
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

The Annual Broadway Democrats' Harlem Town Meeting:

Housing, Rent Regulation, and Repairs

**For All Residents of
West Harlem & Morningside Heights**

Invited:

- State Senator Bill Perkins
- State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell
- City Councilmember Robert Jackson
- New York City Housing Authority

**Please note the
time and location
for this meeting:**

Thursday, June 9th

7:00-9:00

Jackie Robinson Senior Center

1301 Amsterdam Ave (between West 123rd and La Salle)

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

Volume 36, Issue 6

June 2011

President's Corner

Joe Nunley

THE 'RIGHT' SIDE OF HISTORY

The third week of May was both exciting and frustrating. President Barack Obama gave a major address on the Middle East and he said "It will be the policy of the United States to support reform across the region, and to support transitions to democracy." On the Israel-Palestinian issue he said, "The status quo is unsustainable, and Israel, too, must act boldly to advance a lasting peace."

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel spoke before the US Congress. He declared that Jerusalem will be part of Israel, and claimed the whole of Jerusalem as Israeli, against rulings of the UN and the International Court of Justice. He declared that Israel will maintain a "strong presence" along the Jordan Valley (where Palestinians are daily being expelled from the lands in favor of illegal Israeli occupants).

As Ben Caspit said in the Maariv newspaper in Israel:

Netanyahu knows very well the conditions that he set yesterday for a peace process are a complete non-starter. There is no Palestinian in the world who will accept them, there is no Arab state in the world that will support them, there is not a single European who will take them seriously, and they will all only make Barack Obama angry.

Then there was the spectacle of the US Congress giving twenty-nine standing ovations to this extremist talk. Then there was the striking incident of Rae Abileah, a young Jewish-American woman (born in Israel), standing up in the gallery and yelling "Stop the Occupation" and being thrown to the floor by some men from AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and hospitalized as well as arrested.

When interviewed she discussed the culture of silence and the fear about speaking out. She's right. The Israeli lobby has succeeded in ruling against any criticism of Israel as out of bounds, especially in Congress. AIPAC has a stranglehold on Congress with the result that US policy is not debated there, even though that policy has important consequences for the entire world. Where is the progressive voice? MSNBC? This so-called liberal station won't touch the Israeli-Palestinian issue with a ten-foot pole. Isn't it interesting that Netanyahu came and spoke and not one of their four evening shows even mentioned it? One of the major events of the week?

Unlike in America, in Israel there is a lively debate regarding the direction of their country. The vast majority of Israelis support a two state solution. Tzipi Livi, the opposition leader, says that Palestinian statehood isn't a favor to Obama, it's vital for Israel. She said it was essential if Israel was to remain a Jewish and democratic state. Prominent public figures in Israel have signed an open letter to European leaders calling for recognition of an independent Palestinian State along 1967 lines. Signatories of the letter include former Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg, former Foreign Ministry Director, Alon Liel, former head of the Civil Service Commission, Itzhak Gbnoor, former Israeli Ambassador to South Africa and the Philippines, Ilan Baruch. Academics who signed the letter include Nobel Prize winner Professor Daniel Kahneman. In April, seventeen Israel Prize winners called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along 1967 lines.

Netanyahu and his Likud party want everyone to share in their illusions. As Merav Michaeli says, the prime minister has his own reality show as "the leader of a persecuted people." The fact is that 22 Arab League countries submitted a proposal for ending the conflict with the Palestinians and for full normalization with Israel. It was ignored. Michaeli says "the reality is that the State of Israel has become accustomed to the present situation and does not recognize itself

without it.” He says Netanyahu plays at negotiations that lead nowhere. He writes, “He wants settlements, he wants occupation, he wants the situation as it is and sees no problem with it.”

In February more than 100 nations voted for a UN Resolution that could have condemned “illegal” Israeli settlements and halted any new construction. The US vetoed it. Now in September a resolution will come before the UN on the recognition of a Palestinian State. If this goes to the UN and the US is forced to veto it, Israel will be even more isolated, and the US will be seen for the second time, as telling the whole world, “What you think is meaningless to us.” Not so good for us and a primary reason Obama is pushing for a negotiated settlement now.

What the Palestinian people are demanding isn't something that is a barbarism. They're demanding democracy. They're demanding freedom. They're demanding the opportunity to pursue happiness. Young Jewish progressives and others are seeing things with a fresh eye. The Arab Spring is awakening the determination of the young everywhere to be free and independent. The old ways of thinking will disappear with their courage to speak up. Too bad that courage and consciousness seems non-existent in the present US Congress or the present government of Israel.

