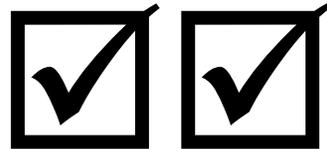

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

The Annual Club Elections



Thursday, January 15th

Meeting starts at 8:00 PM

Bank Street College

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

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Volume 40, Issue 1

January 2015

A STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO RECENT EVENTS

The Steering Committee of the Broadway Democrats joins with many New Yorkers and other Americans in painful disbelief that the case of a police officer, who was caught on video apparently using a choke hold not permitted by department policy during an arrest which led to the death of Eric Garner, was not moved to trial by jury for a full public hearing of the evidence.

The similar failure of the grand jury in Ferguson, Missouri to indict and require a full public hearing in the death of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black man who was also killed by deadly force at the hands of a policeman, makes it important that we address on both a local and national level the use of force (especially deadly force) by police, flaws in the current grand jury system, and the lack of communication between the police and the communities they serve.

Every one of these deaths was devastating to an individual, a family, and a community, and was grotesquely out of proportion given the minor offenses involved. We must improve police training to reduce their use of deadly force, and encourage our police departments to hire and train officers to better understand and communicate with the communities in which they keep the peace.

In addition to raising serious questions about policing, these incidents also lay bare deeper societal issues. Racism and criminalization based solely on skin color, especially for young Black men, are endemic to our society. Until this bias is acknowledged and directly addressed, remedies to halt these avoidable deaths will have a difficult path toward success.

We call on all Americans to identify and expose the forces of structural oppression and injustice that result in violence and dehumanization in all relationships. Equal justice for all must be woven durably and inextricably into the social and ethnic fabric of our society.

Hold the date: February 12th:

Forum with Jonathan Moore, lawyer for the Garner family.

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

Happy New Year!

I'm very glad to get rid of 2014, a year of tragedies at home and abroad. This year will be much quieter politically, with no major public offices on the ballot—until the end of the year, when we will endorse for President , since petitioning for the NY Presidential Primary will begin in early January 2016. It's a good time to catch our breaths, think about how what we as Democrats want to accomplish, and how we should present our ideas and organize our followers. As always, Broadway Democrats will be an important part of this movement here in NYC. Join us!

The Tragedies of Wenjian Liu, Rafael Ramos, and Eric Garner

Lives senselessly lost, families deprived of their loved ones, a city torn apart by grief and rage. I don't always agree with Mayor De Blasio—on his idiotic and big money-driven proposed carriage horse ban, for example—but on all three of these horrible deaths he has been a strong voice for compassion, healing, and for looking for ways for the city to prevent future tragedies. The only specific issue I will raise is that if handguns weren't so available, especially to mentally ill people, Officers Liu and Ramos would probably be alive today. We must look into our own hearts, and at the words and deeds of our leaders. Who among us is trying to insure that these tragedies will never happen again, and who is merely trying to further their own, destructive agendas?

Mario Cuomo

To paraphrase the master himself, he spoke in poetry, almost always beautifully, but governed in prose, not always well. His Socratic dialogues with himself were intriguing yet exasperating. Unlike his contemporaries Mayor Koch and Governor Carey, he had no major lasting accomplishment, like

saving our city from bankruptcy. But who among even our Democratic leaders spoke so movingly of the immigrant experience, and most importantly of the responsibility of government to help, not just the middle class, but those who need it most? *This* is the true legacy of Mario Cuomo.



President's Corner

Gretchen Borges

OVERBUILDING

Anyone looking at the New York City skyline recently cannot help but notice the appearance of an extremely tall addition—157 West 57th Street. Eventually, seven towers, including several which will dwarf that skinny intrusion, are planned for that corridor and their shadows will darken Central Park for years to come. More luxury housing for non-residents is not what New York City needs, but seems to be what we will get.

But we have issues closer to home. Two neighborhood institutions, both in need of infusions of cash, have turned to their real estate holdings for solutions. As anyone who has walked past 113th Street and Amsterdam knows, a new building is rapidly rising next to the Cathedral. This development, hailed by the Cathedral hierarchy for the funds it will provide, will provide a startling contrast to the Cathedral's majestic façade. And startling contrast is the least critical comment to be made about the aesthetic result.

