

## ***THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS***

Cathedral Station ♦ P.O. Box 1316 ♦ New York, N.Y. 10025 ♦ (212) 539-7602

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

### ***President***

Daniele Gerard

### ***Editor***

Lauren Williams  
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### ***District Leaders***

Bob Botfeld  
Cynthia Doty

### ***State Committee***

Lynn Thomas  
Daniel Marks Cohen

# **JANUARY 9, 2013**

**FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS:** RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE SANDY:  
The NYC-Environmental Justice Alliance, Occupy Sandy, and a Breezy Point homeowner

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

**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. Recovering from Hurricane Sandy
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

## **CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, January 23, 2013**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, February 13, 2013**  
**Three Parks Meeting, 7 PM \*NOTE TIME\***  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, February 27, 2013**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, March 13, 2013**  
**Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

## President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Happy New Year, members and friends! We are looking forward to an exciting year of New York City elections and great changeover in so many different offices. Stay tuned for candidate forums in the spring and street activity when the weather gets warmer.

Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make the Three Parks holiday party yet another hugely popular and successful event. Kudos to State Committee Member Lynn Thomas and Board Member Lauren Williams for shepherding the volunteers and to Board Member Ernestine Gallagher for once again managing to get everyone fed.

Our January 9 meeting will provide a roundup of the effects of and recovery from Hurricane Sandy. We will hear from speakers from (1) The New York City-Environmental Justice Alliance, a non-profit citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice, (2) Occupy Sandy, an all volunteer organization that connects people seeking aid directly to those offering it on the ground, and (3) Breezy Point. Rosemary McGinn, who was in Breezy Point during the hurricane in her family home, will describe her dealings with FEMA.

**The Club's February meeting will feature Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and will begin at 7:00 p.m. to accommodate his schedule. We look forward to seeing you there!**

## District Leader Report

By Bob Botflod

I wish you a Happy New Year. Below are a few brief notes and an election tally omitted from December's issue due to lack of space.

Like many Three Parks' members, I was gratified by Obama's victory after being frustrated that he had not used his bully pulpit well in his first four years. Hopefully, the nerve wracking Democratic victories for President Obama and the U.S. Senate will give Obama (with our continuous prodding, urging, demands, etc.) the necessary backing to pursue a more progressive economic agenda and saner environmental policies.

Meanwhile, in 2013 Three Parks Independent Democrats will have an important role to play in the city council, borough president, public advocate, controller and mayoral elections. Under the proposed city council lines, Three Parks will participate and have a key role in as many as three city council races – which is unfortunately not helpful to our neighborhood.

However, thanks to the reported Vito Lopez centered controversy over the new Brooklyn council lines, the proposed council lines citywide have been withdrawn and there will be an unexpected additional round of hearings on the new council districts. We will have another opportunity to advocate for more representative council lines in which our neighborhood would be in the center of a councilmember's district instead of on the fringes of a three gerrymandered, elongated ones.

### **NEW CITY COUNCIL REDISTRICTING HEARING – JANUARY 7**

The Manhattan hearing will be held on Monday, January 7 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Hunter College Auditorium, 695 Park Avenue. Prior to the hearings, you may submit written comments to the NYC Districting Commission by mail to NYC Districting Commission, Attn: Jonathan Ettricks, 253 Broadway, 7<sup>th</sup> Fl., New York, NY 10007 or by email at [hearings@districting.nyc.gov](mailto:hearings@districting.nyc.gov)

### **THE GUN VIOLENCE VACCINE**

If there were a disease in the United States that was still killing one out of every 10,000 Americans using an American vaccine but in other advanced countries was killing less than one out of every 100,000 using a different vaccine, one would hope we would quickly import the different better vaccine. If a better method works, use it.

Well, this time Obama and our legislature should demand that we adopt the gun violence vaccine that exists in most European countries – strict gun control with no automatic weapons in private hands. The only justification for these automatic, military weapons remaining in private hands is an underlying assumption that government really does not work even for the most basic task of protecting us in our homes. Instead of trying to make government work better, this Tea Party type belief is undermining a civilized view of our country. Hopefully, the awful tragedy at Sandy Hook will help to change this.

### **NOVEMBER ELECTION STATISTICS: HOW YOUR ED VOTED**

You can see how your block/ED voted in the following chart. Below is a chart of the election day vote in each of the EDs in our Part A of the 69<sup>th</sup> Assembly District. As of this writing, the Board of Elections (BOE) had still not published the official tally, but below are the unofficial machine totals that do not include affidavit or absentee ballots. The BOE was still tallying them in late December. Please note that although you may feel free to boast if your own ED is one of the leading Obama vote gatherers, due to the consolidation and

new shape of the EDs, EDs now vary more in size than they did in previous years. Some EDs have as few as 248 active voters and others have over 1200.

69AD ED	PA RT	Obama Biden (Dem)	Romney Ryan (Rep)	Romney Ryan (Cons)	Obama Biden (WFP)
044	A	460	60	1	23
045	A	331	80	4	13
046	A	537	60	5	25
047	A	504	60	3	36
048	A	421	43	1	21
049	A	414	53	1	40
050	A	331	39	3	20
051	A	370	54	1	22
052	A	410	40	3	23
053	A	380	11	0	4
054	A	464	28	3	12
055	A	495	25	1	16
056	A-C	302	6	0	1
057	A	711	13	1	7
058	A	434	32	1	18
059	A	246	13	0	10
060	A	441	38	4	15
061	A	376	37	3	32
062	A	379	33	0	18
063	A	255	19	1	10
064	A	427	42	2	24
065	A	378	52	2	26
066	A	507	39	2	24
067	A	281	9	0	4
068	A	541	25	2	10
069	A	566	41	3	36
070	A	248	10	2	10
071	A-C	379	36	3	23
072	A	626	62	6	35
073	A	614	60	5	35
074	A	609	35	2	16
075	A	535	23	3	15

076	A-C	285	9	1	11
077	A-C	496	34	1	26
078	A-C	418	39	2	21
079	A	396	20	2	19
080	A-C	477	20	6	15
081	A	490	36	3	15

**Thank You to Daniele Gerard**  
By Bob Boffeld and Cynthia Doty

After five years as President of Three Parks, Daniele Gerard is stepping down in February to become First Vice President.

Daniele's energy, writing and organizational skills, and common sense have been instrumental in furthering the goals of Three Parks. Her help in electing the club's endorsed candidates, organizing monthly club and board meetings, and running the annual benefit from 2007 to 2012 has made her an invaluable member of the Three Parks team. She has devoted countless hours each month to club business, including tabling and gathering petition signatures, arranging appointments with electeds on issues, and managing the storefront bank accounts during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections.

No task has been too small or too large for Daniele to take on and complete effectively and efficiently while working enthusiastically with members and friends of Three Parks.

Daniele's efforts on the club's campaigns to ban fracking, close Indian Point, and preserve and strengthen Social Security exemplify the Three Parks tradition of vigorous grassroots activism. As First Vice President, she will continue fighting for these issues. We would like to recognize Daniele's many contributions to the continuing success of Three Parks and express our gratitude for her hard work and leadership.

**THREE PARKS MEETING – FEBRUARY 13**

**PLEASE NOTE: 7 p.m. start time**

**Speaker: Professor Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winning economist**

## Obama's Social Security Cost of Living Cut

By Steve Max and Daniele Gerard

December 30, 2012

As part of a package deal to avoid the so called Fiscal Cliff, the President is offering the Republicans a change in the way the already inadequate Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is calculated that will take money out of the pockets of all senior citizens. Even if the Republicans reject the deal, we will hear about it again because it is part of Obama's long standing interest in weakening Social Security.

Essentially, the benefit cut works this way: Let's say that you are a senior, and that you buy yourself a steak every Saturday night. Now when the price of steak goes up, your Social Security benefit is supposed to rise at the end of the year so that you can keep on having your weekly steak. (You vegetarians will have to excuse us, but this example just doesn't work as well with turnips.) In reality, the COLA doesn't cover the full rise in the cost of the steak, the meal gets a little smaller each year, but at least you still have it.

Under the new Obama system, at the end of the year the government will say, "Yes, the cost of steak did rise but the seniors switched to cheaper chicken, so no COLA for you." The next year they say, "Yes, the cost of chicken did go up, but then seniors switched to hot dogs, so no COLA for you." Next they say, "Yes the cost of hot dogs did go up, but now seniors are eating dog food and dog food isn't covered by the COLA."

For a person who retired in the year 2000 with a base benefit of \$1,000 a month, the COLA under the present method brings the benefit up to \$1,336.60 a month. Under the new Obama method it would be \$1,286.90 a month, a difference of \$49.70 per month.<sup>1</sup> Now to some people \$49.70 may not sound like much, but consider that for a third of seniors, Social Security is 90 percent of their income, and for a quarter of all seniors, Social Security is their only income. Taking almost fifty bucks a month out of such a low income is a lot of meals they can't afford, and it is a miserable thing to do, especially when there is no reason to do it.

The odd thing about the whole situation is that the projected savings from Obama's proposed COLA cut, while huge for senior citizens, are so small in the overall deficit issue that they are totally irrelevant. The projected saving is only around \$122 billion spread over ten years or \$12.2 billion a year. So what is really going on here?

Cutting benefits, it would appear, is not a response to the current "Cliff Crisis"; it is something Obama has wanted to do

all along, and something he has offered Republicans in past budget and debt ceilings discussions. We were only saved from it by Republican obstinacy and refusal to cooperate on any level. As a Senator and as a 2008 candidate, Obama had strongly supported raising the Payroll Tax cap so that the rich would pay more. Immediately after getting elected in 2008, however, he began moving toward benefit cuts.

*The Washington Post* of January 7, 2009 reported that "President-elect Barack Obama said Wednesday that overhauling Social Security and Medicare would be 'a central part' of his administration's efforts to contain federal spending, signaling for the first time that he would wade into the thorny politics of entitlement programs."

Obama convened the Bowles-Simpson Commission to make proposals about the deficit. He told it to include recommendations for Social Security although Social Security had nothing to do with the deficit. Simpson, of course, is the former Republican Senator Alan Simpson, who was then working as a professional Social Security hater. He once said, "We've reached a point now where it's like a milk cow with 310 million tits." The Co-Chairs of this Commission proposed changing the COLA among many other things, but they could not muster enough votes among the commission members to endorse their recommendations. The President continues to press for some commission findings.

Progressive organizations from the largest national groups and unions to the most local are putting up stiff opposition to this benefit cut. We in Three Parks can be proud to be part of that effort.

### ***THREE PARKS MEETING***

**FEBRUARY 13**

**PLEASE NOTE: 7 p.m. start time**

**Speaker: Professor Joseph Stiglitz,  
Nobel Prize winning economist**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.economicpopulist.org/content/chained-cpi-will-reduce-your-social-security-benefits>

## Proposed Resolution on Protecting Social Programs

*From time to time, Three Parks introduces resolutions to enable the club to work formally on various issues, for example, health care/single payer, education, and fracking. Below for consideration by the membership is a proposed resolution to preserve and strengthen social programs in addition to Social Security. It will be read, discussed, and voted on at the January 9 club meeting.*

WHEREAS Members of Congress and the Executive are negotiating a budget that may cut or otherwise weaken programs upon which millions of Americans rely, including, but not limited to, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/food stamps;

WHEREAS any action that reduces funding or implementation of these programs places the burden of our country's economic struggles on those who are the least able to bear them and who are in no way responsible for federal deficits or the economic downturn;

WHEREAS these programs are vital to protecting millions of Americans, including those struggling to live on both sides of the poverty line, as well as those in the middle class; and

WHEREAS to the extent the government needs to find ways to increase revenue, it should look first to actions with the least impact on the poor and middle class, such as raising taxes on the highest income earners, eliminating corporate tax loopholes, and reducing the military budget.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) Three Parks Independent Democrats calls upon all our elected officials to vote against cuts or any weakening of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP/food stamps and other programs vital to the millions of Americans who depend on them and instead to fight to preserve and strengthen these programs and
- 2) IMPLEMENTATION: The mandate of the club's existing Social Security Committee is expanded to include activities in these areas.

