



## THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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## CLUB MEETING, June 14, 2017

**Topic:** The State of the City  
**Speaker:** Mayor Bill de Blasio  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2017  
**Time:** 8:00 pm  
**Place:** The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 Street  
**Room:** Ballroom

### AGENDA

7:45 pm Sign-in  
8:00 pm Call to Order  
District Leader Report  
The Petitioning Process & Distribution of Petitions  
Speaker: Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Annual Petitioning Pizza Party  
Plans for TPID Summer Picnic  
ADJOURN

### CALENDAR

**Wednesday, June 14, 2017, 8:00 pm**  
Three Parks Membership Meeting  
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue  
**Wednesday, June 28, 2017, 8:00 pm**  
Three Parks Board Meeting  
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue  
**Wednesday, July 26, 2017, 5:30-8:00 pm**  
Three Parks Summer Picnic, Central Park  
103 St & Central Park West

## Presidents Report

By Merle McEldowney

Our next meeting on June 14 is really exciting—PIZZA and PETITIONING and THE MAYOR! Yes, Mayor de Blasio will be at our meeting. It will be a special chance to listen to the Mayor at close quarters!

But here's an even better reason to come to the meeting. It is Three Parks' petitioning kick off...and we bribe you with pizza. We need to get all of our local officials on the ballot. Most are incumbents and have no opposition. What is important to us is to get Mark Levine (who does have opposition) a huge number of signatures. A few months ago, Mark's opponent appeared at our meeting and gave an abominable racist and anti-semitic performance. We need to demonstrate that the answer to that performance is lots of signatures on Mark's petitions. While we are doing that, we will be collecting signatures for all other elected officials as well as for our district leaders, Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty.

Last month the club had two fabulous meetings. May 10 featured Donna Lieberman, Executive Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), and Michael Gianaris, the New York State Senator who represents the 12th District in western Queens. Both focused on the fight to protect and defend New York's immigrant communities in the face of increased threats and attacks by federal authorities.

Lieberman outlined the NYCLU's ongoing efforts to make immigrant communities aware of their legal rights and protections. She described how the NYCLU cooperates closely with immigrants' rights groups, defends immigrants who are being subjected to federal deportation proceedings, works to guarantee their access to legal representation, and ensures that due process is followed in all deportation cases.

Lieberman also touched on other current NYCLU concerns, including the campaign to close the gaps in New York State's laws on reproductive rights in the face of threats to Roe v. Wade. She also spoke about the fight to provide legal protections for New York State agricultural workers, many of whom are immigrants.

Gianaris focused on how these same issues are currently faring in the New York State legislature. As Deputy Democratic Conference leader, he explained how the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC), the eight Democratic state senators who do not caucus with other Democrats, have in effect helped Republicans block progressive legislation in the state senate. He stressed the crucial importance of electing progressive candidates in

the next election cycle in order to transfer control to Senate Democrats.

On May 24, members welcomed two longtime Upper West Side neighbors, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Editor and Publisher of The Nation, and Cyrus Vance, Manhattan District Attorney. Vanden Heuvel's topic was "resistance and rebuilding in the Trump era." Focusing on the local electoral races across the country from now through 2018, she argued that Democratic candidates must move beyond opposition to the Trump administration and present voters with a progressive agenda that will improve people's daily lives. Proposals for programs such as building affordable housing and providing debt-free education—many of which are now being "incubated" at the local level—will play a key role in motivating voters to turn out for Democrats. Vanden Heuvel warned that the Trump Administration's efforts to de-regulate the media are endangering the free press. She stressed the crucial importance of maintaining and strengthening a "fearless, watchdog media" as a guardian of democratic values.

District Attorney Vance reported on his ongoing efforts to improve New York City's criminal justice system. Pointing out the continual threat posed by guns entering the City illegally from other states, he warned that many gun laws now being considered in Congress could harm New Yorkers. He detailed his current campaign to block passage of state-to-state reciprocal "concealed carry" gun laws. In response to questions, he appealed for more judges and other legal resources to improve the functioning of the City's court system and to eliminate abuses in sentencing and incarceration practices.

