



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, October 10, 2018, 8:00 pm

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103 Street

Report from Washington

Congressman Adriano Espaillat, 13th Congressional District

The Power of One-to-One Conversations to Change Minds

Adam Barbanel-Fried, Changing the Conversation Together

AGENDA

7:45 pm Sign-in
8:00 pm Call to Order
District Leader Report
Guest Speakers
Questions Answers
Adjourn

CALENDAR

Wednesday, Oct. 24, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Board Meeting

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 8:00 pm
Three Parks Club Meeting

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

Sunday, Dec. 9, 5:00-7:00 pm
Three Parks Holiday Party

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

President's Report

By Merle McEldowney

What has happened?

My last message was about the Democratic challengers for the State Senate. The goal was to defeat the Independent Democratic Caucus. This has been the wish of progressives for years. The chance that a progressive agenda would be passed depended upon having all Democrats vote as Democrats. The progressive agenda includes true campaign reform, expansion of voting rights, codification of Roe v. Wade in New York State, a single payer health care system. All of these and more were on the program, if only the Democrats could take over the Senate!

The prize of Primary night was defeating Jeff Klein—Alessandra Biaggi at 28 years old, took on Jeff Klein the leader of the Independent Democratic Caucus—and she won! Zellnor Myrie beat Jesse Hamilton, and John Liu will go to the State Senate after unseating Tony Avella. These three wins spell the end of the IDC.

This is not the end. Democrats still need a majority in the State Senate (without the nominal Democrat Zimcha Felder from Brooklyn who calls himself a Democrat but regularly causes with the Republicans).

When Democrats are in the majority, we will find out if they really want to expand the voting rolls. Will they pass campaign finance laws that will make it easier for challengers to run?

In the last few months, Three Parks campaigned rigorously for Bob Jackson. The results were clear in the number of votes that were cast on the Upper West Side and the number of people who voted for Jackson. Bob, we are counting on you to preserve rent regulations, fight for affordable housing and support environmental rules that will save New York City from the ravages of trash and climate change.

There is no rest for the weary. In the next few months, the campaign committee of Three Parks will be campaigning in congressional districts to take back Congress. There are races in upstate New York, New Jersey and even on Staten Island, where we can talk to voters and distribute literature. Watch your emails. Check our website—threeparksdems.org—and be part of turning the rest of the country blue!

Also very important before you vote in November: There will be three proposals on the ballot. Elsewhere in this newsletter, our State Committeeperson Dan Cohen, has summarized the proposals and given his personal

recommendation. If you are unaware of the contents of these proposals, please read Dan's article. Three Parks has not voted on these proposals. Dan recommends that you vote YES on Proposition #1—improved public funding of elections, NO on Proposition #2—a “civic engagement” commission, which seems to give the Mayor some increased powers, and NO on Proposition #3—term limits for community board members. On the surface, #3 is a good idea; however, Dan believes that communities need to nurture board members to gain expertise on their communities and allow that expertise to help neighborhoods. I agree with all of Dan's recommendations and will vote likewise. But just to be clear: Dan's recommendations are his own. Mine (which happen to be the same) are mine. Three Parks has taken no position on these.

Don't forget our upcoming meeting on October 10. Congressperson Adriano Espalliat will be with us! We will have lots of questions to ask him about what is happening in Washington. Also on the agenda will be Adam Barbanel-Fried, leader of Changing the Conversation Together (CTC Together) and speaking about the power of one-to-one conversations to change minds. His thoughts on having in depth conversations with voters, rather than “quick chats,” are compelling!

District Leader

By Bob Botfeld

It was an overdue celebration after a long and successful Primary Day. Six of the eight IDC state senators were defeated. Not only did our area strongly support the Three Parks' endorsed candidate, by five to one for Robert Jackson over Marisol Alcantara (and two to one for our endorsed attorney general candidate Zephyr Teachout over Letitia James), but more importantly, we *doubled* our voter turnout from the last off-year primary election. In Part A of the 69th Assembly district, the Three Parks' election districts, nearly 50% of registered Democrats voted in the Jackson vs. Alcantara race. The citywide vote doubled to 25% of registered Democrats—a good sign.

In recognition of the heavy vote here, the candidates campaigned at our local polling sites throughout the day. Teachout greeted the voters at our largest polling site, West Side High School at 102, during the afternoon. During the evening rush, Jackson was joined by Mayor de Blasio at the 96th street subway

After the polls closed, club members gathered at the Serafina restaurant on 105 street to watch the election reports on NY1 and toast the good results. Uptown, the Jackson post primary party at Crazy Annie's on

Broadway and 164th was a raucous, packed, wonderful culmination of two years of effort. No longer would our district, probably the most liberal area in the country, be represented by a turncoat Democrat. The shoulder-to-shoulder packed crowd cheered as Jackson crushed Alcantara; roared as Alexandra Biaggi kept her lead over the head of the IDC, Jeff Klein, and yelled as Three Parks' favorite candidate, John Liu, edged out Avella. Perhaps the best and craziest indication of the anti-IDC Blue Wave was the improbable victory of Julie Salazar—who won even though little of her background story turned out to be true.

Democrats can succeed when they work together. On election night, Jackson's first and most fervent thank you was to former state senate candidate, Micah Lasher. In 2016, Lasher nearly beat Alcantara but because Lasher and Jackson split the progressive vote, Alcantara won even though she had less than 35% of the vote. Jackson recounted how in early 2017, Lasher told him that he would support Jackson because if they both ran again, Alcantara would again prevail. Lasher followed through and we won.

It's Now or Never

We have five more weeks until the most important election in our lives. Knocking on doors works. Please join Three Parks—or any group—on the weekend trips to the swing congressional districts. ***We need to get out the Democratic vote on November 6!***

Desperate Need for Poll Workers

In this area, we will not have a closely contested election. But because of a critical shortage of poll workers, we need help working at the poll sites. Because of a lack of poll workers, there is a risk of long lines at the polls. You can help—and make money at the same time. Poll workers are paid \$200 for the day and receive additional pay for attending the training class. (In some years poll workers can make up to \$1,000.) Please tell your friends about the poll worker shortage and the job openings. There is still time to sign up to work on election day. If you call me (212-865-1450), I can place you in a poll site in this neighborhood.

State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

Now that the state primary is behind us (the federal primary was in June, New York is the only state in the country with two primaries (but that is for another column), we turn our attention to November. While the Blue Wave is building for Democrats across America to take back Congress, there are also three ballot proposals

to be voted on by New York City residents on Election Day. Below is a listing of the three proposals (in italics) and then my analysis and suggestion of support or opposition.

Ballot Proposal #1: Campaign Finance

This proposal would amend the City Charter to lower the amount a candidate for city elected office may accept from a contributor. It would also increase the public funding used to match a portion of the contributions received by a candidate who participates in the city's public financing program. In addition, the proposal would make public matching funds available earlier in the election year to participating candidates who can demonstrate need for the funds. It would also ease a requirement that candidates for Mayor, Comptroller, or Public Advocate must meet to qualify for matching funds. The amendments would apply to participating candidates who choose to have the amendments apply to their campaigns beginning with the 2021 primary election, and would then apply to all candidates beginning in 2022. Shall this proposal be adopted?

Vote YES on #1.

Gotham Gazette, among other sites, states that this proposal would reduce contribution limits for participants from \$5,100 to \$2,000 for citywide candidates, from \$3,950 to \$1,500 for candidates for Borough President and from \$2,850 to \$1,000 for City Council seats. The proposed limits for those who choose not to opt in to the program are \$3,500, \$2,500 and \$1,500 respectively. The proposal also increases the matching ratio to 8-to-1 for the first \$250 raised by a citywide candidate and for the first \$175 raised for all other seats. It would increase the cap on public funds disbursements from 55% to 75% of the spending limit for a seat, while also doling out the funds earlier in the election cycle. It lowers the barriers to entry for people interested in running for office, making what is essentially the best campaign finance program in the country even better.

Ballot Proposal #2: Civic Engagement Commission

This proposal would amend the City Charter to create a Civic Engagement Commission that would implement, no later than the City Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2020, a citywide participatory budgeting program established by the Mayor to promote participation by city residents in making recommendations for projects in their communities; require the Commission to partner with community based organizations and civic leaders, as well as other city agencies, to support and encourage civic engagement efforts; require the Commission to establish a program to provide language interpreters at city poll sites,

to be implemented for the general election in 2020; permit the Mayor to assign relevant powers and duties of certain other city agencies to the Commission; provide that the Civic Engagement Commission would have 15 members, with 8 members appointed by the Mayor, 2 members by the City Council speaker and 1 member by each Borough President; and provide for one of the Mayor's appointees to be Commission Chair and for the Chair to employ and direct Commission staff. Shall this proposal be adopted?

