
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

Re-opening Old Wounds: Are we fighting the same ol' battles?

Speakers:

Delores Jones-Brown

Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice &
Director, The Center on Race, Crime and Justice

Candis Tolliver

Organizer, New York Civil Liberties Union

A discussion about why we seem to be engaging in many of the same political battles for civil rights and women's rights that we fought in the 1960s and 1970s, and suggestions for actions we can take to help win the battles, once and for all.

**At 9:30, we will vote to endorse in the race for the
State Senate, 31st District.**

Thursday, May 10, 2012

7:45 pm sign in/refreshments * 8:00 forum * 9:30 club business

Bank Street College

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

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District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

It is now determined that the club will be involved in three elections in the next six months: the "Federal" primary June 26, the primaries for all other contested offices September 11, and the General Election November 6. We know that Jerry Nadler and Kirstin Gillibrand are unopposed June 26. This means that only those of you who live in the new 13th CD, which in our area covers everything north of 122nd, east of Morningside Park, and Manhattan Valley, 100th-110th, Amsterdam-Central Park West, will be going to the polls then. It looks like, though we won't know for sure until petitions are filed in July, State Senator Bill Perkins, Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell, State Committee Members Lynn Thomas and Dan Cohen, and our Civil Court candidates Anil Singh, Verna Saunders and Melissa Crane, will be unopposed, or at least not seriously opposed. It also looks like there will be a September primary for Surrogate between our endorsed candidate Rita Mella and Barbara Jaffe, the two Independent Screening Panel-approved candidates. We will work hard for Rita, but this court will be in good hands regardless of who wins. That leaves three major contests, one in each election:

Charles Rangel vs. Adriano Espaillat, June 26th. Yes, there are several other candidates, but they have no chance of winning or coming close. Senator Espaillat is unquestionably the strongest opponent Congressman Rangel has ever faced. He is a phenomenal political organizer with a strong progressive voting record. He is the champion of Washington Heights, which together with the newly added adjacent areas in the Bronx contains more people than Charlie's Harlem bailiwick—and almost all of the Upper West Side, also an area of strength for Charlie, is now in Jerry Nadler's district. But Charlie also has strengths, most notably, his

outstanding legislative record. This is ultimately a legislative position; Charlie Rangel is one of the great legislators of our time. Finally, a personal note: I have worked with Charlie for years and years. I've never heard a bad word from him about any Democrat. He is the ultimate Happy Warrior. Adriano can be this way, but he can also be the other way. His performance at our club meeting, unfairly disparaging the club leadership, is a case in point. I am open to persuasion that Adriano Espaillat should be Charlie Rangel's successor. But he should not be his conqueror.

Mark Levine vs. Guillermo Linares? Sept. 11th.

If and only if Senator Espaillat wins the Congressional primary, his Senate seat will come open. (If he loses, he will run again for the State Senate, he will have no serious opponent, and we will gladly endorse him.) Mark, our endorsed candidate two years ago, will be an even better candidate this time around. It is unclear why Assemblyman Linares would give up his safe seat, or why we should support him: Mark, like Senators Perkins and Espaillat, would be the candidate of those who want a progressive, Democratic State Senate; Linares would draw support from the Bloomberg faction, which supported him when he ran against Eric Schneiderman ten years ago.

Barack Obama vs. Mitt Romney, November 6th.

Watch for Storefront news. Yes We Can!

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President's Corner

Joe Nunley

Freedom and the War Against It. The news in April was incredible in terms of revealing how much freedom we've lost in America and how much we yet may be losing.

On April 26th the Republican controlled House passed the Cyber Intelligence and Sharing Act

(CISPA) which would allow private internet companies like Google, Facebook and Microsoft to hand over troves of confidential customer records and communications to the National Security Agency, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security.

Backers of the bill say it is needed to help companies track down foreign entities—including the Chinese and Russian governments—which are committing online economic espionage that is stealing trade secrets from U.S. corporations and the government.

The Obama Administration has threatened to veto the bill, saying “the sharing of information must be conducted in a way that preserves Americans’ privacy, data confidentiality and civil liberties and recognizes the civilian nature of cyberspace. Cybersecurity and privacy are not mutually exclusive.” We’ll have to see what version the bill takes in the Senate and if, indeed, Obama will veto it.

