
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Noah Kaufman ♦

May General Meeting:

WHOSE CITY IS IT ANYWAY?

How do we know whether we're being listened to
or being ignored?

How can we tell whether we're participating in democracy
or getting the run-around?

**Join us for a forum on making our voices heard
beyond the ballot box**

*in collaboration with the Partnership for Working Families,
which fights for "community-controlled, public infrastructure
that builds community wealth and health
and puts power into the hands of the people"*

Thursday, May 16, 2019

7:45 p.m. registration

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

Bank Street College

610 W. 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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Volume 44, Issue 5

May 2019

Spring Fling 2019

April 28, 2019 at 107 West Restaurant



Senator Schumer and Richard Siegel



Congressman Nadler



Bob Liff and Comptroller Stringer



Borough President Gale Brewer,
D.L.s Paula Diamond Román and Curtis Arluck



Councilmember
Mark Levine



Paula, Curtis, Assemblymember and
Danny O'Donnell and Club President
Noah Kaufman

(more photos below)

President's Column

Noah Kaufman

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the members of the Steering Committee for the hard work they did to make our Spring Fling 2019 event so successful. It's great that the Democrats of the 69th Assembly District can come together to celebrate. It is Spring, and in the spirit of the springtime holidays we rejoice. We find a renewal of strength and purpose.

Thank you to the Fundraising Committee Chairs Susan Crawford and Zoila Marte, and to ever-stalwart Luis Diamond-Román, our Treasurer. Thank you to our District Leaders, Paula Diamond-Román and Curtis Arluck.

Thank you as well to our Benefactors, Patrons, Sponsors and the many guests who joined us. Thank you for your generous contributions to our efforts, and for your ongoing support of a strong progressive Democratic Party. Thank you to the volunteers who put in the effort to make the event happen. And thank you to 107 West restaurant for the outstanding food, beverages, and service.

This year we honored Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President. In her introduction, Paula Diamond-Roman noted Ms. Brewer's exemplary service at the local, City and state level, and her tireless advocacy for women, for small business owners, for non-profit organizations and public services. In accepting the award, Ms. Brewer spoke passionately of her desire to keep the needle moving towards better access to better services for all Manhattanites.

This year's recipient of the Ida and Jesse Frankel Community Service Award was the W. 113th Street PlayGarden, a project of the 113th Street Amsterdam-Broadway Committee (113ABC). The PlayGarden celebrates 50 years as a "vest-pocket park" and neighborhood haven. Member Jeanine Tarasuk, a member of the 113ABC steering committee, accepted the award with appreciation and with thanks to the many friends and neighbors who have kept the oasis clean and green since 1969.

We also presented Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell with our special thanks for his continued service to our community and to the State. I had the enjoyable task of presenting our commendations to the Assemblymember; how nice it is to say in public "thank you" to a neighbor who works every day to make a better community for all.

Celebrating with us were Senator Schumer and Representative Nadler. Their comments, addressing the serious challenges facing our nation, were marked by loud applause and support. The work they, and we, are doing to defend the Constitution and to protect the rule of law is critical. The 243-year old experiment which is the United States of America must not be derailed. The fate of Planet Earth, of all humankind, is jeopardized by our collective actions, and collective lack of action.

State Senators Benjamin and Jackson, City Comptroller Stringer, and City Councilmembers Mark Levine and Brad Lander were in attendance as well. I was glad to see our neighboring District Leaders Cynthia Doty, Bob Botfield, Joan Paylo and Alex Barret among the many attendees. Together, we have much still to do. And on that note, dear readers, let me remind you to join or to renew your membership in the Broadway Democratic Club. And whether you're a member or not, please come to our monthly meetings, held the second Tuesday of each month.

In an additional note, I must reiterate my horror at the Department of Homeland Security policies which abuse and denigrate refugees. The United States of America must not put children in cages, and must not embarrass those seeking safe haven. I will say again, the great Lady Liberty stands in our harbor holding high her lamp. Liberty is not a slogan, it is not a photo op. Justice must be the firmest pillar of good government. We pledge allegiance to the Republic, one nation with Liberty and Justice for all, not *some*.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," wrote Rev. King. "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

The author is an officer and delegate of Local 375 CSTG, AFSCME, a Delegate to District Council 37 AFSCME, and President of the Broadway Democrats.



The Far Horizon

Bob Liff

When I was a reporter, I realized that politics was unlike most other beats. Other beats had stories with beginnings and ends, but politics was basically all middles, with political players already looking to the next election as they fought over this one.

There were certainly signposts along the way – polls, reports on money collected and spent, switching alliances, and of course elections themselves – but there was always a longer horizon than covering cops, a fire or what have you.

As we continue the long slog towards November 2020, we must keep that far horizon in view. And in the face of Trump's unprecedented threats to our Constitutional order, outlined so dramatically by Sen. Schumer and Rep. Nadler at our recent Spring Fling, we had better prepare to support whoever emerges from the presidential nominating scrum already well under way.

