

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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

Website: ThreeParksDems.org ♦ Email: ThreeParksDems@aol.com

President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Ray Schwartz (tappsch@nyc.rr.com)

District Leaders

Bob Boffeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

March 12, 2008

FEATURED TOPIC: “Congestion Pricing: Regressive Tax or Fair Solution to Traffic Problems and Pollution?”

DATE: Wednesday, March 12, 2008

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: American Youth Hostel (HI-NY)
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
3. Congestion Pricing: Pros and Cons
4. State Committee Candidates
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wed., March 12, 2008, 8 PM
Three Parks Meeting
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wed., March 19, 2008, 5:30 PM
Westside Peace March (see page 4 article)

Wed., March 26, 2008, 8 PM
Three Parks Board Meeting
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wed., April 9, 2008, 8 PM
Three Parks Meeting
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wed., April 23, 2008, 8 PM
Three Parks Board Meeting
Place: HINY, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Sun., May 4, 2008, 3-6 PM
Three Parks Fundraiser
Place: Meridiana, B'way & 105/6th Sts.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Our February 13th Club meeting was a huge success! Despite nasty weather, we had a terrific turnout – more than 150 people – for **Katrina vanden Heuvel's** talk about media and the elections. A big thank you to Katrina for her insightful views on media and the Presidential primaries and her thoughtful and thorough answers to all our questions.

Our upcoming meeting on **Wednesday, March 12** will feature a discussion by experts of the pros and cons of the Mayor's congestion pricing proposal currently before the legislature. Does it represent a regressive tax on low and moderate income New Yorkers or a fair solution to the City's traffic problems and pollution? Join us to find out the answers to these and other questions.

Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to attend this community wide event. A flyer is included in the newsletter, so spread the word by posting it in your building.

In addition, some of our State and local elected officials may stop by on March 12 to address us in preparation for Three Parks' May 14 endorsement meeting – a definite roster was still in the works as the newsletter went to press. Our goal, as in past years, is to hear from all the candidates running for public office who represent our district before we make our endorsements in May. As always, you must be a member in good standing, and current in your dues, to vote in our endorsements. If you haven't paid your Three Parks dues for 2008, there's no time like the present to do so!

The Three Parks Benefit Committee is hard at work on our upcoming fundraiser on Sunday, May 4 at Meridiana, when we will honor Council Members Inez Dickens and Melissa Mark-Viverito in recognition of their advocacy on behalf of issues important to our community, including the recent West 97th to 110th Street rezoning. The labor group Justice Will Be Served! will also be honored for its campaign advocating for fair wages and against long hours – in our neighborhood, especially on behalf of underpaid workers at Saigon Grill, Ollie's and Flor de Mayo.

This year's proceeds will go toward funding a Club storefront where volunteers will once again gather to work for the Democratic Presidential nominee and candidates for Congress, the State Senate and Assembly. (In accordance with the Three Parks Constitution, the winner of the Democratic

Presidential primaries will automatically receive the Club endorsement. It will then be time to rally behind our party's nominee.) As usual, contributions also help Three Parks fund other initiatives, including anti-Iraq war petitioning and rallies, bus trips for weekend canvassing, social justice efforts, candidate forums and community outreach, including voter registration.

If you wish to be listed on the invitation as a sponsor at \$150, a patron at \$250 or a benefactor at \$500, please let us know by March 10th, as the invitation will go to print that week.

Speaking of voter registration, despite the frigid temperatures of the last two weekends in February, Three Parks led effective tabling operations that registered dozens of new voters on the spot and distributed more voter registration forms to passersby. We also attracted several new Three Parks members. The Club is providing a great service to the community – hats off to Lynn and Steve Max for organizing the outreach and to all the volunteers who worked so hard!

Finally, on behalf of the Three Parks Board, I would like to thank the membership for giving all of us another opportunity to serve. I am particularly happy to have been elected Club President, to have the chance to continue working with such an extremely dedicated group of volunteers, and to support our District Leaders, Bob Botfeld and Cynthia Doty. Following Theresa Canter and Josh Pepper will be an honor!

