

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Cathedral Station • P.O. Box 1316 • New York, N.Y. 10025 • (212) 539-7602

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

President

Lauren Williams

Editors

Lorraine Zamora
lzamora245@gmail.com
Jock Davenport
kentuckynotslim@gmail.com
Richard Luna

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas
Daniel Marks Cohen

CLUB MEETING, OCTOBER 14, 2015

Topic:

Reports from, and Question and Answer Session with, Congressman Jerrold Nadler and State Senator Bill Perkins

Speakers:

HON. JERROLD NADLER, Congressman, New York City, 10th District (invited)

HON. BILL PERKINS, New York State Senator, 30th Senate District

DATE: Wednesday, October 14, 2015

TIME: 8:00 PM

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

ROOM: Soho Room (Lower Level)

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in

8:00 PM Call to Order

District Leader Reports

Speakers: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman, New York City, 10th District, and Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator, 30th Senate District

Adjourn

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

Election Day

Wednesday, November 11, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Membership meeting,
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 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Membership meeting
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 8:00 pm

Three Parks Board Meeting
The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue

President's Report

By Lauren Williams

Our September meeting was a great beginning for the Club's fall activities with reports from our District Leaders, Cynthia Doty and Bob Botfeld, who will be serving us for additional two-year terms. They announced that our successful petitioning, which included candidates for County Committee, Judicial Delegate, Alternate Judicial Delegate, and Judge, resulted in an uncontested slate and no primary elections in our area. At our next meeting, Bob and Cynthia will provide details on the November 3 election when some Election Districts will be combined and some of our usual poll sites will not be used.

As our first speaker, Public Advocate Letitia James presented an overview of her citywide responsibilities. She is an ex-officio member of the City Council and oversees expenditures that are within the Mayor's budget rather than having a separate budget line. She gave examples of her recent actions that included initiating litigation against the Board of Education for inadequate air conditioning on buses transporting disabled students. Among other areas she has addressed are: services to foster children that are spread across contracts with 29 agencies; a program that provides body cameras to police officers; and issues associated with the City's 56,000 homeless—a third of which are children. She also responded to members' questions that included expansion of bike lanes on the Upper West Side. James encouraged members to contact her office directly or to go through Ed Sullivan, a local liaison with her office, who often attends our meetings. Local Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell followed with a report on his recent

activities within the district and in Albany.

At our next meeting on Wednesday, October 14, State Senator Bill Perkins and Congressman Jerry Nadler (invited) will present updates on recent events as well as their views on what's ahead in Albany and Washington. With the 2016 campaign season already well underway among presidential contenders, we can look forward to hearing their comments on the national and state elections closer to home. In the coming months, as we see and hear more candidates announcing their intentions, Three Parks Democrats will keep members informed and provide opportunities for members to engage candidates on issues affecting us all.

District Leader's Report

By Bob Botfeld

The Bike Lane on Amsterdam Avenue

The Department of Transportation has proposed putting another protected bike lane on Amsterdam Avenue. The bicycle lane would be placed adjacent to the sidewalk and a decreased number of parking spaces would be moved further into the street, reducing the lanes available for traffic.

I am an avid bicyclist who does not own a car. I bike nearly every day from March to mid-December for recreation, exercise and getting around Manhattan. But I do not believe that, in this very dense congested city, one lane of the West Side's only uptown avenue suitable for commercial traffic, buses, and cars should be removed for the benefit of the small number of bicyclists that would use it during fair weather.

The West Side currently has five north-south routes for bikers. Central Park, Central Park

West, and Riverside Park have designated paths for bikers. Following the recent reduction of automobile lanes on Riverside Drive and West End Avenue, there is now a wide buffer area suitable for bicycling between the parked cars and the traffic. This gives the relatively few bikers five options for north-south travel on the West Side.

When the bike lane was installed on Columbus Avenue, store owners complained that the new bike lanes make deliveries difficult, increase congestion on the avenue, reduce parking space for customers, and negatively impact their businesses. Traffic congestion has increased significantly since the bike lanes were introduced. Many of the residents of Park West Village, who can observe this directly, report the increased congestion. An Eyewitness Channel 7 study last fall also reported significantly more congested traffic since the bike lanes were introduced. More traffic slows our buses—the most accessible mass transit option for our elder population.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

The bike lane supporters who have packed community board meetings around the city have framed the argument for bike lanes as environmental friendly bikes vs. polluting cars. But from my neighbors, I hear that the growing number of bikes makes them less comfortable about walking around the neighborhood. First, the protected bike lanes create two separate streams of avenue traffic; pedestrians have to check twice as they cross Columbus Avenue. Second, bikers are notorious for ignoring red lights.

The sidewalks are our outdoors—our front yards and our meeting place. The Amsterdam

Avenue bike lanes would put moving vehicles, bikes, right next to the sidewalk. This narrows the space in which walkers feel comfortable. It removes the ‘buffer,’ the row of parked cars, between the moving vehicles and the street.

Finally, biking is very different than walking. Walking is a social, communal activity. When walking, we often greet and stop and talk to someone we know—even if only slightly. It increases and strengthens our bonds. On the other hand, bicycling is an asocial activity. When I bike, I am not looking around or chatting but focused on the street and where I am going—or I will bump into something. Riding on a bus is more social, and people are more connected than when we bike.

At the last club meeting, in an unscientific straw poll, most of the members indicated opposition to the bike lane. This is a local issue that should matter to those who live here. Please let me know at the next club meeting or by email at rjbwteg@aol.com.

Judicial Convention, September 24

The 2015 First Judicial District Nominating Convention that nominates candidates for the New York State Supreme Court was held on September 24 in the auditorium in Harlem Hospital. At the convention incumbent Supreme Court Justice Barbara Kapnick, currently serving as an Associate Appellate Justice in the Appellate Court, was nominated for re-election. Nominated for the four open seats were Civil Court Judges Arlene Bluth, Raymond Bruce, Arthur Engoron, and Tanya Kennedy. All of the newly nominated judges are currently serving as Acting Supreme Court Judges.

Jerrold Nadler and the Iran Vote

By Merle McEldowney

Most of us at Three Parks Independent Democrats have always been proud of our congressman Jerrold Nadler. He is a wonderful representative and has always promoted the humane, progressive values that we support. Congressman Nadler has been a consistent supporter of Israel for his entire life, ranging from collecting money for Israel, to his recent efforts to stop the BDS (boycott, divest, and sanction Israel) movement. He regularly attends a synagogue on the West Side and takes part in Jewish life here.

Last month we watched him as he made a serious and courageous decision to support the president's diplomacy in making an agreement with Iran.

Congressman Nadler was under enormous pressure from his large and diverse district. He represents a community of Jews that are as diverse as New York City. His district encompasses heavily orthodox districts in Brooklyn and the Upper West Side with its large population of orthodox, progressive, and more secular Jews. To much of his district the question of whether or not to support the Iran agreement was crucially important—people on both sides of this issue felt passionate about it. I am certain the Three Parks members called his office with opinions pro and con.

Some of us waited for his decision. It was clear that he was not making this important decision cavalierly. Whatever he did, he was going to anger a good chunk of his constituents. Politically, there was no right answer; he could not duck the issue. There was no compromise; a yes or no vote was required. Those of us who have known Jerry, know him

to be a thoughtful, extremely knowledgeable and careful congressperson who has always represented his district well. It must be assumed that the decision that he made was the one he believed the most likely to prevent a war in the Middle East.

The reactions to his decision to support the president's diplomatic efforts have been extreme. It was far more extreme than expected. There is a serious threat to run a primary against him. He has been called "kapo" (a reference to the Jews who worked on behalf of Nazis in the concentration camps). He has been called a traitor to the Jews and told that "the blood of Jews and Israel are on his hands." Most of the vitriol can be found on Facebook, Twitter, various blogs, radio talk shows and opinion pieces. One writer said flatly that Nadler has "endangered the existence of the State of Israel and has disappointed the Jewish community."

The fact is, he has disappointed a part of the Jewish community. Many in the Jewish community are proud of his courageous stand.

There are people in Three Parks that are passionate on both sides of this issue. I am proud of Congressman Nadler. I am proud that he decided to do what he believed was right, and that his actions were not dictated by calculations of which of his constituents were on what side. That was courageous!

The Purpose of the Grand Jury

Wendy Dannett

We have all heard about grand jury cases involving police shootings of African Americans. I and others have wondered why no indictments were brought against the police when evidence showed the victim had

no weapon, as in Michael Brown's case. Or, when video footage showed another man, Eric Garner, was choked to death. Seeing first hand how the grand jury system works, it is not hard to understand.

