
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

**Hear the
candidates for
District Leader.**

**PARTICIPATE IN
THE DISCUSSION.**

**Vote your
endorsements.**

**Thursday,
May 9th, 2013**

7:45 p.m. Sign-in * 8:00 p.m. Candidates

Bank Street College

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

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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President's Corner

Gretchen Borges

Thoughts prompted by a visit to Gettysburg

This past week-end I went to Gettysburg for perhaps the tenth time in my life. As the national park readies itself for the 150th anniversary of the Battle, the power lines have been buried, the farms have been taken back to their 1860s appearances, and split rail fences abound. As it was a week-day, the battlefield was oddly peaceful, with just a few school groups being taken through the troop movements from Little Round Top and Devils Den, and Picketts' Charge and the Copse of Trees, where the Union line held. Eastern Redbud and Dogwood blossomed amid the delicate spring green of the trees. It was hard to envision the carnage that took place in those July days in 1863.

No matter how many fields of battle I visit or books of history I read, I have trouble imagining being able to summon the courage it takes for a soldier to run into the fire of another. In Gettysburg, reading Lincoln's words after walking the battlefield once again, was a comforting exercise. *...that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

A key part of that freedom is one that Lincoln himself curtailed during the Civil War—freedom of speech.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech; or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Though of less immediate newsworthiness to the national press in recent weeks than the Second Amendment, the First Amendment claims pride of place in the liberal's shelf of prize texts. Its intent was to limit the reach of the laws passed by Congress, but its scope has expanded far beyond any such legislation. The concept of free speech is

imbedded in America. When those longing to be free think of America, what they think of is inevitably the First Amendment rights we have: freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of the right to assemble, to petition the government (though the latter be somewhat futile these days). The First Amendment encompasses all that is best, most noble, most solid, in America's philosophical foundations.

Using the clear and present danger yardstick, interpretations of the First Amendment have expanded and contracted its scope as the nation has passed through times of peril. So when faced with an undeclared naval war with France and the aftermath of the French Revolution, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, severely curtailing the Amendment, just seven years after it was adopted, until the Act expired in 1801. During the Civil War, Lincoln had anti-Union comments in newspapers censored and mail opened. Similar restrictions were put in place during WWI and WWII, and more ignominiously, during the McCarthy era.

Clearly, when the nation feels threatened, it has not trusted its citizens with freedom of expression. I do not intend to debate the wisdom of those restrictions here. Rather, I want to consider, what are the values served by the protection of speech? In terms of society, I should think we could all agree that freedom of speech and thus the press provides a check on governmental power, by facilitating citizens' awareness of events and thereby helping check abuse of power. (At least in an ideal world in which citizens pay attention and news is accurately reported.) A society with access to freedom of expression tends to be one with stability and adaptability (true either if one believes in the power of "venting" or if, more cynically, one believes in the likelihood such exposure leads to government monitoring). And finally, and again ideally, free speech, by exposing us to ideas we might find intolerable, might make us in the end more tolerant to other ideas in other areas of our lives.

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District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

MOMENTOUS OCCASIONS

This Thursday is the Broadway Democrats' endorsement meeting for offices ranging from Mayor to District Leader. The next day is my 60th birthday. Blessed with good health and a wonderful family, proud of my accomplishments with Broadway Democrats and the causes we fight for, looking forward to running many more Marathons both personal and political, I seek another term as your Democratic District Leader.

The issues change a bit over the years. The approach remains the same: to work cooperatively with others to build a better club, a better community, and a better world. Here are some of the things we've done, and that still need to be done:

A Better Democratic Party in our Community

Working for Obama in our Democratic Victory storefront was a labor of purpose and love. More than a thousand people came together to phone bank, sell buttons, ride the buses to Pennsylvania, register voters. I am proud of the Broadway Democrats' work, spearheaded by Joe Nunley, in this effort. My special project has always been to make sure Election Day runs as smoothly as possible here. We are not in a swing state, but our people's votes are just as important to them! I designed the poll site maps that helped make order out of the Election Day chaos, and worked with our storefront "local artists" to make sure they were readable. Paula and Lizabeth and Danny and Ed at PS 165, Luis at Cathedral Parkway Towers, Norm and Joan and their team in Morningside Gardens, Sarah and her team in Grant Houses, so many others from all over the district, worked tirelessly to make people's voting experience as trouble-free as possible. And it mostly worked: shorter lines than in most places, better turnout than in most places, President Obama winning our district with 92%.

To do better in the future, we need to attract more and younger people to the club, figure out a way to keep people active in between Presidential elections, and work to revamp the ossified, patronage-ridden Board of Elections which is every bit as bad as its critics say.

