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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Noah Kaufman ♦

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## **Annual Club Elections**

Please join us to elect club officers and twelve Steering Committee members. Nominees are listed in this newsletter, and additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting.

**Club elections will be followed by a**

## **Vote to Endorse for Public Advocate**

To vote in *either* the Club Elections or to endorse, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine meetings and you must be current on your dues (seniors \$10; \$25 all others). Vote in person or by proxy.

## **Thursday, January 17th**

7:45 p.m. Sign-in

Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp!

## **Bank Street College**

610 W. 112<sup>th</sup> Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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## Annual Club Elections

The following Club members seek seats on the 2019 Steering Committee (alphabetically):

Gretchen Borges  
Susan Crawford  
Shelby Drescher  
Katie Hanner  
David Isaacson  
Bob Liff  
Joe Nunley  
Mary Peppito  
Richard Siegel  
Barbara Trelstad  
Dan Zweig

**At least one more nominee for the Steering Committee is needed for a full slate of twelve.**

The following Club members are running for Club offices:

### ***For President: Noah Kaufman***

Noah is seeking a second term as Club President. He is a longtime Club member, and is honored to have worked with the members of the Steering Committee this past year. He's an officer and delegate of Local 375 CSTG, AFSCME, and a Delegate to District Council 37 AFSCME. He's an active member of the West 113th Street block association; a public school parent (and graduate); and has represented students and their families on the Citywide Council on High Schools.

### ***For Vice President: Amy Porter***

Amy is seeking a second term as Club Vice-President. She has also served as a judicial delegate and a County Committee member. She's a coach and a mediator with New York Peace Institute, and is currently Chair of the Professional Opportunities in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Subcommittee for the New York City Bar Association ADR Committee. She has worked as a fundraiser, an administrative law judge with the city and the state, and a solo practitioner representing criminal defendants.

### ***For Treasurer: Luis Román***

Luis has been a Broadway Dems member since 1993. He's previously served as President, Treasurer and Secretary, as well as a judicial convention delegate and County Committee member. Luis grew up in Grant Houses and is a resident of Manhattan Valley, and he's been a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society, representing indigent defendants in Supreme Court and Criminal Court in the Bronx, for more than 25 years.

**The position of club Secretary is OPEN (many thanks to our outgoing Secretary, Barbara Trelstad, for her outstanding work during her two terms in office!).**

**Nominations for Steering Committee and Officers may be made from the floor at the meeting:**

**Thursday, January 17th  
8:00 p.m. (7:45 p.m. registration)  
Bank Street College  
610 W. 112<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Remember:** in order to vote in Club elections, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine meetings, and you must be current on your dues:

**\$10 seniors  
\$25 all others**

Elections to be followed by a club vote to endorse in the race for

## Public Advocate

There are lots of candidates for this important office. Especially since this is expected to be a low-turnout election, our endorsement (and *your* vote) could make a difference. Please come make your voice heard! ***No candidates or official surrogates will be speaking, and comments from the floor will be strictly timed.***

***We look forward to seeing you all!***

## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

### *The Wall*

I posted the following on Facebook before Trump's Tuesday night speech, which will happen after the deadline for submitting articles for this newsletter. Let's see if he does anything other than "chant and bleat." And lie:

I'm not a big fan of Governor Cuomo's go-it-alone governing style, but at least his L Train rescue plan was done in consultation with engineers and other experts. What is Trump's border security plan? Chanting and bleating "border security" is not a recipe for anything, except disaster. Several billion dollars has already been allocated for border security, but only a fraction of it has been spent. Why do we need billions more? Ask the technical experts, let's see what they say. Meanwhile, open up and clean up our beautiful national parks, and get our beautiful Federal workers working again!

### *The New Democratic House*

It was so inspiring to watch the swearing-in of Speaker Nancy Pelosi and all those new House members who look like America, think like America, and make us proud again to be American. The Democratic House's very first votes were to put Americans back to work, and many other great votes on justice, immigration, voting rights, expanding health care, and saving the environment will soon follow. But we must be careful not to give the Dark Side ammunition: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez calling for substantially higher taxes on the super-rich and dancing her way into our hearts, YES! Rashida Tlaib using an expletive to describe the President and prejudging impeachment before the Muller report has even been issued, NO!