Watch for These Upcoming Democratic Primaries

April 9 Wyoming
April 11 Mississippi
April 22 Pennsylvania

Voter Registration for a Democratic Victory

By Lynn Max

While the Democratic Nominee for President still has to be decided, Westsiders know that even now, it's full speed ahead to a Democratic Victory in November. Despite cold and damp February weather, people have been flocking to our voter registration tables to fill out registration forms for themselves and to take forms to give to others. We are routinely thanked for being out there, and it's a wonderful opportunity to publicize our club

and to sign up volunteers for the election. Please check your e-mails and **ThreeParksDems.org** for times and location of the next voter registration tables and come join us!

Three Parks members don't have to wait for the next table, though. Board member Corine Pettey sets a good example for us all by carrying the forms with her wherever she goes. Voter registration forms will be available at the March 12 meeting.

Report from the Campaign Trail

By Cynthia Doty, District Leader

Howdy from the Texas campaign trail. I arrived in Houston on **Go Texas Day** and watched the Trail Riders come into town – thousands of horse riders coming in from trail rides from all over the state and country for an annual campout and parade downtown. All the Texan politicians will be in the parade. It seems being able to ride a horse helps you win elections in Texas! I haven't seen either Hillary or Barack in the saddle though.

Texas has the weirdest most complicated voting system of any of the states. They have both a primary and a caucus. The news tries to explain the details but everyone still seems very confused.

Early voting has just ended, but the challenge now is to get those folks as well as next Tuesday's primary voters to come back to the evening caucuses. It's not certain if they will be able to really prove who voted in the primary and who didn't, even though all voters are supposed to get receipts when they cast their ballots. And the caucus can't officially start until after the polls close and everyone inside has voted, so some caucuses will have people signing in and then having to sit around waiting for hours. Just that thought is giving lots of average folks second thoughts.

Everyone is very excited because primaries haven't meant anything in Texas for decades. The expected Harris County (Houston area) voter turnout for the caucuses alone is 100,000. In 2004 there were only 5000 caucus goers. The overall turnout in Texas is expected to be 87% of all registered voters! Amazing! Something new is definitely happening in America – thanks to both Hillary and Barack! We can be very proud of our Democratic Party and we should all feel very excited about November. The winds of change are blowing strong!

Election Results

February 13, 2008 Club Meeting

Club Officers

President: Daniele Gerard (54)
First Vice President: Judy Wood (56)
Second Vice President: Theresa Canter (57)
Treasurer: Ellen Flax (53)
Corresponding Secretary: Ray Schwartz (54)
Membership Secretary: Lynn Bender Max (56)
Recording Secretary: Lauren Williams (55)

Club Board of Directors

Corine Pettey (53)
Dan Berger (51)
Jock Davenport(51)
Arlene Geiger (51)
David Kogelman (51)
Milivoy Samurovich (51)
Deborah Thomas (51)
Mary Ann Marks (50)
Ernestine Gallagher (29)
Marie Lunn (49)
Ken Tulloch (48)
Yvonne Vulliemoz (48)
Patrick O'Shaughnessey (47)

Condolences are extended to the family of Marvin Sochet, a member of Broadway Democrats. Riverside residents Marvin and his wife Mary often joined Three Parks in many activities and were active in many anti-war protests and marches.

Special Thanks for Your Donations

Thanks to everyone who donated to our Holiday Party collection for the food pantry. We delivered over 20 bags of non-perishable items to the Westside Campaign Against Hunger located at the Church of St Paul & Andrew at 86th Street. and West End Avenue. All such contributions are very much needed and appreciated. Please continue to help throughout the year.

What's Happening in the Manhattan Judiciary

By Alan Flacks

New York County Surrogate **Renee Roth** retires at the end of this year. In the running for her seat this year are State Supreme Court Justice **Milton A. Tingling**; **John J. Reddy, Jr.**, one of the two counsel to the Public Administrator of New York County; and **Nora Anderson**, a private practice litigator in Surrogate's court. **Eve Rachel Markewich**, who made a previous unsuccessful

bid for the post and said she is not running, added, "I enjoy my current practice."

