



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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

President

Daniele Gerard

Editor

Lauren Williams
(laurenwilliams1@cs.com)

District Leaders

Bob Botfeld
Cynthia Doty

State Committee

Lynn Thomas
Daniel Marks Cohen

FEBRUARY 9, 2011

FEATURED TOPIC & SPEAKERS: THE STATE OF OUR STATE AND PROGRESSIVE ISSUES: Fracking, Education, Budget Cuts and more—STATE SENATOR BILL PERKINS and ASSEMBLY MEMBER DANIEL O'DONNELL; ELECTIONS FOR THREE PARKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS; CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9th

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLACE: The Youth Hostel
891 Amsterdam Avenue at 103rd Street

ROOM: Chapel/Ballroom

AGENDA

7:45 PM Sign-in
8 PM Call to Order

1. President's Report & Announcements
2. District Leaders' Reports
3. The State of Our State
4. Elections for TPID Board of Directors
5. Charter School Update
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 23, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, March 9, 2011
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, March 23, 2011
Three Parks Board Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

Wednesday, April 13, 2011
Three Parks Meeting, 8 PM
Place: Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave. at 103rd St.

President's Column

By Daniele Gerard

A hearty thanks to our new State Senator Adriano Espaillat for his Albany update at our last meeting. Our gratitude also goes out, once again, to our own Steve Max for his thorough, succinct, and fiercely accurate presentation on the real truth about Social Security, repeated past attempts to destroy this greatest social program of all time, and current attempts to achieve the same objective. Thanks to Board Member Ray Schwartz as well for his spotlight on similar perils to Medicare. Three Parks has a lot of activity planned — we look forward to working with the membership, our community, and friends to hold the line on preserving these programs for years to come.

This month's meeting will focus on the state of our State and issues close to the heart of Three Parks and progressives everywhere: fracking, education, proposed budget and employee cuts, and more. We will also hear an update on charter schools and hold elections for the club's 2011 Board of Directors; the ballot box will open at 8:30 p.m.

If you are up to date on meeting attendance, please be sure to pay your dues at the February meeting in order to be able to vote for the TPID Board of Directors. Please see the list of eligible voters and other relevant information elsewhere in this issue.

As we trudge through the snow, it's hard to believe that Spring is not far off. But as sure as Spring will come, so will the annual Three Parks benefit. On **Sunday, May 1**, we will honor Attorney General Eric Schneiderman with the Ted Weiss Public Service Award. Three Parks will also honor Noah Gotbaum, President of Community Education Council, District 3, and Mark Diller, Chair of CB7's Youth, Education & Libraries Committee, with the Jesse Crawford Community Service Award. **Please let us know this month** if you would like to support the event by having your name listed on the invitation; send an e-mail to <ThreeParksDems@aol.com>

Known Unknowns and Unknown Unknowns

By Daniel Marks Cohen
State Committeeman, 69th AD

Perhaps the only good thing former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld did was provide humanity with a decent catchphrase. In application to the State Committee, the known unknown is that while Jay Jacobs is currently the Chair of the State Party, it is unclear whether he will remain in that position, or be replaced. His work as chairman — from what I

hear — has been mixed, neither truly loved or deeply hated, he remains from what I see a competent but not particularly charismatic chairman, more workhorse than showhorse, and with a particularly charismatic Governor, that may be what Cuomo wants (the decision to keep or replace the chairman is exclusively the Governor's to make). I predict that Jacobs stays. The next State Committee meeting is not until May, but we may have clarity about the chairman's position sooner than that. It is not a political earthquake regardless of what happens, but in our little fishbowl, all ripples are felt.

Unknown unknown is what Cuomo will do now that he has assumed the mantle of responsibility as Governor. He campaigned against a hapless opponent(s) so much so that he did not need to articulate many positions or interact with the press or the public, except in controlled environments. Early signs since taking office are encouraging — robust support for gay marriage, pushing for ethics reform including forcing elected officials to disclose outside sources of income and clients (a direct shot over the bow of the ship of Assembly Speaker Shelly Silver, whose income as an attorney at the state's largest malpractice firms is well known generally, but also a well kept secret on specifics) and fiscal austerity. Although I was too young at the time to appreciate the early years, Mario Cuomo also inspired when he initially took office, and later disappointed. I hope that history does not repeat itself.

