



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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<i>President</i>	<i>Editors</i>	<i>District Leaders</i>	<i>State Committee</i>
Merle McEldowney	Corinne Constantine	Bob Botfeld	Lynn Thomas
	Jock Davenport	Cynthia Doty	Daniel Marks Cohen
	Richard E. Luna		
	Lorraine Zamora		

Club Meeting, November 14, 2018, 8:00 pm
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 Street

What the Election Means for the State Senate

Speaker:

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
State Senate Democratic Leader

AGENDA

7:45 pm Sign-in
8:00 pm Call to Order
District Leader Report
Guest Speaker: Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Questions & Answers
Adjourn

CALENDAR

Wednesday, Nov. 28, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

Sunday, Dec. 9, 5:00-8:00 pm
Three Parks Holiday Party

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 9, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Club Meeting

Wednesday, January 23, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

President's Report

By Merle McEldowney

This is the most important election of our lives!

It has been said before, but each time the importance has seemed more dire. When Barack Obama ran against John McCain, we thought having Sarah Palin as vice president to McCain would be terrible. Now, the threat of two more years with an unchecked Donald Trump is even more serious.

Three Parks members have been canvassing for Democratic progressive candidates for as long as I have known Three Parks. For example, I first met Lynn and Steve Max, and Cynthia Doty and others, canvassing for John Hall in 2006. Today they still are canvassing—for congressional candidates in the same part of New York State, the Hudson Valley. Somehow the stakes seem so much higher. We need to take back Congress now, more than ever. The road is difficult, but even harder to bear will be the fear we will live with “if we are not able to win.”

Every weekend for the last month, our members have gone by car to the Hudson valley to ring doorbells. These excursions have been organized and headed by Lynn and Steve Max and Chuck Wall, of our “Take Back Congress” committee. This determined threesome has also run phone banks for the past year in which club members call Republican seniors in the Hudson Valley about the possibility of losing some of their Medicare benefits under a Republican Congress. By the time you read this, Election Day will be behind us and you will know the results of our work. Hopefully, we will have taken back Congress and can take a bit of credit for a job well done. Hopefully, Three Parks club members will have participated in a massive grass roots campaign, having helped bring it to a successful conclusion, and we can enjoy the satisfaction of knowing our time and efforts were worthwhile.

At our club meeting in October, Congressperson Adriano Espaillat spoke about the Republican Congress and how dangerous it is. His talk emphasized how important it is to elect Democrats. Adam Barbanel-Fried, from Changing the Conversation Together, explained how to be more effective in our canvassing efforts and emphasized the importance of telling personal stories to the people who are willing to converse with us.

At our November club meeting, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, who hopefully will have been elected majority leader of the State Senate, will be with us to talk about the election results and what they mean for the New York State Senate.

District Leader

By Bob Botfeld

Tuesday's Election—the NYC Ballot Proposals

If you read this before you vote on Tuesday, below is my view of the Mayor's ballot proposals #2 and #3.

Ballot proposal #2 purports to encourage civic engagement in the City. But this proposal wastes money by creating a level of bureaucracy that other City agencies are responsible for; tucked into proposal #2 is funding for a land-use commission that would reduce the independence of the local Community Boards on their key function—planning land use in their communities. Land-use issues are complicated and often require technical assistance from experts. Proposal #2 would provide that expertise but under the control of the Mayor—instead of simply providing additional funding for the Community Boards to hire their own experts. **Vote No on Proposal #2.**

Ballot proposal #3 imposes term limits on Community Board members to attract new voices on the boards. Community Board members are appointed to two-year terms by the Borough President in consultation with the local council member. But this proposal is unnecessary. There is a natural turnover of Community Board members, and the elected officials who appoint them are themselves subject to term limits. There is no need for an artificial term limit whose major impact would be to eliminate the few land use experts on every board. Their expertise is gained over time. It is critical for each board to retain that expertise to make the best land-use decisions for the community. Again, this proposal would heavily favor the real estate interests—rather than community interests. **Vote No on proposal #3.**

Democracy Lives—At Least in Manhattan

Whatever happens on Tuesday, November 6—and I am very hopeful that the Democrats will take control of the New York State Senate and the United States House of Representatives—democracy lives in Manhattan.

Last Monday, October 29, in a meeting of the Manhattan Democratic County Committee that included over 75 Three Parks club members, we voted to fix a lack of democracy in the Manhattan Democratic Party constitution (Democratic Rules). This rule restricted the ability of the County Committee to nominate a Democratic candidate to fill unexpected vacancies in an elected office.

The meeting last Monday was initiated in response to an unexpected result last year of the County Committee vote to nominate the Democratic candidate to fill the vacancy in the 26th State Senate.

Background

Unscheduled vacancies in the middle of a term are fairly common. Over one-third of the assembly members and senators of the New York State legislature are initially nominated and elected through a midterm County Committee vote rather than a primary election. Jerry Nadler was first nominated for Congress, Scott Stringer for Assembly and, more recently, Brian Benjamin for the State Senate, each through a County Committee meeting.

Last fall, the Manhattan County Committee members of the 26th State Senate district voted overwhelmingly, 72% to 28%, to nominate Paul Newell, but instead a second candidate, Brian Kavanaugh, received the nomination.

Usually, such as when Brian Benjamin replaced State Senator Bill Perkins in the 30th State Senate district earlier this year, the County Committee vote determines the nominee. The 26th State Senate district spans two counties, New York County (Manhattan) and Kings County (Brooklyn). The Democratic Party-rules state that the County leaders will determine the nominee with each county leader's vote weighted by how much of the district is in each of their counties. The County Committee vote serves only in an advisory role.

Since two-thirds of the 26th State Senate district lies in Manhattan, it was expected that the Manhattan County Committee vote would prevail. Because the Manhattan County leader split his vote between Newell and Kavanaugh in accordance with the 72% to 28% Manhattan County Committee vote, while the Brooklyn county leader voted all his votes for Kavanaugh, Kavanaugh won.

This was unexpected and upsetting, not only because of the unrepresentative result in the 26th State Senate nomination, but because so many of Manhattan's legislative districts span multiple counties. Three of Manhattan's State Senate districts and all four U.S. Congressional districts span more than one county. This could become a problem for us because Jerry Nadler's Congressional district, while mostly in Manhattan, is also in a conservative, right-wing part of Brooklyn.

How it was fixed.

After the County Committee meeting last fall, a Rules Committee was formed to propose changes to address this problem and any other issue in the Democratic Rules. The Rules Committee was divided into subcommittees.

Jeannie Wilcke, president of Downtown Independent Democrats (DID), and I co-chaired the subcommittee to fix the problem where the county leader can override the vote of the County Committee. We rewrote the

Democratic Rules so that in political districts that span multiple counties, the County leader must vote 100% of his weighted vote in accordance with the winner of the Manhattan County Committee district vote.

Other Changes and Issues

The other subcommittees proposed a number of other changes to the Democratic Rules. These included adding electronic notice for both Executive Committee and County Committee meetings, longer notice periods, a change to make it easier to introduce amendments at County Meetings, and the elimination of archaic language and non-functioning committees.

In addition, the Ethics Committee, was restructured to eliminate the appearance of any conflict of interest that could influence the vote in the 26th State Senate nomination. The Committee was restructured with a more independent and wider representation among the County Committee members. Finally, along with the restructured Ethics Committee, and triggered by the 26th State Senate vote, there was a widely debated, controversial proposal to restrict anyone serving as County Leader from being a lobbyist.

There was strong interest in this proposal but it was not included in the proposed changes. Singling out a particular occupation does not address the conflicts of interest that are present with any actively involved leader. Elected officials, who are the often county leaders of other counties, have far more pressures on them from the leaders of their party, local constituents, and fellow legislators. On the other hand, there are lobbyists for many issues we progressives care about (such as Planned Parenthood, League of Conservation Voters, Etc.) and would like to serve as leaders of the party. Lastly, it permits so many professions (real estate developers, hedge fund managers, and so forth) that have conflicts of interest with so many issues.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

I don't know about you, but I am both furious and tired. This has been an exhausting election season, perhaps the most I have ever experienced. With bomb threats, shootings of innocent people in schools, supermarkets and houses of worship, it feels like a nation under siege. Conversations across the political aisle, when they are not shouting matches, border on the surreal, with constant reaction to conspiracy theories drafted by the most extreme of the right edge of humanity, concocting outlandish answers to response to questions of their world-view.

Last weekend was our final foray into Dutchess County to turn the Faso congressional seat blue with the election of Antonio Delgado. The Upper West Side has sent dozens of volunteers to the district, as well as to campaign for Max Rose in Staten Island, and Mikie Sherrill in New Jersey. I remain optimistic that by the time you read this we will have taken back BOTH the House and the Senate—and thus slow down the White House’s reactionary agenda and incoherent actions.

Come the day after Election Day, then what? We have—almost certainly – a vacancy with Tish James’ elevation to become NYS Attorney General, leaving her seat as NYC Public Advocate open early next year. A special election follows in mid-February, which will likely attract multiple candidates and, with no minimum threshold, allow someone to get elected to be a heartbeat away from the mayoralty with as little as 15%-20% of the vote.

But aside from that, 2019 is an “off-year” for us: no regular city elections, no state or federal races, really just District Leaders. State legislatures in New Jersey and Virginia have elections next year, and while not as sexy as turning Congressional seats blue, they are important parts of the puzzle if we want to control redistricting in those states in 2020. NJ is Democratic, but in Virginia the Republicans have a thin two-seat majority in each house.

Certainly we will be immersed in the Presidential circus for the Democratic nominee, but locally the game is quiet. We should discuss, as a group, where we should be channeling our energy and resources in 2019. We have built and attracted an unprecedented level of voter interest and activity: to which end will it be deployed in the year to come?

Three Parks Goes All Out for the Midterms By Chuck Wall

For the final month of the Midterm election season, Three Parks members pulled out all the stops. We knocked on voters’ doors, handed out leaflets, made numerous phone calls, and wrote hundreds of postcards for Democrats running in close races in nearby districts.

Canvassing Upstate: For progressive Democrat Antonio Delgado, who challenged GOP incumbent Congressman John Faso in the 19th District (Hudson Valley), Three Parks volunteers made canvassing trips every weekend during October. Following earlier trips to Pawling and Kingston on October 6 and 7, more than twenty volunteers traveled by car caravan to New Paltz (Ulster County). On October 13, 21 and 28, groups just as large traveled to Monticello (Sullivan County). At

each location, we received guidance and support from local Delgado campaign team members. All told, our volunteers knocked on hundreds of doors, handed out stacks of campaign literature, spoke with scores of upstate voters, and provided valuable voter information to the Delgado campaign.

Phoning and Postcard Writing: Back home in New York, we continued the phone banking/postcard-writing events that proved so successful during the past year. On October 15 and 30, more than 30 volunteers participated, respectively. Activities included: Telephoning upstate Republican seniors, alerting them to the Trump administration’s threats to Social Security and Medicare and urging them to support Democratic candidate Delgado, who promised to protect seniors’ benefits. Writing follow-up postcards to upstate Republicans who responded positively to our phone calls last year, reminding them of our message and urging them to vote for Delgado. Writing similar postcards to upstate Republican voters whom we were unable to reach by phone.

During these sessions, when Republican seniors were contacted, more than a few agreed that they would vote for Delgado over his Republican opponent John Faso!

Leafleting on Staten Island: As the election approached, Three Parks members also campaigned in support of Democrat Max Rose, who challenged GOP incumbent Congressman Dan Donovan in the 11th District (Staten Island and southwest Brooklyn). On October 11 and 24, and again on Nov. 1, volunteers handed out leaflets to commuters at the Staten Island ferry terminals in Manhattan and on Staten Island. Two-dozen Three Parks volunteers, all wearing prominent “Max Rose for Congress” signs and spreading out throughout the terminals, made an impressive sight!

The Final Push: On the final weekend before the election, some Three Parks members joined bus trips upstate to canvass for Delgado and also for Democratic State Senate candidates James Skoufis and Karen Smythe. This canvassing drive was part of the all-important effort to win a Democratic majority in the New York State Senate. Other Three Parks members stayed local, to continue leafleting at Manhattan-Staten Island ferry terminals for Max Rose.

By the time this newsletter is received, the midterm elections will be over and the results will be known. But no matter what the outcome, Three Parks members can be confident that the club made every effort—over many long months and right to the end—to support progressive Democratic candidates in the battle to win back Congress and promote progressive ideals.

