
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Joe Nunley ◆

Annual Town Hall Meeting: Manhattan Valley

Invited Speakers

- 👉 State Senator Adriano Espaillat (31st)
- 👉 State Senator Bill Perkins (30th)
- 👉 Assemblymember Danny O'Donnell (69th)
- 👉 Councilmember Melissa Mark Viverito (8th)
- 👉 Peter Arndtsen, Columbus-Amsterdam BID
 - 👉 Borough President's Office
 - 👉 D.A.'s Office
 - 👉 Department of Sanitation
 - 👉 Police Department (24th)

Thursday, March 8, 2012

7:45 pm sign in/refreshments * 8:00 forum * 9:30 club business

Speakers will make brief presentations, followed by a question and answer session.

During club business, we will elect Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the annual Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Convention.

**Cathedral Parkway Towers
125 West 109th Street
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)**

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Volume 37, Issue 3

March 2012

State Committeeman

Daniel Marks Cohen, 69th AD

So we are in the middle of the redistricting mess. Just before the end of January the New York State Senate Democrats filed a lawsuit challenging the way the majority Senate Republicans had drawn the district maps to create an additional 63rd seat to preserve their one-vote control of the State Senate. I was honored to be the lead plaintiff of the suit, now known as Cohen v. LATFOR (which stands for Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment). You can read the original complaint here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/79969638/LATFOR-Lawsuit>, but in summary, the GOP blatantly and shamelessly uses two different methods of counting voters to get the result they want—that precious extra seat they need. Every 10 years after a national census the states redraw their district lines to reflect demographic changes. NYS has a history of litigation and gerrymandering and unfortunately this year is no different. What IS different is the way the Senate Republicans counted voters this year, which prompted the lawsuit, and the potential deal and/or veto from the Governor, which could fix the problem in the future.

In years past, the GOP majority would count voters using a method with a specific formula, and for simplicity's sake, we will refer to this as Method A. For years—in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, the Republicans used Method A to calculate the number of voters in each district to needed to draw the lines for each Senator. Then, in the last go-round in 2002, the GOP used a new method, called Method B, to draw the lines since Method A would not give them an additional seat. And, *they also specifically disavowed Method A forever*, as an appropriate way of counting voters. But in 2012, when using Method B, they couldn't get to 63 seats, and using the old reliable Method A, could also not get 63 seats. It was only when using BOTH Methods A and B that they could get the 63 seats, even though they had specifically said that Method A was never to be used again, now, when it is convenient, they bring it back. So the lawsuit is challenging the lines, both because the use of

Method A was ruled inappropriate, and to mix and match, using both methods, is unconstitutional.

The lawsuit is in court, along with another lawsuit that is challenging the Federal congressional lines. According to *The New York Times*, New York State has not approved either legislative or Congressional districts, making it among the last state in the country to do so. With the primary for Congressional seats set for June 26th the need to get this done has become critical. According to the *Times*, the congressional lawsuit is now before a federal Magistrate Judge, Roanne L. Mann. Judge Mann has scheduled a public hearing Monday in Brooklyn federal court to receive more information on the proposed Congressional maps. And Cohen v. LATFOR is before Judge Dora Irizarry to address a motion to dismiss the suit. And in the midst of all this is the Governor, who said that he would veto the lines because of the gerrymandering, but has not done so as of yet. Rumors abound of a deal being cut to create a panel that would redraw the lines, but the panel would be beholden to the Legislature, solving nothing. The judge in the case could force the legislature to redraw the lines, or call for experts to do it. While nothing will be resolved in the next few weeks, by the time of the club meeting Cuomo will have tipped his hand, and the lawsuit will be have been dismissed, or, more likely, will lead to a panel of experts to redraw the lines. I will have an update about this, and other matters, at the next club meeting.



From the Steering Committee

Gretchen Borges

WHAT SAY HAVE WE?

The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine recently presented its plans for new residential towers to be constructed on its north lot, running along 113th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Morningside Drive. At the forum held at Synod Hall on February 21st, the cathedral dean James Kowalski laid out the cathedral's financial need for additional income both to maintain the cathedral and other buildings on its close and to continue its

mission. Details of the proposed construction's massing were then presented by Gary Handel, representing Handel Architects and additional statements were given by a representative of the developer and a representative from construction unions. Members of the community then voiced their reactions to the plans.

A number of comments were made about the visual impact of the new construction on the existing cathedral, about the cathedral's need for additional income, about alternative sources of income. I recognize that the Cathedral can build on its property as of right. And the dean and the architect were quick to emphasize that they are not planning on the maximum size permitted. Indeed, current plans are for a 140 foot building, with a massing to occupy 54 percent of the site).

But as a member of the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee, I stated my disapproval of a contemporary structure abutting the cathedral and blocking light from its stained glass windows. As a neighborhood resident, however, I found most striking, the despairing comments on the increased crowding in our neighborhood likely to result from the infusion of people from the development's approximately 400 apartments. People noted that the grocery stores, the sidewalks, the schools are crowded already and asked how can our neighborhood absorb so many new residents. What say have we in our quality of life? In this case, unfortunately, we will have very little.

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From the Steering Committee

Lizabeth Sostre

BOOK REVIEW

So we are in the middle of the redistricting *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education: What's at Stake?* by Michael Fabricant and Michelle Fine. New York: Teachers College Press, 2012.

Before I rave about this book, I must admit, in the interest of full disclosure, that I studied Michelle Fine's books (*Framing Dropouts* in particular) when I was a graduate student at Columbia and also had the privilege of working with her on the task force that helped to create the Frank McCourt High School. Michelle Fine is a scholar and an activist. Now I can start to rave.

I have long been looking for a comprehensive study of charter schools and found nothing of value. Michelle Fine and Michael Fabricant have written the book that I have been waiting for: *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education: What's At Stake?* It is not a book solely for educators and it is not full of educational or political jargon. It is carefully researched and very accessible.

I don't write book reviews. I am making an exception for this book. And I am not going to summarize all the key points in the book either because I want you to read it. The issue of charter schools is a critical one for all of us, especially for anyone who is politically involved.

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NOTE LOCATION OF THIS MEETING:

**Cathedral Parkway
Towers**

125 W 109th Street

**(between Columbus
and Amsterdam)**

**During club business, we will elect
Delegates and Alternate Delegates to
the annual Supreme Court Judicial
Nominating Convention.**

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
P.O. Box 1099
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

FIRST
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
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President: Joe Nunley
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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