



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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<i>President</i>	<i>Editors</i>	<i>District Leaders</i>	<i>State Committee</i>
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Club Meeting, October 11, 2017

Topics: MTA in Crisis!—Daniel R. Garodnick, City Council Member, 4th District
Puerto Rico: What Should We Be Doing?

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2017

Time: 8:00 pm

Place: The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 Street

Room: Ballroom

AGENDA

7:45 pm Sign-in
8:00 pm Call to Order
District Leader Report
Proposed Resolution on New York State
Constitutional Convention
Speaker: Daniel R. Garodnick
Questions & Answers
Adjourn

CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 25, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 8, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Membership Meeting

VOTE ON ELECTION DAY, Tuesday, Nov. 7

Wednesday, November 15, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

Sunday, December 3, 2017, 5:00-8:00 pm
Three Parks Annual Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 13, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

**Remember to Vote
on Election Day
November 7**

President's Report

By Merle McEldowney

Since last November's presidential election, the Trump agenda has always been scary and Three Parks has always been committed to fighting it in whatever way possible. We have a Take Back Congress committee that is working to take back the seat in the 19th congressional district.

But as time goes by, the Trump agenda seems to get worse. Even the Republicans could not pass a health care law that would take so many people off health care; now his proposed restructuring of the tax code so obviously favors the wealthy that we can have hope that enough Republicans will be too embarrassed to vote for it.

What was not expected is his recent decision to act as if 3.5 million American citizens living on the island of Puerto Rico are not entitled to the same kind of disaster relief as their fellow Americans received in New Orleans, Florida or Texas.

Three Parks will do what we can to tell the president he needs to be president of all of us. We will be tabling on the weekends and using this newsletter to encourage people to call the president: he needs to suspend the Jones Act for at least a year. His ten-day suspension proves he understands that the law is harmful to the recovery, but ten days is a token gesture. When people are without food, water or energy, token gestures do not suffice.

We are encouraging our members to contribute money to one or both of the two organizations listed on page 5 in this newsletter. Also, keep checking our email blasts, help at our tables on Broadway, and visit our web page.

In November, New York State residents will be asked to vote on convening a NYS constitutional convention. Our club meeting on September 13 attempted to educate our members about the issues. William Samuels and Bertha Lewis made a case for the possibilities of a convention. Arthur Cheliotis and Steve Max discussed the risks.

At our board meeting on September 27, the Three Parks Board of Directors voted to accept a resolution to oppose the New York State Constitutional Convention. At our October 11 club meeting, the membership will have a chance to vote and speak on the resolution, which appears on page 3 of this newsletter.

Also, at our October 11 club meeting, we will be hearing from Daniel Garodnick, a member of the City Council and its transportation committee, on the current crisis of the MTA and what can be done about it. It promises to be another informative and exciting meeting. See you there.

In Opposition to a New York State Constitutional Convention

By Steve Max

The November 7 election will give us a chance to vote for or against holding a convention to rewrite the New York State Constitution. Nothing could be more dangerous at this time of right wing ascendancy than a convention that has unlimited power to change the laws, regulations and the very form of our state government. Advocates for the convention have produced quantities of fine proposals that could be adopted if only there were a large progressive majority of delegates. There are excellent lists of constitutional amendments, some of which run to book length, but they are made by policy wonks, none of whom has even the start of a real plan to gain control of the convention.

A large progressive delegate majority is highly unlikely. Three delegates will be elected from each of 63 state senate districts, but the Senate was gerrymandered in 2012 to encourage a Republican majority. In addition, 15 at-large delegates will be elected statewide. The political parties will put their people on the ballot.

Several independent groups are also out looking for people to run for delegate. We could easily have not three, but six, nine or more Democrats and Independents all running against each other in the same district, splitting the vote—thereby letting the Republicans win. Elections in Senate districts are expensive. The 2014 election figures have been analyzed. The average spent by each senate candidate was over \$995,000. It's not that there isn't enough money—there is too much money, and it goes to all the wrong people. The best people, who can't be bought, will get the least.

We hear that this will be a "people's convention" and our neighbors will be the delegates. The last time there was a convention, it lasted four months, meeting a few days a week in Albany. The law says there is no time limit: the convention itself decides, and it could last four months or six, even a year or more. Because the Senate is split, delegates are also likely to be split. Then, the 15 delegates elected statewide might be the balance of power. What does it cost a relatively obscure person to campaign statewide for an obscure position?