My philosophy as a political reporter (cleaning this up slightly) was that when two people called each other idiots, I agreed with both of them so long as they told me. I was only in it for the conflict. I still believe that conflict is healthy, for the Democratic Party as well as for the city, state and country. But just as foreign policy is supposed to stop at the water's edge, intra-Democratic conflict has to be set aside once a nominee is chosen – especially when we face a Republican party that has fully sold what soul it had to the embarrassment from Fifth Avenue.

When we see a significant proportion of self-professed Bernie Sanders supporters, for example, say they would vote for Trump if Sanders does not get the nomination, we have to pause and wonder what sense of privilege is involved in believing that it does not matter if Trump is reelected. At the risk of repeating myself from an earlier column in this space, can anyone argue it did not matter that Bush beat Gore? That Reagan beat Carter? That Nixon beat Humphrey? That Trump beat Clinton?

We Democrats have a well-known propensity for organizing our firing squads in a circle, when we should be firing out instead. There's truth in the old saying that Democrats need to fall in love while Republicans just need to fall in line, but neither we nor the country can afford that luxury this time around.

As Schumer and Nadler grimly pointed out at our fundraiser, Trump's autocratic abandonment of even a baseline respect for our Constitutional order is a threat to our very democracy. As we find our response, the stakes are too high to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

The rebuffing of Congressional oversight, attacking the press as "the enemy of the people," stoking xenophobic and racist tendencies that our system is supposed to keep in check, putting foxes in charge of the henhouses at agencies overseeing

the environment, educational policy, immigration, anti-trust regulations, labor policy and health insurance, not to mention the hard-right ideological appointments to lifetime court seats, all underscore just what is at stake in next year's elections.

Besides, we always have the 2021 mayoral and city elections to fight over. Let's keep our powder dry, and elbows sharp, for that one.

The author is a former White House advance staffer for President Jimmy Carter, and a former reporter and columnist for Newsday and the Daily News. He hosts the CUNY Forum on CUNY-TV, and is SVP at George Arzt Communications, Inc.



District Leader's Report

Curtis Arluck

No June 25 Primary in our Area

The year before the Presidential election is always the off-off year in the NYC political calendar, and 2019 is no exception. The wild card was the race to fill the remaining two years of Tish James's term, but after the 17-candidate special election was easily won by Jumaane Williams, no one filed against him in the June 25 Democratic primary, nor are there any opponents to Civil Court Judge candidates Robert Rosenthal and Ashlee Crawford. Paula Diamond-Román and I filed the excellent total of 2,067 signatures for Democratic District Leader—thanks to everyone for all your hard work! We filed the same number of total signatures for our 35 Election District Democratic County Committee slate; our 69th AD Judicial Convention Delegates and Alternates got more than 5,000 signatures; and no one filed against any of us, so we're unopposed. And since there are no opposed Primary candidates, the polls in our area won't open June 25, saving the city around \$100,000. (In a few districts around town the polls will open only because there are opposed County Committee or Judicial Convention Delegate candidates – what a waste!)

While our work is over for this election cycle, there is still much to be done. We'll be hitting the streets as early as the upcoming weekend to publicize our various political and community efforts. Thank you, and join us!

The author is a tax professional and has been the Democratic Male District Leader for the 69th Assembly District for the past 40 years.



Disclaimer: unless otherwise indicated, items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.



State Committee Report

Daniel Marks Cohen

Another City Charter Revision Commission?

The City Charter is essentially the city's constitution. It is the collection of rules that govern the city, and it is amended from time to time. I know, I know, didn't we JUST vote on some revisions to the city charter last year? We did, in fact, and all three ballot measures passed (increasing the NYC campaign-finance matching ratio from 6:1 to 8:1, creating a (likely pointless) Mayoral Civic Engagement Commission, and imposing 10-year term limits for all Community Boards beginning in 2029).

But that was the MAYOR's charter revision. This year we get to vote on the CITY COUNCIL's take on revising the charter.

There are preliminary hearings in all five boroughs on the proposals from the Charter Revision Commission ("CRC"). The Manhattan hearing is Thursday, May 9, at City Hall starting at 6:00 pm – and lots of changes are proposed. You can read the CRS's full report here: <https://www.charter2019.nyc/>; I've also summarized them briefly below.

Ranked Choice Voting: City elections currently allow a candidate in a large field to win despite getting only a small share of the vote. When a runoff is necessary, elections can be costly (and turnout is often low). To deal with some of these issues, the CRC is recommending implementing Ranked Choice Voting, in which voters rank the candidates by preference order and, as the votes are counted, the candidate who ranks first on the fewest ballots is removed until, after multiple rounds, one candidate has the majority of votes.

