



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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

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<i>President</i>	<i>Editors</i>	<i>District Leaders</i>	<i>State Committee</i>
Merle McEldowney	Lorraine Zamora <small>lzamora245@gmail.com</small> Jock Davenport Richard E. Luna	Bob Botfeld Cynthia Doty	Lynn Thomas Daniel Marks Cohen

Club Meeting, September 13, 2017

- Topic:** New York State Constitutional Convention: Great Possibilities—Great Risks
- Speakers:** Arthur Cheliotas, President, Local 1180, Communication Workers of America
Bertha Lewis, President, The Black Institute
Steve Max, Associate Director Emeritus, Midwest Academy, Three Parks Board Member
Bill Samuels, Chair, EffectiveNY
- Date:** Wednesday, September 13, 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 on the 9/12 Primary
- Panel of Speakers: NYS Constitutional Convention, Great Possibilities—Great Risks
- Questions & Answers
- ADJOURN

CALENDAR

- VOTE ON PRIMARY DAY, Tuesday, Sept. 12**
- Wednesday, October 11, 8:00 pm**
Three Parks Membership Meeting
- 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. 14**
- 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 PRIMARY DAY
SEPTEMBER 12**

Presidents Report

By Merle McEldowney

What's coming up? Primary Day on Tuesday, Sept. 12.

Three Parks covers two city council districts. We have endorsed Mark Levine in the 7th council district and Helen Rosenthal in the 6th. Both incumbents have served our district well, and deserve to be re-elected.

A special note about Mark Levine's election: He is being challenged by Thomas Lopez-Pierre. Mr. Lopez-Pierre spoke at a Three Parks club meeting in the spring, and used the time to repeat some antisemitic remarks. This summer Mr. Lopez-Pierre submitted signatures nominating himself for City Council, district leader and judicial delegate. The Board of Elections found so many irregularities on the petitions for judicial delegate and district leader that Lopez-Pierre withdrew his name from those elections. His name still remains on the ballot for City Council.

It is important to vote for Mark Levine on Primary Day, September 12, because he has been a stellar city council member, and to let Mr. Lopez-Pierre know that this community stands against the kind of venom that he spreads.

On Election Day, November 14, New Yorkers will make another trip to the voting booth. This time to weigh in on whether or not New York should have a convention to rewrite the New York State Constitution. Our club meeting on September 13 will focus on the pros and cons of holding a Constitution Convention (the Con Con) and we have titled the evening's discussion, "Great Possibilities—Great Risks."

The Con Con is a controversial issue with progressives lining up on both sides. Many see the possibility of a new state constitution to reform our broken state government. Unions and other progressives think the risks to union rights, environmental protections and other issues are too great. On September 13, Bill Samuels, chair of EffectiveNY, and Bertha Lewis, president of the Black Institute, will talk about the possibilities. Arthur Cheliotis, Union Leader of Local 1180, and Steve Max, Associate Director Emeritus, Midwest Academy and Three Parks board member, will talk about the risks of such a convention. It promises to be an informative and exciting meeting. Dan Cohen, state committeeman and Three Parks board member, summarizes the pros and cons of the Con Con elsewhere in this newsletter.

What has Three Parks done recently? It has been a very busy summer. Our meeting in June featured a special guest speaker, Mayor Bill de Blasio. It also

was our annual Pizza and Petitioning meeting. Getting representatives to the county committee is an important part of what we do as a Democratic political club. Our district leaders make certain that we have all the county committee slots filled. They also make sure that our endorsed candidates get as many signatures as they need to prevent a challenge.

In July, we had our annual summer picnic. As always, it was a beautiful event in Central Park with a potluck array of great food and drink, and the kind of amazing people that you are guaranteed to encounter at a Three Parks event. Special thanks to Theresa Canter for her expert leadership and coordination of what has become a Three Parks summer tradition.

Three Parks Independent Democrats Endorsed Candidates

**Bill de Blasio
Mayor**

**Scott Stringer
Comptroller**

**Letitia James
Public Advocate**

**Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President**

**Cyrus Vance, Jr.
Manhattan District Attorney**

**Helen Rosenthal
City Council 6th CD**

**Mark Levine
City Council 7th CD**

**Leslie Stroth, Richard Tsai
& Phaedra Perry
Civil Court**

District Leader Report

By Bob Botfeld

In an extraordinary petitioning effort reflecting the political energy needed to take back our country, a record 78 members and friends of Three Parks Independent Democrats petitioned this year, collecting over 3,400 signatures to place the Three Parks' endorsed candidates on the ballot.

We helped our endorsed elected officials get on the ballot for the September 12th primary: Bill de Blasio, Mayor; Scott Stringer, Comptroller; Letitia James, Public Advocate; Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President; Cy Vance, Manhattan District Attorney; Helen Rosenthal, City Council 6th CD; Mark Levine, City Council 7th CD; and Leslie Stroth, Richard Tsai, and Phaedra Perry, all for Civil Court. The petitioning was essential to qualify our volunteer Democratic Party officials as the nominees for the September 12th primary: District Leaders, Cynthia Doty and Bob Botfeld, county committee members, and judicial delegates.

We qualified county committee members in 39 of our Three Parks' 40 election districts. Three Parks is unique among Democratic clubs in qualifying county committee members for every election district through petitioning. This year, we omitted a single ED partly because the Board of Elections created four ED's at the last minute. The boundaries were not set until petitioning was in process.

It was a strong club effort that included weekend days and weekday nights of tabling, and individuals combing through their buildings for signatures. There were a number of exceptional efforts. In the eastern part of our district bordering Central Park, the team of Norm LaFond and Audrey Isaacs collected an amazing 404 signatures and 329 signatures, respectively. In the western part of our area, we were led by our traditional phenom Mary Ann Marks who scooped 294 signatures. Demonstrating again the power of marriage, next were Lynn Bender Max and Steve Max, with 83 and 79 signatures. Chuck Wall, co-leader with Steve Max of the Three Parks Take Back the House campaign, followed with 75 signatures. Marie Lunn, who greets us all so pleasantly at our club meetings' sign-in table and helps set up our annual picnic was next, gathering 70 signatures, as did new club member, Landon Wickham. Another new member and fledgling county committee member, Ilene Pfeiffer, followed closely with 69.

State Committeeman Dan Cohen, club secretary Jock Davenport, and judicial monitor Stephanie Tegnazian, each added 60 signatures to our totals. Female District Leader, Cynthia Doty, barely edged out male District

Leader, Bob Botfeld, 58 to 57, as they also coordinated and managed the petitioning effort.

Two new petitioning stars, Moira Sullivan (57) and Claudia Ford (50), added to our total contribution while qualifying their election districts. Corinne Constantine, who organized the bus campaign during last year's Clinton-Kaine storefront, added 46. Lorraine Zamora, who co-managed the storefront and superbly edits the club newsletter, somehow found time to get 43 of her neighbors to sign. New member, Hannah Leider, found 42 sigs in the toughest ED in our district, the 36th ED, where almost no one actually lives and only nine people voted in the last primary. Irene Shrier, who adds mobility and chauffeuring to the club's operation when she is not skiing or playing tennis, rounded out the over 40 signatures club with 42 along with Jane Thompson (41).

Soprano Deborah Thomas sang in with 39; State Committeewoman Lynn Thomas added 38. Bruce Markens, Lois Safian, Mildred Speiser, Wendy Dannett and Theresa Canter all strongly contributed with plus 30 signatures.

A large contingent of club members decided that 30 was exactly the right number: Joanna Cohen, Jerry Cordova, Marnie Hall, Sam Lazarus, Gregory Nunes, Kim Parker, Ian Hoffman Reid, Susan Tucker, and Antoinette Marie Williams. Then there was an equally large group that probably remembered that the most you should admit to is 29: Lisa Di Caprio, Jessica Haberstock, Betsy Malcolm, Abby McGloster, Eleanor Cory Gressel, Arlene Mehlmann, Edwin Perez, and Carol Van Deusen. Alex Medwedew admitted to 28.

Genora Bennett, Judy Hummel, Sam Bartos, Daniele Gerard, Janet Harvilchuck, Carol Myers, Arlene Geiger, Doris Shreiber, Kitty Crowley, Martina Garcia, Janice Mayer, Josh Pepper, Al Placeres, and Michael Stearns each contributed 20 or more signatures.

The teen club was led by Elizabeth Kellner, Wilhelmina Perry, Ellen Flax, Jacob Gross, Judy Wood, Johann Cutti, Marilyn King, Elaine Hazzard, and Cecilia Villabona. And helping make sure that all our ED's were qualified were these spirited contributors: Robert Bardin, Amy Epstein, Martha Haffey, Brenda Pinckney, Diane Pollak, Christopher Scott, David Lazarus, Emma Jenkins and Brenda Morgan.

A great job and congratulations to all!

ConConCon

by Daniel Marks Cohen, State Committeeman

ConCon stands for Constitutional Convention. Every two decades, New York voters have a referendum on whether to revise the New York State Constitution. The last time was 1997, when New Yorkers voted no. The legislature had called a ConCon back in 1968, but voters rejected the proposed changes. The last time voters approved a ConCon and also approved an amended Constitution was in 1938, almost 80 years ago.

The process this year is straightforward: a referendum on whether to have a ConCon is held in November. If a majority of voters approve the convention, three delegates (anyone can run as a delegate) in each of the 63 state senate districts and 15 statewide at-large seats are chosen by voters next November, for a total of 204 people (“delegates”). The delegates meet in Albany in April 2019 at a convention to debate modifying the Constitution. Changes approved by a majority of the delegates are submitted to the voters, a majority in favor would ratify those changes.

