



## THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

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**State Committee**  
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Daniel Marks Cohen

### Club Meeting, February 13, 2019, 8:00 pm

The Youth Hostel, 891 Amsterdam Ave, at 103 Street, Ballroom

## Cash Bail & Criminal Justice Reform

### Speakers:

**Brian Benjamin, State Senator, 30th District**

**Dan Quart, NYS Assemblyman, 73rd District**

**Endorsements for Judicial Delegates, District Leaders & Civil Court Judges**

**Election of 2019 Three Parks Board of Directors**

### Agenda

7:30 pm Sign In

8:00 pm Call to Order

Election of Three Parks Board\*

Endorsements for Judicial Delegates, District  
Leaders & Civil Court Judges\*

Speakers: Brian Benjamin & Dan Quart

Q & A

Adjourn

\*Ballot Box for Board Election & Endorsements  
will be open from 8:30 to 9:30 pm

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Wednesday, Feb. 27**

**7:00** Three Parks Board Meeting  
**7:30–9:00** Petitions & Pizza Party\*

**Wednesday, March 13, 8:00 pm**

Three Parks Club Meeting

**Wednesday, March 27, 8:00 pm**

Three Parks Board Meeting

**Wednesday, April 10, 8:00 pm**

Three Parks Club Meeting

**Wednesday, April 24, 8:00 pm**

Three Parks Board Meeting

\*Club Members: Come pick up your petitions &  
have a slice of pizza!

## **President's Report**

By Merle McEldowney

My term as president of Three Parks Independent Democrats comes to an end this month, and this will be my last President's Report. So I want to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues and fellow club members for their friendship and support, and to offer my best wishes for the coming year.

But first, a few words about the Three Park's busy schedule now that the new political year is getting underway. The special election for Public Advocate—to fill the vacancy created when Tish James was elected State Attorney General—is now right around the corner, on February 26. With time so short, the club did not make an endorsement, but we still wanted to provide our members and other neighbors with information about the crowded field of impressive candidates. So on January 9 we held a Public Advocate candidates' forum. Not every candidate showed up, but those who did had the opportunity to offer their views on issues such as criminal justice, environmental regulations, and more. Public Advocate is officially a non-partisan position, but clearly, it is essential to elect a Democrat.

Next, because the Democratic primary date has now been moved forward to June 25, it is time to gear up for the next round of elections. The positions at stake include judicial delegates, civil court judges, and district leaders. At our next club meeting on February 13, candidates for these positions will speak, and we will have an endorsement vote. Club members will then be encouraged to help with petitioning for our endorsed candidates. The June 25 primary ballot will also once again include Public Advocate, because the current term for that office expires at the end of the year. Three Parks expects to endorse a candidate for that office at its March 13 meeting.

Also at that meeting, we have convoked a panel of experts to discuss an issue of prime importance to club members and indeed all residents of our city: reform of the criminal justice system. Don't miss what promises to be an informative and stimulating forum!

And now, as promised, it is time for me to say farewell as president, and to thank everyone who has been so helpful and supportive these past two years. I do not have the space here to thank everyone, but I certainly want to express my gratitude to my fellow board members, both those who are currently serving and those who will join the Three Parks Board in this coming year. I especially want to thank Lorraine Zamora who, as head of the Three Parks newsletter team and chair of the annual fundraiser committee, has been so helpful to me throughout my

time in office. I also want to say how much I appreciate everyone who worked so hard on our victorious political campaigns this past year, everyone who came to our meetings to discuss the issues that our members care so passionately about, and everyone who put in long hours to make our public events so entertaining and successful.

Again, I don't have the space to thank everyone here—you know how grateful I am to all of you—but one thing I can do is take a moment to thank some behind-the-scenes people who don't usually get public appreciation: our gifted photographer Barbara Lee, Alex Medwedew and Bruce Markens who help so much with our annual holiday parties, and of course, the talented group who, month in and month out, make this newsletter happen: Jock Davenport, Corinne Constantine, Mary Ann Marks, Theresa Canter, and especially our expert layout and production manager Richard Luna.