### Proposed Nominees to the Three Parks Board of Directors

Elections will be held at the February 13 meeting:

Theresa Canter, Second Vice President  
Wendy Dannett  
Jock Davenport, Recording Secretary  
Ellen Flax, Treasurer  
Ernestine Gallagher  
Daniele Gerard, First Vice President  
Louisa Gilbert  
Elizabeth Kellner, President  
Erl Kimmich  
Barbara Lee  
Marie Lunn  
Bruce Markens  
Mary Ann Marks  
Lynn Bender Max  
Merle McEldowney  
Abigail McGloster  
Corine Pettey

Milivoy Samurovich  
Ray Schwartz  
Lauren Williams, Membership Director  
Jane Wisdom  
Judy Wood, Corresponding Secretary

The District Leaders, Bob Boffeld 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 69<sup>th</sup> Assembly District or any adjoining Assembly District, or anyone employed in or doing business in the 69<sup>th</sup> 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 2013 Membership Form is included in the Newsletter. Renew your membership or join now to be able to vote at the February 13 Annual General Meeting.*

## **A Reflection on the Film The Central Park Five**

By Wendy Dannett (edited by Jacob Dannett)

I recently saw the movie *The Central Park Five* and was very moved by the stories of five black and Latino teenagers who were railroaded into making false confessions about the rape and beating of a white female jogger, which resulted in their convictions in 1989. They were ages 14 to 16 at the time, and seeing them made me think of my son at that age, young and innocent about the world. They were condemned by those in the government, such as Mayor Koch (who railed against them on TV) and by the media – before their convictions.

Before seeing the movie, I heard one of the youths from the film, Yusef Salaam, speak at a fundraiser. I saw him now as a poised young man. Hearing him speak about what his ordeal – the trial, being in jail, and his struggles since being out – was very upsetting. Besides the years of his life that were lost in jail he still has had to face people who do not believe in his innocence, though he was exonerated and the true rapist, Matias Reyes, has been convicted. I was impressed by Yusef's strength and determination to do whatever he can to help others in similar situations.

Sadly, the story of *The Central Park Five* is not unusual or isolated. Their cases epitomize the unfairness of our justice system and government policies, past and present. Today we are dealing with "Stop and Frisk" and killings resulting from this policy. I have decried these injustices and others, and I have tried in my own way to fight against them (for example, going into Mississippi during the 1960's to work on voter registration for Black Americans, rallying against the war in Vietnam and now working against environmental injustices). I often have felt my efforts have been inadequate, and I was not prepared to put my life on the line.

Therefore, I was impressed by another aspect of *The Central Park Five*: the efforts of Bill Perkins in the young men's defense. (I actually learned more about this at a talk at local 1199, where Bill Perkins was recognized for helping these

youths.) I am often dismayed by the duplicity of our elected officials – but Perkins was a lone figure who defended the young men and helped them get a lawyer. Today, he continues to fight for unpopular positions, such as fighting against charter schools and working for affordable housing. *The Central Park Five* is a movie that is not only provocative and eye-opening but importantly shows why the work we do as activists and progressive Democrats is important.

## **Three Parks Holiday Party**

By Lauren Williams

Three Parks hosted its Annual Holiday Party on December 2. Thanks to colorful and festive decorations coordinated by Lynn Thomas, wonderful holiday and dance music delivered by DJ Denise, and the potluck buffet prepared by Ernestine Gallagher's team of chefs and members as well as our guests, the over 200 partygoers enjoyed a wonderful evening. Numerous electeds and local Democratic Party officials also joined the festivities. Pictures are posted on the Three Parks Web site and at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/30081092@N04/sets/>

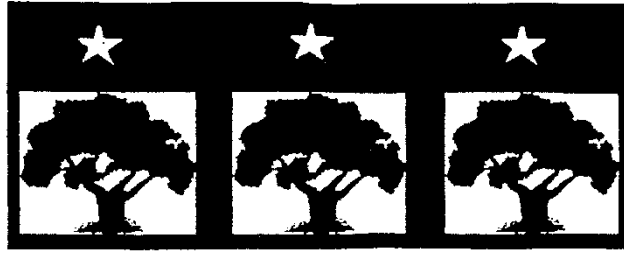
Three Parks' President Daniele Gerard welcomed everyone and acknowledged the many volunteers who helped by decorating, tending bar, serving food, and helping with other party tasks. She also thanked those who brought donations for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts.

***THREE PARKS MEETING***

**FEBRUARY 13**

**PLEASE NOTE: 7 p.m. start time**

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Please pay your 2013 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*

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## 2013 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 2013\*\*\*\*

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

**NEXT MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9**  
**Recovering from Hurricane Sandy**