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# THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

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**We invite you to attend a  
forum on:**

## **Hydrofracking: What Are the Issues?**

***Speakers:***

**Senator Adriano Espaillat**

**AND**

**Dave Publow**

**Outreach Coordinator for United for Action**

**Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Meeting starts at 8:00 PM**

**Forum begins 8:30 PM**

**Bank Street College**

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

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Volume 36, Issue 9

November 2011

## President's Corner

Joe Nunley

### OCCUPY OR VOTE?

The Occupy Wall Street movement is expressing dissent to the system itself. These protesters are not pleading with Congress for electoral reform. They are saying that they believe that the system is radically corrupted and that they are no longer willing to tolerate it. To them we are faux liberal reformers who have been abject failures in standing up for the rights of the poor and the working class. They are in REBELLION, calling for real resistance to the corporate state.

For those of us who have devoted our energy to electoral politics they offer much food for thought. Does corporate America control Congress? And long as there is cheap labor available to corporate America, can any meaningful jobs be created? Are the politicians only doing the bidding of their paymasters and following orders faithfully? The Republicans are clearly acting on behalf of the 1% but aren't the DLC Democrats doing so as well? This 1% really believes that ANY money from ANY source to provide any aid and comfort for anything is theirs and any use of it is the same as stealing from their pockets. The protesters believe that the economy serves the oligarchs. Are they wrong? The elites of both parties believe that globalization and unfettered capitalism are a natural and eternal dynamic that can never be altered. The protesters believe that until the corporate state is extinct the corporate abuse of the poor, the sick, the children, and those being slaughtered in our imperial wars will not end, nor will the destruction of the ecosystem.

Again, much food for thought. And I wonder, are they right? Is the system so radically corrupted that it is beyond electoral repair? Some recent developments come to mind.

Wikileaks, the online whistleblower website which has shed more light on the world's most powerful factions than all other media combined, has been subjected to a financial blockade imposed by the Bank of America, Visa, MasterCard, Pay Pal and Western Union which has destroyed 96% of its revenue. They have been charged with no crime. They've engaged in First Amendment activity. But the government has destroyed them through their pressure and influence over the private sector which is frightening.

There was massive and industry wide fraud on the part of Wall Street and the banking industry and yet there have been no criminal investigations of any kind, let alone prosecutions. Already, three thousand protesters have been arrested around the country for exercising their constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. Meanwhile, the United States is the largest prison state in the world. Glen Greenwald, in his extraordinary new book, *For Liberty and Justice for Some*, points out how the elite class treats itself when it comes to crimes and how it treats ordinary Americans. The rule of law was supposed to be the sole guarantor of equal opportunity and equal treatment. Many believe that the rule of law has been subverted in this country.

The elites believe that elites should not be held accountable for crimes committed in office. Gerald Ford pardoned Richard Nixon. Bush got caught red handed spying on Americans without a warrant and the telecoms participated in knowing violation of the law. And yet Congress intervened and passed a law that had no purpose other than to retroactively immunize them for liability. Torture, extraordinary rendition, lying to take a nation to war—through extra-legal and extra-judicial means....

Electoral politics? Yes. It can't be abandoned. After all, we worked hard to elect Eric Schneiderman as Attorney General and he is standing presently steadfast in his determination to hold Wall Street to the rule of law, although he is being aggressively pressured by the administration. Elizabeth Warren is running for the Senate in Massachusetts. Wisconsin is working to recall Governor Scott Walker. Be strong, step up the persistence and don't give up. We still have an essential role to play in saving our anemic democracy.

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## District Leader's Report

Paula Diamond Román

We face so many issues of concern right now—cuts to Medicare/Medicaid, protecting Social Security, tax justice on a state and national level, the living wage campaign—that it has often been challenging to know which to act on first. However, the success and replication of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement around the country has really brought home how

widespread the frustration with the economy and the pains of unemployment has grown.

While we all have many reasons to think back to eight years of President Bush with anger, I am frequently reminded of the echoing effects of his disdain for science and his fondness for military spending. Prior to Bush, we had a president and vice-president who spent their eight years investing in a strong research and development strategy that increased public access to computers and the Internet and spurred job creation around new technologies. Between 1993 and 2001, President Clinton invested an additional \$13 billion for science and technology programs included in the 21st Century Research Fund. We saw the effect that this sort of investment had on private sector innovation and job creation under Clinton.

The issue isn't just level of investment. Both before and after Clinton, the focus was on investing federal research dollars into defense, rather than into civilian research. While innovations from defense research may eventually "trickle down" into the civilian economy, investment in civilian research has a much more direct impact on long-term economic growth. While Bush's research and development budget did increase overall dollars slightly, his emphasis was on defense research.

In addition, Clinton and Gore put together a plan on how to use the burgeoning information technology for economic growth. They increased funding for a range of science and technology programs; they supported the development of the vastly faster Next Generation Internet, which connected universities and national labs; they encouraged Congress to extend the 20 percent Research and Experimentation tax credit through 2004; they invested in "green" technology initiatives, nanotechnology and biomedical research, and the National Human Genome Research project. They didn't put together some sort of economic politburo that told the private sector what to produce. They had a healthy respect for science and technology which fueled a well-thought-out agenda for how to use government dollars to support the **real** "job creators."

President Obama has made some steps to renew this investment of R&D dollars as part of a job creation plan. We need to encourage him to step it up. To begin with, Obama and Congress need to make the Research and Experimentation tax credit permanent. Then, he needs to follow Clinton's lead and put billions of dollars in R&D. I'm not suggesting this step as an alternative to bailing out the car companies or suggesting that this money creates jobs superior to blue-collar union jobs. After all, microprocessors can be produced in American factories by union workers too and some of those microprocessors will go into cars made in Detroit. However, any stimulus package has to include R&D dollars so that we can create generations of jobs, grow industries for the future, and

keep our reputation as the country of both Henry Ford and Steve Jobs.



## Assembly Member Reports

Daniel O'Donnell

I write today to bring attention to an issue that has long been a priority for me in our community: historic preservation. On October 25<sup>th</sup>, I had the pleasure of testifying on behalf of the Riverside-West End Historic District at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). This worthy district, which extends from West 89<sup>th</sup> Street to West 109<sup>th</sup> Street largely along West End Avenue and Riverside Drive, appears to be moving forward. It will come to a vote by LPC in coming months.

However, other historic areas of my Assembly district remain under serious threat of demolition or significant alteration, especially the Morningside Heights community. As any long-time resident of our community is aware, the architectural fabric of our historic neighborhood has been irreparably marred by recent demolitions and inappropriate, non-contextual developments. As a neighborhood that has an impressive cohesion of architectural style and a very distinct sense of place, I believe we need and deserve historic district designation from LPC.

Currently, the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee (MHHDC), of which I was a founding member in 1995, is spearheading the efforts to further this cause. They have held a number of exciting events in recent weeks and are continuing their advocacy efforts apace. I encourage all who are interested in helping to preserve our wonderfully historic neighborhood to get in touch with the MHHDC (<http://morningsideheights.org>) to find out more.



## State Committeeman Reports

Daniel Marks Cohen

State Committeeman, 69<sup>th</sup> AD

A State Committee meeting has been called for mid-November in Albany, and two resolutions have been submitted for consideration, the first, a resolution on tax policy, is below, the other, another try at getting a strong position against gas fracking, follows.

### Resolution on Taxation Policy

**WHEREAS**, the United States and the State of New York are struggling with serious fiscal problems which have arisen from the economic recession and will do so for the foreseeable future, and

**WHEREAS**, it is impossible to bring the long term national and state budgets into balance by budget cuts alone without seriously damaging vital programs including education, environmental protection, health care and infrastructure maintenance, and

**WHEREAS**, public employee layoffs and furloughs, reduction of public employee wages, increased public employee contributions to health and retirement programs, increased tuition at public universities and increased transit fares and tolls amount to a tax on middle class and poor working people, and

**WHEREAS**, during the Bush and Pataki administrations significant tax reductions were given to upper income groups which have significantly reduced the ability to support vital government services, and

**WHEREAS**, we need to restore balance to the taxation system by increasing tax rates on taxpayers in the upper income brackets to a more equitable level as they were in previous Democratic administrations in the nation and the state, and