I sat on a grand jury this past June for two weeks. The jury had 23 people. None of us was screened for biases. In fact, we were told initially that it didn't matter if we had negative views of the system: we could just vote "no." The cases were presented by an assistant district attorney, and no judge was (or is ever) present. We were told the grand jury does not try people—that is done by a trial or petit jury. Rather, the grand jury's purpose is to decide whether there is probable cause to prosecute someone for a felony crime, and then send them to a petit jury if the jury votes yes.

You may think it is difficult for the DA to get a "yes" vote, since in order for the DA to get an indictment, 16 jurors must vote yes. But with each case you are reminded by the DA or foreman that this is not a real trial and no one is being convicted; you are only voting whether there is sufficient evidence to bring the case to trial. So my sense was that most jurors relaxed. I did. Also, you are NOT told that most of the cases sent on to a jury trial end up being plea bargained. (This was reported in the New York Times.) Plea bargaining means the sentence is lowered, but there will be a conviction on the defendant's record.

The material we heard was selected by the assistant DA. Only in two cases out of about 35 that we heard, was the defendant present, and that was because that person requested to be heard. Those two cases were very instructive,

because I saw the significance of hearing both sides of the case. One case involved a person being prosecuted for selling goods. Another case concerned a person being accused of physical harm by another. In hearing both sides, there was a much closer jury vote, and I believe that in both cases, the jurors did not side with the DA.

The assistant DAs were all young, sincere, smart people. One very personable woman presented a complicated drug case (I am not permitted to give any details). Should those defendants have been indicted? I am not sure, but they were. So, ultimately, in serving on the grand jury, we had huge power over peoples' lives, even though we did not determine guilt or innocence.

Free Concert

Club Member Deborah Thomas, soprano, will sing selections from movie musicals at Bruno Walter Auditorium in the Lincoln Center Library, at 111 Amsterdam Avenue, on Saturday, October 17, 2015, at 2:30 pm. The concert is free and open to the public.

Participatory Budgeting Neighborhood Assembly

Wednesday, October 28, 2015 6-8 pm Free.
The Marseilles, 230 W 103 Street
Share your ideas for how to improve public parks, schools, libraries, streets and public housing on the Upper West Side.

Hurrah, Hurray for the N.R.A. Another Kid Was Shot Today

By Cy A. Adler

I don't own a gun, and I'm glad to live in a city where few of my neighbors own guns. Guns cause Deaths. The N.R.A., supported by gun makers, has done little to stop senseless gun slaughter. Here is a little song about how good guns are at killing kids. Pete Seeger composed the tune.

*It was play time at Sandy Hook School
in a quiet town one morn;
bright sun shown down on the green lawn
when in burst a gun-packing fool.*

*Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.
Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.*

*Any one can pull a trigger
and blow out a human life;
A gun is better for killing
than an arrow, club or knife.*

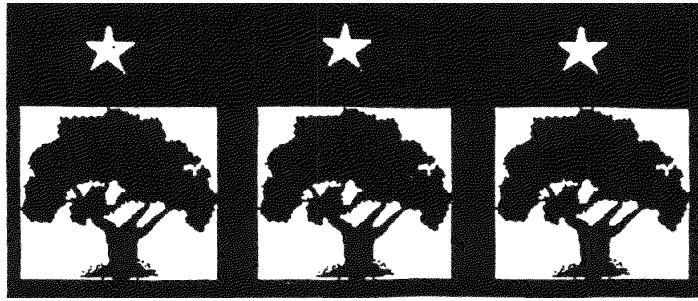
*Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.
Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.
Kids were playing in the school
when in came this gun-toting fool;
He shot: bang, bang! Kids cried and bled
till twenty kids lay sprawled and dead.*

*Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.
Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
Another kid was shot today.*

*Hurrah, hurray for the N.R.A.
They bought the Congress vote today
So kooks and crooks could blast away.
And another kid was shot today.*

2015/2016 Political Calendar

Oct. 9, 2015	Last day to register for the General Election
Nov. 3, 2015	General Election. Polls open 6AM-9PM
April 19, 2016	Democratic and Republican Presidential Primaries
June 28, 2016	Congressional Primary
Sept. 13, 2016	State Primary
Nov. 1, 2016	General Election (Presidential Election)



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, October 14, 2015

Reports and Q & A Session

Speakers: Congressman Jerrold Nadler, New York City 10th District (invited), and
New York State Senator Bill Perkins, 30th Senate District