the option of choosing the schools they wish to attend. As changes take place, she and her staff continually ask if these changes are good for the children, families, and the schools. She tries to ensure that the schools are where parents want to send their children.

The greatest growth in school options has occurred at the high school level. In September 2003 there were 755 elementary schools, 517 middle schools, and 251 high schools. *Continued on page 6*

CHOOSING A PUBLIC SCHOOL CONT'D

4/28/10 Sent email alert urging members to participate in Reform Albany Day on 5/5/2010.

4/20/10 Testified before NYC Charter Revision Commission suggesting that they consider: pay equity for NYC employees; limit and disclosure of NYC Council members' outside income; definition and adequate funding of office of the Public Advocate; nonpartisan 2011 redistricting; transparency of government operations; updating Charter on Dept. of Education; distinguishing the City Charter, as NYC's constitution, from statutes, for City operations.

3/22/10 Outreach to WCC members and organizational affiliates to ensure successful 2010 Census.

Result: As of 4/23/10 NYC mail-in participation was 60 percent, up from 57 percent in 2000, earning NYC a place in "most improved category."

3/16/10 Joined coalition to congratulate new chairman of Charter Revision Commission, offer assistance and suggest issues to consider.

The Office of Student Enrollment was created in October 2003. As of 2009 there were 770 elementary and 526 middle schools; of both levels combined almost 300 were not zoned for a designated area. And there were 444 high schools. During the transition more high school options opened.

Specialized High Schools.

Previously only three specialized high schools required a test for entry: Bronx Science, Stuyvesant and Brooklyn Tech. Now there are eight such schools, as well as LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, which melds outstanding academic grades with auditions

in five studios. CUNY created three high schools on its campuses. Now Staten Island Technical High School and Brooklyn Latin have been added.

Career and Technical Education Schools (CTE) superseded vocational schools for particular trades. Now students have to take required academic courses and the Regents exams as well as sequences in particular career areas such as new technology.

Academically Selective Schools. Twenty very competitive schools only take students with an academic average of 85 or 90 or higher. These include Bard High School, Beacon and Millennium.

International Schools. Seventeen schools are geared to young people relatively new to the United States are available, if the family wants that option. Otherwise these students can attend regular high schools that provide special help for them.

Smaller Learning Communities. Eighteen are in some very large high schools and were started to promote academic achievement. Research has shown that more personalized instruction has been helpful to some students. These communities are staffed by a principal, and a lead teacher.

Performing and Visual Arts Schools number 27 in the City. Some are complete conservatory high schools preparing students to move into the field. LaGuardia calls for an audition.

Small Schools. During the last seven years, 214 schools have been capped at 452 students, and

have partners such as New Visions and Urban Assembly to work with them to develop an educational philosophy, an ethos and structure.

Comprehensive High Schools.

About 32 are left. There are still some zoned high schools in Queens, some in Brooklyn, but in the Bronx most are gone. In Manhattan only one or two are left including Murry Bergtraum which had options for students in business.

Transfer Schools. These 44 schools offer students in the 9th or 10th grade who are not doing well academically in their schools another option.

Charter Schools are public schools that operate independently according to a five-year performance contract. NYC's administration is committed to developing more charter schools, increasing from 89 to 104 in September. They provide more choice to parents who wish to find a place for their children via a lottery.

Four values guide admissions:

Equity - The Department has developed a centralized process so that all students have access and can participate with the same breadth of information offered to each family. It is no longer whom you know.

Transparency/Integrity - The admissions process should be as transparent as possible so that all participants understand what options are available, how to access them, and how to make informed choices. The data must support what is said about choice.

Student-Driven Choice - This gives students and families the freedom to express their preferences and have them honored to the extent possible. Choices should be student-centered, not school-centered.

Achievement/Accountability - A student-driven process should help create competitiveness among schools, increasing the number of high-performing schools, and thereby promoting higher levels of student achievement. Ms. Sciabarra believes that when schools compete, they get better. Families should be able to hold the DOE accountable for the administration of the choice process at the highest levels.