Vote NO on #2.

I am all in favor of civic engagement, but this proposal is remarkably vague about what it intends the Mayor to do with these new powers. Regardless of how you feel about the current Mayor, unlimited powers in the name of something as ambiguous as "civic engagement" make me nervous. The overall idea has merit, but let City Hall rewrite the proposal to be more specific about what they intend to do. I am unconvinced that we need to create a commission on civic engagement to get people involved.

Ballot Proposal #3: Community Boards

This proposal would amend the City Charter to impose term limits of a maximum of four consecutive full two-year terms for community board members with the exception of the initial transition to the new term limits system; require Borough Presidents to seek out persons of diverse backgrounds in making appointments to community boards. The proposal would also add new application and reporting requirements related to these appointments; and if Question 2, "Civic Engagement Commission," is approved, it would require the proposed Civic Engagement Commission to provide resources, assistance, and training related to land use and other matters to Community Boards. Shall this proposal be adopted?

Vote NO on #3.

Everyone loves term limits. But the Community Board (CB) may not be the best place for them. CBs cover every neighborhood in the city. The Upper West Side is split between CB7, which is south of 110th Street, and CB9, which is north of it. I have had the privilege of serving on both CB7 about a dozen years ago and serve on CB9 currently. The non-partisan boards are made up of 50 people each, unpaid volunteers, who are appointed by the Borough President in consultation with local City Council Members. CBs are advisory, but they do have a legally mandated influence over land use, the decisions regarding zoning and development in our neighborhoods. Term limits for CB members do not make sense because veteran board members have the institutional memory that, as Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer puts

it, "are the secret weapon in negotiations with developers. Having new members with fresh perspectives is vital too, but when it comes time to sit across the table from developers who have armies of lawyers, you have to have members who are well versed in local issues and understand zoning—who know where the bodies are buried." Forcing the entire board to turn over every 10 years would put the neighborhood at a disadvantage and give real estate developers even more leverage when asking for community support. With local news reporting contracting, there are even fewer resources for residents to turn to when questioning a development proposal. CBs are one of the few places where people pay attention, over time, and remember who, and what happened, back when. Term limiting CBs is essentially a giveaway to real estate developers who could exploit the potentially uninformed ignorance of newcomers without old-timers around to speak up with their historical knowledge.

Jackson et al: Ahead on the Upper West Side

By Steve Max

Three Parks can be proud of Robert Jackson and of our role in his campaign. Jackson won with 56% in the whole 31st Senatorial District, but on the Upper West Side he got 81%, the highest of any area. Of the rest of our endorsed candidates, Cynthia Nixon got 41% in Manhattan and 46% on the Upper West Side, Jumaane Williams got 56% in Manhattan and 61% here, while Zephyr Teachout got 44% in Manhattan and 55% in our area.

The Governor, the Democratic State Senate leadership and the municipal unions made what was undoubtedly the biggest political error of the year with their shameful deal to support the renegades of the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC). When you make a deal with the Devil, you are supposed to get something really great in exchange for surrendering your mortal soul, but this time the deal went bad. Six of the eight IDC members went down in flames while Satan ran off with the souls of IDC's supporters. Too bad, they could have been on the side of the angels, including Three Parks Democrats.

The main upset was the downfall of IDC's leader and master builder Jeff Klein. We say master builder because it has long been suspected that the Governor himself was the architect of the IDC, which prevented anything from passing that might upset the Governor's Wall Street backers or muddy his presidential ambitions. Klein went into the primary with \$2 million in his campaign fund, and then raised well over \$1.5 million more, only to be knocked out by newcomer Alessandra Biaggi 54% to 46%. Biaggi raised about \$354,000 and won with people

power plus voter's disgust with the IDC.

IDC member Marisol Alcantara, defeated by Robert Jackson, could have been a rising progressive star with Sanders delegates and union credentials, but she drank the IDC Kool Aid for money and a committee chair. She was endorsed by the Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Manhattan Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, 18 unions and many others. A bad bet and very bad judgment

We now need to transfer our energy to taking back Congress. Please go to the Club's web page, www.ThreeParksDerms.org and sign-up to help.

Help Take Back Congress Now!

By Chuck Wall

The Three Parks Take Back Congress team is planning a full schedule of campaign events from now through the Midterm Elections on November 6. We are supporting progressive Democrat Antonio Delgado, who is challenging GOP incumbent Congressman John Faso in the 19th District (Hudson Valley) and has a good chance of winning. We are also supporting progressive Democrat Max Rose, who is challenging GOP incumbent Dan Donovan in the 11th District (Staten Island and southwest Brooklyn) and who has a tough fight on his hands. Join us to help make the Blue Wave happen!

Our efforts are already underway. On October 2, our team wrote postcards to hundreds of senior citizens in the Hudson Valley district. These were voters with whom we had positive conversations in our phone banks last winter and spring. We reminded them that Republicans are threatening Medicare and Social Security, and that Congressman Faso is unlikely to protect their benefits. We urged them to vote for Delgado instead. Team members also phoned NYC Democrats with second homes in the district to ask them or remind them to switch their voter registration upstate so they can vote for Delgado.

Three Parks has also begun canvassing trips to the Hudson Valley district to support Delgado. Following an earlier trip to Pawling in Dutchess County, Three Parks Board members have now also traveled to Kingston in Ulster County to canvass voters door-to-door. Further trips are scheduled for the following dates: Saturday, October 6, and Sunday, October 7. Trip plans are also underway for the weekends of October 13, October 20; October 27 and November 3.

So join your fellow Club members and come canvass with us for Antonio Delgado! Transportation details will depend on the number of people going. We'll leave from,

and return to, the Upper West Side, around 96th Street. For each trip, the approximate contribution to travel cost will be \$20 (but if you can't afford \$20, sign up anyway and we'll figure something out). Watch your email for further information and sign-up opportunities, or check the Three Parks website: threeparksdems.org.

If you can't make a day-long canvassing trip, or if you prefer weekdays to weekends, we're also planning one or more events to support Max Rose's campaign in Staten Island. Leafleting will take place on a weekday afternoon at the Staten Island Ferry terminal. Rose faces an uphill battle, and he needs support from Democrats throughout the City. For further information, watch your email or check our website.

Why Can't We Be Friends?

By Jessica Haberkrock

I spent the day on the September 27th, as many of us I'm sure did, watching the testimonies of Professor Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh. Throughout the day, my friends and I discussed the many issues that arose from this hearing. Aside from the obvious victim blaming and sexism, the issue we talked about most was the degree of partisanship and disrespect for each other.

It seems to have become the standard—its their side or our side, either you are with us or you are with them. I often hear that we must fight against everything the Republicans do. Some even go so far as to say Republicans are evil, ignorant, or brainwashed.

But this is not how our country has functioned in the past. Our Congress has always been divided into factions, but they've found ways to work together to make great progress. Our Constitution was founded on the principle of compromise. Without the ability to hear out all sides and find a common ground, we may not have the same, great country we all love. Other legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act, the creation of NASA, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) all had bipartisan support and input. Without support from both sides and ability to work together, our country may be a different place.

As much as I want some of the policies we all fight for, such as universal health care, a living wage, and quality education, I know that accomplishing those goals requires having conversations with those who may not agree with me. It takes an understanding of different perspectives and opinions. To create laws that will function effectively, there must be open dialogue between all sides. If we truly want to move our country forward, we need to stop pushing those who may not think like us anyway. Rather, we should hold out our hand, show respect, and listen. We

may even discover we're in the same boat after all.

The 2018 Judicial Convention

By Alan Flacks, Delegate

The 2018 Judicial Nominating Convention for Manhattan (First Judicial District) was held on September 20. There were three vacancies for Justice of the Supreme Court to be filled for the November General Election.

Of the 19 panel-screened candidates who could be considered for those "open" seats, 18—all Lower Court judges—were nominated. All but four declined the nomination because they did not have sufficient support among the 84 convention delegates.

Chosen were Alexander Tisch and Lynn Kotler, who were unopposed because they garnered the backing of the majority of delegates in the weeks leading up to the convention. For the third seat, there was a floor fight between Shawn Kelly and Mary Rosado. Rosado beat Kelly by a vote of 47-37. Three Parks delegates, Alan Flacks and Audrey Isaacs, voted for Rosado, and Bruce Markens voted for Shawn Kelly.

Inmates Fight California Fires for \$1 an Hour

By Wendy Dannett

California relies on thousands of prisoners, including women and youth offenders, to battle wildfires burning statewide. About one third of the entire fire fighting force are prisoners. According to the San Diego Tribune, prison inmates are working alongside professional firefighters with one main difference: pay. Professional firefighters earn \$74,000 per year, whereas inmates make \$2 per day plus \$1 per hour when fighting an active fire. (Average prison pay for other jobs is \$.20 per hour.) Taking firefighting jobs is not strictly voluntary, but often a prisoner will want them because you can earn time off from your sentence, living conditions are better and there is more access to family visits.

The Conservation (Fire) Camps program is jointly managed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the Department of Forestry. Its origins date back to the early 1900s when inmates helped build roads and highways. Firefighting was incorporated in the 1940s, Annika Neklason told the Atlantic, when firefighters were needed to replace men called up to fight in WWII. Today there are 3800 inmates living in 43 minimum security camps. Only minimum-custody inmates are allowed to volunteer. It excludes arsonists, sex offenders, kidnappers, gang members, and those with life sentences.

Amy Goodman of "Democracy Now" interviewed Anita

Mota, a former inmate firefighter. She only earned \$.53 per hour when fighting fires. She was placed in a firehouse in the area where her prison was, and dealt with fires where people lived as well as in the wild. Some people knew she was an inmate, but it was not a problem. The area in which she worked had a lot of correction officers. "I remember a Christmas Eve fire at a correction officer's home. We were doing our best to save that holiday for that family....We were saving our jailers really, and we were doing it proudly."

Some people refer to firefighting inmates as slave labor, a term which is invoked also as so many inmates are black. Critics fear the financial benefits to the state incentivize mass incarceration: the prison program in California can reduce state firefighting costs by \$100 million. The CDCR maintains the program helps both the state and inmates. In addition to the pay, most inmates get 2 days off their sentence for every good day of behavior. But the firefighting work rarely leads to firefighting jobs once inmates are released. Most fire departments require firefighters to be a licensed EMT. EMT certifying boards typically deny applicants with criminal history.

Many have critiqued the program not only for the slave wages, but also for putting inmates in harm's way. "Just like full-time civilian firefighters, inmate firefighters face serious risk when performing tasks like creating containment lines." Six inmates have died recently in fires, according to NPR. Although there are benefits to working with fires, the work is not voluntary. There are few options to earn money in prison, for costs like phone calls or toiletries. Lisa Graybill, deputy director at Southern Poverty Law Center, told Newsweek she thinks prisoners are so eager for the chance to work and demonstrate their rehabilitation that they will accept any work conditions. "But they shouldn't be exploited by the state. They're putting their life on the line...and should be paid fairly for a day's work."

In Memoriam

Cy Adler, longtime TPID member, died on Thursday, Sept. 27. Here is a message from his son, David:

"I would like to share with everyone that Cy passed away. It was sudden. He had a lot of friends and colleagues and, as his son, I don't know how to contact everyone. He donated his body to science so there not be a funeral. We are looking into planning some sort of memorial. He did request that happy thoughts and songs be sung for him. Thank you everyone."

How to Contact Your Elected Officials 2018

Senator Charles E. Schumer

212-486-4430, 202-224-6542

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

212-688-6262, 202-224-4451

Governor Andrew Cuomo

212-681-4580, 518-474-8390

Acting Attorney General

Barbara Underwood

212-416-8000, 518-776-2000

Rep. Jerrold Nadler

212-367-7350, 202-225-5635

Rep. Adriano Espaillat

212-663-3900, 202-225-4365

Mayor Bill de Blasio

311

Comptroller Scott Stringer

212-669-3916

Borough President Gale Brewer

212-669-8300

Senator Brian Benjamin

212-222-7315, 518-455-2441

State Senator Marisol Alcantara

212-544-0173, 518-455-2041

**Assembly Member Daniel
O'Donnell**

212-866-3970, 518-455-5603

Council Member Mark Levine

212-928-6814, 212-788-7007

Council Member Helen Rosenthal

212-873-0282, 212-788-6975

2019 MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Next Meeting: October 10, 2018

Speakers:

Congressman Andriano Espaillat, 31st Congressional District

Adam Barbanel-Fried, Changing the Conversation Together