The New York County Democratic organization's judiciary committee is setting up a merit screening panel to interview candidates who want to be judges. The panelists will be chosen by the heads of various civic and good-government groups as well as heads of bar associations and law schools.

The target date for this panel to report for Surrogate is May 1, in order to allow the candidates to go to club endorsement meetings and this judicial office requires petition signatures.

An interesting occurrence this year is that the target date for reporting the most highly qualified State Supreme Court candidates, who are chosen (designated) at the September Party judicial nominating convention, is July 15. Now, this will allow the successful applicants reported as "most highly qualified" to lobby delegate candidates for two months.

There is no Civil Court seat for this panel to screen. [Paul Feinman's seat is from the 1st Civil Court District (Lower East Side), and the local Democratic Party District Leaders will set up their own panel to screen for a replacement candidate.]

However, there is the Surrogate Court vacancy (*q.v., supra*), and there are four vacancies on the State Supreme Court (1st Judicial District), *videlicet*: **Martin Schoenfeld** (incumbent standing for re-election), **Marcy Kahn** (do.), **Stephen Crane** (resigned), and **Louis York** (reached statutory retirement age). Crane's resignation, effective February 1, 2008, creates a vacancy. According to court insiders, it is highly likely that the Governor will make an interim appointment, thus creating a judge who will be considered an incumbent under our Party's "Crane Rule" (named after the retiring judge). **Shirley Kornreich** and **Lucy Billings** have submitted their applications for appointment to this vacancy.

March for Peace on March 19 with West Side Peace Action

West Side Peace Action is planning a Westside Peace March from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on Wednesday, March 19. Those marching will gather at 86th Street and West End Avenue and march to Verdi Square at 72nd Street and Broadway. It will be a solemn march to observe the fifth anniversary of our military involvement in Iraq.

Upcoming Community Event

Mildred Speiser will speak on "The Secret Lives of Presidents' Wives" at 1:00 PM on March 13 at the Council Senior Center on 241 West 72nd Street (North side and between Broadway and West End Avenue).

Don't Forget About Albany!

By Steve Strauss

Amidst our strong interest in picking a worthy Democratic Party nominee for President in a race that has been far different from what anyone predicted six months ago I am afraid that Three Parks, and others perhaps, has given insufficient attention to the many important issues to be decided upon in Albany this year. While we will hear from proponents and opponents of congestion pricing this month, there are many more issues we should be talking about with Danny O'Donnell, Eric Schneiderman, and Bill Perkins.

One issue is how much should Democrats in Albany posture and how much should they actually try and get bills passed in both Houses? Do we simply wait until Democrats win control of the State Senate in November and leave the big issues to the 2009 legislative session where it might be hard to blame the lack of progress on a Republican-controlled State Senate? Sometimes I get a little tired of Albany's one-house bills which Democrats in the Assembly and Republicans in the State Senate pass knowing there is no chance in Hell that the other house will pass. That's not governing.

Expanding the Bottle Deposit Law to cover bottled water and juices is a good example. The Assembly keeps on insisting that the unclaimed nickels should go to the State to fund environmental projects. This allows the State Senate to say the Bottle Deposit expansion is simply a new tax. Why not just extend the deposit requirement to bottled water and juices and let the stores keep the unclaimed nickels, as is the case under the existing law? It takes away a big excuse for the State Senate to hide behind. Apparently, the Governor's position is moving in this direction.

Other issues that need some discussion: How much of the State's budget should be spent on health care? Right now it's quite high. New York spends more on Medicaid and Medicare than any other state. Is our care that much better or that much more expensive to provide? The Governor wants to overhaul hospital reimbursement rates to

better reflect current medical practices such as shorter hospital stays for many procedures. Sounds good. Is it?

Should the state or the racing industry take a smaller cut out of New York City's OTB parlors? If we have casino-style gambling in New York State, should entry be limited so that the Legislature gets to pick winners and losers or should anyone who meets entry standards be allowed to open a facility? Should the state finally crack down on Indian Reservations that are selling gasoline and cigarettes to non-Indians and not paying any state sales taxes? Should the Legislature lift the cap it set on the sales tax on gasoline to fund road, highway and transit improvements? Why is the Legislature preventing New York City from installing more red-light cameras at intersections?

Should the state spend billions of more dollars building a bigger Javits Convention Center or just repair the one we've got and invest in other needed infrastructure projects? Should the state reform the local Industrial Development agencies and restrict their ability to grant tax-free financing to almost anyone building something in most of the state? Should the state modify the Wickes law so localities can build things at lower costs with general contractors? Will the Legislature ever give Judges a raise? It's been quite a while since their last pay hike.

Lastly, should the Legislature meet in formal sessions more than 2 or 3 days a week so that more might get done?

Visit our updated club Web site
ThreeParksDems.org to keep abreast
of the latest news and notices of up-
coming activities.

MOVING PEOPLE AND THINGS IN OUR CITY NOW

By Cy A. Adler, President, Shorewalkers Inc.

To survive, New York City must install congestion pricing; but that is not enough. Flow of traffic in a city is like flow of blood in a body – if the flow congeals, the city or body will sicken or die. Cars are like dogs in the city; incidentally, while living in Manhattan I have had and slept with three dogs and four cars.

To quicken flow of people and goods in our city tolls on all Manhattan bridges and tunnels should be pegged at \$8 for everyone who must drive to

Manhattan during rush hours. However, less-wealthy city residents would be given a rebate of \$7 per trip. To get this discount a New York City resident would have only to sign an affidavit affirming that he or she lives in New York City and has limited income and resources. This can be accomplished by integrating fare collection with Easy-Pass and the current MTA MetroCard system.

No parking garages mar the finest residential buildings on Park, Fifth, Sutton Place and West End Avenues! City dwellers do not need parking garages. The City should forbid new parking spaces in Manhattan, raise taxes on existing parking lots, and charge more for street parking.

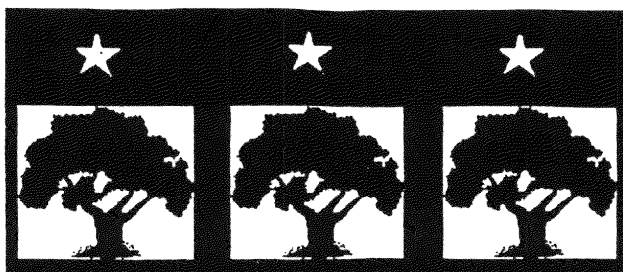
To accommodate non-Manhattan car drivers, the MTA and Mayor Bloomberg should build parking garages above the subway train yards terminals in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens. These park-and-ride garages will more than pay for themselves and encourage use of the subway lines.

Buses contribute to traffic tie-ups. MTA, ferry, tour, tourist, school, private, hospital, elderly, and other buses crisscross Manhattan. Let's rationalize bus use. This won't be easy. Twenty months ago we asked the MTA Bus Division to consider changing four traffic-jamming right-angle turns at Broadway and West 96th Street into one U-turn on an empty lot. This would reduce congestion and improve air quality. We are still waiting for an answer.

New York City teachers, police officers, firemen, and politicians who live in New York City bestow on the City multiple civic and economic benefits, aside from reducing traffic congestion. City, State and Federal governments must persuade more of their employees to live in the city.

Greenways allow citizens to walk and bike using their legs. Walking and biking not only reduce automotive congestion and pollution, but also increase citizen fitness and longevity. The mayor should provide funds to mark and maintain the 32-mile Great Saunter Walking Path around Manhattan and the Grand Harlem River Greenway, as well as other city greenways.

When put into effect, these proposals will benefit all men and women, even car lovers, who visit, live, and work in our great city.



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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

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. # _____

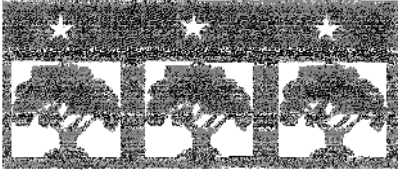
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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, March 12, 2008

Congestion Pricing: Regressive Tax or Fair Solution?