

## Bayside This Week

# Behar Eyes Shift From Finance To Council

Steve Behar could easily pass for a member of the Queens County Young Democrats. He is schooled in grassroots political activism, has organized youth voter registration drives across Northeast Queens and knows his way around a baseball field.

He may be a fresh face, but the Bayside resident certainly isn't green.

For one thing, Behar, who is one of seven confirmed candidates running to replace Tony Avella in the 19th District City Council race, holds more degrees than a thermometer. After earning two master's degrees in Business and Law from Tulane University and a Master of Law in Securities and Financial Regulation from Georgetown University, he began his career as an attorney at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington, D.C.

He then moved on to senior associate at a major Wall Street law firm, where he crisscrossed the globe, spending time in the firm's Hong Kong division. A few years later, he procured a spot as head securities attorney and lead international attorney at a major Fortune 175 company - a position that would secure his status as a corporate success story.

But Behar's vision of success differed from those of his hedge fund associates. In 2004, he opened his own practice so he would have an opportunity to focus on his first love - politics.

"I've always been a political junkie," Behar said. "But I was busy in my career, so I couldn't get as involved as I'd liked. I've always been happiest working for the gov-

ernment or public good."

Behar's academic background and civic involvement suggest he has been cultivating political ambitions for years - he is a founding member of Democracy for New York City and the current president of two organizations: Democrats for New Politics and Northshore Anti-Graffiti Volunteers. But his motivation to run for office and get into the muck of community leadership was borne from disenchantment. After the 2000 election, Behar felt George W. Bush had stolen the election. He supported an Al Gore comeback and was dismayed when the former vice president sat the next election out.

"For the first time in my life I took four weeks off from politics. I didn't watch the Sunday shows and needed to get away," he said. "Then I got withdrawals and had to figure out who to support. I read up on all the candidates and their positions - and found myself agreeing with Howard Dean's policies."

Behar headed up to New Hampshire to canvass for Dean. He admired the Democrat's energy and progressive campaign stratagems - including his way of engaging young adults in politics. Inspired and equipped with campaigning experience, Behar hit the ground running back in New York. He brought life to Democracy for New York City, which he said had become a fading organization, and recruited young members to help him campaign for Barack Obama. His group co-sponsored voter registration drives with the Queens County Young Democrats and road

trips with similar youth organizations. They also reached out to people on the Internet and blogs and were using e-mail before it became a trend in Queens, he said.

"I've got a lot of volunteers from those groups who support me because I was with them, knocking on doors in freezing weather, campaigning for Obama," Behar said. "It's one thing to agree with a candidate because you like his ideas; it's another thing to have been in the trenches with him."

Two of the major issues Behar plans to address in his campaign are senior well-being and zoning laws and development. His parents, who have lived in the same Bell Park Gardens home for more than 39 years, live off their small pensions, he said. Though they are fortunate enough to have each other to rely on and an attorney son who can help navigate through scores of paperwork and pension forms, Behar said he sometimes wonders how a widow or widower in his 80s deals with the morass.

"I want to appoint one person on the staff to handle all issues for seniors," he said. "That person would eventually become a go-to person for seniors."

Behar is passionate about preserving the character of Northeast Queens and preventing developers from building monstrous constructions that defy zoning laws. The community needs a mayor and buildings department that enforces these laws, he said. But most importantly, politicians have to stop allowing real estate special interest groups to augment their campaign funding in exchange



Steve Behar has recently received Tony Avella's endorsement for City Council.

for favors or permission to build out of code.

"If I was looking to make money, I'd be working at a hedge fund or a big law firm," Behar said. "It's not about the money for me. My conscience and votes aren't for sale. I'm running for two reasons: to give back to my community and because I enjoy this. I enjoy working with people."

To learn more about Steve Behar, visit Beharfornewyork.com.

— Lisa Fogarty

## Queens Tribune

## Bayside CLOSEUP

Serving Bayside and Bay Terrace

### Get Six Acts Of Comedy

Theatre Time Productions is proud to present "All in the Timing" by David Ives, six one-act comedies at 8 p.m. on March 13 at the First Presbyterian Church of Whitestone, 15-43 149th St. at 8:30 p.m. on March 22. For more information, pricing and reservations, call (718) 391-8697.