The June 14 meeting promises to be a grand finale to what has been a series of exciting and informative monthly club meetings this year. I hope to see you there.

## District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

### What is the NY Democratic County Committee?

Would you like to be the Democratic representative for your block? In our neighborhood, one or two blocks comprise an election district. Each election district is represented by two, three or four Democratic County Committee members, and as a member of the County Committee you become part of the governing body of the Democratic Party in Manhattan.

The requirements are simple—reside in the 69th Assembly District, collect between 15-30 signatures on the club petitions, and attend one or two organizational meetings during your two-year term.

### **Why is the County Committee important?**

It is the County Committee who nominates the Democratic replacement for any city, state or congressional office when the nominated candidate is unable to or chooses not to run in the general election. Selection of our state legislators by the County Committee is surprisingly common.

Almost one-third of New York State's Senators and Assembly members are first elected by the County Committee. In recent years, the Three Parks' area was in the middle of several elections decided by the County Committee. In 1992, Congressman Ted Weiss died a few days before the Democratic primary. The County Committee members representing Three Parks and other West Side clubs convened a nominating assembly to replace Weiss. In a close election, then Assembly member Jerrold Nadler was selected to be the Democratic nominee for Congress. A few days later, in a dramatic convention, the 67th Assembly District County Committee members chose Scott Stringer as the Democratic nominee to replace Nadler in the New York State Assembly by the ultimate small margin of a single County Committee member's vote.

Just three months ago, on March 11, in an hotly contested County Committee meeting, Brian Benjamin was chosen by the County Committee members as the Democratic nominee to replace Bill Perkins in the 30th State Senate District. The public election held last week was a pro forma exercise—Benjamin received over 92 percent of the vote in this overwhelmingly Democratic district.

If you would like to be on the County Committee, contact District Leaders Bob Botfeld ([rjbwteg@aol.com](mailto:rjbwteg@aol.com) or phone 212-865-1450) or Cynthia Doty ([c1doty@aol.com](mailto:c1doty@aol.com) or phone: 212-749-4085).

### **Petitioning**

Petitioning for the County Committee and all offices begins Tuesday, June 6. 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 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. Distribution of the petitions will begin on June 5 and also at the June 14 club meeting and pizza party.

### **Three Parks Endorsement Votes**

**May 10 and 24, 2017**

The endorsed candidates are shown in bold.

*May 10*

Manhattan Borough President

**Gale Brewer 72**

No Endorsement 2

City Council 6th CD

Cary Goodman 1

**Helen Rosenthal 54**

Mel Wymore 14

No Endorsement 1

City Council 7th CD

**Mark Levine 65**

Thomas Lopez Pierre 1

No Endorsement 6

*May 24*

Mayor

Sal Albanese 11

**Bill de Blasio 75**

No Endorsement 18

Comptroller

**Scott Stringer 94**

No Endorsement 11

Public Advocate

**Letitia James 92**

No Endorsement 8

Manhattan District Attorney

**Cyrus Vance, Jr. 95**

No Endorsement 6

District Leader, Female

69th AD, Part A

**Cynthia Doty 89**

No Endorsement 14

District Leader, Male

69th AD, Part A

**Bob Botfeld 84**

No Endorsement 19

NY County Civil Court

County Wide Vacancy #1

**Phaedra Perry 58**

No Endorsement 26

NY County Civil Court

County Wide Vacancy #2

**Richard Tsai 72**

No Endorsement 18

NY County Civil Court  
5th Judicial District  
**Leslie Stroth 77**  
Kate Waterman 23  
No Endorsement 3

Judicial Delegates  
69th AD, Part A  
**Lauren Williams 55 (Delegate)**  
Stephanie Tegnazian 26  
**Al Placeres 37 (2nd Alternate)**  
Abigail McGloster 34  
**Bruce Markens 42 (Delegate)**  
**Audrey Isaacs 41 (1st Alternate)**  
**Alan Flacks 77 (Delegate)**

