
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Gretchen Borges ◆

Hear the Candidates for City Council Districts, 6 & 7

**Thursday,
April 11, 2013**

7:45 p.m. Sign-in * 8:00 p.m. Candidates

Bank Street College

610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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President's Corner

Gretchen Borges

Our Own District at Last

On Thursday, March 28th, an impressive parade of candidates for Mayor, Public Advocate, and Manhattan Borough President came before us. And on April 11th we will once again hear from more candidates, this time for City Council Districts 6 and 7, the two that cover the AD in which the Broadway Dems club nestles. Why should you come to this meeting?

Until the most recent redistricting, Morningside Heights was cut into three parts, represented by three City Council Members, whose main priorities were understandably where the majority of their districts stood. We were the odd corners. Now, thanks to the advocacy of Curtis Arluck and Laura Friedman and Joe Nunley and many others in the club, most of Morningside Heights will be in one district, District 7.

Morningside Heights will finally have a real voice at the table. I encourage you to come to the meeting on April 11th to hear the candidates for Districts 7 and District 6 to help you make your decision.

What are the issues pressuring Morningside Heights? Certainly the neighborhood shares many of the same problems facing all of Manhattan, but some are unique to us and we would do well to prepare for the candidates prior to the evening's event. The slate is full, time will be tight, have your questions ready.

New York City seems to be veering toward a 99%/1% dichotomy, with one group earning low wages serving the other group being paid a disproportionately high income. This election season, as always, many have been asking, can a middle class survive in Manhattan? The question is particularly poignant since the article the Times ran in January focusing on the issue featured a woman living in the Heights, though in a Columbia-subsidized apartment. And housing is of course one of the major expenses for most New Yorkers.

In Morningside Heights we do not have much developable land. But what has been built recently and what is being considered is primarily luxury housing. Consider the Avalon Morningside Park at 1 Morningside Drive (an 80/20 project where rents range from \$2665 for a studio to \$6385 for a 3 bedroom). St. John the Divine is now planning to build on the opposite corner of its close, across the street from St Luke's Hospital, and again would like to erect a large, primarily luxury rental building. And the New York City Housing Authority

(NYCHA) plans to build luxury housing on the Douglass Houses grounds.

In addition to the type of housing under consideration, imagine the effect of 400 more units of housing erected on the corner of 113th and Amsterdam. We will not have more supermarkets, or schools seats, or buses, or subways. Just as other sections of the city have been asked to absorb high rise after high rise, see their light diminish, their side walks and subways crowded beyond bearable, their quality of life disappear, so will Morningside Heights become one of those once pleasant neighborhoods of memory.

Community Board 9 has passed a Zoning Resolution that would limit the size of new development, as Brad Taylor briefly explained to us after the Charter School forum. Candidates should be queried about their positions concerning new development in Morningside Heights, and about the Zoning Resolution.

Bring your questions on the 11th!

WANTED:

**One Webmaster to take
charge of the
Broadway Dems Website,**

<http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org/>

**If you are interested,
please contact:**

president@broadwaydemocrats.org

From the State Assemblyman

Daniel O'Donnell

As many in the community know, I am the sole Manhattan Assembly Member on the Education Committee. I take this role very seriously and fight for our children's education, whether it's through increased funding during budget negotiations or stand-alone legislation throughout the year.

I recently introduced two bills to help protect NY's schoolchildren which are currently awaiting consideration. The first is in response to news that talks are ongoing to demolish two currently occupied schools—PS 191 and PS 199—to make room for luxury

high-rise condos with some replacement school space on the ground floors. Obviously, community input in such plans is absolutely essential, but currently not mandatory under law. My bill, A6058, would require community involvement, both through the Community Education Council and the Universal Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), whenever a city school building is sold or transferred. Our children's education must not be sacrificed for quick money.

The second bill, A6059, comes after news that the State Education Department is planning to share our schoolchildren's confidential data with private corporations without any ability for parents or students to opt-out and keep their information private. This is unacceptable; I believe that students and parents have a fundamental right to privacy and to control their own information. Under my bill, student information cannot be disclosed without explicit parental consent, and students' needs will once again be prioritized over those of the private companies seeking to profit from our children.



From the State Committeeman

Daniel Marks Cohen

I am pleased to announce my support for the two council districts, for the 6th, I endorse Marc Landis for the position to succeed Gale Brewer and for the 7th, and I am supporting Mark Levine to succeed Robert Jackson. Both Marc and Mark are true pragmatic progressives, Landis and I have known each other over twenty years in Democratic politics, he is the right person for the job, and I am glad he has thrown his hat in the ring. Levine and I are newer political allies, from his first run for the State Senate when I ran for State Committee in 2010, and he will be a worthy replacement for Jackson, who, like Brewer, has been term-limited.

I am reserving my endorsement on the other offices until all the clubs have spoken, but I will offer some observations about the rest of the field. The easiest is the Comptroller's race: at the moment, and likely going forward, Scott Stringer, the current Borough President, is the only candidate in the race. Briefly City Councilman Dan Garodnick on the East Side was in the race, but dropped out to run for re-election and possibly be elected as Speaker. And the campaign to succeed Stringer as Borough President is a little easier to see as well now that Gale Brewer has gotten in the race. A long-time West Sider, she competes against Bob Jackson for the West Side vote, and with the West Side being approximately 40% of the total vote in the primary, with four candidates, if she gets 75% or better of the vote, she wins the race. East Side Councilwoman Jessica Lappin is running hard, but with two west side candidates it will be difficult to get traction here. The remaining candidate in the race, Julie Menin, is a bit of a cypher, having been a Democrat, an Independent, a Republican, all within a year and a half. Considering that all of the Manhattan Borough Presidents in recently

memory have run for higher office, and the last Democratic Mayor (Dinkins) was MBP, I am reluctant to elevate someone to higher office without more of a commitment from them about their progressive political bona fides.

The Public Advocate race is also really down to two candidates, State Senator Dan Squadron and City Councilwoman Tish James. The other two candidates, Cathy Guerriero, a Columbia professor, has no prior campaign experience, and Reshma Saujani, the Deputy Public Advocate, who ran an unsuccessful campaign against Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney before being crushed 80%/20%, despite raising almost twice as much money as Maloney. Saujani did not make many friends in that race, Maloney was a poor choice for her to challenge and the PA race is another one. It makes me question her political instincts. If she had lost to Maloney, but gotten close, that might have been worth the effort. Saujani probably would have been better off running for something more local – such as State Senate – alas, she lives in recently elected Brad Hoylman's district, so that isn't an option. But she also lives in City Council Speaker Chris Quinn's district, if Quinn gets elected Mayor, she might consider running there. I don't begrudge Saujani's ambition, but she needs to pick her targets more carefully.

Speaking of Mayor: of the four major candidates, Quinn has the most money, DeBlasio is probably the most liberal, Thompson is also politically but seems to be approaching his campaign very, well, casually. Liu, with the investigation over his head, is in a tough spot. Over a month ago I signed up on his website to see if anyone would contact me: to date, no response. If nobody is following up with possible campaign volunteers it brings to mind the reference to a try falling in the forest with nobody to hear it: does it get elected Mayor? Probably not...



From the Steering Committee

Rachelle Bradt

If not Fracking, Then What?

When I wiped off the black soot from my window sills as part of my annual spring cleaning routine I wondered what is happening to the air we breathe. Then I went ahead and called Governor Cuomo's office to weigh in on his pending decision on hydraulic fracturing (fracking). Do we really need fossil fuels that badly that we have to put not only our air, but also our water supply at risk? Currently we sure act as if we do: New York State derives most of its power from imported gas, coal and oil.

To my relief I stumbled across the article "*Life after Oil and Gas*" by Elizabeth Rosenthal in the New York Times Sunday Review of March 23, 2013 where I found some encouraging news. "It's absolutely not true that we need natural gas, coal or oil - we think it's a myth". That's the conclusion of two civil and environmental engineers and

researchers, one from Stanford CA and the other from Cornell, NY.

Their recently published study " *Examining the feasibility of converting New York State's all-purpose energy infrastructure to one using wind, water, and sunlight*" for New York State is the first to develop a detailed statewide plan to renewable energy conversion.

According to co-author Mark Z. Jacobson, professor of Civil and Environmental engineering at Stanford University "converting to *wind, water and sunlight* (WWS) is feasible, will stabilize costs of energy and will produce jobs while reducing health and climate damage." While WWS conversion may involve initial capital costs, these costs would be more than made up for over time by the elimination of fuel costs. It also provides new calculations of the costs of human life and health care expenditures caused by air pollution. (Rob Jordan, Stanford Report, March 12, 2013)

"The economics of this plan make sense," said co-author Anthony Ingraffea, professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University, "Now it is up to the political sphere."

That's a good thought to start Earth Month with. You can get the ball rolling by calling the Ban Fracking hotline to Governor Cuomo's office at 866-584-6799. Then choose a WWS energy supplier for your electricity supply and help green New York's electric grid.

From the Steering Committee Ed Sullivan

A Slave Labor Bill?

A new Immigration Reform Bill is being crafted in Washington, DC, at his very moment, and while we are all glad to see some movement on immigration policy, we are definitely not looking to re-instate slavery in the United States of America.

But that is exactly what may happen if we are not attentive. In fact, the nose of the slavery camel is already in the tent.

The Guest Worker Program already exists in the United States. Immigrant laborers can come across our borders to do work here that American workers allegedly disdain. But there are big problems with that program, and they are fatal to an acceptable Bill.

