

THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Cathedral Station ♦ P.O. Box 1316 ♦ New York, N.Y. 10025 ♦ (212) 866-6378

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

President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Ray Schwartz (tappsch@nyc.rr.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas

September 2009

SEPT. MEETING: **Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

**FEATURED TOPICS
&
SPEAKERS**

ALBANY UPDATE: Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell
Liz Benjamin, *Daily News* political reporter and blogger
DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY UPDATE: Election Day—
Tuesday, September 15th

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: American Youth Hostels
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in

8 PM Call to Order

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
3. Albany Update
4. Democratic Primary Update
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 23, 2009

Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, November 11, 2009

Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM

Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

Welcome back from summer break! Three Parks members had a jam-packed petitioning season and have been campaigning frequently at tables and subway stops on behalf of the Club's endorsed candidates. Three Parks also co-hosted with Democracy for New York City several health care reform initiatives; we wrote hundreds of letters to and called constituents of members of the Senate Finance Committee in Oregon, Florida, Maine and Montana to ask them to urge their senators to support the public option. On a social note, the August 5th Three Parks picnic was a huge success with live music, delicious food and many members, friends and elected officials in attendance. Many thanks to Theresa Canter for spearheading the event.

A big thank you to the Club's endorsed candidates for dropping in throughout the evening at our June meeting to spur us on toward collecting more than 2,000 signatures on candidates' petitions. And once again, we were grateful to Steve Max for another thoughtful, thorough presentation, this time on "What Happened to Our Economy?"

The Three Parks September meeting will feature Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell and *Daily News* political reporter and blogger Liz Benjamin, who will give us an update on what's going on in Albany—past, present and predictions for the future. We will also hear from various speakers on the upcoming Democratic Primary.

In an unusual development, Three Parks District Leader Cynthia Doty is being challenged in the Democratic Primary. All of us know how Cynthia—a hard-working, knowledgeable, and honest force for progressive change—has been instrumental in making Three Parks one of the most active and widely respected political clubs in the City. This challenge is not only personal to Cynthia, but also an attack on Three Parks. I urge you to support Cynthia any way you can to get out the vote for her on September 15th.

All of the Club's endorsed candidates need your help. Please contact them to volunteer in this critical period before the primary to ensure the highest possible turnout and victory for our candidates, especially in the very close races for Comptroller, Public Advocate and District Attorney. Any amount of time you can give, whether at a subway stop, making calls, or volunteering at a candidate's office, can really make a difference. Please look elsewhere in this newsletter for the candidates' contact information.

Finally, remind your neighbors and friends to vote on Tuesday, September 15th.

District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

THREE PARKS & CYNTHIA DOTY CHALLENGED IN THE SEPT 15 PRIMARY

The September 15th Democratic primary is a critical election for members of Three Parks Independent Democrats. Not only do we have a slate of candidates for citywide offices, Manhattan offices, and local council races to support but most importantly we have a challenge to Cynthia for District Leader.

Cynthia is simply a unique and terrific District Leader. She does as much or more in her unpaid position as do many paid public officials. Her commitment both to the issues we support as a club and the thankless details required to support and manage our fairly large political club is unmatched. Whether it is running the phone banks at the Obama storefront, getting the food to the club picnic, taking the lead on health care, or directing table after table on Broadway for Social Security, the historic rezoning of the neighborhood, or stopping eminent domain from destroying the 125th Street community, Cynthia has dedicated herself to helping our neighborhood and progressive ideals.

Almost overlooked in all Cynthia does is also what she represents to us in Three Parks Independent Democrats. A challenge to a District Leader (or our County Committee members) is not just a challenge to Cynthia - it is a challenge to Three Parks Independent Democrats. Three Parks is a Democratic political club that is part of the New York State Democratic Party. However, we only have this role because we elect District Leaders and County Committee members.

So our support of a District Leader (or County Committee members) is unlike our support of our other endorsed candidates. If an endorsed candidate for mayor loses, the candidate loses. If a District Leader loses, Three Parks relinquishes its role in the Democratic Party.

