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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

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## **Mayor de Blasio's Agenda for New York City: A Discussion**

***Moderated by Bob Liff,***  
**Political Analyst**

**Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>**

7:45 p.m. Sign in

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

**Bank Street College**

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

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Volume 39, Issue 5

June 2014

## District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

### CUOMO

I spent most of my last newsletter article lambasting our Governor for cozying up to State Senate Republicans and for his conservative stands on many issues, especially Charter Schools. Yet in the privacy of my ballot at the club meeting I cast the deciding vote to endorse Mr. Cuomo, who won a second ballot victory by the uninspiring vote of 20-19. To some extent I did this because of the disagreeable antics of Cuomo's opponent Randy Credico, to some extent because Danny O'Donnell—whom Cuomo doesn't seem to treat any better than he does most other liberal leaders—was uncomfortable with his home club turning its back on the man who delivered Marriage Equality to the people of New York State.

There are other parts of Cuomo's record to admire: he delivered one of the strongest gun control bills in the country, and saw his popularity drop precipitously as a result. I think he is unfairly treated by some fracking opponents: so far, he has held the line against very, very powerful economic forces, and New York has had four fracking-free years while Pennsylvania just across the border is despoiled by it. On unions and wage settlement issues he is a conciliator, not a nasty opponent, *a la* Christie and Bloomberg. From upstate yogurt factories to marriage equality to Pre-K, he gets things done.

The Governor's failings are also legion, and legendary. He has consistently sided with the small minority of Charter School children and their wealthy backers at the expense of the vast majority of the state's students who go to regular public schools. He has empowered State Senate Republicans at the expense of both progressive values and good government, as signified by the reprehensibly gerrymandered State Senate lines and the wasteful dual June/September primaries, which have cost the state millions and millions of dollars. If tax cuts are so bad nationally, why are they so good for New York?

Worst of all is the attitude of confrontation towards the progressive leaders of New York State. I could never get too personally angry at Bill Clinton or Chuck Schumer when they took positions against our interests: they always did, and always will, give you the sense that they value you, as a person, and as a fellow Democratic warrior.

If Governor Cuomo can go beyond making a few concessions, and rejoin this Democratic spirit, I will vote for him with some enthusiasm. If not, it will be a long summer and autumn.

DA

### PETITIONING HAS BEGUN

We were out Saturday morning at Absolute Bagels, joined by our State Senate Candidate Robert Jackson, and got an especially good response to Bob, Danny O'Donnell, and Bill Perkins. **We will be out in the 110<sup>th</sup> St./Broadway this Saturday 11-2 or so, joined for some of the time by Danny O'Donnell and we expect some of our other candidates. Join us! To pick up petitions for your building/area, contact Curtis Arluck, 212-662-4057, email CurtisDems@aol.com.**

## District Leader's Report

Paula Diamond Román

On April 19, 1989, Trisha Meili was jogging in Central Park when she was raped and beaten almost to death. Found four hours after the assault, she had severe blood loss from multiple lacerations and internal bleeding and her skull was fractured; the initial medical prognosis was that she would die or, at best, remain in a permanent coma. While Meili eventually recovered for the most part, she was left with balance and vision disabilities and no memory of the attack or anything in the hour before the attack.

In the days following the attack, the city erupted in furious hysteria, partially because of the severity of Meili's injuries. The extreme reaction was also partially due to the media description of a night of gang attacks, with up to thirty Black and Hispanic teenagers "wilding" through the park assaulting strangers. After a period in which we had begun to reclaim our city, New Yorkers began to fear that our

parks were no longer safe for them. Some of the newspapers even made us wonder if “wilding” packs of Black and Hispanic teenagers were going to savage us wherever we went in our city.

Antron McCray (15 years old), Kevin Richardson (14 years old), Yusef Salaam (15 years old), Raymond Santana (14 years old), and Kharey Wise (16 years old), were in Central Park that night, along with approximately thirty other teenagers, many of whom were identified or self-identified as participating in the various attacks that night in the park. The five suspects were subjected to forty-eight hours of intense questioning by the police, much of it unrecorded and without a parent or guardian present. McCray, Richardson, Santana, and Wise made signed and videotaped confessions about participating in various attacks that night, including the rape and assault of Trisha Meili, and implicated each other. Allegedly, Salaam made verbal admissions but no signed and videotaped confession; although he had ID that indicated he was fifteen, the police and district attorneys who questioned him believed that he was sixteen and he was questioned without access to parents or guardians.

From the time they were arrested, McCray, Richardson, Salaam, Santana, and Wise maintained that they hadn't attacked Trisha Meili and asserted that the videotaped statements were the result of a combination of coercion, deception, trickery and manipulation by the police. Salaam, for example, allegedly confessed after being told that there were fingerprints on Meili's clothing. In fact, there was no physical evidence, such as fingerprints and DNA evidence tying the five of them to the rape and assault; the DNA evidence collected at the scene belonged to a single assailant, not matching any of the five suspects. The way that the police handled the questioning and the evidence seemed outrageous but didn't seem to be capturing anyone's attention as much as the horror about the crime.

In August 1990, McCray, Salaam, and Santana were convicted of attempted murder and convicted of rape, assault, robbery and riot and were given the maximum sentence allowed for juveniles of 5–10 years. In December 1990, Richardson was convicted of attempted murder and rape and given the maximum sentence allowed for juveniles of 5–10 years; Wise, tried as an adult, was convicted of sexual abuse and assault and given a sentence of 5–15 years. Jurors sitting on their trials claimed that they were convinced by the physical evidence

(semen, grass, dirt and two hairs "consistent with" the victim's hair recovered from Richardson's underpants), rather than the confessions, even though none of the physical evidence included fingerprints or DNA evidence.

In 2002, a convicted rapist and murderer serving a life sentence for other crimes, confessed to committing the rape and assault alone; DNA evidence confirmed that he was the single assailant that the evidence had always suggested. The hairs found in Richardson's underpants were finally analyzed and the DNA established that they didn't belong to Meili. The District Attorney's office analyzed the “confessions” and noted the inconsistencies between them and lack of corroboration with any of the known facts about the assault. On December 19, 2002, after twelve years of being the Central Park Rapists and having already completed their sentences, the convictions of McCray, Richardson, Salaam, Santana, and Wise were vacated. The following year, McCray, Richardson, and Santana sued the city for malicious prosecution, racial discrimination and emotional distress. Mayor Bloomberg's administration refused to settle the suits, citing “the confessions that withstood intense scrutiny, in full and fair pretrial hearings and at two lengthy public trials.”

I was almost the same age as Trisha Meili when she was raped and assaulted. It was easy for me to identify with her when the case dominated the news for weeks. It was less easy for me to identify with Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana, and Kharey Wise but I still remember being a little confused about how the system was allowed to handle five kids between fourteen and sixteen, even if they had committed a horrific crime. (That issue is still politically relevant today.) Five months into Mayor de Blasio's administration, I am even more confused about how we justify the blatant disregard for the facts by the police and district attorneys involved in the prosecution, many of whom still defend the result today. It feels as if we are saying that, if lies are cleverly enough packaged to pass through enough layers of the justice system without being detected by jurors or judges, the justice system has been proven to work. Our new and progressive mayor and our Westside Liberal comptroller must come forward and state if that is what they believe. Deferring this decision any longer is denying justice.



## **President's Corner**

Gretchen Borges

### **NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOODS**

All of us have been aware of the increasing number of small businesses closing their doors in the past few years, a trend leaving many empty storefronts in its wake. When the rents increase, the small non-chain businesses cannot afford to stay and seemingly only chains or banks move in. And the neighborhood suffers from the change.

Increasingly a trend seems to be overtaking urban areas: a neighborhood will be discovered, admired for its personality, its charm, characteristics frequently referring in practice to pre-war buildings and non-chain businesses. As the neighborhood gains in popularity, the value of the real estate increases. Rentals become coops or condos, the formerly artistic/intellectual/hipster inhabitants can no longer afford to live there. The independent businesses suffer from increases in rent. They are replaced by drugstores and banks. And the neighborhood once characterized as a desirable place to live enters a new era of overpriced housing, chain retail, and financial analysts as inhabitants. In those neighborhoods with substantial percentages of taxpayer sites (low rises that are built to their zoning maximum), the charm of light and air are soon replaced by glass towers. And the cycle is repeated endlessly as neighborhoods are rapidly transformed into carbon copies of each other, none more or less desirable than others to live in, differentiated only by those characteristics that cannot be altered by trends influenced by the profit motive. Consider the Lower East Side, or Chelsea, or Williamsburg.

