



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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Bob Botfeld
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State Committee

Lynn Thomas
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JUNE 13, 2012

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: ERIC ALTERMAN: THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT—*The Nation's* columnist on Obama v. Romney
PIZZA & PETITIONING—Help get Three Parks endorsed candidates on the ballot

DATE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

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. Eric Alterman
4. Pizza & Petitioning
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, June 27, 2012
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

THREE PARKS ANNUAL PICNIC
Look for a postcard and email blast with the July date and time—come one, come all!

Wednesday, August 29, 2012
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, September 12, 2012
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Thanks to the panelists from the May 9 Green Alternatives club meeting: Eddie Bautista, Clare Donohue, and Max Joel. They presented a terrific overview of current energy issues and possibilities for a greener city. Thanks also to the membership for a lively discussion of candidates for State Senate, Assembly, State Committee, Civil Court, and Surrogate's Court. Endorsement results are elsewhere in the newsletter.

The Three Parks June meeting, our last until September 12, will feature Eric Alterman, Distinguished Professor of English and Journalism at Brooklyn College and CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, "The Liberal Media" columnist for *The Nation*, a regular contributor to *The Daily Beast*, and a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, the Nation Institute and the World Policy Institute.

Alterman is the author of nine books, including *The Cause: The Fight for American Liberalism from Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama* (2012, co-author), *Kabuki Democracy: The System vs. Barack Obama* (2011), *Why We're Liberals: A Handbook for Restoring America's Most Important Ideals* (2008, 2009), and the national bestsellers *What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and the News* (2003, 2004) and *The Book on Bush: How George W. (Mis)leads America* (2004, co-author). He will speak about the upcoming presidential campaign.

This summer promises no shortage of grassroots activities. First, petitioning on behalf of our endorsed candidates from now until Friday, July 6. Second, the time-honored tradition of the club picnic run by Theresa Canter and her hearty volunteers – you will receive notice soon of this event to take place probably toward the end of July. Third, the Club will be gearing up for the 2012 campaign storefront to be located on Broadway. From the 2008 storefront, we registered 6,400 voters, sent 1,000 volunteers to Bristol, Pennsylvania to canvass for President Obama, and made 35,000 calls on behalf of the president and other candidates. We look forward to welcoming volunteers shortly before Labor Day to help re-elect the President and other Democratic candidates.

This is our last newsletter until September. The Three Parks Board would like to thank our amazingly active membership for gathering thousands of signatures on petitions to Save Our Stores, ban fracking in New York State, strengthen and preserve Social Security, fight the Spectra Pipeline, and shut down Indian Point. Onwards and upwards this summer and beyond!

Update on the Sweatshop Free

Upper West Side Campaign

By Bruce Markens

Last May, Three Parks passed a resolution supporting the efforts of Justice Will Be Served and the Sweatshop Free Upper West Side Campaign to end sweatshop conditions in local businesses. The main focus of this campaign centered on the boycott of Saigon Grill that started in November, 2010 and continues despite various legal actions taken against the owners. Three Parks is just one of many political, community, church, and workers groups that have actively and successfully worked to discourage people from patronizing Saigon Grill.

The boycott of Saigon Grill has led the Sweatshop Free Campaign to canvas local merchants and to have them pledge that they will continue running sweatshop free businesses and will abide by all labor laws. So far, over 60 local businesses have signed the pledge. Equally important, the continued visibility of the Saigon Grill boycott has encouraged other workers to demand that their employers abide by labor laws and treat workers with dignity. Thus, last November the Sweatshop Free Campaign endorsed a citywide campaign against Domino's Pizza, extending the struggle against Domino's that began with the mistreatment of workers on the Upper West Side as well as other Manhattan locations.

At the same time, the Sweatshop Free Upper West Side Campaign, along with other groups, responded to complaints by workers at V&T Restaurant. After months of pressure and discussions, a settlement with workers is imminent. The struggle continues and the Sweatshop Free Campaign thanks Three Parks for their support and encourages interested members to stay involved in ongoing activities. Toward this end, members of Three Parks are invited to a celebration of the impending V&T settlement and hoped for resolutions of other Sweatshop Free Campaign issues.

The celebration will take place on Friday, June 29 at 6:00 p.m. at the Franciscan Community Center at 217 West 97th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway. A flyer giving more details about this celebration will be distributed at the June 13 meeting.

REMINDER – SAVE THE DATE!

