



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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Lynn Thomas
Daniel Marks Cohen

CLUB MEETING JUNE 11, 2014

FEATURED TOPICS & **Jamie Kemmerer, candidate for State Senate** in Brooklyn
SPEAKERS: **Take Back the House Campaign** in 11th Congressional District –
Staten Island/Brooklyn
Pizza and Petitioning

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014

TIME: 8:00 PM

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

ROOM: Chapel/Ballroom

AGENDA

- 8:00 pm Call To Order and Announcements
1. **Pizza party, Petitioning and Campaigns**
 2. **Volunteer Opportunities with Other Campaigns including Take Back the House and the NY State Senate.**
 3. **Jamie Kemmerer - Democratic Candidate for the State Senate in Southwest Brooklyn**
 4. **Discussion and Vote on Resolution in Support of Fossil Fuel Divestment by Public and Union Pension Funds**

Adjourn

CALENDAR

May 29 - July 4

Petitioning for NY State candidates

June 2, June 3, & June 4 –

Participatory Budgeting Meetings.

7th CD Council District, Helen Rosenthal

Various locations - see article p.6

June 12 & June 17

Participatory Budgeting Meetings

6th City Council District, Mark Levine

Various locations - see article p.6

Wednesday, June 11, 2014, 8pm

TPID Membership Meeting

Hostel Ballroom

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Primary Election for 13th Congressional District

Wednesday, June 25, 2014, 8pm

TPID Board Meeting - Hostel Board Room

Wednesday, July 23, 5:30pm-8pm

Three Parks' 11th Annual Club Picnic

Near the Pool in Central Park (103rd St & CPW)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Elizabeth Kellner

At the May meeting, Three Parks members cast an overwhelming symbolic vote against Governor Cuomo's bid for re-election. Several people spoke for No Endorsement, reciting a litany of grievances where they believe the Governor could have, but failed, to give his full support for the Democratic Party's agenda in addition to his having enabled the ascendancy of the IDC/Republican controlled State Senate to block progressive measures which Democrats support. This was in stark contrast to the club's overwhelming support for the re-election bids of Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Comptroller Tom DiNapoli.

We also endorsed unopposed incumbents Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell and State Senator Bill Perkins and Democratic State Committee Members Daniel Marks Cohen and Lynn Thomas. For the contested State Senate seat now held by Adriano Espaillat, who is running for Congress, the club endorsed Robert Jackson. Complete results of the endorsement vote, as well as a report on the State Convention, appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Compared to the hectic and demanding political season of the Summer of 2013 when we had numerous and crowded primaries for multiple city and party offices, 2014 appears to be relatively quiet. However, there is still plenty of action for concerned Democrats who want to be part of a progressive campaign.

First, we have the June 24 federal primary to choose among Adriano Espaillat, Charles Rangel and Michael Walrond for the Democratic nomination in the 13th Congressional District. Petitioning for state offices began May 29 and ends July 10, and even our unopposed candidates must still collect the necessary number of signatures to secure their place on the ballot. Finally, there are several exciting contests beyond Three Parks boundaries where volunteers can make a difference.

Here is just a sample:

In the Bronx, long-time progressive Oliver Koppell is challenging incumbent State Senator Jeff Klein, mastermind and leader of the IDC.

In Queens, John Liu is challenging incumbent State Senator Tony Avella who recently defected from the Democrats to the IDC.

In Brooklyn, Democratic activist Jamie Kemmerer is running in November against long time incumbent Republican State Senator Martin Golden.

In Brooklyn/Staten Island former City Councilman Dominic Recchia is running in November against recently indicted Congressman Michael Grimm. Even before the criminal charges were announced, this was thought to be a "red to blue" seat.

Stay tuned for announcements of how to become involved with these campaigns -- just think of it as summer camp in the outer boroughs!

Finally, a word of thanks to all those who worked so hard to make Three Parks May 4 benefit such a success. Thank you to all those who gave their financial support, who attended and to our remarkable honorees -- Bloomingdale Aging in Place and Public Advocate Letitia James. Thanks also to the team at Cafe Orale (formerly Cafe Frida) who once again provided a lovely venue and delicious food.

DISTRICT LEADER REPORT

By Bob Botfeld

PETITIONING

Petitioning for our candidates for state senate, assembly, civil court and judicial delegates began May 29. The petitioning started unusually early this year because the normal June start date fell on a religious holiday.

Petitioning is our opportunity to meet our neighbors, talk about local issues and politics, get some fresh air while we're standing on our local corner, join other club members at the weekend tables, and knock on our neighbors' doors.

Petitioning on behalf of our candidates is critical. If candidates do not get the requisite number of signatures, they won't be on the ballot. If they're not on the ballot, they cannot be elected – even if they are the incumbents.