First problem. The workers are tied, under contract, to one employer, and may not change employers without permission. That means if an employee finds that his, or her, employer is holding back on pay, or doesn't pay for required overtime, or is abusive to the workers, or provides housing that is below decent standards, or allows hazardous conditions on the work site, the worker cannot quit that job and go to another.

And these abuses of the law and of decency are not exceptional. They are the norm.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has recently up-dated a report called "Close To Slavery," discussing the Guest Worker Program in the United States.

Workers are "systematically exploited and abused," according to the report. And workers who complain are subjected to deportation and blacklisting.

If a worker complains to his boss about the treatment of workers, or stirs up concern among his work mates, or talks union, or reports to the authorities, he is fired, and the *migras* are informed by the boss.

The *migras*, the US Immigration Services, then take the trouble maker into custody, and after holding him in a immigrant detention center—no rose garden—deport him. His name then goes on a blacklist, scanned by other employers and by the border guards.

That is the second problem. The US Immigration Services, instead of protecting the rights of the workers, have become the henchmen, the bully boys, of the worst employers in the land, all according to law. And if that's what happens within the law, one can only imagine what happens outside the law.

We often think of Guest Workers as part of the army of farm workers that tend to crops in southern plantation states. Some are. About half. But others do different work. Forestry, sea food processing, landscaping and construction are jobs that Guest Workers perform all around the country. The exploitation follows them wherever they go.

New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman described in a newspaper article, in 2011, some of the problems his investigators found in New York City—delays in wages up to three months; failure to pay for overtime work that was mandatory (albeit illegally so); sexual activity forced on an unwilling worker (that's rape), making her pregnant.

That brings up the third problem. Although Attorney General Schneiderman took action against the abuses that were reported, he is aware that many abuses go unreported out of ignorance of the law, and out of fear of reprisal. That is because *those officials who would like to protect the workers against exploitation do not have the funds to do their job.*

One official of the US Labor Department, charged with enforcing the Guest Worker Law, referred to the program as "legalized slavery."

Congressman Charles Rangel of New York is clear in his opinion of the Guest Worker Program: "The Guest Worker Program is the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery."

*******Announcements*******

Endorsement Voting

WHEN DO WE VOTE?

Endorsement votes for all offices will be made at the club meeting **THURSDAY MAY 9.**

WHO GETS TO VOTE?

You are eligible to vote if:

1. You have paid your dues.
2. You have attended one of the previous 9 monthly meetings.
3. You live in an area that is or was once in the club's area (the 69th AD).

NOTE: You must vote in Broadway Democrats as your home club; you can't also vote in another club.

WHAT ENDORSEMENTS WILL WE BE MAKING?

- Mayor
- Comptroller
- Public Advocate
- Manhattan Borough President
- Manhattan District Attorney
- City Council Member, Districts 6 and 7
- Democratic District Leaders, 69th AD Part C

HOW DOES THE CLUB VOTE?

Instant Runoff Voting

The club adopted Instant Runoff Voting in 2006.

Each voting member will rank their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices, rather than just casting a vote for their single top favorite. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed in an instant runoff to the next candidate in the rankings. Any ballot which runs out of ranked candidates becomes a No Endorsement vote. *

For a more complete description, see the Club's Constitution, at http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org/broadwayconstitution_2007.pdf

And the fourth problem: There is no path to citizenship. The Guest Workers are not American citizens and are never going to be American citizens. They are never going to vote for those who will protect their rights or vote against those who will deny them.

Take it or leave it, they are told. If you don't like it here, go back where you came from. If you shoot off your mouth, we'll fire you, then deport you.

If the Guest Worker Program is used as the basis for any part of the Immigration Reform Bill, that will corrupt the whole Bill, and it should be defeated – the entire Bill.

There is no room in twenty-first century America for a little bit of slavery. All slavery is wrong—even just a little bit.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

March 14th Club Meeting

Re: BUILDING ON NYCHA OPEN SPACE

Broadway Democrats strongly opposes recent plans to site luxury housing in Douglass Houses and other NYCHA housing and offers our support to efforts to fight these terrible proposals.

Re: Women's Equality Act

Broadway Democrats endorses Governor Cuomo's Women's Equality Act and lends our support to it.

**You Are Invited,
So Save the Date:**

**Sunday May 5th,
2:00-5:00 p.m.**

**The Broadway Dems'
Spring Fling!**

at 107 West

2787 Broadway (between 107th-108th)

\$50 Member, dues paid

\$35 Senior, dues paid

\$150 Guest

Please make check payable to Broadway Democrats and mail to 545 West 111th, #8B, New York, NY 10025. Email fundraiser2013@broadwaydemocrats.org to RSVP or for further information.

Membership

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings, live in the 69th AD or an Ed that used to be in the 69th AD, and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$20; senior dues are \$5.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

The Broadway Democrats
P.O. Box 1099
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

FIRST
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Gretchen Borges
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

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