At the Club meeting on February 13, you will have the opportunity to meet and elect your new club president and board members for the coming year. I wish them success and the best of luck. If they have the same level of friendship and support that I enjoyed, we're sure to have a great 2019!

## **District Leader Report**

By Bob Botfeld

Last week Governor Cuomo signed an election law bill that changed the Democratic primary date from the usual second Tuesday in September to the last Tuesday in June.

This year the Democratic primary will be held on June 25. Petitioning for candidates for judicial delegate and other party offices will begin on February 26. Due to the abbreviated period before the primary, the club will hold an endorsement election for district leader and judicial delegates at the February 13 meeting.

## **County Committee Members Needed**

Because of the large turnout in the Three Parks' part of the 69th Assembly District in the November midterm election, our neighborhood has been allocated additional county committee seats. If you would like to be on the county committee please contact Cynthia or me before February 15. (Bob Botfeld: 212-865-1450 or email: [bobbotfeld@aol.com](mailto:bobbotfeld@aol.com); Cynthia Doty: 212-749-4085 or email: [cldoty@aol.com](mailto:cldoty@aol.com))

## **What is the NY Democratic County Committee?**

In our neighborhood, one or two blocks comprise an Election District. Each district is represented by two, three or four Democratic County Committee members, and as a member of the County Committee you become part of the governing body of the Democratic Party in

Manhattan. The requirements are simple—reside in the 69th Assembly District, collect between 15-30 signatures on the club petitions, and attend one or two organizational meetings during your two-year term.

### **Why is the County Committee important?**

It is the County Committee that nominates the Democratic replacement for any city, state or congressional office when the nominated candidate is unable to or chooses not to run in the general election. Selection of our state legislators by the County Committee is surprisingly common. Almost one-third of New York State's Senators and Assembly members are first elected by the County Committee. In recent years, the Three Parks' area was in the middle of several elections decided by the County Committee. In 1992, Congressman Ted Weiss died a few days before the Democratic primary. The County Committee members representing Three Parks and other West Side clubs convened a nominating assembly to replace Weiss. In a close election, then Assemblymember Jerrold Nadler was selected to be the Democratic nominee for Congress. A few days later, in a dramatic convention, the 67th Assembly District County Committee members chose Scott Stringer as the Democratic nominee to replace Nadler in the New York State Assembly by the ultimate small margin of a single County Committee member's vote.

More recently, in 2017, in a hotly contested County Committee meeting, Brian Benjamin was chosen by the County Committee members as the Democratic nominee to replace Bill Perkins in the 30th State Senate District. And last fall, the County Committee met in a special meeting to substantially modify the constitution of the New York County Democratic Party, further empowering the County Committee in its ability to determine the Democratic nominee when the election district spans more than one county.

### **Petitioning Begins Early this Year**

Petitioning for the County Committee and all offices begins Tuesday, February 26. Petitioning is our opportunity to meet our neighbors, talk about local issues and politics, get some fresh air while we're standing on our local corner, join other club members at the weekend tables and knock on our neighbors' doors. Petitioning on behalf of our candidates is critical. If candidates do not get the requisite signatures, they won't be on the ballot. If they're not on the ballot, they cannot be elected—even if they are the incumbents. If you have not petitioned in the past, please take the opportunity to join in this very important activity and learn what your neighbors think about local and national politics. Distribution of the

petitions will begin at a special club meeting and pizza party on Wednesday, 2February 27.

My excellent co-leader Cynthia Doty and I are both up for re-election this year. I have enjoyed working on our successful efforts on behalf local, state, and national issues and candidates as district leader and ask for your support for the opportunity to continue for the next two years.