We are fortunate in Morningside Heights to have Riverside Park as a constant asset, one that has gone through phases for sure of greater and lesser upkeep and safety, but one that cannot be substantively altered or removed in its entirety from the neighborhood. In addition since the majority of the housing stock was built in a relatively constrained time period, prewar for the most part, the danger of masonry or brick reasonably scaled buildings being replaced by looming glass towers is limited to relatively few vulnerable sites.

Unfortunately, one of those sites is adjacent to the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. The awkward glass structure of predominantly luxury apartments will add little to the neighborhood and will detract significantly from the glory of the cathedral.

Our commercial corridors are suffering the effects of the inevitable route to uniformity. To the south of us, rezoning has effectively limited the number of banks and drugstores that can invade spaces, perhaps limiting the tendency of rapacious landlords to raise rents to levels unsustainable from independent businesses.

In Midtown, the Mayor's proposed rezoning would replace masonry office buildings with new skyscrapers, leading to darker streets and increased congestion. Yes, the plan includes transportation improvements, unlike the version which failed to pass under Mayor Bloomberg. But it will also allow the construction of at least one tower 150 taller than the Chrysler Building. With plans such as these, the New York skyline will not differ substantively from those of Houston or Minneapolis, a prophesy of disparagement, not praise.



## **Assembly Member's Report**

Daniel O'Donnell

As I am sure most of you have heard, a founding member of our club, Lew Moses, has passed away. He will be remembered by all of us for his passionate work on behalf of progressive causes, both in our local community and beyond. A stalwart member of the Broadway Democrats since its founding, Lew was one of our leaders in the struggle for the betterment of our community, and I am proud to have worked alongside him, fighting the good fight. The club and our community won't be the same without him. He will be missed.



## **State Committee Report**

Daniel Marks Cohen

The party faithful re-nominated Governor Cuomo at the State Convention at the Hilton Hotel in Melville, Long Island last month, the most self-interested and cynical official in the state.

As Governor, Cuomo muscled through gun control legislation post-Sandy Hook, endorsed Marriage Equality, and passed on-time budgets five years in a row (which has not happened in over 30 years). Those actions deserve praise and high marks. But as a Democrat, Cuomo has been must worse, and even counter-productive. He introduced a 10-point

plan Women's Equality Act that has stalled in the State Senate. He has passed a cynical campaign finance reform legislation that been derided by good government groups like Common Cause. And he has delayed a state "Dream Act" that would legalize undocumented immigrants.

Actually, the Governor has not stopped those things – the State Senate has. That is odd because the senate actually has a majority of DEMOCRATS at the moment, except that five of them in the Independent Democratic Conference ("IDC") have caucused with the Republican minority to control the body, and in turn, stall ANY progressive legislation. And the governor does nothing to challenge the IDC. The Progressive Caucus put forth a resolution to encourage the IDC senators to return to the party (I would have called for something stronger, like "get back in the party or we will challenge you" but a softer approach won over), yet even that non-offensive resolution was quashed in Executive Committee. As was a resolution from my State Committee colleague Debra Cooper to support the 10-point Women's Equality Act—also quashed.

The one resolution to ask the Governor not to take the Independence Party line (which like its odious predecessor the Liberal Party was neither Liberal - or in this case "independent" - nor a party) was allowed on the floor but then also quashed. The Independence Party is a cabal of crypto-fascist thugs who extort support for elected officials for cash, routinely endorsing Republicans in upstate legislative races and allowing conservative Democrats to vote for them on the Independence line, rather than likely voting Democrat, and thus eroding support upstate for the Democratic party and hampering efforts to take back the Senate. And then after stating he is considering what to do, he signs the paperwork accepting the IP nod that same day.

So in this mix another third party swoops in—the Working Families Party—and it cut a deal with the Governor to endorse him in exchange for the governor's commitment to take back the State Senate. This is the state of New York politics: the Democratic Governor will not support Democrats in the State Senate to exert its majority to support Democratic initiatives until a third party threatens his personal politics ambitions, and THEN he discovers his Democratic roots.

I am a true believer—I am involved in politics because I believe it can change the world, but I am

not naïve—I know you need political pressure to accomplish this change. But one must have a core tenet, a central driving belief, besides one's personal ambitions to have people join your cause and support your vision. Cuomo appears to have none. Normally, a governor that supports gun control legislation and gay marriage would be touted as a viable progressive candidate for President but all I can think of is how the Governor has undercut the very beliefs he claims to support. He may be Governor, but he has a way to go to become a Democrat again.



