

Gary Ackerman (D/NY) September 20-22, 1997

Itinerary for Sunday, September 21, 1997

- 11:30 a.m. Address the congregation of the Huntington JCC's Chai Club. Speak about Swiss banks, peace process, and any Jewish issues.
- Cold Spring Harbor Antique Show (impulse stop)
- 12:30 p.m. Great Neck Plaza and the Great Neck Plaza Management Council will host their Annual AutoFest, Middle Neck Road and Grace Avenue.
- 3-5:00 p.m. Deena Lesser's F/R. GLA--special guest. 33 East Broadway, Roslyn.
- 4-6:00 p.m. Councilman Sheldon Leffler's Campaign Headquarter's opening, 205-07 Hillside Avenue
- 5:30 p.m. Long Island Anti-Defamation League will host their First Annual Dress Down F/R. You are at Stanley Tulchin's table along with Arthur Shorin, Chairman of the Topps Company, Morton Grossman, President and CEO of STA International, Arnold Cohen of Mahoney and Cohen.

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Book #1

- I flew down--courtesy of cut-rate flight--on Saturday afternoon. Jerry Scharfman and I missed signals at LaGuardia, but caught up with each other at the Ramada Inn. Went to dinner with Jerry and Claudia London--his "significant other"--at Little Portugal restaurant and then to a Portuguese bakery for coffee and dessert. He speaks Portuguese (and teaches Spanish) and spent a Fullbright year at Quimbra U in Portugal. Got his Ph.D. at City College in Spanish (I think). Anyway, he's much at home in a Portuguese restaurant. Says there are about 25,000 Portuguese here in LI--Mineola in this case. "The fisherman went to New England, the carpenters and painters and gardeners came here. And they are totally non-political. The older ones aren't even citizens; and the younger generation could care less."
- We gabbed (he and she mostly) about a lot of stuff.
- One thing seemed clear from conversation. Gary is much involved in local politics and played a role (very late, "he held off for a long time") in recent battle over County Democratic Chairmanship. Is interested (but declined an interview) on Lilco fight. Has good relations with Republican county boss (Montello) whom Jerry says helped Gary's son--a 3rd year law student--get an internship with a Republican district judge "unbeknownst to Gary." "His son never ever mentions his father. It embarrasses him. He's a nice kid. And he does everything on his own." Gary thinks this happened because Gary talks to the Republican boss-Montello or something like that. He and Claudia say Republicans have a lock on Nassau because they get the snow shovelled and help people with their everyday problems, while Democrats split hairs over who is most liberal. "If you don't have power, you talk about the issues," says Gary. County Executive--Garlotta--is also on good terms with Gary. They talk about Garlotta as possible Liet. Governor candidate. They embraced at ADL. Gary likes to hug and kiss friends.
- Jerry sees Gary as rock solid no matter what he does. "We took Suffolk last time, can you believe that?" That was almost his first greeting to me!
- "Gary is a middle of the roader. He's not a strong liberal. He has to deal with businessmen now. He's learned a lot. (Since he's been in the new district?) You bet. How could he not change?"
- The Northport housing problem: "It's still there. They're

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going back to court. Gary tried to be an honest broker, but the town board would not budge." Then he said something about Fort Totten taking its place--but I didn't understand. I think idea was that mixed housing might go in at Fort Totten.

- "There's not a single lawyer on Gary's staff--in the district or in DC." Why? No answer.
- Arthur Flug broke his back on a whitewater rafting trip. He'll be out for two months. Ann McShane is taking over the office. Sunday a.m. Jerry and I will get bagels and cream cheese and go over and visit Arthur before we pick up Gary. (We didn't--Arthur was busy.)
- Jerry says of Gary that "He'll talk to anyone."
- Said that tomorrow we'll be going the "Jewish circuit" from Huntington to Queens to Nassau County Brai Brith. "Mostly political stops," he says, for fund-raiser and kick-off meeting--both for local candidates.
- "Look at their filings with the FEC. See where the money comes from. That's his whole ball game right there. I'm telling you." I noted that Gary raises a lot of money and that was his reply.
- Jerry noted that Gary was having dinner tonight with "a very rich contributor."
- Ask Gary. If I go to the FEC and look at your campaign contribution records, how much will I know about your views on issues? From that alone?
- He says Gary voted vs. NAFTA and for GATT ^(yes, he did) ~~(he thinks)~~. Gary has weakened on NAFTA. *Fact track?*
- He talked about Alan Gershuny--he worked for Manes and got tarred by Manes scandal (ripping off parking meter proceeds) and dropped out of sight for several years. "Gary brought him back from exile and saved him from disgrace by hiring him in 1991. No one knew what he did in the mean time--drove a limousine, I think. He is more knowledgeable about politics than any of us. He has better political instincts than Gary, better than any of us; and we rely on him heavily. He is the most objective, even-tempered person I have ever known."
- The next day (Sunday) we picked Gary up at 11:00 or so. He was watching the morning news shows, flipping the dial, he said, to see what was going on. (As if he were in Washington.)
- We drove first to Huntington to a Jewish temple for a talk

