

Knickerbocker Ledger



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Top Story > Albany County Democratic Committeeman: "Ward leader 'paid' to make comment"



As election season winds down, was an internal ward letter sent from ward leader ordered by Democratic higher-ups, including Dan McCoy?

BY SEAN COLLINS, Political Director
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Probably not in the literal sense, but Samuel J. Coleman, an Albany County Democratic Committeeman, alleges that the letter sent out by a city ward leader was done so at the behest of County Executive candidate (read as: County Executive-elect) Daniel P. McCoy, who currently serves as the chairman for the Albany County Legislature.

Coleman, 40, was challenging 16-year incumbent Virginia Maffia-Tobler in the 3rd Legislative District, which includes parts of Arbor Hill and West End, ultimately losing by 38 votes in the primary. Before primary day, 11th Ward Leader Maggie Ray Sample sent out a press release stating Coleman had not been "forthcoming" about a current drug charge and a past drug conviction during an interview with a panel of Democrats who ultimately endorsed him over Tobler.

Coleman is currently facing charges after being pulled over in Stuyvesant Plaza in February for failing to remain right and speeding. Inside his car, police found marijuana stems along with both a plastic bag and scale containing cocaine residue. Coleman and a passenger, his cousin –who has accepted full responsibility according to Coleman – were both charged with misdemeanors and that his cousin was eventually fined after the charges were reduced to disorderly conduct. Coleman's case, however, remains open.

"[It] has been dragged on forever and a day now," he said. "I think it's actually being pushed to remain open to keep me out of the race."

This is where Sample and McCoy come in. He contends that if she had attended the meeting, she would have known how candid he was about this charge and his past conviction and only raised the specter of these charges for political reasons.

"Maggie Sample was paid to make that comment. She brought up old stuff to make it seem like a pattern," he said. "The problem I had with her was when she said that I was never forthcoming about it. You, as the ward leader, didn't even come to the meeting. You weren't there. What would make you the one to come and speak out when you didn't even take the time to come to the meeting? Everyone else was there...everyone in that room knew of this charge."

Coleman contends that Sample made the comment at the behest of McCoy when it became obvious that Coleman had a chance to win in the primary.

"See, they didn't start campaigning until they realized the strength I had and the support I had," he said. "So what they chose to do was say, 'Oh, okay, so we can slander him with this.' Everybody's door I knocked on though, I explained it to them, I've never hid it from anyone. Most people that know me know of the charges, know what I did."

Coleman thinks it is machine politics at work. Tobler is a supporter of McCoy and by having her in the legislature, it creates a more favorable environment for McCoy to move his agenda forward, according to Coleman. (con't on Pg. 2)

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE
Your Choice – "Ward leader 'paid' to make comment"
Albany – NYSR receives \$42,500 grant from NY Foundation
The Hollywood Review – The Big Year
Entertainment – 'Drive' Me Literal
Cartoon – SMALLBANY

Albany > Higher Education
Money Talks: New York Students Rising receives large grant from New York Foundation



BY LEDGER WIRE, Newsroom Reports
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As reports emerge of Occupy Wall Street raising over \$300,000 in order to keep its organization running, higher education activist organization New York Students Rising (NYSR) has received word that it will be the recipient of just over \$40,000 of funding to organize and run its activities.

With the October 5 walkout gaining the attention to national and regional media, the New York Foundation – a New York City-based fund that has supported community activism across the State of New York – has earmarked \$42,500 to NYSR for the first year, with matching amounts for the following five years – thus, the possibility of NYSR having nearly a quarter million dollars of funding by mid decade is real.

NYSR formed from the result of smaller organizations, most notably after last year's budget cuts at the University at Albany, which provoked the formation of Save Our SUNY (SOS).

The State University of New York Student Assembly, in comparison, has an annual budget of approximately \$58,000 that is appropriated by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Student Assembly is also held by state purchasing regulations – one key difference that allows NYSR to spend and organize faster, as their funds are private. (con't to Page 2)

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Mark it on your calendar.

