

On AIR



THE BRONX TALKS

ON Bronx Talk AM

Host: **GARY AXELBANK**

Term limits, politics, tax cuts, domestic violence, and water filtration were just a few of the wide variety of subjects discussed recently on BronxTalk. Here are excerpts:

COUNCILMAN JOEL RIVERA, ON TERM LIMITS:

I was wronged by an editorial in a newspaper. I voted no to repeal term limits. I voted no because the vote of the people had been heard. If it's going to be repealed, it should be by another referendum. People have spoken not once, but two times. I was never in favor of the repeal. What I have been against was the fact that a multi-billionaire tried to make a market on a campaign and have a one-sided campaign. You had to appreciate the fact that a multi-billionaire comes into our community and tries to tell us who we can vote for. That is not right, that is unjust, and that is unfair. That is exactly what I denounced. I was misquoted. They must have assumed that I was taking a position on term limits. But I never took a position to favor the repeal.

CONGRESSMAN JOSÉ E. SERRANO, ON THE BUSH TAX PLAN:

The people of the South Bronx and my district are smart enough and in tune enough to know that a tax cut which may give them \$300 a year more, \$600 a year more, compared to somebody else getting \$15,000 who makes close to a million dollars, they may pay in another way in a couple of years by seeing a reduction of services for their senior citizen grandmother or for the local hospital. Tax cuts are not the issue that I hear the most. Services is the larger issue. We will be stuck with cuts in services. There is more of a concern on services than there is on, "Give me another \$200 in my pocket."

CATHY STEWART, INDEPENDENCE PARTY:

Ralph Nader was competing for votes. Al Gore had no more right to those votes, nor did George Bush, nor did Ralph Nader. The notion that, somehow, an independent is a different class of citizen and isn't just out in the marketplace of our democracy competing for ideas and the hearts and votes of American citizens is really problematic. We've just launched an independent appeal that's reaching out to independents across the country. It's an appeal that's being made to Ralph Nader, Gov. Jesse Ventura, and Ross Perot "probably the biggest names in independent politics" calling on them to unify the independent movement, and call for a march on Washington of independents sometime this year so that we can flex our

muscle and demonstrate that there is a unity of vision around the need to restructure our political process.

JEFFREY GRATZ, EPA, ON THE MOSHOLU WATER FILTRATION PLANT COURT DECISION:

We gave the city plenty of time from the very start to do what was necessary to apply to the state legislature, to go through the sitting process in a diligent fashion. At this point, the ball is in the city's court. The city took a gamble and it lost. This is a public health issue and that's what we're looking at it as. The gamble is that they did not need State approval and they really lost that gamble.

AUBREY ROGERS, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION:

The Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation is one of fifteen women's demonstration projects that we've just announced. That means that a center will be dedicated to helping women-owned businesses, helping the ones that exist grow and expand, and encouraging women to go into business by having a counseling service and workshops. They will do technical assistance. They will do training. There's a great need in the Bronx. There are nine million women-owned businesses, a lot of them in the Bronx.

DAWN INSANELLI, STRICTLY BRONX:

There was a New York City region map in one of the major bookstores that's sold throughout the country. When I read the paragraph about the Bronx, it pretty much got us crazy. It said, "Primarily residential, many parts of the Bronx have seen better days. Yet despite the urban decay, which is the focus of attention from community, government, and philanthropic groups, the Bronx is also known as the borough of universities." That had no place in a tourism publication. We felt as a group that we should go out and make a stand and directly act on this. We wrote a letter to Unique Media (the publishers of the map) asking them to explain why they chose to depict our borough this way. They did not choose to depict any other borough in this fashion.

MAJORA CARTER, SUSTAINABLE SOUTH BRONX:

My job as Executive Director of Sustainable South Bronx will be to build consensus and figure out ways so that communities are not always bearing the brunt of environmental burdens. Also, we'll be taking up problems that no one else wants to deal with. It is about coming up with a holistic approach that will create sustain-



North View of the Grand Concourse

PHOTO: BRONX PICTURE PAGE.

ability for the people that live there today and in the future.

PAT LOGAN, BRONX PARKS SPEAK UP:

There have been a lot of improvements in the last 15 to 20 years in the Bronx, a lot of them around housing. Now, people are starting to look at some of the issues around housing that also makes for a sustainable neighborhood. We're trying to put a coalition together around parks. The current parks budget is less than one half of one percent of the city budget. That just isn't cutting it. Under this administration, we have seen a lot of good capital improvements in our Bronx parks, but we need to worry about ongoing maintenance down the line. We don't want to lose those capital improvements. We also would like to see some programming come back into these parks.

DR. WINSTON PRICE, AETNA U.S. HEALTHCARE, ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

There's a lot of psychological overtones to the behavior of being victimized for many years. Turning to the family would seem to be the simplest and easiest and quickest way to get resources. Unfortunately in our society, that is not always received in the proper light. Many abused women are turned away from family. They're felt to be a cause of the problem. So they turn away from looking for help, go back to the abusive situation, and try to tolerate the situation. They're often told, "I've been through this. You just need to stick it out." "He'll change." Many of the abusive males have cycles that they go through. When they reach a crisis, they will turn around and

seem to be the most docile individual you ever want to see. But then the cycle begins all over again with the abuse.

SUSANNAH PASQUANTONIO, HUNGER ACTION NETWORK:

Food stamps are now in the form of an electronic benefit transfer card. It started last year. When you go to the supermarket, you don't have to take out the embarrassing coupon. You just swipe the card. It looks like you have an ATM card. As a result of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law, many people thought that they were getting pushed off the welfare rolls and that they weren't eligible for food stamps anymore. The food stamp is a nutrition program. It's not welfare. The majority are still eligible, but they don't know it.

MARIA UZOVICH, AGING IN AMERICA, ON THE NEED FOR DIVERSE PROGRAMS:

Most senior centers need to keep basic arts and crafts programs available for their clients. People need to have an activity to provide them with self-expression and creative opportunities. Also, senior center staff need to provide communication and mixer programs. You need to create programs that would get them to know each other, make them feel comfortable. And the educational programs are very important and are becoming even more important as we're attracting the younger senior. They've been learning all their lives and they shouldn't stop learning at age 60 or 70 or 80. There's always more to learn, especially with the latest technology. Believe it or not, the seniors are very eager to learn the Internet.