

# The Epoch Times

Epoch Times International

# THE CITY

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## WEATHER

Mon - Wintry Mix | Hi 36 | Low 30  
 Tue - Cloudy | Hi 39 | Low 30  
 Wed - Partly Cloudy | Hi 40 | Low 28  
 Thu - Mostly Sunny | Hi 44 | Low 36  
 Fri - Cloudy | Hi 47 | Low 39

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'A FRESH LOOK AT OUR CHANGING WORLD'

FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 4, 2007

## Last Ash Wednesday



**CLOSING CHURCH:** Local residents held a candlelight Ash Wednesday mass last week at Our Lady Queen of Angels, a 120-year-old Catholic church on 113th Street in East Harlem. The church was formally shut down on Feb. 12 by the archdiocese because its congregation is considered too small.

## Freedom Tower Wins Spitzer's Blessing

NEW YORK (Reuters)—New York's \$3 billion Freedom Tower won the backing of Gov. Eliot Spitzer last Tuesday, ending speculation he might demand an overhaul of the iconic skyscraper that will replace the Twin Towers.

Spitzer and New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine also confirmed they were open to selling the 1,776-foot tower, one of several tall office buildings to be built where the World Trade Center was destroyed in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Under construction and due to be completed in 2011, the Freedom Tower will be owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a public agency controlled by the neighboring states. New York's governor had called the Freedom Tower a "white elephant," and he has been reviewing the project since he took office in January.

"We are comfortable that this is viable, profitable, a smart decision," Spitzer told a news conference. Spitzer said the project's finances are now more secure, partly due to a recovery in the market for New York commercial real estate and progress in securing leases with federal government agencies.

"The real estate market ... has fundamentally changed, and we have come closer to government leases for about 1 million square feet," Spitzer said.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who joined the governors at the news conference, offered the strongest defense of the design of the Freedom Tower, which is expected to be America's tallest building.

Concerns about security and construction realities forced changes to architect Daniel Libeskind's initial design. Some critics have bashed the latest design by architect David Childs which includes a 186-foot-tall concrete base sheathed in glass.

"I don't think it will look like a fortress," the mayor said. "This building will send the message we want to the world—that New York City can recover. We were hit but are not bowed."

When asked to comment on the design, Corzine and Spitzer said they were not experts.

"This is a compromise between real security needs and aesthetics. ... In the context, the Freedom Tower is a remarkable product," said Spitzer, who comes from a prominent real estate family.

### For Sale?

Spitzer and Corzine, a former chairman of Goldman Sachs, agreed they would consider proposals from hedge funds and real estate firms that want to buy the skyscraper.

Though Manhattan's commercial real estate market is hot, there have been concerns about the Freedom Tower's ability to attract tenants. Port Authority officials have said some of their workers do not want to return to the World Trade Center site because it has been attacked twice—by hijacked jetliners in 2001 and a truck bomb in 1993.

## A New Year Find



**FLOWER MARKET:** A woman picks flowers at the annual Lunar New Year Flower Market in Chinatown on Feb. 17. The biggest holiday in Chinese culture, the Chinese New Year began on Feb. 18 and lasts two weeks.

## The Rat War Is Upon Us

### City Commentary

By EVAN MANTYK  
 Epoch Times New York Staff

NEW YORK—Recent reports of a KFC-Taco Bell infested with "30 to 50 rats" made me immediately cringe. The infestation was discovered by passersby of the Greenwich Village establishment and then filmed by a news crew, who had it all over the morning news last Friday. I'm sure there were also many people at home cringing at the thought of all those rat droppings in close proximity to their ground taco meat and fried chicken.

Now, that particular KFC-Taco Bell has been closed down by the city Health Department and the fast food restaurant's corporate owner Yum Brand Inc. is scrambling to do damage control.

The reality is that it would be easy to place blame on the city Health Department—who inspected the KFC-Taco Bell just one day earlier and cited it for only minor violations—or bad corporate ethics from the Yum Brand Inc, who blamed it on construction in the basement and is still recovering from the E. Coli recently found in their food. I, however, in my infinite wisdom, have instead decided to blame you. That is, you and me, the people of New York City. Do we really think that no customers or employees had noticed this infestation before? How can we explain their silence?

We have grown soft and weak in the timeless battle man has waged against the vermin. This revelation preceded last week's KFC-Taco Bell fiasco, when I found mouse droppings on my desk at work—the place where I eat my lunch every day, spend many hours typing at the computer and display pictures of loved ones. The issue was compounded when, at the same time, my in-laws, who were visiting my apartment for the holidays, found mice running in and out of their things, gnawing into chocolate Christmas

gifts, and leaving their own little filthy treats in return.

While the vermin had thoroughly infiltrated my surroundings and seemed to be growing in number, I found myself in a numb sort of momentary rage. I suddenly remembered how a year earlier I had interviewed my fellow New Yorkers about the threat of terrorism and found many seemed adverse to even mentioning the word "terrorist."

Sure, they acknowledged that there was someone out there trying to do harm to someone else, possibly themselves or someone they knew, and that this doing of harm would be done in secret and outside the established national or world order—but "terrorist"? No, that sounds too crass. And yet, whether you are anti-war or pro-war, anyone who has a clue about world affairs knows that terrorists are bad.

At this point, I simply rearranged the metaphorical letters in the word "terrorist," who secretly undermine national and world rules, and came up with the word "vermin," who secretly undermine the rules of my apartment, and I realized that I had had enough. There is a good guy and it is me, and there is a bad guy and it is them.

I then rushed to Duane Reade and spent \$20 on mouse traps of various types. For one or two vermin, I suggest traditional traps. Wedge bread into the bait component so they have to give it a good yank to get it out, and they get a good smash in the neck while doing so. For combating groups of vermin, as I was doing, I also suggest bait trays filled with little chemical pellets that you should separate into smaller containers (like the lid of a gallon container for milk) and place around your home (or restaurant!). Make sure to be careful that children and pets don't get into the pellets.

Thinking this way, we shouldn't waste our time placing too much blame on that particular KFC-Taco Bell's owners and employees, or even Yum Brand Inc., or the Health Department. Certainly, they have something to learn from this too, but isn't the incident a reflection of New Yorkers' overall blasé attitude toward good and bad in the world?

Instead, next time you find rat droppings on your desk, immediately face an unimagined reality: the rat war is upon us.

applying for U.S. citizenship. Where: 110-04 Atlantic Avenue, Richmond Hill, NY 11419. When: Saturday, March 3, 2007, Noon-3 p.m.; Saturday, March 24, 2007, Noon-3 p.m. For information on exactly what documents to bring, applicants are asked to please contact Ms. Bibi Razack at: (718) 441-6050 (ext. 203).

## Events Calendar

### A NIGHT OUT

Thursday, March 1: **Juilliard String Quartet: 60 Years Young, The Juilliard School**—Juilliard's famed quartet-in-residence (Joel Smirnoff and Ronald Copes, violin; Samuel Rhodes, viola; and Joel Krosnick, cello) celebrates a 60th anniversary with the energy and passion that have made them an American icon. This is the last of three special anniversary performances this season at Juilliard. At 8 p.m. Free tickets required. *Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center Plaza* | 212-799-5000

### FOR THE KIDS

Friday, March 2-4: **New York International Children's Film Festival, GKids, Director's Guild of America**—NYICFF has earned the reputation as one of the finest film festivals for people under 18 by programming the best new animation, live action, and experimental film from around the world. From more than 2,200 entries, 180 films were selected. Programs are organized by age group, with screenings available for all ages from tots to teens! *Peter Norton Symphony Space, Cantor Film Center, & IFC Center* | 888-468-7619

Saturday, March 3: **The Laurie Berkner Band with Susie Lampert**

and Adam Bernstein, **Town Hall**—Join us for an afternoon of children's music at 11 a.m. & 1:30 p.m. "A kind of sippy-cup Sheryl Crow, Berkner inhabits a kid's curious perspective in her lyrics and pens folk-pop melodies that bear repeated—very repeated—listensings."—Time Magazine. *123 West 43rd Street (b/w Broadway and 6th)* | 212-977-1003

### CITY OFFERINGS

March 1-15, **March Madness at Housing Works Thrift Shops**—Spring Previews. Join us for our own version of March Madness with the ultimate shopping event (x 7!) featuring the very best and one-of-a-kind merchandise that has been saved for months, including new and vintage items from top home and fashion designers and brands, all at "charitable prices"—generally 70 percent off retail. Benefits Housing Works, the nation's largest community-based AIDS service organization helping to improve the lives of people living in New York with HIV/AIDS. \$10 donation for entry. For times and locations, check [www.housingworksauctions.com](http://www.housingworksauctions.com).

Saturday, March 3: **Queens Citizenship Days, South Queens Boys & Girls Club**—Free application assistance for anyone interested in

## Russian Community Group Honors The Epoch Times

*Prizes go to those who 'have demonstrated ethical leadership and corporate stewardship'*

By LIDIA TALAI  
 Epoch Times New York Staff

NEW YORK—The Russian-American Community Coalition (RACC) presented its 2006 Prosperity Prizes in Brooklyn last Thursday, and The Epoch Times was among the honorees.

RACC Chairwoman Zina Konovalova presented the awards to a number of organizations and individuals.

In the award letter, Konovalova noted that the Prosperity Prizes go to those who "have demonstrated ethical leadership and corporate stewardship in helping us to make an improvement in development of the Russian-speaking community of New York."

One of the honorees was New York State Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny, the first Russian-speaking state assembly member.

"You can be proud of your own heritage and proud of being an American," said Brook-Krasny. He noted that RACC serves as a bridge between the Russian-speaking community and the mainstream New York community.

Editor-in-Chief John Nania accepted the award for The Epoch Times. In brief remarks, he mentioned that The Epoch Times has both local community coverage and an international reach, including a Russian-language newspaper edition and Web site. He presented an Epoch Times pen inscribed in Russian to Konovalova.

Epoch Times staff presented Russian-language copies of its "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party" book to RACC officers and



**AWARDED:** The Russian-American Community Coalition's Prosperity Prize awarded to The Epoch Times last Thursday in Brooklyn.

some of the honorees. Focusing on the damaging nature of China's Communist Party, the commentaries have been well received in Russia.

An Epoch Times article published last spring exposing unscrupulous co-op sponsors led to the recognition by RACC. The article detailed how many New Yorkers from the Russian and Eastern European communities have their monthly maintenance fees raised by these sponsors, who were supposed to legally relinquish their ownership of the co-op within five years.

After the formal part of the ceremony was over, the honorees made use of the opportunity to talk among themselves about the present and future of the Russian community in New York, and enjoyed the Russian blintz and coffee served for breakfast.