On November 11, 2011, BAS News will be making an important announcement. What's the announcement, you ask? We can't tell you yet. You can check knickledger.com in the days leading up to 11/11/11 as well as ask one of our writers as well – they're in the know. Anyway, we aim not to disappoint, but to make you – our readers – more informed.

Jacquelyn M. Cohen, Managing Editor-In-Chief

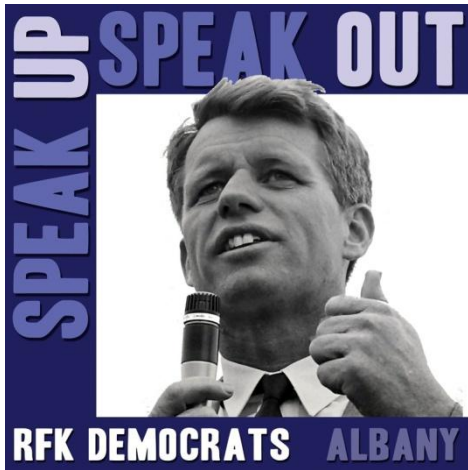
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Entertainment > Movie Reviews

Hollywood Review: The Big Year



BY CRITIC AT LARGE, Entertainment Staff Writer
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Some would say that "The Big Year" is strictly for the birds. Actually it is all about the birds. And coincidentally about the birders who watch them.

For three loons - industrialist Stu Preissler (Steve Martin), computer programmer Brad Harris (Jack Black), and contractor Kenny Bostick (Owen Wilson) it turns into a major competition that has them traveling the continent in a manner reminiscent of "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles", all in the pursuit of seeing more birds in North America in one year than anyone else. The stakes are high as jobs, family relationships, and childhood dreams are put at risk.

It has been said that the journey is more important than the destination. This is very true for all three as the journey not only changes their lives but gives them insight into what each holds most dear. For one it is enjoying family and finally retiring, for another it is finding the girl of his dreams in a most unlikely fashion, for the third... Well, there is no telling what someone will find most important.

Their whirlwind tour has them chasing storms that force birds to land, migrating to migratory grounds, and following a flock of birders who are flocking to spot various flocks progressing through scenic vistas. Occasionally the pursuit of birds has harrowing consequences. Consider the helicopter ride, the unplanned nap, and for good measure the poor unsuspecting newlywed wife of a birder honeymooning on Attu Island in the Aleutians. All add a level of excitement and humor.

The trio is backed by a supporting cast that includes JoBeth Williams as Edith - Stu's supportive wife, Brian Dennehy as Raymond - Brad's dad, Diane Weist as Brad's mother, Rashida Jones as Ellie - Brad's favorite bird, Rosamund Pike as Jessica - Kenny's wife, and Anjelica Huston as Annie Auklet - the captain of a ship that takes birders out to sea. There is even an appearance by Al Roker, naturally playing a New York Weatherman (talk about type casting).

How will it end? Go see it now and find out. This is one film that should be seen on the big screen to get the most enjoyment out of its natural settings. Great for a day or night when you are in the mood for a very entertaining family oriented comedy. Stay for the credits, at least the first part, and see how many birds you can spot.

Rated: PG • KL

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Entertainment > Movie Reviews

'Drive' Me Literal

BY ROBIN ZLOTNICK, Staff Writer
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A Michigan woman is suing FilmDistrict, the distributor of the movie, Drive, for falsely advertising the film, claiming that they promoted it as similar to the "Fast and Furious" series, when in actuality, it bore no resemblance to those chase/action masterpieces and there was very little driving. She is also saying that the movie promoted criminal violence against members of the Jewish faith. Just like that other horribly anti-Semitic piece of schlock, Schindler's List.

I for one, think she has a point. Not only that, but I believe this astute and admirably forthcoming member of society has opened a can of worms in Hollywood the size of, well, Michigan, the great state and home of our laudable media savior.

