

Council

**Wednesday, 26 May 2004
Commencing at 5.30 pm**

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, 6 WAIPAREIRA AVENUE, LINCOLN,
WAITAKERE CITY, ON WEDNESDAY, 26 MAY 2004,
COMMENCING AT 5.30 PM.**

PART B - REPORT OF THE MAYOR

A POSTCARD FROM NEW YORK

I first came to New York in 1969 to spend some time in an advertising agency, Wells, Rich and Greene. It was at that time the most exciting agency around. I met Mary Wells at a conference in the mid west and she asked me to come to New York and work in the 5th Avenue creative shop. In the days ahead, I learnt a huge amount about the making of television commercials, then in their early days in New Zealand.

More importantly, I met the team behind the Presidential elections for Richard Nixon. From them, I learnt the complex marketing techniques brought together for an American election campaign and the strategy and image needed to make a huge campaign work.

With this in mind I worked on the 1969 and 1972 Labour campaigns here in New Zealand - and to be honest not a lot in the area of electioneering has changes. There is, of course, a much greater emphasis on electronic media (TV in particular), but the use of catchy slogan billboards, and radio and print still dominate.

So in a way I owe this strange and wonderful town a lot. I enjoy its rough edge. Manhattan is the United States of America in total. The music of America is here. *Gershwin, Broadway and even P Diddy feature in "Raisin in the Sun"* - to rave reviews.

Anything is possible here. On Broadway I get a much sought after single ticket for the hottest show in town, 'Assassins' by Stephen Sondheim. 'Assassins' is a semi opera about the Presidential killers. It twists the American dream inside out. I watch the audience carefully. I wonder if they could be thinking Wilkes Booth, John Hinkley, and Oswald, who will be the next one. The message is "everybody has a right". I can only add "really".

It's a great piece of work but the guy in the next seat tells me during the intermission, the show could never travel around the United States. He's not wrong. This is a country at war, and like the days of Vietnam, not everyone is tagging along with President Bush. 'Assassins' has been waiting to open since 2001, but after September 11, when everything changed in America, it was decided to hold it until things cooled off - I wonder if they have.

Following the Mayoral delegation to the United Nations, I had some free time. I walked maybe 20kms around the blocks that make up Manhattan. It is very much Mayor Bloomberg's town, as it was Giuliani's - he cleaned it up, got the sex and drugs off the pavements. Now, Bloomberg goes further.

He's so like Mayor Banks. Both are self made men, rich in their own right, in City Hall and calling their own shots- cleaning up the streets; honking of horns brings you a \$250 fine, blocking the street, \$350. But the streets are so clean - everyone working for the City seems to have a broom, no glass, no graffiti or dog crap.



On Thursday, 29 April one of Mayor Bloomberg's Councillors introduced "Green Buildings" - a new bill that would require all future building projects to employ eco-friendly designs. The Bill also calls for green renovations of all public buildings including energy-saving technologies.

On Monday at the weekly press conference at City Hall, Bloomberg offered to all New Yorkers a \$400 rebate on their taxes. This is seen by as a reward for the tough fact of having some of the highest property taxes in America.

New York is a forgiving town. It is illegal to graffiti - fines of up to \$1000 or jail time if caught. Yet at the same time there is a major exhibition in town - 'Tribute to the NYC Graffiti artist' - whose style or 'autograph' you can find in almost every part of the world. Waitakere included.

Well, I am off to Times Square - it is Saturday and the Revlon Walk is being starting at 10.00 am by Mayor Bloomberg. It's a bizarre event, where some of the most beautiful women in the world are literally going to walk the streets, past thousands and thousands of wide-eyed teens, middle aged men and about the same number of women.

After all these years, New York just keeps getting better. I wouldn't want to live here, but it sure is good for a visit - a bit like Glen Eden really!

THE WORLD CONFERENCE FOR MAYORS FOR PEACE

UN HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK

M1-M3

I was delighted and honoured to be invited to join this delegation by Mayor Tadatashi Akiba, the Mayor of Hiroshima, as attached at pages M1 to M3.

I accepted the invitation on behalf of this Council and the City of Waitakere- proudly anti-nuclear, and among the first to be so (and just so it is on the record, the trip was funded personally).

As Councillors are aware, several years ago I was one of eight "Mayors for Peace" recognised by the United Nations. The small brass "trophy" resides in the Mayoral Lounge and is on of my proudest achievements.

