



THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

Endorsement Forum, Part 1:

-  ***District Leader (Man and Woman)***
-  ***Judicial Delegates and Alternates (4 each)***
-  ***Judges (if candidates' names available)***

Thursday, May 12th

7:30 pm sign in/refreshments * 8:00 forum

Bank Street College of Education

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

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Volume 36, Issue 5

May 2011

President's Corner

Joe Nunley

Taking out Osama Bin Laden and other international criminals with pinpoint military or police-like action is what I thought the "war on terror" was going to be about. I heartily congratulate the President, the Navy SEALs, the CIA, and others for their success!

Nine years ago we launched an attack to take out those who with great cruelty attacked and slaughtered our people on 9/11. Yesterday we took out the main leader of that group. At the time of the attack, those criminals who had sworn to wage a campaign of destruction against the west, numbered a few thousand. Today that number is hard to estimate but we know that it has grown precipitously and spread from one country to fifty. This growth is hardly making us safer.

I believe that it is important to maintain a clarity in our thinking at this time which goes beyond the thinking of "good" and "evil" which is the narrative behind the so called "war on terror". We must continue not to allow this "war on terror" to be a pretense for military action whose real purpose is in something else.

One wonders what makes one freedom fighter or dictator valuable and another a liability? It is apparently their allegiance to western energy interests. Those groups that we are now fighting in Afghanistan were once funded and armed by us when they fought against the Russians. Now that the US is the occupier they have turned against us with a vengeance.

If you really want to combat terrorism, you get to the root cause. (It's oddly a Republican, Ron Paul, who has done the best job at doing this.) The terrorists don't hate us for our freedom, as Bush would say. They hate us because we're sticking our nose in their business, putting bases on their land, and supporting corrupt regimes.

It is a misguided foreign policy that is putting us in danger. Imagine how we would feel if a foreign power came here, set up bases, and even tried to take possession of our natural resources. I bet we'd react with violent protest. Would that make us terrorists?

No American president has been able to convince me that the wars that we initiated in Iraq and have escalated in Afghanistan are vital to our national security. Whenever we're talking calmly and rationally about America's reasons to be at war in these countries, **they've got us where they want us.**

Because the actual situations are so insane, so ludicrous, so irrational and so far removed from what is told to us that we must assume at all times that we're being duped by the American government. The mistake that we make is to take anything coming out of Washington at face value.

Is there anyone in Washington who is seeking peace in the world? No, we're seeking new opponents for war. War doesn't need a reason. It just needs to happen. We can't seem to stop it. Is anyone trying? We need war so that we can use weapons and ammunition and justify making more weapons and ammunition. The military needs war so that we can justify having 400,000 military personnel overseas in perpetuity. (Yes, perpetuity).

From terrorism there is paranoia and fear and from paranoia and fear you can get unlimited money from the American taxpayer.

Hillary Clinton told us that the war on terror will continue. We already knew that.

The "war on terror" is the greatest war ever because the war never has to be ended. Endless wars are very profitable for "defense" and "homeland security" contractors and it maintains the global world economic order that sustains the
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ruling economic elite in the US (consisting of about 0.1% of the US population.)

The corporately owned news media (particularly television) seems to work in general partnership with whoever is President regarding foreign policy—there may be disagreements but the premises are always accepted (no matter how inane when critically examined.) A few recent entries: 1) America must attack Saddam Hussein before he attacks Israel and other countries with his weapons of mass destruction (even I bought that one). 2) If the Taliban regain power in Afghanistan Al Qaeda will return and be provided a safe haven from which to attack us.

Never fear, or as our politicians and corporate media propagandists tell us, "Always fear". The ruling class will promptly find another bogeyman to scare the public and keep them marching in step.

Let's keep our eyes open.



District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER RE-ELECTION

Thursday, May 12 is the Broadway Democrats' endorsement meeting, and I am honored to seek the club's support for another term as District Leader. It has been a frustrating two years, especially on the national political scene. President Obama has brought the economy much of the way back from Republican-induced ruin, yet his voice is being drowned out by the screamers insisting that we return to the same policies which brought us to the abyss to begin with. The Democratic –controlled Congress passed one landmark bill after another only to be booted out for a bunch of reactionary crazies who want to drastically cut all services to the poor, shut down Social Security and Medicare, and accelerate the transfer of even more billions to the rich. Our state government is broke, and our Democratic State Senate leadership is poor. Our Mayor's vision for education puts the unqualified Cathie Black at the helm while hedge-fund profiteers displace real schools in favor of charter schools of dubious

benefit for a small percentage of school children and detrimental to most of the others, while the blue-ribbon consultants in whom he vests so much trust turn out to be common criminals.