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mostly about Israel. Lots of questions. 50 people--25 had questions. I taped a lot of it. As we left, he said, "The Jews are an unusual group. They know so much and they ask so many questions." That afternoon as we walked down the main street in Great Neck--with the long row of antique cars on the left, he said, "I'm walking fast by this group. They are my liberal liberals, the heart of my support. But if I slow down, each one of them will have a question for me." One did jump out and ask, "What are you going to do about campaign finance. He gave a quick, "The Republicans won't let us bring it up so we can vote on it. That's the problem," and kept going. Not in the mood at that point--since we were behind in the schedule. Someone called then "the freeze group."

- On the way to the temple, he talked about the redistricting of Suffolk in 1991. "There were two Democratic congressmen in the area, Tom Downey and George Hockbrukner. With the help of their friends in the Democratic Assembly, they divided up Huntington between them. There were two sections that were Democratic, one was heavily black, the other heavily Jewish. Downey took one, Hockbrukner took the other. They carved out the Republican areas and left them to be part of the new district. They were the most Republican parts of Huntington."
- Re Smithtown, "Tom Downey told me that whatever I did, not to bother with Smithtown. There is no way they will ever vote for you, no matter what you do or say. Don't go out there; it is a total waste of time. But I said I'm not going to concede one bit of the district to anyone. I intend to fight for every inch. I may not have campaigned there as much as some other places, but I spent the whole million bucks on cable and I had to buy some of it just for Suffolk, because there are two cable systems on that part of Long Island. And we carried Suffolk. Can you believe that we carried Suffolk County!" Ann told me the next day that they carried Smithtown with 50%.
- He mentioned, again, the Northport housing fracas, and his effort "to bring the two parties together." He said he thought he probably lost the adjacent area, but that in Northport, generally, he won. But he didn't know.
- One of the things I notice is that Gary is not someone who has a lot of the relevant political statistics on his mind. Jumping from state district, to 1st territory to present, he was unsure about it--also about percentage of Jews in this or that place, or district as a whole.
- For example, he said he lost "10% of the Jews" in his district in 1991. But he couldn't say what size that base was. We spent the day at Jewish events basically. And Jews are his base, clearly. But when I asked him about the percent of Jews in the district, he suggested looking at polling data. You'd

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think he'd have that on the tip of his tongue.

- Said Asians were about 11% of population, 2% of the vote. Just getting active, he says. Indians have been here longest. There is an Asian-American club in Queens. Koreans, Taiwanese, "They come to fund-raisers. And the Democrats have put Asians into a couple of judgeships and a couple on the school board. But they are just becoming active. I'd say that they make up about 11% of the population and about 2% of the vote."
- Re his district, "The thought was that I would run in a district that moved to the west in Queens and up into Westchester. The idea was that I would run against Nita Lowey, that she was a first term and I had more experience, that my base in Queens would be far greater than hers. I did not buy that argument. I said there's no way I'm going to run in Westchester. I'm going to run in Queens! The thinking was that Scheuer would run in the new Queens-Long Island district because he had already represented 85% of the Queens part, and I had only 15% of it. Scheuer thought he could scare me out. But what they didn't know was that I had represented a lot of Scheuer's section when I was in the State Senate. Furthermore, I had kept right on doing a lot of constituent work for the people who knew me and whose parents had to go one place or another. Scheuer had a staff guy who would tell people who had a problem to "pray," just to pray! I helped a lot of those people. Besides I knew I would beat Scheuer because he's a different kind of congressman. He would come to the event (flea market) at Cold Spring Harbor with a bull horn and a kid walking up front shouting, "come and shake hands with Congressman Scheuer!! He would come along with his cane, looking pretty grand. He didn't relate to people. When we took a poll, 85% of the district he had represented, and asked people who their congressman was, more people said Ackerman was their congressman than said Scheuer. Our pollster knew that; so did his. When we saw that, we knew we had him. I was well known in that area. I was born and grew up there. My parents were active in the projects. I went to public school there. I went to college there. I was a boy scout (eagle scout) there. I was the local boy--not Scheuer--I was the boy who grew up in the projects and went to Congress." *(My early comment of Scheuer + Long Island!)*
- ✓ - He's very gregarious. *much more than Ben*
- Re the new district, "It was not to my liking. It was a disaster. I didn't know where it was or anything about it. I think I had been to Huntington area. I'd never heard of East Northport. I knew Great Neck would not be a problem. It's 70% Jewish. Jews are mostly Democrats and Democrats will usually vote for the Democrat. But Suffolk was strange and