Kitty corner to that building site is the Art Deco tower on the northwest corner, one of the last apartment buildings built in the Morningside Heights first building bloom. Plagued by electrical problems and lead paint it was sparsely inhabited until its owner, Mount Sinai Saint Luke's, entered into a partnership with a developer which will provide money to the hospital and more housing to the community. The wealthier members of the community who can pay a monthly rent of \$5995 for a two bedroom apartment or \$3000 for a studio. I will refrain from emphasizing the deadening effect on the façade of the replacement windows, an unfortunate choice from the perspective of any architectural historian.

What is not yet apparent are the results of the development plans formulated for other portions of the Mount Sinai Saint Luke's holdings. As revealed at a community meeting the hospital held last month, plans to sell several of their buildings are

moving forward. The two on Morningside Drive are landmarked and thus cannot be torn down. They no doubt will be gutted and turned into luxury condos. The fate of the remaining sites is what should concern the neighborhood. Beyond what could happen to the historical fabric of the site, the community should consider its needs when responding to the development plans.

As has already been seen, cash starved institutions do not always make neighborly decisions. But Morningside Heights does not have to become an uptown version of the West 60s. With an organized and thoughtful response, the community might be able to get some of its priorities addressed, not just those of the developer.



State Committee

Daniel Marks Cohen

So another year passes, and another election cycle, and there is a pattern that some observers have noted that I wanted to pass along. In Presidential elections, the putative "Democratic Majority" is becoming readily apparent. Every four years, on a national level, our team turns out an increasing percentage of the vote—we are getting more and more Americans to consistently pull the lever for Democratic candidates. But only every four years. In the midterms—such as we just had—the base vote shrinks considerably, allowing Republicans to hold the House of Representatives and now to take over the Senate. Barring a major issue tsunami in year's past such as the House Banking Scandal benefitting the GOP or the post-Katrina disgust that helped the Democrats, I fear that this present situation is going to be the norm for a while, with a divided government of the Republicans holding Congress while the Democrats hold the Presidency. This is a prescription for gridlock, and a cynic might even wonder if the major parties even prefer it this way—with each having a foil to blame inaction on the other. But if Democrats are going to take back the Senate and recapture the House, we need to keep our base vote up in the midterms, find an issue (or personality) to galvanize the vote so that we do not repeat the pattern of winning one election only to lose badly in the next round.

Turning from national to state wide, June 2015 marks the sunset of rent regulation in Albany unless housing activists can again compel the state not to just renew the laws but to expand the scope

of the rules. Ending vacancy decontrol, ending luxury decontrol, strengthening eviction protection and repealing the Urstadt Law (which prevents the City from having control over its rent regulated apartments, instead of leaving them in the hands of Albany) must be the priorities this year. Mike McKee of the New York State Tenants & Neighbors Coalition has a short but clear article on the regulations at Met Council on Housing website about what is at stake for tenants if they are just “renewed” but watered down as they were four years ago:

http://metcouncilonhousing.org/news_and_issues/tenant_newspaper/2014/february/will_albany_screw_renters_again_how_we_can_prevent_it). In brief, McKee talks about the many players in Albany but the most important of all is the Tenant movement. There are more than 1 million rent regulated apartments in the city region, housing 2.5 million New Yorkers. Motivating them to pressure the legislature with letters, calls, visits and votes is what will make the difference. McKee notes that in 1996 more than half (56%) of the city’s rental housing stock was rent regulated, now almost ten years later we have lost enough to bring it down to less than 47%. If every year we lose 1% we won’t have ANY rent regulated housing stock by the middle of this century. West Siders will be connecting to tenant campaigns already in motion to get our voices heard upstate. Stay tuned, and I hope you will get involved.