ELIZABETH SCIABARRA (CENTER) OF NYC DEPT. OF EDUCATION WITH WCC'S DOROTHY WILNER (L) AND ELEANOR STIER (R)

SELECTING JUDGES

By Ellyn Schiff Berman

In recent years, the WCC has been asked to suggest candidates for independent judicial screening panels. As a nonpartisan organization, WCC will respond to requests from political parties and other sources. In March, WCC President Ruth Acker sent an email asking if members might be interested in serving on a panel. Within a few days, she heard back from 32 that they were! She contacted several people about an immediate opening. Ellyn Schiff Berman, a member for the past 10 years, filled the position. Ms. Berman has a doctorate in social welfare, did social work in a foster care and adoption agency prior to coordinating a scholarship program and acting as a professional development counselor at Hunter College School of Social Work. She kindly sent us this account:

I have just finished my work with the Independent Judicial Screening Panel and I want to thank the Women's City Club for the chance to serve. The panel voted on May 24th for 12 highly qualified candidates for four civil court vacancies in Manhattan. Those names have now been sent to the New York County Democratic Party which will make the final choice. Only four of those selected will be nominated by the Party for each judgeship and will appear on the ballot in November.

The Independent Judicial Screening Panel grew out of a judicial reform movement of the '60's, finally realized in 1977 when the Democratic Party of New York County agreed that only those candidates approved by an independent screening panel would be eligible for judicial vacancies. The party stipulated that the screening panel be made up of representatives of various bar associations and civic organizations. The Women's City Club is one of those organizations.

The 20-member panel met seven times during April and May to interview 25 candidates for four court openings and two sitting judges applying for reappointment, all of whom submitted lengthy written applications. It was a diverse panel made up of representatives of bar associations, such as the Dominican Bar Association, the Asian American Bar Association and others representing civic organizations, such as The Fortune Society and Gay Men's Health Crisis.

All of us were charged with giving careful consideration to each applicant's qualifications regardless of race, gender or political views. Each applicant was first interviewed by a small sub-committee and his/her references were contacted and explored. We worked conscientiously to give each applicant a fair hearing, evaluating written material, including writing samples, and then giving each applicant equal opportunity to present him or herself in a 30-minute question and answer interview in front of the full panel. It was a rigorous process intended to look at an applicant's professional background, i.e. legal knowledge, as well as judicial temperament, i.e. qualities such as "mature sense of proportion" and "even disposition".

I was pleased to be part of an important though unfortunately still uncommon process geared to improving our system for the selection of judges. The WCC, as one of the civic organizations called upon to send a representative to the panel, is thereby helping to develop an alternative judicial selection process which may be used in other counties of New York State and beyond. Recently in an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor made a plea for each state to review its judicial selection process. She urged a "merit selection" system with nonpartisan nominating commissions to investigate applicants for judicial vacancies, followed by performance evaluations. Having now experienced the present system in New York County first hand, I can see that it's a step in the right direction, but one that is not used widely enough and is limited in scope.

"I have just finished my work with the Independent Judicial Screening Panel and I want to thank the Women's City Club for the chance to serve."

Ellyn Schiff Berman

2/24/10 Advocated for passage of NYS Senate bill authorizing boards of elections to employ election inspectors to increase cadre of trained poll workers on adjustment to new voting machines.

2/22/10 Joined coalition in letter urging NYC Board of Elections in its search for a new executive director to take adequate time and adopt minimum qualifications and accountability measures.

2/12/10 Urged Mayor Bloomberg in appointment of Charter Revision Commission to strive for diversity, grant independence and allow adequate time for the task.

2/11/10 Thanked NYS Senator Schneiderman for leadership in expelling Hiram Monserrate from Senate following conviction on misdemeanor assault charges.

2/9/10 Testified before NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations calling for public hearing on policy and practices used to recruit and train poll workers for transition to new voting machines.

2/2/10 Mobilized WCC members to call on NYS Senator John Sampson to bring resolution to Senate floor to expel Hiram Monserrate from Senate based on his misdemeanor assault conviction.

Result: NYS Senate voted to expel Hiram Monserrate.

2/1/10 Joined coalition expressing concern to Board of Elections about how new voting machines treat overvotes [for more candidates than offices open] and recommending usability testing.

1/22/10 Met with NYC Council Speaker Quinn to discuss WCC's public policy priorities.

COUNCIL MEMBER DANIEL GARODNICK: AFFORDABLE CO-OP CONVERSION

By

Marilyn Wellemeier

At a Lunchtime with Legislators program on June 1st Pam Elam, chair of WCC's NYC Charter Revision Task Force, introduced **DANIEL GARODNICK** as "one of the rising stars of the City Council." His Eastside district, from 14th to 97th streets, elected him to a second term in November 2009. With affordable housing as his topic at WCC, Garodnick focused on the fate of Stuyvesant Town where he lived as a boy and still lives, and Peter Cooper Village, both huge complexes developed by Met Life for World War II vets. "Stability of the Neighborhood was the flavor of the place when I was growing up," he recalled.

"It's not everyday you get elected to office and 20% of your district goes up for sale."

Hon. Daniel Garodnick

Met Life enjoyed a limited return on those properties replete with tax breaks for about 45 years. The units were then covered by rent stabilization. In 2001 Met Life started deregulating. When an apartment became vacant Met Life renovated and was entitled to add one-fortieth of the cost of renovation to the rent. So a \$2,000 apartment could become a \$3,000 apartment, bringing it to a market rate. One fourth of the units were deregulated in 2005-06.

In a strategic decision Met Life put a big part of its real estate, including Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village up for sale. "It's not every day you get elected to office and 20 percent of your district goes up for sale," Garodnick remarked.

"Seeing this scenario unfold," the resident Council member observed, "I thought it important for tenants to organize to find a way to buy the apartments for themselves and convert to some sort of equity cooperative." Met Life said "No," then relented. The residents bid \$4.5 billion. The properties sold for \$5.45 billion to Tishman Speyer and Blackrock, with funds from many participants including Singapore, the Hartford Companies and the Church of England.

The purpose of that deal was to turn over rent stabilized units for market rates quickly, creating a luxury market in a master community. Three things got in the way: The tenants of Stuyvesant and Peter Cooper were rent stabilized with every legal right to be there. While the buyers assumed that most tenants actually lived in Florida, far more people really lived in these complexes than the buyers expected. Second, the owners had been receiving a tax break, which meant they weren't allowed to deregulate the rents. What's more, Tishman Speyer's reserves were low and they could not pay their debts with money coming in from rents. Finally the real estate market fell apart. Tishman Speyer defaulted but still manages the properties and there has been no steep drop in services because the rent goes to maintenance before it goes to pay debt. Foreclosure will probably occur by summer's end, Garodnick noted. As a rental property Stuyvesant Town is worth only about \$1.2 billion.

In a second attempt to convert these communities, the tenants association of Stuyvesant and Peter Cooper has brought in a financial advisor as well as the law firm of Paul Weiss, where Garodnick had been a litigator before entering public office.

The idea is to create a coop or condo with restrictions so residents can buy at a discount and stabilized tenants can stay without buying. They will test potential partners, but insist that only the united tenants of Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper can effect conversion. The tenants association has drawn up a unity pledge of belief in what the association is doing and 65 percent of the units have signed on. Nothing in the law gives them the power to make the conversion. But, says Garodnick, "We have political support, all the way from [Senator] Chuck Shumer down to me."

"I think we are going to succeed this time.... We are piecing together something that will allow us to achieve the goals we set out, to maximize places for tenants, long-term affordability, practical maintenance and stability."



NYC ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL GARODNICK SPEAKS TO WCC ON PLANS FOR STUYVESANT TOWN

THE COMPLETE COUNT: U.S. CENSUS 2010

By Anne-Sophie Martz

Recognizing that New York City is regularly undercounted in the Census, the WCC Board passed a resolution in December 2009 to present a program informing members on how we can help and to undertake a related project. On February 9 at 33 West 60th Street, **Barbara Zucker**, the chair of the Public Policy Committee, introduced three speakers.

Before her appointment by the Mayor, **STACEY CUMBERBATCH** was a State Assistant Attorney General and Assistant Corporation Council in the City Law Dept. She gave us a broad view of the Census as a constitutional mandate to determine the number of seats each state would have in the House of Representatives. The data collected also help determine boundaries for legislative and congressional districts and, in part, the allocation of more than \$400 billion to states and communities by the federal government.

The Commerce Department administers the Census Bureau, which every ten years sends a form to every recorded household in the country and makes serious efforts to find and get a response from every resident. The final count is delivered to the President and the redistricting results to the states.

In 2000 only 57 percent of New York City households sent in the completed form, resulting, even after follow-up efforts, in a serious undercount for the City. Ms. Cumberbatch said that a big factor is the large immigrant population, legal and illegal, whose difficulties with the English language and fear of exposure make it wary of answering questions. The fact is, she emphasized, that the answers do not make anyone liable for prosecution, but do affect the equitable allotment of funds for services that are sorely needed in the City. Since Dominican areas had in the past done better than other immigrant areas, because their leaders realized that it was important to persuade people to be counted, Ms. Cumberbatch decided to make use of official "2010 Census Partners" to help increase response rates. WCC and many other organizations have become "Partners."

NORMAN ENG, Director of Media Relations for the New York Immigration Coalition, came to America as a child from Hong Kong. He earned his law degree at Fordham University and now works on State budget issues along with language

problems that come up in connection with social services and the police. Since over 30 percent of New Yorkers are foreign born, he said, many residents have language problems, but there is also often a cultural distrust of government especially by undocumented residents; they must be counted, but need reassurance.

This year hundreds of community groups are working to remind everyone of the importance of the count. There will be posters in businesses and public places. Census Forums will be held in all five boroughs on March 27 in a festive atmosphere to help people with their forms. Mr. Eng's focus is on ethnic newspapers. He tries to get the Census portrayed as safe and confidential and very important for school money.

BECCA PALMER, the third speaker, is a Partnership Specialist in the Census Bureau. She works with the many volunteer groups who can help. Among the groups who may distrust the Census, she said, are the Lesbian community, local ethnic groups, faith-based communities and Business Improvement Districts. Before Census Day, April 1st, Ms. Palmer suggested several possible actions for individual members. Among them: distribute leaflets at subway stops, stores and restaurants; captain a building on Census Day; plan an event; social networking.

Q and A on counting special populations:



WCC's Barbara Zucker (right) presents (r-l) Stacey Cumberbatch, head of NYC Census, Norman Eng of Immigration Coalition and Becca Palmer, Census volunteer specialist.

Federal laws mandate counting prisoners at the prison. Upstate New York prisons hold 60,000 prisoners. Pending legislation would count them at their homes.

The Census Bureau designates a 24-hour period for counting the homeless at places where they get services and in known places where they can

usually be found.

There is a "Census in the Schools" website and curricular materials are available. A member commented: "Civics in the schools is important, with the low adult literacy in the City."

The forms are checked for duplication. Some populations are over counted, e.g. "Snowbirds", people with more than one home.

In 2000 the City did not challenge the count, though minorities have always been undercounted. A system of statistical adjustment was struck down by the Supreme Court.

WCC ACTS

PUBLIC POLICY Cont'd

12/29/09 Testified before NYC Board of Elections on pros and cons of three optical scan voting systems under consideration to replace the City's lever voting machines.

TASK FORCES

Arts & Preservation

4/10/10 Testified before NYC Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses in support of landmark designation for West Park Presbyterian Church on W. 86th St.

2/17/10 Wrote to Speaker Quinn encouraging her to get NYC Council to approve landmark designation for West Park Presbyterian Church.

Charter Revision

3/24/10 Created task force to develop WCC proposals and respond to Commission recommendations.

According to the Census Bureau NYC increased its mail-in participation rate by 3 percent, earning a 60 percent mail-in rate in 2010 (up from 57 percent in 2000).

Education

4/7/10 Created action plan on student enrollment, governance of the Dept. of Education, and Race to the Top grants to innovate and reform programs.

Physical Education

3/2/10 Met with Lori Benson, director of the Dept. of Education's Office of School Fitness program, and Cathy Nonas of the Dept. of Health's School Health program to discuss how to improve physical fitness in the City's public schools.

Poverty

1/20/10 Suggested criteria to Mayor Bloomberg for budget cuts without jeopardizing programs and services for the City's most vulnerable populations.

12/16/09 Urged Gov. Paterson to approve revisions to State law that would protect homeless individuals and families from ejection from shelters for arbitrary reasons or bureaucratic error.

TOUR: EARLY NYC AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

By Marilyn Wellemeyer

On the morning of May 13 a group of Women's City Club members met at the Federal Hall National Memorial, 26 Wall Street, to tour downtown locations significant to early African American history and also the African Burial Ground National Monument, which belongs to the National Park System. In 1991 construction workers at 290 Broadway discovered an old cemetery. Excavation yielded remains of 419 African Americans. Sent to Howard University in Washington, D.C. for study, the 17th and 18th century remains were returned to New York for ceremonial reburial in 2003.

PARK RANGER **CYRUS FORMAN** led us on an extensive 90-minute walking tour. The first enslaved Africans arrived in 1626 with the Dutch West India Company. In time they gained tracts of land. Their burial ground began through agreement with the Dutch.

The British took over New Amsterdam in 1664. At 66 Pearl Street a covered 18th century cistern was a meeting place where slaves drew water for their British masters. Pearl Street had been a beach where pearls washed up. Markets here sold crafts made by slaves. African dancing was popular; break dancing and eventually tap dancing emerged.

Wall Street, the only straight street in the financial district, was a stockade built by African labor originally to keep out Indians and the English. It formed a boundary of the City until the late 1600's. Wall and Pearl Streets, the first point of debarkation, had been the site of a slave market, with daily auctions. Here slaves could begin earning freedom from absentee owners, who purchased them as an investment, by franchising their skills to increase their price. The stock exchange started across the street from the slave market.

Under British law Africans were not allowed to ride horses, among other regulations. One third of NYC's population was composed of slaves. Slavery ended in New York in 1827, but because of the cotton trade New York City never ended its ties with the South.

On Nassau Street a parking lot is the site of an African Free School founded in 1794. Its curriculum included reading and writing Latin and was the envy of all city schools. A school at Beekman and Park Row was a site of early minstrel shows.

At Duane and Elk near City Hall PARK RANGER **JORDAN WRIGHT** took over to talk about the burial ground, which as shown on old maps had extended for several blocks. Most remains are of people from West and Central Africa.

The tour culminated with the African Burial Ground National Monument, at Broadway and Duane Street. Seven grass-covered burial mounds mark the locations of underground crypts where the remains were replaced, 60 bodies in each, facing east as close as possible to their original positions.

The large open granite Circle of the Diaspora symbolizes the dispersing of Africans from their homeland throughout the Western Hemisphere. Above the circular ramp engraved symbols represent the different original cultures of African Americans, displaying their diversity. The 24-foot Ancestral Libation Chamber symbolizes the African spirit and equals the distance below ground where remains were discovered. It is a place for meditation.

We are grateful to **Carol Leimas** for arranging this educational excursion.

For information on individual visits you may call 212-637-2019 or go online to www.nps.gov/afbg.



NATIONAL PARK RANGER CYRUS FORMAN
LEADS WCC'S TOUR

TOUR: NYC TRANSIT MUSEUM

By Sharon Yakata

New York City is an amazing, unique place and it is not surprising that the history of its transportation network is equally fascinating. The New York City subway system is over 100 years old and the museum displaying its history is located in a defunct station called Boerum Hill in Brooklyn Heights.

Our small group of Women's City Club members toured the museum on March 26 and learned that the first subway line, the Interboro Rapid Transit line (IRT), began construction in 1900; it was completed in a relatively short four years, opening in 1904. It ran from City Hall to Grand Central on the eastside and then westward to 145th Street. The Brooklyn Manhattan line (BMT) commenced in 1910 and the Independent (IND) was built in the 1930's. These three subway lines were an amazing accomplishment, chiseled out of Manhattan schist initially with only pickaxes, hammers and shovels. Jackhammers were not used until 1910.

Primarily Irish and Italian immigrants and African Americans built the system. Their wages ranged from \$4.50 (per day) for the teamsters and drivers to \$.75 for water boys. The subway was created because of the congestion in the City and the need to allow the population to move outside the overcrowded downtown area. The fare was 5¢ and remained at that rate until 1948 when it was increased to 10¢. We were shown an intriguing display of evolving fare collection boxes and turnstiles. The system went from paper tickets to coins to tokens of varying size and finally to metro cards.

The subway systems were financed by private investors -- the first subway line by August Belmont. The City of New York owned the tunnels but the investors owned the trains and tracks. It was not until 1940 when all three major companies went bankrupt that New York City took over the transit system. Later with the incorporation of the Long Island Railroad and the New York Central Railroad the Metropolitan Transportation Authority was created.

Another source of income was advertisements in the stations and in the subway cars. Looking at the old ads was a fascinating walk down memory lane for some of us.

The museum has an array of actual train cars used by the various systems. How many of us remember the rattan seats, or trains that carried a conductor in each car who called out stations and

used a lever to open the doors? Or the elevated lines with leather straps to hang on? A little tidbit that we learned on the tour - the trains are not all the same width; the Division A cars (the numbered lines) have three doors and are narrower than the Division B cars (the lettered lines). The reason: since this was a private business, Belmont wanted to make it difficult for competition; his trains and tracks were unique and would not complement competing lines.

Our guide, Kendra, told us about the development of surface transport, beginning with omnibuses in the 1870's, then horse cars, cable cars, trolleys and eventually buses.

A few other interesting factoids: the elevated line of the BRT, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit which later merged with the BMT, had for a period women-only cars. The older cars used light bulbs for illumination. To prevent the bulbs from being stolen, and used at home, some were AC bulbs, and the DC bulbs had opposite threading.

Where do old train cars go? Some have been cleaned out and dropped along the Atlantic coast to create reefs.

We didn't have a chance to watch the videos or some of the historical displays. I will have to return. I hope some of our members will have a chance to visit the museum, which is an easy subway ride from Manhattan's Westside. The museum is very child friendly with special programs on the weekend for kids. For history buffs, the Museum, part of the MTA, is definitely informative.

Thank you, **Carol Leimas**, for organizing this.



THE NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT MUSEUM
HOUSED IN A DEFUNCT BROOKLYN SUBWAY STATION

KUDOS

Actress **Marian Seldes**, a member of WCC for 18 years, received a 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award at Tony ceremonies on June 13 in Radio City Music Hall. Her career spans 60 years, from *Medea* in 1947 to *Deuce* in 2007. And her teaching has touched many aspiring Thespians. Congratulations!

307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1403
 New York, NY 10001

Agenda

Agenda	
EDITOR: MARILYN WELLMAYER	PRESIDENT: RUTH E. ACKER
EDITOR EMERITA: GERALDINE RHODS	VICE PRESIDENTS: EVA-MARIA TAUSIG
PRODUCTION: JORGE RUIZ	SECRETARIES: BARBARA ZUCKER
MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR: JOAN FABIO	TREASURER: SHARON YAKATA
VOLUNTEER & PROGRAM COORDINATOR: HEIDI OVERBECK	CO-COUNSEL: DORIS BEAUSOLEIL
BOOKKEEPER: KURT A. RICHWARGER	CO-COUNSEL: NADA L. WESTERMAN
AGENDA IS PUBLISHED BY THE WOMEN'S CITY CLUB OF NEW YORK	
307 SEVENTH AVENUE, SUITE 1403, NEW YORK, NY 10001 FOR INQUIRIES CALL (212) 353-8070, FAX (212) 228-4665, EMAIL INFO@WCCNY.ORG OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.WCCNY.ORG.	

BECOME A LIFE MEMBER!

WCC suggests that members consider Life Membership in the organization.

The \$5,000 fee, payable in one or two yearly installments, obviates the need to pay each year while helping WCC finances.

Join the 30 current members who have taken advantage of the membership level. Throughout the years many members have done so. Helmut Friedlaender did so when he was in his 90's; two generations of Ackers – mother Helen and daughter Ruth – did so in their relative youth. Fran Levenson and Bernard Warshavsky are Dual Life Members.

New Life Members will:

- be presented with an elegant WCC lapel pin to commemorate the member's dedication to the WCC.
- (if members elect to do so) receive their pin at a thank you presentation event at the WCC office in front of member's invited guest.
- receive life time membership benefits including free admission to most WCC programs, discounted rates to special events and tours and continue to receive our communications.