☪

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

2011 Primary Ballot Appears Set; Join Us!

Thank you for your support in last month's Broadway Democrats meeting. It looks like the primary ballot in our area is now set, though we all need to petition, and other candidates could always emerge. While every eligible person has a right to run, and serious contests are often good for our party and our democracy (see “Obama vs. Clinton, 2008”), this year it is especially important that we deter the challenges of perennial or nuisance candidates. If they seek judicial office, it will be in opposition to the Most Highly Qualified candidates reported out by our esteemed independent screening panels; if they make it on the ballot for any office, they will cost the taxpayers thousands of dollars, because as it stands now the polls won't even open in our area this September 13th since there are no contests.

Here is a list of the candidates we will be petitioning for. All are endorsed by the Broadway Democrats, except in the two vacant Civil Court contests, where we took a preferential rather than an actual endorsement vote, but all the other panel-approved candidates have either dropped out or are running elsewhere.

Countywide Civil Court (re-election): Sali Ann Scarpulla

Countywide Civil Court (open seat): Erika Edwards

Civil Court, 7th (north of 110th St.) District (re-election): Raymond Bruce

Civil Court, 5th (south of 110th St.) District (open seat): Franc Perry

Female Democratic District Leader, 69th AD Part C: Paula Diamond-Román

Male Democratic District Leader, 69C: Curtis Arluck

Judicial Convention Delegates and Alternates, 69th AD (12 of each). Joint slate with Three Parks and CFD, the Broadway Democrats' candidates are:

Delegates: Luis Román, Cathy Grad, Patti Jacobs, Linda Schoener

Alternates: Joe Nunley, Lew Moses, Martina Garcia, Paul Shneyer

Democratic County Committee: 87 stalwart activists. To qualify, you must petition in your ED (you don't have to run in the ED where you live). Interested? **Call (212-662-4057) or e-mail me (CurtisDems@aol.com).**

Petitioning for these offices begins Tuesday, June 7, and ends Thursday, July 14 (we need them back by Monday July 11th.) You may pick up your petitions at the club meeting June 9th, by contacting me, or at our gala:

PETITION PICKUP PARTY

Tuesday, June 7th, 7 – 8:30 PM,
at the home of Curtis Arluck & Katie Hanner,
545 West 111th, Apt. 8B. Featuring:

- Petitions
- Light Refreshments
- (weather permitting) A tour of our beautiful roof deck and garden (Katie Hanner, leading horticulturist.)

Please RSVP to the above e-mail address or phone number, as we need to prepare your
(cont. on page 4)

petitions in advance, and know how many people to expect.

Two more announcements:

--Starting Saturday June 11 we will be out tabling with club, rent stabilization and anti-Afghanistan petitions. Join us!

--Congratulations to Democrat Kathy Hochul for winning the staunchly Republican NY-26!



State Committeeman Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

State Committeeman, 69th AD

Just returned from attending the Spring Democratic State Committee meeting this May in Suffolk County, Long Island, and while there were a lot of speeches, in action I and the rest of the Reform Caucus came away disappointed. Last month in the newsletter I published the ethics resolution that was submitted for approval by the State Committee; below is the resolution to extend the moratorium on gas fracking that was also up for a vote. For the sake of brevity I have slightly excerpted the resolution:

“Whereas the process of extracting natural gas from shale known as hydrofracking requires the injection of large quantities of water containing toxic and carcinogenic chemicals into the beds of shale and;

Whereas this process has led to the contamination of drinking water in many places where it has been carried out and;

Whereas there is a serious problem with the disposal of the contaminated waste water and;

Whereas the state of Pennsylvania recently has banned the disposal of this waste water in 15 sewage treatment plants because the chemicals in the waste water seriously interfere with the operation of the sewage treatment plants and;

Whereas it has been proposed to use hydrofracking in the Marcellus shale deposit which lies under the watershed collection region of the water supply of New York City which has the largest unfiltered water supply in the world and;

Whereas there is a temporary moratorium on horizontal hydrofracking in New York which expires the end of June and;

Whereas there are bills filed in the Assembly which would make this ban permanent and;

Whereas the energy bill passed by Congress in 2005 at the urging of Vice President Dick Cheney has exempted the process of hydrofracking from federal regulations governing clean water;

Therefore be it resolved that the New York State Democratic Committee calls for the passage of legislation which will ban the process of horizontal hydrofracking in the watershed of New York City or any other municipality in the State unless it is possible to absolutely guarantee that there is no danger to the municipal water supply and;

Be it further resolved that the New York State Democratic Committee calls for the passage of legislation which will ban the dumping of the waste water from hydrofracking into any sewage disposal system that has not removed all dangerous contaminants from it.”