And lastly we turn to local perspective—Mayor de Blasio has tried to be all things to all people, and has wound up being neither to no one. The recent deaths of unarmed black men in New York and Missouri were horrible and people must be held accountable, but rather than calming the waters the mayor only managed to outrage the police and make the situation worse. Perhaps if this were taking place against the backdrop of an efficiently-run mayoralty the press, the protestors and the police might have cut him some more slack. But with the perception of his administration as not in control (the whole drama with his wife’s former chief-of-staff Rachel Noerdlinger being poorly handled and De Blasio looked weak, petulant and indecisive) he had used up all his goodwill. His heart is in the right place, but his words and actions are falling short. Here’s hoping that 2015 treats the Mayor better than the past year, and that he gets a better handle on the leadership of this city, its politics, and its people’s needs.



Steering Committee

Pat Almonrode

Exciting Times for Progressives in NYC

The People’s Climate March Grows into Something More

As we enter a new year, it’s hard to deny the feeling that change is *really* in the air. It’s an exciting time to be a progressive in New York. On the national level, we wait with differing degrees of dread for the new Congress to convene, and we shudder to imagine what the Supreme Court might do (or undo) between now and the end of its current term, in June. But here in NYC, it’s hard not to be, well, *hopeful*. The Mayor and the City Council, while not perfect, have done several things right, and seem genuinely open to working with civic organizations to advance a progressive agenda.

This is certainly true of the responses by the administration and the council to the threat of climate change. On September 21, 2014 – the date of the People’s Climate March – Mayor de Blasio announced a commitment to reduce the city’s overall emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 80 percent (from 2005 levels) by 2050. Not long after the Mayor’s announcement, the City Council unanimously passed a bill sponsored by Councilmember Costa Constantinides (D-Qns) that amended the NYC Code so that it now embodies the same GHG reduction target.

The centerpiece of this commitment is a sweeping plan to retrofit public and private buildings, which (it is hoped) will not only dramatically reduce the city’s contributions to climate change (buildings produce about 70 percent of the city’s GHG emissions), but will also spur major cost savings and create thousands of new jobs. And, while private owners will first be “urged” to retrofit and upgrade their buildings, both the Mayor and Donovan Richards, the chair of the Council’s Environmental Protection Committee, have said that they are open to *requiring* such changes if the private sector doesn’t voluntarily get on board.

Although the devil, of course, is in the details of implementation – and although many climate activists think they’re still not enough – these initiatives make New York the largest city to commit to such steep and swift GHG reductions, and they chart a long-term path for investment in renewable sources of energy and a total transition from fossil fuels.

of religion, gender, ethnicity, income, disability or sexual orientation.

A significant part of the impetus for these initiatives came from the organizing done for the People's Climate March, in which climate activists worked tirelessly with others, from all facets of the broader progressive movement, to ultimately turn 400,000 people out into the streets of Manhattan on September 21. The success of that effort has led to a deep desire among many of the March organizers to strengthen their ties with other progressives, and to mobilize across a wide range of issues. After all, as Naomi Klein lays out in her brilliant book *This Changes Everything*, and as others have argued before and since, the same societal structures that are responsible for the climate crisis are also responsible for oppression, inequity, and exploitation in other realms.

Spurred by this thinking, many of the individuals and groups that organized the March are developing a multi-issue progressive campaign in NYC, along the lines of North Carolina's Moral Mondays campaign. The campaign is still taking shape, but it will work toward some version of the following goals:

- to pass a moral state budget that prioritizes people over profit, and promote corporate accountability to protect the public good
- to provide high-quality, well-funded, diverse public schools
- to end economic inequality and the exploitation of workers
- to end racial and economic inequities and establish a fair, unbiased and restorative justice system
- to fight all forms of environmental injustice and promote green jobs to secure a safe, sustainable food supply while building a renewable energy infrastructure
- to restore faith in the democratic process by expanding voter participation and eliminating the influence of money in politics
- to ensure access to high-quality, affordable housing for all
- to guarantee access to quality, affordable, single-payer health care for all, while ensuring safe working conditions and equitable pay for providers
- to afford equal rights, opportunities and protections to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status
- to enforce the right to free exercise of religion, pass the Women's Equality Act, and ensure nondiscrimination on the basis

The idea is to work together to stage actions throughout the year, with each one focusing on one of these goals, and to use the actions not only to advance these goals but also to deepen ties among various issue-driven progressive groups – to remember we *really are* all in this together. Ambitious? Certainly. But this is the time. Current plans (still being developed) are for a kick-off event maybe as soon as Martin Luther King Day, January 19. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Pat Almonrode at palmonrode@gmail.com for more information.