If you have not petitioned in the past, please take the opportunity to join in this very important activity and learn what your neighbors think about local and national politics.

From now until the club meeting on June 11, we are distributing the petitions at the Three Parks petitioning tables on Broadway. To arrange delivery of your petitions now call me at 212-865-1450 or Cynthia at 212-749-4085

Petitions and instructions for petitions will be distributed and discussed at the June 11 club meeting and pizza party.

POLL WORKERS

There are still vacancies for poll workers in Three Parks' district for the September primary and November general election.

Poll workers are paid approximately \$200/day and up to an additional \$100 for attending the mandatory training classes.

If you are interested in being a poll worker contact me at 212-865-1450 (email: rjbwteg@aol.com) or Cynthia at 212-749-4085 (email: cldoty@aol.com)

PIKETTY ON CAPITAL

By Judy Wood

Thomas Piketty, the French economist, is currently taking the media by storm, selling books and appearing on all programs. Piketty talks about the tax structure in the U.S. which once worked towards creating a just and fair society, but which has become so distorted that we are now looking at rising inequality; returning to an earlier and darker time in our history.

How and when did this happen? He pinpoints the 1980's as the definitive turning point. We know that 1980 saw the ascendancy of Reaganism with a vengeance. There was vengeance wreaked on the working middle class, known as union workers. These folks were the backbone of a strong middle class who earned enough money to send their kids to college. Now their wages, if they have any, are half of what they were and cost of college is going skyward for most of their kids at a time when a college degree is practically the only way to a decent job/career.

Reaganism also saw the culmination of the enduring philosophy of the Republican party - cut taxes, no new taxes, do in the progressive income tax that provided the resources that made a good life for millions. No one who raises even the idea of taxes is immediately shut down, primaried, and voted out of office, or not elected at all. The Democrats are afraid to be branded tax-and-spend liberals. They have been cowed by this anti-tax mantra which has caused the crisis we are in. And

the raising of the minimum wage is a bandaid at best in the fight against poverty.

Much more will be needed.

A bit of historical perspective.

1929 - THE GREAT CRASH

1930's THE GREAT DEPRESSION

This led to a host of social programs and a safety net which saved millions

The Supreme Court tried to fight it, but they were not successful

Progressive taxation was introduced

1940-45 WORLD WAR II

Then we had the GI bill, educated hundreds of thousands affordably

This newly educated cohort increased social mobility and economic growth

1946-1979 BABY BOOM era begins

Tax rates rise as high as 80% for those high earners and this money is poured into the economy creating housing and jobs

By 1990 the highest tax rate is in the 30% range and revenues plummet and resources no longer available for the programs needed by Americans.

In the past year or so, we have seen the rise to prominence of a new breed of progressive politicians who are not afraid to speak out:

Elizabeth Warren - Senator from Mass

Bill deBlasio - our new Mayor

Ras Baraka - new Mayor of Newark replacing Cory Booker, hedge fund & charter school darling

Marty Walsh - new Mayor of Boston, union leader and progressive guy

In New York we have endured 20 years of Republican governance which has left us with a legacy of high end real estate development, and very little affordable housing, and a movement to do in the public school system, which is also a nationwide hedge fund movement, designed to destroy the teachers unions which typically support Democrats.

Democracy means good free public education for all, without lotteries, colocations, exclusivity, or "millionaire/billionaire input." I say, if you want to help kids and have lots of money, help the public

schools in your town. Talk to the principals and teachers and involve them. They know what schools and kids need.

A few contrasts over the years:

Mayor La Guardia started our public radio station WNYC, and the New York City Opera, the people's opera.

Mayor Giuliani tried to sell the radio station, happily was not successful, but did sell the New York public television station.

Mayor Bloomberg, top billionaire, watched the people's opera, the New York City Opera, die on his watch without giving them a dime.

Thanks guys.

Our new Mayor has a lot to overcome, a lot to take care of. Lets help him turn things around.

DIVESTING FROM FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES

By Daniele Gerard and Merle McEldowney

It's long past time to leave fossil fuels in the ground and move full speed ahead on renewable energy. Three Parks members and friends have been advocating against fracking for more than four years. The membership can be proud of turning out for legislative and agency hearings on this issue and at rallies against climate change and in favor of renewable energy sources. Many of us were heartened by the 2011 CUNY study showing that two-thirds of New York City's rooftops are suitable for solar panels and could jointly generate enough energy to meet half the city's demand for electricity at peak periods.