Three Parks Phone Banks by the Numbers:

Phone banks conducted since Feb. 2017: 18

Participating volunteers: 110

Volunteer-hours contributed: 500+

**Calls to Republican voters in 19th District:
5,000+**

**Conversations with Republican voters in
19th District: 1,100+**

Postcards to voters in 19th District: 1,500+

Trump's Spewing Hatred Leads to Violence

By Wendy Dannett

Trump has been spreading hatred ever since he has been in office. Now we can see the effects. There were murders of blacks at a church in South Carolina last summer and last week two murders of blacks at a supermarket. Last weekend, there were murders of 11 Jews at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. And last week there was antisemitic graffiti written at the Union Temple Synagogue in Brooklyn, causing the cancellation of a talk on the midterm elections by Ilana Glazer.

Besides concerns about racism and antisemitism, I have concerns about Trump's attitude toward immigrants. Trump's attacks against immigrants of color have led his base to be terrified that the country is going to be taken over by "invaders." A woman was quoted in the New York Times as saying how frightened she is. She called the caravan of migrants "a ploy to destroy America and bring us to our knees." The problems of racism, antisemitism and hatred of immigrants did not start with Trump, but it has gotten a lot worse under his aggressively conservative administration. Even under Obama, three million people were deported. I can remember the upset when ICE officials boarded trains and buses in upstate New York, looking for people who did not have proper documents. And, of course, this country was built on slavery and the killing of Native Americans.

Trump has been hostile toward immigrants of color from the start of his administration. When he took office, he disparaged Mexicans, commenting that Mexicans were all criminals and should not be allowed into the country. Last week, he attacked a caravan of Hondurans trying to escape persecution and poverty and traveling as a large group of 7,000 to avoid attacks. He calls them invaders. He is sending 15,000 armed troops to our border with Mexico. And his latest act is his threat to remove the birthright of children of immigrants, which has been protected by the 14th amendment.

The issue of immigration has brought people together, though sometimes through violence. The gunman who attacked the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh said he was angry the congregants were helping the "invaders." On the Upper West Side, a Jewish group held a meeting on October 21 at the church of St. Andrew and St. Paul to discuss immigration issues. Deborah Barrios, who spoke at the meeting, is taking refuge at the church after being told she would be deported. She has lived in New York 13 years. "When I received notice to leave this country, it was heartbreaking," she said. "It is difficult to understand these tragedies in a country that is supposed to protect the rights of children."

Jason Stanley, who has written on fascism, quotes a poem on the United States Holocaust Museum: *First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not Jewish. Then they came for me.* "At a certain point it is too late," states Stanley.

People have talked about how important the midterm elections are in efforts to stop this move to fascism. By the time this article is out, the elections will be over. I hope the Democrats are successful in stopping this fascist takeover.

A Man with a Dream

By Merle McEldowney

For the past twenty years, I have been involved in organizations that are essentially nonpolitical: the Appalachian Mountain club—I love hiking and walking—and Country Dance of New York—a group that folk dances every Saturday night. Both of these were volunteer activities that included people interested in politics. One individual who belonged to these groups with me, as well being a member of Three Parks, was Cy Adler.

Cy was constantly encouraging me to join in "The Great Saunter." He spoke about it frequently to anyone who would listen. Cy's dream was to have a walking path around the entire rim of Manhattan and lead it. He lobbied the city regularly to create this foot path and and he wrote a book about it, "The Great Saunter" (now available on Amazon).

Cy Adler died on September 27. On October 11, Mayor DiBlasio announced a \$250,000 investment to complete the 32.5 mile loop around Manhattan. Altogether, it will total 1,000 acres, more than Central Park.

Thank you, Cy, for dreaming and planning and lobbying and walking for all of us.



Three Parks Independent Democrats Annual Holiday Party

Sunday, December 9, 2018

5:00-8:00 p.m.

The Youth Hostel

891 Amsterdam Avenue 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 main dish for eight—meat, fish, vegetable, 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 Lois Safian know what you will bring. She can be reached at lsafian@mindspring.com.

Three Parks Independent Democrats 2019 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) _____

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Three Parks Independent Democrats—Dues 2019

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Next Meeting: November 14, 2018

Speaker:

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, State Senate Democratic Leader

What the Election Means for the State Senate