What this bill really concerns is established corporations making money from every single bit that gets transferred; and it’s about the government tracking dissent in America.

What it is *not* about is protecting US Corporate interests in China.

If they are worried about China stealing intellectual property then why are so many companies putting factories in China and why are these private companies financially helping to support China? If private industry and the government are sharing information, then they no doubt will use this association as a means of circumventing the Constitution. Whereas the government has to have a certain amount of accountability (presumably) for its actions, private industry doesn’t. If private industry needs to protect its intellectual property then the expense should be on them and not the government supported by tax dollars.

But all of this is trumped by the startling revelations and thought of William Binney, NSA whistleblower, in his first television interview on *Democracy Now* this week.

William Binney is a crypto mathematician largely responsible for automating the agency’s worldwide eavesdropping network. He worked there forty years and had 6,000 employees under him. He has said that the wraps came off after 9/11 and has shed much light on Bush and NSA’s warrantless wiretapping program. He resigned in protest in early 2002. He said, “It was a very depressing thing to have happen that they would turn their capabilities that I built for them to do detection of foreign threats, to have that turned on the people of the United States.” William Binney estimates the NSA has assembled 20 trillion transactions—phone calls, e mails and other forms of data—from Americans. He says it likely has copies of almost all of the emails sent and received from people in the United States these last ten years and he strongly challenges NSA Director Keith Alexander’s assertion that the NSA is not intercepting information about US citizens.

If Binney is correct, then the CISPS bill is trying to legalize what is already being done. Binney says that “the oversight given to the intelligence community is virtually nonexistent from Congress. I mean they are totally dependent because they have no way of knowing what’s happening inside the agencies involved unless they have people come forward to tell them, like me. They would not know those things”.

When William Binney went to the Senate Intelligence Committee and reported this illegal spying by NSA there was immediate retaliation. The next day the FBI burst into his home while he was in the shower and put a gun to his head. Indictments were drawn up but withdrawn. He has never been charged with a crime. (Unlike Thomas Drake, another NSA whistleblower, who is facing 35 years in prison for “retaining classified documents.”)

The mainstream media is conspicuously ignoring this story, despite it being possibly the most significant thing going on right now. Without the ability to communicate freely (and privately), there is no need for activism, there is no democracy, there are no other rights. When American civil liberties are threatened the People must hit back with such shocking fervency as to stun the offenders into an absolute fear of ever

daring to undermine the American people's most fundamental and precious rights and freedoms. The National Security Administration must be thoroughly investigated.



State Committeeman

Daniel Marks Cohen, 69th AD

The lawsuit to resolve the redistricting mess continues. Shortly after my last column we learned that State Supreme Court Judge Rick Braun had ruled against us the plaintiffs in Cohen v. Cuomo, and so we appealed to the NYS Court of Appeals, which is the highest court in the state, and which will be the final word on the matter. Oral arguments were in Albany on the 26th, and it was a "hot bench" meaning that lots of questions were asked by the Court, which, while not a sign of a decision one way or another, is definitely a sign of interest in the case, and shows that the judges may not have preconceived notions of their decision. Due to the timing of the case, an answer is expected shortly—particularly since petitioning for State Senate and Assembly seats begins in June, just a month away, and we do not know what the district lines will be if they are overturned. The Court is aware of the time pressure and will render a decision quickly to allow time to redraw the lines—we anticipate that if we prevail the Court will refer the decision to the same three judge federal panel that drafted the Congressional lines. This move would make sense since the experts used in the congressional redistricting are standing by and they are familiar with data needed to draft the lines. Plus, since it would be supervised by federal judges, the lines would be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act which protects the interests of minority voters.

