

On AIR



THE BRONX TALKS

ON BronxTalk AM

Host: GARY AXELBANK

Like the rest of the nation, the Bronx was buzzing this week about the presidential election. BronxTalk also featured discussions about community issues, Darryl Strawberry, Veterans Day, and some important not-for-profit programs in the Bronx. Here are excerpts:

Dr. Frederick L. Shields, Mercy College, on the presidential election: There is a potential for unifying the country with reforms in many areas, not just in vote counting and the electoral college and that sort of thing. It almost reminds me a little of the lesson that the children and adults got in the country during the Lewinsky-Clinton impeachment process, although that kind of was an expensive price to pay for a little education. I've heard people in the networks referring to this election as the closest in its generation, the closest since 1960. In fact, this is by far the closest election in American history.

Prof. Herminio Martínez, Lehman College, on lawsuits about the Florida vote:

The courts are going to be hearing the arguments. We have to keep in mind what they're going to be looking for. They're going to, most likely, be looking for willful intent to deny the voters the right to exercise the vote both in Palm Beach and in other parts. If, in fact, the court finds out there was no willful intent, then most likely they will uphold the vote count. That issue of willful intent has to be cleared up. Then the debate could go on, because regardless of who's elected President, questions will continue to be raised both about the difference between the popular vote and the electoral vote, and about the very narrow margin that will determine who becomes the President. Whoever the President is will inherit this dispute and have a very divided nation.

Naomi Bernstein, Board of Elections, on how vote results get to the networks: After the polls close, our inspectors open up the machine to reveal the numbers next to each candidate. The four inspectors are in each election district for each machine -- two Democrats and two Republicans. Two of them will call out the numbers next to each candidate's name. Two will write down the numbers on the canvas sheet. One copy is put in the back of the machine for verification when it comes back to the Board. Another one goes back to the Board for that evening's tally. Then the third is given to the police officer on duty. That's where everything happens. He takes it back

to his police precinct, punches in numbers into the computer that's connected to 1 Police Plaza, and the police get all those numbers. Then AP News Election Service picks up those numbers, translates it into election data, and then they put it out over their AP wires.

Lorraine Coyle Koppell, Attorney, on her race against Guy Velella:

The two issues that should have played the largest role were all the scandals surrounding Guy Velella. When I was in the street, people just didn't seem to care. They said, "You know what, they all do it." But in fact, they don't all do it. There are a lot of people who don't do the things that Guy Velella is accused of doing and, in fact, has admitted to. That didn't resonate the way I thought it would. It certainly didn't resonate the way it would have resonated with me if I had heard these same things. The other thing that we heard was, "I know what he's like, but he did this or he did that with taxpayer dollars." Dart Westphal, Harlem River Valley Development Corp., on plans to develop the Harlem River waterfront: We need to maintain the interest and show the vision of what it could look like--where you put the park, where you put the housing development, which do you switch around where. If we can maintain the whole vision, then we can orchestrate all these different things. But, it'll take a lot of years to make anything happen.

Bill Perkins, 9th C.D., on rats:

For sometime, we've had a blasé attitude about it. A change in that attitude will change our approaches to dealing with it, including legislation that will address the way in which we are disposing of our garbage, as well as legislation that will look at other aspects of this problem. There's no single source of the problem and there's no magic bullet solution to the problem. It's a multifaceted problem. Sometimes when we have construction tearing up the ground, it exposes the rats and they begin to run all over the place.

Eddie Ellis, Community Justice Center, on programs for youthful offenders:

There doesn't seem to be an enormous commitment on the part of city government to improve services, particularly for this population which they consider to be very troubled. Many of the young people that we work with have violent backgrounds, have been involved with violent incidents that resulted in their incarceration. Many of them, however, have a sincere desire to change and are looking for some assistance--particularly from adults-- that will put



Prof. Herminio Martínez, Lehman College

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them on the right path and allow them to have the kinds of resources necessary to change their lives. That's the most rewarding part of the job, when you can take a young person who's troubled or who has had trouble in the past, provide the kinds of tools that are necessary to straighten their lives out, help them get back on their feet, get them back into school, get them into employment situations, and then see them a year later and have them say, "I'm doing pretty well. I got married. I just had a baby." That's a tremendous reward.

David Gibson, VIP Community Services, on Darryl Strawberry:

There are two things that need to take place: a collaboration and partnership between the criminal justice system and the treatment system--to understand what each other's goals are, and to come out with some type of strategic plan in addressing Darryl's problems. Darryl is experiencing a number of major stresses that put him at risk for relapse. His health problems, even possibly that he might be having some family problems, and the feelings of failure create a lot of stress. This is leading to the relapse. At this point, we need to take a look at what are the actual treatment strategies that are being used with Darryl. Are those strategies the type of strategies that will be most effective with Darryl? I would consider

long-term treatment for Darryl.

Gerald Scott Mitchell, Vietnam Veteran:

It's not easy to send young men off to war and come back without the fellows you went over with. I'm constantly reminded of that. But I have no regrets. As an American citizen, I just would like the people who have the opportunity to become a citizen to stop taking freedom for granted because there's a lot of blood that has been spilled for them to live free and not to speak another language other than what we have here as Americans. I've always been proud to serve my country. Being a veteran is something I'm very proud of. I wouldn't change my life for anything. I just wish that people would respect the veterans and give them their just due. When you send us off to war, make sure you take care of us when we come back because we come back hurt.

Dr. Glen Nygreen, Bronx Rotary, on the "Gift of Life", which helps foreign children get health care:

It's for children between four to eight years old. Just the thrill of being able to welcome a child who is seriously ill, lackadaisical with no energy, unable to function, and to see that child six weeks later leaving, going back to his or her home country with a whole life ahead is just a heartwarming experience.