

## ***THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS***

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***District Leaders***

Bob Botfeld  
Cynthia Doty

***State Committee***

Lynn Thomas

# November 11, 2009

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKER: THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN—Dr. Bashir A. Zikria, Former Chair, Afghan National Liberation Front (ANLF); Chair, Afghan National Immigrants' Council, USA; Professor Emeritus & Special Lecturer, Columbia University

DATE: Wednesday, NOVEMBER 11, 2009

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: American Youth Hostels  
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. Election update
4. THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

### **CALENDAR**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2009**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**SUNDAY, December 6, 2009**  
**Three Parks Holiday Party, 5-8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, December 16, 2009**  
**Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

**Wednesday, January 13, 2010**  
**Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM**  
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103<sup>rd</sup> St.

## President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

The Three Parks October meeting featured updates from several elected officials and members—many thanks to all who took the time to come by. Our main speaker, State Senator Eric Schneiderman, provided a thoughtful overview of goings on in Albany and hopes for a progressive agenda in the coming months. The Senator emphasized the accomplishments of an otherwise dysfunctional time, including sweeping reforms to the failed Rockefeller Drug Laws.

We also received greetings from our next Comptroller, John Liu, and Council Members Inez Dickens and Melissa Mark-Viverito. State Committee Members Lynn Thomas and Larry Hirsch provided a report on the recent State Committee Convention and TPID Board Member Elizabeth Kellner a report on the September Judicial Convention. Member Steve Max described where health care reform, the public option and subsidies stand now that the Senate Finance bill has come out of committee and highlighted some of the Club's activities. I encouraged the membership to contact Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Governor Paterson to voice their opposition to relicensing Indian Point and to comment on New York State's draft energy plan. Although the deadline to weigh in on the plan has passed, there is still time to tell our senators and the governor to close Indian Point—please go to [ThreeParksDems.org](http://ThreeParksDems.org) and click on the Indian Point link.

The Club's November meeting will cover a critical issue: the war in Afghanistan. Dr. Bashir Zikria, Former Chair, Afghan National Liberation Front (ANLF) and Chair, Afghan National Immigrants' Council, USA, is also Professor Emeritus and Special Lecturer at Columbia University. He will outline his strategy for a win-win situation for the United States and the People of Afghanistan. Please join us for an informative evening that will touch on aspects of the conflict and its possible resolution that do not receive nearly enough media coverage.

As you all know, Three Parks does not hold a December meeting; instead, we host our annual Holiday Party! Please mark your calendars now for Sunday, December 6th from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

at the Hostel—and remember to bring a favorite dish to share with fellow revelers. If you'd like to volunteer to help with the festivities, just sign up at the November meeting.

[PLEASE NOTE: Unfortunately, we went to press with this newsletter before the November 3rd election; please attend the November 11th meeting and look in the December issue for commentary on the results.]



### THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Dear Friends:

Please see testimony below that I delivered this morning to the New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection on natural gas drilling in the NYC watershed.

Thank you Chairman Gennaro and members of the Committee on Environmental Protection for holding this important and timely hearing on natural gas drilling in the Catskill/Delaware watershed.

I am here today to briefly explain why the draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) published on September 30, 2009 by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) provides inadequate environmental, health and economic protections for the City of New York. I will be submitting additional testimony on the technical merits of the SGEIS at the Department of Environmental Conservation on November 10, 2009, however, I believe there are some important details that simply can't wait until that time.

The SGEIS takes a disappointing and reckless position on the protection of the Catskill/Delaware

watershed, exempting less than one third of the land in the watershed from hydraulic fracturing. This means that a form of natural gas extraction that produces one of the most toxic industrial byproducts produced by gas and oil drilling will be permitted in the remaining unprotected sections of the same watershed that provides New York City with 90% of its unfiltered water supply.

Earlier this year my office released “Uncalculated Risk”, a report that documented extensive environmental degradation connected to hydraulic fracturing, including over two dozen leaks, spills, contaminations and explosions in nine different states. If the State rushes to approve hydraulic fracturing in the Catskill/Delaware watershed and continues to downplay the dubious environmental track record associated with this type of drilling, New York City’s most crucial natural infrastructure will be compromised.

Additionally, if we allow hydraulic fracturing in the Catskill/Delaware watershed, an accident adjacent to New York City’s unfiltered water supply could introduce the threat of grave human health consequences. I am shocked that the DEC would even contemplate the potential exposure of New York City’s unfiltered water supply to benzene, formaldehyde, ethylene glycol, hydrochloric acid, toluene and hundreds of other endocrine disruptors and carcinogenic chemicals used for hydraulic fracturing.

If the environmental and human health consequences of the DEC’s proposal to allow hydraulic fracturing are not reason enough for an explicit ban on hydraulic fracturing in the Catskill/Delaware watershed, the long-term economic toll that drilling would cause must also be seriously considered.

In July 2007, the City and State reached an agreement on a filtration avoidance determination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for “a series of watershed protection initiatives and activities” meant to prevent the construction of a water filtration plant and maintain New York City’s water supply in its natural, unfiltered state.

Prior to the EPA’s most recent filtration avoidance determination the City had sunk over \$168 million into the purchase some 70,000 acres of land in the Catskill Delaware Watershed. When the 2007

filtration avoidance determination was reached the City pledged to spend an additional \$300 million for additional land acquisitions. On top of the money paid for land acquisition, the city also pays over \$100 million in annual property taxes on the watershed land that it owns.

The key to the EPA’s filtration avoidance determination was the fact that the State’s plans for land acquisition meant that a growing amount of land would be unavailable for any kind of private development – residential building and the construction of new commercial enterprises of any sort. And now, today, we’re talking about allowing natural gas drilling over the remaining land in the watershed that is not publicly owned.

Not only would this be a major reversal to a longstanding policy that New York State just reaffirmed two years ago, it would mean that a repeal of New York City’s filtration avoidance determination by the EPA upon its expiration would be a near certainty.

If the sanctity of the Catskill/Delaware watersheds pristine water is violated by hydraulic fracturing, there would be no choice but to construct a water filtration system to mitigate the potential contamination that drilling could cause. Building a water filtration facility would cost an estimated ten to twenty billion dollars. On top of that, the RAND Corporation has estimated an annual cost of \$300 million for the maintenance and upkeep of such a facility.

When we add all of these numbers up, even the most optimistic long-term projections for the amount of tax revenue generated by hydraulic fracturing would pale in comparison to the sunk and future costs that the State and City should have to bear if a new water filtration facility must be constructed.

With all of these factors in mind, I am making the following calls to action:

- First, the DEC should extend the commenting period on the draft SGEIS from 60 days to 120 days. The SGEIS is an 800 page technical document and it takes an enormous amount of time to read and digest. It is unrealistic for the DEC to expect concerned citizens to make sound

public comments without a sufficient amount of time for review.

- Second, I call on every person at this hearing to join me at the DEC's public hearing on November 10, 2009. We need every concerned New Yorker to participate in that hearing and send a clear message to Albany: Keep our water safe.
- Finally, I call on Governor Paterson and the DEC to make an immediate modification to the SGEIS and explicitly ban hydraulic fracturing in the Catskill/Delaware watershed. I believe the choice is simple: we either correct this error and ban drilling now, or soon enough the officials entrusted with protecting our environment will be asked to explain why they were asleep at the switch when it mattered most.

Thank you Councilman Gennaro for the opportunity to testify on what is the most important environmental issue this city has faced in the last decade. I look forward to working together with you and other members of the Council to "Kill the Drill".

### Statement by Senator Perkins on Domestic Violence

For Release: October 30, 2009  
Contact: Cordell Cleare 212-222-7315

***Today Senator Perkins made the following statement regarding recent allegations of domestic violence against NY1 Reporter Dominic Carter:***

"The recent stories of allegations being made against Dominic Carter, a NY1 Reporter, of domestic violence reminds us that clearly there is an atmosphere of violence against women by men that cuts across all lines of race, class, education levels etc. Violence against women cannot be tolerated in any quarter or at any level in our society or at any time. The most severe punishment must be dealt to show the seriousness of these offenses.

We must not tolerate it amongst our legislators, our media or anywhere in our communities. September 2009 marks the 15th Anniversary of the Federal "Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)". Those who might wink or turn a blind

eye to these incidents need to understand that this "dirty little secret" in our society has to be outed. It has to be exposed. It has to be punished. And it has to be stopped by any means necessary."

### NY County Leader Wright Speaks about Senator Monserrate

"As the primary participant in the circumstances surrounding the Senatorial circus of this past legislative session, coupled with his conviction of a misdemeanor for domestic violence, I find it very easy to ask that Hiram Monserrate step aside as Senator of the 13th District in Queens, New York.

As the New York Democratic County Leader, I think his further participation in public service would compromise the ideals, philosophies, and principles of the Democratic Party in the City of New York, the State of New York and the Nation. As a co-conspirator with reactionary Senate Republicans, he placed a bet for his own aggrandizement and put the Democratic Party in peril. Domestic violence should never be tolerated and I stand with the Queens Democratic County Leader, Joe Crowley in calling for his swift departure."

Keith L. T. Wright, 70th A.D.  
New York County Democratic Leader

### Call to Action "Be counted in 2010" By Cynthia Doty

The US Constitution requires a national census every 10 years. This is a count of every person residing in the United States. All RESIDENTS must be counted, including people of all races and ethnic groups, both citizens and NON-citizens alike.

**Census Day is April 1, 2010.** The results show state population counts and determine representation in the US House of Representatives. Plus more than **\$300 Billion** is allocated to states and communities based in part on the census data, funds for community services and jobs.

The census will be used to determine any changes to election districts, which could directly effect who will represent New York in elected office.

It is important for Three Parks to be sure everyone in our district is counted correctly. We will need to spread the word, educate our neighbors as to the importance of the census and reassure everyone that it is safe to answer the questionnaires when they arrive.

## **Obama and the Electric Car**

**By Steve Max**

Remember how the Bush Administration worked to undermine California's zero emissions laws that promoted electric car development? What a contrast (and a relief) when, last March, President Obama announced a \$2.4 billion plan to get more electric vehicles on the road. More than half the money will go to US companies for research on batteries and the rest for other car components, training and evaluation.

Welcome as the Obama program is, the September unveiling of France's electric vehicle campaign raises some serious questions about the size and direction of the US effort. France is launching a \$2.2 billion program to build one million street and home car battery charging stations around the country by 2015. In addition, France is contributing \$186 million toward the cost of a new battery factory that Renault is starting near Paris. Clearly there are two different approaches here. Obama apparently supports the contention of the US energy and automotive industries that far more research is needed. The French, on the other hand, believe that the technology is ready to go and they are jumpstarting the market. The difference in the jobcreation potential of the two programs is glaring with most of the American money going for high tech equipment for a handful of scientists, while the French are hiring people to connect a million plug-in stations with miles and miles of wire.

Earlier in September, the French announced that \$10 billion will be going to extend railroad freight lines in an effort to get trucks off the highways. This will not only reduce greenhouse gases, but will make the highways safer for the smaller, lighter electric cars.

The President is no doubt reacting to the problem that while about 55 thousand electric cars are already rolling in the USA, foreign companies hold the battery patents due to the previous disinterest of US firms. It will be most unfortunate, however,

if wide scale electric vehicle promotion were held up here until American companies discovered something new enough to earn their own patents. Obama's goal for the US is one million electric vehicles on the road by 2015. For France it is a far more ambitious two million by 2020. (The US has roughly five times the population of France.)

Meanwhile, the city of Paris is moving forward with a program of its own that we could well use here in New York. Under the leadership of its Socialist mayor, Paris is planning to have a fleet of 4,000 small electric cars in the city itself and 2,000 more in nearby suburbs that will be available at 700 self-service rental and charging stations. One simply checks availability on-line, picks up a car at a nearby station and drops it at the station closest to the final destination. The cost hasn't been finalized yet but there will be a monthly subscription of roughly twenty-five dollars and a charge somewhere between six and nine dollars for thirty minutes of driving. (Due to the current unfavorable exchange rate, these costs seem higher to us in dollars than they will to the French in euros.) The plan is expected to go into operation later next year. Paris already has a similar short term rental program with 20,000 bicycles, although maintenance and theft appear to be ongoing problems. (As an aside, it is worth noting that the French view of government as creating solutions is also what gets their Single Payer health care system the top rating by the UN World Health Organization.)

Of course, to reduce global warming gasses, any electric vehicle program has to be backed up by a non-carbon based (coal or gas) electric generating system to charge the batteries. US electricity is 31% non-carbon, in France it is 92% but with an over reliance on nuclear power.

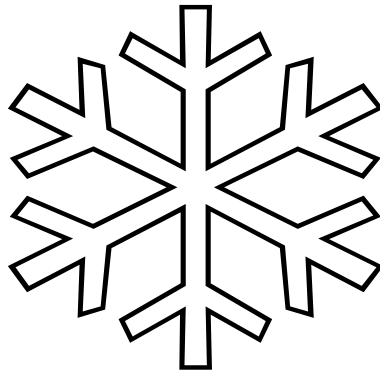
## **Condolences**

Our deepest sympathies to our longtime District Leader Bob Botfeld on the sad loss of his mother. Rose Botfeld had 94 good years and one year less good. . She passed away on Oct. 27. We extend our sincerest condolences to the Botfeld family from the Three Parks family.

Condolences to the family and friends of club member and County Committee member Gladys Smith who passed away after a long fight with cancer.

# Hold the Date...

**Three Parks Independent Democrats**



## **Annual Holiday Party**

**Sunday, December 6, 2009**

**5-8 p.m.**

**American Youth Hostel**

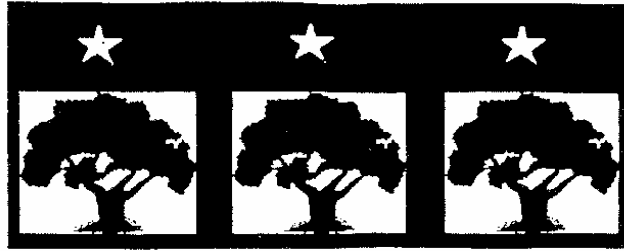
**891 Amsterdam Ave. @ 103rd Street**

**Chapel Room**

Admission is FREE so plan to come and enjoy the fun, festivities and food with other Club Members and their families.

*Club Members are asked to bring a dish – meat, vegetable, salad, potato/pasta/rice, salad or dessert – for all to enjoy and non-perishable food items that will be donated to a local food pantry. Please sign up at*

*the meeting or call 212-678-8609 to let us know what dish you plan to bring.*



*THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS*  
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-6378

Please pay your 2009 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*

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## **2009 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

*New Member* \_\_\_\_\_

*Renewal* \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category -- Check One**

Individual (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$40) \_\_\_\_\_

Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_

Low Income Family (18) \_\_\_\_\_

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 make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2009"**

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

**NEXT MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2009  
THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5-8 PM  
THREE PARKS HOLIDAY PARTY**