



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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

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

President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Lauren Williams
(laurenwilliams1@cs.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas
Daniel Marks Cohen

MARCH 9, 2011

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: HOUSING IN NYC: RENT PROTECTION LAWS, PUBLIC HOUSING, AND TENANTS' RIGHTS—Michael McKee, Tenants Political Action Committee; Kenneth Schaeffer, Metropolitan Council on Housing; Jane Wisdom, President, Douglass Houses Residents' Association; and Victor Gonzalez, Member, Resident Advisory Board, NYCHA

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9th

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. Housing in NYC
4. Nominations for judicial delegates
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, March 23, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, April 13, 2011
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, April 27, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

SUNDAY, MAY 1
Three Parks Annual Benefit, 1 PM to 4 PM
Café Frida, 768 Amsterdam Avenue, 97th/98th Streets

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

NEW YORK NY 100
01 MAR 2011 PM 1 T



INT

10025+751025@1316



NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9th

**HOUSING IN NYC:
Rent protection laws,
public housing, and tenants' rights**

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

As always, we were grateful to hear from State Senator Bill Perkins and Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell at the Three Parks February meeting; their forthright perspectives on New York State government help all of us to focus our efforts. Congratulations to the 2011 TPID Board of Directors—it is an honor to continue working with the membership to further the Club's progressive goals.

This month's meeting will feature a comprehensive update on New York City housing from the experts: Michael McKee, Tenants Political Action Committee; Kenneth Schaeffer, Metropolitan Council on Housing; Jane Wisdom, President, Douglass Houses Residents' Association; and Victor Gonzalez, Member, Resident Advisory Board, NYCHA. They will cover rent stabilization laws, public housing issues, tenants' rights, and more. We will also entertain nominations for judicial delegates to the September 2011 Supreme Court Nominating Convention; delegates will be elected at the Three Parks April meeting.

Three Parks will honor Attorney General Eric Schneiderman with the Ted Weiss Public Service Award at our 36th annual benefit on Sunday, May 1. We will also honor Noah Gotbaum, President of Community Education Council, District 3, and Mark Diller, Chair of CB7's Youth, Education & Libraries Committee, with the Jesse Crawford Community Service Award. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Please let us know on or before March 10 if you would like to support the event by having your name listed on the invitation; visit ThreeParksDems.org for rates or send an e-mail to ThreeParksDems@aol.com.

This year's event is at a new location and time: Café Frida, 768 Amsterdam at 97th/98th Streets from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Condolences

Three Parks Independent Democrats extends condolences to the family of Alma Schieren, a long time member of Three Parks, who passed away in February.

Follow the Money

By Jock Davenport

Not long ago I joined fellow Three Parkers in Jerry Nadler's Manhattan office where Jerry addressed our current political crisis with his usual political virtuosity. At one point, the discussion turned to the fanatical refusal of House Republicans to sanction Keynesian spending to revive an economy thrown into its worst crisis since the Great Depression – a crisis largely created by the predatory and see-no-evil depredations of the second Bush administration and Dubai's enablers in Congress and on the bench. On the federal level, a remedy for our current predicament is indeed possible, of course, but the Neanderthals on Capitol Hill scream like adolescents at a horror movie when Democrats propose more federal spending. Moreover, it is no help, Nadler reminded us, that governments on the state and local levels cannot avail themselves of the remedy of deficit spending and printing money to revive their regional economic woes, and so are resorting to drastic cutbacks in essential public services. In crime-ridden Camden, New Jersey, for instance, half the police force has been laid off. "There just isn't any money anywhere," Jerry concluded.

But *why* is public capital almost impossible to raise in this supposedly richest nation in the history of the world? Today, in what used to be called Red China, the material prospects of ordinary people are steadily getting better. In this country, for the first time in our history, young people's lives will be less prosperous and hopeful than their parents' lives. What are the Chinese doing right? Where have we gone astray?

We do not even have to look to liberal economic theorists like Paul Krugman for an answer to that second question; in fact, we can usefully go to the Old Testament for guidance. I know: much of what we read in the Bible is – how shall I put it – ill advised and best ignored. (Is anyone these days, even Pat Robertson, keen on stoning women who commit adultery?) However, Judeo-Christian scripture contains eternal, priceless pearls of wisdom as well. The ancient Hebrews first understood something we Americans have recently forgotten: that too much wealth in the hands of too few is fatal to the general welfare. The scribes who wrote the Book of Leviticus were not any more Marxists or socialists than Obama is; they simply knew from bitter experience, as a people who had suffered under Pharaoh's yoke, that wealth, power, and unearned privilege flow naturally and corruptly together, and always to the detriment of the unfavored and exploited many. Understanding this to the marrow, the ancient Hebrews made it a *religious obligation* for slave owners to free their

slaves after seven years of service, and every Jubilee year all debts had to be cancelled. It is both inspiring and humbling to think people so long dead were so wise.

Before Ronald Reagan began the Second Gilded Age by telling us our democratic government was our enemy, and then hammered down the marginal tax rate from 70 percent when he entered office to 28 percent when he left, most Americans understood that there were good, just reasons for taxing the rich at higher rates than we taxed the less affluent. This vast continental nation contains abundant mineral and timber wealth. We live in the world's breadbasket; are blessed with a stable political system, an independent judiciary, a civilian-controlled military, and the best university system in the world that graduates a well-trained workforce. We have huge reserves of investment capital. Above all, we live in a nation founded on human equality and the pursuit of happiness. Before Reagan genially conned Americans into abandoning their faith in the graduated income tax, the reigning assumption behind supporting it was that those who prosper the most have gotten rich not just because of their talents and drive but because they have been able to take advantage of all the blessings enumerated above. Therefore, *they need to give something back to the country that has given them so much*, and the most important way to do that is by paying higher taxes.

One reason the Soviet Union ended up on history's ash heap was that its crude command economy and straitjacket politics could not produce transformative innovators like Bill Gates. That society's meager rewards went only to the ruling elite. Party poobahs stifled initiative and gave almost nothing back to the masses they exploited but claimed to represent. No wonder the Soviet empire went the way of all empires. However, ours will share the same fate if we do not soon reclaim what the founding fathers bequeathed us.

A recent column by Nicholas Kristof deplored the 24 percent of income now taken home by just 1 percent of our population, "up from almost 9 percent in 1976." Why much of that historic transfer of income benefits the already rich is owing to relentless Republican efforts to undermine Americans' faith in New Deal liberalism. Reagan successfully demonized it by calling it the "L"-word, and it joined the "F"-word and the "N"-word in the vocabulary of unmentionables. Today a mere 20 percent of our population dares to call themselves liberals – half of the 40 percent who style themselves conservatives. I hope to live long enough to see those numbers reversed. However, it

will not happen until and unless we Americans relearn those ancient economic truths, based on justice, first handed down over two millennia ago by those Old Testament sages.

UWS Community Sweatshop Free Rally!

Save the Date!

March 26, 2011

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location TBD

(look for an email w/ details)

and

Come to the Planning Meetings for the Event

Thursdays at 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

March 3 at Trinity Church (168 100th Street)

March 10, 17, and 24 location TBD

For more information, send an e-mail to

boycottsaiongrill@gmail.com