Mayor Akiba is a key driver behind the Mayors for Peace movement. He is a man who truly "walks the talk", and in 1991 was involved in negotiating the release of Japanese hostages taken by Saddam Hussein.

I would also like to thank/acknowledge Marion Hancock of the New Zealand Peace Foundation who encouraged me to participate in conference.

The meeting of Mayors at the United Nations was to coincide with the meeting of the "NNP" (Parliamentarians and Mayors for Nuclear Non-Proliferation), setting an agenda for global mobilization in 2005.

It was my first visit to the United Nations - an organisation I have held in high regard for many years. In the area of humanitarian aide, the United Nations keeps millions alive in Africa in particular and is the largest organisation of its kind on the planet. But to its critics, it is a high-level talk shop that has let massacres occur under the nose of its peace keeping forces.

Maybe there is some validity in that here in the USA, a country at war, there is a growing opinion that the UN could have done more to halve the war in Iraq. If we believe the United Nations can help, save and aid, how come with all the might and weight of nations the record is not looking good.



In these walls they talk of Rwanda, the United Nations Force in place was actually reduced on the eve of the genocide 10 years ago. In Sierra Leone, a 17,000-strong multinational force collapsed in the face of some drunken gunmen, only to be rescued by a task force of 800 British soldiers who restored the situation. In Bosnia in 1995, the United Nations enforced "safe haven" of Srebrenica turned into a death camp for 8,000 Bosnian Muslims. It was the worst massacre in Europe since 1945. It would be unfair to blame the soldiers. The United Nations does not have its own army. It has to carve out armies from crooked timber available in the General Assembly. The member states rarely have a common purpose, except to shove the problem onto someone else's shoulders. In Rwanda, the United Nations commander predicted genocide, but received no support from New York, where the powers that be were desperate to avoid an American intervention.

At best, the United Nations can freeze a conflict - as in Cyprus or between Israel and Syria, provided both sides agree. It can do old-fashioned nation-building - as happened in Cambodia - provided there is no significant armed opposition.

I spent some time in the breaks of the conference talking to the large media contingent who roam the halls looking for stories. They all told me about the contempt the White House holds for the United Nations.

As Richard Pearl, the former chairman of the Pentagon Defence Policy Board said "The United Nations are the chatterbox on the Hudson". Yet most of the media agree Annan has been good - in fact they told me he turned out better than expected.

As the conference began, delegates met on a freezing, gloomy Monday at the Crown Plaza a few blocks from the Main United Nations Centre. On arrival, all visitors must register through strict security; the first of many bag and person searches I will encounter in the days ahead.

In the rain we stand in a long queue waiting to be processed, first through a tent set up on the forecourt - and then into the foyer for registration, being photographed and receiving our all important badge which must be worn at all times.

Our first view of the United Nations in action was the main room of the conference hall a vast cavern with the most polite chairperson thanking each speaker for their kind words and thoughts. He also reminds the room they are running over time - in fact it's clear they are never going to get through even half of the speakers.

The presentations from nation after nation go on, literally, for hours. Every paper is read, word for word - no adlib here. The issues and nuances are just too important.

Our delegation is joined by the Deputy Mayor of London, who I fall into conversation with. She's from the Greens and knows our own Rod, Nandor, and Jeannette.

Over lunch we are joined by the Israeli politician Yael Dayan daughter of Moshe Dayan - the hero of the six day war.

The next day began with a major meeting where each group discussed key global issues which were then presented by a nominated key speaker. After the speaker, the floor would be opened up for discussion.

M4 One clear message was that local government must do more than be an administrative body - to tackle social issues we must work closely with, and be recognised by, central government, as attached at page M4.

We agreed over the three days that our best endeavours would be in establishing a national structure in which Mayors and parliamentarians can interact with each other. This will help ensure that engagement at the grassroots level translates into more ambitious national action.



Generally, parliamentarians spend most of their time in the national capital (which in many countries - like New Zealand - is not the economically or socially dominant city).

Mayors on the other hand, are almost always town based, and the door to city hall is almost always open to the average citizen. It is, thus, much easier for grassroots activism to sustain campaigns on a citywide basis, and easier for Mayors to take part in them.

The involvement of the Mayor and/or city hall in an event will increase the chances that a local MP will accept an invitation to take part. Nationwide protest - or I prefer to call it "awakening" - can best be organized with the help of Mayors.

On the other hand, it is hard for Mayors, like their citizens, to have a co-ordinated, sustained presence in the capital. For a start, they risk losing their "connectedness" to their communities.

