

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXX, Number 99, 2 October 1996 — New York prepares for voter registration drive [ARTICLE]

New York prepares for voter registration drive

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With the presidential election one month away, Register New York—spearheaded by Leora Hanser, BC '96—will undertake a massive project of registering people this weekend in the five boroughs.

On Oct. 5, under Hanser's organization, Register New York will take to the streets in the five boroughs with representations from over 50 organizations working at 30 sites in an attempt to register New Yorkers.

Hanser, the head of the Voter Empowerment Project for Community Impact, said she saw the need for a voter registration campaign after sponsoring a smaller campaign last April that registered over 100 people.

During her first registration project, Hanser discovered that there are numerous organizations throughout the city that sponsor voter registration drives. Hanser said her goal was to bring those groups together throughout the city for a "city-wide" drive.

"It's certainly not innovative or original,

but nobody's doing it and it needs to get done," Hanser said.

During the first half of the summer, while working at Community Impact (CI), Hanser "networked" with various non-profit organizations throughout the city.

According to Hanser, it was necessary to interact with other organizations in order to gain their trust for her and her project.

"In many organization's eyes, I am a huge risk," Hanser said why?? I don't understand why she's such a big deal.

After garnering the support of non-profit organizations, Hanser said she spent the second half of the summer working out the logistics of the project.

"I thought there were moments when this wasn't going to happen, but I persevered," Hanser said.

According to Director of Communications for the Office of Public Information Anne Canty, Hanser was also responsible for learning laws about voter registration, as well as making alliances with groups throughout the city already involved with voter registration.

Register New York, which will depend mainly on the manpower from various city groups, has enlisted the help of the Gay Men's Health Crisis, New York City Coalition Against Hunger, the Day Care Council of New York City, Children's AIDS Society, and St. Mary's Church, as well as numerous other organizations.

According Canty, the project will

also allow Columbia to become more involved in the surrounding community.

"This voter registration drive that [Hanser] put together and spearheaded is going to allow many New Yorkers to vote. Our full name is Columbia University in the City of New York, and it's just another way we can make that connection," Canty said.

According to Hanser, the project will be mostly staffed through volunteers. In addition, Hanser said the project received \$500 from the Manhattan Borough President's Office, a sum that will cover printing costs.

Various organizations involved in the project will also provide pens, binder clips, makeshift clipboards, and all other necessary supplies for the project.

"We're giving them the stuff. Now they have to follow through," Hanser said.

In the weeks leading up to this Saturday, Hanser said she has been making various presentations to student organizations on campus to advertise the project. According to Hanser, presentations about the campaign have been made to the University House Council, Barnard's Student Government Association, Columbia College Student Council, and Barnard's Student Governing Board.

According to Hanser, the project is desperate for volunteers from the Columbia campus. Hanser will hold an organizational meeting on Thursday night for assistants to garner support for the Columbia site at 125th Street, which will extend

from Frederick Douglas to Third Avenue.

On Saturday, Hanser will be responsible for coordinating the various sites throughout the city and will not focus on the Columbia site.

According to Hanser, most of her day will be spent checking the various sites throughout the boroughs to make sure things are running smoothly.