Reforming the Democratic Party: We are the Good Guys! Sometimes, we have the right to be smug. The NYC political process is in shambles—but not in Manhattan. Elected officials are going to jail in droves—but not in Manhattan. Democratic, both small and capital D, political clubs have

virtually ceased to exist, but not in Manhattan. Here, the much maligned reform movement is alive and well. Here, we have the finest Judiciary in the state. The Manhattan Democratic Party Judiciary Committee, which I have been honored to Chair for the last 25 years, has perfected its Independent Screening Panels to the point where almost everyone reported out would be a superb judge, and the (sometimes still too acrimonious, I must admit) contests we have are between the good and the great, the terrific candidate from the East Side vs. the terrific candidate from the West Side. Sheila Abdus-Salaam and Analisa Torres, (heading respectively for the NY Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court), your time has come! Anil Singh and Peter Moulton, your time will soon come! *To do better*, we need to keep working—even the best organization can get stale very quickly if it's not tended to—and recognize that when it comes to party reform, different communities have somewhat different needs.

Diversity in the Club and the Democratic Party

All of Broadway Democrats officers are women. Seven of our sixteen Steering Committee members are African American or Latino; half of our Judicial Convention Delegates last year were minorities. I've been honored to serve under County Leaders Denny Farrell and Keith Wright, to spearhead local campaigns for Danny O'Donnell, Charlie Rangel, Bill Perkins, Melissa Mark-Viverito and Rita Mella.

We've done well, *but to do even better*, we need to keep our eyes on the prize--which is results rather than talk.

The Democratic Party and the Issues

Fighting for peace abroad and economic justice at home. Opposing fracking and the expansion of Charter Schools. Working for sane gun restrictions, immigration reform and marriage equality. Fighting for affordable housing, and against the city's obsession with creating more and more unneeded luxury housing, now even on the site of NYCHA developments such as Frederick Douglass Houses. "Acting locally, thinking globally" has always been the motto of our club, and I've been honored to be a key part of it. *To do even better*, we need to hammer home the point that spending on people and infrastructure is something the government should do more, not less, and to not be afraid to fight the concentration of economic power which completely controls the Republican Party and threatens control of the Democratic Party as well.

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As many of you know, I and apparently Paula are opposed for re-election by a candidate who in his parallel City Council campaign has engaged in the most vile kind of anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric. The condemnation of this hate speech, and the support for Paula and I, have been overwhelming. Secure in the knowledge that we will be judged on our records and “the content of our character”, I join Paula in asking for your support, this Thursday night and in the weeks ahead.



District Leader's Report

Paula Diamond Román

As some of you may know, I'm very passionate on the subject of gun control and gun violence, and it isn't a new passion.

I could write pages about *United States v. Miller* (1939) and *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), the two most significant Supreme Court decisions on the 2nd Amendment; neither fully resolving the issue once and for all. I could crunch and quote the numbers on the policy and practice of “stop, question, and frisk,” which increased under Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, from around 160,851 stops in 2003 to 575,996 stops in 2009. I could wax poetic about all we learned at our February 2011 forum on Gun Control: Pragmatic Approaches to Reducing Gun Violence where Jens Ludwig, a professor of Social Service Administration, Law, and Public Policy at the University of Chicago, spoke about the harm reduction model of gun control and Richard Aborn, president of the Citizens Crime Commission of New York and former president of the Brady Campaign spoke about actions we as a club could take.

I could also rant and rave about the recent shootings and the unsuccessful efforts made to get the recent Manchin/Toomey compromise amendment passed in the Senate. I could seethe about the bravery and hard work done by Senators Manchin and Toomey, while the Obama-hating Republicans in the Senate ignored the people's will to put background checks into place. Except for two things.

The first reason for optimism is the reaction of the American voters to the failure of this bill. We were, as one article put it, peeved. Even senators in traditionally gun-friendly states, such as Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, New Hampshire and Ohio, have seen their standings in public opinion polls go

down. Senators who supported the bill, especially Senators Manchin and Toomey, have seen their numbers go up. The voting public is threatening to remember this when it's time to go to the polls and re-elect, or not, their senators.

The second reason for optimism is the reaction of Senator Manchin to having his bill go down in flames. Senator Manchin is positively cheery. He plans to re-introduce the bill; he believes that some Senators didn't get a chance to read the bill thoroughly and that, when they do, they will vote for it. (Or, he believes some of these Senators will realize what may happen to them if they don't change their vote; there's nothing like having your approval numbers nose-dive to change your mind!) Experts on gun control legislation have repeatedly pointed out that it took almost seven years and three presidents to pass the Brady Bill. Senator Manchin is totally committed to getting his bill passed in fewer years and fewer presidents.