## **From the Steering Committee** Lizabeth Sostre

### **ANOTHER CONFESSION**

I have a confession to make. When the Central Park 5 were exonerated, I was uncomfortable. How could I have been so wrong?

I remember when the incident took place. I don't remember the year, but everything else is pretty clear. A woman was brutalized in Central Park and the perpetrators were arrested and convicted. I remember the term "wilding." It seemed to me at the time that they were not human, not teenagers, more like wolves. And of course, they were guilty. After all, they confessed. And they were convicted.

Years later, they were cleared. The DNA of the person who actually committed the crime (a serial rapist) matched the DNA found on the victim. The Central Park 5 were innocent. They had done time in jail for a crime they did not commit. Their lives had been violated by a miscarriage of justice. Yet at the time that the Central Park 5 were cleared, I was not totally convinced of their innocence. My image of them had not changed. Why?

A film followed. I never saw it. I didn't want to know. I didn't want to accept that once again Black males were victimized by the criminal justice system. I didn't want to admit that I had it so very wrong, because that would force me to confront my own reactions, and even my own racism.

So what is happening now? You would think that everyone agrees that a monetary settlement should be reached. But that is not true. There is a strong push-back against the settlement, for a financial settlement makes a strong statement about how the case was originally handled and indicts those

involved, some of whom became extremely successful on the backs of those five teens.

If you, like me, found it easier not to think about this case before and the damage it has done to the lives of five innocent Black males, it is not too late now to get involved. It is not too late to demand that these men get the monetary damages they deserve. Now we can do something. We have a chance now to ensure there is some justice for the Central Park Five.

Please email or call Mayor Bill de Blasio, Comptroller Scott Stringer and Corporation Counsel Zachary Carter. Tell them that we know they are interested in a just and speedy resolution to the settlement of the Central Park Five case and support their efforts to bring the case to a fair conclusion. If you are interested in keeping informed and/or want to get involved in the Central Park 5 case, email me at [LizabethNY23@aol.com](mailto:LizabethNY23@aol.com).



## **From the Steering Committee**

Pat Almonrode

### **DIVESTING NYS AND NYC PENSION FUNDS FROM FOSSIL FUELS**

The burning of fossil fuels—coal, oil, and natural gas—releases heat-trapping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, resulting in the disruption of the climate through global warming. National and international climate scientists have warned for decades that we need to drastically decrease our reliance on fossil fuels if we want to preserve a habitable planet. Recently, the prestigious Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announced that we have fifteen years *at most* to avoid climate catastrophe.

A worldwide organization called 350.org is leading the effort to wean society off its fossil-fuel addiction. One of 350's most important campaigns is a drive to get institutions to divest from fossil-fuel stocks. The campaign has been concentrated on universities, religious bodies, and non-profit foundations, and it's had considerable success. More recently, towns and cities across the country have also begun to divest—places as diverse as Seattle, Madison, Ithaca, San Francisco, and Santa Fe have either divested or have committed to do so.

Divestment makes practical, financial and moral sense. Divestment frees up assets that can then

be used to support the continued development of clean energy technology, creating American jobs. Divestment makes financial sense because fossil-fuel investments have actually been underperforming for several years, and because these investments are very risky going forward, since a large part of their valuation is based on carbon assets that will end up “stranded” and worthless as we move away from a carbon-intensive economy. And finally, divestment makes moral sense. Simply put—if it's wrong to wreck the climate, then it's wrong to invest in and profit from that wreckage.

We must stand with President Obama when he says, as he did in his most recent radio address, “I refuse to condemn our children to a planet that's beyond fixing.” That's why 350NYC, the local group affiliated with 350.org, is sponsoring a resolution through which the City Council can urge both the State and the City Comptrollers to divest the pension funds they manage from fossil fuels. These funds are among the largest of their kind in the country, and divesting them would send a powerful signal in the market—that we cannot and *will not* put up with business-as-usual any more. This non-binding resolution will be introduced in the Council soon, and 350NYC is seeking endorsement from citizen groups. As of this writing, at least one Democratic club in the City—the Village Independent Democrats—has endorsed the resolution. It's time for the Broadway Democrats to do the same. We'll be discussing and voting on this at our next meeting on June 12. Please attend.