### *Two Great Opportunities January 17th*

1. Come to the Club Meeting and vote for our own Danny O'Donnell for Public Advocate. Danny has put together an outstanding grass roots campaign, and with big support from our community in a low-turnout race, he can win!
2. Run for a spot on the Broadway Democrats Steering Committee. We have a couple of vacancies, and urgently need some new voices. Let yours be heard!



## President's Column

Noah Kaufman

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

*Philadelphia, 1787*

Dear Broadway Democrats,

Greetings of peace, and best wishes for the New Year. I hope you are all well, and that all members will attend the Club meeting Thursday January 17 at Bank Street College of Education, W.112<sup>th</sup> Street.

We have so much on our progressive agenda: club activities, local community concerns, national policy, and global climate change. There will be significant challenges, and opportunities, in the coming weeks and months. We have the opportunity to support transportation, housing, education and economic advancement across the five boroughs. With Democratic majorities in the Assembly and the State Senate, we – here in the Big Apple and across the Empire State – will debate and advance legislation and implement policies to stem the out-migration of our population (more on the importance of our national Census to follow). With Democrats controlling the House of Representatives, we are poised to reinstate Constitutional checks on the current President's misdeeds and consistent dishonesty. It is critical that the House and the Senate restore order to our federal government and respect each objective of the Preamble of the Constitution.

Here on Manhattan Island our Club will have numerous areas of focus: the need for affordable housing and the protection of our Housing Authority developments; protecting our local, regional and global environment; working to further improve community-police relations; and further traffic planning and investments which have led to reductions in traffic fatalities across the city. It is a huge task, but we must "increase the peace," ensure rising economic tides lift all boats (not just those of the top 1%), and ensure integrity and honesty in government.

Speaking of integrity and honesty in government, the Broadway Democratic Club

Meeting on January 17th has a full agenda. We will seek the nominations and hold elections for our Club Officers and our Steering Committee, and we will endorse a candidate in the race for NYC Public Advocate.

Because Leticia James, our former Public Advocate, was elected New York State Attorney General, she leaves a vacancy in the PA office at the Dinkins Municipal Building at 1 Centre Street. Mayor de Blasio has authorized the first ever city-wide Special Election, to be held **February 26**.

It is with great pride I am happy to report our neighbor, our club member, our friend, and our current NY State Assembly Member, Daniel J. "Danny" O'Donnell has declared his candidacy for Public Advocate. You can judge for yourself that Danny is the right candidate for this job. In this unusual, non-partisan election there will be no party lines. It is a wide-open and confusing ballot; look for Danny's name on the "Equality For All" line.

Let's work together to "**establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty**" all over this land.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting Thursday January 17th. We always look forward to hearing from you. Reach us via email at [president@broadwaydems.org](mailto:president@broadwaydems.org), on Facebook (search for Broadway Democrats), or send a letter to P.O. Box 1099 Cathedral Station, NY 10025.

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**Disclaimer:** items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.

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## "Something There Is That Doesn't Love a Wall"

Ed Sullivan

This opening line of Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall" says it clearly: there is a force in nature that tears down the stone walls that New England farmers build between their properties (so that the apple growers' fruit will not cross over to eat their neighbors' pine cones?).

Frost portrays his neighbor as a stone age cave man, mindlessly repeating his father's saying, "Good fences make good neighbors," as he repairs the wall that has been damaged by "something" during the winter.

Donald Trump's altar boys in Washington (like, for instance, Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina) have a similar mindless saying: "walls work." Actually, they don't. The Berlin Wall didn't work, and was torn down. The Great Wall of China meanders aimlessly through the Chinese countryside, as tourists from around the world climb all over it, tickets in hand. The Maginot Line in France, built to protect France from invasion from Germany, didn't even slow down Rommel's tanks in 1940.

Walls don't work, except in the minds of the gullible, those whom Mr. T. calls his base. These good folk believe anything that their leader tells them – that Mr. T. got more votes than Hillary in 2016, that Mexico will pay for the Wall, and that he himself is a greater President than Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln or Roosevelt!