**WHEREAS**, President Obama has made the need to increase federal tax rates on taxpayers in the upper income brackets to a more equitable level a cornerstone of his economic recovery strategy, and

**WHEREAS**, the need to raise taxes on taxpayers in the upper income brackets has been recognized by such significant investors as Warren Buffett, and

**THEREFORE** be it resolved that the New York State Democratic Committee calls upon the New York legislature and the U.S. Congress to increase the rates of taxation on those in the upper income levels, and

**FURTHERMORE** the Secretary of the New York State Democratic Committee is instructed to transmit a copy of this resolution to all of the members of the New York State Assembly, the New York State Senate, the Governor of the State of New York, Senators Gillibrand and Schumer and the New York State Congressional Representatives.

### **Resolution in Support of Banning Hydraulic Fracturing Gas Extraction in New York State**

**WHEREAS**, Hydrofracturing is a method of drilling for natural gas that requires literally millions of gallons of fresh water that become polluted and highly toxic in the process; and

**WHEREAS**, Hydrofracturing, also known as hydrofracking, would pollute our state's waters by requiring between 3 to 8 million gallons of water and 80 to 300 tons of chemicals, depending on well size and depth, to be pumped into each of those gas wells; and

**WHEREAS**, this water would come from our streams and rivers or be pumped from underground, and would then resurface from the wells as highly toxic waters; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no way to prevent these highly toxic waters from eventually polluting more water; and

**WHEREAS**, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has stated that "gas drilling poses unacceptable risks to the unfiltered drinking water supply for nine million New Yorkers;" and

**WHEREAS**, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has formally notified state officials that it has major concerns about how the proposed drilling would affect public health and the environment; and

**WHEREAS**, while New York State environmental officials have recently announced that they would impose stricter regulations on hydrofracturing; and

**WHEREAS**, these regulations will apply to the Catskills watershed, which supplies the New York, Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties' water supply, and will also apply to the smaller Skaneateles Lake watershed, which supplies drinking water to Syracuse and some other communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in other areas of New York State, gas companies would face a far less cumbersome permit process that would rely on the state's own environmental assessment of where drilling can be allowed; and

**WHEREAS**, New York State environmental officials have not imposed an outright ban on hydrofracturing; and

**WHEREAS**, well-respected environmental advocates such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) have stated that nothing short of an outright ban on hydrofracturing would ensure that gas companies do not exploit the watersheds in the future;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the New York State Democratic Party calls upon Governor Cuomo and the NYS Assembly and Senate to ban hydrofracturing in New York state; and

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, that the New York State Democratic Party calls upon our Congressional delegation and our two Democratic United States Senators to pass legislation banning hydrofracturing throughout the U.S. and immediately bring this process under the jurisdiction of all applicable federal laws; and

**LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED**, that the NYS Democratic Party urges further research in and economic support, including but not limited to support such as tax credits, for non-polluting alternative energy sources such as wind, solar and hydropower.



## **From the Steering Committee**

Luis Román

The news out of Washington is singularly depressing. As we enter the 2012 presidential election cycle, our national government is paralyzed, trapped between the timidity of Democrats and the intransigence of Republicans. Even as President Obama stumps around the country for his jobs bill and takes what limited executive action he can to benefit underwater mortgagees and college graduates who are drowning in debt, it seems there are no big ideas left. That is how it seemed to me, until last month, when I read a report issued by the New America Foundation on the world economic crisis. Entitled “The Way Forward,” the report contains the most clear, concise explanation of the U.S. and world economic crises I have read. The report also offers a series of proposals I believe should be the centerpiece of a progressive campaign to rescue the U.S. economy.

The first “pillar” of the New America proposal is a five-year, 1.2 trillion dollar public investment program, focused on renovation of crumbling infrastructure, research and technology development, and education. The report rightly notes that we cannot depend on private sector hiring to ease our unemployment problem. Basic structural economic issues, such as the glut of employable labor in the developing world, and productivity gains resulting from technology, make it unlikely that the private sector alone can be the solution. Thus, the public sector must step in to take up the slack. The report proposes a massive five-year public-private partnership. Some of the benefits would be immediate. The report estimates the program would create more than 5.5 million jobs in *each* year of the program. Further results would include substantial growth in GDP, productivity gains from refurbished infrastructure, as well as increased tax revenue, which would assist with our debt and deficit problems.

The second “pillar” of the proposal focuses on perhaps the most recognizable victims of this crisis, underwater homeowners, whose mortgage debt far exceeds the value of their homes. The report notes that while the Obama administration has made efforts at assisting distressed homeowners, these efforts have been paltry in comparison with the depth of the problem. The report proposes a comprehensive solution, which would encompass all underwater mortgagees. The form of assistance provided would depend on the severity of the individual homeowner’s indebtedness.

Bridge loans would be available to those whose mortgage debt only slightly outpaces home value. Debt restructuring would be available to those unable to pay the interest on their mortgage, but who can still meet the principal. For those completely unable to meet their obligation, a form of “rent to own” opportunity would be offered where, after living as tenants in the home for a period of years, the homeowner would have the opportunity to repurchase the home under a new arrangement. This kind of comprehensive relief is what distressed home owners have been crying out for, and it keeps homes from being abandoned or foreclosed, which would further depress the market.

The final “pillar” of the proposal tackles the world economic crisis. The report proposes solutions for the European debt crisis, as well as offering a potential solution to the issues of China’s currency valuation and capital surpluses that are keeping China’s rapid economic growth from translating to prosperity for its citizens. The most far reaching proposal is for fundamental reform of global financial governance, to take into account the changes in the world’s financial structure and more easily respond to future economic crises.

None of these proposals is a “magic bullet.” Even if the jobs proposal was immediately implemented, the report estimates that it would take 5 to 7 years for unemployment to return to pre-crisis levels. The proposals in this report are challenging, and politically untenable, and that is exactly why they are necessary for us now. One of the problems with the Occupy Wall Street movement is that while the protestors are shining a light on the needs of the 99% in this country, they are not addressing those needs. We all need a big idea to get behind. I say that, at the very least, the public works program proposed in this report is exactly that kind of big idea.

To read the full report, log on to:  
[http://newamerica.net/publications/policy/the\\_way\\_forward](http://newamerica.net/publications/policy/the_way_forward).



## **From the Steering Committee**

Richard A. Siegel

### **The Glass Is Half Full—Help Fill It Up**

President Obama has taken a lot of criticism from progressives. Steering committee members have written critical pieces in our newsletter. One club member has sent a mailing to the membership looking for a candidate to run against our president in the democratic primary. Cable TV has many complaining that he is a centralist, not a liberal/progressive.

These are difficult times and many progressive programs and values have been threatened. And yes, there was a window of opportunity in early 2009 that is a missed opportunity. The 2010 elections were a tidal wave against progressive-ism.

Our president appears to have learned from past mistakes and is now making some progress. The public narrative is changing. It is now about jobs, and Occupy Wall Street—financial inequalities. The president is using his office to direct the narrative. He is leading the narrative daily—talking about fixing bridges and roads, talking about the needs and aspirations of the “99%”, and calling out the opposition by name when they are blocking or opposing legislation that would help the situation.

It is very easy to be an armchair ideologue and preach to the converted. It is much more difficult to find pragmatic solutions in a country where so many people vote against their economic interests.

The way to make the glass full is to take advantage of the narrative change and support specific bills and candidates that move us toward our goals.

For example, the key to the extension of the millionaire’s tax is to get Governor Cuomo to change his position. One East Side politician suggested the only way that change will happen is if some state Republicans back the tax. He states that most of their constituents would be helped and their communities would benefit if the income generated was invested in their communities. We need to work to make this happen. We need to find issues in Republican districts and help the communities express their needs to their electeds. The president is leading on this issue. We need to join him in his efforts

***Please read the following personal account of living with the results of fracking and some information about our presenter, Dave Publow from United for Action.***

*Reprinted with permission from The Ithaca Journal*  
This powerful piece is by a woman who recently moved from Bradford Co, PA to the Town of Hector, NY. She made this presentation to the most recent meeting of the Schuyler Legislature on Aug. 12

#### **Pa. should serve as warning on drilling**

2:31 PM, Sep. 23, 2011

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/article/20110924/VIEWPOINTS02/109240302/Pa-should-serve-warning-drilling?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|Viewpoints>

Written by Libby Foust

Our family farm is in Bradford County, Pa. Our farm was one of the first well sites chosen and is now one of hundreds, soon to be thousands.

When the folks in Pennsylvania first heard of the wells coming, they were excited. No one had ever experienced the drilling business, so there was nothing to fear. They had toiled their whole lives just to make ends meet, and maybe this was the road to a better life.

Then they came. Trucks by the hundreds, tankers, dump trucks, drilling rigs, fracking rigs. Five-acre drilling pads were bulldozed in the middle of farmers' best fields, million-gallon ponds were installed, roads were built, woods and fields were trenched and bulldozed for tie lines. Drilling rigs went up at an unbelievable rate. From one spot on our farm, I counted eight rigs.

Then the generators started. You could hear them a half-mile away. Then the pumping stations — small, industrial sites with buildings and pipes sticking up out of the ground. They put one of these at the end of our little dirt road. Now the woods are gone and the dirt road is a main thoroughfare. One entire field is a pumping station. When I first saw this, I cried.

This industry is like a swarm of locusts, leaving destruction and a lasting impact on the environment. But it goes much deeper than this. It creates greed and pits neighbor against neighbor, even dividing families. Back home, all rental properties now house gas people, as the landlords raised the rents so high that longtime tenants were forced to move. Every parking area is lined with pipes and equipment associated with the gas business. Roads have been destroyed and are barely passable. Motorists are being forced off the road by a steady stream of big rigs and trucks.

People who are used to a few cars going by their house now have to endure 100 tractor trailers a day. I went up to our well site and counted 80 tankers lined up so closely that you couldn't fit between them.

The gas companies do put on a good show. They have a nice booth at the fair. They buy bicycle helmets for the kids. They pay to have the walkways at the fairgrounds paved. They are always presenting a check for this and a check for that. Their pictures are always in the paper for doing good deeds. What a joke.

That's Bradford County.

The Finger Lakes area has been blessed with so much natural beauty — the gorges, the lakes, the vineyards.

We have so much to protect. We want our fields to be green so our children can walk through them. We need our water to be clean, not only for ourselves but also for our livestock and marine life.

If they start drilling, what's going to happen to the water in our lakes? What's going to happen if there is a drilling accident and people's homes start filling up with methane gas? Don't think it can happen? In northern Pennsylvania, it already has.

I urge you to protect this area, its residents, its natural beauty and our way of life from the ravages of the gas industry.

Foust resides in the Town of Hector.

## **TEXT OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE VOTED ON BY MEMBERSHIP AT NOVEMBER FORUM:**

### **Occupy Wall Street Movement.**

We the Broadway Democrats support the constitutional rights to freely assemble in Zuccotti Park of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

### **New Zoning Proposal**

We the Broadway Democrats supports the extension of the Department of City planning new zoning proposal to protect neighborhood stores on Amsterdam and Columbus Avenue to be extended to 110th Street.

### **Tax on Millionaires**

The Steering Committee of the Broadway Democrats supports the reinstating of the surcharge tax on millionaires in New York State.

#### **About United for Action:**

United for Action ([unitedforaction.org](http://unitedforaction.org)) is a grassroots, volunteer organization based in New York City, committed to the following:

- Educating the public about the dangerous realities of methane gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in New York State and beyond;
- Mobilizing the citizens of the State of New York to protect the public health and the environmental and economic sustainability of our communities.

The volunteers at United for Action come from all walks of life, ranging from teachers to lawyers, to doctors to artists. They share the common interest of safeguarding our air, water, and food supply from a very real threat.

#### **About Dave Publow:**

Dave Publow is the Outreach Coordinator for United for Action and has a broad background in consumer advocacy and public service, including work experience as a mediator/advocate with the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General.

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

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Broadway Democrats  
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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

**A Forum on Fracking with Dave Publow and Senator Espailat**  
**Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> 8:00 p.m.**  
Bank Street College (610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive))

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