
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

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

Climate Change: What Can Be Done?

Guest Speaker:

Philip Kahn,

Trained by Al Gore to give Climate Change
Presentations

Thursday,

November 14th, 2013

* 7:45PM Sign-in

* 8:00PM Club Business and Discussion

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

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Volume 38, Issue 9

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President's Corner

Gretchen Borges

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.*

So it seems in the United States of America today. Are we skating close to the chaos of post world war one Europe described by William Butler Yeats's apocalyptic vision in *The Second Coming*? Congress shut down the government, threatened not to raise the debt limit. The state news agency of China, our primary lender, editorialized, "As U.S. politicians of both political parties are still shuffling back and forth between the White House and the Capitol Hill without striking a viable deal to bring normality to the body politic they brag about, it is perhaps a good time for the befuddled world to start considering building a de-Americanized world." The launch of <https://www.healthcare.gov/> is an unmitigated disaster. As we learn more about the NSA, our horror deepens at a seemingly unlimited surveillance system accountable to no one. And that was just this past month.

The bedrock of our nation, the right to vote, is being chipped away by states' passing increasingly restrictive legislation, limiting access to the ballot to those who can meet carefully constructed qualifications. The issue has many more ramifications than the outright targeting of those likely to vote Democratic. It is reflective of this country taking a giant step backward into a time of segregation and hatred, with that hatred now spreading to include those convicted of a crime, women, immigrants, even the elderly. And the states passing the restrictions are no longer limited to the south.

What has happened to the bold experiment in government that is the United States of America? Can we trace the problems to the passionate intensity of the worst and the lack of conviction of the best? Ted Cruz's bewitching of Congress was met by complacency from the moderate Republicans. Of late, they seem to have resolved to be more active. A bit too little a bit too late, some would say.

The incursions of private money into elections at all levels (See NY Times story from November 3 on the Koch brothers' Club for Prosperity's efforts to influence the outcome of a city council election in Coralville, Iowa) is but an expression of the pervasive power of large corporations in our lives. Corporations have tried their hand at government in the past. Just look into the bloody history of the British East India Company for how well that went. We have not reached that point, but seem to be inexorably creeping towards it, like Yeats's rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem.

Do I have positive words to end this gloomy offering? In New York City we have a reason for optimism. (I will assume as much, even though I am writing on election eve.) Bill De Blasio is the first Democratic mayor in New York City for 20 years. I wish him and his administration well. And I hope that the chaos in Washington recedes.

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State Committee Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

Somewhat haphazardly, the State Democratic Party finally met in Rye Brook for its Fall meeting. The newly formed Progressive Caucus had its second meeting, over 30 paid members, and more than twice that number attended the meeting—which was terrific. Guest speaker Assemblywoman Deborah Glick updated us about Governor Cuomo's "10-point Women's Equality Agenda" which was submitted as legislation to the Assembly, and passed, but due to the unholy alliance between the Republican State Senate and the so called "Independent Democratic Conference"

run by Bronx State Senator Jeff Klein, the legislation has since stalled in that chamber.

NINE of the ten points have passed the State Senate individually, but the final point is important: it would guarantee a woman's right to an abortion as established by the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. It would secure a right to late-term abortions when the health of the pregnant woman is at risk or when the fetus is not viable, as determined by a doctor. New York State law allows abortions after 24 weeks only if the mother's life is in danger, but it is superseded by the Roe decision that allows late-term abortions to protect a woman's health. It is important to note that the tenth point does not CHANGE anything in practice, just codifies it in law. But it has become a political football for Republicans to prove their bona fides and they have co-opted the IDC into supporting them (Senator Klein says that the ten point does not go far enough, and he supports a broader plan for women's rights—yet somehow cannot bring himself to support this change in law).

So this situation is yet another reason to support challengers to the four IDC members, including the aforementioned Klein (SS 34 – Bronx/Westchester), Diane Savino (SS 23 – Brooklyn/Staten Island), David Carlucci (SS 38 – Rockland/Westchester) and David Valesky (SS 53 – Syracuse). Three out of four are within a short distance from the Upper West Side—next year, when the Primary is likely a foregone conclusion for our representatives downstate, we should GO NORTH and push for candidates to run against them in a primary because they are contributing to the stonewalling of progressive legislation.