The degree to which Mayors already have national co-ordinating bodies varies from country to country. Most of the discussion explored that situation within the United States, where there is the United States Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities. The former is exclusively for Mayors, the latter includes city councillors.

Both have internal structures and staff that include working group or committees on special topics. Basically, they get as organised and smart about lobbying and advocacy at government level as the major corporates.

One such structure proposed at the conference would aim to establish working relationships between the Mayoral caucuses and the parliamentary caucuses. In our case it could be a beefed up version of the "Metro Mayors" Association.

These are working sessions, and Mayors and parliamentarians need the ideas and dedication of experts to ensure that good strategies are adopted and implemented.

M5-M7 Another excellent idea was that New York would be the venue for a World Peace Fair, aimed at attracting New Yorkers and others around the world to Central Park for a joyous celebration of the world's diversity, as attached at pages M5 to M7.

The aim is to hold this in 2005. A week later in Cities around the world similar events would be held (while the 2005 NPT Review Conference is underway at the United Nations Headquarters).

In essence it would be a massive and passive demonstration against nuclear weapons and war - a globally co-ordinated protest if you like.

Each Mayor was then asked if we could get our Government to send a special envoy to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for Peace Celebrations, again in 2005.

A VISIT TO CITY HALL AND GROUND ZERO

The next day the conference heard from our very own Hon Marion Hobbs. It was an excellent presentation and everyone I spoke to was impressed by not only the substance of her speech, but the passion with which it was delivered.

The fact that we even had a Minister for Disarmament amazed them all.

It was a long session (they all are) but nothing is small here, including the unimaginable size of the building itself.

After lunch we walk across the road to Ground Zero.



I must confess I had strong reservations about visiting the site of the 9-11 attacks. The ever present video documentary team follow us, and as we now so used to them and not paying attention to the sound and camera, they record our personal thoughts in a very raw and impromptu way.

It's a very moving walk. We met at St Pauls Church. Survivors and family members of victims of the attack now worship together. They spread a message of peace, campaigning against aggression, believing attacking Iraq and Afghanistan will solve nothing.

The group has been to Iraq and Afghanistan, meeting children and getting a United States based email chain going. They get school kids in the United States to link with Iraqi kids, asking "what do you listen to" - "who are you" ... it is a start.

The skyscrapers that border the site are still under major repairs, still draped in sacking.

Now we venture down the long platform to ground Zero itself. Out of respect, no cameras or video are allowed. It is a wind swept and eerie site, looking like a huge construction site.

A tribute area stands in front of the platform, with photos, badges, flowers, very personal - all fading and wet from the spring rain.

The Mayor of Hiroshima has been given a pair of crushed spectacles found in the rubble. He is given the honour of pinning them to the memorial fence. We are asked to join the presentation by pinning symbolic glasses, made by school children, especially for this moment.

This is outside the main gate, and is able to be captured by the documentary team. I decline to be featured- it just seems too intrusive- and walk back alone.

Later that evening we are hosted at a reception by the Pakistan Ambassador to the United Nations. Most of us found Ground Zero hard to shake off, and I found this reception too hard to get through. I leave early.

It's now Thursday and the first session of the day is opened by both Mayors Akiba and Itoh. We then move into "debriefing" on the conference. I suggested that the next Mayors for Peace conference should be held in the City that had brought us all together - Hiroshima. I spoke of the need to lift the world awareness to what we stood for - and the 60th Anniversary of the bombing would open up the issue yet again.

Following the debriefing I did a long interview for Radio New Mexico and in particular the City of Albuquerque where the most amount of nuclear weapons in the United States are stored / pointed. A strange thing in an area better known for music, arts and culture of the South West.

Perhaps the most free and frank discussion came at a private meeting with United Nations Ambassadors of China and India. Through Yeal Dayan we told them in no uncertain terms that nuclear weapons in India, Iran and Pakistan were of huge concern to all of us.

We told them clearly that the global community had had enough of living in fear and they owed it to themselves - and their own people - to move towards disarmament.

The United Nations is a place of polite talk - in fact the more they say the less is spoken. We as Mayors could go beyond the dialogue of the diplomatic, and talk as we do to our citizens - straight and honest.

So in a way Mayors do, and can go that little bit further, we can lay out the issue and are respected for doing just that. On these four days in April we did.



To Be Or Not To Be

The inauguration of a Laureate was, many years ago, a huge City (and indeed national) occasion.

