

DAILY NEWS

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

Kin preview 8 WTC memorial designs

By GREG GITTRICH
and TAMER EL-GHOBASHY
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

The footprints of the twin towers are clearly visible in all eight of the finalists for a World Trade Center memorial, but none preserves the space down to the bedrock.

"There is respect for the footprints in all of them, and you really see that," said Nikki Stern, the widow of Marsh & McLennan Vice President Jim Portori, after she looked at models of the

competing designs at the World Financial Center's Winter Garden last night. The special preview was attended by about 25 victims' families.

The designs all make extensive use of natural elements such as trees, grass, water and light, often including them as a way to delineate the footprints, the relatives said.

"They're all very creative," said Jack Lynch, whose son, Firefighter Michael Lynch, died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist at-

tack. "They've done a great job within the guidelines."

"It was a very emotional and moving experience," said Monica Iken, who lost her husband, Michael.

The designs will be unveiled to the public at 10:30 a.m. today and remain on display for several weeks.

But, unlike the international competition that led to the selection of Daniel Libeskind's overall plan for Ground Zero, the memorial design contest includes no public input.

A special jury will select the winning entry by year's end.

Among the finalists, only one preserves virtually all of the north tower's footprint and some of the south tower's footprint down to the bedrock.

All the designs are multilevel and all provide a space where unidentified remains can be entombed and a way for the families to descend to the bedrock. Some bring elements of the memorial to street level, the families said. One features a vast lawn that is supposed to be ac-

cessed only by family members for the next 20 years.

Each treats the controversial issue of listing the dead differently. For example, one groups them by where they died, another by age, and another names rescue workers separately, the relatives said.

In video presentations, the architects — all relatively unknown designers from around the world, including the U.S., Israel, Japan and France — said they were willing to revise their concepts.



Iraq war. With his first campaign shot, Clark got himself right in the foot.

This game of politics is complicated. From time to time, the gifted amateur comes along — Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan — but it is no accident that the two are often likened to each other. They were enormously appealing presences, and both had more than a smattering of political experience — Ike as supreme commander in World War II, Reagan as a union and anti-Communist activist.

More important, both Ike and Reagan had important constituencies that urged them to run — and when they did, they won big. No one is predicting that for Schwarzenegger — and no one is predicting anything for Huffington, who, nonetheless, has the backing of some very smart people.

What are these people thinking? Huffington could not govern. The Democratic-controlled California Legislature is not going to play ball with someone who once swooned for Newt Gingrich and helped run the Republican senatorial campaign of her former husband, Michael Huffington. As for Schwarzenegger, that same Legislature is going to be there for him, too. Maybe he can be persuasive, but that's impossible.

crat-turned-Republican. As will any governor of California, Bloomberg has had to raise taxes and cut services. He has a near-fatal 57% disapproval rating.

Some of that is no fault of his — who likes higher taxes? — but some of it is. He has been learning how to be a politician on the job. It has cost him.

Or look at Jesse Ventura, another relative amateur, who became governor of Minnesota on the basis of straight talking and a to-hell-with-politics persona. It turned out a big mouth was not enough. Ventura is back in show business, which, it can fairly be said, he never left.

I can appreciate the yearning for the outsider, the gifted amateur, since too many politicians become so burdened by experience, they can't say anything straight. But the tendency to see all issues as contemporary Gordian knots — one slash of the sword will do it — underestimates the complexity of governing. After you win, you actually have to do something.

Clark plunged into the presidential race without the foggiest notion of what he thinks on a range of domestic issues. Schwarzenegger mutters "details, details" while reading up on what he should already know. "The Candidate" was a drama. What's happening now is a farce.

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Prayers at public school events are not exactly my cup of tea. However, if people want to have such prayers, there is nothing in the history of our republic that suggests it is illegal for them to do so.

The court decisions of the past 50 years are raw exercises in legislative power. Judges don't like prayer in schools, and therefore they legislate against the practice. Since their power is virtually unlimited (as we saw in the theft of the 2000 presidential election), they can do whatever they want. Only impeachment or a constitutional amendment or a change in legal fashions can repeal the court's legislation. The court as a third and unelected legislature has absolute power. Absolute power, as we know, corrupts absolutely.

The First Amendment's clause on religion is a delicate balancing act. It prohibits the American government from interfering with the free exercise of religion or establishing an official religion, as the Church of England is established in England.

The court decisions of the last half-century have twisted the establishment part of the clause beyond recognition and have notably interfered with the free exercise of religion. The justices have used clever little arguments that lawyers so dearly love to justify the establishment of unbelief as the official religion of America.

The underlying conviction that motivated these decisions back in the 1950s was that religion is really not a good thing and should not be permitted to interfere with the ordinary processes of American democracy.

With some exceptions, the legal theorists at the elite law schools of the country who support the "wall of separation" and their journalistic supporters are agnostics or atheists. Like any religious group, they want to establish their own religion, and they have done so.