Three Parks has accomplished much over the past few years. Let's make sure that Cynthia and Three Parks can continue to do the good work as progressive activists within the Democratic Party, city, state and nation. Call the club number 212-866-6378 or email me at bobotfeld@aol.com to let Cynthia and Three Parks know how you want to help.

"The work begins anew. The cause endures. The hope rises again and the dream goes on."

**Senator Edward Kennedy
2008 Democratic Convention**

Senator Edward Kennedy, the voice for the voiceless
and a proud Liberal to the very end.
America will miss him!

The Three Parks Picnic By Theresa Canter

The Three Parks sixth annual Picnic was again a great success! We had a great turnout with lots of good food (including Rosetta William's famous fried chicken!). Despite the ominous forecast, it turned out to be a lovely evening at the pond in Central Park. Many thanks to all the people who helped to coordinate, set-up and clean-up the event - including Bob Botfeld, Cynthia Doty, Ellen Flax, Marie Lunn, Mary Ann Marks, Ray Schwartz, Gloria Swanson, Deborah Thomas. Not only were we again entertained by Alan Cary who sang and played the banjo, but we had a surprise appearance by The Uptown Singers.

Aborn for DA By Elizabeth Kellner

The DA race is not something only lawyers should care about. We are all affected in many ways by the successes and failures of the criminal justice system, even if we are never the direct victim of a crime, and even in the face of crime rates continuing to decline.

Richard Aborn has been endorsed by TPID in the three person September 15 primary. He is the clear choice among progressives, community activists, and those who understand the causes and consequences of crime to be a social and economic, not just police or legal, problem. The Manhattan DA can be a statewide and national leader in this respect. Richard Aborn is the most qualified to assume that role as well as manage and innovate the vast resources of the DA's office.

Aborn and his two opponents have all been rated qualified by the City Bar Association, and they are all alumni of Morgenthau's 35 year administration. Only Aborn has been a successful advocate on important policy issues. Only Aborn has significant managerial experience. Only Aborn has the combination of lifetime opposition to the death penalty and a life long career working on criminal justice issues in New York and around the country.

Whether your concerns are white collar crime, an economic downturn threatening the progress we have made, guns on our streets, the staggering percentage of people and children of color in our jails, police brutality, the expense of incarceration, or the risk of wrongful convictions, Aborn is the best person for the job. He has been endorsed by Nadler, Schneiderman, Brewer, Rosenthal, O'Donnell, Perkins and Viverito among many others. They recognize Aborn's skill, his leadership, his being in touch with the needs and concerns of our community

Vote for Norman Siegel for Public Advocate! By Theresa Canter

The Democratic primary is September 15th, and I urge you to join me in voting for the Three Parks endorsed candidate **Norman Siegel** for Public Advocate. With his formidable experience and unswerving commitment to justice, equality and freedom, **Norman** will be the Public Advocate who will serve the interest of all New Yorkers.

Norman Siegel's commitment to civil rights is unmatched in NYC and he has led the way in critical civil rights and civil liberties struggles.

Norman has also represented and advocated for a wide variety of community groups; the right of Brooklyn and Harlem communities to stop the government from using eminent domain to take their homes for the enrichment of private developers; safety standards for skyscrapers and effective firefighter communications equipment; and the public release of 9/11 emergency tapes and transcripts. Whether he is representing our right to peacefully assemble (Central Park), the right to protest (Republican National Convention) or the property owners and tenants who are fighting eminent domain, he is an advocate for 'We, the people' and those precious rights guaranteed in our Constitution.

If you want to help make the people's advocate the Public Advocate, please join us and volunteer to Get Out The Vote! Volunteers are needed to canvass, phonebank, and for Dear Neighbor letters. Please contact me at tesscanter@aol.com or 212-448-6271 if you want to help elect **Norman Siegel** as our next Public Advocate.