*Note: the three Judicial Delegate candidates receiving the most votes will be Delegates. The next two candidates will be Alternate Delegates.*

## **Time to End the IDC-Republican Alliance in the NYS Senate**

By Chuck Wall

The landslide victory of Democrat Brian Benjamin in the May 23 special election for New York State senator from the 30th District (Harlem and parts of the Upper West Side) has ramped up the pressure on the Senate's Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) members to rejoin their mainline Democratic colleagues. Benjamin, endorsed and supported by Three Parks Independent Democrats, has pledged to work closely with the other mainline Democratic senators and has called on the IDC members to end their power-sharing coalition with Senate Republicans.

With Benjamin's election, Democrats hold a nominal one-seat majority in the State Senate. But a single renegade Democrat, Senator Simcha Felder from Brooklyn, caucuses with the Republicans; this would continue to give them a working majority, even if the eight IDC members rejoined the Democratic Caucus. As a result, the Republicans control the chamber, and important pieces of progressive legislation, including the single-payer New York Health Act, have gone nowhere. According to State Senator Mike Gianaris, a recent speaker at Three Parks, "They are giving power to the Republicans to decide whether [progressive] issues get brought up at all. Things that do get done, get done much later than they should or get watered down."

Now national Democratic leaders as well as local activists are stepping up their efforts to end the IDC-Republican alliance. In a statement, Keith Ellison, deputy chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said that Benjamin's election gives New York "the opportunity to become the

seventh state in the nation with a completely Democratic state government. To accomplish that, the Democratic Party, which stands for working families, must unite in New York and everywhere."

Here in New York, grassroots activists are organizing ongoing protests against IDC members. A recent demonstration at the office of IDC-member Senator Marisol Alcantara, who represents a large part of the Upper West Side and Washington Heights, drew a large crowd, including a strong contingent of Three Parks members. (Three Parks has formally resolved that it "will not invite elected officials who are members of the IDC to speak to the club membership or otherwise participate in activities until they have joined or rejoined the State Senate Democrats.") Demonstrations have also taken place in Queens against IDC-member Senator Jose Peralta and in Brooklyn against IDC-member Senator Jesse Hamilton. Further demonstrations are planned, and there is also growing talk among Democrats about mounting primary challenges next year against IDC members.

Meanwhile, the New York State Comptroller, as well as the State Attorney General and the U.S. Attorney's office in Brooklyn, are now investigating the legality of some generous financial stipends (called "lulus") that are currently doled out to certain IDC members. These stipends are extra payments that are normally made to committee chairmen, but are now paid to the second-highest-ranking committee member—in these cases the IDC member. Because the IDC members hold these positions by virtue of their IDC membership, these stipends are perks that they would not receive if they stayed with the mainline Democrats.

While we await the outcome of these investigations, Three Parks and other grassroots organizations will continue to press the IDC members to either rejoin the mainline party or face challenges in next year's elections. In the meantime, demonstrations and other events are planned at New York City-area IDC members' offices and town halls. Watch for announcements by email or on the Club website at [www.threeparksdems.org](http://www.threeparksdems.org).

## **A Fair Fare**

By Wendy Dannett

Hundreds of thousands of very low-income New Yorkers can't afford MetroCards, even though they rely on public transportation. The Community Service Society of New York found that although 58 percent of very low-income New Yorkers rely on public transportation, one out of four cannot afford to pay. "For New York's more than 800,000 working poor, transit expenses consume over 10 percent of

their budget, forcing them to choose between transit and other necessities,” such as doctor appointments and jobs. The cost of a 30-day unlimited card is over 10 percent of many families’ budgets, forcing sacrifice on essentials such as food and rent.

One such New Yorker, Leslie W., is a 44-year-old substitute teacher. On her \$17,000 a year salary, she barely makes ends meet to support herself and her son. She has had to make difficult decisions regarding MetroCards, such as choosing between a transit fare and taking a job. She has had to forgo Spanish classes, as she lacks the money for transit. At times she relies on the kindness of bus drivers to let her get on without a fare. Another person, Christine G., a social work student, finds public transportation is a barrier for her and her 3 year old son. “There are times I had to hop on the back of the bus...It’s just not me.” She sees well-dressed neighbors begging for swipes.