June 26, 2012

Congressional Primary

Polls open from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The only Democratic contest in our area is for the newly districted 13th Congressional District

Hizzoner Our Mayor

By Judy Wood

The latest actions coming from this guy are quite amusing – that is if you find poverty amusing. He vetoed the “living wage” bill on the grounds that it would be bad for business. This bill was so watered down that it was covering fewer and fewer workers, and only covered workers at locations who receive city subsidies. The “living wage” in the bill is \$10.00/hour with benefits, or \$11.50 without benefits. You call that a living. Of course he has no idea, he of the 11 homes in the U.S. and abroad. The Council has the votes to override, which will happen soon. So what is this man saying to us – why veto a bill that will become law.

And then there’s his sugary drinks proposition – a plan which has produced much hilarity. When there was a movement recently to tax sugary drinks I don’t remember hearing from him. The beverage industry went into action then and killed that option, which would have at least raised some revenue, while not controlling obesity either. Hizzoner needs a consultation with a dietitian, or just a walk around town to see all the eating and drinking going on on the streets of New York.

His actions prove to us yet again how out of touch he is with ordinary people – we’ve seen that any number of times – but the large sugary drinks plan is so lame. If the mayor cared as much about children’s education and well-being as he does about our waistlines, he would not have taken the hatchet to after school programs!

We need a new mayor – the sooner the better – one who can relate to the needs of working people.

Annual Club Picnic Planned for Summer

By Theresa Canter

Once again we are planning on 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 presidential campaign season.

When we get the confirmation of the date from the Parks Department we will post details on the Web site and send out an email blast, in addition to the postcard invite. So, stay tuned for the specific date, time, and other details!

FREE LEGAL CLINIC FOR TENANTS

When: June 28 and July 26, 2012

Where: Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell's Office

Call Joy at 212-866-3970 for an appointment

Endorsement Vote Results from May 9 Club Meeting

The results of the revised final tally were:

Total votes cast 79

NY State Senate 30th SD

Bill Perkins 73
No endorsement 3

NY State Senate 31st SD

Mark Levine 59
Guillermo Linares 4
No Endorsement 14

NY State Assembly 69th AD

Daniel J. O'Donnell 69
No Endorsement 9

NY State Committee 69th AD – Female

Lynn L. Thomas 72
No Endorsement 3

NY State Committee 69th AD – Male

Daniel Marks Cohen 70
No Endorsement 6

Surrogate Court – Manhattan

Barbara Jaffe 50
Rita Mella 24
No Endorsement 4

Civil Court – New York County

Anil C. Singh 65
No endorsement 9

Civil Court – New York County

Melissa A. Crane 54
No endorsement 16

Civil Court – New York County

Verna L. Saunders 51
No endorsement 18

Summary of Nuclear Regulatory Commission Hearing on Indian Point

By Erl Kimmich

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission held a public meeting on the safety of Indian Point on May 17 in Tarrytown, NY. While the representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) sat stone-faced, the full room of 250-300 people kept stepping to the microphone. Most who spoke brought up issues in favor of denying a new license to the power plant. They said the plant was well past its designed life span. They said it was on the intersection of two seismic

faults. They said there was no way to evacuate the millions of people that would be subject to exposure in the event of an accident.

I thought of another issue – the condition of concrete and rebar structures that were built back in the early sixties. Crumbling? Rusted? Also, this is an industry that has been subsidized since its inception; nuclear power would have already failed as an energy option if taxpayer dollars were not propping it up.

The people who spoke in favor of re-licensing Indian Point just don't get it, it seems. Instead of addressing safety issues, they kept bringing up how the people in charge of safety at Indian Point were really good people. Further, they shared that there was a deep culture of safety prevalent at the plant. Some business leaders maintained that the plant was good for business. How does that relate to safety I wonder?

When Three Parks President Daniele Gerard got her turn at the microphone, she suggested that the NRC consider the following points when making the decision whether or not to re-license Indian Point:

- A) The likelihood of a terrorist attack;
 - B) Cancer rates;
 - C) Continuing radioactive leaks into the Hudson;
 - D) The likelihood of an earthquake near IP;
 - E) The state of old technology compared to advances that have been made in the field; and
 - F) That someone will have to pay for the safe storage of spent fuel and radioactive waste – literally forever.
- Daniele also urged that the NRC and the U.S. make a decision based on scientific data.

Costs and Time Allocation of Fuel Switches

Compiled by Erl Kimmich

In the ongoing effort to curb air pollution in New York City, buildings citywide – including many on the Upper West Side – will be switching from #6 fuel oil to other fuels that are deemed cleaner. Over recent months, many articles and public forums have focused on the mandated conversions and the various energy options. Clearly, the mandated changes have sparked public interest in a complex energy issue that can be considered a catastrophe or an opportunity depending on the choices made.

