

Newsom tends to his business on East Coast

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Mayor Gavin Newsom, who left San Francisco on Wednesday for a sister-city trip to Cork, Ireland, has been making a few East Coast stops along the way to take care of some unfinished business -- both political and personal.

The first stop was Washington, D.C., for a little lunch-hour fundraiser Thursday aimed at helping Newsom pay off the last of the \$500,000 he still owed at the end of his record-breaking, \$5 million run for mayor in 2003.

The downtown gathering was hosted by political strategist David Mixner, whom Newsweek once dubbed "the most powerful gay man in America." Even Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who was busy all week with the hearings for chief justice nominee John Roberts, broke away long enough to stop by and say hello.

Then Newsom was off to Philadelphia for another mayoral debt fundraiser, this time hosted by Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, before heading to New York on Friday for still another cash-grab with "young professionals."

Each event took in about \$10,000, according to mayoral political adviser Eric Jaye. That leaves Newsom with only about \$40,000 to \$50,000 left to go on the outstanding bill.

After the fundraising spree, we're told, Newsom took some "personal" time in Manhattan, including getting together with his estranged wife, Court TV analyst Kimberly Guilfoyle Newsom. This after the two hobnobbed considerably during her extended visit to San Francisco last month.

And what about those divorce papers they filed at the start of the year?

"They haven't finalized it," says a friend who didn't want to be identified. "They both have days where they think it's a good idea and days where they both think it's a mistake."

In the meantime, Newsom is definitely not playing the hermit. He's been out dating for months and was last spotted sharing smiles Monday night with documentary producer Emily Morse at Kokkari, where a gaggle of Newsomites migrated after the big Peggy Drexler book-signing party at City Hall.

The do Ron run: Will he or won't he? We'll know by Oct. 1 -- that's the word on former congressman-turned-Beltway-lobbyist Ron Dellums and whether he'll run for Oakland mayor when Jerry Brown moves on next year.

For months now, there's been a move afoot to try to lure the 69-year-old liberal back into the ring in the hopes of knocking out City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente -- the heir apparent to the campaign money and pull of the Brown-Don Perata political axis.

"It's the 'anybody but Ignacio' crowd," said City Councilman Larry Reid. He describes Dellums' backers as a collection of African American and union leaders who feel they've gotten the short shrift from the gruff-talking, wheeling-dealing De La Fuente.

Reid, it should be noted, is supporting De La Fuente.

Geoffrey Pete, a longtime political fundraiser in Oakland's African American community and a Dellums backer, said the effort to get the 27-year veteran of Congress to run is about more than just trying to stop De La Fuente -- it's about ending the city's "demoralizing" eight years under Brown.

"Jerry Brown's goal was to dismantle the African American leadership that was in place here for 20 years," Pete said. "He's gutted local contracting, gutted local hiring, and viciously attacked African American department heads."

The fear among some African Americans and unions is that De La Fuente will be an extension of the same.

"Very few people have access to him as council president," Pete said. "It's a pay-to-play environment."

De La Fuente countered that Pete had plenty of access in past administrations -- even getting a \$285,000 city loan when Elihu Harris was mayor to help buy the building that housed the club where Pete has thrown a lot of his fundraisers.

"Still, I respect the fact that they might want someone else as mayor," De La Fuente said. "That's their right."

And so the debate goes -- with other potential and announced candidates such as City Councilwoman Nancy Nadel of West Oakland, Alameda County Treasurer Donald White and Oakland school board members Dan Siegel and Greg Hodge pretty much waiting for Dellums to make up his mind.

As for Dellums himself?

As has been the case since the "Run Ron Run" effort started, Dellums -- whose lobbying clients now include the AIDS Health Care Foundation, AT&T and Rolls-Royce of North America -- didn't return calls for comment.

James Ferguson, who works with the former congressman at Dellums & Associates back in D.C., said that "once he makes the announcement, it will pretty much put to rest most of the questions."

Agnew quakes anew at KNEW: One can't help but get the feeling that recently canned radio sports talk exec Bob Agnew has moved much closer to the strike zone -- politics.

Agnew was shown the door at KNBR after sports talker Larry Krueger uttered his remarks about "brain dead" Caribbean hitters swinging at junk and Felipe Alou's brain having turned to Cream of Wheat. Now he's bounced back as the new program director for a pair of local Clear Channel-owned A.M. stations, KQKE 960 (the Quake) and KNEW 91.

Yep -- he's simultaneously running programming for one of the Bay Area's most liberal channels (Quake's Air America, home of Al Franken) and one its most conservative, hot-talk KNEW (home of Michael Savage and the Savage Nation.)

Two stations where comments like Cream of Wheat brains are common air fare on a slow day.

"Fortunately," Agnew said, "Clear Channel has lots of attorneys."

As for talk jock Krueger, who found himself tossed from KNBR as well in the wake of his remarks?

"I understand he's doing a tryout in St. Louis with another sports station," Agnew said.

If you say so: "Everybody has got an opinion about schools, sports and sex, because they've all participated at some level -- even solitarily."

So said state Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata at the confirmation hearing of Joan Boruki, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's pick to be head of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Think about it: "You know, the more I think about it, the more it seems clear to me that the root of Arnold's problems is that he actually thought bodybuilding was a real sport. It's not.

"Bodybuilding is all about posing. In real sports, people hit back."

-- Democratic political consultant Richie Ross on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's fall in the polls.

And finally: The joke of the week:

Q: What is President Bush's position on Roe vs. Wade?

A: He really doesn't care how people get out of New Orleans.

Chronicle columnists Phillip Matier and Andrew Ross appear Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays. They can also be heard on KGO Radio on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Phil Matier can be seen regularly on KRON 4 News, and also on Sunday night at 9:30 on his own show, "4 the Record." Got a tip? Call them at (415) 777-8815, or drop them an e-mail at matierandross@sfchronicle.com.

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