The recent CSS survey found the consequence of being unable to afford a MetroCard is especially hard on Blacks and Latinos. 31 percent of African-Americans and 43 percent of Latinos reported the cost of MTA transportation kept them from looking for jobs outside their neighborhood. Attorney Karume James stated those who cannot afford public transportation often end up getting arrested for jumping a turnstile, and then have to choose between feeding their children and going to court. “Fare-beating arrests are now the highest number of arrests made by the NYPD, over 29,000 in 2015, 92 percent involving people of color...These arrests are one of the principal ways the city and NYPD criminalize low-income New Yorkers of color,” states Robert Gangi, Director of the Police Reform Organizing Project.

Public advocate Leticia James has said that “no one should wind up with a criminal record because they can’t afford to ride the train.” Turnstile convictions can haunt immigrants. They could lead to deportation, attorney Nyasa Hickey stated. Or immigrants could also be subject to mandatory detention without bond for several months for these convictions. An NYPD representative said that first-time fare evasion was not an offense in which they would cooperate with ICE. But transit recidivists have to be arrested and therefore have a record.

Groups have sprung up to fight for lower transit fares. One group, Riders Alliance, has initiated a program called “fair fares.” They have approached the Mayor and City Council. Although the City Council is interested, the Mayor has said the city can’t afford to reduce the rate, and the state should pay for it. Other large cities, such as Seattle, San Francisco and London, have eased the burden on low income families through discounted fares programs. Many

elected representatives, such as Scott Stringer and Leticia James, have expressed the need for fare reductions for the poor. It is time something was done.

## **Phone Banking to Upstate Republican Voters**

By Chuck Wall

Three Parks members, eager to start laying the groundwork for the 2018 Midterm elections, have been working the phones!

At our fifth “Take Back Congress” phone bank night on May 15, callers picked up where they left off in previous phone banks, telephoning Republican senior citizen voters in the 19th Congressional District, an upstate area stretching from Dutchess County in the south to Otsego County in the northwest. On May 15 alone, we made nearly 350 calls so, by now, our callers have logged literally hundreds of significant conversations with these voters. The aim is to alert them that Trump Administration officials have made public proposals to cut funding for Social Security and Medicare. Voters concerned about those proposed cuts are urged to call their Republican Congressman, John Faso, who sits on the House Budget Committee and to tell him not to undermine Medicare and Social Security.

Many of the senior citizen voters we spoke to were unaware of the threats to the programs they rely on. But some already had doubts that Congressman Faso would protect Medicare and Social Security, perhaps in the light of a recent, widely circulated video clip that shows him hugging a constituent who suffers from a brain tumor and promising to protect people with pre-existing health conditions – shortly before voting in favor of the Trumpcare plan that would strip her and millions of others of their health insurance. In Faso’s district, so far six Democrats have announced plans to challenge him in the 2018 Midterm elections. We will be watching developments there in the coming months and reporting on them regularly.

Once the campaigning season starts, we will be making trips to Faso’s district to join forces with progressive groups there. We are also looking at possible campaign activities in New York City’s only Republican congressional district on Staten Island.

Our phone banks are ongoing, so please join us for upcoming events. Upcoming phone banks are being planned. Watch for future announcements on our email blasts and check the TPID website [www.threeparksdems.org](http://www.threeparksdems.org). No computers are needed, but please bring a cellphone. Scripts and training are provided.

## **Campaign for Justice for Workers**

By Susan Meyer

Your help is needed in getting justice for workers who have had wages stolen by bosses. Indus Valley/Manhattan Valley is just one example of a restaurant whose workers went to court, received a judgment of \$700,000, and still cannot collect back pay. This is an outrage—but one we can do something about by passing legislation in Albany (SWEAT bill A628/ S579) that will freeze the criminal employer's assets until he pays the workers before he plays hide and seek with his money. You can learn more about the bill at [www.sweatny.org](http://www.sweatny.org).