But here in our community, the glass is more than half full. We have so many people who are working to build a better community and a better world, and so many more who, while too busy to do much themselves, will stop you on the street, or e-mail you, to express their frustrations, their ideas and their hopes. I love being part part of our community's efforts to strengthen itself locally and help stop the Republicans' destruction of our country globally. I look forward to continuing this work with the Broadway Democrats and the people of our district.

ODE TO OUR PRESIDENT AND OUR GOVERNOR

There has been much criticism from the left of President Obama and Governor Cuomo. As long as these criticisms are realistic, I share many of them. President Obama *could not* have gotten a Health Care bill that was one iota better than the bill that passed, but he *could* have treated the progressive wing of the party as a valued partner, as did Presidents Roosevelt and Clinton, rather than too often casting us aside as he sought common ground with the likes of Olympia Snowe and John McCain. Governor Cuomo *could not* have avoided drastic program cuts, but he *could* have passed an extension of the millionaires' tax which would have significantly reduced the amounts that had to be cut. But let us also be thankful for what we have. President Obama is great not just because he isn't his predecessor, or because he (assisted by the Democratic Congress) saved the country from economic ruin. He is a towering voice, here and abroad, for reason, for decency, for hope. Governor Cuomo describes himself as "a liberal who is broke" and by and large he has acted like one. There is no union-bashing, or worker-bashing, or gay-bashing, or immigrant-bashing, from this Governor's mouth. When Mayor Bloomberg was in Albany not to lobby for education funds already promised the city under the Fiscal Equity lawsuit but for the right to unilaterally fire senior teachers, Governor Cuomo swatted him aside like the pest that he was, and came up with a blueprint for a responsible plan to regulate underperforming (cont. on page 4)

teachers which was praised by the UFT itself. Now, he is marshalling his political capital to accomplish what would truly be an achievement that would put him in the history books: marriage equality. We pray he will succeed.

HOPE REICHBACH

I write this as the memorial service is being conducted for Hope Reichbach, Chief of Staff for Brooklyn Councilman Steve Levin, who died tragically at the age of 22. I did not know Hope well, but we have many connections with her. Her father, Judge Gustin Reichbach—himself seriously ill with pancreatic cancer—was a leader in the Columbia uprising in 1968. Gus began his judicial career in 1990, when he was reported out of the same 5th District Screening Panel as our own Laura Safer Espinoza. Never has there been a happier rivalry! Laura's Eric, my Jacob and Hope were blissfully ignorant two-year-olds during that campaign; Hope and Jacob were in the same 7th and 8th Grade class at Hunter High School. She ran for District Leader at 22, the same age as I was when first elected to the State Committee. I've long had to write tributes to my political elders; increasingly, recently, for my contemporaries, but I never thought I'd have to write one for someone as young as Hope. My heartfelt condolences to Gus and his wife Ellen Meyers: Brooklyn has lost a dynamic young advocate, you have lost you lovely daughter.



TABLING

Broadway Democrats will be out on Broadway and 111th Street from 1-4 PM on Saturday May 7, 2011 with information on rent regulation.

State Committeeman Report

Daniel Marks Cohen
State Committeeman, 69th AD

There is some movement on the State Committee—a meeting has been scheduled for May 19th in Suffolk County, Long Island. And the latest word on the street about the new State chairman is that it is going to be Charlie King,

currently the Executive Director and a former CFD District Leader, replacing current chairman Jay Jacobs. This has been much discussed but not confirmed for months, and if true, at least it finally resolves the leadership issue for the State Party. Like many of us on the West Side, I have known Charlie since his Upper West Side days, and it will be helpful to have a connection to the leadership. The Reform Caucus has met a few times since our last meeting in September, and we are proposing a few resolutions, including ethics reform and extending the natural gas fracking moratorium that expires this summer. The proposal for ethics reform entails the NYSDC asking the Governor and both Houses of the Legislature to enact the creation of a new ethics agency:

1. The agency will oversee single, unified system charged with investigating and adjudicating ethical misdeeds committed by members of all branches of state government and lobbyists.
2. The agency's governing board will be appointed by a broad, multistage process that ensures that its members do not have personal or institutional ties with those whose conduct it oversees. Current and recent lobbyists, state officials and state employees will not be eligible for membership.
3. The agency must have the power to enforce high ethical standards, including the authority to conduct investigations, issue subpoenas, impose sanctions, audit disclosure statements and make criminal referrals as well as sufficient staff and funding to carry out its mission.
4. All statewide legislators should be required to disclose both the sources and the amounts of all outside income.

I will keep you informed about its progress in the State Committee next month.

Also just this past month in April, together with CFD's District Leader Joan Paylo and my predecessor, former State Committeeman Larry Hirsch, we joined a few dozen activists to follow
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up on the Justice Will be Served rally protesting the mistreatment of the employees at Saigon Grill the previous month. This time we targeted businesses on the Upper West Side, asking them to join us in a campaign to make the neighborhood "Sweatshop Free" and comply with existing labor laws enacted to ensure fair

treatment of workers. Working in teams, my team was able to contact over a dozen businesses during an hour in total the entire group got over dozen businesses to commit to joining the campaign (including the new place called "The Neighborhood" on the corner of 106th Street and Amsterdam Avenue – so please patronize them if you have not done so already).

A belated happy Passover and Easter to all, see you at the club fundraiser on May 1st or at the next club meeting.



From the Steering Committee

Richard A. Siegel

Medicare Facts and Myths

Medicare has been one of the **most successful programs** in the history of this country. Instead of celebrating this success, efforts are now underway to severely alter or to eliminate this benefit. There are ways to modify the plan without destroying it.

In 1965, when Medicare was established, life expectancy in the United States was **70.2 years**. In 2009, it had increased to **78.7 years**. Seniors now have the Medical care needed to address medical problems. In 2006, the prescription drug program—PART D—was established. This benefit will also help increase life expectancy in the United States.

Financial savings can be accomplished by some modifications to Medicare. A few are easy and non-controversial: (*cont. on page 6*)

**Assembly Members Keith L. T. Wright
&
Daniel J. O'Donnell
present the
HARLEM HEALTH SERIES**

At the State Office Building
(163 West 125th Street at Adam Clayton
Powell Jr. Blvd., 8th Floor)

**UPCOMING: Men's Health
Thursday, May 12th
6:00 – 8:00 PM**

*Harlem Hospital's Hip Hop Public
Health Education Center* presents
**Environment, Access, and Health: How
Do the Options and Offerings in a
Community Impact Health
and Well-being?**

Spanish translation services available
Servicio de traducción disponible

For more information, please call
Assembly Member O'Donnell's
Community Office at 212-866-3970 or
Assembly Member Wright's Community
Office at 212-866-5806.

- 1) *Allow the government to negotiate prescription drug rates with the pharmaceutical companies.* The 2006 legislation creating this benefit included a provision that prevented negotiation.
- 2) *Eliminate the 14% over payments given to private insurers to provide Medicare Advantage programs.* These private plans were supposed to provide more extensive care more efficiently. Instead, the government pays approximately 14% more for each person enrolled in a private plan. The 2010 health care reform bill has started that process but it can be expedited.
- 3) *Continue to reduce fraud.* There continue to be physicians and other health care providers that take advantage of the program. Companies that provide equipment (beds, walkers, wheelchairs, etc) also need tighter scrutiny.