The comparison information that follows provides the estimated costs and time involved in converting a building to one or the other of the energy options being considered by decision makers in local buildings. The information comes from handouts distributed at hearings and other sources. Internal conversion costs are building- specific and will vary greatly between buildings.

Converting from #6 to #2 Fuel Oil

- **Cost and Time allocation: \$10,000-300,000 and two days**
- **Potential Expense Items for an Oil to Oil Conversion:**
 - Remove preheat unit
 - Burner tuning
 - New burner
 - New boiler
 - New oil tank
 - Retire old tank
 - Asbestos remediation

Converting from Oil to Natural Gas

- **Cost and Time allocation: \$100,000 to more than \$1,000,000 and could take up to two years for Con Ed to run a line to your building. Minimum time you should plan on is a few months to half a year.**
- **Potential Expense Items for Oil to Natural Gas Conversion (Behind the Meter)**
 - Chimney liner
 - Gas booster
 - Gas line piping
 - Fire proof room for booster or regulator
 - Burner tuning
 - New burner
 - New boiler
 - Maintaining dual fuel capability (interruptible gas service)
 - Old tank retirement (firm gas service)
 - Asbestos remediation
 - Gas line integrity (existing cooking gas customers)
- **Potential Gas Connection Expense** may be extra depending on a building's proximity to existing lines. To learn more get in touch with Con Ed.

Congratulations and Well Wishes

Three Parks extends congratulations to Dan Cohen and Jill Drossman Cohen on the birth of their son, Caleb Marks Cohen.

We also extend congratulations to former TPID Treasurer Jason Morgan, who will be marrying his long-term partner, Ente Breed, at a ceremony in Amsterdam this summer. (See the related article below.)

The Club extends wishes for a speedy recovery to member Susan Johnson Baldwin who recently underwent knee surgery.

A Plea for Immigration Equality

By Ellen Flax

Above, we congratulated Jason Morgan on his upcoming marriage to Ente Breed. Unfortunately, because Jason's husband-to-be is Dutch, and not American, the Defense of Marriage Act (which, as we go to press, was ruled unconstitutional by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a decision likely to be considered by the U.S. Supreme Court) prevents the two of them from living together in the United States.

A green card is readily available if you and your spouse are straight; but, alas, not if you and your spouse are of the same sex. Federal law trumps state law for the purpose of immigration -- even for residents of states like New York, where gay marriage is legal. While the two are, for now, happily living in Hong Kong (which has far more progressive laws than we do for same sex couples when it comes to obtaining a work permit for a trailing spouse or partner), it is horrible that permanent residency in the United States is not an option for them.

Consequently, I am throwing an online wedding shower for them that will benefit the Immigration Equality Action Fund, a group working to rectify this human rights violation -- for Jason and Ente, as well as for the 36,000 other couples in the same situation.

The fundraiser URL is <http://tinyurl.com/JandEShower>

Thanks in advance for your support!

A Certain Black Swan

By David C. Kaplan

A financial expert referred to the 2008 economic meltdown as the Black Swan -- the occurrences that happen once every 10,000 years. In reality this Black Swan was not a freak of nature; instead it was the certain product of reckless economic system that created toxic problems.

The business cycle was traditionally thought to be uncontrollable. There would be prosperity for some years, leading to speculation which would lead to a market crash and economic slowdown. When the economic slowdown came the only remedy was to cut governmental and private spending, foreclose mortgages, and lay off workers. But in the 1930s, an English economist named John Maynard Keynes had a better idea; he believed that economic downturns were caused by the lack of consumers' spending. He thought that the government should encourage consumer spending by social welfare programs, massive public works, and tax cuts that benefited moderate income people.

Beginning in a moderate way during the New Deal and continuing through World War II and in the postwar years 1946 -1975, the United States government kept up spending mainly for the defense but to a lesser extent for public works and social welfare programs. This strategy led to a somewhat limited but generally prosperous middle class society.

This condition began to unravel first with the high inflation caused by the Vietnam War spending and then continued with the rises in oil prices. The rises in oil price led to high inflations and economic slowdown, and these events led to the discrediting of Keynesian economics and a return to classical economics -- decision makers who believed in low government spending since spending led to inflation. They also favored lower taxes on the rich since the rich would spend money on job creation. The classical economists believed in weak governmental regulation as well since they saw regulation raising the cost of doing business.

