

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Cathedral Station ♦ P.O. Box 1316 ♦ New York, N.Y. 10025 ♦ (212) 866-6378

Website: ThreeParksDems.org ♦ Email: ThreeParksDems@aol.com

President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Lauren Williams
(laurenwilliams1@cs.com)

District Leaders

Bob Boffeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas
Daniel Marks Cohen

JANUARY 11, 2012

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: The 1%, the 99%, and the Economy—Steve Max Club; discussion and endorsement vote for President of the United States; vote on living wage resolution

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11th

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: The Youth Hostel
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel/Ballroom

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in
8 PM Call to Order

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
3. The Economy, the 1% and 99%
4. Discussion and endorsement for President
5. Vote on living wage resolution
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 25, 2012
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, February 8, 2012
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, February 22, 2012
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, March 14, 2012
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column

Daniele Gerard

Three Parks wishes a Happy New Year to all our members and friends!

We were so delighted to see everyone who attended the Three Parks Holiday Party on Sunday, December 4. More than 200 TPID members, neighbors, judges, and elected officials joined us to celebrate the season and dine on the delicious treats everyone brought to this potluck extravaganza. Our heartiest thanks go out to all the volunteers, ably led by State Committee Member Lynn Thomas and TPID Correspondence Secretary Lauren Williams, who worked for hours to turn the hostel ballroom into a glittering, elegant venue for our annual event.

Our first club meeting of the New Year features Three Parks member Steve Max with his latest timely presentation: "The 1%, the 99%, and the Economy," to be followed by a discussion and endorsement vote for President of the United States. It promises to be a lively and informative evening; be sure to come and make your voices heard.

Several members of the board of Three Parks met with Governor Cuomo's Assistant Secretary for Energy and the Environment to discuss hydrofracking. Our write-up elsewhere in the newsletter underscores New York State's cavalier attitude toward this inherently dangerous process that has proven to be an ecological and health disaster in every state where it has been used.

Finally, please read the Three Parks proposed resolution on the living wage that will be discussed and voted on at the meeting.

State Committee Member Report

Daniel Marks Cohen, 69th AD

Greetings all – I had a chance to see many of you at the numerous holiday parties this season, but if I missed you, best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

It has been a whirlwind of a year, recapping briefly, I began my position as State Committeeman in September 2010 and it has been a fascinating, maddening, invigorating experience. I intend to seek re-election this year and hope to have your support.

When I first started the most immediate question

then was whether Jay Jacobs would remain chairman of the State Party. That issue is resolved affirmatively, somewhat to our detriment though, as his behavior has not been the most inclusive or (small d) democratic.

And Cuomo's first year was mixed – good on some social issues, particularly marriage equality, and more recently on the taxicab bill. And he continues to make encouraging statements that he intends to close Indian Point. On fracking, he is coy, flirting with both sides while counseling patience while the State's environmental agency completes its work. But media reports and individual meetings with west side activists have shown, the agency is not prepared for the environmental damage likely to ensue if fracking is approved.

The Reform Caucus of the State Committee has met repeatedly over the past 16 months and we have been invigorated by the State Party's recent attempts to prevent us from passing resolutions submitted in favor of progressive taxation and against fracking. Usually the press ignores the resolutions of the State Committee, but the recent heavy-handed actions by the aforementioned Mr. Jacobs have only fueled the issue. We have demanded, and been granted, an audience with the Great Oz next month, where we will press our case that unless the State Party allows our resolutions on the floor, and a hand-counted vote, we will sue for our rights under the State's open meeting laws.

Redistricting is lurching forward, and despite broad and deep dissatisfaction with LATFOR (the state's legislative task force on redistricting), with testimony by many westsiders, including me, the committee has drafted new lines, and early feedback is that they are awful. The governor has proposed vetoing the lines, but it remains to be seen if he will follow through with his threat.

So we enter a new year with much uncertainty, although with also some positive glimmers – Obama was widely considered in trouble at the beginning of 2011, and he has ended in a much better position, largely as the result of the GOP imploding with multiple flavors of the month (gosh, I MISS Herman Cain). Romney is still likely to be the nominee, and as a result, likely to give the President a run for the White House. But I feel that the mood of the country is such that it would be difficult for Mitt "Mr. One Percent" Romney to get elected in 2012.