### **Judicial Delegate Candidates Needed**

By Bob Botfeld

Because of the large turnout at the November election, the club has been assigned a large number of judicial delegates and alternates for 2019—more than double the previous years.

We will be endorsing six judicial delegates and six judicial alternates at the February 13 meeting. If you are interested in being a judicial delegate, consider running this year. If you would like more information, call the district leaders: Bob Botfeld at 212-865-1450 or Cynthia Doty at 212-749-4085

If you want to run for judicial delegate, please email [bobbotfeld@aol.com](mailto:bobbotfeld@aol.com) before February 10 so that your name will be printed on the prepared ballot used at the February meeting. Nominations will also be taken at the February meeting and write-ins are permitted.

### **What is the role of the Judicial Delegate?**

Judicial Delegates select the Democratic nominee for open New York County Supreme Court judgeships. Delegates must be available to attend the Judicial Nominating Convention, which will be held one evening during the week of Aug 8-14, although unlikely to be on a Friday evening or Saturday. At the convention the delegates will cast votes, by Assembly District, to determine which judicial candidates will appear as the party's nominees on the general election ballot in November. Delegates are also expected to meet the Judicial candidates prior to the Convention. There will be Supreme Court Judicial Forums and receptions held by the candidates where delegates can meet the Judges running for NYS Supreme Court.

All candidates for Judicial Delegate must be current in their dues for 2019! Dues may be paid through PayPal on our website [ThreeParksDems.org](http://ThreeParksDems.org), paid at the meeting on Feb 13, or mailed to our PO box.

The following club members have submitted information about their candidacy. If you would like to be a candidate, send an email to Bob at [bobbotfeld@aol.com](mailto:bobbotfeld@aol.com) in order to have your name preprinted on the ballot to be used at the February 13 club meeting.

## Judicial Delegates

**Alan Flacks**—is an experienced delegate to the Judicial Nominating Convention, having served many times. He is conversant with the procedures (delegates seek his guidance) and is committed to the merit screening panel process (which he helped establish). After each convention, Alan writes a report of the proceedings for club members and other interested people. A long-time TPID member and Democratic County Committee member, Alan also has served as the club's corresponding secretary. Community and civic activities include his block association, the 24th Pct. Community Council, the NAACP, and St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Community Advisory Board.

**Elizabeth Kellner**—is a retired attorney, living in Manhattan Valley for 42 years. A member of TPID for 40

years, she has served as a Judicial Delegate or Alternate several times, as well as club President and board member. As an attorney, her work involved litigation, i.e., disputes in court. Since retiring, in addition to various Democratic campaigns, Elizabeth has served on the board of a major network of community health care clinics, a public interest foundation affiliated with Columbia Law School (her alma mater), and a child advocacy policy not-for-profit. Her husband maintains an active practice in the New York courts where she regularly follows developments. Her two adult children teach in New York City.

**Bruce Markens**—served eight years on the TPID Board, including one as recording secretary, and was co-chair of its Education Committee for several years. He has served as a Judicial Delegate or Alternate on seven different occasions. Bruce is committed to using his independent

## Women's March 2019

By Irene Shrier

On the morning of January 19, Three Parks members and friends gathered at the 96 Street and Broadway subway station, ready to march once again. We took the subway to 79 Street and walked over to Central Park West where large groups of marchers had begun to assemble. Walking down CPW, past the Trump Hotel, and on our way to 44 Street, we saw the usual homemade anti-Trump signs, heard the chants of "Down with Trump," and welcomed the street musicians who helped urge us on. The crowd may not have been as large as in past years, but they were solidly united in their exuberance and desire for Change!



judgment to nominate judges who are highly qualified and understand the different perspectives of New York City's diverse community.