### Basic Computer Lessons

For adult beginners, a one-on-one half-hour tutoring session. Limit three sessions per day, one session per person, by appointment only. Sign up for either 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m. or 12 p.m. (Noon).

The event will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 13 at Auburndale Library, 25-55 Francis Lewis Blvd., (718) 352-2027.

### Rockin' Side Of The Blues

Blues singer/guitarist Eddie Lee Isaacs rock 'n' rolls with the blues in this performance of music made great by Little Richard, Fats Domino, Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis and others. Funded by a Special Legislative Grant.

The event will be held at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 14 at Auburndale Library, 25-55 Francis Lewis Blvd., (718) 352-2027.

### Auburndale Chess Club

Chess was once the game of kings, now it is the king of games. Join us for a game of chess every Friday! All ages are welcome, with chessmaster Paul Landau.

The event will be held at 3:30 p.m. Friday, March 13 at Auburndale Library, 25-55 Francis Lewis Blvd., (718) 352-2027.

### Tax Counseling

Counselors trained by the IRS will provide assistance in completing your 2008 personal income tax return. Bring a copy of your 2007 tax return, W-2 forms, 1099 forms, forms mailed to you by the IRS, and any other information concerning your income and expenses. Service is free; first-come, first-served. Available through April 10, Fridays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The event will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, March 13 at Kew Gardens Hills Library, 72-33 Vleigh Place, (718) 261-6654.

### Scrabble And Chess Club

Come to our Super Awesome Scrabble and Chess Club every Thursday! Play super awesome board games with super awesome people of all ages. Don't know how to play? No problem--we'll teach you!

The event will be held at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 19 at Windsor Park Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd., (718) 468-8300.

### Income Tax Counseling

Counselors trained by the IRS will provide assistance in completing your 2008 personal income tax return. Bring a copy of your 2007 tax return, W-2 forms, 1099 forms, forms mailed to you by the IRS, and any other information concerning your income and expenses. Service is free; first-come, first-

served. Available through April 14, Tuesdays from 1-5 p.m. Presented by American Assoc. of Retired Persons (AARP).

The event will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 17 at Bayside Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd., (718) 229-1834.

### Ignore The Traffic, Celebrate A Highway

Just in time to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Long Island Motor Parkway, the local author team of Howard Kroplick and Al Velocci proudly release The Long Island Motor Parkway. Opened in October 1908, the Long Island Motor Parkway was the first paved road built exclusively for automobiles and was the forerunner of the modern highway system.

The authors will be presenting an illustrated lecture based upon their book with a Q&A session afterwards at 2:30 p.m. on March 22 at the Queens Historical Society, 143-35 37th Ave. Admissions is \$2 for students and seniors, \$3 for adults.

### Celtic Music Concert

A graduate of the Juilliard School with a master's degree in Music, Bettina Covo is a unique singer/songwriter whose style encompasses jazz, pop, classical, folk and world music with a little urban alternative thrown in for good measure. She and her band will perform both traditional, new and original Celtic songs and instrumentals intermingled with the words of some of the great Irish poets. This program is funded by the Stop & Stor Charitable Fund. In Auditorium, Lower Level.

The event will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 14 at Flushing Library, 41-17 Main St., (718) 661-1200.

### Local Artists On Display

From March 7 to April 26, the Flushing Town Hall will feature a collection of works done by Long Island City Artists. From receptions to salon days and studio visits, the program varies. For more detailed information, call (718) 463-7700.

### The Art of Feng Shui

Learn how to bring your life into a more peaceful balance and how to reduce stress by using the principles of feng shui. 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19 at Queensboro Hill Library, 60-05 Main St., (718) 359-8332.

### Introduction To The Internet

Learn to navigate the Internet, search and browse the Web and learn how to type Web site addresses/URLs. Registration is required and you must have a Library card. The event will be held at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 19 at McGoldrick Library, 155-06 Roosevelt Ave. (off Northern Blvd), (718) 461-1616.

### Jazz Up Your Rhythm

At 2 p.m. on April 5, one of New York City's most celebrated jazz drummers, Pheeroan akLaff jams with Japanese traditional taiko drummers at Flushing Town Hall. For more information, call (718) 463-7700.