One other item is that I had a chance to attend the United for Action (<http://unitedforaction.org/>) panel on gas fracking at the Society for Ethical Culture last week on the 24th, and it was excellent. Three experts spoke, including economist Janette Barth, and Deborah Rogers—a former Wall Street financial consultant who was featured in a recent *Rolling Stone* article "The Big Fracking Bubble"

(<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-big-fracking-bubble-the-scam-behind-the-gas-boom-20120301>) which is really worth reading. The two women pointed out two very sobering points. The economist, Barth, examined county by county comparisons in other states (Texas, Wyoming, and Pennsylvania) and determined that economic activity and quality of life goes DOWN where fracking is permitted—income goes down, homelessness goes up, crime goes up—all the opposite of what fracking supporters say will happen in New York if it is permitted. Barth's studies were based over years, through the boom, recession, and recovery, to allow for changes in the national economy to be considered. Rogers, the former analyst, talked at length about how gas companies are cooking their books to increase the amount of debt that they can obtain from banks. The companies have grown accustomed to using wildly unrealistic numbers in the gas explorations. These overinflated energy numbers, impossibly high expectations and overindulgence in leverage all sound familiar, said Rogers—just like Enron, the Texas-based energy company that went bust in a spectacular fashion in 2001. Rogers pointed to Chesapeake Energy, the company highlighted in *Rolling Stone*, and this week the *New York Times* had a front page business section article about financial irregularities at the company and how its debt has been downgraded to junk status. Chesapeake's errors are (to borrow a Titanic reference in honor of its 100th anniversary) the tip of the iceberg. While we must continue the fight from an environmental perspective, it is also clear that a multi-pronged effort to expose the sham accounting of the gas fracking industry is beginning, and it is beginning to have an impact. And not a moment too soon.



From the Steering Committee

Lizabeth Sostre

Re-Opening Old Wounds.

As I got closer, I could hear the familiar sounds. The chanting. The bullhorn blasting speeches. And then I saw familiar sights. Phalanxes of police officers. The horses. The emergency vehicles. What the hell was I doing there?

Trayvon Martin had been killed. The victim of racial profiling. And I was on my way to a demonstration in Union Square for justice. In this case, justice meant, at the very least, the arrest of George Zimmerman.

I had the strong feeling that I should not be there. Not that day. Not that time. Not once more. I have been doing this—demonstrating for equality and justice—since 1968. Why were these events still happening? Why was it still necessary for me to give up the comfort of my home to add my body to yet another demonstration? Why was it necessary that I march and chant through the streets of Manhattan—“No Justice, No Peace!” one more time. Nothing has changed. Racism still permeates our society.

There is one difference today though. We have actually managed to elect a Black president. But the Republicans handcuffed him and everyone was shocked when he could not put his promises for change into effect. If Obama would say it was morning, the Republicans would swear it was night. They were and are determined to make sure that a Black man is never again in the history of the United States elected to be president and they will do anything and everything to win this election. As they have done anything and everything to ensure that his program for change is shackled with the chains of racism. It is up to us, as progressive Democrats, to do whatever we can to ensure that Obama wins this election and that a Black President is able to, once again, step into the White House.



Notes on Voting & Endorsement Balloting Procedures

A candidate must receive “50% plus one” of all votes cast for that office to be endorsed. If no endorsement is reached at the March meeting, there will be a run-off vote with the top two vote-getters and “No Endorsement” at the following meeting. If no endorsement is reached after three ballots, the club’s position on that office will be “No Endorsement.”

What You Need to Know About the State Senate Endorsement

The Steering Committee scheduled the May 10th endorsement vote for State Senate (31st District) because this is the last club meeting before petitioning for this office begins in early June. The incumbent, Adriano Espaillat, is not currently seeking re-election for State Senate because he is a candidate for Congress in the June 26th primary.

If any of the candidates endorsed by the club on March 22nd or May 10th drop out of the race before the September primary, the club would hold another endorsement meeting for that office before the September primary.

Get Your Newsletter Electronically!

The Broadway Democrats want to know if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter via email rather than a paper copy via the US mail. The club would be able to save a significant sum and use less overall energy and resources (human and otherwise).

If you wish to receive the newsletter electronically, please email your name to the editor (Gretchen Borges) at gborges370@gmail.com.

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: _____

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FIRST
CLASS

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President: Joe Nunley
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Reopening Old Wounds (Endorsement for State Senate, 31st District)
Thursday, May 10th 8:00 p.m.
Bank Street College (610 West 112th Street, bet. Broadway and Riverside)