We urge our elected officials to take bold action against climate change. This newsletter includes a resolution calling on New York City and State pension funds to divest from fossil fuels. This includes the City's primary employee Pension Funds: the Employees' Retirement System; the Teachers' Retirement System, the Police Pension Fund; the Fire Department Pension Fund; and the Board of Education Retirement System. Each pension fund is financially independent and has its own board of trustees. New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer is the custodian and investment advisor to the boards of the five pension funds.

The New York State Common Retirement Fund (CRF) holds assets in trust for more than one million

employees and retirees from State government, most local governments, and some public authorities. State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli is the sole trustee and manager of the CRF.

Please review the resolution and be prepared to discuss it and vote at the June meeting. If the membership votes to adopt it, we will join 350NYC, NYC Friends of Clearwater, Food & Water Watch, United for Action, and Village Independent Democrats, among others, in calling for divestment. Together, we can fight against the oil and gas industry and for a clean energy future!

For more information, including about alternate investments in new building projects, energy efficiency, public transportation and other green infrastructure projects, go to <http://350nyc.org/fossil-free-nyc/>

From time for time, Three Parks' members introduce resolutions to enable the club to work formally on various issues, for example, health care/single payer, Social Security, fracking, and a living wage. Below for consideration by the membership is a proposed resolution on divesting from fossil fuels. It will be read, discussed, and voted on at the June 11th club meeting.

RESOLUTION IN FAVOR OF DIVESTMENT FROM FOSSIL FUEL COMPANIES

(To be voted on June 11, 2014)

WHEREAS climate disasters have cost New York City and New York State billions of dollars in recent years,

WHEREAS investing pension money in fossil fuels provides funding for the operations of oil, gas, and coal companies,

WHEREAS reliance on fossil fuels for energy is acknowledged by 97 percent of scientists studying the issue as the main cause of the climate change threatening our environment, public health, economy, infrastructure, agriculture, transportation systems, and more,

WHEREAS fossil fuel investments comprise less than five percent of the \$150 billion New York City pension funds and the \$176 billion New York State pension fund,

WHEREAS studies show that divesting from fossil fuels will not result in a substantial profit risk to a portfolio,

WHEREAS by divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in

green infrastructure and clean technologies, the New York City and New York State pension funds can help finance the transition to a low-carbon economy,

WHEREAS as the April 2014 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change emphasized, there remains a 15-year window of opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent catastrophic climate change, and

WHEREAS Three Parks Independent Democrats supports efforts to keep fossil fuels in the ground and a swift transition to renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind.

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that Three Parks Independent Democrats calls (1) on the pension boards of New York City, the New York City Comptroller and the New York State Comptroller to divest from fossil fuel companies and (2) on the New York City Council to pass a resolution in favor of divestment from fossil fuel companies.

STATE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Daniel Marks Cohen

The party faithful re-nominated Governor Cuomo at the State Convention at the Hilton Hotel in Melville, Long Island last month, the most self-interested and cynical official in the state.

As Governor, Cuomo muscled through gun control legislation post-Sandy Hook, endorsed Marriage Equality, and passed on-time budgets five years in a row (which has not happened in over 30 years). Those actions deserve praise and high marks. But as a Democrat, Cuomo has been much worse, and even counter-productive. He introduced a 10-point plan, Women's Equality Act, that has stalled in the State Senate. He has passed a cynical campaign finance reform legislation that been derided by good government groups like Common Cause. And he has delayed a state "Dream Act" that would legalize undocumented immigrants.

Actually, the Governor has not stopped those things – the State Senate has. That is odd because the Senate actually has a majority of Democrats at the moment, except that five of them in the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) have caucused with the Republican minority to control the body, and in turn, stall ANY progressive legislation. And the governor does nothing to challenge the IDC. The Progressive Caucus put forth a resolution to encourage the IDC Senators to return to the party (I would have called for something stronger, like "get back in the party or we will challenge you" but a softer approach won over), yet even that non-offensive resolution was quashed in

Executive Committee. As was a resolution from my State Committee colleague Debra Cooper to support the 10-point Women's Equality Act – also quashed.

The one resolution to ask the Governor not to take the Independence Party line (which like its odious predecessor, the Liberal Party, was neither Liberal - or in this case "independent" - nor a party) was allowed on the floor but then also quashed. The Independence Party is a cabal of crypto-fascist thugs who extort support for elected officials for cash, routinely endorsing Republicans in upstate legislative races and allowing conservative Democrats to vote for them on the Independence line, rather than likely voting Democrat, and thus eroding support upstate for the Democratic party and hampering efforts to take back the Senate. And then after stating he is considering what to do, he signs the paperwork accepting the IP nod that same day.