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foreign to me." (Maybe this went before the Great Neck part.)

- Anyway, he talked about Great Neck the same way he talked about Huntington, except "in reverse." "In the western and northern part of Nassau, there were two Republican incumbents--Norman Lent and _____. The two of them and their friends in the Republican State Senate, carved out Democrats--mostly Jewish--from their new district. They left me with heavily Jewish, heavily Democratic Great Neck. Norman Lent told me 'my crap will be your gold.' He called the leftover district the spermatazoa district, because it looked like sperm with a tail swimming along. In Suffolk, I was the victim of the machinations of my colleagues; but in Nassau, I was the beneficiary of their machinations. I had no say in the matter. I got the leftover district." *like Ben --*
- Constant talking morning till night about how "the district makes no sense. I don't know a lot of the time whether I'm in or out of the district. Neither do my constituents. At Shelter Rock Temple (the one Karen was married in), the parishioners argue among themselves. 'I'm in Ackerman's district; no you're not, I am; no neither of you is!' One side of the street is in, one side is not. When we sort our mail, right down to each mail carrier's route, even the mail carriers can't tell whether to deliver my literature or Peter King's literature. Sometimes they deliver both. No wonder people don't know who their congressman is. It's crazy."
- In the car all day, the conversation between Jerry and Gary, "Are we in the district now? I think so." Two minutes later: "Now we're out of the district. No, I don't think so. Here we are, the 6th District. Well, it must be the dividing line. I don't know, it's along here somewhere," etc., etc.
- The point is that the district has so many twists and turns in every part of it, that it is literally a jig saw puzzle.
- "Last night, we had dinner with three other couples in a very large home on the North Shore. It was right in the narrow corridor that splits my district. A few houses to the right of us was my district, and a few houses to the left of us was my district. But I didn't eat dinner in my district. You go figure."
- Very residual like Ben's. But Gary's doesn't have the degree of homogeneity that Ben's had. (See Gary's description later.)
- So it's no wonder Gary has a hard time with hard statistics. It's not like districts that follow county lines. And, as Jerry keeps saying--and Ben I knew full well--the demographic change has been great and constant--making statistical summary hard to come by.

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*This is not a
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All the scheduled events were Jewish centered and a large proportion of travel talk is Jewish centered. The Temple-- then the Cold Spring Harbor Fire Department festival which was an impulse stop. Then Deena Lesser fund-raiser--Town Clerk of North Hempstead (which takes in Great Neck, Port Washington and Glen Cove). Then to Great Neck street fair. Jerry: "He owns this town." Then to Loeffler City Council headquarters opening. (He ran vs. Gary in 1983 primary), then to ADL dinner.

We happened upon the Fire Department festival--a 100+ antique show outdoors. Gary had to stop to shop for about an hour-- putting us behind on the schedule. "This is the place to campaign. I love garage sales. I buy so much at flea markets and garage sales that I had to have my own garage sale to get rid of the stuff. It's very relaxing for me and its a good way to meet people.

