

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Ray Schwartz (tappsch@nyc.rr.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

June 2008 Meeting

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS:

Building a Bigger Democratic Majority in Congress:
Rodd Mcleod, Regional Political Director, Democratic
Congressional Campaign Committee and William Lofy,
Deputy Political Director, Democratic Senatorial
Campaign Committee

Pizza & Petitioning

DATE: Wednesday, June 11, 2008

TIME: 8:00 PM

**PLACE: American Youth Hostels
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street**

ROOM: Chapel

AGENDA

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

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
Petitioning Kickoff
3. Building a Bigger Democratic Majority
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Mon. June 16, 2008, 10 AM – 6 PM
NYC Rent Guidelines Board – Public Hearing
Place: Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St.

Thurs. June 19, 2008, 5:30 PM – 9:30 PM
NYC Rent Guidelines Board – Final Vote
Place: Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St.

Wed. June 25, 2008, 8 PM
Three Parks Board Meeting
Place: Youth Hostel
891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wed. Aug. 6, 2008, 6 PM – 8 PM (Tentative)
Three Parks Annual Picnic
Place: Central Park West at 103rd St.

August 25 – 28, 2008
Democratic Party Presidential Convention
Place: Denver, Colorado

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Once again, Three Parks hosted more than 100 people at our last meeting. We extend our thanks to the speakers for our Housing Forum—Jennie Laurie, Executive Director of Metropolitan Council on Housing, and Beth Malone, Director of NHS's Home Ownership Center. Their talks were informative and the Q&A lively. The membership is certainly looking forward to a Democratic Senate that can join the Assembly in passing pro-tenant legislation! Elsewhere in the newsletter is a recap of the Club's endorsement votes.

Our June 11th meeting will feature two front line participants in the Democrats' push to increase the majority in the House and Senate in November 2008. Rodd McLeod, Regional Political Director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and William Lofy, Deputy Political Director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, will bring us up to date on House and Senate races around the country, chances for picking up seats in November, what the DCCC and DSCC are doing for the various candidates—and how we can get involved. The Club will also host its annual pizza party and distribute nominating petitions. Please post the enclosed flyer in your building to help spread the word!

This will be our last formal Club meeting until September, although we are planning a picnic for Wednesday, August 6th (rain date August 13th), location to be announced soon. Please check the website often for updates about the picnic, the storefront we plan to open in the Fall, upcoming voter registration & membership drives and other tabling activities. (You can also pay dues, make contributions and volunteer using the website.) Over the next five months, we will be preparing to win the White House and increase Democratic majorities locally and in Congress. Always be sure to sign in at every Club meeting so we know whom we can count on to participate in Club activities.

As I look back on my first three months as

President, I am reminded of both the purpose of Three Parks as spelled out in our Constitution and the Club's achievements in meeting its goals. For example, the Club is charged with "maintain[ing] and improv[ing] the quality of life in our neighborhood, city, state and country." In this context, we can be enormously proud of the Club's significant participation in the successful fights for neighborhood rezoning, against the West Side Stadium, and against the Bush Administration's attempts to privatize Social Security. We have also collected thousands of signatures on petitions and sponsored letter-writing campaigns in two other ongoing battles: against the Iraq War and the relicensing of the Indian Point nuclear power plant.

Our mandate includes providing support for "Democratic candidates who demonstrate ability, integrity and progressive convictions." As well as petitioning and campaigning for our Congressional, state and local representatives, dozens of Club volunteers have also canvassed, participated in phone-banking and distributed flyers on behalf of John Hall and Andrea Stewart-Cousins in Westchester and Linda Stender in New Jersey, among others. From the Club's 2004 storefront, volunteers made 35,000 calls on behalf of the Presidential and other races; Three Parks arranged for bus trips that took more than 1,500 volunteers to canvas in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The Club's purpose is also to "build enrollment in the Democratic Party" and "support the Democratic Party" in our Assembly District. On many weekends throughout the year, even in the dead of winter, you can often find Board members and other Three Parks volunteers registering voters and conducting additional tabling activities. The Club's monthly meetings and the community events we cosponsor always feature issues of importance to Democrats in the district.

These achievements are what Three Parks is really all about, thanks to the myriad volunteers who regularly attend meetings, sign up for even the most thankless tasks and work so consistently to accomplish the objectives

spelled out in the Constitution. These are the people who make the difference in the Club's impact in the neighborhood, the City and beyond. I am grateful to work with so many members of our community devoted to both democratic and Democratic causes and principles.

When Three Parks opens its storefront this fall, we will build together on our successes; I look forward to working with all of you there. Let's gear up to elect Democrats at home and around the country to implement a truly progressive agenda at all levels of government.

District Leader Report

By Cynthia Doty

As I write this column I am off to Washington D.C. to attend the DNC Rules Committee meeting (as an observer) to decide what to do about seating the Florida and Michigan delegation. These next few days will see the end of the Primaries and most likely a decision will be made as to who will be our next Democratic nominee for President.

Contrary to what we hear from the media and all the talking heads, this political race has actually been very exciting and invigorating for us Democrats. As Dukakis said, "We may sound like a bunch of fighting cats out in the alley, but all we are really doing is making more Democrats." More people have come out to vote this year than ever before in history. And more people of all stripes and ages have been motivated enough to really come to rallies, to phone banks, to caucuses, and to fundraisers than ever before. Democrats have raised record amounts of money and far surpassed the Republicans.

Now we have to come together and sustain this momentum through November. We have a wonderful chance to win more seats in the House and Senate to provide real substantial majority votes on legislation and we progressives have a chance to demand real progressive laws for a change. To do that, however, we must acknowledge that both our candidates ran very good campaigns and

garnered **huge record-breaking** numbers of votes. The winner will win by only a small margin so he or she must very publicly acknowledge the depth of the others' support and respect the others' supporters. The winner must show **sincere** (not patronizing or token) respect for the loser and work very hard to include him or her in the next phase. The demonizing and character attacks must stop and a major, well-respected role for the other must be found.

If we cannot come together, we will give the election to McCain....and that would be a disaster for this country. We cannot have another 4 years of Republican destruction from Washington!

Three Parks will do our part with our grass roots campaigning. We will work on Congressional seats in NJ and NYS and we will help win several NYS Senate seats to give the Dems a majority in Albany. So roll up your sleeves and join us. It will be exciting and lots of fun! Victory will be ours in November!

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Public
Hearing on Increases to Rent Controlled
and Stabilized Apartments

Monday, June 16th, 10AM-6PM
Cooper Union, 7 E 7th St
(To testify, Register at 212-385-2934 x 11)

Thursday, June 19th, 5:30-9:30PM
Final Vote and Demonstration
Cooper Union, 7 E. 7th St.

Carriage Horse Legislation

By Elizabeth Forel, President - The Coalition for
New York City Animals, Inc.

Horse-drawn carriages have long been a matter of controversy in NYC. These slow moving 18th century conveyances impede the flow of traffic, including fire trucks and ambulances. They constitute a danger to people in vehicles, on bicycles, on foot, as well as to the horses themselves. Since 2006, At least six people have been hospitalized and

three horses have died from horse carriage accidents. The horses work nine hours a day, seven days a week between the shafts of their carriages only to return to their small stalls in multi-storied warehouses. They have no turnout.

In December, 2008, Council Member Tony Avella introduced Intro 658 – a bill that would ban the carriage industry from operating in NYC. Major cities like London, Paris, Toronto and even Beijing have a ban in place. Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito, immediately co-sponsored the bill. She was followed by Council Members Arroyo, Mendez, Monserrate, Palma and Yassky. Unfortunately, Speaker Christine Quinn, who has an abysmal record on animal issues has blocked the bill from moving forward. Please contact Council Members Inez Dickens (212)-788-7397 and Gale Brewer (212)-788-6975 to ask them to sign on to this bill. Please visit www.banhdc.org for more information and to contact us for our online newsletter. Questions: coalitionbanhdc@gmail.com.

Gas Prices, Another Republican Failure

By Steve Max

As gas prices pass \$4.00 indicating that the cost of oil has reached a record high, much discussion has turned to the cause. Many factors have an impact on the cost of oil including instability in the Middle East, increased consumption worldwide and a leveling off of new oil field discoveries. Receiving less attention is the falling value of the dollar which results from Republican/neo-liberal policies.

The value of the dollar has been sliding steadily, which means that if you bought a loaf of French bread for \$1.00 in the year 2000, the bread would now cost \$1.57 even if the French baker had not raised the price one bit in eight years. The fifty-seven cent increase is entirely due to the falling value of the dollar. There can be little doubt that since oil is sold in dollars world wide, the owners of oil have noticed the drop in the dollar and raised prices

accordingly. In addition and perhaps more important, as the dollar falls those who own them look for investments that will hold their value. What could be better than speculating in valuable oil. But speculation in oil, like speculation in food, also drives up prices.

Almost a year ago CNBC carried a Reuters' news item saying in part:

"The weak dollar's leading role in oil's ascent to record highs is partly due to a tide of financial flows into commodity investments but also reflects a shift in the greenback's relationship with crude.

The dollar has traditionally influenced the price of oil and other commodities, including gold and base metals, which are mostly priced in the currency [dollars] and usually move to compensate for changes in the its value.

So the steep fall in the dollar to record lows against the euro, for example, has helped drive oil to a record of \$83.90 a barrel, reached on Sept. 20."

Last May, when the price rise had briefly slowed before heading toward today's \$130.00 a barrel, CNN World Business again spoke of oil's price/dollar connection"

"SINGAPORE (AP) -- Oil prices retreated further Friday from the early-week record near \$120 a barrel as a strengthening U.S. dollar prompted investors to exit the market.

The dollar's rise has stripped away some of oil's appeal to investors who have been betting that the greenback would continue to falter. When the dollar gains ground, commodities such as oil lose their value as a hedge against inflation, prompting selling. Also, a stronger dollar makes oil more expensive to investors overseas."

But isn't this just Economist Adam Smith's Invisible Hand of the free market blessing all who chose to live under Capitalism? That too, but it really is the Republicans. In 2004 when the dollar took a big hit, President Bush made a decision not to do the things governments usually do to defend the value of their currencies. He knew that a falling dollar would

make American exports cheaper for other countries to buy which boosted jobs and gave the appearance of success to his economic program.

Since then, tax breaks for the rich have led to huge budget deficits that require borrowing from other countries. This has steadily increased the amount of dollars foreign banks are holding. Ruinous free market trade policies, also endorsed by neo-liberals, have added to the trillions of dollars in foreign banks, and now after allowing the housing bubble to expand and break without regulation, the Administration is lowering interest rates which reduces the profit on loans of dollars made by foreigners. Worse, countries with big dollar stocks are growing hesitant to invest in American real estate. No wonder they are asking, what good are all these dollars and why do we want more of them?

It used to be that by common agreement all oil was sold for dollars, so, if nothing else, the holders of dollars could buy oil with them. This is starting to change. Partly because of the falling dollar value and partly because of Bush Administration hostility, Iran and Venezuela stopped selling oil for dollars this year. (As did Saddam Hussein just before he was overthrown.)

All of these interconnected developments are combining to raise the price of gas at the pump, and while we should not be surprised to see it mysteriously drop just before the election, Americans will continue to pay the price for Republican policies unless a new administration drastically changes the country's direction.

Straus Park Events

Book/Photography Fair, Sat. July 12,

10 am – 4 pm (Rain date: 7/13)

Contact Margie Kavanau at 212-866-9038
to rent space

Art in the Park, Sat. Oct. 18 (rain date: 10/19)

10am – 4pm

Kornreich Confirmed As Supreme Court Justice

By Alan Flacks

New York City Civil Court Judge Shirley Werner Kornreich was confirmed by the New York State Senate May 28th, 2008, to fill an interim seat on the State's trial bench. An Upper Westside resident, she was nominated by Governor Paterson for the vacancy created when Appellate Division Justice Stephen Crane left last February. As she was confirmed before June 1st she is considered an "incumbent" judge under the New York County Democratic Party rules, thus making easier her designation at the Party's judicial nominating convention later this year for election to a full term. She is expected to resign her current County-wide Civil Court seat shortly creating another judgeship for the Party to fill.

In the Surrogate race, the three contenders for the Democratic nomination, Nora Anderson (a practitioner in the Surrogate's court), John Reddy (one of the two attorneys appointed by the Surrogates to work for the Public Administrator in that court), and Milton Tingling (a State Supreme Court justice) all have won some endorsements to date from various Manhattan Democratic clubs. All have their supporters, all promise to run, and all have "war chests."

