Cedric Kushner assembled a buffet of boxers at the world famous Oyster Bar in Grand Central Station on Monday. No one was there looking to catch a train out of town. Rather, these fighters were looking to catch the express line all the way to the top.

The news conference was about potential and dreams and comebacks and good food, so there were plenty of smiles around the room. The game faces come out on Wednesday night when this moveable feast arrives at the Manhattan Center's Grand Ballroom for Kushner's second installment of Gotham Boxing. The card will be televised by ESPN.

Heavyweight David Tua (44-3-1) makes his third start since a two-year hiatus from the ring. He meets 40-year-old Edward Gutierrez (15-2) in a 10-rounder. In his last appearance, Tua decisioned the strong, and a bit underrated, Cisse Salif.

"When I came back last year, we could have taken an easier opponent," he said. "But to me, I needed to know where I was at."

It's hard to say where Tua is at, but it's obvious where he wants to be – which is back in the mix of the heavyweight division. Tua was a fixture in the rankings for close to a decade. Watching guys he's beaten – Hasim Rahman and John Ruiz – end up with title belts can surely inspire a comeback. Although Tua made it a point to say that this was not a comeback, but a continuation of a vision.

Speaking of a vision – Shannon Briggs was supposed to headline Cedric's card but as talks heated up for his challenge of IBF heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko, Ced sidelined Shannon in favor of waiting for the homecoming bout against Klitschko at the Garden in the fall. Nonetheless, Shannon showed up at the presser and both sides said the big fight is nearly a done deal and could be finalized this week.

In case you were wondering, Klitschko's side was represented by Emanuel Steward, who was at the Oyster Bar because his young cruiserweight prospect Johnathon Banks (11-0) takes on Cuban star Eliseo Castillo in the main event. As for the Briggs-Klitschko bout, Steward was pointing in Briggs' direction when he said, "I'm more afraid him than I was of Sam Peter."

In assessing Castillo, Steward was a bit more confident. "He's a good boxer. It's a gamble, but I'm not too concerned. An opportunity presented itself so we took it."

The reason Steward is taking such a risk is that Banks has been Klitschko's chief sparring partner and has gone over 100 rounds with the IBF heavyweight champion. After Klitschko knocked out Castillo in April of 2005, he told Steward, "He's not as tough as Johnathon."

Castillo is not too worried either. How can a guy who left Cuba on a raft at the age of 17 with his two brothers be worried about a prize fight? Castillo arrived in New York City via Havana,

Guantanamo Bay, Panama, Guantanamo Bay again and finally Miami.

Castillo has a victory over Michael Moorer and don't get too worked up over the loss to Klitschko. The Cuban is a natural cruiserweight and gave away 26 pounds to Klitschko in their bout.

When asked why he left Cuba, Castillo said, "I was looking for a better opportunity in this country because in my country you don't have any future in boxing. In this country, no matter what you do, you have a better future. Where better to come than the United States?"

This opportunity will give him a chance to win the WBO-NABO cruiserweight title. He wouldn't rule out a trip back to the heavyweight division, but says weight is not a factor when he fights.

"You never know," said Castillo, who is 20-1-1. "It doesn't matter to me, the weight. I can fight at 168 pounds. I can fight at 200 pounds, it doesn't matter."

Across the room, sitting by himself was junior welterweight prospect Jorge Teron. The tough Bronx pug is 10-0-1 and suffered a draw in his last bout. He's recovered from surgery on his left hand (he showed off the scar) and demanded a rematch with the guy who held him to a draw – crafty Panamanian veteran Armando Cordoba (21-25-2).

"I think I won the fight," he said of the six-round draw in Hollywood, Florida, in June. "I think I won 4 out of 6 rounds. It was a majority draw, one of the judges voted for me. But it's bothered me, that's why I wanted this fight again. I wanted to make sure I got this guy again."

Teron recently switched trainers from Hector Roca to former welterweight champion Mark Breland.

And on the other side of the room was Mean Joe Greene, the middleweight prospect who fights Damone Wright (17-25-2) for vacant WBC Youth Middleweight championship. Greene is 10-0 with seven knockouts and looks at this bout as a steppingstone. He was asked if knew anything about his opponent.

"Not really," he said. "But it doesn't even matter."

True indeed, nothing else really matters until these men climb into the ring Wednesday night.