- "If I were campaigning hard, we'd have stopped at every garage sale."
- Afterward, "That was worth missing our next stop. The thing that amazed me was how many relatives of these people I knew. Of course, most of them weren't in the district--or else they did not know and I didn't know. How come nobody lives in my district?" (was a borderline area) Whimsy like Ben. He stopped and fingered stuff at every booth, wandered around slowly saying hello or shaking hands when people recognized him or when he felt like it--all very casual. He hit every booth. It was a gorgeous day and the setting was a park on the water. Hundreds of people milling around.
- After that, in the car, he tied this in with his stamps. "My stamps are in the back seat. There are two stamp shows in Long Island. I thought if we had time... (he trailed off). Stamps are my thing. Some of the dealers know what I'm looking for. I can get away from everything and concentrate on something else."
- "He's like a little kid," says Jerry.
- He does enjoy another life. Has a house on a lake near (or in) Connecticut. Goes there a lot (met one of his fund-raiser co-chairs there). "I try to come home every weekend and get away if I can. If there's something my staff thinks is important, I'll kick and groan and see how hard they kick and groan. This weekend, a number of things came together, so I did it. Of course, if I were campaigning, I'd stop at every garage sale." (Nothing too small!)
- He travels a lot and after his talk at the temple, he regaled a large stay-over group with talk of trip to Pakistan, India,

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Israel. He and Ben Gilman took a big trip at recess.

- First question from Alan when we met and talked the next morning and I mentioned the flea market. "How was the recognition factor? Did they recognize him?" I said yes and better at Great Neck festival. He said that would be the case. And when Gary came into the office the next morning, the first thing he said, in answer to 'how did it go' was, "I had good recognition in Great Neck." He's a little bit of a puzzle because he clearly believes in a lot of person-to-person activity. Yet he doesn't fill his days with events and when he comes home, he goes to his other house.
- His house boat is called Unsinkable II; Unsinkable I sank!
- At the ADL event, Schumer came, grabbed the platform out of the normal order and left. Gary sat there, was introduced and stayed, etc., even through most of the Capitol Steps performance. I mentioned to Alan that I thought Schumer was pushy. He said no, that if Gary were running for something, he would have done same thing--pushed himself first onto the program. I guess "pushiness" is no problem in this milieu.
- He thinks he gets the Queens vote because they know him. "I got a good bounce from Queens." The Nassau vote comes because they are Democrats. And, I guess, Jewish, too.
- In Great Neck, "You notice some people here have a middle eastern look. They are Iranian Jews. Many of them were able to get a lot of money out of Iran before the Ayatollahs took over. They would come to someone's door with a million dollars in cash and ask to buy the house! They have built several beautiful synagogues here. They are not very active politically, but they do contribute. They are very pro-Israel, because that's their defense against whom ever."
- Re winning Suffolk (and Smithtown by 50%), "He had no money. And we put in the whole million bucks."
- I asked what his practice was with respect to local politics and he said they stayed out of primaries--but that there were cases where they were committed or where they had a strong preference when they did enter. Most of the clubs in Queens weren't active. But when I asked later, who helped in 1992 primary, he immediately mentioned the clubs and the Assembly District leaders. They give you a hand hold. This may need more fleshing out. Because the talk in the car was a lot of local stuff. A state senator had died recently and the Democrats thought they had a good chance of taking a Republican seat. ("He was much loved and a health nut and his casket was carried by eight overweight guys.")

Damen
Runyan!

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- He has four city councilmen in his district. They were all term limited. He sees no threat from any of the three Democrats. The Republican might run.

Book #2

- How do you describe your district to others? "You mean geographically?" Yes, and any other way. "It's a conglomeration, an amalgam of communities strung together for contradictory reasons. It's made up of leftovers and remnants which add up to the requisite number of residents, a patchwork quilt. It's a mixture of city and suburbs--50% of the population is in the city, Queens, and 50% of the vote is in the suburbs, Long Island. It has the most liberal Democrats and the most conservative Republicans, not in a straight line, though. The most liberal are in the middle; the city is middle class, working people. Nassau has some very wealthy people--fairly liberal, Jewish. Suffolk has a lot of blue collar people and some wealthy mixed along the North Shore. The district is like a man made lake--artificial."
- Is it easy to represent? "It's a challenge. To one group, the other group might as well come from outer space. Each group believes that what they believe is all there is. So it is hard to synthesize a philosophy. I haven't changed my philosophy. But the importance of issues may change where I can keep my core beliefs and I feel that I owe some group consideration on an issue of importance to them. I'll throw a vote. If it's not a matter of morality or philosophy or if it's not about who I am, if someone thinks a parkway should be widened, I can do that."
- Flag vote: "An overwhelming majority of people in my district feel very strongly about the flag issue--probably as intensely as anything else in my district. They think it's their flag and that it's God's will. But it's my flag, too, and I can't vote with them. Where intensity is stronger like that, people are most likely to remember and take it out on me. But it's a matter of philosophy. It's who I am."
- Toughest vote? "I struggled with parental notification--not parental consent--notification. And the death penalty, too. People in my district overwhelmingly support it. But I can't agree. They are both philosophical issues; but they are difficult ones."
- Does the change in district make a difference in the way you vote or think about things? "Yes. In Queens, there was not any well-honed idea of business concerns and interests. It was just a matter of jobs. There was no long run view of trade and the future of the economy. I've been forced to grow up. Now that I see both sides of these questions, it makes