**Alfred Placeres**—was a TPID Judicial Delegate in 1982 and 1983, and an Alternate in 2017 and 2018. Past experience includes: staff attorney at Harlem Legal Services and Neighborhood Law Office at 104 Street/Broadway; member—Community Board 7, Mayor's Small Business Advisory Committee for Koch, Dinkins and Bloomberg, Bloomberg's Transition Team, and Paterson's NYS Small Business Task Force. Recipient of NYC Mayor's 2010 Small Business Advocacy Award, Comptroller John Liu's 2010 Community Service Award, and Comptroller Carl McCall's 1994 Civic Service Award. Al was MNN producer, with his wife and son, of "The Lion of Lenox Avenue," a biopic on the life of Congressman Charles Rangel.

**Stephanie Tegnazian**—has been a TPID member for over 25 years and involved in the judiciary selection process since Lloyd McAulay began the interview forums. She has visited Housing Court, Court of Claims, Family Court, Civil Court, Supreme Court and Appellate Court to better understand how judges do their jobs. Stephanie has worked on campaigns for Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Robert Jackson, and Congresspersons Max Rose (Staten Island) and Jess King (PA). Last year she became involved with NY VOTES, a statewide grassroots advocacy group dedicated to guiding lawmakers in Albany on what needs to be changed in our NYS voting laws. She feels highly qualified to be a judicial representative and represent TPID in this highly important process.

## **Almost a Century in the Making: Democrats Take Control the State Legislature**

By Daniel Marks Cohen

There has been a lot of (justifiable) excitement about the recent defeat of the so-called Independent Democratic Conference (the "IDC") and the election of 39 Democrats to the 23 Republicans in the State Senate (Senator Simcha Felder, nominally a Democrat who frequently votes with the GOP, is isolated as a party of one, for the time being). This is not the first time that the Democrats have had control of the State Senate. As recently as 2009, the split was between 32 Democrats to 30 Republicans, but that was under the tumultuous leadership of Malcolm Smith, followed by John Sampson, and it was very brief—the GOP recaptured control through the IDC the following cycle—and both men are now in prison for corruption.

If you look further back in time, the Democrats controlled the Senate in 1965, but again only for a year. In fact, you

have to look much further back in history, to the year 1938, when Democrats controlled the Senate for a significant period—5 years, but then lost it for another 25 years. Then, as now, it was not just about absolute control—it is about the margin of control, and Democrats have not had the kind of margin we have now in over 80 years. Previously the legislature could just add another seat. (This has happened several times. When the GOP was at risk of losing its majority, it just added another seat to the State Senate—we were 51 total State Senate seats in 1938, we are 63 seats now.) On other occasions, a few senators could be persuaded to switch parties, or switch alliances to support Republicans (the IDC being the most recent version of this, but it was not the first time in New York State history). With 16 senators between the Democrats and the GOP, shenanigans like adding another seat to the State Senate would have no impact, and it would require a massive defection to give the Republicans control again, which seems highly unlikely.

Why is this important? Often when we look at legislatures, the energy and attention is directed towards the US Congress. This is not inappropriate. If the Democrats are going to push back against the White House they need to control at least one legislative house to give the Democrats some leverage against Trump. Taking back the House of Representatives gave the Democrats some real muscle on Capitol Hill. More often, the local and state legislatures here in New York have the greatest immediate impact on the daily lives of New Yorkers. The Reproductive Health Act, voting reform, LGBTQ rights, tenant protections and congestion pricing are just a small list of the large number of priorities of this newly empowered state legislature. Legislation lay waiting for a Democratic majority to emerge to enact them into law. The Albany Times Union referred to this new situation as the "Californication of New York" politics, where the West Coast was the "left coast" on issues that mattered to progressives. Now with a Democratic-controlled legislature, New York State has a chance to be the true left coast of politics.

By electing just eight new senators, a handful of Democrats from a few key districts was enough to give us the majority. This was not easy, let me not undersell it—but in addition to the victories being an expression of rage against the Trump-supporting GOP in November, it was also a reflection of changes in demographic trends—particularly in the once-red counties of Long Island. In 2016, Republicans controlled seven of the nine State Senate districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties. But after the "blue wave" of 2018, it was the Democrats that had the majority. Half of the majority in the State Senate comes from these wins in districts formerly held by Republican

senators. Plus these wins were in a non-Presidential election year.

Past voting patterns suggest that in 2020 Democrats cannot only hold their majority but may also add a few more seats to the blue team. In particular, the close elections in the 41st district—Dutchess County (1% margin), the 50th—Cayuga County (2% margin), the 4th—Suffolk County (4% margin), the 55th—Monroe County (4% margin), and the 43rd—Columbia County (6% margin), where the Democratic candidate fell just a bit short. There were also several other seats where Republicans ran unopposed. With the ascendant Democrats now in the majority in the State Senate, no seat will go uncontested in 2020.

Adding this all together—the diminishment of Long Island as a Republican stronghold, the Democrats holding a firm majority, and the possibility of an even larger blue wave next year—the potential exists for increasing the total number of Democrats in the State Senate. This increases the probability that we hold the majority beyond our brief periods in power in the State’s history. It completes the progression of power in New York State from purple to firmly blue, and essentially extinguishes the Republicans from power in legislatures in New York and New England, and with the exception of Pennsylvania, also the entire Northeast region of the United States. We have a chance now to make real change to positively impact people’s lives. This year and the years to come will be about pushing for a progressive agenda. We should celebrate our victory in New York State, but it is now that the work truly begins.

## **U.S. Poised for Regime Change in Venezuela**

By Wendy Dannett

Our government seems to be advocating a coup and regime change in Venezuela. Trump is backing a right-wing assemblyman in Venezuela named Juan Guaido as president (who did not even run in the last election) rather than the actual Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro. Maduro, he feels, has behaved like a dictator. Trump, therefore, has heightened economic sanctions on the country and wants to take over the Venezuelan oil company.

“No one can deny Venezuela’s problems,” Oscar Guardiola-Rivera states in the Guardian. And the responsibility for shortages of food and medicine lies with the Maduro government, he feels. There is a lot to criticize president Maduro for, states Joe Emersberger of MintPress. There have been late or misguided economic measures, corruption, and power-hoarding. Others have said there wasn’t diversification away from oil, and it is hard for an economy to over-rely on oil. “But

these criticisms cannot disguise a coup or justify an intervention which, if that comes, will engulf us all,” says Emersberger. And the economic sanctions have drastically reduced the government’s ability to buy food and medicine.

Senator Bernie Sanders has stated that though the Maduro government has waged a violent crackdown on Venezuelan society and has overseen an economy which is a disaster, resulting in millions migrating – nevertheless, “the United States should support the rule of law, fair elections, and self-determination for the Venezuelan people.” We shouldn’t be in the business of regime change or supporting coups, which we have in the past, he states. Our efforts for regime change in Iraq, Libya, Chile, Nicaragua, and Guatemala have been disastrous, with thousands being killed.

The United States, says Congress member Ro Khanna, is economically sanctioning Venezuela for its lack of democracy, but not Saudi Arabia, and feels this is hypocritical. Congress member Tulsi Gabbard tweeted “Let the Venezuelan people determine their future.” Finally, Medea Benjamin of Code Pink stated the United States is helping to set the stage for a civil war in Venezuela. Besides imposing drastic sanctions, supporting a man for President who didn’t even run, the U.S. is trying to divide the military, thereby setting the stage for tremendous violence.

“The competence of a government is also a totally separate issue from its democratic legitimacy, but the two are often conflated in Venezuela’s case,” states Emersberger. He cites figures which legitimize Maduro’s victory. But, he goes on to say, democratic legitimacy provides little defense for a government when the United States and its allies decide it must go.

Perhaps with better policies, Maduro could have prevented the U.S. intervening. But now Trump appears to have put a stranglehold on the Venezuelan economy. Medea Benjamin concludes that it is important to stand up, not to say we love Maduro, but to say we are against U.S. intervention.