And rounding out the whirlwind of 2011, I got engaged over the summer and I am scheduled to be married in early January 2012. I may miss seeing some of you at January meetings due to a short honeymoon, but I hope to see you on the petitioning trail for Obama in 2012.\

Three Parks Holiday Party

Lauren Williams

Thanks to festive decorations, holiday and other music spun by DJ Denise, and delicious food provided by Club members and their guests, Three Parks hosted its Annual Holiday Party on Sunday, December 4. Numerous electeds and local Democratic Party officials also stopped to enjoy the food, music, and holiday cheer. Club President Daniele Gerard welcomed members and guests and acknowledged the volunteers who decorated, tended bar, served food, and helped with other party tasks. Gracious thanks are extended to all who made the party a fabulous success and to those who contributed items for the local food pantry.

It's Not a Tax Cut. It's Your Pension.

Steve Max and Daniele Gerard

The payroll tax cut has been extended for two months with both the President and Newt Gingrich wishing it had been a full year. (The original Obama proposal was for a full year with the cut both increased and extended to employers.) In truth, this is not a tax cut, anymore than the payroll tax is really a tax. The payroll tax is your and your employer's contribution to your pension plan, Social Security. A pension contribution isn't a tax; it is actually a form of savings. Now, less of your and everyone else's paycheck will go to the pension—so much less that the pension plan will become insolvent if this continues. But, "Don't worry," we are told: Congress will borrow money from China and fully repay Social Security for everything it will lose. This part is probably true; it is the law, at least for now. But, we know what this leads to because we have seen it said of every public and many corporate pension plans: "Sorry, we can no longer afford those generous benefits." If Social Security is changed from a self-funding plan to one that has to be subsidized from general tax revenue, benefit cuts are inevitable.

Now that the Administration and Congress have succeeded in their quest for a Pyrrhic political victory, what do the Democrats plan to do to rescue Social Security from the plunder they have

wrought? The payroll tax cut is an obvious method of causing Social Security, for the first time in its history, not only to contribute to the deficit, but also to raise the national debt, bringing us closer to the dreaded debt ceiling that the President just got Congressional Republicans to agree to raise in exchange for huge cuts in Medicare.

Little notice was given to the section of the payroll tax cut bill that puts the Keystone Pipeline back on the table. The Administration was about to approve the pipeline when mass demonstrations and arrests, including those of Three Parks board members Erl Kimmich and Merle McEldowney, showed how much support it would cost Obama in 2012. In November, Obama wisely announced that a pipeline decision would not be made until 2013. The "Tax Cut" bill now requires a decision in 60 days. If the President does not declare that the pipeline "would not serve the national interest," the law says it is automatically approved at the federal level. If the President decides that the pipeline is not in the national interest, he is required to write a report explaining why. This provision gives him very little wiggle room and is designed to either get the pipeline through or give the Republicans a document to use as a campaign issue.

In order to discipline progressive Democrats opposed to damaging Social Security, the Administration attached the extension of unemployment benefits to the bill. It appears that, in a similar move, the Republicans brought in the pipeline to appeal to their far right. It worked. Has Obama outsmarted himself again?

So what's next? The same amount of stimulus allegedly provided by the payroll tax cut can easily be created, as it has been in the past, by cutting the income tax for middle-income people and by making a payment similar to the earned income tax credit to lower-income people. Will the Administration and Congress do this in 2012—and restore Social Security contributions to their usual level? Will they raise the cap on income subject to Social Security taxes to include salaries above the current cap, \$106,800? Above \$250,000, as proposed by Representative DeFazio (D-Ore.)?

What is the Democrats' plan to strengthen and preserve this vital social program that keeps tens of millions of Americans out of poverty each year? Do they have one? FDR's goal was to protect Social Security from political whim: "We

put those payroll contributions there so as to give the contributors a legal, moral, and political right to collect their pensions With those taxes in there, no damn politician can ever scrap my social security program.”