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for tough decisions. I'm grappling with one now--fast track authority for the President. In Queens, the unions are opposed to it. But I have to jump out to Smithtown now where blue collar people may be helped by trade. (He talked a lot about that in the car last night and I listened to some of their dialogue today--more about that later.) I'm leaning in one direction. I've given a lot of support to the administration in foreign affairs, on MFN for China and on GATT. I've accepted a high profile on a lot of long range issues. But now there are people, you know, who are losing their jobs, real people who have to put bread on the table. You have constituents who need protection. It's hard to know how to equate their jobs with the jobs the business guy is going to create down the road. But that is 'on the come' and this is 'right now.' One is definite, the other is down the road. It's economic triage."

- How do you explain your action--now or in general? "First, you figure out what's the right thing to do and then you explain why its the right thing. Sometimes, you do the wrong thing and don't have to explain. But you do have to market your decision and sell it. With people who oppose you, of course, it's the most difficult. Because you're explaining a position they don't care about and you can't put an explanation on a bumper sticker. Yet people don't want to listen. (In this case with fast track.) The people I disappoint will have argued it all out. They know the other side. Hopefully, this will be a chance to help them with their interests down the line. If it means a heck of a lot to them, they will remember. Perhaps there will be another way to help them."
- Re media, "People have to know what you are doing--and that you're not doing something to hurt their interests. In Queens, it is very difficult, because you are competing with a dozen of the members of Congress. The New York Times is important because some of my constituents read it--more in Nassau than in Queens. Newsday is more important for Suffolk and Nassau."
- "New York Times has a Queens section. Newsday has a Queens section in its Long Island edition and special sections for Suffolk and Nassau. Each paper has separate sections for each part of the district. So I have to do triple time to get my story out."
- "A major event in Douglaston--an important area for me--is totally foreign in Nassau. I know that because I was an editor of the Queens Tribune. A newspaper is a local thing. I told all my reporters that all their stories should be about Queens. I used to tell them that if an atom bomb fell on Manhattan, the lead story should be that there was a back up

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on the Long Island Expressway!"

- "No matter how big my story might be in Queens, I can't get any mention or any face time in Nassau. I have to work three times as hard to get a story. And cable is just as hard. There is one cable station in Queens, but it only covers the city. There is another cable company in Nassau, but it doesn't cover Suffolk. That's another company. If you live on the other side of the street at the border of the two systems, you can only get one. Our efforts to get a permit for a blind man to take his dog to Hawaii is a headline story. We've had national coverage. But its not a Queens story. It's a Huntington story."
- "In this situation, weeklies become very important to us. Some people say that weeklies are not worth the attention. But we pay them a lot of attention."
- Re personal service, "Politics is a personal service business. Mass marketing is necessary but the personal touch is a big plus. A satisfied constituent is a life-long customer. And one that will tell others about it. Even if you don't succeed, people will thank you for trying. That guy last night--when I told him I was sorry we couldn't help said that's ok, you tried."
- "When we got the new district, we opened up two offices to anchor the district--at both ends of Northern Boulevard--even though they call it 25A in Huntington. That was a deliberate decision; and we pride ourselves on our constituent service. Most of it is done here in the two offices unless it's something very complicated, which we may send to DC."
- Who are fight, bleed and die people? "The same ones I would fight, bleed and die for. People who believe in what I have done or like what I said. A good part of that core is personal--even people who disagree with me. One very conservative guy who has been a tremendous help to me disagrees with me on everything. He said to me once, 'you fight against me on everything I believe in, but you are the best congressman I ever had.' Why? Because I fixed a problem for him--way out in Republican territory--a problem having to do with shore-front and utilities. I went out there and people saw me. They told me they had seen me more in two years than they had seen their congressman who lived there." (Asharoken)
- Ann McShane (who is temporary AA since Arthur broke his back) said Gary had helped save a lighthouse--at least till 2000--that Long Island has big boating, fishing, sea-oriented recreation interest there, and they know what he did. These examples--like Zoe and the major--go a long way.