These ideas were carried out by Ronald Reagan when he became president in 1980. Taxes were cut for the rich while government safety and environmental regulations were weakened. Governmental regulation of the banks and stock markets also was cut; however, government spending remained high due to a massive increase in defense spending. These measures did not lead to prosperity but to a massive recession and a 10 percent loss in employment in 1982.

With financial deregulation came speculative schemes. Mortgages, instead of being held by banks, were divided into separate parts and bundled and sold to back up collateral debt obligation bonds which were then sold to regular and investment banks. These mortgages had high payments and interest rates which home owners could not pay. They led to the bonds becoming worthless and the crash of the stock market in 2008.

In his book *The Return of Depression Economics*, Paul Krugman points out the full impact of these practices on the business cycle. The economy recovered somewhat during the Clinton years, but the widening income gap between the rich and everyone else remained.

Joseph Stiglitz, in his book *Free Fall*, states his belief that the economic crisis could give rise to the question of what kind of society we want -- one based on greed or cooperation.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

Well, alas, "my" lawsuit of *Cohen v. Cuomo* went before the NYS Court of Appeals, which is the highest court in the state, and unfortunately was denied appeal. This was the last stand, and as it was a state issue; there is no appeal to

federal courts. It is unfortunate, but the Courts said that as abysmal as the drawn lines were there was no compelling reason to override the legislature and redraw them. My fellow plaintiffs and I disagreed, feeling that the method of using two different rationales for adding a 63rd seat in the State Senate was flawed; but it was not enough to warrant a Constitutional review by the Court.

I am disappointed since it means that the new lines remain in place until 2020. The most egregious of these is the 31st (formerly the Eric Schneiderman district and now occupied by Adriano Espaillat). The district runs from 224th Street to 24th Street and in some areas is only a single block wide and looks like the country of Chile. With a lack of compactness and virtually no common interest among its geographically diverse neighbors, it is an absurd district that flies in the face of good government and equal representation. But we are stuck with it for a decade. Let's not forget this experience, and hopefully, under new leadership in a DEMOCRATIC State Senate in 2020, we can right this ridiculous wrong.

In other news, Jay Jacobs has announced his resignation as Chairman effective June 5. Then the new State Party leadership will be co-chaired by Assemblyman Keith Wright (following in his predecessor Denny Farrell's footsteps being NY County Chair while also NY State Chair simultaneously) and Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner. It also has been reported that Charlie King is stepping down as Executive Director. This is all fascinating – perhaps Cuomo wanted to wait until the end of the budget negotiations before he moved ahead with his changing of the guard. Jacobs' departure had been anticipated for months and then delayed. Considering how poorly he treated the reformers in the State Party (while personally being a nice guy), I am glad to see him go and hope we get treated better by our co-chair neighbor. To that end, the Reform Caucus submitted new rules to prevent the State Party leadership from endlessly tabling resolutions they found embarrassing. Jacobs said he supported the change, and at the next meeting on June 5, hopefully these new rules will pass the State Committee so that they will become binding.

And lastly but most proudly, I am thrilled to announce I am the father of a new Democrat! Caleb Marks Cohen was born to my wife Jill and me on Saturday, May 12 at 4:47 p.m., an early Mother's Day present. He was seven pounds even and

20 inches long. Everyone is tired, but doing great. Thanks for the many well-wishes, and I look forward to introducing him to everyone soon.

***Across America, our Upper West Side is synonymous
with outspokenly-progressive politics.
How did that happen?***

**The Park West Neighborhood History Group
Presents**

**Congressman Jerry Nadler Explains
60 Years of Upper West Side Political Clubs**



**Monday, June 11 at 8:00 p.m. at
Hostelling International (Amsterdam Avenue at
West 103rd Street)**

Famously known as one of the original "West Side Kids," Congressman Nadler is a walking, talking treasure trove of history and minutia of West Side power, politics and political clubs. Travel back with him to remember the movements, the battles won and lost, the rich panoply of local characters and others who built the fabled "Upper Left Side," and how Broadway Independent Democrats, Community Free Democrats, and Three Parks Independent Democrats began and evolved.

Sponsored by:

- Park West Neighborhood History Group
(www.upperwestsidehistory.weebly.com)
- Columbus-Amsterdam Business Improvement District
- Hostelling International NY

All are welcome to this Free Event

For further information call 212-666-9774



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 539-7602

Please pay your 2012 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*

2012 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 2012****

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

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

***THE NATION'S* ERIC ALTERMAN
PIZZA & PETITIONING**