

Chelsea **now**



Wings of desire, p. 18

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 8

THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF CHELSEA

NOVEMBER 17 - 23, 2006

They've been working on the rail yards; Lots of new ideas

BY ALBERT AMATEAU

Now that the proposed Jets stadium over the West Side rail yards is dead and buried — thanks to Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and the united opposition of local elected officials and civic groups — what's next?

That was the question put to about 100 Clinton and Chelsea activists at a Wednesday roundtable conducted by the Hudson Yards Community Advisory Council, the Hell's Kitchen Hudson Yards Alliance and Community Board 4.

Without the stadium proposed for a platform over the Western Yards between 11th and 12th Aves. there remains the massive Hudson Yards redevelopment project, which the city approved last year

Continued on page 7

F.I.T. students decry pattern of injustice against union

BY LAWRENCE LERNER

Fashion Institute of Technology students traded haute-couture clothing styles for activist outfits Tuesday afternoon, coming out in full force to demand a new contract for faculty and staff at a rally in the school's main plaza that drew nearly 200 participants.

Organized by F.I.T.'s Student Association, the demonstration marked the first show of student support in this prolonged contract battle for the school's beleaguered United College Employees

Continued on page 12



Chelsea Now photo by Jefferson Siegel

And the winner is....

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, left, presented the Cop of the Year Award to 10th Precinct Officer Sean Conlon at the Greenwich Village-Chelsea Chamber of Commerce's Cop of the Year Awards on Wednesday. See Page 3.

Helping world artists take a bite out of the Big Apple

BY LAWRENCE LERNER

In a barren eighth-floor art studio overlooking the streets of Hell's Kitchen, Tobias Zielony hovers over a row of grainy, 30-inch-by-36-inch photographs spread before him on the gray concrete floor. He points to a black-and-white shot of two young men standing on a wooded path, lit up like ghosts by the camera's flash and staring intently, if sullenly, at the lens, their rumpled button-down shirts hanging over ripped jeans. Adjacent to it is an image of one of the men, asleep on

a filthy sofa chair in a dilapidated porn cinema.

"These are male prostitutes smuggled into Germany from Eastern Europe," he says in a mild German accent, his strawberry-blond hair and light, freckled complexion reminiscent of his countryman and former tennis star Boris Becker. "Here, they've arrived in Berlin at a cinema known as 'Big Sexyland.' They think it's going to be the place of their dreams, only to discover this desolate place."

The 32-year-old Zielony landed in New

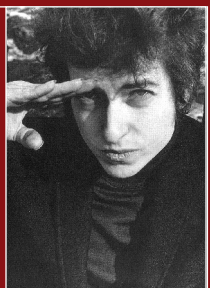
York City to work on and exhibit this series as part of a six-month residency, courtesy of his government's cultural ministry and the International Studio and Curatorial Program, a nonprofit organization that brings artists and curators from all over the world to live and work in New York, long regarded as the epicenter of the art world.

Tonight through Monday, Zielony will

Continued on page 8

**EDITORIAL,
LETTERS
PAGE 20**

**BOHEMIAN
DREAMING
PAGE 23**



F.I.T. students and union stitch together alliance

Continued from page 1

union, whose members have been working without a new contract for almost a year and a half.

According to New York State's Taylor Law, U.C.E. members remain employed under their old contract, which expired at the end of May 2005.

"The most gratifying thing was the students' response," said U.C.E. President Juliette Romano after speaking at the rally. "We didn't think it right to reach out to them, on ethical grounds. So, it was great that they came to us and held this rally on our behalf."

The student association decided to get behind the union now, nearly 18 months after the union's contract expired, after becoming frustrated by the lack of progress at the negotiating table.

"We thought this would resolve itself initially, so we stayed out of it," said Claire LaRoche, a rally organizer who is the F.I.T. Student Association's vice president of student affairs. "Now that it's dragged on this long, we felt like, 'If we don't do something, how long is this going to go on?'"

'We felt like, "If we don't do something, how long is this going to go on?'"