<b>Voters Eligible for Feb. 13, 2019</b>		Elizabeth Krob	Kellner	Ariel	Zucker-Brull	Minda	Meister
<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	David	Lazarus	<b>Voters Eligible if Paid for Feb 13, 2019</b>		Derrick	Mullins
		Hannah	Leider	<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	John	Newell
Eva-Lee	Baird	Marie	Lunn	William	Baldwin	Joan	Ogden
Margaret	Beels	Susan	Maderer	Emily	Baldwin	Kim	Parker
Clemens Christian	Beels	Betsy	Malcolm	Susan J.	Baldwin	Mary	Pasley
Bob	Botfeld	Mary Ann	Marks	Paul	Bifani	Hank	Perlin
Janice	Bynum	Lynn Bender	Max	Vincent	Brancato	Ilene	Pfeiffer
Theresa	Canter	Stephen	Max	Raven	Brown	Elliot	Podwill
Young Me	Chung	Arlene	Mehlman	David	Camacho	Carol	Reisner
Daniel Marks	Cohen	Judy	Pierre	Wendy	Dannett	Doris	Schreiber
Corinne	Constantine	Alfred	Placeres	Wendy	Diller	Gerald	Schultz
Kitty	Crowley	Nathan	Riley	Timothy	Eckersley	Michelle	Semler
Mimi	Daitz	Jonathan	Rubin	Keith	Edwards	Barry N.	Sher
John	Davenport	Lois	Safian	Mary J.	Geissman	Deborah	Socular
Maxine	DeSeta	Katherine	Samuels	Robert	Ginsberg	Mildred	Speiser
Cynthia	Doty	Carl Joseph	Scalise	Judy	Gray	Barbara	Stark
Jeffrey	Felmus	Ray	Schwartz	Janet	Harvilchuck	Roschel Holland	Stearns
Gerry Ann	Fifer	Irene	Shrier	Judy	Hummel	Michael	Stearns
Alan	Flacks	Vera	Silverman	Audrey	Isaacs	Lynn	Thomas
Ellen	Flax	Allan	Spitz	Andrea	Kishner	Jane	Thompson
Daniele	Gerard	Deborah	Thomas	Warren	Kishner	Ken	Tulloch
Pilar	Gomez	Daniel	Tsadok	Penelope	Laitin	Arlene	Tyrkko
Jessica	Haberstock	Charles	Wall	Kenneth	Laufer	Ruben D.	Vargas
Prince	Haigood	Tim	Walsh	Sam	Lazarus	Helene	Victor
Elaine	Hazzard	Lauren A.	Williams	Gail	Leinwall	Kitty	Williston
David	Heitholt	Judy	Wood	Bruce	Markens	Matthew	Woodruff
Jacqueline	Huey	Anthony	Zak	Merle	McEldowney	Gloria	Zeche
Emma	Jenkins	Lorraine	Zamora	Alex	Medwedew		
Russell	Jenkins	Tamar	Zucker				
David C.	Kaplan						

### **\*Voting Eligibility Clause**

In order to vote in TPID club elections, a member must have paid dues for 2019 and attended at least one meeting in the past six months. Members who were paid up for 2018 and who meet the attendance requirement may become eligible to vote upon payment of 2019 dues. New memberships become effective 30 days after dues are paid. To be eligible to vote, new members must attend at least one meeting after the 30-day period and within six months prior to the election. Memberships that have lapsed due to nonpayment of annual dues are considered new. Reminder: Members may not vote at Three Parks if they also vote at other Democratic clubs.

## **Petitions & Pizza Party**

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**7:30 to 9:00 pm**

**The Youth Hostel**

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**Club members: Come pick up your petitions, and have a slice of pizza!**

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**Endorsements for Judicial Delegates, District Leaders  
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**Election of Three Parks Board of Directors**