The Reform Caucus of the State Committee met, and has also created a small working group on issues we should press for in the new administration, among the things discussed this week were ethics reform and nonpartisan redistricting, with the goal to draft resolutions to submit before the spring meeting. I will elaborate more on them as they unfold.

Switching topics, while I have witnessed and shared the displeasure with the recent initiative of the Harlem Success Academy ("HSA"), which has shamelessly, and many say, misleadingly marketed itself to west side parents about the new school they are proposing to co-locate in the old Brandeis High School building (and it was with satisfaction that CB7 unanimously rejected the co-location), I am a little concerned about the tenor against ALL charter schools. Many are little better, and often worse, than the schools they replaced, but a few have managed to offer a superior alternative for parents desperate for better education options for their children. So while I agreed with a recent Three Parks resolution against HSA co-location, I was against an overall moratorium on charter schools, and that is why I voted no.

In closing, I wanted to express my condolences to Alan Flacks on the recent death of his mother. It is hard to lose a close family member and my sympathies to Alan and his family over the loss.

Social Security Update

By Steve Max

The State of the Union Address gives some idea of how the fight to preserve Social Security is likely to unfold. The Address was notable both for what the President said, and for what he did not say. The President called for a “bipartisan solution to strengthen Social Security,” and he stated that “We must do it without putting at risk current retirees, the most vulnerable, or people with disabilities; without slashing benefits for future generations; and without subjecting Americans’ guaranteed retirement income to the whims of the stock market.”

While this is reassuring, especially the rejection of stock speculation, Obama did not include on his list of things to avoid, the two major proposals of his Deficit Commission - raising the retirement age and recalculating the S.S. cost of living adjustment. We can surmise then that Obama’s concessions to the Republicans will start with these.

The Deficit Commission proposes indexing the retirement age to assumed gains in life expectancy, so that as people lived longer they will have to work longer. For people born after 1960, the current retirement age is 67. Under the Commission’s plan, the retirement age would rise to 68 around the year 2050 and 69 in 2075. If life expectancy keeps increasing beyond that, eventually people will work until they drop and the nursing home will get their Social Security checks. Increasing the retirement age is actually a benefit cut in disguise. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) estimates that the current change from age 65 to 67 equals a 13 percent cut in benefits. Increasing it to 69 and six months would be a 30 percent cut. Last year, when the French government raised the retirement age from 60 to 62, there was rioting throughout the country. Most of the demonstrators were students and youth who realized that not only was their retirement being stolen, but also their chances of finding a job fell as older workers stayed employed longer.

The second proposal reduces S.S. cost of living adjustments. EPI estimates the reduction in benefits to be 3 percent for workers retired for ten years and 6 percent for those retired 20 years. To simplify it down to a single product, the trick is this: Under the current system, the Bureau of Labor Statistics determines the price of, say, steak and then as the

price of steak rises, people on S.S. get a cost of living adjustment. Under the new system, when people can’t afford steak and switch to hamburger, the government starts tracking the price of hamburger, instead of steak, to prove that you are spending the same amount and don’t need an adjustment. Then, when you switch to chicken they track that, and finally, base your cost of living on the price of a box of macaroni and cheese because that is what you are now buying instead of steak. This is called the Chained Consumer Price Index. Beware of it.

A somewhat positive proposal in the Commission report is raising the Social Security payroll tax cap. Today, wages above \$106,800 are not taxed. The Commission proposes gradually raising the cap to \$190,000 by 2020. Wages above that amount would still not be taxed. This is a step in the right direction, but as is typical of the discourse in Washington these days, it puts the burden on the upper middle class while sparing millionaires any inconvenience. Three Parks supports removing the cap altogether, which would eliminate the entire Social Security shortfall with no benefit reductions at all. If this were done, about one in five people would pay more than now and the median increase in taxes paid by individuals over their working lives would be 3 percent, according to the report of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging (5/13/2010). We should certainly address why only earned income (wages) is taxed for Social Security, but unearned income (stocks and bonds) is not. It is patently absurd, not to mention unfair, not to tax both for S.S., especially as cries of insolvency ring out on all sides.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said, “There is no social security crisis and it is fully funded for the next 40 years. Those who claim Social Security is in crisis just don’t like government programs.”

Board Nominees Biographies

(in alphabetical order)

Theresa Canter – Second Vice-President. Having been privileged to serve the past three years as Second Vice-President, and previously as First Vice-President, President, and Treasurer, Theresa would be honored to continue to serve the membership in her current position and provide support to the Club leadership.