Some people may question why we who live in urban communities should be concerned about background checks. The answer lies in the Harm Reduction model of gun control. Background checks will make it more difficult for those in states with lax gun laws to buy large numbers of guns for re-sale. Around 90% of the guns recovered in New York crimes have been bought out of state, with a large number coming from Virginia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Making it difficult for these illegal gun “retailers” to drive up Interstate-95, the “Iron Pipeline,” and sell guns in New York will reduce the number of guns in our urban communities. (In addition, several of these states have passed a “one gun per month” law which would be even more effective as a federal law.)

Now that we're cheered up, what's next? Forty-one Republicans voted against the bill—Alexander, Ayotte, Barrasso, Blunt, Boozman, Burr, Chambliss, Coats, Coburn, Cochran, Corker, Cornyn, Crapo, Cruz, Enzi, Fischer, Flake, Graham, Grassley, Hatch, Heller, Hoeven, Inhofe, Isakson, Johanns, Johnson, Lee, McConnell, Moran, Murkowski, Paul, Portman, Risch, Roberts, Rubio, Scott, Sessions, Shelby, Thune, Vitter, and Wicker—and five Democrats voted against the bill—Baucus, Begich, Heitkamp, Pryor, and Reid. Supposedly, Senate Majority Leader Reid's “no” vote was procedural so he can bring the bill back for another vote. If the bill comes up for another vote, we need to maintain all our “yes”

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votes and chip off five of those “no” votes. We need to be prepared to launch into action the minute we hear the bill has been re-introduced to make ‘phone calls and to ask our family and friends in other states to make ‘phone calls to their Senators. To paraphrase the song, we got knocked down on the first vote but we got up again. Senators, who are more concerned with what the NRA thinks of them than the concerns of their constituents, are never going to keep us down. We will pass gun control legislation and we will reduce gun violence.

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From the Steering Committee Ed Sullivan

Macho, Macho, Macho Man

Recently, in Wyoming, a teenage boy killed himself after he was punished by his parents for having smoked some forbidden cigars. Teenagers sometimes take disapproval more seriously than we adults imagine.

The poor young fellow used an heirloom pistol to commit suicide, handed down to the family by his grandfather. His father, distraught over this tragedy, gave away the treasured pistol that had killed his son. Understandably, he didn’t want to see it again. He didn’t want to relive the memory of losing his son, again and again.

But he could not bring himself to dispose of a valuable gun collection he had. That collection was, apparently, too important to the person he had identified himself as being. “I will always believe in guns,” he explained.

As so often happens, the need for self-identification through icons was strong, and love of guns trumped love of family on the list.

In the United States of America, masculine self-identity is connected to gun ownership and gun use in the minds of tens of millions of American males. Many of the most sophisticated and intelligent commentators on the gun controversy currently swirling through American news media hasten to advise the listening public that they too own a gun. To them, this is a badge of credibility.

Vice President Joe Biden, newscaster Tom Brokaw, TV host Joe Scarborough, documentary film maker Michael Moore talk of their gun ownership, even as they urge restrictions on that practice. The ad that Mayors for Gun Control is running to advocate action by Congress to control

guns features a man in a country setting telling the audience that he needs his gun for hunting and “to protect my family.” He is holding a rifle as he speaks. Credibility.

That rifle is useful in hunting, no doubt. But as far as protecting the family is concerned, the gun in the household does not protect the family at all. It endangers the family. There is a clear coordination, statistically, between gun availability and homicides, suicides and accidents that are gun related, according to studies.

If you have a gun in your household, your chances of losing a loved one to a homicide, suicide or accident are greater than if you don’t have a gun in your house.

But don’t quote these statistics to many gun owners. They know the statistics, but they don’t want to act on them. Guns are a visible, tangible symbol of power. And displaying masculine power is more important to these gun owners than the danger that the guns pose to them, or pose to their families.

The physical display of guns, or ostentatious talk of hunting escapades, or comparing this type of gun to another type of gun, provides the same kind of power identification as baring his teeth and thumping on his chest does for a male gorilla.

But when human beings use guns to display power, people get hurt. People get killed – lots of them.

In 2010, in one year, more than 75,000 people were injured by guns in the United States, and over 30,000 people died of gunshot wounds, including both homicides and suicides.

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From the Steering Committee Rachelle Bradt

How "green" is natural gas?

As part of a community conversation on Sunday April 28 at The Riverside Church, Senator Perkins described the devastation he has just seen in Pennsylvania, where fracking is in full swing: This method of gas extraction has turned scenic areas relying on tourism and farming into industrial zones with heavy truck traffic and toxins released into the air, the soil and the water. He ended with a passionate plea to organize and let New York elected officials know that New Yorkers will not allow this to happen in our state.

Until recently I was not sure myself if natural gas was "green" and "clean burning." After all, we have been using it in our kitchens for a long time. The *Sane Energy Project* points out that "conventional gas," a by-product of oil extraction or simple vertical wells, is fast running out. Now shale gas is the nation's largest source of methane emissions, a greenhouse gas at least 20 times as damaging as carbon dioxide. Extracting it involves drilling deep into the earth and using explosives, millions of gallons of water, silica, and toxic chemicals to break apart a hard shale layer, creating fissures that release the gas. Yet *PlaNYC*, New York City's agenda for a greener, greater New York, features methane as a centerpiece of the city's energy future. (saneenergyproject.org;)

Sane Energy suggests asking elected officials:

- 1) "Will you support a permanent ban, rather than a temporary or conditions-based moratorium, on fracking and all fracking-related activities in the entirety of New York State, to protect ALL citizens, upstate and down?"
- 2) "What steps will your administration take to curb the use of natural gas for heating and electricity, and how will you reform this aspect of *PlaNYC*?"

To quote NYC Assemblywoman Deborah Glick (who represents the West Village): "Fossil Fuels is so 20th century. New York can and should lead on renewables. That's real vision. Fracking is a waiting disaster". New York State can be a leader in renewable and sustainable energy, if we have the political will to do it. You can add your voice by calling the *Ban Fracking* hotline to Governor Cuomo's office at 866-584-6799.



Some Helpful Information about the Discussion and Voting Planned for the May 9th Meeting

DISCUSSION GROUND RULES

We will begin discussion of candidates at 8:30p.m.

- You must show your ballot to speak.
- A three minute limit will be enforced on each comment. A one minute and a 10 second warning will be given.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

You are eligible to vote if:

1. You have paid your dues.
2. You have attended one of the previous 9 monthly meetings.
3. You live in an area that is or was once in the club's area (the 69th AD).
4. Maps will be available at the sign in table.

NOTE: You must vote in Broadway Democrats as your home club; you can't also vote in another club.

ENDORSEMENT VOTING

What endorsements will we be making?

- Mayor
- Comptroller
- Public Advocate
- Manhattan Borough President
- Manhattan District Attorney
- City Council Member, Districts 6 and 7
- Democratic District Leaders, 69th AD Part C

Further explanations excerpted from the Club Constitution.

Available at:

http://www.broadwaydemocrats.org/broadwayconstitution_2007.pdf

ARTICLE IV

Section 6 – Voting

Each voting member who shall have paid his or her annual dues for that calendar year, and who shall have attended at least one of the nine previous meetings of the Club, shall be eligible to vote on all business that may come before the Club at an annual, monthly or emergency meeting. Each voting

member shall be entitled to one vote, to be cast in person or by proxy, except that each proxy vote shall be cast according to the following rules:

- a voting member who expects to be absent from a meeting may cast a proxy vote at that meeting for himself or herself only;
- the proxy must be signed by the giver, or otherwise identified as bona fide;
- the proxy giver must designate the name of the proxy carrier, who must be a voting member of the Club;
- the proxy carrier may carry only one proxy.

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ARTICLE VIII

Section 1 -- Voting Procedure

b. Voting for endorsement shall be conducted by the method of Instant Runoff Voting. Each voting member shall cast one ballot. A ballot shall consist of a list of the candidates known to be running, as well as

"No Endorsement", for each office. If there are only two candidates running for an office, the candidate with a majority of votes shall receive the club's endorsement. If there are more than two candidates running for an office, the voting member shall indicate preferential

ranking by numbers - 1 for first preference, 2 for second preference, 3 for third preference. No more than three choices shall be such marked, though a member may choose to rank fewer than three candidates. A

count of first place votes shall then be conducted. If a single candidate has received a majority of votes, that candidate shall be deemed to have won the vote, and shall be endorsed by the club. Otherwise, whichever candidate (other than No Endorsement) has the fewest total votes shall be eliminated, and their votes shall be redistributed to the next choice down the list. In the case where no further choices are listed on a ballot, that vote shall then be distributed to No Endorsement. After each redistribution, if a single candidate has a majority of votes, that candidate shall be endorsed. If the process

reduces to a single candidate, and that candidate does not have more votes than No Endorsement, no endorsement shall be given by the club.

c. In cases where the office being sought by candidates seeking Club endorsement represents only part of the Club's area, at least ten votes must be cast by members living in the district represented, and the candidate must win the vote among those members living in said district, as well as the vote of the full club, pursuant to the procedure outlined in the previous paragraph, to be considered endorsed by the Club.

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, live in the 69th AD or an Ed that used to be in the 69th AD, 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

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

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