Sadly, BOTH proposals were tabled indefinitely at the meeting. The argument for tabling the ethics reform proposal was that the governor was coming up with his own proposal, and did not want the State Committee to get in front of his announcement. The argument for tabling the gas fracking moratorium extension was that it would get ahead of an NYS Dept. of Environmental Protection report due out over the summer.

Both arguments are phony, the real reason is that the governor’s not wanting to have our proposal upstage his own ideas for ethics reform or to pressure him to move quicker on it, and his concern for hurting Democratic electoral chances in local elections in upstate New York, rather than worrying about the health of constituents and the safety of the water supply. The State Committee exists to push our elected officials to take positions or move them in the direction that the party wants, not to permit the leaders to cut deals or to hog press attention. We in the Reform Caucus objected, and forced a vote, but we were not able to overcome the Cuomo forces against us. We have vowed to try again in the fall and we will be better prepared.

Though I reported the last word on the street about the new State chairman was that it was going to be Charlie King (currently the Executive Director) and a former CFD District Leader, the chairman remains Jay Jacobs for now—but his

term is up in the fall, so perhaps it will be resolved then. See you out petitioning this spring, or at the next club meeting!

☺

From the Steering Committee

Richard A. Siegel

(with help from SW colleagues)

Trying to Legislate Communication in Healthcare

Every year, one or two bills in the state legislature try to legislate communication about health care planning. This year a new bill that would require hospitals to provide a patient who may be in need of long term care upon discharge with information on the NY Connects program, or with contact information for such patient's area agency on aging. (**S 4796-A and A7788**)

As a social worker in hospitals for 30 years, I can tell you this effort, while noble, misses the mark. While it always feels good to mandate that a hospital provide information, it is usually the place where people have the most difficulty processing and understanding that information.

Current Regulations

As a result of current regulations, patients are already being provided with Patient Rights packages, the Important Message if they are a Medicare patient, patient education for their diagnosis, the 24 or 48 hour discharge notice and multiple other pieces of information about their insurance, usually managed, and what's in their "network". More information is included than most people can read in a day. It is also a simply overwhelming. As one Social Work director stated, "patients and/or their families are being asked to make life altering decisions at a time when they are anxious, not feeling well, and are barely able to hear or comprehend all the information being provided." In addition, as a result of the many pressures to control health care costs, admissions are shorter than ever before. A patient's financial condition affects what options he or she may have. Finally, many more people are in managed care plans. These plans often limit care to providers in their network and have case managers that are supposed to be assisting with these decisions.

The Right Time and Place

The vast majority of people get the vast majority of their medical care in the community from their primary care provider. It is during that visit that patients can learn about their condition and how it is affecting their day to day life. What this means is that people and their families need to start planning while they are in the community, without the anxiety of a medical crisis and when they are not under pressure to make life transition decisions. Another colleague stated, "as we have learned with Advance Directives and Health Care Proxies, the time to discuss this issue is not during a hospitalization when someone is sick but in their primary care setting when they are well, can better process the information, and have time to make an informed decision."

These are difficult conversations to have (professional to patient and family member to family member). Yet, waiting until a medical crisis is the least desirable solution. Every effort should be made to have people explore their choices for care before a decision must be made imminently. Part of the health care reform act included a provision for these types of decisions. Instead of embracing this idea, it was demonized as "pulling the plug on Grandma." If our state government wants to encourage informed decisions, it needs to find ways to get information to people while they are at home, when they can communicate with their health care providers and their families. These discussions should take place well before the time to finally make life transition decisions.

Another Social Work colleague stated, "My recommendation would be that NY Connects program information be provided to individuals through HRA, through managed care insurance companies, specifically their Chronic Disease programs, in primary care settings in the community, senior centers, or any other setting prior to hospitalization." The next time you hear about a bill requiring a hospital to do something, think about whether that information is better received in a MD's office.

New Yorker's United for Marriage Equality Phonebank

New Yorkers across the state need your help to achieve equality and guarantee full marriage rights for all New Yorkers. Join other New Yorkers as we call statewide urging our legislators to support marriage equality.

Dates: Daily Monday to Thursday (until June 20)

Time: 5pm-8:30pm

Location: SEIU 1199, 330 W 42nd St, 7th Floor, New York, NY

RSVP @ www.HRC.org/NYUMphonebanks. For Questions, e-mail Stephen Anderson at stephen.anderson@hrc.org

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

The Annual Broadway Democrats' Harlem Town Meeting **Thursday, June 9th 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Jackie Robinson Senior Center: 1301 Amsterdam Ave (between West 123rd and La Salle)