Alas, the rest of the State Party meeting was a snoozefest. Several resolutions were submitted before the executive committee (a resolution to ban horse carriages, a resolution calling for a two-year moratorium on fracking, and a resolution to support the Governor's Women's Agenda plan as mentioned above), but despite the best efforts of progressives, the majority voted to recommend to table. Then the full State Committee agreed to follow suit in a sheeplike measure. It is maddening to see folks just blindly support the leadership for tabling resolutions—even if they are noncontroversial, even if they are just advisory—the State Party can choose to ignore them! But Cuomo runs the party with an iron fist, and if he does not approve, it is not approved. So much for the democracy in the Democratic party. It is very frustrating.

In other news, it was noted this week that that the Assembly is now considering moving the Primary permanently from the second Tuesday in September to the fourth Tuesday in June. This would allow it to coincide with the congressional primary as required by Federal law (to allow the military and other service members overseas to participate in the primary)—as it was determined by a federal judge that the September primary in New York did not comply with the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act. Eliminating the double primary, which was what we had in 2012, would save an unnecessary additional cost of \$50 million. The only issue for us clubs is petitioning would then be moved back from summer in June/July to spring in March/April. It is hard enough to get people to sign petitions when the sun is shining; it will be even trickier to do it if it is raining and cold. Not sure how we get around that problem, but it will have an impact on all political club operations. See you at the club meeting next month!

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From the Steering Committee

Ed Sullivan

Entitlements = Rights

The Anti Obamacare zealots are furious.

They are against “entitlements,” of course, because the way they use the word, “entitlement” has built-in sarcasm. It implies that there are some people demanding something to which they are not entitled.

Some people can't afford expensive health care. But they want it anyway. In the opinion of the Antis, that is a violation of a vague (but clear to them) American principle, circa 1885. Roughly put: If you can't afford it, you don't get it. Buzz off!

It's bad enough, say the Antis, that people are demanding fulfillment of promises made regarding Social Security benefits and Medicare—just because these benefits were paid for with deductions from their own paychecks, year after hard working year.

Now these same people, cry the Antis, are about to claim yet another entitlement, this time to health care insurance, under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), which is also paid for primarily by the recipients. This claim assumes they have a right to this coverage, or a right to health care itself,

whether the health care they need is beyond their means or not!

What is this country coming to? the Antis weep.

Well, let's discuss what this country is coming to. We are finally beginning to realize the rights—i.e., the entitlements—articulated in the Declaration of Independence 237 years ago in Philadelphia, and signed by the members of the Continental Congress.

“Life” is the first right enumerated as being “self evident,” as being “endowed by the Creator,” and as being “unalienable.” It would seem to follow, that if a person has a right to live, and if his or her life is threatened by an illness of some kind, and if a remedy to that illness is at hand, it would be a denial of that right if the remedy were not applied, if the remedy were withheld, for lack of funds.

Now let's suppose that the remedy to the fatal illness is, in fact, at hand, but is beyond the financial means of the ill person. Who then is going to secure the right of the ill person to maintain life? Who is going to pay for the remedy?

Back to the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration asserts that *“to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men . . .”*

Oh, indeed. So government action is not just some 21st century scheme imposed on the people of the United States by Barack Obama and his merry band of crypto-socialists. Government action was called for by the most sacred of our founding documents, in 1776, and has been a living force in our nation's history ever since.

The Erie Canal, the Homestead Act, the Land Grant Colleges, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Interstate Highway System, yes, Social Security and Medicare, and the dredging by the Army Corps of Engineers of innumerable rivers and harbors are just a few of the many examples of government actions that have made our nation a nation.

There is simply no rational justification for denying health care to ill people because, allegedly, paying for that health care is not the business of the government. To the contrary.

It is the business and the duty of the government to “secure” the right—the entitlement—of each person to live, if providing medical care can effectuate that.

That is what Obamacare is all about.

But the Obamacare program has started off with delays and confusion—regrettable and inexcusable.

And our Anti Obamacare cousins are strangling themselves in I-told-you-so smugness. Doesn't this bumpy beginning of the enrollment process mean that Obamacare is fatally flawed, and should be abandoned? Doesn't this mean we should give up on Obamacare because people are having trouble signing up for health care, to which, according to the Antis, they are not entitled anyway?

Sorry, cousins. No crocodile tears, please. You never wanted Obamacare in the first place. You're just being opportunist in using the disorganized roll out as an excuse to kill the program.

Don't you recall the many space rockets that fell into the Atlantic Ocean, or burned up on the launching pad, before the American moon landing was finally achieved?

We didn't give up on the space program then. We reached our goal. We can reach our goal again, with Obamacare, and we will.

Let's get back to basics.

History moves inexorably, if not always directly, toward a more free, more egalitarian society. The Affordable Care Act is just one more step in that process. Get out of the way, cousins.

Entitlements are rights, and rights are entitlements. That's just the way it is.

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Go Green!

**Get your newsletter
emailed.**

**To make the change, just email
your name to
president@broadwaydemocrats.org.**

In Memoriam Kennis Howard Davis

Kennis Davis will be missed. He will be remembered as a hardworking member of the Broadway Democrats, who ably served on the Steering Committee, and frequently volunteered at tabling.

Kennis Howard Davis, 76, passed away on October 5, 2013. He was born on March 15, 1937, grew up in Orlando, Florida and enlisted in the US Navy after graduating from high school. He served until his Honorable Discharge in 1963.

In 1974 he married Anna (Dusty) in New York and was happily married until her death in 2002. While in New York, he worked as a bartender and attended BMCC, receiving an Associates Degree in Business Administration. He also earned a BA from Pace University in 2005.

He is survived by 8 children, 25 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

Remembering Kennis

Lizabeth Sostre

A day or so after Kennis passed away, I emailed a friend of mine that I was grieving the loss of a friend. She said she never heard me speak of Kennis and asked who he was. This is what I wrote in response.

Kennis Davis was a 76 year old black Korean War veteran who was on disability. Most days he sat outside on Columbus Avenue and talked to everyone who walked by. He joined the Broadway Democrats and was elected to the Steering Committee. He didn't talk much at meetings, but he and I talked almost daily because I always passed him on my way to get to work. I would stop, we would chat and then we hugged.

Kennis knew and saw what was going on in the country. He saw racism and knew how insidious it was. He understood deeply what progressive politics truly meant because it was his life. He tabled with us, gathered signatures on petitions and handed out literature. There were times he did not feel well, but he never complained.

Kennis was one of those special people you know in life who never advertised his specialness. He didn't need to. He knew who he was and wasn't about to waste his time persuading you if you did not get it. He lived his life simply, truly and honestly. He was my neighbor and friend. I miss him very much.

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This resolution was passed at the October 10, 2013 Forum.

Broadway Democrats Resolution on the Trans Pacific Partnership and pending Authorization of "Fast Track" Authority. October 10, 2013

1. **Whereas:** According to the testimonial of Representative Grayson (FL), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in its current form threatens to outsource U.S. jobs, prohibit regulation of Wall Street, curtail internet freedom, limit access to lifesaving drugs, and grant foreign corporations the power to sue for compensation from sovereign governments when their laws prevent them from endangering public health and safety,

2. **Whereas:** TPP negotiations have been held over five years by the representatives of participating governments and corporations without public knowledge and are currently slated for a "Fast Track" Authorization by Congress, which would keep members of Congress and the public ignorant of its content,

3. **Whereas:** The continued lack of adequate congressional consultation in many areas of the proposed pact deeply implicates Congress' constitutional and domestic policy authorities and would yield the power of Congress to discuss and amend trade agreements,

Be it resolved that:

The Broadway Democrats, having duly met and voted on October 10, 2013 call on Representatives Rangel and Nadler and Senators Gillibrand and Schumer to oppose any mechanism delegating Congress' constitutional authority over trade policy that continues to exclude Congress from having a meaningful role in the formative stages of trade agreements and throughout the negotiating and approval processes and to oppose "Fast Track" Trade Promotion Authority for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

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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E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

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FIRST
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