The more difficult suggestions include:

- 1) *Review care given in the last year of life.* Estimates are somewhere between 25% and 30% of Medicare expenditures are on care in the last year of life. It often includes time in an ICU. In many situations, people are receiving very expensive high tech care that—most studies demonstrate—do not increase the likelihood of survival. There has been increased attention to assisting people in planning for end of life care. This includes expanding hospice care—care that has the goal of providing comfort care rather than curative care. People spend the last months of life at home in comfort—rather than in and out of hospitals and ICUs. In many cases, it is a much better use of health care dollars. Most people do not talk about this topic. Many after, discussions with significant others and health care providers, find that they want control over what care they receive and where they spend their last days of life. Those of us who work in healthcare believe that many people and families are happier when this option is chosen.
- 2) *Ration some care.* This process is already occurring. A person in liver failure with an

active drinking problem is not allowed to get a liver transplant. One idea suggested is to pick an age limit for the start of dialysis (e.g., once you turn 70, dialysis will not be started). Another idea is to limit transfers to ICU's for individuals with multiple medical problems (e.g., congestive heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) when there is a very low likelihood of a successful outcome.

These are some of the more common ideas that can preserve most of the positive aspects of Medicare. **As this issue continues to be discussed, please let our electeds know what you think.**



Letter to the Editor

Robert Ginsberg
Former Democratic State Committeeman

I had not intended to continue communications – however I was so impressed with the letter of your President Joe Nunley that I could not resist the temptation.

Joe brings me back to the early days of the reform movement—when we realized that a big part of our job was to remove conservative/patronage oriented Democrats and replace them with progressive honest Democrats.

Joe's main thesis is that we should not support Democrats who supported Cuomo's budget—and I believe by implication those who supported the various wars.

As most of you know—I was Chairman of the Westside Committee To End The War In Vietnam and it was my resolution in opposition to the Iraq war which passed the Democratic State Committee—even though a number of our representatives had voted for it; and it was my resolutions that passed the Democratic State Committee in favor of eliminating the cap on social security and reinstating higher tax brackets for the wealthy. (Even though neither would benefit me) True confession, however, I must note that I disagree with Joe and Richard concerning Libya. I firmly believe that there are just wars—that Libya is not really a war—it is only
(cont. on page 7)

use of our air power—and that we are saving lives and not creating our own friendly administration. Fighting for democracy is a principle established in this country in 1776.

I would like, however, to take Joe's thought one step further. It is that local clubs such as Broadway should take an active part in supporting progressive Democrats *in primaries* in New York City and perhaps even the suburbs. As most of you know I have done this throughout my political life including candidates from Frank Barbaro to Chris Owens to Mark Green, etc., etc.

SO I SINCERELY HOPE THAT BROADWAY FOLLOWS THROUGH ON JOE'S LETTER; ORGANIZES COMMITTEES TO SELECT PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES WHERE THEY ARE OPPOSING NON-PROGRESSIVE CANDIDATES AND "GET THE TROOPS OUT" TO DO SOME WORK.

I will close with an amusing note—after Joe's article was the "State Committeeman Report" by Daniel Marks Cohen. In his article Mr. Cohen mentions a number of commendable acts that he has participated in – BUT NONE OF THEM ARE OF THE COURAGEOUS TYPE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY THAT I BELIEVE BROADWAY AND THE OTHER REFORM CLUBS SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN. The amusement is that Mr. Cohen talks about supporting Richard Borne for District Attorney. I read the paragraph many times and could not figure out why I did not see Mr. Borne on the ballot. Finally it dawned on me that Mr. Cohen was referring to Mr. Aborn—whom of course I supported and voted for.



The Sweat Shop Free Upper West Side Campaign

The Sweat Shop Free Upper West Side Campaign would like to thank the Broadway Democrats for their endorsement and welcome them to the campaign. The Sweatshop Free Campaign is led by residents, students, and community groups to build a community where fair labor practices are the standard. In the past, the struggle of workers at Saigon Grill (2007) exposed labor law violations such as failure to pay minimum wage and overtime, tip-stealing, and discrimination. This led other workers to organize and improve conditions at Flor De Mayo, Ollie's Noodle Shop, Tomo Sushi, Café Con Leche and many other establishments. While workers and residents were able to make significant improvements, the Sweatshop Free Campaign marks a new stage, calling on the entire community to join and create a supportive neighborhood that upholds ethical business practices. For more information or to get involved with our upcoming pledge drives, visit our website: sweatshopfreeny.tumblr.com. To report the conditions in your workplace, call us at: 908-312-0497.

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
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FIRST
CLASS

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**Endorsement Forum, Part 1: District Leaders, Judicial Delegates
and Alternates, Judicial Candidates**
Thursday, May 12th 800 p.m.
(610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive))