FDR must be spinning in his grave.

Comments on Fracking Hearing Erl Kimmich

I went to both the hearing in Loch Sheldrake on November 29th and the one on Chambers Street on the 30th. Three Parks Independent Democrats members turned out on the 30th, where the club testified in the morning session.

I got to hear so many people: medical professionals, farmers, trout fisherwomen, environmentalists, grandmothers, high school and college students, business people from Wall Street, and lawyers and teachers. I stayed to the end of the session in Loch Sheldrake, which was extended to accommodate all the speakers, and I stayed almost until 10PM at the evening session in NYC. I learned so much!

Health workers cited Dr. Theo Colburn's investigation into the chemicals used in fracking, including known carcinogens and endocrine disrupters. People cited Josh Fox's Gasland the Oscar nominated dense-packed-with-information documentary about gas drilling.

Repeatedly, we heard testimony that inevitable methane gas leaks associated with extraction and transportation from the shale would render natural gas more polluting than oil or coal, since methane is a far worse green house gas than carbon dioxide.

A man in support of gas drilling introduced himself as a manufacturer and vendor of special well pipes. These pipes, he assured us would contain the radioactive radon and other radioactive substances that are freed during fracking. He described how the same disruptions which were necessary to release the gas would also release radioactive gases that have been secure in shale bed for thousands of years. Until now the Marcellus Shale has contained the deadly radon in its porous pockets. He warned that an inadvertent, but inevitable effect, of fracking would be the release of radioactive gas. The solution he offered was special pipes, of his design, which would attract, like magnets, the radioactive substance to the pipes deep underground and then the drillers could seal the well when they

were done and trap the radioactive gas. As you might imagine, the three minute infomercial was greeted by a hearty round of boos.

Another person stepped up to voice concern that the radon currently trapped in the Marcellus shale, when released through fracking, will travel with the natural gas up out of the ground. Pipelines will then deliver the radioactive particles to the cook tops and ovens of thousands, if not millions, of kitchens. Imagine radon delivered right to your house: all. All you do is turn on the burner to boil some water or fry an egg. Presto!

Gail Brewer and Scott Stringer spoke against fracking. **They** don't need further studies. Hooray for them! By the way, neither do most of us who have done some homework on this. Not to mention that burning natural gas gives off carbon dioxide and deadly carbon monoxide. So, let's get on with the retooling our economy to usher in a green one and reduce the need for natural gas.

Many thanks to Three Parks Independent Democrats for collecting over two thousand letters to Governor Cuomo signed by our neighbors calling for a ban on fracking that were submitted into the record. Thanks also for all the dissemination of pertinent articles and research regarding this threat. It makes me proud to be a member of a club that puts people and planet before the insane pursuits of oilmen.

Fracking Meeting with Governor's Staff

Daniele Gerard, Bruce Markens, Mary Ann Marks, Lynn Max, Steve Max, Merle McEldowney, Milivoy Samurovich, and Judy Wood

On December 9, 2011, we met with Thomas Congdon, Governor Cuomo's Assistant Secretary for Energy and the Environment, to discuss hydrofracking. We explained that Three Parks Independent Democrats is in favor of a statewide ban on fracking, but that we did not want to discuss a ban or recent hearings held by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Rather, we wanted to find out the basis for the Governor's contention that fracking can be done safely.

In response to our questions, we learned the following:

1. The state has not conducted any studies to determine how long New York City might have to go without water under various scenarios, including pipes' being broken by blasting or

seismic activity, water's being poisoned, or a filtration plant's becoming necessary.

2. Although longstanding state policy dictates that the polluter pays, the state has no way to determine whether any particular drilling company actually has the finances to pay if contamination occurs to the City's or any other water supply or to cover medical bills if health problems result from fracking.
3. An advisory panel will review staffing needs of the DEC and other agencies that would have responsibilities regarding fracking, but there is no timeframe for the panel to issue recommendations.
4. Emergency planning will be left up to fracking companies.

We explained our concern that taxpayers would end up subsidizing industry's activities by paying for their mistakes before, during, and after years of costly litigation on any one of a number of these issues—all while there could be no water to drink for thousands or even millions of people. We also opined that if fracking is permitted in New York State, when an accident occurs, it will be known far and wide as "Cuomo's spill."

Mr. Congdon stated he would share our concerns about how to make companies pay for damage they cause, the requisite level of insurance, the absence of cost estimates, and the lack of financial guarantees.

Proposed Living Wage Resolution

From time to time, Three Parks introduces resolutions to enable the club to work formally on various issues, for example, health care/single payer, Social Security, fracking, and Indian Point. Below for consideration by the membership is a proposed resolution supporting the Living Wage Bill currently before the City Council. It will be read, discussed, and voted on at the January 11th club meeting.

LIVING WAGE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour is not a sufficient living wage for workers and their families,

WHEREAS New York's minimum wage is no higher than the federal mandate,

WHEREAS working full-time and earning

minimum wage results in a maximum salary of \$15,000,

WHEREAS the Living Wage Bill coming before the City Council calls for pay rates of \$10.00 and \$11.50 per hour for companies receiving city government subsidies, and

WHEREAS the dollar difference in pay will make a significant difference in the incomes of workers and their families.

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that Three Parks Independent Democrats supports the Living Wage Bill and urges City Council members to vote in favor of it.

Pass a Living Wage Bill
Judy Wood

As I write this, a bill called the Living Wage bill is pending in the City Council. At this time Speaker Quinn has not committed to the bill, which the Mayor says he will veto if it passes. It is a "living wage bill" if you call \$10.00 an hour a living wage. Even at that rate, it is near subsistence in NY City.

The Mayor says that government should not interfere in the marketplace, except of course for the tax breaks and subsidies given to businesses such as Yankee Stadium and Goldman Sachs. But what does he know of surviving on a modest salary. According to a report in the New York Times Dec. 24, eight states are raising their wage floor to \$9 and San Francisco will become the first major city to have a \$10 minimum wage. The final sentence in the NYTimes article says "for those workers who do receive raises in the new year the added income still will not be enough to push them over the poverty line."

Our City Council Members should be on board with this bill, and put pressure on the Speaker to bring it to a vote as soon as possible. Working New Yorkers are entitled to a decent wage for their work, and we at Three Parks support this bill and this as a movement nationwide. Part of the Occupy movement relates to this concept and has brought it to the attention of the nation.

Congratulations to former Three Parks President Josh Pepper for receiving a prestigious law award for his recent casework at the NY State Attorney General's Office.

And many kudos and thanks to Lucille M. Donte for her work organizing the 24th Precinct's very successful Holiday Toy Collection for children.

Proposed Nominees to the Three Parks Board of Directors

Elections will be held at the **February 8th** meeting:

Theresa Canter – Second Vice-President
 Wendy Dannett
 Jock Davenport – Recording Secretary
 Ellen Flax – Treasurer
 Ernestine Gallagher
 Daniele Gerard – President
 Louisa Gilbert
 Elizabeth Kellner
 Erl Kimmich
 Barbara Lee
 Marie Lunn
 Bruce Markens
 Mary Ann Marks
 Lynn Max – Membership Director
 Merle McEldowney
 Corine Pettey
 Milivoy Samurovich
 Ray Schwartz
 Ken Tulloch
 Lauren Williams – Corresponding Secretary
 Jane Wisdom
 Judy Wood – First Vice-President

The District Leaders, Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty, are *ex officio* members of the Board.

As the Three Parks Constitution provides, to be eligible to vote, a member new to the Club during the calendar year of such vote must have attended at least one other meeting of the Club within the previous six months. Members of Three Parks in the prior calendar year must have attended at least one Club meeting within the previous six months and have their dues current by the vote. Any person residing in the 69th Assembly District or any adjoining Assembly District, or anyone employed in or doing business in the 69th Assembly District, who is a registered voter enrolled in the Democratic Party shall become a member in good standing 30 days after application for membership and payment of dues.

The 2012 Membership Form is included in the Newsletter. Renew your membership or join now to be able to vote at the February 8th Annual General Meeting.

Condolences to Three Parks board member Corine Pettey on the passing of her sister, Audrey Pettey. Also to Iris Korman, Nostradamus and Jacob on the passing of Iris's father and to Ray Hoey on the passing of his wife Patricia. Our sympathies to all.

Eligible Voters January 11th 2012

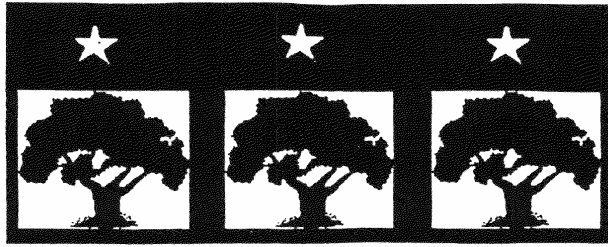
Cyrus Adler	Minda Meister
Ralph Andrew	Gail Meyers
Susan Andrews	Batya Miller
Mollie Bailey	Antonine Momplaisir
Robert Bardin	Christopher Mooney
Margret Beels	Brenda Morgan
Shoshannah Benmosche	Derrick Mullins
Bob Botfeld	John Newell
Vincent Brancato	Joan Ogden
David Camacho	Gabrina Pearson
Theresa Canter	Malik Pearson
Isabella Caputo	Josh Pepper
Dan Cohen	Annie Petrus
Wendy Dannett	Corine Pettey
John Davenport	Geraldine Phillips
Cynthia Doty	Rose Podrasky
Renna Draynel	Florence Puccetti-Hepner
Gerry Ann Fifer	Carol Reisner
Alan Flacks	Nathan Riley
Ellen Flax	Suzanne Samelson
Ernestine Gallagher	K. Samuels
Mary J. Geissman	Milivoy Samurovich
Daniele Gerard	Carl Joseph Scalise*
Louisa Gilbert	Doris Schreiber
Robert Ginsberg	Ray Schwartz
Pilar Gomez	Ahmad Shirazi
Vivian Gruder	Irene Shrier
Robert Gumbs	Mildred Speiser
Brian Jordan	Roschel Holland Stearns
Ulla Jorgensen	Stephanie Tegnazian
Micky Josephs	Ruth Tepper
David C. Kaplan	Deborah Thomas
Michael Katz	Lynn Thomas
Elizabeth Krob Kellner	Jane Thompson
Erlend Kimmich	Ken Tulloch
Jerry Koenig	Ruben Vargas
Kenneth Laufer	George Voorhis
Marguerite Lavin	Yvonne Vulliemoz
David Lazarus	Rosetta Williams
Barbara Lee	Lauren A. Williams
Estelle Levy	Judy Wood
Marie Lunn	Vernita Worrell
Betsy Malcolm	Gloria Zeche
Bruce Markens	
Mary Ann Marks	
Stephen Max	
Lynn Bender Max	
Merle McEldowney	
Abigail McGloster	
Alex Medwedew	
Ernest Mehler	
Dorothy Mehler	

Eligible If Paid Jan. 11, 2012

Marla Brunker
 Martina Garcia*
 Chaumtoli Huq
 Joan Levinson
 James Shames
 * Can vote only in one club

Weddings

Congratulations to State Committee Member Dan Cohen on his upcoming wedding and also to Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell on his wedding later in the month. Looks like 2012 will be a very special year!



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-6378

Please pay your 2012 dues by filling out the form below and bringing it to the next meeting
or by mailing it with your check to:

*Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
New York, N.Y. 10025
Attn: Treasurer*

2012 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member _____

Renewal _____

Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$25) _____

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$40) _____

Low Income (\$15) _____

Low Income Family (\$20) _____

Sponsor (\$50) _____ Patron (\$100) _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Email _____

Check here if you prefer to receive the newsletter via email.

******Please pay your dues with a check or via PayPal--cash and money orders are far more difficult to process. Thanks in advance for your cooperation! Please make out all checks to:**

“Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2012****

Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
New York, N.Y. 10025

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11th

**The 1%, the 99%, and the Economy
Endorsement Vote for President**