Wendy Dannett. Activist for justice and peace since the 60’s, she became involved with Three Parks Independent Democrats in 2000, around the Gore campaign. She has remained active with the Club since then, working on campaigns and issues

such as hydrofracking. She looks forward to continuing work with the Club, and possibly adding issues such as the prison system or the war in Afghanistan.

Jock Davenport. A neighborhood resident since 1986, he has been active in many areas since then: my block association, the “drugstore” wars, pushing Columbia University to include a supermarket at 103rd St. He has been active in Three Parks since 1996. He has been a Board member for eleven years.

Ellen Flax – Treasurer is a consultant to foundations and non-profits and serves as the rabbi of several local elder-care facilities. She was active in the storefront during the 2008 and 2004 elections and would be delighted to serve another term as Treasurer.

Ernestine Gallagher is a longtime member of Three Parks and member of the Board. Ernestine has worked on many campaigns over the years and in organizing the annual holiday party every year. She also is active in Frederick Douglass Houses.

Daniele Gerard – President is a lifelong New Yorker. She worked on the staff of NYC Council President Carol Bellamy, attended Columbia Law School, and practiced at Cravath and North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services. A Three Parks member since 2004, Indian Point critic, and two-time storefront veteran, she would be honored to serve a fourth term as President.

Louisa Gilbert has been a neighborhood resident since 1981 and a member of Three Parks for the last seven years. She was a volunteer at the storefront office for the 2004 and 2008 campaigns and also helped with petitioning. Since 1999, she has served as the Co-Director of Social Intervention Group at Columbia University, which is a research center focusing on developing and advancing evidence-base programs that address HIV, substance abuse and domestic violence. She is very interested in working with the Club to advocate for universal health care and affordable housing.

Elizabeth Kellner. A member of Three Parks 30+ years, she was a 2008 storefront regular and among the original 1984 storefront team. She is a Columbia Law and School of Public Health graduate. She practiced law for 20 years as civil litigator at large NYC firm and insurance industry corporation. She is a 20-year board member of community health care agency. Her primary areas of interest are health care reform, public schools, and affordable housing.

Erl Kimmich. Back in NYC after a long sojourn in Arizona where he knocked doors for Raul Grijalva's campaign, he is glad to contribute effort, and devote time to the issues we face.

Barbara Lee just moved back into the neighborhood and is so glad to be home. Barbara has been a member of Three Parks since 2004. She was on the Executive Board of NYC for Dean, hosted UWS meet-ups and ran their website. She was very involved in both the Kerry and Obama storefronts, made several trips to PA in 2004, helped with voter registration, and was a phone bank captain in 2008. She served on the Board in 2005, and she would be honored to serve again.

Marie Lunn has served on the Board for 5 years and has been a Three Parks member for 9 years. She has worked on several campaigns, helped with petitioning and served as a poll worker. She is also a member of the NY County Committee.

Bruce Markens – Recording Secretary is a retired teacher and union activist. He has served on Three Parks Board for two years, including one year as Recording Secretary. He helped organize forums on education for the Club. He worked in the 2008 storefront for Obama, on the John Hall campaign in 2006, and on Norman Siegel's campaigns for Public Advocate. He is a strong supporter of single payer health care and a strong opponent of expansion of charter schools.

Mary Ann Marks has been a Board member for the past 5 years and a member of the Three Parks Club for nine years. She volunteered at the 2008 storefront and worked on Cynthia Doty's City Council race. She helped with the re-zoning, healthcare, and gas drilling campaigns and helped on other campaigns. She is looking forward to doing much more.

Lynn Max – Membership Director was co-manager of the Obama/Biden 2008 campaign storefront. She served on the steering committee for our successful rezoning campaign and co-chaired the Three Parks Social Security campaign and Three Parks 2006 “Take Back Congress” campaign (John Hall). She was co-manager of the Kerry/Edwards campaign storefront in 2004 and a member of health care and gas drilling committees. She was active in the 2010 campaign for Eric Schneiderman for Attorney General and for other statewide candidates.

Merle McEldowney. She found Three Parks during the 2006 John Hall Campaign. This would be her third year as a Board member. She is involved in

the Social Security issue and in mobilizing the Club and others to stop hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. Last year she was elected as an alternate Judicial Delegate. After spending her career in New York City courts, she sees an opportunity to have some input into the selection of judges as a privilege

Corine Pettey is former District Leader, Riverside Democrats and served as a District 3 Elementary School Principal for 24 years. She is opposed to gas companies drilling for gas in our watershed, insists that Government create more jobs by helping to establish more "green" companies and public work projects to improve our infrastructure. It's jobs, jobs, jobs. She sees the need to mobilize and help the president and Congress to establish provisions that will nullify the recent disastrous Supreme Court decision that allows corporations to use their limitless monies to elect public officials. She opposes Columbia University use of eminent domain in the West Harlem area.

Milivoy Samurovich is a founding member of Three Parks and served for 5 years as District Leader. He also served on CB 7, co-chaired the Urban Renewal sub-committee, and served on the committee that opposed the Westway Highway. He served on CB 1, chaired the Battery Park Committee during planning phase, led the Tenants Committee of his apartment building, organized rent strikes, and served on the Co-op Negotiating Committee.

Ray Schwartz has been a member of the Club for more than 16 years. He has served as Membership Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Vice-President. He believes that the need for a progressive and loud voice is vital to all of us and that Three Parks gives us the opportunity to make our voices heard.

Ken Tulloch was educated at Allegheny College and Drew Seminary, served as UM clergy from 1968-2004, and retired to NYC in 2004. He is married with 2 daughters. He has leafleted and tabled on TPID issues, petitioned on Indian Point and for candidates, worked for the Stender campaign in NJ, served on Democratic County Committee (2005), recruited people for CB7 meetings on zoning change actions, and served 4 years on the TPID Board. He teaches ESL classes and is Chair of NYC CROP Hunger Walk.

Lauren Williams – Corresponding Secretary has served on the Board as Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary. She has coordinated the Holiday Party, volunteered during the 2004 and

2008 campaigns, tabled and petitioned for Club issues, and registered voters. She also worked on Cynthia Doty's 2005 campaign and on the Harrison and Hall campaigns for Congress.

Jane Wisdom. I am running for this position because I know how to get along with everyone as President of Douglass Houses for 3 terms. I can be of assistance to all. I will represent the Board with pride and help better our community to be the best.

Judy Wood – First Vice-President has been an active member of Three Parks for many years and is a former District Leader of the Club. She edited the Club newsletter for three years, which was very exciting. She supervised phone banks at the Obama storefront and traveled to PA with Three Parks members. She has also worked on numerous political campaigns and done tabling on issues.

The Hydraulic Fracturing Front

By Merle McEldowney

The most important piece of concrete news is that Governor Cuomo has appointed Joe Marens as commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. Last July, Marens said the state should wait for a two-year federal study to finish before it allows hydraulic fracturing to proceed.

What happens in neighboring states can have a serious effect on our water quality. The rivers in the Delaware River Basin supply water to over 15 million people. New York City gets roughly half its water from reservoirs located on tributaries of the Delaware. Responsibility for managing these waters goes to the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). There are five members of the commission: the governors of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the North East commander of the Army Corps of Engineers.

On December 9, the commission released regulations for drilling in the basin. There is a 90-day comment period for that report. Environmentalists think the comment period is too short and that the report will allow extensive gas drilling in the watershed, potentially poisoning the water of both New York City and Philadelphia. The Web site of Delaware River Keeper has a good synopsis of this report at <http://www.delawareriverkeeper.org/act-now/urgent-details.aspx?ld=66>

Hydraulic Fracturing is making news as more and more people are becoming aware of its dangers. Some examples follow.

Gasland, the movie about gas drilling, has been nominated for an Academy Award. The film clearly demonstrates the dangers of hydraulic fracturing.

Philadelphia City Council voted unanimously to approve a resolution opposing Marcellus Shale natural-gas development in the Delaware River basin until further environmental studies can be conducted. Though the measure is symbolic, it sends a message that the city is officially worried about the environmental effect of gas drilling in the Delaware River watershed

And on the west coast, the Beverly Hills City Council unanimously approved an interim ordinance banning oil and gas drilling.

Even across the pond, Member of Parliament from the Labour party Mr. Irranca-Davies wrote the following to energy minister Charles Hendry and energy secretary Chris Huhne, urging them to put a temporary halt on extraction of shale gas and coal-bed methane:

"This form of energy production is new to the UK, and may well have potential for our future energy security and affordability.

"But ministers cannot turn a blind eye and sacrifice our natural environment, or compromise on our climate change targets.

"If we are to avoid the environmental problems caused by some operators in other countries, the

government must assure itself, the public, and industry that the right regulatory framework and environmental safeguards are in place.

STEVE MAX HONORED

Congratulations to Club member Steve Max. He was honored in December at the Midwest Academy Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C. where he received the Lifetime Achievement Award. Steve has trained countless numbers of activists and organizers who are changing the world for the better since the Academy was founded in 1973. As Bill Shiebler, SEIU Organizer, said "...Steve inspires us all not to only dream of a better world, but to go out and organize to make it a reality."

Condolences

Three Parks Independent Democrats extends condolences to Joyce Johnson on the death of her mother Dorothy Bradford Stanley and to Alan Flacks on the loss of his mother Ruth Flacks.

Three Parks also is saddened to learn of the passing of David Kogelman's father. In his memory, contributions can be made to Hospice and Palliative Care of Westchester, 311 North Street, Suite 204, White Plains, NY 10605.

Voters Eligible Feb. 9 2011

Baldwin, William
Baldwin, Emily
Beason, Catherine
Beels, Margret
Benmosche, Shoshannah
Botfeld, Bob
Canter, Theresa
Cohen, Dan
Dannett, Wendy
Doty, Cynthia
Flax, Ellen
Gerard, Daniele
Gilbert, Louisa

Katz, Michael
Kellner, Elizabeth Krob
Kimmich, Erlend
Lee, Barbara
Malcolm, Betsy
Markens, Bruce
Marks, Mary Ann
Max, Stephen
Max, Lynn Bender
Morgan, Brenda
Owens, Iretta
Pepper, Joshua
Pettay, Corine
Puccetti-Hepner, Florence

Samelson, Suzanne
Schreiber, Doris
Stearns, Michael
Stearns, Roschel Holland
Thomas, Deborah
Tulloch, Ken
Vargas, Ruben
Voorhis, George
Vulliemoz, Yvonne
Williams, Lauren A.
Wood, Judy
Zucker, Marlene
Zucker, Tamar
Zucker-Brull, Ariel

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Voters Eligible If Paid – Feb. 9 2011

Adler, Cyrus
Andrew, Ralph
Andrews, Susan
Bailey, Mollie
Baldwin, Susan J.
Bardin, Robert
Benowitz, Marcia
Bondell, Joan
Camacho, David
Caputo, Isabella
Davenport, John
De Seta, Maxine
Draynel, Renna
Evangelist, Bernadette
Flacks, Alan
Gallagher, Ernestine
Garcia, Martina
Geissman, Mary J.
Ginsberg, Simon
Gomez, Elizabeth
Haridopolos, Adam

Harvilchuck, Janet
Jacobs, Laura Sally
Josephs, Micky
Kaplan, David C.
Koenig, Jerry
Laufer, Kenneth
Lavin, Marguerite
Lazarus, David
Leinwall, Gail
Levinson, Joan
Lunn, Marie
McEldowney, Merle
McGuinness, George
Medwedew, Alex
Mehler, Ernest
Mehler, Dorothy
Mehlman, Arlene
Meister, Minda
Meyers, Gail
Miller, Batya
Morand, Martin
Newell, John
Ogden, Joan

Ostrofsky, Diane
Phillips, Geraldine
Podrasky, Rose
Prochazka, Lisa Anne
Reisner, Carol
Riley, Nathan
Rubin, Jonathan
Samuels, K.
Samurovich, Christine
Samurovich, Milivoy
Sarver, Eugene
Scalise, Carl Joseph
Schwartz, Ray
Segal, Judy
Shrier, Irene
Solomon, Judith
Speiser, Mildred
Taylor, Clara
Tegnazian, Stephanie
Thomas, Lynn
Thompson, Jane
Williams, Rosetta
Zeche, Gloria

Eligibility Rules

To be eligible to vote in a Three Parks election a member must have paid dues for 2011 and have attended at least one meeting in the previous six months.

Members on the Eligible if Paid list were in good standing in 2010 and meet attendance requirements. They may pay at the door and receive a ballot. All others will be considered new members and are not eligible to vote in this election.

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NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9th

**THE STATE OF OUR STATE
AND PROGRESSIVE ISSUES**

TPID BOARD ELECTIONS; CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE