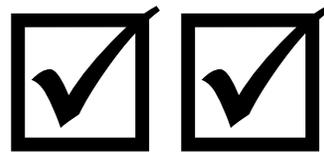

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Joe Nunley ♦

Annual Club Elections

and

Gun Control Discussion



Thursday, January 17th

Meeting starts at 8:00 PM

Forum begins 8:30 PM

Bank Street College

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

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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Volume 38, Issue 1

January 2013

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

ELECTION CALENDAR

Better News from Washington and Albany

Happy New Year! Tempered of course by the tragedies of Sandy and Sandy Hook Elementary, we have a lot to be thankful for:

- * A newly strengthened and purposeful President Obama won a clear victory in the Congressional tax votes, increasing taxes on the wealthy for the first time since the Clinton years—which is also the last time we had a surplus. And this time, even some Republicans voted for the package.
- * The Republican Party is in disarray; the country opposes its policies on every major issue, its House and Senate leaders are widely unpopular, its Presidential standard bearer has vanished, unlamented by Republicans as well as the rest of the country. Its idiotic and destructive fiscal cliff and debt ceiling strategies are opposed by business and labor leaders, Wall Street and those who want to occupy Wall Street. Most Republicans will fight these measures every step of the way, but major Sandy aid will pass, and prospects look good for some kind of action on gun regulation and immigration reform.
- * A special note of thanks to Vice President Joe Biden: you picked the President and Democrats all over the county up when we were down after the first debate, you pummeled the Republicans while negotiating a good deal with them, you showed us what advocacy and the art of practical politics are all about.
- * After spending the better part of the year making bad deals with Senate Republicans and deflating us with centrist twaddle, Governor Cuomo gave a wonderful State of the State Address, promising—and seemingly on the verge of delivering—the strongest gun and ammunition control laws in the country, passionately arguing for the need for Sandy relief, an increase in the minimum wage, a wide variety of economic and legal initiatives for women's rights, facing up to the destructive consequences of climate change: "it is a denial to say each of these situations is once-in-a-lifetime. There is a 100-year flood every two years now." But on the subject of our environment, Governor: *ban fracking. It cannot be done safely!*

Local News: Elections Galore This Year

We will devote more attention to this in the coming months, but it will be in just a few months, because the club endorsement meetings will likely be in April and May. For now, to highlight three races:

For **Mayor**, I am quite confident that whoever is the Democratic nominee will easily defeat the Republicans: President Obama received 81% of the vote in NYC, the highest percentage by a Presidential candidate since the present day city boundaries were formed in 1898 (in our area he got 92% and in Grant Houses, 99%!) I would certainly support Christine Quinn against a Republican, but like most of you find her too solicitous of the Mayor and the business interests. I worry about Bill DeBlasio and John Liu splitting the progressive vote, and as I look at Liu's background as opposed to his exemplary rhetoric I wonder if he is or should be The One.

For **Borough President** (succeeding Scott Stringer who looks to be a shoo-in for Comptroller) I am torn among four great candidates representing each of Manhattan's quadrants: Julie Menin (South), Jessica Lappin (East), Gale Brewer (West) and Robert Jackson (North). We can't go wrong here.

For **City Council, 7th District**, which is still not finalized but is likely to include all of our area except CPW-Columbus, which will go into our esteemed Council Member Inez Dickens' 9th District, there are many candidates, but only one so far has assembled a diverse group of supporters as befits this diverse district: Mark Levine. Mark has been endorsed by Bill De Blasio, Scott Stringer, Jerry Nadler, Adriano Espaillat, Melissa Mark-Viverito, and several Harlem leaders and labor unions. Broadway Democrats is one of the most important clubs in this district. (Three Parks, unless the lines miraculously change, is split among *three* Council districts.). It is our job to listen to all of the candidates and pick the best one for our community. Finally, a word of praise for Melissa Mark-Viverito, who has done an outstanding job representing Manhattan Valley and the 8th District. It was necessary that Manhattan Valley and the West Side form the nucleus of our own district; it never made sense for us to be combined with the geographically remote East Harlem, which has a completely different set of institutions and problems. But the Districting Commission still did Melissa wrong by also taking parts of East Harlem out of her district, and by making it a Bronx-majority district. Melissa has my enthusiastic support of re-election, and I know many club members as individuals--the club can't endorse outside of its own area-- will do the same.

Join Us! Help us build upon the successes of last year. Run for the club Steering Committee in this Thursday's elections: the current list of names is just advisory; anyone can be nominated from the floor. Every one of us once walked into the club as a newbie who knew hardly anyone, and now we're "insiders." You can be too!



President's Corner

Joe Nunley

MEMORIES

January 17 will be my last day as president of the Broadway Democrats and I'm sure that we're going to elect a great new president.

I want to thank everyone for their extraordinary support during my two year stint. It's funny, I've written twenty seven articles in the last twenty eight newsletters and I've never used the pronoun "I". Well, here goes. I've written articles on The Smoking Ban, Iran(three) (some people wish I'd written zero), The Living Wage, Student Debt, Search and Frisk, Republican Insanity, The Debt Ceiling Deal, Economic Recovery, A New Foreign Policy, Obama, Planned Parenthood (I think), and The Student Debt Crisis, and Occupy Wall Street, etc, etc. I hope you liked some of them. Heck, I hope you read some of them.

Some of my memories are as follows:

Cutting off Congressman Jerome Nadler the first time he spoke to us as our representative. (Who said I wasn't tight on time?)

Our informal, in the round conversation with State Senator Bill Perkins.

Congressman Charles Rangel, after his surgery, with a cane, dressed impeccably in his splendid suit, bent over and ambling his way down the hallway into the meeting room at Grant Houses to thunderous applause. And who was there can forget his extraordinary speech on the immorality of the republican Congress?

Paula Diamond Roman taking my arm and pulling me next to her to make sure that I was in the photograph when Rangel announced his candidacy outside of Central Park.

Curtis Arluck, sleeves rolled up, washing dishes at our holiday party.

Ed Sullivan, selling Obama button with me on 110th Street, entrancing me with stories of city politics and Albany.

The sad farewell to Rosalie Lipsett, Zunaldo Marte, and Daniel Mark Cohen's father.

Putting my arm around newly elected Supreme Court Judge Shalom Hagler, after one too many drinks.

Curtis Arluck giving his testimony at the Redistricting Hearing as well as Laura Friedman, Joan Levine, and others.

Bob Botfeld pushing me for one more day a week of The Broadway Democrats tabling for Obama.

Standing on a step ladder in the rain putting up the lights outside the Storefront with Ed Sullivan handing me the extension cords.

Joining thousands in the Stop and Frisk March on 5th Avenue. Saying hi to John Liu and seeing Randy Credico dressed in a prison outfit.

Sitting with Zoila Marte at the Living Wage Rally at Riverside Church and listening to the piped in recording of Martin Luther King's famous speech there.

On the phone at different times making calls for Richard Aborn, David Yassky, Julien Schreiberman, John Hall, Elizabeth Warren and of course, Barack Obama.

Raising \$50,000 on the phone for Obama.

Campaigning upstate for Kirsten Gillibrand.

Meeting the bus as it came back from Pennsylvania election night at the Storefront and all of us going outside to cheer their arrival.

Luis Román bringing organization to the voter chaos at Cathedral Towers election day.

Telling Senator Chuck Schumer that I'd ask him to play basketball with me in Riverside Park, but in Washington they play too rough.

The photo of Danny O'Donnell and John Banta lifted high above in chairs at their wedding.

Receiving a phone call from Charles Rangel.

Holiday party hopping with Judge Anil Singh.

And hundreds of memoires regarding our remarkable Steering Committee and their remarkable work; Gretchen Borges, Richard Siegel, Lizabeth Sostre, Linda Schoener, Kennis Davis, Martina Garcia, Katie Hanner, Norm Levine, Sarah Martin, Nick O'Neill, as well as those mentioned earlier. And all the club members who came out in the election; Patti Jacobs, Gillian Goll, Martha Cain, Mary Outlaw, Maria Cavell, Margorie Goldsmith, Zohorah Thompson, Carlin Good, Madis Crowell, Lois Lazarus, Paul Shneyer, Gerard Powell, David Weiman, Marge Nissen, Margorie Philips, and others already mentioned. And I apologize for any that I forgot.

And I want to thank Mary Hines, Bob Ginsberg, and Brian D'Agostino for their encouragement and Lew Moses for standing with me when it really counted and Bob Liff for the laughs.

Thanks for the memories and there are many more that I'd like to write about, but I'd need a book for that!



Assembly Member's Report

Daniel O'Donnell

As this issue goes to press, the 2013-2014 legislative session has just begun, and I have returned to Albany with my colleagues in the Assembly and State Senate. There are many crucial issues awaiting consideration this session, first and foremost the proliferation of guns and gun violence in our society.

As many club members will know, since I was elected in 2002 I have fought for stricter firearm laws to ensure the safety of our citizens. Indeed, one of the groups to support my first run for the Assembly was the organization, "New Yorkers Against Gun Violence." The first bill of mine to ever pass the New York State Assembly was A2494-B, which would require judges issuing an order of protection to inquire as to the possession of a firearm by the defendant. This bill has passed in the Assembly every year since 2003. Unfortunately, the State Senate has refused to take up the bill.

I have high hopes that by the time you read this newsletter, the Legislature will have taken up and passed a comprehensive package of legislation to help keep our state safer from this scourge. It is the least we can do to honor the memory of those lost in Newtown, CT, and Webster, NY, as well as the countless others who lose their lives to guns across our city, state, and country every year.



From the Steering Committee

Richard Siegel

LOOKING AT MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The recent tragedies in Aurora and in Newtown and the recent subway deaths (when people have been pushed on to the tracks in front of a train) have raised at least two important issues: 1) what additional gun control regulations are needed and 2) what additional approaches to people with mental illness are needed. Working in a NYC hospital has given me some insight into how dysfunctional NYS policies can be at this time. The root cause issue in these policies is where the Rights of the Individual intersect with needs of society and at what point of impairment (if any) does society override individual rights.

It is somewhat ironic we are looking at this issue within a year of the death of Dr. Thomas Szasz. The LA Times wrote "*He came to prominence with his 1961 book, 'The Myth of Mental Illness,' in which he argued that mental illness was not a disease but simply 'problems in living.' In that and a series of subsequent tomes, he argued against using drugs to treat mental disorders, using insanity as a defense against criminal acts and committing people to mental institutions against their will. He called the latter act 'a crime against humanity.'*"

Dr. Szasz's work led to the deinstitutionalization of persons with mental illness in New York State in the 1970s and 1980. During that period, state and federal courts ruled that the mentally ill had the legal right to refuse treatment and could not be involuntarily committed to mental institutions unless they posed a clear and present danger to themselves or others. Treatment instead was to be offered in community residences and other outpatient venues. While many attempts have been made to provide these services in the community, in many cases, people with mental illness receive inadequate treatment or no treatment at all. Deinstitutionalization in NYS has led to the rise in homelessness, especially here in New York City.

Almost all patients with mental illness are eligible for disability, which provides them with a monthly stipend. While this money is supposed to be used for food, clothing and shelter, in some cases, it is used instead for alcohol and illegal drugs. Since NYC has to provide free shelter on demand, many will not agree to any form of supportive housing (which is paid for, in part, by SSI benefits).

The New York courts, in my humble opinion, are overly protective of an individual's right to refuse treatment. A person must be assessed to be an imminent danger to oneself or others to be hospitalized. Even in the hospital, a court order must be obtained to administer medication over objection. Many legal organizations vigorously defend the rights of the individual. These rights take precedence over **the best interests** of an individual (to get some treatment and be protected from self-destructive decisions). Medical records are protected so that information cannot be released with consent of the individuals. Many families are frustrated that 'something isn't being done' to help a relative with mental illness.

The end result is a distinct group of people in our communities with serious problems. They do not receive any help unless they are willing to accept it, or they demonstrate that they are a danger to self or others. The standard for helping these individuals is re-active, not pro-active. This approach can lead to the shootings and subway fatalities noted above.

We need a new standard in dealing with mental illness. The pendulum has to move more to the center. This move must be done carefully and slowly. In the long run, it is in the best interests of the individuals who need help. It is in the best interests of society.

Balloting Procedures

To be eligible to vote, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues.

Votes may be cast in person or by proxy, limit one proxy per voting member. A proxy must be written. The proxy giver must state the name of the proxy holder (i.e., the name can't be filled in later by the proxy holder). The proxy must be signed or verifiable, as by electronic transmission stating the person's name.

As per the club constitution, there will be only one ballot. The winner will be selected by "Instant Runoff Voting"; "no endorsement" is still a ballot option.

PLEASE NOTE:

We will be meeting in the auditorium, but will be sitting on the stage. To access this area, take the elevator down to the basement, turn to the right, walk to the end of the long hallway, then turn left to walk onto the stage of the auditorium.

This entrance is handicap accessible.

Elections

It's January, time to elect the Broadway Democrats' officers for the next year. Individuals nominated thus far are listed below. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

President: Gretchen Borges
Vice President: Lizabeth Sostre
Treasurer: Katie Hanner
Secretary: Zoila Marte*

Steering Committee:

Rachelle Bradt*
Kennis Davis
Martina Garcia*
Patti Jacobs
Norm Levine
Sarah Martin*
Thomas Martin*
Lew Moses
Nick O'Neill
Gerard Powell
Luis Roman*
Linda Schoener*
Richard Siegel
Ed Sullivan

* = not reached at press time, must confirm that they are running

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 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: Joe Nunley
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Club Elections and Gun Control Discussion
Thursday, January 17th 8:00 p.m.
Bank Street College of Education
(610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive))