

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Ray Schwartz (tapsch@nyc.rr.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

June 2009

JUNE MEETING: Wednesday, June 10, 2009

**FEATURED TOPICS
&
SPEAKERS**

PIZZA AND PETITIONING

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR ECONOMY? by Steve
Max

ENDORSED CANDIDATES to give greetings

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
2. Health Care & Judicial Updates
3. District Leaders' Reports
4. Pizza and Petitioning
5. Presentation: What Happened to Our Economy
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

THREE PARKS PICNIC

Date, time and location to be announced

LOOK FOR THE POSTCARD IN THE MAIL!

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column By Daniele Gerard

Congratulations to all the candidates endorsed by Three Parks!

Mayor: Tony Avella
Comptroller: John Liu
Public Advocate: Norman Siegel
Borough President: Scott Stringer
Manhattan District Attorney: Richard Aborn
City Council, 8th District: Melissa Mark-Viverito
City Council, 9th District: Inez Dickens
District Leaders: Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty

Thanks to all the candidates who addressed the membership. A special thanks to the panelists of the Club's May 27th education forum on the future of New York City's public schools—Michael Fiorillo, UFT Chapter Leader, Newcomers High School and Aaron Pallas, Professor of Sociology and Education, Teachers College. Their informative presentations and thoughtful, nuanced responses to the membership's questions provided much to consider for the future of the City's schools.

At the June 10th meeting, Three Parks will host its traditional "pizza and petitioning" party where members can pick up their petition packets and enjoy pizza and socializing. Club member Steve Max will provide an overview of the financial crisis entitled "What Happened to Our Economy?" Our endorsed candidates will be dropping by during the evening. This is the last club meeting before September, so come one, come all.

For the rest of June and the first part of July, it is critical that as many club members as possible be out petitioning in force. This is where we can make a real difference in the upcoming elections to get the Club's endorsed candidates on the ballot. Remember to return all your signed petitions to Bob Botfeld or Cynthia Doty on or before July 9th. (The Democratic primary will take

place on Tuesday, September 15th and the general election on Tuesday, November 3rd.)

The Three Parks annual picnic is scheduled for late July or early August; look for the postcard in your mailbox in the next few weeks announcing the date, time and place. We look forward to seeing you there!

CITY BUDGET ACTION By Cynthia Doty

**The New York City Council will be voting on the 2009-10 City Budget soon.
ACT NOW!**

The New York City Council will be voting on the 2009-2010 budget next month. Please call our Council Members and ask them to restore funding to the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Record numbers of New Yorkers rely on soup kitchens and food pantries to help them get through the month.

Urge our Council Members to: *Restore \$2.1million to the Emergency Food Assistance Program to enable emergency food programs to continue serving hungry New Yorkers.*

EFAP funding is used for the direct purchase of food and for capacity expansion efforts for over 500 EFAP food pantries and soup kitchens throughout NYC.

According to the New York City Food Bank's report "NYC Hunger Experience 2008 Update: Food Poverty Soars as Recession Hits Home"

- Four million NYC residents have difficulty providing for the basic food needs of their families.
- This number is up by one million just in the last year alone, a symptom of this deep recession. This is the highest one year jump since the beginning of the poll in 2003.

Contact: Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito at 212-828-9800 and Council Member Inez Dickens at 212-678-4505.

Update on Indian Point By Daniele Gerard

On May 11th, Assemblyman Richard Brodsky argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit a case challenging the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for easing fire safety requirements at Indian Point (IP). The main issues on appeal were that the NRC improperly granted the requested reduction because the agency (1) failed to give proper notice or provide for public participation, (2) failed to consider relevant evidence in making its decision, and (3) characterized the change as an "exemption" rather than as an amendment in violation of the Atomic Energy Act. As the Assemblyman colorfully stated, the NRC could have called the requested reduction in fire safety requirements "a banana"—it was still an amendment subject to certain procedures under the law.

Under NRC regulations, a nuclear power facility built prior to 1979 must use a fire barrier with a one-hour fire rating; in other words, the barrier must protect cables and other equipment necessary for a safe shutdown from the effects of fire for one hour. Since 1993, the NRC has known that the fire barrier at Indian Point did not meet the one-hour requirement. In fact, a 2005 test confirmed a 1993 test that the fire barrier exceeded temperature limits within thirteen to 42 minutes. In August 2008, Entergy, the owner-operator of Indian Point, requested a reduction in the fire safety standard from one hour to 24 minutes for certain areas, which the NRC granted. Assemblyman Brodsky was joined by John Sipos of the New York State Attorney General's Office; they argued this appeal on behalf of a coalition of public interest groups.

In 2007, Entergy filed for a 20-year license extension; IP's current licenses expire in 2013 and 2015. The NRC does not expect to make a decision on the renewal until sometime after February 2010. For further information and to sign a petition to close Indian Point when its current licenses expire, please go to

riverkeeper.org; you can also write to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and ask them to speak out publicly against license renewal.

Judge Sotomayor in *Madison vs. Limbaugh* By Steve Max

The right-wing Swiftboat machine was rolling even before President Obama could utter the name Sotomayor. She's a judicial activist they say, someone who will make policy from the bench and impose her own convictions instead of simply stating the law, as if that is not exactly what conservative judges do. Unfortunately, instead of challenging the right's false definition of a good judge, Sonia Sotomayor's defenders are saying that of course she isn't an activist. The underlying right-wing view is that our Constitution and laws are crystal clear and all a judge should do is apply them to the case at hand. That is wrong. James Madison said so and he ought to know a thing or two about the Constitution.

Eager to secure New York State's ratification of the new Constitution, Madison wrote a newspaper article entitled *Concerning the Difficulties of the Convention in Devising a Proper Form of Government*. Madison addressed criticisms that the new constitution was unclear in its delineation of powers between the federal government and the states, and also unclear about the separation of powers between the branches of the federal government itself. He said, in effect: Of course it isn't clear; these are very complex subjects and we did our best, but we are only human.

"The experience of ages, with the continued and combined labors of the most enlightened legislatures and jurists, has been equally unsuccessful in delineating the several objects and limits of different codes of laws and different tribunals of justice."

"Besides the obscurity arising from the complexity of objects, and the imperfection of the human faculties, the medium through which the conceptions of men are conveyed to each other adds a fresh embarrassment."

The use of words is to express ideas. Perspicuity, therefore, requires not only that the ideas should be distinctly formed, but that they should be expressed by words distinctly and exclusively appropriate to them. But no language is so copious as to supply words and phrases for every complex idea, or so correct as not to include many equivocally denoting different ideas. ... When the Almighty himself condescends to address mankind in their own language, his meaning, luminous as it must be, is rendered dim and doubtful by the cloudy medium through which it is communicated.”

“All new laws, though penned with the greatest technical skill, and passed on the fullest and most mature deliberation, are considered as more or less obscure and equivocal, until their meaning be liquidated and ascertained by a series of particular discussions and adjudications.”

Remarkable! Four months after the drafting is complete, one of the principal authors of the Constitution says that it is neither clear nor written in stone for all justices to follow forever, but that it is more or less obscure and equivocal, its meaning to be clarified by adjudication. This is not a one-way street in which the Constitution and laws determine the judgment of courts, but a two-way process in which the meaning of the law itself is shaped by the judicial process. Policy will be made from the bench after all. Despite its protests, the right knows this and acts accordingly. If Sonia Sotomayor will be our activist judge, we should say good—and more of the same. The father of the Constitution would have expected no less.

**Three Parks Meets with Senator
Schumer on Health Care**
By Cynthia Doty & the TPID Health Care
Committee

Spearheading a coalition of Democratic clubs, Three Parks members met last week with Senator Schumer to discuss raising the visibility of Single Payer national health care in order to strengthen the proposed Public Option. Senator Schumer is leading a

subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee charged with drafting the Public Option legislation. In addition to Three Parks members and officers, the meeting was attended by Broadway Democrats’ District Leader Curtis Arluck, State Committee Member Larry Hirsch of Community Free Democrats, and Dr. Laura Boylan of Physicians for a National Health Program.

The Senator was presented with over 1,300 signatures supporting Single Payer and urged that it be given a hearing. Single Payer is the program endorsed by Three Parks. We suggested to the Senator that more emphasis on Single Payer, a plan that eliminates private for-profit health insurance altogether, could reduce the attacks by the insurance industry on the less comprehensive proposals emerging from his committee. We also urged the Senator to produce the strongest possible program and challenge the Republicans to filibuster it.

Senator Schumer listened intently to our concerns and discussed various strategies for achieving successful reform given the signals from the White House and the political leanings of his colleagues. He agreed to ask the Congressional Budget Office to do an analysis of Single Payer legislation, a significant step. He also said he would call for the House to hold hearings and would participate himself. He expressed support for some of our proposals for strengthening the public option and encouraged everyone to find ways to put pressure on Finance Committee Democrats, especially Ron Wyden of Oregon and Bill Nelson of Florida, to support a strong public option.

All in all it was a very informative and productive meeting. For more information on the TPID Health Care Campaign, go to www.threeparksdems.org

Diversity at The Beacon School
By a concerned group of Beacon students

The Beacon School, located on 61st between Amsterdam and West End has become

regarded as one the best public schools in New York City. Its academic rigor reaches the standards of those of Stuyvesant, Brooklyn Tech., and Bronx Science. We are proud to say we are a part of its community. But every sliver lining has a cloud. When Beacon was founded in 1993, it was a school which catered to large range of students, all differing in ethnic background, neighborhoods, socio-economic standing, race and skill levels. This was due to the original admission process. This process was one where 50% of the students who applied were randomly chosen and the other 50% were screened. Having half of the students randomly selected made for a diverse student population.

Currently, and beginning with the graduating class of 2009, all students who have applied are screened. However, not just anyone can apply. The students who can apply are the ones who have scored 3-4 out of 4 on their 8th grade exams and have an 85% or higher average in school. This already eliminates a great deal of students. Last year, Beacon was 54% white; 17% black/African-American; 22% Hispanic/Latino and 7% Asian. In 2005-2006 1% were English Language Learners and 6% were Special Education Students. The students who do meet this criteria go for an interview and present their portfolio. This portfolio is a representation of their best work from 7th and 8th grade. However the students who have the resources to create impressive portfolios tend to be from families in District 3 or Park Slope, Brooklyn. These are the dominating neighborhoods where Beacon students hail from. NYC's Public School race demographics are: 14.2% white, 34.7% black, 14.3% Asian and 36.7% Hispanic.

For the past month, there has been a diverse group of students working to make Beacon a more ethnically, economically, and culturally diverse school. This dedicated group of students is interested in making the admissions policy a fairer (or more equitable) one that does not exclude the majority of our communities. We intend to volunteer out time to work with neighborhood elementary and middle schools that largely comprise low

income students and students of color so that they can learn about and have greater access to Beacon. As part of an overall outreach effort we also would like to propose that Beacon students give presentations to 7th grade students at under represented schools. We would also like Beacon students to be more meaningfully, yet appropriately, involved with admissions, school policy, decision-making, and the overall functioning of the Beacon community. Beacon offers a rich educational experience that all students should have the opportunity to enjoy.

SPRING CONCERT

NEW YORK CITY LABOR CHORUS
fresh from an appearance at Madison
Square Garden with
PETE SEEGER & CO.

Saturday, June 13 at 7:30 pm
Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St.
Seniors, Students, Unemployed \$15
General Admission \$25

Contact: judyw123@verizon.net

Three Parks Endorsement Vote Results

May 13, 2009 Meeting

<u>Mayor</u>		<u>Public Advocate</u>	
Tony Avella	43	Bill de Blasio	11
Bill Thompson	24	Eric Gioia	8
No Endorsement	4	Mark Green	5
<u>Write in:</u>		Norman Siegel	53
Anthony Weiner	2	No Endorsement	1
Mike Bloomberg	1		
Alan Flacks	1	<u>Comptroller</u>	
Ellen Flax	1	Melinda Katz	1
		John Liu	48
		David Weprin	1
		David Yassky	25
		No Endorsement	4