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- He did not mention Jewish people when I asked for strongest supporters. I think that Jews are so strong and so natural in his district and his thinking that he doesn't see them as separate in any way. It's as if I asked Barber Conable that question, he'd never say "white people." That's the way it is with Gary.
- Toughest race? 1992 primary. Help? Club leaders and AD leaders in Queens (need more on this).
- "The Democrats on Long Island (in fall '92) were so pleased to have a Democrat in, they were very supportive. In Greenlawn, we had such a turnout of volunteers, they wouldn't fit in the headquarters. Everyone wanted to work for a Democrat--even one from the city." *Alan mentioned this, too.*
- "Personal relations are very important for the activists--no question about it. If they like you, it's hard for them to vote against you."
- How did you colonize Long Island? (the staffers who had been sitting there eating lunch, Chinese, chuckled when they heard that word)?
- "I went out there a lot and I was me. People would say, 'How come you're here; you were here last week.' [To illustrate how he did it, he told a story:] "Once when I was out in Huntington, I heard woman say under her breath, 'We'll see him again in two years.' I made it a point to walk past her on my way out and I said, 'You'll see me before that.' She had worked for one of my predecessors three times removed--Jerry Ambro. And she was devoted to him. Not too long afterward, I saw her at a function. I went over and said, 'It's me again.' By the next election, she was one of the first people at our victory party. She came up to me and said, 'You're the second best congressman in the whole world.' I was pleased--second best is quite a compliment. When my mother died recently, she came to pay a shiva call. She said to me, 'You don't remember, but I used to think you were the second best congressman in the whole world. You aren't. You're the best.' It was so touching, I had tears in my eyes. Jerry Ambro died recently. I went to his funeral. She was there. (Delores Malone)." The idea is that he went to Long Island facing skepticism and when people got to know him, they became loyal supporters.
- "Then there was the guy who came up to me and said, 'You're one of three congressmen I really like. The first two got indicted.' I said stop right there, I don't need your vote!"
- "I haven't been as hands-on in Long Island as I was in Queens. I could have been out there even more, but as it is, we have

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spent more time there than the previous congressman did."

- Re International Relations Committee in House, "We've made international relations a local issue--both for ethnic communities and for the local economy."
- "For the Jewish people on Long Island, I'm the only congressman they ever heard of. There are a lot of Irish on Long Island. For years, I was active on Irish matters, despite the fact that I had no Irish constituents. I had no political motivation, which impressed them even more."
- Said he was going to get an award from the Greek community, "Homeric Award." He said Greeks vote, but don't contribute. The Indians contribute, but don't vote. Koreans contribute.
- "The clincher is that you supported our community when we needed help."
- "We did two rounds of town meetings on Long Island. We felt we had to because people did not know who I was. Before in Queens, I didn't have to. It was my home. I was always around talking to people. I was the local guy. Before I got into politics, I was editor of the local paper and I went to all the meetings. People who were not home much felt they had to come back and tell people what they were doing. I didn't."
- He said of Scheuer, "He represented 85% of the Queens portion of the new district. And he just assumed that they would support him. That's the way he was. But he had not represented them well. He was never around. And I had represented a large part of that territory in the State Senate. He had no idea that the redistricting had returned me to my home ground. He was completely blindsided."
- "I never criticize Ben Rosenthal. But he was a Washington guy. He was the first New York congressman to move his family to Washington. He did it very well. He could come home for big events. And he would do town meetings. But he wasn't around much."
- Re Banking Committee, "I went on it a couple of times as a temporary assignment, when the party needed someone. When they asked me the third time, I said that I would go on if I could stay on and accumulate a little seniority."
- "They say Banking is a good committee for raising money, but we haven't done much with it. Maybe in the future we could. I don't know." Not much of a go-getter here.
- A couple of times he mentioned his "100 club" of individuals who give \$2,000 (?) each and make up the core of his home

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contributions. He mentioned Cooper and Tilles (arts patron has center named after him at CW Post) as co-chairs. He has one big fund-raiser and some little ones.

