

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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CLUB MEETING, NOVEMBER 11, 2015

Topic:

City Council and District Update, and Q & A Session, with NYC Councilmember Mark Levine

Speakers:

HON. MARK LEVINE, New York City Councilmember, 7TH Council District

DATE: Wednesday, November 11, 2015

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 St.

ROOM: Ballroom

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in

8:00 PM Call to Order

District Leader Reports

Speaker:

Hon. Mark Levine, New York City
Councilmember, 7TH Council District

Adjourn

CALENDAR

Wednesday, November 11, 2015

8:00 pm There will be a brief meeting of the County Committee, 69th A.D., Part A (i.e., the TPID members who petitioned in June)

8:15 pm Three Parks Membership meeting will begin.
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Sunday, December 6, 2015, 5:00-8:00 pm

Three Parks Holiday Party
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Wednesday, December 16, 2015 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

President's Report

By Lauren Williams

At our October meeting, we welcomed two of our stalwart elected officials, Congressman Jerry Nadler and State Senator Bill Perkins. They reported on recent legislative actions and issues in Washington and Albany and fielded questions from members following their remarks.

Senator Perkins elaborated on a handout that summarized legislative proposals before the NY State Senate during the 2015 Session. He spoke about progress on curtailing the current solitary confinement policy as well as NYCHA and criminal justice reforms. He also highlighted legislation passed that included NYCHA Scaffolding Reform and Urban Development Corporation Reform. (Contact his office for a copy of the handout at 212-222-7315 or perkins@nysenate.gov.)

Congressman Nadler treated us to a detailed explanation of his Congressional vote on the Iran agreement and his decision to support President Obama's position. He thoroughly presented both sides of the issue as well as the likely scenarios that would have followed either the adoption or the defeat of the proposed agreement. He acknowledged the seriousness of the issue and the divergent views among his constituents. He said he had heard from many within his district in the weeks leading up to the vote and since—many of whom were Upper West Siders.

NYC Councilmember Mark Levine, who represents the 7TH District, will speak at our November meeting. He will provide updates on City Council actions and issues of importance to our community. He also will announce how members can become involved in the 2016 funding cycle for Participatory Budgeting. Councilmember Helen Rosenthal is also promoting the initiative in the City Council's 6TH District.

Many of you are already engaged in supporting and volunteering for Democratic candidates who have announced for President and Congress. At our last meeting, the Board of Directors decided that the club will announce links to candidates' local campaign activities. The intent of these posts is to connect members with opportunities to become engaged and informed and not as a Three Parks Independent Democrats endorsement of a particular candidate. When official club endorsements for the 2016 races are to be considered by the membership, official announcements will be made in the newsletter preceding any endorsement vote.

I hope you will mark your calendar to attend our Annual Holiday Party on Sunday, December 6. At our November 11 meeting, you will have the opportunity to sign up for what food you'll bring. Once again we are planning to have

wonderful food, great music for dancing, a lovely decorated ballroom, and a room full of members and friends in the holiday spirit. I hope to see you there as we end our 2015 club year.

District Leader's Report

By Bob Botfeld

Hall Cards and Voter Turnout

Over the past decade, voter participation in city elections has substantially decreased. It is no coincidence that the precipitous drop occurred during the Bloomberg administration's crackdown and aggressive fining of political candidates for their colorful tradition of placing campaign posters on every conceivable lamppost and utility pole. Our city elections now occur with almost no street presence on Election Day.

This suppression of the vote under the guise of tidiness is unfortunate. It is important that we are reminded to vote. For many city residents, voting is their only physical affirmation that they live and participate in a democracy.

At Three Parks, we have a traditional election eve activity to remind voters about each election. Uniquely among local clubs and perhaps anywhere else, volunteers from Three Parks Independent Democrats post orange election notices, hall cards, in every apartment building and brownstone within the Three Parks' division of the 69TH Assembly District. We do this in more than 800 buildings

For every election, State Committeewoman Lynn Thomas creates the 36 different election notices. At least one election notice is diligently placed in each of our 800 plus buildings, thanks to the following club members: Robert Bardin, Bob Botfeld, Dan Cohen, Wendy Dannett, Jock Davenport, Cynthia Doty, Ellen Flax, Daniele Gerard, Louisa Gilbert, Tom Goggin, Marnie Hall, Janet Harvilchek, Elizabeth Kellner, Erl Kimmich, Norm La Fond, Bruce Markens, Merle McEldowney, Lynn Max, Steve Max, Brenda Morgan, Milivoy Samurovich, Lynn Thomas, George Voorhis, Lauren Williams, Judy Wood and Lorraine Zamora.

As a result we have a higher turnout than other areas. In a recent presidential election, over 92% of registered Democrats in our area voted.

Film Company, a Small Victory, and Thank You to Councilmember Rosenthal

It seems like a movie or TV show is filmed every other month somewhere in our neighborhood. Overnight, No Parking signs sprout on our side streets where we thought we had safely parked for a few days. During the Jewish holidays in September a film company posted No

Parking signs around Riverside Drive between 102nd and 104th streets. For automobile parkers observing the Jewish holiday season and seemingly protected by the suspension of alternate side of the street parking rules, the sudden appearance of the No Parking signs destroyed their usual holiday respite from the constant search to find a parking space every other day. For observant members in our community, the unexpected No Parking would require them to move their car when they thought they had carefully avoided having to drive.

At the beginning of the Jewish holidays, club member Lisa Berger called me about the parking dilemma of some of her neighbors. I called Councilmember Helen Rosenthal who represents the affected blocks. Within an hour, her excellent staff had reached the Mayor's office and obtained assurance that no one had to move their car. The cars would not be ticketed. This is a small victory but every victory counts. Thank you to Councilmember Helen Rosenthal and staff.

County Committee Meeting on November 11

At the beginning of our November club meeting, we will hold a short meeting of the members of the County Committee from Part A of the 69TH Assembly District (AD). The County Committee is composed of club members who collected qualifying nominating signatures on the club petitions this past June. This meeting, called a "divisional meeting" under the county rules, is usually scheduled shortly after the September primary. It can be held to allow vacant county committee slots to be filled. However, since Three Parks club members successfully filled every slot by gathering signatures and filing nominating positions (and was the only club to do so), our meeting will be brief and pro forma.

What is a divisional meeting? Divisional meetings are neighborhood subcommittee meetings of the full county-wide county committee. In counties without active political clubs, divisional meetings serve to foster the political activity of the Democratic party. In Manhattan, with its active Democratic clubs such as Three Parks, the divisional county committees are simply part of each club. Three Parks' assigned boundaries are the same as the divisional county committee boundaries. In effect, we have a divisional meeting following every other September primary election—as well as monthly in our scheduled club meetings.

End Police Violence

By Erl Kimmich

Thousands have taken to the streets again to demand an end to Police Violence and Mass Incarceration.

October 22, 23 and 24 were days of action in NYC called for by Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and Dr. Cornell West. The events were endorsed by Medea Benjamin, Noam Chomsky, Harry Belafonte, Immortal Technique, Alice Walker and dozens of groups, religious leaders, and the families of the victims of police violence. Family members of the murdered came from Utah, Detroit, Wisconsin, California, and elsewhere. There were Native Americans, whites, Latinos, and African Americans all of whom had lost family to excessive force. The three days of action included a blockade of the causeway to Riker's Island that culminated in a march from Washington Square Park to Bryant Park on Saturday October 24. I and other members of Three Parks participated.

There was a sense of urgency among the marchers. I felt it, too, in speaking with neighbors and family. The longer it takes for police behavior to change, the more lives are being lost. The courage of the young people who put themselves on the line is inspirational. The youth and minorities have been disproportionately targeted for stop and frisk and other police tactics. Nevertheless, they turned out in large numbers for the march. While issues like global warming and income inequality loom heavily for all of us, police violence is an immediate threat. Families are demanding an end to the violence, and an end to the mass incarcerations!

Which side are you on? The rallying cry of the march should resonate in all of us. Are we on the side of justice and the rule of law as set forth by our democracy or not? Does a uniform exempt police from the rules that govern everyone else? Are they taught in the academy that it is okay for them to engage in violent crimes? On the firing range are they drilled to: "shoot once, twice, and empty the clip?" Do their jobs require them to kill perpetrators or suspects? Are police officers trained to bring suspects—presumed innocent until proven guilty—into custody beaten, maimed or dead? Are they taught to torture or kill suspects in custody? Are we told that if we witness a police officer committing a crime, we should close ranks behind that officer? Are people supposed to perjure themselves to protect fellow officers from prosecution under the law, no matter what they may have done? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then we have found a part of the problem.

As a people and a nation, do we side with bullies and thugs in blue uniforms or in gang colors or do we side with our communities, families, and the rule of law? Do we insist that police officers be held to the highest standards, or do we allow them to run wild with impunity and without respect for the laws that govern our social contract? Most

of us, including our public safety officers, can agree on the answers to these questions.

It takes courage to exercise our first amendment rights and to speak out for justice. We've already seen how a celebrity like Quentin Tarantino who took a public stand in support of the families of the slain received threats of attacks on his livelihood from the police. Fear of reprisal should not enter the equation when it comes to criticism of the government or police.

As a club, we have already passed a resolution to strengthen the Citizens' Review Board and to institute effective training procedures to end broken window and stop and frisk policies. What will be our next steps? Please reach out to me or other club members with your suggestions so that we may win some social, political and legal victories as we did with the ban on fracking!

**County Committee Meeting
69th Assembly District—Part A
November 11, 8:00 PM**

At the beginning of the Three Parks Club Meeting on November 11, there will be a brief meeting of members of the County Committee, 69TH AD, Part A, i.e., the members of Three Parks Democrats who petitioned in June. The club meeting will start at 8:15.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

This is a quiet year for us—even the Democratic State Committee, which met in the September at the Grand Hyatt, was pretty empty. The leadership rushed through the meeting to get to the Eleanor Roosevelt Luncheon that day. Everything was put on hold. The Progressive Caucus tried to get the committee to consider a resolution demanding that the Independent Democratic Conference (the group of State Senate Democrats that caucuses with the Republicans to give the Republicans the majority) return to the fold. This resolution was tabled. For the moment, the issue is moot since the GOP has an outright majority. We hope to elect more Democrats next year to the State Senate—enough to give us a margin of error the IDC cannot deliver the chamber to the Republicans. We'll try again in the spring meeting, when the State Senate is up for re-election; perhaps, in a Presidential election year, the Democrats can take back the State Senate once and for all.

Side note: last month, State Party Chairman (and former Governor) David Paterson stepped down from his post. At the time, nothing was reported as to the reason why, but it seemed a bit odd, 18-months into his term, to step aside. I have scoured the blogs and asked around and the answer

seems to be that Governor Paterson wanted to go into the private sector. Perhaps an opportunity arose and he felt like now was the time, given that it was a quiet year and there would be enough time to find someone to replace him. The position is more ceremonial really, as the day-to-day workings of the party are run by Basil Smikle, the Executive Director.

In addition to my work as State Committeeman, I am also involved in the community in a few other ways—including being part of the leadership of Valley Restoration Local Development Corporation. The LDC used to run the thrift shop on Amsterdam between 106 and 107 Streets until it closed in April, but in the recent past it led the effort to landmark and convert the former Association Residence for the Relief of Respectable Aged Indigent Females at 891 Amsterdam Avenue into the American Youth Hostel. The thrift shop space is vacant; we are considering what would be in the best interest of the community in filling the space. We are willing to lease it at below-market rate to find the right tenant. No banks, nail salons or drug stores need apply! We want to find a local business or nonprofit that could use the space—or perhaps several retail tenants who could share it. Please contact me—newyorkcitydan@yahoo.com or go on our website: www.vr1dc.org—to learn more.

Lastly, I am working with the Friends of Anibal Aviles Playground on 108 Street—the children's playground on the north side of 108 Street between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues. We have a website (www.FOAAP.org) and a FaceBook page, check us out. The playground is a bit worse for wear, and I am part of a parent- and resident-driven initiative to fix it up. At the same time, adjacent to the playground, the city-owned parking garages are being considered by the West Side Federation for Supportive Senior Housing (WSFSSH) to develop affordable housing on the sites. There is hope that WSFSSH and the playground will cooperate and lead to redevelopment of the playground. Recently I had a conversation with Kaboom, a national charity that funds the creation of playgrounds. We discussed involving the community in a redesign of the playground and having Kaboom pay for most of the improvements. All preliminary, but also exciting. See you at the November meeting!

Food and Water Watch Update

By Erl Kimmich

This October 19, Food and Water Watch (FWW) celebrated its tenth year in action with a rousing fundraiser in Tribeca. There was good reason: winning the battle to ban fracking in New York State, among other victories, and needing to collect donations for the continued struggles ahead.

The FWW tenth-year anniversary celebration was marked by three exceptional speakers, Wenonah Hauter, Jerrold Nadler, and Josh Fox, who have been instrumental in winning a ban against fracking in New York State and continuing their efforts to enact a nationwide ban. As the three took their turns with the microphone, a story of commitment, resolution, perseverance, hard work, and courage revealed itself. From the beginning, FWW, with Wenonah at the helm, resolved to seek a complete ban on fracking instead of allowing it and seeking regulation of the gas industry. They refused to be swayed by other environmental groups who favored regulation or a partial ban. From the beginning, FWW pointed out that laws and regulations could not be adequately enforced and would not be sufficient to protect our water supplies.

Congressman Nadler has been an outspoken foe of the gas lobby and has stood against the powerful fossil fuel barons through his office and work on the hill. He spoke of FWW's ongoing efforts to secure a national ban. Our thanks to Jerry Nadler for his continued work on this!

FWW's leadership in demanding a ban eventually drew anti-fracking groups and individuals together in numbers that the governor could not ignore. That the focus of Josh Fox's speech. For his own part, Josh helped kick

the movement into high gear with his Oscar-nominated *Gasland* in 2010, an excellent documentary followed by a second expository film, *Gasland 2*. His work to film, produce and get these movies distributed was crucial in swelling the numbers of FWW's movement to ban fracking.

Some of the other FWW victories over the past years include:

- Helping communities across the country organize to prevent corporate takeovers of their publicly owned water systems.
- Creating a nationwide movement to require certain types of labeling for food products including country of origin and GMO foods.
- Helping international water justice groups win a UN resolution recognizing the human right to water.

As you may recall, Three Parks collected thousands of signatures in our neighborhood and presented them to the various public hearings panels and commissions that were held in NYC and Albany. We delivered signatures to Gov. Cuomo as well. So let's give ourselves a pat on the back—but the fight is not over! Three Parks members attended a hearing on Monday, November 2, to stop the Port Ambrose gas export terminal from being constructed.

Congratulations to

Former TPID president, Joshua Pepper, & Kate Powers

Kate Marie Powers and Joshua Benjamin Pepper were married in October by Rabbi David Markus at the Country Club of Pittsfield in Pittsfield, Mass.

The bride, 42, is keeping her name. She works in Albany as a senior policy adviser and the director of legislative affairs for Eric T. Schneiderman, the attorney general of New York State. She graduated summa cum laude from Assumption College in Worcester, Mass. She received a master's degree in public administration and a law degree summa cum laude from Syracuse University. She also received a master's degree in social work from the University of Vermont and a certificate in global affairs from N.Y.U. She is the daughter of Christine K. Bubriski of Pittsfield and Richard J. Powers of Ocala, Fla.

The groom, 46, is a deputy commissioner and the general counsel at the New York State Office of Mental Health in Albany. He graduated from Columbia, from which he also received a master's in economics. He received a law degree cum laude from N.Y.U. He is a son of Barbara B. Pepper of Stratton Mountain, VT, and the late Allan M. Pepper.



Three Parks Independent Democrats Annual Holiday Party

Sunday, December 6, 2015

5:00-8:00 p.m.

The Youth Hostel

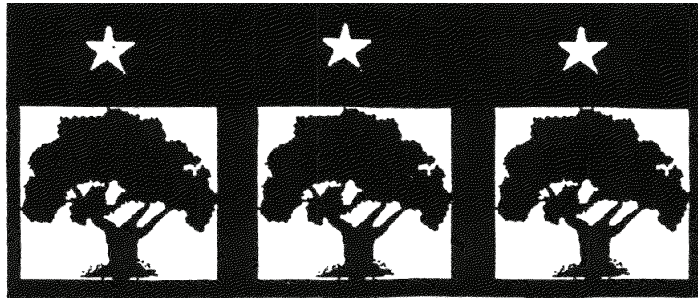
891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103 Street

Ballroom

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

Please bring a dish (should be enough for at least 6)—meat, vegetable, salad, potato/pasta/rice, or dessert—for the buffet. Three Parks also will collect cash or checks made out to West Side Campaign Against Hunger.

Please let Lorraine Zamora know what you will bring. She can be reached at 212-749-2882 or lzamora245@gmail.com.



Three Parks Independent Democrats

Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316, New York, NY 10025, tel: 212-539-7602

Please pay your 2015 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

2015 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 solely by email.

Please pay your dues with a check or via PayPal—cash and money orders are far more difficult to process.
Please make out all checks to “Three Parks Independent Democrats—Dues 2015”

Thank you for your cooperation!

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

Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 11, 2015

City Council And District Update
with Q & A Session

Speaker: Hon. Mark Levine, New York City Councilmember, 7TH Council District