It is an ancient honour; and one of the greatest and highest that any City - or country can give.

It is an idea that I have been toying with for some time, and during a brief break in proceedings here in New York, I found myself in the library at the wonderful Metropolitan Museum in Central Park.

Here I decided to research the history of Laureate's and, so, from the other side of the world, I am bringing you this idea- one that I think Waitakere could pursue.

What sparked the idea again was my stay at the Chelsea Hotel here in New York- built to cater for artists from all over America who came to practice their talent and creativity.

This grand old and dirty 10 storey beauty has housed the best of American talent and art since it was built. Millar wrote 'View from the Bridge' when he stayed here. Dylan Thomas died here, and Arthur C Clarke wrote 2001 in room 205.

M8-M9 Quinten Crisp also lived here for 40 years. Every floor is filled with writers scribbling away. The huge rooms with wooden floors and bad plumbing are a joy. Big beds used for sleeping or jumping. The ceilings must be at least 20 feet up. The halls and stairways are crammed with paintings, large, full, good, bad and brilliant. The balustrades topped with brass and everywhere strange - yes, very strange people. Many a little out of it, many with a mission, and all carrying the essentials of life in a small bag, as attached at pages M8 to M9.

The concept of Laureate awards comes from ancient Greece. The idea was to give some balance to a culture big on wars and games (such as the Olympics), but with little appreciation of the artists, poets and musicians.

The Romans picked up the idea awarding scholars - and then also their creative artists.

Ultimately, to become a Laureate was one of the highest honours bestowed in Britain. It still is.

A Laureate in the Arts is an honorary title given to the person who demonstrates more than excellence- I would say genius. It's usually a poet, a playwright, painter, sculptor or writer.

Ben Jonson was the first British Poet Laureate, appointed in 1616. Now around the world Laureates are flourishing in enlightened Cities, bestowed by Councils and other governing bodies.

The most publicised are the British Laureates (remember John Masefield). These days, it is Andrew Motion who, among other things, published a hip-hop work for Prince Andrew. His title is granted for life.

The City of New York gave Stewart Conn a Laureate for his service to poetry and prose and the new title "Edinburgh Maker"- the medieval term for writer. It will be a three year appointment.

California has a Poet Laureate, Katerina Canyon, who lectures on how to write poems of wonder about - you guessed it - California.

In all, 34 states have Laureates, as do Cities in Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

My favourite is Lawrence Ferlinghetti who founded the City Lights book shop in San Francisco and their first Laureate. He is still there and Kubi Witten-Hannah, who some of you know well, will visit him in August.



So, I would like to suggest that we have a similar scheme here.

First off, I would like to establish a small group to establish the guidelines, criteria and roles for four Laureates for Waitakere. They will receive a medal (specially designed for the project), a citation and will be hosted by the Council, at a special function - maybe the December Council meeting by the Mayor.

The aim is simple - to acknowledge, celebrate and honour those truly outstanding achievers in the arts field.

We have regular presentations here at Council. We also have our Walkway of Fame and other functions like the Sports Awards and Business Awards. But this is something on a totally different level.

MILESTONES

A Sad Passing

It is with true sadness that I record, from abroad, the passing of Graham Claude Spraggon, known as "Kere". Aged 73, he had been ailing for some time.

Kere was the father of Rewi Spraggon, who works in our Waitakere libraries. Rewi has also been a protocol advisor, a carver of note and a friend to me and my family over the Mayoral years.

The Mayoress attended the tangi for Kere, held at Pipiwai in Northland, on our behalf and passed on the sympathy of the whole Council to Rewi, his mother, brothers, sisters and extended family.

A Loss to One of Waitakere's Oldest Families

M10-M16 Alice Woodward (nee Bethell) passed away peacefully on Friday, 14 May in her 105th year. Alice was the Matriarch of the Bethell's family and her death is a great loss to the City. Councillor Penny Hulse attended Alice's funeral and conveyed the sympathy of the entire Council to the Woodward and Bethell families. Eulogy notes are attached at pages M10 to M16.

And the Winner is ... New Zealand Idol

Ben Lummis is our first New Zealand Idol winner. A 23 year old teacher from Ranui, Ben competed against thousands of other hopefuls from across the nation to take the title. Just goes to show what talent we have right here in Waitakere City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Report of the Mayor be received.
2. That the Council endorses the concept of City Laureates for the Arts.

RA Harvey, QSO, JP
MAYOR OF WAITAKERE CITY