May 27, 2009 Meeting

<u>Manhattan District Attorney</u>		<u>NYC 8th Council District</u>	
Richard Aborn	41	Gwen Goodwin	7
Leslie Crocker Snyder	1	Melissa Mark-Viverito	44
Cyrus Vance, Jr.	25	Robert Rodriguez	0
No Endorsement	1	Calvin Solomon	17
		Evette Zayas	1
<u>Manhattan Borough President</u>		No Endorsement	2
Scott Stringer	56		
No Endorsement	6	<u>NYC 9th Council District</u>	
Alan Flacks	5	Carlton Berkley	4
Unknown	1	Landon Dais	1
		Inez Dickens	48
		Nicholas Simpson	3
		No Endorsement	13

The Following Resolution Will Be Voted on at the June 10th TPID Meeting

Resolution to Endorse an Alternative to NYC Carriage Horses as Proposed by New Yorkers for Clean, Livable & Safe Streets

WHEREAS, New Yorkers for Clean, Livable & Safe Streets (NY-CLASS), a non-profit organization funded by the ASPCA and private donations, urges Three Parks Independent Democrats to support the phase out of the carriage horse industry and the implementation of the eco-friendly hybrid antique automobile industry; and

WHEREAS, horse drawn carriages in Central Park and mid-town Manhattan degrade our quality of life and lead to environmentally harmful conditions; and

WHEREAS, many carriage-horse operators consistently violate laws and regulations set forth by the NYC Administrative Code, the NYC Health Code, and the Consumer Affairs Regulations; and

WHEREAS, during these difficult economic times, New York City needs a more economically stimulating alternative to the current carriage-horse industry that will be regulated and metered so that the City will receive a much needed injection of additional revenue; and

WHEREAS, it is universally agreed upon by equine veterinarians that the horse carriage

industry is severely and even fatally detrimental to the health and well-being of horses; and

WHEREAS, a 2007 audit by the New York City Comptroller stated that carriage horses do not have ready access to water or shade in the summer, work on blazing hot pavement and are forced to stand in dirty pools of water.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Three Parks Independent Democrats supports current legislation being drafted by Council Member Dan Garodnick in the New York City Council to phase out the carriage-horse industry and replace it with the eco-friendly hybrid antique automobile industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT all carriage horses will be rescued from their current state of inhumane treatment and final destination of the slaughterhouse and will instead be placed on farms to retire humanely.

Jared G. Rosen, Executive Director, NY-CLASS

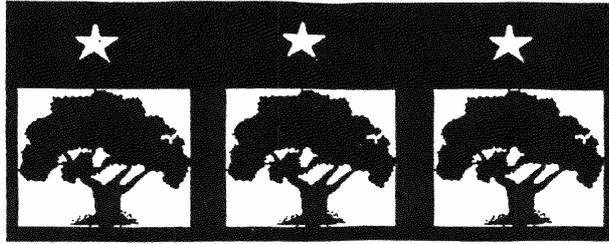
JUNE 10TH CANNED FOOD DRIVE From the Three Parks Board of Directors

As we all know, local food pantries are struggling to keep up with the increasing number of clients visiting them. On June 10th, please bring an item from the list below to the Three Parks meeting for delivery to West Side Campaign Against Hunger.

CANS or JARS Tuna or Salmon Fruit Vegetables Condensed milk	DRY GOODS Cereal Fruit Pasta or Rice Dried beans
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In addition, if you would like to organize food or check collection in your building, please email threeparksdems@aol.com to find out how easy this can be. Any non-perishable foods will be picked up weekly; donations for as little as \$5 can be made online at WSCAH's website <http://www.wscah.org> or by mail to WSCAH, 263 West 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024

Thank you so much for your contributions, whether of food or funds, and for everything you do to help our neighbors in need!



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

Please pay your 2009 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*

2009 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member _____

Renewal _____

Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$25) _____

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

Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$10) _____

Low Income Family (18) _____

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 make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2009"

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

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Pizza & Petitioning

**Presentation: What Happened to Our Economy?
Endorsed candidates dropping by**

The deadline for the September Newsletter is August 26th, 2009