These are, truly, exciting times for progressives in New York!



Steering Committee

Pat Almonrode

The Port Ambrose Deepwater LNG Port - An Environmental Threat You've Probably Never Heard Of *How You Can Help Stop It (and Why You Should)*

We've won a ban on fracking in New York – but that *doesn't mean* we can relax. There are still lots of projects out there – some planned, some already begun – that pose serious threats to our local environment, to our health and safety, and to the climate. And Port Ambrose is the next one of these we need to fight.

Port Ambrose is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility proposed for the waters off Long Beach, Long Island. Liquefying natural gas (by super-chilling it to -260 degrees) allows it to be shipped overseas in LNG tankers which are as long as the Empire State Building is tall.

This project would damage our marine ecosystem, increase the risk of terrorist attacks, exacerbate climate change and, worst of all, lock us into continued dependence on fossil fuels at a time when we, as a society, need to be doing all that we can to replace those dirty fuels of the past with abundant, clean, and *safe* renewable energy.

Its proponents tout Port Ambrose as an *import* facility that will supply natural gas to the NYC/Long Island market, but make no mistake: if built, the project will be used to *export* American gas

(produced by fracking in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, and elsewhere), continuing to enrich transnational fossil-fuel companies, already the most profitable businesses that have ever existed. And, just to add insult to injury – Port Ambrose is proposed for the same area where an offshore wind farm is also proposed to be built. They can't *both* be built there.

What can *you* do to help stop this wasteful, dangerous, and entirely wrong-headed project? Two things:

- **Call Governor Cuomo and Governor Christie**, each of whom has the authority to veto this project. Make sure that *at least one* of them does the right thing to protect the public health and welfare. Call Governor Cuomo at (518) 474-8390 and Governor Christie at (609) 292-6000. Ask them to veto Port Ambrose!
- Attend the only NYC-area hearing on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. We need a big turnout to show that we *are* paying attention, and that we *don't* want this project to be built! The hearing is **Wednesday, January 7, at the JFK Hilton**, 144-02 135th Avenue in Jamaica (right outside JFK Airport). There will be an open house from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm where you can sign up to speak at the hearing and pick up information material. The hearing will start at 6:00 pm.

The invaluable folks at Food & Water Watch have chartered a bus from Manhattan to the JFK Hilton and back. The bus will leave at 2:00 pm from 34th Street and 8th Avenue and will be back at the same location by 9:30 pm. Please go to <http://tinyurl.com/PtAmbroseBus> and sign up. Or, you can take the LIRR to Jamaica station, or the E, J, Z train to the Sutphin Blvd/Archer Avenue stop. Transfer to the Q40 bus, and take it to the end of the line, which is right in front of the hotel where the hearing will be held.

Please attend this important hearing – and please consider testifying. You may find this link helpful for some talking points:

<http://nolngcoalition.org/about/>.

☞

FOLLOW UP TO INEQUALITY FORUM

I was pondering one of the questions asked at the forum about the "real" unemployment rate. In case anyone is interested, they can find the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates of alternative measures of "underutilization" or unemployment of the labor force here: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t15.htm>.

As I thought, the most comprehensive measure of unemployment (including discouraged workers, those "marginally" attached to the labor force, and involuntarily part-time) is 11.5% or about twice (not three times) the reported rates.

David F. Weiman

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 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: Luis Román
Vice President: Richard Siegel
Treasurer: Dan Zweig
Secretary: Pat Almonrode

Steering Committee (totaling 12)

Gretchen Borges
Rachelle Bradt
Katie Hanner
Norm Levine
Zoila Marte
Sarah Martin
Nick O'Neill
Linda Prince
Linda Sayre
Lizabeth Sostre
Ed Sullivan
As yet unnamed

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: Gretchen Borges
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Club Elections

Thursday, January 15th 8:00 p.m.

Bank Street College of Education

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