How can you help? Phone calls to your State Senators will put pressure on them to bring the bill out of committee for a vote on the floor. Phone calls are very effective and we need a groundswell. Will you help? It will make a difference in our Campaign for Justice. We are counting on you to help push this over the top.

First, call 518-455-2800 to find out your State Senator's office number. Then call and tell her/him how you feel.

In addition, call the head of the Judiciary Committee, Senator John Bonacic, at 518-455-3181. (The bill is currently in his committee.) Then call Senator Jeffrey Klein at 518-455-3595 and, finally, John Flanagan at 518-455-2971.

This is how we make change. Act together. Outrage, then action Thank you.

## **Annual TPID Picnic in Central Park!**

**Wednesday, July 26, 5:30-8:00 pm**

By Theresa Canter

Please put Wednesday, July 26, 5:30-8:00 pm, on your calendar! Our 14th Annual Three Parks potluck picnic will be in Central Park on the Pool lawn at 103 Street and Central Park West, same place as last year. Petitioning season will be over and since there are no club meetings in July or August, it's the perfect opportunity for club members to gather and share a lovely evening in the park, schmoozing and eating with our neighbors, electeds and candidates!

We will be sending out a reminder postcard invitation, email blasts and an Evite (please respond!) as we get closer to the date. In order to facilitate picnic planning, we will have a sign-up sheet at the June 10 club meeting for food and volunteers. As always, we ask that you please bring a dish to share with your fellow club members.

See you on July 26.

## **In Memory of Sue Andrews.**

Three Parks extends its condolences to the family of Sue Andrews. Sue was a longtime club member, dedicated activist, and an indefatigable fighter and calm force for all progressive causes. Her sister, Dee, sent us the following: Susan Lloyd Andrews died on March 27 of natural causes at her apartment in New York City. Sue was born in Philadelphia, graduated from Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, New York, and went on to major in history at Wheaton. She received her MSW from Fordham University and worked as a social worker and on the ground floor of data processing before finding her true vocation as copy editor for numerous publishers through a long freelance career. A dedicated New Yorker, she was an enthusiastic member and volunteer for the Editorial Freelancers Association, the Women's Welsh Club of New York, Peace Action, Three Parks Independent Democrats, and the Garden People of Riverside Park, as well as a supporter of the Wheaton Alumnae Association and an attender at the Flushing (NY) Friends Meeting. Sue was an avid reader, with an abiding love of family and for the outdoors, especially as a birdwatcher and energetic hiker. She vacationed nearly every summer, a student of nature, at her family's home in Andover, NH. Her humor, wealth of knowledge, and passionate engagement with life will be sorely missed by all her friends and family.

Donations may be made in Sue's memory to the American Friends Service Committee, Development Office, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

## **Save the Date!**

**Forum on Climate Change  
Monday, June 26, 7:00 PM**

Council Member Helen Rosenthal will be hosting a forum to address climate change. The focus will be on how Upper West Siders can switch to clean energy now. Location and speakers are yet to be determined.

For more information and to sign up, contact Sarah Crean at 212-788-6975 or [screan@council.nyc.gov](mailto:screan@council.nyc.gov).

## 2017 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Please make out all checks to **Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2017**.

*Mail to:* Three Parks Independent Democrats

Cathedral Station, P.O. Box 1316, New York, NY 10025 Attn: Treasurer

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Once again, we thank you and, remember, we are just a phone call away!



Suba Pharmacy 2721 Broadway at 104 Street | 212-866-6700

*Editor's Note:*

Suba Pharmacy is one of the few independent family-owned pharmacies on the Upper West Side. Equally important, Mr. Suba cares about his customers and goes out of his way to accommodate them. In 2004, when Suba's lease was about to expire, Three Parks petitioned to reinstate the store's lease. We were successful. It's time to help the pharmacy again. On behalf of Suba, thanks for your patronage.

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**Next Meeting**  
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**The State of the City**  
**Mayor Bill de Blasio**  
**Annual Petitioning Pizza Party**