The only other judicial vacancy in New York County is the First Civil Court District seat in lower Manhattan. **Nancy Marie Bannon**, **Gerald Lebovits**, and **Frank Nervo** were reported as the best of the applicants to the local Democratic Party screening panel set up by the Party's district leaders there. Bannon is the law clerk to Judge Deborah Kaplan; Lebovits is a Housing Court Judge, and Nervo is a solo practitioner.

Electronic Collection Results

The May 17th to 19th Upper Westside Recycling event collected over 9.5 tons of old electronic equipment. The Lower East Side Ecology Center thanks all those who contributed.

Tell the NY Senate to Pass the PAID Family Leave Act

Cynthia Doty, District Leader

In 1993 Pres. Clinton signed into law the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which enabled over 50 million Americans to take up to 12 weeks off from their jobs to care for a newborn or ill family member without losing their jobs. However, this leave is UNPAID, so many cannot afford to use it because they cannot afford to lose the income.

PAID Family Leave makes it economically feasible for workers to take time off, helps businesses retain and recruit valuable employees, and reduces health care costs. Since 130,000 working mothers will give birth in NYS in this next year, this legislation is urgently needed. In addition, many more workers need to take time off to care for an aging parent as our population lives longer and more people are staying in their homes rather than institutions.

Send an email or postcard to Senator Bruno, (as well as Senators Perkins and Schneiderman), and tell him to pass PAID Family Leave Act this year!

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Eileen Weiss, past president of our sister club, Park River Independent Democrats. Sympathies go out to her family and all her political friends. She will be missed.

Condolences to Norman and Joan Levine, members of our sister club Broadway Democrats, on the passing of their son Eric who was a noted musician and political activist, especially in the disability community. A memorial service will be held on June 15th.

The Fifth Annual Three Parks Picnic! Details to come!

Tentative Date: Wed. Aug. 6th
6 – 8 PM

Place: Central Park at 103rd St.

May Meeting Endorsement Results

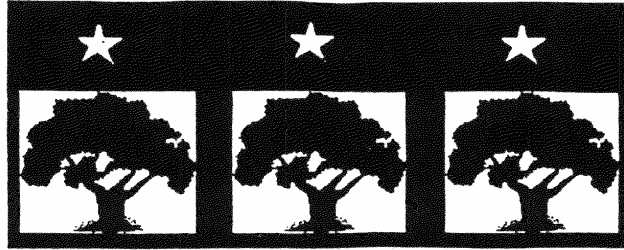
The results of the Three Parks May endorsement votes are as follows:

| | | | |
|---|----|----------------|----|
| <u>US House of Representatives, 15th District</u> | | | |
| Rangel | 86 | No Endorsement | 22 |
| <u>NY State Senate, 31st Senate District</u> | | | |
| Schneiderman | 87 | No Endorsement | 8 |
| <u>NY State Senate, 30th Senate District</u> | | | |
| Perkins | 94 | No Endorsement | 10 |
| <u>NY State Assembly, 69th Assembly District</u> | | | |
| O'Donnell | 83 | No Endorsement | 20 |
| <u>NY State Committee, Female 69th Assembly District</u> | | | |
| Thomas | 86 | No Endorsement | 5 |
| <u>NY State Committee, Male, 69th Assembly District</u> | | | |
| Ginsberg | 61 | | |
| Hirsch | 37 | | |
| No Endorsement | 5 | | |
| <u>Manhattan Surrogate</u> | | | |
| Anderson | 63 | | |
| Tingling | 39 | | |
| Reddy | 2 | | |
| No Endorsement | 7 | | |
| <u>Three Parks Judicial Delegates</u> | | | |
| Canter | 61 | | |
| Flacks | 81 | | |
| Gallagher | 26 | | |
| Kogelman | 18 | | |
| D. Thomas | 9 | | |
| Petty | 28 | | |
| Samurovich | 55 | | |
| Tegnazian | 3 | | |
| Wood | 40 | | |

The deadline for submissions for the September 2008 Newsletter is August 27, 2008.

The September Three Parks Meeting will be on September 10, 2008.





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Please pay your 2008 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***

2008 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member___

Renewal___

Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$20) _____

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$30) _____

Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$8)_____

Sponsor (\$40)_____ 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 make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2008"

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

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

**BUILDING A BIGGER MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE & SENATE:
Electing Democrats in November 2008--and how you can help!
PIZZA & PETITIONING**