Claire LaRoche,

F.I.T. Student Association

According to U.C.E.'s Romano, the union has been deadlocked with the administration over givebacks and shared-governance procedures.

At issue are proposed cuts in vacation and personal days for future union members, along with increased work hours for some student-service professionals, technicians and lab and teaching assistants. Under the proposed contract, these changes would be implemented without commensurate pay increases.

Romano says the administration also wants more control over teaching assignments, as well as the appointment of stu-



Chelsea Now photo by Lawrence Lerner

U.C.E. President Juliette Romano addresses a crowd of nearly 200 people at a student-sponsored rally at the Fashion Institute of Technology's main plaza on Tuesday.

dent-service department heads and faculty to teach courses via the Internet, procedures that have largely been the domain of faculty members.

Addressing the crowd of students, faculty, staff and administrators at the rally, the U.C.E. leader said, "These are gains we fought hard for in the past. Now the administration is asking us to mortgage our future, and we're not going to do that."

That sent a burst of applause across the packed plaza on 27th St. just east of Eighth Ave.

Earlier that morning, Romano and U.C.E. representatives met with city and

state politicians and union leaders about the contract negotiations.

But it was the students who took center stage during the afternoon.

Handing out "Students Support a Contract Now" buttons and wearing "I Love F.I.T." T-shirts inspired by Milton Glaser's famous "I Love NY" logo, they pulled together their first rally on behalf of faculty staff since U.C.E. first began bargaining with F.I.T.'s administration 40 years ago.

"Why support the professors and staff?" asked Heather Golden, student association president and a rally organizer, addressing the crowd. "You guys do so

much for us. You push us into the industry by getting us internships. You counsel us when we have personal problems. What could be more important than that?"

Immediately following the rally, student association representatives circulated among the crowd, soliciting signatures for petitions of support that the group will present to F.I.T. President Joyce Brown and the school's board of trustees in January.

"We'll deliver these to the board of trustees publicly," said Richard Lowe, a student association member, as he held out a clipboard with petition for a fellow student to sign. "If we give these directly to the president, it may not ever get to board."

Distrust of Brown and her administration was widespread at the rally, with numerous students and faculty members citing the president's poor communication and general aloofness in response to their concerns.

According to Romano, Brown's administration can add disingenuousness to that list of character flaws.

F.I.T. is a community college within the State University of New York system and is funded equally by the city, state and student tuition. As such, Romano said the city uses its settlements with DC 37 — New York City's largest public employee union — as a template for funding U.C.E. each contract cycle.

"DC 37 settled with the city this July and got a 10 percent salary increase over a period of 32 months — and they had no givebacks, since the city is currently running a surplus," said Romano.

"Our salary schedules haven't increased since June 2004, which means our members have had to absorb cost-of-living increases for two years," she said. "After the DC 37 settlement, the city made funding for our salary increases available to the college, but the college has been holding these monies hostage and claiming financial hardship."

Romano and her colleagues find F.I.T.'s hardship claims hard to believe.

Brown did not make herself available for comment. The administration's spokesperson, Brenda Pérez, responded only by saying that "F.I.T. is reserving discussion for the negotiating table, which the administration believes is the appropriate venue to continue working toward an agreement." She added, however, that the administration has set no timetable for renewing those discussions.



emagendental
the art and science of smiles

Expert cosmetic, prosthetic, and implant dentistry

Emily Ro, DDS, MS
Prosthodontist


260 8th Avenue, Suite 2S (at 23rd St.)
212-952-8900

In the heart of Chelsea

Let us show you your smile potential



Peter McManus Cafe Bar & Grill



The McManus Family Tradition (Est. 1936)

Happy Thanksgiving!
We served your parents, your grandparents
and your great grand parents on Thanksgiving!
Serving Fine Food & Drinks for Four Generations
* Lunch and Late Night Dinners *
152 Seventh Avenue (at 19th Street)
212- 929-9691

*Chelsea's Cheers & Favorite Watering Hole Where People Don't Even Know Your Name
Where Good People, Food & Drink Meet.*