Now he is trying to blackmail the Congress into funding a wall between the United States and Mexico. He has shut down the government *sine die* until Congress does as he says. And his base, including Senator Graham, asks what's wrong with extortion? And, when you think about it, if we can accept the murder of journalists, the imprisonment of seven year old children in cages, the arming of North Korea with nuclear weapons, the insulting of national heroes like John McCain; the parading of the Ku Klux Klan in Charlottesville, and all the rest of Mr. T.'s daily inanities, I guess a little extortion doesn't seem all that bad by comparison.

But who are we, really? Are we the great United States of America, the nation that lives in our anthems? Or are we just a bunch of chumps who live on the North American continent, sitting around waiting for some bozo to come along and tell us what to do? Well, the bozo is telling us what to do, all right, but thankfully we have Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Speaker Nancy Pelosi to stand up and say NO!

At issue really is the futile and stupid attempt of the far right to have the Wall be the symbol of the whitening of America, an immoral, fetid, anti-historical, onanistic, anti-American loser of a policy that not only must be defeated, but must be crushed. It will be crushed, and the time is now.

Incidentally, the "something" that tears down stone walls in New England is gravity, the same gravity that holds the earth in orbit around the sun,

that holds the moon in orbit around the earth, and that “stills the restless wave” in the ocean. Gravity is invincible.

Equally invincible is the force that has brought tens of millions of immigrants to America, and which really has made America great – now and forever. Do the right wingers in the Trump White House really think they are going to keep out of our country those who uproot themselves from wherever they live and come to America to find justice and freedom, and to find brotherhood with others who also love justice and freedom? Do the White House Fascists really think they can do that?

Think again.



## No Choice but to Fight

Bob Liff

As Casey Stengel once said, “They say you can't do it but sometimes it doesn't always work.”

The more I study that quote, the less I understand it, which is why I like it. It explains succinctly the sheer manic inanity emanating hourly from the Twitter-feed of that guy who owns the garish gold-plated tower on Fifth Avenue.

We are veterans of political fights with, let's say, less left-leaning forces, but those fights were by and large fought over a commonly agreed set of facts. We are now facing a fact-free and amoral president who lies so persistently that the shock value has won off.

The good news is the newly Democratic House of Representatives has New Yorkers like Jerry Nadler, Hakeem Jeffries, Nita Lowey and Nydia Velazquez in positions to hold the administration accountable ethically, policy-wise and legally. Robert Mueller appears to be finishing up his report which Democrats are likely to subpoena – along with Trump's tax returns – if the so-called Justice Department tries to stick them in a drawer.

And the prospect that impeachment would elevate Mike Pence – who I have long feared is smarter, more of a true believer and more ruthlessly efficient than Trump – is less frightening now that Democrats hold the House.

One promise Trump *has* kept is his vow to run the government like his business. The government is failing, shut down and the employees are not getting paid.

The human pain inflicted on immigrants, their children, the environment, civil rights, voting rights, human rights, the Constitution, international alliances, what have you is now being shared by hundreds of thousands of government employees laid off or forced to work without getting paid.

All for a so-called border wall that is racist and xenophobic in its underpinning, and useless and unnecessary for legitimate border security.

The answer is not to wrestle in the mud with a pig, since everyone gets muddy and the pig loves it. When they go low, our answer can't be to go lower because, for one thing, they are better at that than we are. And if nothing else, the November results showed voters are increasingly repulsed by Trump, and will cast ballots accordingly.

I think Sen. Schumer and Speaker Pelosi have taken the right tack – standing firm, even passing the Senate Republican bill to reopen the government while maintaining whatever dignity is possible in dealing with a flailing pathological narcissist who wants to bring down all of us if he can't get his measure of adulation.

It is encouraging that the guardrails of our small-d democratic freedoms so far have held – the courts, the media and our First Amendment rights to speech and to seek redress of grievances. It is the first time in my life – including the depths of Nixon's criminality and Bush *filis'* war-driven destruction of our economy – that those institutions have seemed *genuinely* under attack.

There is no choice but to fight.



The only thing surprising about President Trump's address from the Oval Office on Tuesday night was how totally unnecessary and un-newsworthy it was. Trump did not declare he was reopening the government. He did not issue an “emergency” declaration. He did not even offer any new arguments for a border wall that voters say they don't want for a crisis that doesn't exist. Instead, he delivered a weak, unconvincing promise to sit down with Democrats. Never has he looked so helpless and small. In short, the president snookered the networks into giving him free time to commune with his base. They should not make that mistake again.

