

Gotham Gazette - New York City News, Politics and Policy

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NYC Didja Know?

Because it weighs some two hundred tons, Central Park Cleopatra's Needle had to be rolled on



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NYC News & Policy

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Published each weekday by Citizens Union Foundation

WEDNESDAY 29 DECEMBER 1999

Special Holiday Edition



News

Post-Crew Era Begins...

(29 dec 99) In a two-and-one-half hour "closed door" meeting, the Board of Education decided yesterday to buy out the remaining six months of Rudy Crew's contract, to forego the services of an outside search committee to find his successor, to hire an interim Chancellor by 12 January, and to secure a permanent replacement by May. Mayor Giuliani said he would play a "consulting role" in the process, and Board President William Thompson agreed. Over the past year, educators and politicians have cited Chicago's new centralized system as an example for NYC to emulate. A helpful piece in this morning's Times filed by Dirk Johnson describes the tough management style of Paul Vallas, that city's self-described chief executive of the school system. Vallas supports the notion, touted here by the Mayor, that big-city school heads should be managers, not educators. Vallas advises New York to eschew the standard practice of bringing in someone from a system in a smaller city. Look locally, he says, and outside the box.

Today's Lead Story

of an outside search committee to find his successor, to hire an interim Chancellor by 12 January, and to secure a permanent replacement by May.

Recent stories...

Immigrant Politics... Curious Philanthropy...

In The Dailies

- Times:** Battle on East River
- News:** Rudy: Welfare is Dead
- Post:** Y2K Shopping Anxieties
- N'day:** Lottery Fever Strikes



SEVEN STORIES THAT WERE SUPPOSED TO BE BIG BUT WEREN'T:

Campaign Finance: Last January it looked as if the Mayor would make an all-out assault against the Campaign Finance Board's 4:1 matching program for qualifying campaign contributions. Didn't happen... **West Side Stadium:** First there was going to be a new Yankee Stadium on the far west of Manhattan, and then there was going to be a big new football stadium. Forget both. **Zoning**



The Top 10 NYC News Stories of 1999

1. **The Boom.** 1999 set records for sustained economic growth and job creation. The City's economy is on an historic roll. Nothing else matters so much. This year the economic powerhouse was found not on Wall Street but in Silicon Alley. All hail dot coms!
2. **Diallo.** The Diallo slaying was the most memorable in a series of incidents that frayed public confidence in the NYPD. Police procedures and tactics -- and officers' attitudes towards blacks and Latinos -- were once again the subject of widespread questioning.
3. **School Blues.** After a few years of cautious optimism, 1999 was a downer for NYC public schools. Test scores were disappointing, plans for capital investments were cut back, and the Chancellor was fired. Hopeful auguries: reduced class sizes, new principals' contract, broad support for reforms.
4. **The Mega-Campaign.** Rudy vs. Hillary dominated political substance and spin more than a year before the election. Few statements of the Mayor were scrutinized without reference to how they would play with upstate voters. Democrats seem divided between those who embrace the Clinton candidacy and those who accept it stoically.
5. **Workfare.** No question that the welfare rolls are cut, that welfare spending is down, and that recipients are engaging in "work experiences" at a rate hitherto unknown. But many object to the linkage of payments with forced work, and the issue was cast in high relief when the Administration issued new regs for homeless parents.



6. **Port Authority**


cannonballs upon its arrival in New York in 1880.

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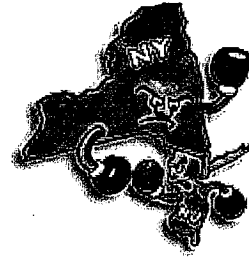
 Editorial

 Design

About Goth. Gaz.

In April Planning Commissioner Rose promised a revolution in the NYC zoning code. A sub-revolutionary proposal (is it "the" proposal?) finally emerged in December. The real action comes next spring... **Governor's Island:** Under the auspices of the City, rival factions agreed on a consensus plan on what to do with the place, but the State stays mum, and Congress has the last word. Has to go forward before Sen. Moynihan leaves... **Alan Hevesi:** Low-profile year for the City Comptroller, who lost ground to Comeback Kids Mark Green and Peter Vallone in the quest for 2001 Dem nomination for Mayor... **Labor Unrest:** Maybe next year, but the TWU decided to accept a business-as-usual deal in 1999... **City Council:** Another twelve months of underachievement for a body that many had said would step up to a new prominence in 1999. Oh, well. Wait 'til....

Next Week: OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS PREDICT THE TOP STORIES OF 2000. (Care to Join In? Send your personal picks to cnugent@gothamgazette.com. Now!)



Brawls. This month's boycott of the Port Authority governing board by the entire NYS delegation is the latest in a series of ill-tempered confrontations between Empire and Garden over the equitable division of

investments and revenues. Scores of billions of dollars are at stake.

7. **"Sensation."** The Brooklyn Museum brouhaha took a no-brainer legal issue (Does the government have the right to cancel a contract when the contracting party exhibits art distasteful to the head of the government?) and mixed it tastily with campaign politics, shock-art marketing machinations, and unflattering displays of timidity by some big arts institutions.

8. **Charter Revision.** Old-fashioned liberals in liberal districts turned out to squash the Mayor's attempt at a hasty and piecemeal revision of the City Charter. A show of strength by Mark Green and civic groups. Also memorable for a spectacularly misguided campaign of telephoning voters on the Upper West Side with an automated message from the Mayor.

9. **Second Avenue Subway.** When was the last time that a question of transit infrastructure became a hot political issue? Planners, environmentalists, business leaders, and Manhattan officeholders combined to make realizable the long-dormant, half-century-old plan for a new East Side line.

10. **Yankeephoria.** One of the best baseball teams of all time seems to consist of likeable men from many cultures who prize team spirit and the bottom line of winning. The Yanks provided civic glue and a vivid example of multi-ethnic excellence. Even Mets fans loved them.

Site of the Moment...



The Monster Walks

Hey! You! Look up! A Virtual Tour of NYC's Architectural Gargoyles.



Questions about NYC?

Ask Mother Knickerbocker!

Sees all! Knows all! Tells all!

Gotham Gazette

"All the news that's fit to click."

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This website is made possible by a generous grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation