
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Gretchen Borges ◆

Statewide Offices Endorsement Meeting



Governor



Attorney General



State Comptroller



State Senate: 30th and 31st Senate Districts



State Assemblyman, 69th AD



***Democratic State Committee: Man and Woman
69th AD***



Civil Court, Countywide - 1 Vacancy



Convention Delegates (5) and Alternates (4)

Thursday, May 8th

7:45 p.m. Sign in

Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp!

Bank Street College

610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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Volume 39, Issue 24

May 2014

District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

BAD MONEY

The latest 5-4 Supreme Court ruling gutting campaign spending limits is another in a long line of reverses for democracy. But this is not going to be another column denouncing the Koch Brothers and their ilk, evil as they are. Our side, or at least people whom we have supported, are also being influenced by this ever-increasing flow of bad money:

New York's Awful, Wasteful Election Calendar

Once again Broadway Democrats will be voting on a "successor" to State Senator Adriano Espaillat, who is once again challenging Congressman Charles Rangel. Once again, if Espaillat loses, he will then seek re-election to the State Senate, and most of the candidates who will come before us on May 8 will disappear, or, if they remain on the ballot, will get clobbered. Much as I hope that Charlie Rangel is again victorious, we cannot blame Senator Espaillat for this ridiculous scenario. Blame instead the State Senate Republicans and their enablers, Governor Cuomo and the "Independent" Democratic Caucus, who would rather that NY State blow \$50 million holding two different primaries, one in June, one in September, then have all contests be decided in one June primary. (Federal courts have ordered that the Congressional primaries be held in June, because a September primary doesn't give the Board of Elections time to get absentee ballots to military personnel; while I believe that this disenfranchises more people than it enfranchises, it is the law which must be obeyed.) Millions of dollars are spent each year trying to keep the Senate Republicans in power; they thwart every bill that benefits NYC and poor and working families; in the rare instances when something good passes the Legislature it is with a handful of Republican votes. The Governor then praises these "brave" Republicans while ignoring the contributions of progressive Democrats who were the reason for the victory, and the continued opposition of the majority of Republicans who fought the legislation all along.

Charter Schools

This year alone, millions of dollars was spent by "Families for Excellent Schools", a group funded almost entirely by politically-connected Wall St. types, to trash Mayor DeBlasio and misrepresent his position on Charter Schools. All DeBlasio was trying to say/do, in his campaign and in his Mayoralty was to redress the imbalance whereby Charter Schools, which make up less than 10% of the students in NYC schools, receive unfair advantages in funding and school placement. It was very depressing to see Governor Cuomo choose to address a rally funded by wealthy donors supporting the Charter School minority rather than one with no wealthy backers, supporting Pre-K for everyone.

Central Park Carriage Horses

Horses pulling carriages is *not* inhumane; they have been doing this for hundreds of years. It is a disservice to the real fights for animal rights-- the cruel puppy mills, the horrific slaughter of animals on land and sea, the often-needless experiments and the discarding of animals once the experiments are concluded—to lump carriage horses doing what horses do with these atrocities. Millions of dollars was spent by NYCLASS to influence the outcome of this controversy. Positions were changed due to money, those who dared to oppose, such as then-Speaker Christine Quinn, were unfairly attacked. There is a legitimate question of how to get the horses from the outside stables into Central Park. This issue must be resolved with reasoned discussion, not with threats, and influxes of money into the campaign coffers of those who will make the decision.

☞

PROPOSED CHANGE IN DUES

At its April 22 meeting, the Steering Committee voted to recommend a change in the club's dues structure.

Currently, dues are \$5 for seniors and \$20 for all others. The Steering Committee proposes dues of \$10 for seniors, students, and those with limited incomes, and \$25 for all others, to take effect on July 1. It is the hope of the Steering Committee that its proposed changes will put the club on a more solid financial footing, while also encouraging more students and those with limited incomes to join.

A vote on this proposal will be taken at the Membership Meeting on May 8.

President's Corner

Gretchen Borges

STATES RIGHTS

Cliven Bundy

At several key points in the American past, the relationship between state and federal power has been debated, even clarified, but never settled. In April, thanks to the Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, we were reminded once again of the existence of a minority, albeit a loud and sometimes armed minority of the US population who are unwilling to accept even the existence of the federal government. As Bundy memorably told radio reporter Dana Loesch, "I believe this is a sovereign state of Nevada. And I abide by all Nevada state laws. But I don't recognize the United States government as even existing." Of course, the inanity of the statement was later superseded by his extraordinary series of unapologetic racist remarks. But the ramifications of the ongoing jostling between states and the federal government in their dispute over the division of power bears further examination.

Federalism as a system of government

The United States is by no means the only federal country in the world. Currently, about 25 countries (in which 40 percent of the world's population reside) use a system of government consisting of individual entities (such as our states) existing concurrently with a central government, which remains distinct from the individual governments of the separate entities. By noting that this list of 25 includes Canada, Switzerland, and Australia, in addition to Iraq, the Sudan, and Russia, one realizes that the concept of federalism is a broad one which can be carried out in a variety of fashions, some more successful than others.

Constitutional Allocations of Powers

In the United States, the allocation of power to the federal government is enunciated in the Constitution, specifically in Article 6, which says in part,

This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

Some specific powers are spelled out for Congress in Section 8 of Article 1, limits to Congress's power are listed in Section 9, and powers prohibited of the states are listed in section 10. And a further clarification (or maybe obfuscation) is in Amendment 10, ratified in 1791: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Since the complexity of life in the twenty first century could not have been imagined, even by the fertile minds of the founding fathers, the Constitution does not address any but the broadest of issues. Consequently, the ongoing discussion of the division of power is primarily informed by interpretations of the Constitution.

States Rights

The very phrase has a raft of unfortunate connotations, bringing to mind slavery, secession, the Civil War, entrenched racism. We are living in interesting times, however, and now states rights are no longer the sole province of the right. Medical marijuana is now legal in 21 states and the District of Columbia. And recreational marijuana is now legal in Colorado and Washington, in contravention of federal law. The gap between state and federal law has limited this lucrative business to cash only status, as cautious bankers are not willing to bridge that divide.

Nullification, which holds that states can determine the constitutionality of laws within their borders, has been used far more frequently by the right. For example, some 23 states have sought to nullify the Affordable Care Act. And a few weeks ago, the Missouri State legislature voted to support bills which would nullify federal gun laws, (an action that would allow a citizen of Missouri to sue federal agents for enforcing federal gun laws), prompting protests from the mayors of both Kansas City and Saint Louis, concerned that their battle against gun crimes would be curtailed. Missouri is not all red, however, and just last year, Governor Jay Dixon, a Democrat, vetoed a similar bill.

Single Party Control

Attempts to contravene federal gun laws and other legislation abhorrent to the right will most likely increase as Republicans gain control of an increasing number of states. Currently, the governor's office and both houses are controlled by Republicans in 23 states, with 157 million people. Democrats hold sway over 13 states, with 88 million people. These 36 states under single party

control means that we are now more divided than we have been since 1952. How has this division happened and what does it portend?

How Did It Happen? Campaign Finance

The Supreme Court's recent decisions (see Citizens United, SpeechNow.org, and McCutcheon) in the area of campaign finance have unleashed a torrent of money, changing the political landscape. The 2010 elections saw the Republican Governor's Association spend \$99 million, resulting in 29 Republican governorships, and 25 Republican controlled legislatures.

What Happens Next?

Once a state is in a single party's control, the legislative districts will be gerrymandered as quickly as possible to maximize that party's representation in Congress. Thus the Republicans' tenacious hold on the House. And continued gridlock as long as the Democrats retain the Senate. Seemingly the second step in the playbook has been to change state voting laws with the aim of minimizing Democratic voter participation. The Supreme Court's decision last year to strike down key sections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 led directly to nine states passing legislation impeding key Democratic constituents' ability to vote. Should the number of Democrats voting in 2014 decrease, it is unlikely we will hold the Senate. However, As many have noted, without immigration reform, Republicans are unlikely to win the Executive Branch, meaning no direct opportunities to tilt the Supreme Court.

If we were to imagine a time when states rights are even more in the ascendancy, consider the areas that would suffer, the very ones that are languishing now. Effective legislation addressing climate change, upgrading the infrastructure, increasing the minimum wage, prioritizing education. Without these actions by the federal government, the US will fall further behind. A recent report released by the Social Progress Imperative (Social Progress Index 2014) measured social and environmental indicators, focusing on outcomes. Using their parameters (broadly, basic human needs, foundations of well being, and opportunity), the US falls into 16th place, behind Ireland, but above Belgium. Rather than bickering over which branch of government has the greater power to make decisions, the US would be far better served by a government that addresses the pressing human needs of its population.



Assembly Member's Report

Daniel O'Donnell

As many of you are aware, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine is quickly proceeding with plans to build two massive, luxury apartment buildings on the northern end of its property. These buildings would be immediately adjacent to the Cathedral, separated by only a handful of feet at points, and would have 428 apartments total, only 87 of which are marked for affordable housing. From both my perspective and that of all the constituents I have heard from on this issue, this development is unwelcome. It threatens to tax an already strained infrastructure in the area, and can move forward without the developer needing to complete any Environmental Impact Study or public review process. That this construction is occurring reflects a historical neglect by New York City's government towards the needs of communities above West 96th Street, especially when it comes to zoning, land use, and historic preservation.

To help address this problem, I wrote to Mayor de Blasio on April 23, 2014, explaining the issues and requesting a meeting to discuss them. I believe that a patchwork of poorly designed and enforced New York City regulations – especially in the aforementioned areas – allows this construction to move forward inappropriately. Its designation as “as-of-right” construction means that there are no discretionary approvals needed for the project to proceed and, despite the efforts of my office and many members of our community, we are deprived of the opportunity for public comment.

I will continue to fight to protect our community from overdevelopment and I am optimistic that our mayor will be in favor of the regulatory reform necessary at the city level to make this possible. Please feel free to contact me or my office if you have any questions about this pressing concern.



From the Steering Committee

Rachelle Bradt

Thousands attended Gifting of a Tipi in Washington, DC

On Saturday April 27 I was part of a crowd of thousands that arrived in buses on the Mall in Washington DC to support the Cowboys and

Indians Alliance (CIA). They were camping in tipis in front of the Washington memorial all week. Their purpose? To reject and protect. To reject the Keystone XL(KXL) pipeline and to protect their land and water and the treaty rights to their home lands.

The proposed pipeline is designed to ship the tar sands mined in Alberta Canada to oil refineries and export ports in Louisiana. Sounds like a great business venture? Not to the citizens of Alberta who rejected a similar pipeline to the Canadian Pacific coast. Not to the Athabasca Chipeway who live in the Boreal forests that have been turned into polluted industrial zones and are dying from increasing incidents of cancer.

In 2011 the eminent NASA climate scientist Dr NAME Hansen declared that a massive infrastructure project such as the KXL pipeline would lead to greenhouse gas outputs that would spell "game over for the climate". On April 25 (2014) Representative Barbara Boxer (CA) lent her support to the encampment on the Mall: " I want you to know that your presence sends a strong signal to Congress and the administration about the need to protect our communities and families from the impacts of dirty tar sands oil."

Having left New York City at 6 am, we arrived at the tipi encampment just in time to join the Four Directions song lead by Greg Grey Cloud of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, in which all gathered faced the cardinal directions in the traditional prayer. A Christian prayer was led by the Reverend John Ellwood from the organization Bold Nebraska, who is also a rancher. "This was a different kind of event", said Duncan Meisel from the organization 350.org, " not a rally, not a march, not a protest, but instead a ceremony, meant to make an impression on the President's moral center, and ground us for the critical weeks and months ahead."

The urgency of rejecting the pipeline construction was made clear by the testimonials of Eriel Deranger from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Canada, and Meghan Hammond, a rancher and mother from Nebraska. "We are one" was the motto that united everyone present at the event. The Rosebud Sioux of Dakota recalled the poignant moment of the 2008 presidential primaries in which candidate Obama was given the name of "Man Who Helps the People". This was a gathering of his brothers and sisters to remind him of his promise and to gift him with a painted tipi. The tipi, providing the stage backdrop for the ceremony, was created by the Lakota artist Steve Tamayo as

a communal project completed with the help of the public. The black skies with several planets arch majestically over the large turtle representing the land of America (Turtle Island). Horses of different colors fan out in all directions, representing groups of people.

"Today is only the beginning," the legendary musician Neil Young addressed the gathering. "We need to end the age of fossil fuels and move on to something better." To make this point Meghan Hammond, a sixth-generation Nebraska rancher, worked with her family to build a crowd-funded, clean-energy powered barn on her property, directly on the proposed route of KXL. A procession headed by the official delegation on horseback delivered the tipi to the Smithsonian Institution. Followed by thousands of supporters from across the United States, the tipi was carried open faced like a giant flag around the Mall. Countless tourists and other passers-by took notice.

In a final gathering by the tipi encampment the Alliance of Cowboys and Indians, supporters of all stripes, including the Sierra Club and 350.org, solemnly formed an immense circle and committed to carry the resolve to resist and protect back to our homes. Back in the bus, I sensed the responsibility weighing on us, but also a renewed sense of purpose and solidarity.

This fall the UN General Assembly will be met by the *People's Climate March*, organized by the Reject and Protect coalition. Newcomers are welcome. For further information and pictures of the Tipi Gifting Ceremony go to www.rejectandprotect.org.



Balloting Procedures

To be eligible to vote, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. There will be an open ballot box which will stay open until 9:30 p.m.

Votes may be cast in person or by proxy, limit one proxy per voting member. A proxy must be written. The proxy giver must state the name of the proxy holder (i.e., the name can't be filled in later by the proxy holder). The proxy must be signed or verifiable, as by electronic transmission stating the person's name.

T there will be only one ballot. The winner will be selected by "Instant Runoff Voting", as described in the club constitution; "no endorsement" is still a ballot option.

Membership

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$20; senior dues are \$5.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

The Broadway Democrats
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FIRST
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Gretchen Borges
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Statewide Offices Endorsement Meeting

Thursday, May 8th Sign in 7:45 p.m. Meeting Starts 8:00 p.m.
Bank Street College of Education 610 W. 112th St. (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)