In 2014, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli raised over five million dollars for just such a campaign. These people will not be our neighbors. What happens after the convention? There will be a statewide referendum on the results. This is where the really big money pours into New York. For example: suppose one constitutional amendment reads, "In order to promote prosperity in the agricultural sector, increase income, lower taxes and create jobs, the

state shall encourage the sale of all marketable products from farmland.” You might think that means legalizing marijuana, which polls 80 percent positive with voters. But what else comes from farmland? Fracked gas!

Who would know that this also overturns the governor’s ban on fracking—hydraulic fracturing—to produce natural gas, one of the most environmentally destructive practices known. What would the oil and gas industry not pay to get that passed? How much money would we be able to raise to tell voters that this amendment is really about fracking?

We all need to do our part to stop the convention from happening. At the October 11 club meeting, I urge you to join the board and support the resolution putting Three Parks on record in opposition.

TPID Resolution Opposing the New York State Constitutional Convention

The following resolution was approved by the TPID Board on September 27, 2017 and will be presented at the upcoming October 11 club meeting:

WHEREAS a New York State Constitutional Convention poses risks to rights protected by New York State’s Constitution, including those upholding social service and school funding, environmental laws, public employee pensions, civil liberties, tenant protections, sanctuary cities and union activities,

WHEREAS if Republicans get control of the convention, they can overturn any New York law or regulation and enact the Trump agenda,

WHEREAS it is unlikely that a majority of delegates will be progressive because (1) three delegates will be elected from each of 63 state senate districts, but the New York State Senate was gerrymandered in 2012 with the intent of producing a Republican majority, (2) the average expenditure in 2014 to win in a state senate district was \$995,000 and (3) running for one of the 15 statewide delegate seats will cost millions,

WHEREAS the cost of the convention is likely to be inordinately high because there is no set time limit on its length, nor budgetary limit on its expenses; the 204 convention delegates are paid at the same rate as state senators, with legislators and judges who serve as delegates collecting double pay, and the convention can hire whatever staff and consultants it chooses,

WHEREAS if voters decide in November 2017 to hold a convention, the election of delegates will be on the same day in 2018 as the congressional election, sidetracking our efforts to take back Congress, and

WHEREAS after the convention, there will be a statewide referendum on proposed amendments that could cost millions for paid media, encouraging an influx of money by hedge fund managers, the Koch brothers and others,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that because the convention poses too many risks, Three Parks Independent Democrats opposes the New York State Constitutional Convention and will √√ campaign for a “NO” vote in the referendum to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2017.

Save the Date!
Three Parks
Annual Holiday Party
Sunday, December 3, 2017,
5-8 pm

TPID Phone Bank to Take Back Congress

By Chuck Wall

After a brief summer hiatus, Three Parks’ team of “Take Back Congress” volunteers has resumed its campaign of phone banking to upstate voters. We are reaching out to voters in a potential “swing” district in upstate New York, and we invite all interested Club members to join us in our ongoing efforts.

Our September 28 phone bank was the start of an active fall season designed to build on the campaign that we launched last February. So far, we have held eight phone banks and racked up some very impressive totals. Volunteers have made almost 2,800 calls and held conversations with more than 550 voters.

Our calls are targeting Republican senior citizens in New York’s 19th Congressional District (the Hudson Valley Region stretching from Dutchess County in the south to Otsego County in the northwest). In the 2016 elections, Republican Congressman John Faso and Donald Trump both won the District by very slim margins and, for the 2018 midterm elections, political observers rate the district a toss-up.

For now, because there is not yet a Democratic nominee for the 2018 elections, we are focusing on issues as a way of influencing voters. In particular, we are calling Republican senior citizens to make them aware of the Trump administration’s long-range threats to Social

Security and Medicare and to raise doubts about the willingness of Congressman Faso to protect those programs. We are also alerting seniors to the repeated attempts, in Republican healthcare bills, to slash the funding that supports elderly patients in nursing homes.

In raising this issue, we are quick to point out that it was the voters' own Congressman Faso who proposed cutting that funding in New York State. The voters whom we call are frequently uninformed and unaware of these issues, and our calls often provide them with information that they had not previously considered.

When voters have responded positively to our calls, we have asked them to call Congressman Faso to register their concerns. At the recent September 28 phone bank, we also began calling back some of those voters to ask if Faso responded to their calls. Over time, we have begun to find a notable increase in the number of Republican voters who are displeased with Faso and with the Trump agenda, and who are willing to share those feelings with us.

So far, eight Democrats have announced plans to challenge Faso in the 2018 midterms. By continuing our phone banks, we are hoping to reduce support for Faso and thus lay the groundwork for Democratic electoral success. Once the campaigning season starts, we expect to work with progressive groups in the district to support the eventual Democratic nominee.

So join your fellow TPID club members for upcoming phone banks and help take back Congress! Watch for details in future email blasts, or check the TPID website www.threeparksdems.org.

We invite all interested club members to join us, but once you get the email invitation, remember to respond promptly as space may be limited. No computers are needed, but please bring a cellphone. Scripts and training are provided.

Manhattan Judicial Convention 2017

By Theresa Canter

The 2017 First District Judicial Nominating Convention that designates candidates for the New York State Supreme Court was convened on September 24 at the School of Visual Arts Theater.

The elected judicial delegates from Three Parks Independent Democrats were Alan Flacks, Lauren Williams and Bruce Markens, with Audrey Isaacs and Al Placeres as the alternates.

There were six open positions for Justice of the Supreme Court, with a total of twenty-two candidates. Fourteen were "reported out" as most highly qualified by the

County's independent judicial screening panels on September 7.

An additional eight judges were also eligible because they had previously reported out of the screening panels in two of the last four consecutive years.

Going into the convention, it became clear that senior candidates Lori Sattler, Verna Saunders, Tony Cannataro and Nancy Bannon had the delegate support for their nominations and ran unopposed. Additionally, Franc Perry, reporting out for the first time, was the designated candidate for the fifth seat. For the sixth slot, there was prior behind-the-scenes competition for delegate votes, but not having sufficient support, both Shawn T. Kelly (Three Parks' favored candidate), and Lynn Kotler, graciously declined the nomination, leaving Adam Silvera to accept with the support of the majority of the judicial delegates. There is always next year when we expect to have three open seats and as many as 22 candidates again!

All of the newly nominated judges are currently serving as Acting Supreme Court Judges and will be on the ballot in the November general election.

**Remember to Vote
on Election Day
November 7**

Voter Registration Deadline is October 13

By Cynthia Doty

The deadline to register to vote in the November 7 election is October 13. This is also the deadline to change parties if one wants to be eligible to vote in a primary next year. If one wants to switch parties, including switching from a "blank" or no party, it also must be done by October 13. Please spread the word to your neighbors and family members.

In September 2018, there will be primaries to choose the Democratic Party candidates for state offices, including NYS Senate. If voters want to elect a Democratic majority in the NYS Senate and defeat the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC), they need to register in the Democratic Party. Deadline to switch parties is October 13!

The Crisis in Puerto Rico

By Wendy Dannett

Yarimar Bonilla recently wrote an article entitled "Why

Would Anyone in Puerto Rico Want a Hurricane? Because Someone Will Get Rich.” Bonilla interviewed a local wealth manager who was upbeat about Puerto Rico’s economic climate; investments in the wake of Trump’s election had been doing well. “The only thing we need now is a hurricane,” the wealth manager said, referring to the fact that natural disasters bring in federal money for rebuilding and are often a boon to the construction industry. (She encouraged Bonilla to buy stock in Home Depot.)

The per capita income in Puerto Rico is about \$18,000, about half that of Mississippi, our poorest state. The hurricane could be a boon for the rich, but it has been a disaster for the people in Puerto Rico at large. The word “apocalyptic” has been used to describe the devastation. Food, water and fuel are scarce. Airports are in shambles, power will be out for months in places, and many roads are severely damaged. Photos show many communities with roofs of houses torn off, second floors ripped apart and flooded streets. People wait in long lines for water and fuel. The storm knocked out 80 percent of the island’s power transmission lines.

As of September 28, nearly all the island’s 1.57 million electricity customers were still without power. It could be four to six months before electricity is fully restored, leaving the island with no A/C, no running water, no toilets or refrigerators, hospitals in jeopardy, and people relying on generators.

The initial response from the U.S. government has been “lackluster.” (It’s been cited that because Puerto Ricans did not vote for Trump, and Texans and Floridians did; Trump was less interested in them.) After dwelling early in the week on Puerto Rico being an island and in massive debt, but not giving them the aid he gave to Texas and Florida, Trump described the administration’s response as a “good news story.”

It took the administration until September 28 to temporarily waive the Jones Act, introduced by Senator Wesley Jones and signed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1920. The Act stipulated that any goods shipped from one American port to another must be on ships constructed in the U.S., and owned and crewed by U.S. citizens. This means that shipping to Puerto Rico is more costly, as there is little competition. Puerto Ricans pay nearly double for U.S. goods through tariffs and fees, and the cost of living is 13 percent higher in Puerto Rico than in hundreds of other urban areas in the U.S. It took until late September for Trump to send in the Army Corps of Engineers.

Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and entitled to the

same government response as any state. Only about 54 percent of Americans know Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. They can travel freely to the U.S. without a passport, are protected by the Bill of Rights, and can vote in presidential primaries. Trump has temporarily waived the Jones Act, but it should be waived permanently.

Trump finally sent in the Army Corps of Engineers, but more personnel are needed and TPID is still concerned about the slowness of help that is going to Puerto Rico. Board Members have put together a list of places to donate to (the Hispanic Federation and UNICEF USA are two) and will be tabling on the street with postcards to tell Trump to “do his job.”

It is important that we tell Trump what we think he should be doing to help Puerto Rico.

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Elizabeth Starkey, longtime friend and supporter of Three Parks, former chair of Community Board 7, district leader, and member of Parks River Independent Democrats. Elizabeth died at 82 of pancreatic cancer in September, shortly after celebrating her 58th wedding anniversary with her husband, John Richard Starkey.

Celebration of her life is planned for this fall on the Upper West Side. Donations to Pancreatic Cancer, ACLU, and/or Landmark West. Condolences to all the members of her family.

Block Party West 104 Street Block Association Saturday, October 14, 2017

10:00-5:00 pm

Between West End & Riverside

Come for lunch and explore over 60 stalls bursting with bargains, browse through novels, plays, cookbooks, biographies and children’s books, bid on many silent-auction items—gift certificates, art objects, theater tickets and appliances, and tap your feet to the music of great musicians.

HELP PUERTO RICO TODAY!

- **Donate Through the Hispanic Federation**

<https://hispanicfederation.org/unidos/>

Hispanic Federation

55 Exchange Place 5th Fl. NYC, NY 10005

- **Donate Through UNICEF USA**

Google UNICEF then click “Puerto Rico Urgent Help”

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund USA

125 Maiden Lane NYC, NY 10038

- **Tell Trump “Start doing your job.”**

(202) 456-1111 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact.>

Three Parks Independent Democrats, www.ThreeParksDems.org

2017 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) _____ (Cell) _____

Email _____

Check here _____ if you prefer to receive the newsletter **solely** by email.

Please pay your dues with a check, money order or via PayPal.

Please make out all checks to **Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2017**.

Mail to: Three Parks Independent Democrats

Cathedral Station, P.O. Box 1316, New York, NY 10025 Attn: Treasurer

Dear Suba Customers,

Faced with rising drug costs and now prescription drug reimbursements from health insurance plans, pharmacy profits are at an all-time low. As a result, we would like you to consider expanding your shopping experience here at SUBA, as we now have a broader selection of **health, beauty, household, natural and organic products**. Our prices are competitive with, and often significantly lower, than the major drug store chains in the neighborhood.

Once again, we thank you and, remember, we are just a phone call away!



Suba Pharmacy 2721 Broadway at 104 Street | 212-866-6700

Editor's Note:

Suba Pharmacy is one of the few independent family-owned pharmacies on the Upper West Side. Equally important, Mr. Suba cares about his customers and goes out of his way to accommodate them. In 2004, when Suba's lease was about to expire, Three Parks petitioned to reinstate the store's lease. We were successful. It's time to help the pharmacy again. On behalf of Suba, thanks for your patronage.

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Next Meeting, Wednesday, October 11, 2017

MTA in Crisis!

Speaker: Daniel R. Garodnick, City Council Member, 4th District

Puerto Rico: What Should We Be Doing?