- Jerry tells me that Gary fought against having tuition instituted at Kings Point (and other four federal academies, too). Ann talked about how he helped keep Coast Guard station on Long Island (till 2000). And there are other project-type things that I could collect to show his activity in three things. Fort Totten

- * Alan called Gary "middle of the road" Democrat now. "He's grown up," says Alan, the same word Gary uses. The fast track decision he was pondering the day I was there is a good case in point. But here's the seldom noticed wrinkle. Gary's movement ideologically shows up in the fact of his indecision and the fact that the labor guys are after him and in there arguing with him. In his earlier incarnation and district, he would not have thought for ten seconds about how to vote. It would have been pure reflex: labor-jobs-Democrats QED. The wrinkle is that his voting record may not change and will not, therefore, register the huge change that has taken place in his thinking. The point is, I guess, that there's a process that goes on prior to vote change that may change the dynamics of representation. And we won't catch it if we only look at roll calls as a measure of ideology. *ie. If Gary is like the south, he's a representative differently. He's a Southerner, he votes as a Southerner. No matter how much he votes.*

The meeting with the labor guys was fascinating--so much so I almost missed my plane home! The day before, in the car coming home from ADL event, he was furious with the labor guys. "I am pro-labor. I have 98% pro-labor voting record. Now, because I'm undecided on fast track, and I may go to 95%, they are roughing me up. They are saying that I want an ambassadorship. They are threatening to put a picket line around my office. I told them that I've never crossed a picket line in my life, but that if they put one around my office, it will be my first. They are going to push me in the opposite direction if they don't stop these tactics. They're coming in to talk tomorrow."

- When they came in to his office Monday, five of them led by NY City Central Labor Council guy (Boilermakers Pres. was the other most vocal one). I started to leave and Gary said, "this will be the really interesting one." He had told me that he was leaning in their direction, but he battled every argument they gave. I think that a verbal battle gave him a lot of enjoyment. He loves argument and combat. He made them shift their ground. They began with the jobs argument by Boilermaker guy. "We supported you. Our guys are in such bad shape we aren't going to be players anymore. We can't put bread on the table." When Gary talked about other jobs being won, they shifted argument to an institutional one. Congress

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shouldn't abdicate to the President. After he had beaten them up on several false starts and arguments, he said that he had to have good arguments if he was going to support their position. Things lightened up. But then they got into a wrangle over Guliani. Central Labor guy: "30% of my people will vote for Guliani. Tell me why? I don't understand it. Pretty soon the labor unions won't be players anymore. There will be a great social upheaval and country will take a right turn." Follow Buchanan, etc. Pretty soon, the argument seemed to be that Gary had to save the labor movement, save the country, keep the Congress as a viable institution, etc. and the only weapon was stop fast track, i.e., go slow to the same end. The labor guys were finding that a reflex, pro-union guy was no longer a sure thing. And that was very upsetting to them. I had to leave to catch my plane as the labor guy was "betting" Gary that Guliani would get 30% of the black vote, amidst head shaking, with Gary challenging the union guys to talk to their membership and educate them. The labor union guys were losing their congressman on one end and their own membership on the other, and the society in general was moving in an unwelcome direction. A real whipsaw situation. And they ended more by pleading than insisting. They are real down now and here was a paradigmatic situation.

- One long story at ADL re some guy he meets who says, "If you kiss my wife, I'll contribute \$1,000 to your campaign." Gary kisses wife and guy repeats that he'll contribute \$1,000. Gary forgets about it. Doesn't know whether guy does or not. One day a couple of elections later, he is in DCCC working the phones, going through a list and calling for contributions to his campaign. He calls some guy he doesn't recognize and says who he is and guy on the other side says, "I already owe you a \$1,000 contribution. And I'll bet you don't know why I owe you \$1,000." Says Gary, "As he's talking, I keep wracking my brain. Who is this guy and what is he talking about. Then suddenly it clicked. I said, "yes, I do know. I gave your wife a kiss, and you owe me the \$1,000." "He laughed; he gave me \$1,000; and in the last campaign, he raised \$17,000 for me. You never know."
- He was illustrating the fact that he often phoned people for money, "working off a list" of people, some of whom he did not know. But Gary's memory, says Jerry, is phenomenal. And there's a case where it served him well.

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