The sure sign that they are hypocrites is that they repeat the "wall of separation" cliché as a magic formula, though they know the phrase is not a direct quote from the Constitution but rather words Thomas Jefferson penned in a letter. It has become the approved mantra for preventing freedom of school choice for poor parents. Almost all the members of the Senate exercise such freedom of choice because they can afford to pay tuition for elite private schools. But the poor people of the District of Columbia are denied such freedom because it would violate the "wall of separation."

What an exercise of phony piety.

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WTC footprints will stay sacred

By KEVIN M. RAMPE

From the moment Daniel Libeskind unveiled his vision for the future World Trade Center site on Feb. 27, it was clear he had achieved the seemingly impossible: at once transforming the site into a place where loss is remembered and life is celebrated.

But before Libeskind even finished the presentation, many questioned whether his vision could survive the months of technical review and refinement that lay ahead. Last week, the Lower Manhattan Development Corp. and the Port Authority answered that question with a resounding yes.

The Libeskind vision emerged not only intact, but improved. The Freedom Tower remains the tallest building in the world, located in the place Libeskind designated, only now it is accompanied by an expanded site for a performing arts center.

The spiraling configuration of buildings, evocative of the Statue of Liberty, remains as well, only with less square footage to allow for more sunlight and open space. Truck security screening, located within the site in Libeskind's original

vision, has now been shifted off-site, greatly enhancing the safety of the entire complex.

Most important, Libeskind's design provides a dramatic setting for the memorial, which is why it resonated with millions of people around the world. The 4½-acre memorial site is framed on one side by the exposed slurry wall, a metaphor for the enduring strength of our democracy, and on the other by a protective ring of cultural buildings.

But in one key respect, Libeskind's memorial setting has been improved.

Many people feel it is essential that the memorial site demarcate and preserve the place where the towers once stood — the footprints. That's why the LMDC made recognition of the footprints a fundamental requirement in the guidelines for the memorial competition now underway. This fall, an independent jury will choose a winning memorial design from among 5,200 submissions from 62 nations.

At the direction of Gov. Pataki, planners went to great lengths to leave the footprints in the Libeskind design free of all but the most essential infrastructure. To do so, the entire substructure of the

site has been reconfigured so truck ramps no longer traverse the footprints underground. What remains will be the infrastructure necessary to support the memorial and the restored PATH service, itself a symbol of our resolve to rebuild.

Sadly, around the time of the second anniversary, some people spread false and cruel rumors about the future use of the footprints, suggesting that a hot dog stand or the like would be located underneath the memorial. Let me be clear: Nothing could be further from the truth.

No matter what form the memorial takes, there will never, ever be commercial or retail space where the towers once stood. We will, however, fulfill our solemn obligation to create a memorial that will make our entire nation proud.

As we continue to rebuild from 9/11, it's important to preserve the spirit of unity so much on display in the aftermath of the attacks. Many assumed that once the recovery ended and the last embers faded, so, too, would that spirit of unity.

It did not. It has not. And it never will. Rampe is president of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp.

DAILY NEWS

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

WTC

After September 11th, the Environmental Protection Agency had a Health Warning for New Yorkers:



"The concern raised by these samples [of dust containing asbestos] would be for the workers at the cleanup site and for those workers who might be returning to their offices on or near Water Street on Monday, September 17, 2001."

(9/14/01 DRAFT EPA PRESS RELEASE SENT FOR WHITE HOUSE APPROVAL)

But the Bush White House Distorted the Truth:

"Our tests show that it is safe for New Yorkers to go back to work in New York's financial district."

(WHITE HOUSE EDITED 9/16/01 PRESS RELEASE)

The Bush White House's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) instructed the EPA to give the public misleading information about the air quality in lower Manhattan, according to a report from EPA's Inspector General. As a result of the White House CEQ's influence, guidance for cleaning indoor spaces and information about the potential health effects from World Trade Center debris were not included in EPA's press releases. The White House told September 11th survivors and rescue workers it was safe to go back to work, deliberately misrepresented the truth about environmental threats to New Yorkers' health and safety and put them in peril. According to Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, 78% of the Ground Zero workers they examined suffered from lung ailments.

There is a better way to protect our families and communities from pollution and contamination, Mr. President. Be honest with us. What we don't know can hurt us.



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Friday, October 3, 2003 DAILY NEWS

Mayor Urges Moving Power Plant Site Out of Williamsburg

Continued From Page B1

radio show yesterday, the mayor said the 9.8-acre site in Greenpoint was better suited for a power plant because it could provide access to gas pipelines and the power grid without disrupting residential neighborhoods.

"It's already industrial," he said, "it doesn't hurt anybody, and given you have to build it someplace, this is a perfect compromise, or perfect solution, to a difficult problem that we always face of where do you put needed facilities that nobody wants in their backyard?"

A spokesman for the developer of the plant, TransGas Energy Systems, said that its engineering and environmental experts were review-

ing the Greenpoint site, and would respond to the mayor's suggestion by Oct. 27. State officials are evaluating the \$1 billion project, and are expected to make a decision on it by June 2004.

City officials have projected that they will need an additional 3,000 megawatts of electricity by 2008 to meet growing energy demands. Proposed projects, or those already under construction, would cover about 2,500 megawatts of that, including a 1,000-megawatt plant in Astoria, Queens, and a transmission line across the Hudson River that would deliver 600 megawatts.

The proposed plant would generate enough electricity to light about one million homes, and would burn relatively clean natural gas and recycle its waste heat to make steam

that could be used to heat buildings.

Deputy Mayor Daniel L. Doctoroff said city officials had looked at more than a dozen possible sites in Brooklyn, and seriously reviewed three others before settling on the one in Greenpoint, which is owned by the Exxon Mobil Corporation.

He said the city had retained a firm with experience in developing power plants, to ensure that the site would meet engineering, design, construction and environmental requirements for a power plant. He added that the city was not planning at this time to subsidize the project with taxpayer dollars.

The property was once used as a storage, blending and distribution site. But by the late 1970's, large amounts of petroleum had seeped into the ground, requiring state-or-

dered cleanup efforts. So far, about 1.5 million gallons of petroleum products have been recovered, state environmental officials said.

Barry Wood, a spokesman for Exxon Mobil, said the property had not been on the market and declined to put a price on it. He said the company was willing to consider selling it, but several issues would have to be addressed, like how the cleanup of the site would continue.

Matthew Burns, a spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, which is overseeing the cleanup, said that while state law did not prevent Exxon Mobil from selling the property, the new owner would be legally responsible for making sure that the cleanup continued.

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Newsday
9-16-03WTC
(WTC)

Coalition: Tests Show Air Still Bad Downtown

By Margaret Ramirez

STAFF WRITER

Anger about air quality in lower Manhattan escalated yesterday as a coalition of residents, office workers and health experts cited evidence that asbestos and other toxins remain inside buildings at dangerous levels.

Robert Gulack, senior counsel for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, said environmental testing by a private firm in January found asbestos in the stairwell of the Woolworth Building, which is across from City Hall. The firm reported 267,500 asbestos structures per square centimeter, nearly 27 times the acceptable federal level. Testing in March found more asbestos in an emergency stairwell used by SEC employees.

During a news conference at Federal Hall, Gulack, who has suffered repeated attacks of bronchitis, believes the offices may have been recontaminated from dust that coated the exterior of the building and was not cleaned until this month.

Last month, a report by the federal Environmental Protection Agency Inspector General found that the agency misled New Yorkers on health effects of the air after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Reacting to the report, Gulack called on the federal government to conduct a comprehensive cleanup effort, to protect workers from any further health effects.

"They rushed us back into contaminated playgrounds and schools and places of business. They took it upon themselves to decide what we would be told, and what might be too upsetting for us to know," Gulack said.

"All the areas impacted on Sept. 11 — in Manhattan and in Brooklyn, in homes and in offices, on the inside of and on the outside of buildings — all of this must be, at long last, properly cleaned up. It is time for all of us to demand the cleanup that ought to have begun two years ago," Gulack said.

Last year, the EPA began a cleanup of residences near Ground Zero. But, several public officials criticized the plan as limited because schools and office buildings were not included. The EPA has said it is responsible for cleaning residential buildings south of Canal Street.

Jo Polett, a lower Manhattan resident, said she was diagnosed with reactive airways disease from World Trade Center dust in her apartment. She now takes four medications to treat her illness.

"People are still being exposed right now," she said. "The EPA needs to come back and address this. They just want this to go away. They don't care what happens to people."

Daily News
9-15-03

EPA's fog over lower Manhattan

Now that it's clear the government was foggy with the facts about the toxins at Ground Zero, the Bush administration must set the record straight. Washington also must pay for a thorough cleanup of the chemical residue in buildings downtown.

Sen. Hillary Clinton and other Democratic members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee have asked its chairman, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), to hold hearings on the 9/11-related health hazards in lower Manhattan. Inhofe has refused, which is pure folly. This issue will not go away, and Republicans would be better off dealing with it now. They've already wasted two years.

Clinton said that if Inhofe won't hold the hearings, she will block a vote on President Bush's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency, Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt.

That should get the EPA's attention.

New Yorkers deserve to know the truth about the World Trade Center smoke and embers. The EPA swept toxic cinders under the rug and proclaimed that all was well. In fact, one week after the disaster, then-EPA chief Christie Whitman was already telling people the air was "safe to breathe."

Based on that unfounded claim, many rescue workers did not use respirators or masks. However, Whitman now contends that she did stress the use of masks. Additionally, people who live and work downtown returned to their ash-filled apartments and offices without knowing the truth.

Subsequent tests showed that the air and dust were full of toxins. In fact, a new report released last week by the University of California/Davis said the smoldering debris pile at Ground Zero was "a chemical factory" and the air was "brutal."

To make matters worse, the EPA inspector general said last month that the White House Council on Environmental Quality pushed the agency to issue reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones about the air quality downtown.

This month, city and federal health officials set up the World Trade Center Health Registry to track the physical condition of some 200,000 people who had been exposed to the smoke, dust and debris near Ground Zero. For example, how many have come down with ailments such as World Trade Center cough? Information on the program is available at (866) 692-9827 or online at www.wtcregistry.org.

It's a fine effort, but the federal government also must ensure that more people are not contaminated by the dust that remains in downtown buildings. Air vents, rugs, curtains, etc., that were not completely cleaned could still harbor dangerous pollutants.

The solution is obvious: Clean the buildings. Completely. And make Washington pick up the tab. It's the least the feds can do to compensate for their lies.

letters@nypost.com

WTC
(over)



Sen. Clinton's Battle Against the EPA

•I am a former resident of Battery Park City who was displaced for four months after 9/11. In one of my trips to try to collect some of my belongings, I spied Sen. Clinton holding an impromptu press conference/photo-op outside of my building, which was closed due to contamination ("Hillary's Free Ride," Editorial, Sept. 10). As the cameras rolled, she assured me that it should be the government's role to assure the safety of Downtown residents by testing the dust in all apartments.

Once the cameras stopped, I didn't hear another word from her on the subject. It was hardly a cause she chose to champion. The timing of her accusations against the Bush administration is curious.

David Dallow
Scarsdale

•No matter what the EPA said or did ("Hillary's Junk Science," Opinion, Steve Milloy, Sept. 10), it does not take the proverbial "rocket scientist" to surmise that the air around Ground Zero was contaminated and not conducive to good health after the towers collapsed.

I remember the donations of masks, gloves, breathing apparatus, etc., by the general public and corporations to the rescue workers for protection, while the federal and state government were trying to get up to speed. Maybe if some of our elected officials had expended a little more effort helping these efforts and less affixing blame and calculating how this tragedy could be put to their political advantage, things would have gone a little smoother.

Philip Vollono
Freeport

THE ISSUE: Sen. Clinton's claims that the agency lied about air quality.



Hillary Clinton

•I am glad that our senators are hearing the concerns of their constituents regarding the air quality at Ground Zero and the EPA's egregious mistake in declaring the air safe. That The Post dismisses Hillary Clinton's efforts to get to the bottom of this false EPA statement is a tremendous disappointment.

Since when is it wrong for a senator to look out for her constituency, whoever they might be? If not our senators, who?

As you noted, Gov. Pataki has stayed largely out of the fray. I am glad Sen. Clinton's able to play hardball, because otherwise we'd get no answers from this administration. If you want to criticize, at least direct your criticism where the fault lies.

Ed Batewell
Massapequa

•The only foul air we have been subjected to, comes courtesy of Sen. Hillary Clinton.

She demanded to know who was responsible for pressuring the EPA to prematurely assert that the air was safe to breathe after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The smartest woman in the world should be able to figure out that,

were it not for her husband's non-responses to the numerous documented terrorist attacks against U.S. interests, there would be no 9/11.

John Dell
Staten Island

•The Post's editorial addressing Sen. Clinton's proposed scrutiny of the Bush administration's candidate for the new EPA head is as politically transparent as The Post seems to think Sen. Clinton is herself.

Why not wait for all the facts to come in before rushing to judgment on such an important matter to the public as this? Surely, The Post is as concerned with the welfare of New York residents, tourists and working people as it is with advancing its own political agenda.

Joseph Aguanno
Brooklyn

•By all accounts Sen. Clinton has worked hard to cultivate a reputation as a hard-working senator. This reportedly has earned her the begrudging respect and a measure of credibility on both sides of the aisle; even as she has staked out positions on both sides of every issue — mimicking her husband's legendary triangulation.

In throwing roadblocks up in front of President Bush's nominee to head the EPA and ginning up hyperventilated claims of a cover-up the senator merely reminds voters of the shenanigans that were the hallmark of the Clinton-Hillary-Gore years.

Vincent P. Tabone
Vice Chairman
Queens Cty. Republican
Party, Astoria

N.Y. Post
9/15/03

Whitman: Pit crews blew off health warning

EXCLUSIVE

By SUSAN EDELMAN
and
STEFAN C. FRIEDMAN

Christie Whitman has three words for many of the Ground Zero rescue workers suffering from "tower lung" and other lingering health problems: We warned you.

Whitman, who headed the federal Environmental Protection Agency on 9/11 and afterward, said yesterday her agency did everything it could to

See **WHITMAN** Page 2

N.Y. Post
9/14/03

Christie: 9/11 crews ignored EPA's air alert

WHITMAN from Page 1

warn rescue teams they needed to worry about their own health and safety while conducting their heroic work.

"We said from the very beginning that people should wear respirators," said Whitman, who resigned from the EPA in May.

"We kept telling them over and over again. I don't think we could have been any stronger than we were about the danger to people working on the site." Whitman's allegations fly in the face of recent claims by the EPA's inspector general that the agency authorized the White House to deceive the public about air quality around Ground Zero after 9/11.

She said EPA statements at the time — claiming that contaminants released into the air posed "minimal" long-term risks to downtown and regional residents — have been corroborated in subsequent tests and studies.

"Now you have the problem of potential long-time

From their mouths

Sept. 13, 2001: The EPA puts out a release saying, "Short-term, low-level exposure [to asbestos] of the type that might have been produced by the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings is unlikely to cause significant health effects."

Sept. 18, 2001: Whitman reassures New Yorkers "the air is safe to breathe."

May 2002: Under pressure, the EPA begins cleaning contaminated apartments in lower Manhattan.

December 2002: EPA says people who returned to the area around Ground Zero after Sept. 17 were "unlikely to suffer short-term or adverse health effects" from contaminated air.

Aug. 21, 2003: EPA inspector

general Nikki Tinsley releases a report saying the White House pressured the EPA to tell New Yorkers the air was safe before adequate testing had been performed.

Aug. 31, 2003: Whitman says, "There's no way in hell" she would play games with information related to air quality.

health concerns because of exposure to asbestos and everything else in that pile and in that air," she said.

"If they had worn the devices, we'd see a lot less problems. Everybody would have been a lot better off."

Firefighter reaction to Whitman's statement was swift and angry.

"She is ultimately responsible," said Steve Cassidy, president of the firefighters union. "When she said that everything was OK, the firefighters believed those state-

ments. For her to say now that we are responsible is outrageous."

The head of the country's largest firefighters union called Whitman's comments "a slap in the face to all firefighters."

"She's trying to cover her ass," fumed Harold Schaitberger, general president of the International Association of Firefighters.

"You could end with the EPA killing more people than the terrorists," added Rep. Jerrold Nadler, a Demo-

crat whose district includes Ground Zero.

Whitman said she wore a mask during a press conference near Ground Zero on Sept. 13, two days after the attacks, and personally urged others to do so.

The former New Jersey governor said she understands the workers were under great stress and emotional strain, but that the EPA cannot be faulted for failing to warn them of dangerous toxins at Ground Zero.

She said some EPA workers were "verbally abused" when they tried to urge recovery workers to don respirators and use washing stations set up by the feds.

The EPA workers "were run off the site on a couple of occasions," Whitman said.

She paraphrased some angry remarks by rescuers and volunteer firefighters: "Don't you tell us what to do. Those are my brothers and sisters in there. Get out of my way."

Whitman said the EPA "unfortunately does not have the authority to force people" to wear the cumbersome breathing devices, but that the city Health Department or federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration, which oversees workplace safety, might have required the protection.

Calls to the city Health Department weren't immediately returned.

Whitman said that within "days," the agency provided 30,000 respirators, a claim called "totally false" by the firefighters union.

WTC

Downtown protest over EPA advice

Lower Manhattan workers, residents and public-health advocates yesterday accused the EPA and the White House of misleading them about air safety after the 9/11 terror attacks.

Citing a report by the EPA's inspector general that said the White House softened the warning about the airborne hazards at Ground Zero, the protesters said they were "outraged" by the allegedly watered-down warnings and the EPA's failure to do a proper cleanup job in offices and homes.

"For too many of these men and women, the EPA's false reassurance that the air quality in lower Manhattan was safe led to their being exposed to much more than they otherwise would have been," said Stephen Levin, co-director of the Mount Sinai-Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine. "Many people did not wear the respiratory protection that they really needed."

Among the protesters who gathered on the steps of Federal Hall to complain was Robert Gulack, a Securities and Exchange Commission employee who said he suffered respiratory problems after being told to go back to work in the Woolworth Building in October 2001.

Bridget Harrison

NY post
9/16/03

Needed: A Breath of Fresh Air on Edits of EPA

There are lies, damned lies and strategic switching of the subject.

This last is the strong suit of the current administration, whose maxim is turning out to be: When caught, create a diversion.

The Environmental Protection Agency now argues that the valiant effort its employees made to protect public health after the terrorist attack on New York City somehow is being besmirched. "The actions taken by EPA personnel were nothing less than heroic," acting EPA Administrator Marianne Horinko wrote in a letter to Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

No question. EPA employees, evacuated from their downtown offices on Sept. 11, 2001, returned to the hot pit of the World Trade Center and the dust-coated streets surrounding it time and again to collect air and dust samples for analysis.

There is, in fact, only one problem with Horinko's righteousness. No one ever accused EPA experts of doing anything but their best.

Not Clinton and Lieberman, who sit on the Senate panel that oversees the agency. Not the enraged — and often ill — residents of lower Manhattan, who



Marie Cocco

have suffered respiratory problems since the attacks. Not even the EPA's inspector general.

The problem isn't with the professionals. It's with the politicians who meddle with them.

The inspector general's recent critical report fingers the White House, not the EPA, for doctoring key press releases in the days after the 9/11 attack. The investigators said the White House Council on Environmental Quality, a redoubt of political appointees, cut out cautions that EPA professionals had written and inserted what the politicians wanted: Everything is hunky-dory. Get back to work.

How did Horinko turn a dispute over political interference into a fantasy about an alleged attack on her employees' performance?

The same way the White House, having warned of a potential "mushroom cloud" from Saddam Hussein's nuclear arsenal, later dismissed as "a bunch of bull" the furor over whether the president peddled a discredited story about Iraqi uranium-shopping to underpin the need for war. Same way the rationale for war switched from the "grave and growing danger" posed by Hussein's still-missing weapons of mass destruction to an argument that the dictator was an all-around bad guy. The same way tax cuts once promoted as a refund of budget surpluses now are pitched as a jobs-creation program. When caught, create diversion.

Clinton and Lieberman never questioned the performance of EPA employees. They wrote to the president, asking who at the White House exercised "editorial control" over the EPA's crucial press releases. They asked why the upbeat changes were made. They wanted to know the basis for them.

Here is what they got: A letter from the EPA,

not the White House. No names of those involved in the rewrites. A claim that "no lists are kept" of such things. And EPA insistence that there are no documents that shed light on the political editing.

So this is the Dick Cheney energy task force, redux. Somehow, a broad energy policy emerged from the vice president's office. It coincidentally favored the oil, mining and utility industries that had sent lobbyists to private meetings. But the White House has blocked the public from knowing which lobbyists were there, what they recommended and how it so happens that their approaches made it into legislation.

"People need to feel that they're getting the straight story," Clinton said in an interview about the EPA controversy. "We're mature enough to be told the truth." She intends to block confirmation of Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt as EPA administrator until she gets better answers.

No one now knows the nature or severity of the long-term health effects to expect from the toxic stew of pulverized building materials, molten plastic, burning jet fuel and other substances that blanketed the New York metropolitan region for months. We know only there was no scientific basis whatever for the government's claim so soon after the attack — while fires smoldered — that the air was safe.

We cannot know if, or when, or what form another terrorist attack might take. But there may one day be a toxic spill or a release of fumes from a chemical factory or an untoward event at a nuclear power plant. And the people will turn to the Environmental Protection Agency for straight talk. And if the EPA turns to the White House, it seems there is little chance the public will get it.

Marie Cocco is a nationally syndicated columnist and member of Newsday's editorial board. Her e-mail address is cocco@newsday.com.

WTC

Gov asked to zone in on ozone and asthma

By JOYCE SHELBY
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz is calling on Gov. Pataki for better state monitoring of ozone levels in Brooklyn.

Some of the highest asthma rates in the entire country are to be found in neighborhoods in Bushwick and Williamsburg, but the state has not monitored the ozone levels there since 1996, Markowitz said.

Brooklyn's levels are based on readings taken in Queens or on Staten Island, according to the borough president.

"It's outrageous and unacceptable. ... Even though the citywide levels of some pollutants have decreased in recent years, the health situation in northern Brooklyn has only gotten worse,"

Markowitz said outside Public School 274 in Bushwick on Friday. "Because the level of ozone and other air pollutants has risen, along with increased truck traffic to the numerous waste transfer stations nearby."

But because ozone is a regional pollutant, the monitors in place, which include one in Queens and another on Staten Island, "effectively provide information for all of New York City," said Matt Burns, spokesman for the state Environment Conservation Department.

Craig Wilson of the American Lung Association of the City of New York said, "When the [state environmental agency] issues an ozone health advisory for New York City, they are actually guessing what the state of Brooklyn's air quality is. In reality, the air quality could be much worse."

Dr. Edward Fishkin, medical director of Woodhull Hospital, described ozone as "a very powerful airway irritant. It directly causes inflammation. It triggers asthma attacks."

"It can even sensitize a person to other allergens, and it may actually cause asthma," Fishkin added.

Big problem in Bushwick

The doctor said asthma rates in Bushwick had reached "shocking numbers," adding that the asthma rate for the U.S. is about 6% to 7%.

"But in Bushwick, as many as 25% of children are afflicted with asthma," Fishkin said. Closer monitoring is needed to alert parents, children and physicians, he said.

"In the year 2003, nobody should die

from asthma," Fishkin said. "But by the year's end, 5,000 people will have died of asthma [nationwide]. Of that 5,000, 200 will be Brooklynites."

"Four percent of all the asthma deaths in this country will be in Brooklyn," added Fishkin, who is founder of the North Brooklyn Asthma Action Alliance.

Public School 274 Principal Daisy O'Gorman said 125 students at the 1,000-student school have been diagnosed with asthma.

Children with the most severe cases may miss 25 to 35 days of school per year, O'Gorman said.

Markowitz addressed his call for ozone monitoring in Brooklyn to the governor. He sent a letter to Pataki on Friday and noted that he was looking for a speedy response.

DAILY NEWS

Monday, September 15, 2003

WTC

THE ISLAND

"They deserve a cleanup, not a coverup."

— Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan)

House Dems seek 9/11 air quality hearings

Officials say White House pressured the EPA into saying there was no health risk from dust and debris

By **TERENCE J. KIVLAN**
ADVANCE WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — House Democrats yesterday demanded a congressional investigation into what they called a Bush administration "coverup" of air pollution at Ground Zero and in Lower Manhattan after Sept. 11, 2001.

"I have heard from too many constituents with health problems," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan), at a Capitol press conference with Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), the House Minority Leader, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) and other Democratic leaders. Nadler's district includes the World Trade Center site.

The charge of a coverup followed last month's report from the Environmental Protection Administration's inspector general, who found

that the White House pressured the EPA into saying there was no health risk from the dust and debris in the air after the Twin Towers collapsed.

The White House "convinced EPA to add reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones" by having the National Security Council control EPA communications after the attack, the report stated.

The EPA's "false assurances" that the air in Lower Manhattan was safe to breathe jeopardized the health of rescue workers at Ground Zero and residents of Lower Manhattan, Nadler said.

"They deserve a cleanup, not a coverup," said Nadler at the press conference.

The Bush administration was right to be concerned about a delay in reopening Wall Street and its impact on the national economy, but no consideration justified "the putting at risk of thousands of people," Nadler added.

In a letter to House Speaker

Dennis Hastert, the Democratic lawmakers requested a series of hearings on the EPA's response.

"This is a critical issue that still confronts people who are living, working and going to school in the buildings around Ground Zero," they wrote.

Former EPA administrator Christine Whitman challenged the EPA inspector general's report and the Democrats' charges.

Ms. Whitman noted that she held a press conference at Ground Zero two days after the attack to warn rescue workers that the air in the "pit" area was toxic and that they should wear protective masks at all times.

In an earlier interview, former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said it was recognized that the pit was heavily polluted and that rescue workers should use masks there. "And obviously not everybody did," he told NBC News.

The EPA's announcement that the air beyond Ground Zero was safe was "consistent with all the reports that we

got from state and city environmental agencies, and the private ones that had been commissioned by the unions and the contractors," Giuliani said.

But the EPA inspector general's report said that seven days after the attack, when the agency declared air near the site to be safe to breathe, it did not have enough information to support that guarantee.

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) had requested Senate hearings on the EPA's pronouncements on air quality in Lower Manhattan after Sept. 11, but Republican leaders in the Senate refused.

Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Stat-ten Island/Brooklyn) could not be reached for comment on the EPA issue yesterday.

Spokesman Craig Donner said Fossella believed "people had a right to know what happened" but had not taken a position on holding hearings.

Terence J. Kivlan is the Washington correspondent for the Advance. He may be reached at terence.kivlan@newhouse.com.

S.I. Adv.
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Lawmakers want to move WTC victims' ashes from landfill

Measure in N.J. Legislature to put ashes at Ground Zero memorial expected to be approved this year

By TERENCE J. KIVLAN
and DAVID ANDREATTA
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

A New Jersey measure requiring the recovery of World Trade Center victims' ashes from the Fresh Kills landfill for placement at a future Ground Zero memorial is poised to clear that state's Legislature later this year, according to the bill's chief sponsor.

"It will be unanimously approved," predicted Democratic Assemblyman Neil Cohen of Union, N.J., in an interview from Trenton yesterday.

The vote will take place when New Jersey lawmakers reconvene after the November elections for a lame-duck session, Cohen said. The legislation was introduced in September 2002.

Specifically, the bill requires the Port Authority to remove the ashes of Sept. 11 victims from the landfill and transport them in special containers to Ground Zero for use as the centerpiece of the future memorial.

The measure has widespread support in New Jersey.

It has been endorsed by Gov. Jim McGreevey.

Over 90 New Jersey municipalities have passed resolutions urging its passage.

The plan is the brainchild of World Trade Center Families for Proper Burial, a Scotch Plains, N.J.-based group of relatives of Sept. 11 victims.

"Fresh Kills landfill is a dirty, smelly, unrespectful place," Diane Horning, a spokesman for the group, said yesterday.

Mrs. Horning, who lost her son Matthew at the Trade Center, cited estimates that it could take three decades for the landfill to be reclaimed sufficiently to create a memorial there.

"I am 56 years old," she said. "I am not sure I want to wait 30 years to visit my son's grave."

The proposal hasn't made much headway on the New York side of the harbor.

Because of the cost and logistics of such an operation, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has repeatedly expressed reservations about transporting perhaps tons of debris from the landfill to Lower Manhattan.

Yesterday, mayoral spokesman Ed Skyler said Bloomberg had not changed his views, but was willing to revisit the issue.

City Hall sources said Bloomberg would be interested in an alternative plan to inter a small amount of the Fresh Kills ash at Ground Zero as a symbolic gesture.

Many relatives of Staten Island's 200 Trade Center Victims are also skeptical of the New Jersey proposal, according to Dennis McKeon, direc-

tor of the World Trade Center Outreach Committee of St. Clare's R.C. Church, Great Kills.

"It's just too vague," he said yesterday.

No one has explained how the ashes would be separated from the other World Trade Center debris at the landfill or exactly how much material would be removed, McKeon said.

"If there is a feasible way to do it ... maybe it has a chance," said McKeon. "But right now

nobody has any solid numbers."

New York state lawmakers, who would have to approve the plan, have raised similar questions. "How would it be done?" asked Assemblyman John Lavelle (D-North Shore) yesterday. "I don't understand it."

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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2003

PUBLIC LIVES

A Public Health Warrior, Tracking 9/11 Trends

By LYNDIA RICHARDSON

DR. POLLY THOMAS is leaning over her computer, reviewing a daily graphic chart of people signing up for the World Trade Center Health Registry. Dr. Thomas is an assistant commissioner for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The new registry, one of the biggest public health investigations in history, falls under Dr. Thomas's aegis in the department's Bureau of Surveillance.