NY State Senate Democrats vs. democracy By Ray Schwartz

I am struggling to separate individual State Senators from the collective incompetence and the disrespect and disregard the New York State Senate has demonstrated toward the citizens of New York. As individuals, I respect Bill Perkins and Eric Schneiderman, however, since the start of the current legislative session my respect for both, as elected representatives, has become more difficult to hold onto. The collective failure of the Senate Democrats to demonstrate competency in leadership and management of the Senate has put into jeopardy many needed reforms in Senate policies and procedures and important legislation. There does not appear to be any true resolution to the Senate's dysfunction or prospects of meaningful reform to Senate operations. (This does not mean the Assembly is not without serious ethical

problems or in need of critical reforms to reflect a democratic process).

What should I, as a voter and citizen, of New York do at this time? Do I look for replacements for the current office holders? Do I support a constitutional convention to push for changes to fix the Assembly and Senate failures? Do I advocate for bringing back public stocks, so commonly used by the Puritans, and probably in storage in the NYS Museum in Albany?

At this moment, before I make up my mind as to my next steps, I request that Senators Perkins and Schneiderman provide a widely circulated public report on the Senate disaster and what their efforts have been to remedy the current situation and ensure that democracy returns permanently to the New York State Senate; as I do not receive their constituent mailings, I have not seen any such report. At that time I will be better able to decide my next steps.

States' Rights and Single Payer By Steve Max Chair, Health Care Committee

Who would have thought that the issue of states' rights would emerge as a major factor in the proposed national health care legislation? Yet, the states' rights concept, usually invoked to circumvent civil rights legislation, could save the situation. In July, while many of us were dozing at the beach (but not ever-alert Three Parks board member Bruce Markens, who caught this) the House Education and Labor committee passed an amendment by Rep. Dennis Kucinich which allows states to set up their own Single Payer systems.

Not that there isn't much of value left in the House and Senate plans. At least insurance company discrimination by age and previous condition will be banned, employers will be required to contribute and there will be subsidies to help families without health insurance buy it, although it will be more expensive than many families can afford. However, the much vaunted Public Option has been loaded with extra and unnecessary costs and the legislation limits benefits to what the private companies offer. Enrollment in the new plan will be limited to those who currently have no insurance. Joshua Holland at AlterNet says, "... only 9-10 million people will be eligible to enroll [*in the public plan*] by 2019. Similarly the publicly-administered exchanges are projected to cover about 30 million by that year." (7/17/09) The Exchanges are where uninsured people will go to buy public or private insurance under the new plan. To put this in perspective, 253 million people including children now have some form of health insurance and 46 million, mostly adults, don't. The prospect of shifting the Single Payer campaign to the states is important because both houses in Maine and NY have endorsed national Single Payer legislation as have

the Assemblies of New Hampshire and Kentucky. Congressman Kucinich says there are active efforts to pass state single payer plans in California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington.

The Kucinich Amendment passed the House committee by a vote of 27 to 19. Interestingly, it picked up 19 Republican votes largely because of the states' rights aspect. It is by no means sure, however, that this provision will be carried over into the final version of the House bill, and it is not in the Senate version. Pressure needs to be brought on members of both houses to preserve states' rights for Single Payer.

Voter Information for the Primary and General Election

PRIMARY - September 15
Run-Off PRIMARY (if necessary) – Sept. 29
GENERAL ELECTION - November 3
PRIMARY - Last Day Register - August 21
PRIMARY Absentee Ballot Request by Mail - Postmarked September 8
PRIMARY Absentee Ballot Personally Delivered Request - September 14
PRIMARY Completed Absentee Ballot - Postmarked September 14
PRIMARY Completed Absentee Ballot - Personally Delivered to BOE - 9:00 pm September 15
Run-Off PRIMARY Completed Absentee Ballot - Postmarked September 28
Run-Off PRIMARY Completed Absentee Ballot - Personally Delivered to BOE - 9:00 pm September 29

GENERAL ELECTION - Last Day to Register Oct. 9
GENERAL ELECTION Absentee Ballot Request by Mail - Postmarked October 27
GENERAL ELECTION Absentee Ballot Personally Delivered Request - November 2
GENERAL ELECTION Completed Absentee Ballot - Postmarked November 2
GENERAL ELECTION Completed Absentee Ballot Personally Delivered to BOE, 9:00 pm November 3

BOARD OF ELECTIONS, Manhattan Borough Office, 200 Varick Street (Houston Street), 10th floor, 212-886-2100

Toll Free Voter Information - 1-866-VOTENYC Website - www.vote.nyc.ny.us or just search NYC Board of Elections

You cannot get an Absentee Ballot Application form on-line - call to request that it be mailed, or better yet, pick it up in person. Someone other than the voter can request the Application (e.g. a parent for a student away at college) but the voter must personally complete the Application as well as the Ballot itself. You can get a Voter Registration form on line, but it cannot be completed on line - you must print, complete by hand and mail it in, or deliver in person.

JEWISH HOME & HOSPITAL LAND SWAP TO EVADE WEST SIDE 97-110TH REZONING OF 2007 By Bob Botfeld

On August 12, 2009, the management of the Jewish Home and Hospital (JHH) announced a land swap of their property on 106th street for a parcel on 100th street in Park West Village. This land swap enables the JHH to build a much taller and larger nursing home than they agreed to build in the negotiated zoning carve out in 2007.



Protest at Jewish Home – Saturday August 15

On Saturday, August 15, there was a protest press conference in front of JHH that was organized by Councilmember Mark-Viverito. Elected officials including BP Scott Stringer, State Senator Bill Perkins, and Councilmember Inez Dickens spoke in favor of an immediate rezoning for the JHH property to R8A/R8B in order to rescind the JHH carve out. Cynthia and I and community participants from DEBNA, Manhattan Valley Preservation Coalition, and West 105th Street HFDC, and Community Board 7 also denounced the land swap. Assemblyman Danny O'Donnell had already released a letter demanding rescinding of the 2007 carve out.

Here's the background:

In September 2007, just prior to the finalization of the 97th to 110th Street Upper West Side Rezoning Plan, the Jewish Home & Hospital (JHH) located between 105th and 106th streets, negotiated a last minute exemption from the planned R8A/8B zoning. The R8A/R8B rezoning would have limited the buildings facing 106th Street to 125 feet (about 12 floors) and the buildings facing 105th street to seven stories. In the negotiated deal, the area upon which JHH facility resides would be carved out to retain the original R72 zoning. R72 zoning has no building height limits.

In return for the carve out, the JHH agreed to a restrictive covenant to be filed with their deed that

would limit their building heights for the new hospital to 150 feet (about 15 floors). JHH also planned to sell part of their street front on 106th street to a private developer. In the restrictive covenant, that private development would be limited to 125 feet and thereby conform to R8A. Importantly, the restrictive covenant also included a clause that stated that in case of a sale of the property, the buyer of the property would be restricted to developing in accordance of R8A/R8B zoning.

In addition, the JHH signed a Memorandum of Agreement, in which the JHH promised the community and their immediate neighbors additional access to JHH meeting rooms for community use and agreed to restrictions on some of the noisier and annoying aspects of their daily operation and the planned construction.

Overall, it was a reasonable compromise with only a small portion of the new development slightly exceeding the intended new zoning and the community gained a few benefits.

But, JHH never signed the restrictive covenant nor filed it with the deed.

Thus the agreement is unenforceable so the 106th block must be rezoned in accordance with the 2007 plan. At follow up meetings with BP Scott Stringer and the other public officials, they all reaffirmed their commitment to immediately begin the ULURP procedure to expedite rezoning the block. City Planning has indicated that they will not oppose rezoning to R8A/R8B

Although, the JHH clearly betrayed the community by negotiating a deal and then not signing the agreement it appears that there may not be much incentive for JHH or the buyer of the property to oppose the rezoning. For a private developer, the community's preferred R8A/R8B zoning, while restricting height development, actually allows far more residential units to be developed than does the current R72. Although higher apartments command premium prices, the much larger allowable developable density under R8A probably creates little or no economic incentive for the developer to oppose the rezoning.

Further updates on the JHH saga will be given at the club meeting on September 9th.

Volunteer for Candidates Endorsed by Three Parks!

For Mayor: Council Member Tony Avella
718-855-7038 www.tonyavellaformayor.com/

For Comptroller: Council Member John Liu

718-360-9393 www.liunewyork.com/

For Public Advocate: Norman Siegel
212-448-6271 www.normansiegel.com/

For Manhattan District Attorney: Richard Aborn 212-916-3197 <http://www.abornforda.com/>

For Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
212-353-2009 www.stringerforny.com/

For NYC Council: Council Member Inez Dickens
212-662-0694 <http://www.inezdickens2009.com/>

Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito
212-828-2009 **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

For District Leader:

Cynthia Doty 212-866-6378
Bob Botfeld 212-866-6378

Our State Senators

By Daniele Gerard, Bob Botfeld & Cynthia Doty

During this period of deplorable shenanigans in the New York State Senate, it's important to keep in mind that this is not just a circus in which everyone is an equally bad performer. Certainly for Upper West Siders, it is critical to discern what's really happening here. For example, our State Senators, Eric Schneiderman and Bill Perkins, have always represented their constituents with only the highest goals of public service in mind, whether through their successful efforts to fight for gun control, pro-choice and environmental legislation, or to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws. Especially in the current crisis, both senators have been at the forefront among those drafting and pushing a bipartisan agreement to get the Senate up and functioning. We worked hard with Senator Schneiderman to take back the Senate for the Democrats; let's not tar our best public servants with a brush we should use only for the self-serving who are wreaking havoc in Albany.

Three Parks fighting for universal health care –tabling on Broadway, petitioning and engaging our community - 08/09



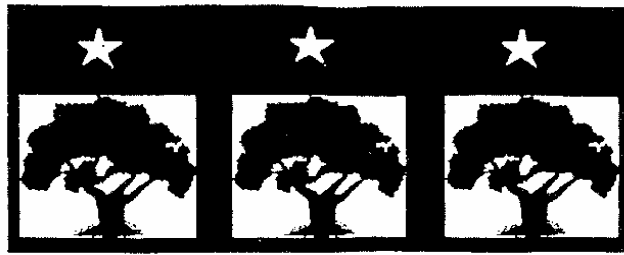
Three Parks members Bruce Markens, Lynn Max, and Steve Max midtown health care rally – August 29, 2009

Thank You Senator Ted Kennedy For making Our Lives and America So Much Better

Immigration Act of 1965
Right to Vote Act:
lowering voting age to 18
Individuals with Disabilities Act
Americans with Disabilities Act
Civil Rights Act of 1991
National Teachers Corp
Fair Housing Act of 1968
Bi-Lingual Education Act
Meals on Wheels
WIC Program
LIHEAP
Title IX
Ryan White CARE Act
National Community Service Act
COBRA
CHIP
Family Medical Leave Act
No Child Left Behind Act
Mental Health Parity Act
Minimum Wage Increases

And for fighting for decades for universal and single payer health coverage, repeating year after year that
“Health care is a right not a privilege!”

Cynthia Doty, District Leader



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS
Cathedral Station P.O. Box 1316 • New York, NY 10025 (212) 866-6378

Please pay your 2009 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*

2009 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member _____

Renewal _____

Membership Category -- Check One

Individual (\$25) _____

Family -- two adults in the same household (\$40) _____

Student/Senior Citizen/Low Income (\$10) _____

Low Income Family (18) _____

Sponsor (\$50) _____ Patron (\$100) _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Email _____

Check here if you prefer to receive the newsletter via email.

Please make out all checks to "Three Parks Independent Democrats - Dues 2009"

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

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2009
Albany Update
Democratic Primary Update

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER:
JEWISH HOME LAND SWAP
CHALLENGE TO THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

The deadline for the October Newsletter is September 30th, 2009