So in this mix another third party swoops in – the Working Families Party – and it cut a deal with the Governor to endorse him in exchange for the governor's commitment to take back the State Senate. This is the state of New York politics: the Democratic Governor will not support Democrats in the State Senate to exert its majority to support Democratic initiatives until a third party threatens his personal politics ambitions, and THEN he discovers his Democratic roots.

I am a true believer – I am involved in politics because I believe it can change the world, but I am not naïve – I know you need political pressure to accomplish this change. But one must have a core tenet, a central driving belief, besides one's personal ambitions to have people join your cause and support your vision. Cuomo appears to have none. Normally, a governor that supports gun control legislation and gay marriage would be touted as a viable progressive candidate for President but all I can think of is how the Governor has undercut the very beliefs he claims to support. He may be Governor, but he has a way to go to become a Democrat again.

Three Parks Endorsement Vote May 14, 2014

NY Governor

- 9 Andrew Cuomo
- 7 Randy Credico
- 54 No Endorsement

NY State Comptroller

- 57 Tom Di Napoli
- 7 No Endorsement

NY State Attorney General

- 6 Eric Schneiderman
- 3 No Endorsement

NY State Senator 30th SD

65 Bill Perkins

6 No Endorsement

NY State Senator 31st SD

1 Marisol Alcantara

0 Manny de los Santos

51 Robert Jackson

17 No Endorsement

NY State Assembly 69th AD

68 Daniel O'Donnell

1 No endorsement

NY County Civil Court

First Ballot

Second Ballot

** 30 Louis Nock 17

** 25 J. Machelles Sweeting 20

9 Richard Tsai

3 No Endorsement 1

NY County Civil Court

49 Arlene Bluth

10 No endorsement

NY State Committee 69th Assembly District Male

64 Daniel Marks Cohen

5 No endorsement

NY State Committee 69th Assembly District Female

64 Lynn Thomas

4 No endorsement

** Subsequent to the Three Parks' endorsement vote Machelles Sweeting withdrew from the race as did Richard Tsai. Lou Nock is the sole remaining Democratic candidate for this office.

Rosenthal and Levine Launch Participatory Budgeting

New Council Members Helen Rosenthal (6th) and Mark Levine (7th) are joining several other Council members to continue and expand the innovation of participatory budgeting in their new districts. Many of our neighbors were engaged in this process started by Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito in her former district. Participatory Budgeting enables New Yorkers to develop and propose projects in their communities and to seek city funding for those efforts. Community residents get to vote on which projects will receive a portion of the city funds which Council members have available to allocate to their districts.

If you live in the **6th District, Helen Rosenthal** is hosting two meetings to inform and discuss this process with her constituents.

Thursday, June 12, 6-8 pm at the West Side YMCA, 5 West 63rd St.

Tuesday, June 17, 6-8 pm at Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Ave. (88th St.)

If you live in the **7th District, Mark Levine** is hosting three meetings to inform and discuss this process with his constituents.

Monday, June 2, 7-8:30 pm, PS 163 Auditorium, West 97th St. (Amsterdam and Columbus).

Tuesday, June 3, 7-9 pm, Wilson Major Morris Center, 459 W. 152nd St. (Amsterdam and St. Nicholas)

Wednesday, June 4, 7-8:30 pm, PS 192 Auditorium, 500 W. 138th St. (Amsterdam and Broadway)

THREE PARKS 11th ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC

BY THE POOL IN CENTRAL PARK
103RD Street and CPW

Wednesday, July 23
5:30pm-8pm

Once again we are planning a Three Parks potluck picnic in Central Park by the pool/pond lawn at 103rd Street! It is always a lot of fun and the weather gods have been kind to us in the past. Petitioning season will be over, and it's the perfect opportunity for club members to share a lovely evening in the park before we gear up for the NY State Primary Elections in September.

We will send out a reminder postcard invitation, email and an Evite (please respond!) as we get closer to July 23. We will have a sign-up sheet at the June 11th meeting for food and volunteers. As always, we request you to bring a dish to share with your fellow club members.

CONDOLENCES

The members of Three Parks Independent Democrats extend our sincerest condolences to Bonnie Moses and her family on the passing of her husband,

Lew Moses.

REMEMBER TO VOTE
TUESDAY JUNE 24, 2014
Three Parks' endorsed candidate
US CONGRESS – 13TH Congressional District
CHARLES B. RANGEL

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2014 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) _____ (Cell) _____ (W) _____

Email _____

Check here _____ if you prefer to receive the newsletter **solely** by email.

Please pay your dues with a check, money order or via PayPal. Money order and cash are more difficult to process. Please make out all checks to **Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2014**.

Mail to:

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

Three Parks Independent Democrats
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316
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Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

How to Take Back the House and the NY Senate
Petitioning Pizza Party