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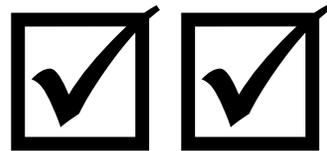
# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

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# The Annual Club Elections



**Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Meeting starts at 8:00 PM**

**Bank Street College**

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

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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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Volume 39, Issue 1

January 2014

## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

**Happy Progressive New Year**, at least in our city! Our dynamic, diverse, and (semi-) young leadership team is installed in City Hall: Bill de Blasio, Tish James, Scott Stringer, and Melissa Mark-Viverito. Gale Brewer leads our Borough, Mark Levine and Helen Rosenthal represent us on the City Council. Our Mayor, with the combination of passion and deliberation that has been the hallmark of his career and the reason for his success, has assembled a talented team of visionaries and doers who will help him make New York a better place for all of us.

The task will not be easy. For the larger issues: education, affordable housing, economic development, economic justice, crime reduction, I leave it to the experts; it will take them and Mayor de Blasio quite a while to bring about major changes. Meanwhile, here are a few modest, feasible- to- readily achievable goals which the Mayor should immediately implement or strive to implement:

**Stop the Stupid Stop and Frisks.** This will be easy, especially with de Blasio and Bratton at the helm. Few would say that the police shouldn't stop and frisk known gang members, or use the technique in active crime scenes. Under the last administration it was the best and the brightest, the boys on their way to school, the men on their way to work, who were stopped over and over again, because they were minorities, because they were less likely than real criminal types to put up a fight, and therefore easier to use to pad the statistics. After the city rose up in rage, after the courts said the policy was blatantly unconstitutional, the stopping of the obviously innocent dropped sharply, and crime continued to drop as well.

**Stop the "Infill" in NYCHA Housing**—Unless the Residents Want It. Few people would object to their homes and services being improved. Could bringing luxury housing into City housing complexes accomplish this? I strongly doubt it, but at the very least, work with the people who live in Grant, Douglass, and all the other NYCHA residences, rather than imposing a dystopian vision of luxury for rich outsiders and squalid backdoor entrances for those who have spent their lives there.

**Implement Meaningful Commercial Rent Regulations.** Every year, hundreds of vibrant, successful small businesses providing essential community services are forced out to make way for chain stores, boutiques, or, increasingly, nothing at all. If a landlord jacks up the rent, forces out a longstanding merchant and then doesn't rent out the store within a few months, the landlord should pay triple damages and the original owner restored with *no* rent increase. There were numerous commercial rent regulation bills in the last City Council. This Mayor, and this Council, should get together and pass one of them.

**End New "Co-Locations" of Charter Schools.** Standing alone, some of these schools might be good. In the same building with non-charter schools, they are cancers.

**Implement Universal Pre-K and Extend Afterschool Programs.** *This* is the prize. How we pay for it is a detail.

**Bring Back the Commuter Tax.** Even as a progressive I am a little uneasy about "taxing the rich" to pay for specific programs. Pre-K and after school programs are worthy goals, but so are better city services, affordable housing, and so many others. But there is no justification for opposing the commuter tax. It is only for non-residents who work in the city. The last commuter tax was *one tenth* of what

residents paid. Commuters don't use *one tenth* as much of our subways and streets as do residents? Really?

### **Congressional and Maybe Other Legislative Primaries are Upon Us.**

If the State Legislature does nothing, the primary election for the House of Representatives, as is legally mandated by Federal courts, will be June 24th, petitioning for it will begin March 4<sup>th</sup> and end April 10<sup>th</sup>, and Broadway Democrats will endorse sometime in February or at the absolute latest in early March. The other primaries, for State Senate, State Assembly, State Committee, and judicial offices would be held in September, with petitioning beginning in early September. Everyone with half a brain or any sense of fiscal responsibility is calling for the Legislature to move all the primaries to June 24, but these qualities so far don't include the Senate Republicans, who once again want two primaries, costing the state's taxpayers millions and millions of dollars.

**Now for some politics.** Once again, it looks like State Senator Adriano Espaillat will challenge Congressman Charlie Rangel (and no one will challenge Congressman Jerry Nadler), especially if there are two primaries, so Espaillat wouldn't have to give up his Senate seat. In 2012 I was one of the few souls who endorsed both Charlie Rangel for Congress and Adriano Espaillat for State Senate (most of Charlie's supporters in June backed Adriano's State Senate opponent Guillermo Linares in September.) I think Charlie Rangel is a great Congressman (and in much better health than two years ago, when he suffered from a dangerous infection, now completely cured) and Adriano Espaillat is a fine State Senator. I see no reason to displace either of them. So, knowing few will completely agree with me (including the principals!), I endorse Charlie Rangel for Congress, Adriano Espaillat for State Senate, and of course Jerry Nadler, Bill Perkins and our own Danny O'Donnell for re-election as well.

## **President's Corner**

Gretchen Borges

### **PRIORITIES**

The start of a new year provides ample impetus for an analysis of priorities, be they personal or political, local or national. I hope that many of you have vowed to become more active in your local political club this year, but even if that activity is limited to reading the newsletter or attending the occasional meeting, we welcome your participation. As the year progresses, there will be many opportunities: for attending endorsement meetings, town halls, and forums, for helping out with petitioning and at polling places, for contributing to the organization of the annual Spring Fling.

Now is a good time to consider what our representatives should prioritize in 2014. Beginning at the local level, Morningside Heights is threatened once again by rapacious landlords who are creating a spate of empty storefronts on Broadway and by inappropriate development, specifically the planned apartment building construction alongside the northern flank of the cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Neighborhoods to the south of us have successfully obtained rezoning to limit the intrusion of large banks and drugstore frontages on Broadway and to limit the height of new construction. We are optimistic that the newly defined City Council district will provide our neighborhood with renewed attention and increased focus.

I am sure that all progressives wish our new city administration well. In this issue, Curtis has addressed several urgent issues that he encourages its members to address quickly. I concur with his choices and encourage club members to make their own opinions heard. We can hope that the city and state will work together rather than against each other in realizing similar goals.

As Congress continues in its crippled course, we can at least clarify actions that we encourage them to consider. Most economists agree that the manner in which the economy recovered from the financial crisis of 2008 has left a majority of our population behind. Two approaches should be endorsed. Increasing the minimum wage is getting a fair amount of press play now. It is truly unfortunate that so many people are limited to positions paying the minimum and it is scandalous that the federal minimum has not kept up to inflation. Both ethically and economically, people should be paid a living wage. Addressing the deficits in our infrastructure when money is cheap would increase the level of safety and comfort throughout the nation while at the same time providing needed jobs. I recognize that the latter is definitely not going to happen and probably not the former without a majority of progressive politicians who vote their convictions.

Recently released figures from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) compared the educational achievements of 15 year olds across 65 countries. Eighteen countries outpaced the US in all three subjects tested (mathematics, scientific, and reading literacy). No one should be surprised. Teaching is not a highly valued profession in the US and education remains the subject of political maneuvering and budgetary slashing. Failing to recognize the need for major educational reform is quite simply putting the future of the country at risk.

Our educational achievement ranking is an accurate reflection of the country's political priorities. If the US wishes to be a competitive economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, those priorities must shift away from inflated military ambitions and budgets and towards providing a challenging education to our children. We have played international big brother too long. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a perpetual state of war, falling on the backs of a very small minority of the country, those who have enlisted in the military. The perpetual war mongering of Congress would end abruptly

were a draft instated. Those of us old enough to remember the bad old days of Viet Nam react viscerally to any such suggestion, but realistically, troops would not be sent into battle if Washington were besieged by protesting parents. I am not suggesting a draft be instituted. I am saying that the time for the US to be engaging in international warfare is over.

What are the dangers to be faced by all the people on this planet? (Why not think expansively? It is the beginning of a new year.) Clearly climate change is near the top if not at the top of the list. With the additional pollution contributions of rapidly developing China, India, and Brazil, changes are being made to our atmosphere that will result in radically redrawn shorelines as the oceans rise. I won't run down the litany of other probable disasters resulting from such changes, but suffice it to say that change, immediate change, is desperately needed.

And still a close second on that list is nuclear war. It is tragic to consider at this distance how close the world came to the elimination of nuclear weapons in 1986. At the Reykjavik talks between Reagan and Gorbachov, when Reagan insisted on retaining the fantasy of Star Wars (the Strategic Defense Initiative), the opportunity was lost. And now we have proliferating nuclear weapons. And once again, attempts to address that proliferation are being sabotaged.

A grim note to end on. Political priorities are generally set by the old, yet overwhelmingly impact the young. I will close as I began, with a fervent request: be vocal, be involved in 2014. Your future literally depends upon it.

RL

## **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. Please build in time to sign in, pay your dues, and allow us to determine your eligibility to vote.**

## **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:** **OPEN**  
**Treasurer:** Katie Hanner  
**Secretary:** **OPEN**

### **Steering Committee (totaling 12)**

Pat Almonrode  
Rachelle Bradt  
Martina Garcia\*  
Patti Jacobs  
Norm Levine  
Lolita Lowe  
Sarah Martin\*  
Nick O'Neill  
Luis Roman  
Linda Sayre  
Richard Siegel  
Lizabeth Sostre  
Ed Sullivan  
Dan Zweig

\* = 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  
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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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