Nonprofit groups supporting campaign finance reform, redistricting, term limits and the legalization of marijuana are in favor of a convention. Others argue a ConCon could pass progressive changes like early voting laws, same day registration, and restriction of legislative district gerrymandering. And still others, including the League of Women Voters and Citizens Union, propose the ConCon could enact new rights, including the right to clean water and clean air, and equal rights for women, LGBTQ people and disabled New Yorkers. Their argument is that the feckless legislature will not likely support any of these politically difficult issues.

Alternatively, unions such as the United Federation of Teachers and state legislative leaders from both parties are against a convention, voicing anxiety that rather than enact new reforms, the convention could lead to a loss of rights in the constitution. The rights to a public education, welfare and pension benefits, and to form a union all could be repealed.

I am against a ConCon (hence the title, “ConConCon”). Progressives are fighting many battles right now – a President who knows no limits, a Congress unrestrained by the voices of reason, and an ambitious Governor willing to sacrifice principle for politics. Activism has been building in the state since the 2016 elections, but if a ConCon is approved, the political left risks being drawn into a battle for the Constitution, rather than focusing attention on winning the State Senate (including defeating the IDC), vulnerable Congressional seats, and the Gubernatorial

election in 2018, and then the White House in 2020.

The problem is the process, with no restrictions on who runs to serve as delegates, no limits on changes proposed, and no protections for prior legislative victories. A ConCon would send lobbyists surging into the state, eager to make changes for their patrons. The delegates are elected by voters to serve in the ConCon, and then disband. There is no accountability. If delegates propose something that wrecks the state budget, unlike politicians who have to get reelected, there is no way for voters to react (other than voting the recommendations down). Imagine if the Constitution were amended to outlaw abortion and then as a lure, it included a \$10,000 tax Break. It might entice people to vote for the changes, regardless of the damage they do. Voter turnout in New York is wretched. There is no obligation to vote on the changes on a convenient date – the vote could be in July, and reduced voter response might enable the horrific to be approved.

Waves of corporate money are sloshing across the country, (Can you imagine what the Koch brothers would spend to win anti-environmental rule changes in our state? Fracking? Clean water? They would spend billions!) Rather than creating new wars to wage, let us confront the challenges we face today. If we take back the State Senate, the changes nonprofit groups seek could be attained through the regular legislative process, rather than through a ConCon free-for-all, and without risking rights we have fought for decades to attain and preserve. With much in jeopardy, the temptation to vote for the ConCon must be tempered by the larger issues we are tackling now.

I urge you to vote NO on the ConCon this November.

Phone Bank to Take Back Congress

By Chuck Wall

After a brief summer hiatus, Three Parks’ team of “Take Back Congress” volunteers is now gearing up to resume our highly successful phone banking campaign. Our calls have proved to be a powerful and effective way to reach out to voters in potential “swing” districts. Phone banking is a great way to make a real difference as election time gets closer!

Our first fall season phone bank will take place on the evening of Thursday, September 28. 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.

Here’s a brief recap of the campaign so far. Since March,

and seven phone banks later, volunteers have made almost 2,500 calls and held conversations with nearly 500 voters. The campaign is targeting Republican senior citizens, mainly in New York's 19th Congressional District (the Hudson Valley Region stretching from Dutchess County in the South to Otsego County in the northwest). The aim is to make these voters aware of the Trump Administration's threats to Social Security and Medicare and to raise doubts about the willingness of their Republican Congressman, John Faso, to protect those programs. In the 2016 elections, both Faso and Donald Trump won the 9th District by very slim margins, and for the 2018 midterm elections, observers now rate the district a tossup.

At the June phone bank, callers experimented with calling voters on Staten Island. The idea was to "test the waters" to find out how those famously staunch Republicans would react to being called. However, the results were mixed, so the July phone bank resumed its focus on the 19th District in the Hudson Valley. In July, as an experiment, we began alerting Republican seniors to the "Trumpcare" bill's proposed cuts to funding for elderly patients in nursing homes. This idea resonated with older voters, and allowed callers to further point out that it was the voters' own Congressman Faso whose Trumpcare amendment threatened that funding in New York State.

Our phone banking to the Hudson Valley Congressional district has revealed that many Upstaters are not well informed about political issues and unaware of the threats to their benefits. After speaking with our callers, many were willing to phone Congressman Faso to voice their concerns.

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

**So please join your fellow club members
Thursday, September 28, for TPID's
first phone bank of the fall.**

Three Parks Annual Picnic!

by Theresa Canter

Once again, we had a glorious day in July for the Three Parks annual picnic in Central Park! It was a tremendous success, with over 100 folks participating in the fun throughout the evening. In addition to our club members and neighborhood friends, we were joined by

many judicial candidates, and City Council members Mark Levine, Helen Rosenthal and Bill Perkins. Also in attendance was our State Senator, Brian Benjamin, State Senate candidate, Robert Jackson, and Keith Wright, County Leader.

As always, it takes a whole lot of Three Parkers to plan and pull off a successful picnic! Many thanks to all the members and guests who brought lots of good food and drink to share; and those who volunteered to transport, set-up, serve and clean-up the event—including Bob Botfeld, Dan Cohen, Corinne Constantine, Wendy Dannett, Jock Davenport, Cynthia Doty, Daniele Gerard, Elizabeth Kellner, Erl Kimmich, David Lazurus, Marie Lunn, Mary Ann Marks, Merle McEldowney, Arlene Mehlman, Lois Safian, Irene Shrier, Gerald Schultz, Deborah Thomas, Chuck Wall, Landon Wickham, Lauren Williams, Lorraine Zamora and all the many others who pitched in to help as needed. And, thanks to Alan Cary who again sang and played the banjo for the crowd, and the acapella group, Uptown Sound.

Remember to Vote on Primary Day, September 12

Climate Change: Why Questions Are Not Being Discussed

By Wendy Dannett

George Monbiot, a British writer known for his environmental and political activism, writes a weekly column for The Guardian. Last week he addressed the issue of silence around climate change. He states that "our greatest predicament, the issue that will define our lives, has been blotted from the public's mind." Monbiot points out that it is not only Donald Trump who does not discuss climate change: neither does the media—ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox. Last year there was total coverage of a mere 50 minutes on the Sunday and evening news programs for the entire year. Yet this was the hottest year on record and one where the U.S. was hammered by climate-related disasters.

This, Monbiot feels, is less a matter of policy than self-censorship: ignoring the subject to avoid trouble. To talk about climate change is to question not just Trump and environmental policy, but the entire political and economic system. "It is to expose a programme that relies on robbing the future to fuel the present, that demands perpetual growth on a finite planet," Monbiot continues.

“It is to challenge our economic system, a system that cannot be sustained, and which will destroy everything if it continues. The system, as is, perpetuates lies about human impact on the environment, which we saw with Exxon.”

To claim there is no link between climate breakdown from human activity and the severity of Hurricane Harvey is not possible. Every aspect of our weather is affected by the increase of 1 centigrade of global warming caused by human activities. “While no weather event can be blamed solely on human-driven warming, none is unaffected by it,” Monbiot states. We know the severity and impact of hurricanes on coastal cities is exacerbated by higher sea levels, caused by the thermal expansion of seawater; and exacerbated by greater storm intensity which is caused by higher sea temperatures and the ability of warm air to hold more water than cold air. Both these phenomena were involved in the severity of Hurricane Harvey. The sea water Harvey brought was unusually warm, so by the time it reached land, Harvey had intensified from a Category 1 to a Category 4 hurricane.

To raise the issue of human activity in climate events is to politicize Hurricane Harvey, Monbiot was told. But he believes it is the silence that is political. To report a storm as though it were an entirely natural phenomenon, like the eclipse, is to take a position. By not linking climate breakdown to environmental disasters, the media ensures our greatest challenge goes unanswered and helps push the world toward catastrophe. In Texas, we saw the storm rip through oil fields, forcing refineries to shut down, including those owned by some of the 25 companies that have

produced more than half the greenhouse gas emissions humans have released. Ironically, Harvey has devastated a place in which climate breakdown is generated, and where the policies prevent climate change from being addressed.

Monbiot observes that “When Trump’s enforcers instruct officials and scientists to purge any mention of climate change, we are scandalized. But when the media does it... we let it pass.” This censorship, he says, is invisible, sown into the fabric of organizations destined to leave major questions of our times unasked. “To acknowledge this issue is to challenge everything.”

I agree with George Monbiot. The problem of not addressing the roots of climate change lies in a nationwide complicity, not just with Trump. Our entire political and economic system needs to be urgently addressed.

**West Side Community Garden
Arts & Crafts Festival
Saturday & Sunday, Sept. 15 & 16, 10-4:30
89th St between Columbus & Amsterdam Avenues
Local Artists Display
& Sell Their Artwork & Crafts**



Three Parks tabling on Broadway for Mark Levine, Saturday, August 26.

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.

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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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Mark Levine, City Council 7th CD

Leslie Stroth, Richard Tsai and Phaedra Perry, Civil Court

Next Meeting, Wednesday, September 13, 2017

The NYS Constitutional Convention: Possibilities & Risks

Arthur Cheliotis, President, Local 1180, CWA

Bertha Lewis, President, The Black Institute

Steve Max, Associate Director Emeritus, Midwest Academy

Bill Samuels, Chair EffectiveNY