"To do this is a huge job," she says, sitting in a small, cramped office at 125 Worth Street, her desk covered with tidy stacks of documents.

The registry is an ambitious project to track down tens of thousands of people who were exposed to the fire and smoke of Sept. 11, 2001. Dr. Thomas says up to 200,000 people could enroll. The agency plans a media campaign with brochures, large posters and subway and PATH train advertisements.

"We have pretty broad recruitment, but we are intensely focused on people with the highest exposure," she says. "Our data will tell a clear story of how many people have different types of health issues." So far, she says 12,900 people have signed up, and 6,000 have completed the 30-minute telephone surveys.

The Health Department can be tight-fisted with its information, particularly if it is deemed confidential, delicate, premature. It can drive a reporter mad. But Dr. Thomas speaks proudly of the agency. "There is a lot of earnest endeavor going on here," she says. It has often been her friendly voice on the other end of the telephone line with reporters, explaining the seemingly inexplicable.

Dr. Thomas has tracked human ailments and diseases, chiefly AIDS, since she arrived at the department in 1981. She was stationed in New York during her training as a medical epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. She was like a detective, mapping the early, deadly pattern of AIDS. She decided to never leave. At the Health Department, she has moni-



"It's sort of a relief that we have started and we are having a great response from New Yorkers. We're very pleased with the interviews going on."

DR. POLLY THOMAS

tored pediatric H.I.V. cases and perinatal transmission of H.I.V. and delved into the spate of anthrax cases two years ago. She was named assistant commissioner in November 2000.

CALL her a public health warrior. But Dr. Thomas, a tall, slender woman with an intense manner, is also somewhat shy and private. She refuses to give her age; sage advice taken from a grandmother who died at 103. "It's personal," says Dr. Thomas, the mother of three children, ages 21, 19 and 15.

In starting the registry, Dr. Thomas has been busy in the last several months with administrative details like developing the survey questionnaire, obtaining approval from the city and federal government, and brainstorming ways to get the message out to the public.

"It's sort of a relief that we have started and we are having a great response from New Yorkers," she says. "We're very pleased with the

interviews going on."

Does she worry about her own health? She says no.

"We would come up out of the subway and have this burning plastic odor, and you wonder what was this burning plastic odor doing to you," she says. "I'm not actually churning my stomach, but I'll be quite happy to have the registry and for the Health Department to have the data and to be able to watch the health trends."

As she talks about the registry, Dr. Thomas becomes more at ease. She makes a point of repeating the registry's toll-free number, (866) NYC-WTCR, and the city's information line, 311.

One is keen to know why it took so long to get the registry going, and whether that delay will hurt the endeavor. Dr. Thomas seems to anticipate these questions. "I think it's fine," she says in an upbeat tone, smiling. She says the draft protocol for the registry was actually developed by December 2001, \$20 million in federal financing was obtained by July 2002, and government approvals came this last summer. "We're concerned about long-term health effects, and so it's certainly

not too late to look at these."

Dr. Thomas tracks human health conditions. But it was her childhood fascination with insects and nature that led her to study biology at Yale, where she attended medical school. The daughter of commercial artists, she was raised in the coal-mining region of northeastern Pennsylvania. "I used to look at bugs in my backyard. There were so many different kinds, and they were beautiful."

She trained as a pediatrician, a decision influenced by her younger sister, who has Down syndrome. She completed her pediatric residency at the University of Rochester, and has a part-time practice in Summit, N.J. She is married to Rick Bell, the executive director of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The registry will follow the health of people for 20 years. Will she still be around then? "I've spent 20 years on AIDS, and hopefully some young energetic person will come along and help nurture the registry."

THE NEW YORK TIMES METRO FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2003

WTC

N.Y.C. Air Quality, Post 9/11

YOUR SEPT. 8 PERISCOPE ITEM " 'WE Were Not Told to Lie' About 9/11 and Health," was inaccurate. As you noted in a correction on Sept. 22, I did not work for the asbestos industry. You did not mention, however, that I in fact started my career working with plaintiffs' lawyers who represented *victims* of asbestos. My work with those victims has given me a clear understanding and deep, personal sensitivity to the risks of exposure to asbestos. In the days immediately following the 9/11 attacks, the Environmental Protection Agency and Council on Environmental Quality, working with OSHA and New York officials, worked to report on New York's air and water quality swiftly, objectively and accurately. We used the best information available, applied seasoned professional judgment and provided it to the public. As noted in an evaluation by the EPA's inspector general on the air quality of lower Manhattan, the inspector general "spoke to a number of experts in the field of environmental monitoring, including physicians, industrial hygienists, and researchers. These experts generally agreed that the levels of airborne asbestos detected in the air outside the perimeter of Ground Zero ... did not present a significant increase in long-term risk to the public." With respect to the workers at Ground Zero who faced significant safety and environmental hazards, we consistently advised them to wear respirators and take extra precautions based on available data. To this day, we are continuing our monitoring, support and long-term research operations. The safety and well-being of the people of New York were always, and remain, our highest priority.

JAMES L. CONNAUGHTON
Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Newsweek
Sept. 29.03