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# Council, advocate & beep races may go down to wire

By DAVE SALTONSTALL
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

In the shadow of yesterday's mayoral primary contests were a host of other big races — for public advocate, controller, four borough presidencies and 37 City Council seats — many of which were expected to go down to the wire.

In what was widely viewed as the most down-and-dirty campaign of the year, former Board of Education President William Thompson was battling for city controller against Herb Berman, former chairman of the city Council's Finance Committee.

During a tough campaign dominated by hard-hitting advertisements, Thompson charged that Berman had received excessive contributions from developers, while Berman hit back at Thompson for past tax liens and allegations of security violations from his days as a private investment banker in the early 1990s.

The race was expected to be a nail-biter, with Berman counting heavily on Jewish support and Thompson — the only African-American running for citywide office this year — sticking mostly to minority neighborhoods.

The Democratic race for public advocate was shaping up to be more of a muddle, with six candidates vying for the honor: Brooklyn Councilman Stephen DiBrienza, speech pathologist Sheila Flaxman, Manhattan Councilwoman Kathryn Freed, former Parks Commissioner Betsy Gotbaum, civil liberties lawyer Norman Siegel and Manhattan Assemblyman Scott Stringer.

Because no one candidate was expected to break 40%, the likelihood of a runoff was considered high, with most betting on Gotbaum, who raised the most money, and Stringer, a solid campaigner, to meet in a runoff Oct. 11.

## Big battles in boros

Tough races for borough president also were unfolding in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island. Only Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields was without any competition.

Amid all the uncertainty last night, however, one thing is for sure: The City Council of Jan. 1 will be a very different place than it is today.

Of the chamber's 51 seats, 37 are up for grabs, with term limits forcing the ouster of no fewer than 35 incumbents, many of whom had spent lifetimes within the institution's often sleepy chambers.

The resulting sea change means that, just as the city faces the monumental task of rebuilding after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, its chief legislative body will be inexperienced, unsettled and without any known leader, at least for now.

"New Yorkers will just have to hope that the new Council meets the very serious needs we now face," said political consultant Hank Sheinkopf. "The problem is they will have to learn quickly."

The group doing that learning will likely be far more reflective of New York City than the mostly white, mostly male bastion that has held sway for years.

## More varied mix in Council

Although official primary results were not available last night, the new Council, to be elected in November, is expected to include far more women, minority-group members and genuine grass-roots candidates than ever before.

New York's growing Asian community, for instance — which now makes up about 10% of the city — is considered likely to elect its first Council member, with strong candidates John Liu and Ethel Chen in Flushing, Queens, and Rocky Chin in Manhattan's Chinatown.

Queens also was sure to get its first Hispanic member, with an all-Hispanic Democratic race in Elmhurst/Corona filled out by Luis Rosero, Hiram Monserrate, Aida Gonzalez-Jarrin and Angel Del Villar.

There will likely be some familiar names in the new Council, too. With all the turnover, no fewer than six children of current members are running for their parents' seats, among them Peter Vallone Jr. Some speculated that, given the sense of insecurity fostered by the terrorist attacks, any recognizable name could be even more of a plus than usual.

"In normal times, nepotism is not a great sales point," said Republican consultant Roger Stone. "But people want to grasp . . . a known commodity, and a familiar last name could be just the thing."

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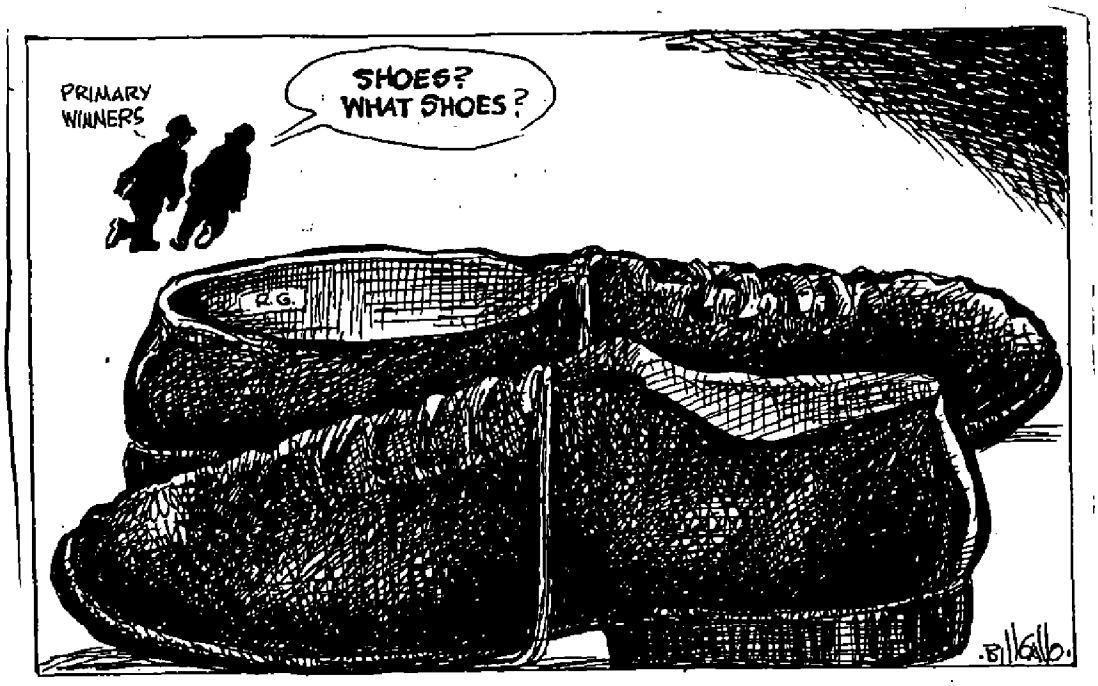




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