Jennifer Rubin, *The Washington Post*, Jan. 9.

# District Leader's Report

## Paula Diamond Román

It's January, when all minds turn to resolutions and fresh slates. In Albany, we've sworn in a Democrat-controlled State Senate for the first time in over fifty years. In Washington, D.C., we've sworn in a Democrat-controlled House of Representatives with a phenomenal degree of diversity in gender, race, age, religion, sexuality, and gender identity. At least our side of the aisle more closely resembles the United States of America!

Once again, Nancy Pelosi is the Speaker and Democrats are chairing House committees. Maxine Waters heads up Financial Services with the power to subpoena tax returns and enforce the Emoluments Clause. Adam Schiff oversees Intelligence and possible abuses of it. Appearing regularly on MSNBC, our own Jerry Nadler chairs Judiciary with jurisdiction over impeachment. For the time being, Congress will be busy with the government shutdown and the legal measures necessary to deal with this president. However, just as we dreamed of the day that we would take back our state government and the House of Representatives, we can also dream of the day we can open up our legislative hope chest.

We've had some successes in raising the minimum wage, but we need to go further with legislation for a living wage to ensure everyone an adequate standard of living. Newly sworn-in Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez has suggested a 70% marginal tax rate. This would achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth, while freeing up money for adequate healthcare and education, protection for our environment, and border security and enough resources for processing refugees.

An unexpected consequence of 9/11 was the enlistment of Americans who might not have ordinarily joined the Armed Forces. As a result, there are now many Democratic Members of Congress with military experience, including several female veterans, counterterrorism advisers, and former CIA officers. This puts the House Democrats on a more even playing field for making national security decisions, determining military budgets, choosing foreign policy priorities, and encouraging an American foreign policy which promotes the right of people throughout the world to govern themselves. New Congressman Max Rose is a post-9/11 combat veteran of the war in Afghanistan and is particularly well-suited to criticize the previous emphasis on "sequential one-year engagements," instead of a long-term plan ending in full withdrawal. A more balanced foreign policy is further facilitated by the large number of members who are Muslim, indigenous, and immigrants from countries not accorded much respect in the past.

Although taking back the Senate was a dream beyond our reach this time, there are also those in the Senate working to get ideas out into the conversation. Senator Warren (not an endorsement) has worked tirelessly to put in place legislation that would regulate the power of business corporations, public utilities and other financial institutions. Thoughts of another Blue Wave in 2020 give renewed hope of reviving the Glass-Steagall Banking Act of 1933 (preferably without another Depression first).

Lastly, we have the nightmare of guaranteeing decent housing for everyone. My husband and I just survived a two-year period that included cleaning out one parent's rent-controlled apartment only to see it sell for \$1.33 million dollars, and another parent's NYCHA apartment only to see it fail to be renovated or rented. However, we have a new chance to pass home rule, wrenching the power over rent control and stabilization away from the state. We have bigger challenges facing NYCHA housing, including our own Grant Houses. Problems are evenly distributed among the local government where the flesh seems to be weak, the state government where the spirit hopefully is renewed, and the federal government, primarily HUD, where both the flesh and the spirit seem to be sleepy. We need to work together to save NYCHA housing before the promise of affordable housing goes down the drain, leaving thousands of New Yorkers at the mercy of the housing market.

Riding the crest of the Blue Wave of 2018, we cannot forget our future responsibilities. While I've suggested a moratorium on being overly critical of the House Democrats while they deal with the government shutdown and whatever legal measures are deemed necessary to deal with this president, we cannot maintain that forever. Building on the success of the Broadway Democrats' Go Blue 2018 sub-committee, which united Club people with those who would never think of joining a political club together in a common and ultimately successful goal, we need to continue encouraging the participation of concerned Democrats in formulating new priorities and policies for our society. We need to work towards involving progressive Democrats everywhere, including those new to the political process or new to party politics, in finding solutions to community problems.

Thanks to all your efforts in 2018, I have such hope for the next two years. Breaking through the fog of president-induced PTSD, I see such potential for real change. As I finish this article in a Pollyanna glow, I invite you to email me with your dreams for the Democratic Party and for our country at valleygirl109@rocketmail.com.