This important issue of not enough driving in the movie, Drive, will rightly lead to the outing of many similar instances. There have been countless times that the innocent public has been harmfully hoodwinked into believing a film was something that it most definitely was not, and we have suffered greatly for placing our trust in those evil magicians who create entertainment. Listed below are merely a few times I've felt taken advantage of, duped, and down right violated as a member of the movie-going population. I urge you to fight for justice, people. We are being lied to, and we need to stand up for our rights by filing lawsuits, in these cases, the only valid and sane course of action.

First, I have my doubts that there was enough "doubt" in the movie Doubt to constitute it being called, Doubt. Plus, there were nuns, right? Anti-Semitism.

Next, I attended a screening, pen and paper in hand, ready to learn How to Train Your Dragon, but though I was promised an instructional video on how to tame and domesticate the greatest fictional pet of all time, it was nothing but a really adorable, little animated film. Unacceptable.

Um, The Book of Eli? It was a movie.

Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger do not look anything alike. Do they think we're all stupid? Or blind? Twins my foot.

It is appalling that I would be expected to Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. I watch a movie to be entertained, not interrogated. I feel antagonized and belittled. How dare...whoever was responsible for that? And yes, I JUST saw that movie.

Children of Men - Not the ironic and gender-role-twisting comedy I was led to believe it was. Can someone please just sue The Shawshank Redemption already? What does that even mean?

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go watch my favorite movie of all time, the upfront, honest, and dignified, Snakes on a Plane. • KL

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By Sean Collins

Tidbits.

MCCOY/COLEMAN/SAMPLE (cont.)

Story: "Ward leader 'paid' to make comment"

"The whole thing about the matter is the seat and control of the Legislature," he said. "Right now, you have [Majority Leader] Frank Comisso and Shawn Morse who are trying to run for Chairman which Dan McCoy is giving up to become County Executive. Shawn Morse is McCoy's henchman, his main man. If Shawn Morse gets the seat, what happens is Dan McCoy has total control."

Coleman said it was never about him in particular but that since he was perceived to be aligned with Wanda Willingham, a county legislator who recently lost her primary to Mert Simpson in the 2nd Legislative district, he became a target.

"Everyone attached me to Wanda Willingham, who did nothing for me. I mean literally nothing," he said. "If I was her support, then they had to stop both of us."

Coleman is due in court on the 18th, but in an email he said he received word from his lawyer that he was going to be asked to consent to an adjournment because the officer is still out on disability which he believes is a violation of his right to a speedy trial and hinders his efforts to run as a write-in.

"I want to get this thing behind me [so] I can go back to the race as a write-in [then] I can state that this situation has been resolved," he said. "But every time I turn around and try to do to that, in some way this case cannot get closed." • KL

An email was sent to Maggie Ray Sample seeking comment as we prepared this story, but at press time she did not respond.

NEW YORK STUDENTS RISING (cont.)

Story: \$42,500 grant awarded by N.Y. Foundation

According to its website, NYSR is "a statewide network of students and campus-organizations dedicated to defending public higher education and empowering students in New York State. From our campus administrations to the halls of state government, students are an under-represented constituency whose fate is at a perilous crossroads. Students are facing higher tuition and incurring greater debt to attend public universities that are under-funded, increasingly influenced by private corporate interests, and run by unaccountable administrators who receive a disproportionate amount of university resources."

According to documents obtained by the Knickerbocker Ledger, the plan calls for NYSR to set up a permanent statewide organization that will run workshops and continue to spread awareness for the group's goals, which include keeping tuition rates where they presently, increasing academic staff positions, and reducing salaries for executives at SUNY system administration and at various campuses, including UAlbany President George M. Philip and CNSE Senior Vice President and CEO Alain E. Kaloyeros.

As the funding is private, NYSR will not face the same scrutiny as the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) has, as that group receives a significant amount of funding from student activity fees collected at various campuses which has met resistance from campus student governments. • KL

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