*(Note: Author is a member of 350NYC)*



## **From the Steering Committee**

Ed Sullivan

### **LEW MOSES REMEMBERED**

Lew Moses passed away last Saturday after a long and painful illness. He fought for life until the end, he so loved this world. Lew left behind his wife Bonnie, his daughter Arianna, her husband Josh, and his grandson Lysander.

Many friends gathered on Monday to share anecdotes about Lew. There were so many. I like the one about Lew, as a child, getting up on a stage in a live theatre during the intermission break and announcing to the audience, “I'm Lew Moses!”, then spotting his mother rushing up to get him, he added, “And this is my mother.”

When a bunch of us were solving the world's problems over brunch one day, and I said, "I don't think this country is in the mood to go to war with Libya, Lew instantly free associated, singing, "I'm in the mood for love."

Just a few weeks ago, when the nursing home where he was had misplaced one of his shoes, Lew pressed me to find it for him. Since at that point Lew couldn't stand, let alone walk, I took the task casually -- too casually for Lew. He was upset. "What are you going to do, wear them?" I asked. "Yes," he answered seriously. "And then what?" "I'm going to walk home."

Lew never gave up. Not on himself. Not on anyone else. Lew Moses did not go gentle into that goodnight. He raged at the dying of the light.

Goodbye, Lew. I will miss you.



### **IS THIS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?**

It costs more than \$20 per year for Broadway Democrats to mail out newsletters to each person on our mailing list. We can no longer afford to mail newsletters to people who aren't dues-paying members.

There are two ways to keep your newsletters coming:

- 1) Mail in your dues to Broadway Democrats, PO Box 1099, Cathedral Station, New York NY 10025. *Until July 1*, dues are \$20, \$5 for seniors. As of July 1, they rise to \$25, \$10 for seniors/students/people with low incomes. One more reason to pay your dues *now!*
- 2) Request, by e-mailing [gborges370@gmail.com](mailto:gborges370@gmail.com), that your newsletters be e-mailed rather than snail-mailed to you. We would love it if you also paid your dues—which you must do in order to vote at club meetings—but we will e-mail newsletters to anyone who requests them. Of course, we would also prefer that everyone, dues-paying or not, receive their newsletter by e-mail, so please contact the above e-mail address to request this. If you have already paid your dues, thank you! Your newsletters, by e- or snail- mail, will keep on coming.

### **CHANGE IN DUES PASSED**

At its April 22 meeting, the Steering Committee voted to recommend a change in the club's dues structure.

Currently, dues are \$5 for seniors and \$20 for all others. The Steering Committee proposed dues of \$10 for seniors, students, and those with limited incomes, and \$25 for all others, to take effect on July 1. It is the hope of the Steering Committee that changes will put the club on a more solid financial footing, while also encouraging more students and those with limited incomes to join.

A vote on this proposal was taken at the Membership Meeting on May 8 and passed.

### **Keeping the Faith: An Interfaith Panel on Immigration Reform Wednesday, July 2, 7:00 – 8:30pm**

**Saint Peter's Church – Lexington Ave. at 54th Street**  
Friends and neighbors of all faith backgrounds are invited to join us at Saint Peter's Church in Midtown for a discussion on the current situation of immigration reform and the important role of faith communities in welcoming the stranger and advocating for immigrant justice. The diverse panel of speakers will include representatives of faith communities, elected officials, and non-profit organizations. The panel will be followed by a question and answer session during which the audience will be invited to engage with speakers. After the panel session, please join us for a reception with light refreshments and conversation.

This event is FREE and open to the public. Tickets are not required, but please RSVP at <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/keeping-the-faith-an-interfaith-panel-on-immigration-reform-tickets-11777259099>.

Questions? Email  
[keepingfaithimmigrationreform@gmail.com](mailto:keepingfaithimmigrationreform@gmail.com).

Organized by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and Saint Peter's Church

## 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. Beginning in July, dues will be \$10 for seniors, students, and those with limited incomes, and \$25 for all others

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

The Broadway Democrats  
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FIRST  
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell  
District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,  
Paula Diamond Román  
President: Gretchen Borges  
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Mayor de Blasio's Agenda: A Discussion Moderated by Bob Liff

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Bank Street College of Education 610 W. 112th St. (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)