Civilian Complaint Review Board: The Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) investigates complaints by the public against NYC police officers. Critics say much reform is needed to make the NYPD and its disciplinary process more accountable to the public. The CRC recommends the following changes: (1) *Appointments:* Empower the City Council to appoint CCRB members directly rather than as designees subject to mayoral approval, and give the Public Advocate the power to appoint or designate one or more members of the CCRB. Currently the Mayor appoints all 13 members of the CCRB, with some members designated or recommended by the Council and the Police Commissioner. (2) *Disciplinary Guidelines:* Require the Police Commissioner to establish disciplinary guidelines that create clear penalties for misconduct. (3) *Police Commissioner Deviation:* If the Police Commissioner does not follow disciplinary recommendations, require the Commissioner to provide a memo to the CCRB and the Deputy Commissioner of Trials (DCT) with a comprehensive explanation. Currently, the Police Commissioner often deviates from the CCRB's and DCT's penalty recommendations. (4) *False Official Statements:* Empower the CCRB to investigate and recommend discipline when there is evidence that an officer has given a false statement during a CCRB investigation. Currently, the CCRB indicates when there is evidence that an officer has made a false statement, but does not investigate or prosecute the case, and the NYPD rarely disciplines the officers. (5) *Subpoena Power:* Delegate subpoena power to high-ranking CCRB staff. Currently, only the board has subpoena power, which can result in inefficient investigations and lost evidence.

Public Advocate: The Public Advocate (PA) is charged with being a watchdog and a check on the Mayor, but the office has no real mechanism for doing so. The CRC recommends the establishment of a method for the PA to require officials and agencies to answer questions posed by the PA. This may be in the form of subpoena power or another legal mechanism. In addition, a guaranteed budget may protect the PA from punitive cuts.

Borough Presidents: Borough Presidents are responsible for coordinating agency services in their respective boroughs. Presently, Borough Presidents do not have the power to require

information from agencies. The CRC recommends requiring agencies to provide Borough Presidents with certain documents and records related to their budget and land use responsibilities and strengthen agency engagement with borough service cabinets.

Budget: The City's expense budget funds important social services, but it is difficult to know how much the City spends on various programs. The CRC recommends creating more specificity in the City's budget, which may improve transparency and accountability over New Yorkers' dollars, and eliminating the Mayor's current ability to unilaterally refuse to spend money on certain Council-approved funds, except for a financial and economic reason.

Corporation Counsel: Presently, the Mayor appoints the Corporation Counsel, who is the head of the NYC Law Department. That person acts as the attorney and counsel for the City as a whole. The CRC recommends requiring the Council's advice and consent for the Mayor's appointment of the Corporation Counsel and establishing a set term of service.

Diversity in Procurement: The CRC recommends supporting the minority- and women-owned business enterprise (MWBE) program by legally requiring that its director be a Deputy Mayor or another senior official who reports directly to the Mayor, and that this director be supported by an Office of MWBEs.

Land Use: The CRC recommends improving community engagement in the land use process by (1) providing more time and an earlier opportunity for Community Boards and Borough Presidents to review and comment on applications before the ULURP clock begins, and (2) extending the time for CBs to review applications in July and August.

Planning: Critics say the many reports required by the Charter related to city planning are inconsistent and difficult to follow. The CRC recommends clarifying how the various city plans and projections should relate to and impact each other. These plans should address future planning challenges, such as neighborhood rezonings. Also, ensure that the public and other stakeholders are involved in these plans.

The author is an affordable housing advocate. He is VP, Director of Real Estate Development for the

NYC Housing Partnership Development Corporation, and is also Democratic State Committeeman for the UWS.

RS

Where Are We? Where Are We Going?

Ed Sullivan

A friend of mine, who had served as an officer in the United States Navy during the post-Vietnam period, told me this story.

He was an Ensign aboard a destroyer in the Sixth Fleet under a Captain who was a coffee addict. All day long the Captain would sit in a chair on the bridge drinking cup after cup of black coffee, issuing brief but fairly obvious orders. One day he keeled over onto the deck, unconscious. He was taken down to his quarters, where he remained for several days under medical care.

One day, when my friend, Foley, was officer of the day, he heard, to his surprise, the call: "Captain's on the bridge. Captain's on the bridge." And indeed, there he was, thin but there. The Captain asked briskly, "Who's the officer of the day?" My friend saluted and said, "Ensign Foley, sir." The Captain said, "Come with me, Foley."

They went to the wing off the bridge where no one could hear them, and the Captain looked Foley in the eye and said, "Foley, where are we and where are we going?"

After a tumultuous Spring holiday period, America needs to look herself in the eye and ask the same questions: "Where are we and where are we going?"

We have a Captain who is not a coffee addict but is an ego addict. He suffers, and we suffer with him, episode after episode of ego stroking screw-ups, and the Democratic Party, which is the only political entity that can get our country back on course, is not quite sure where our country is and where it wants to go.

Does America want to go back to the comfort years of Barack Obama with good old Joe Biden, or does she want to go into uncharted territory with Bernie Sanders or one of the Bernie Wannabees, and solve some of our country's problems?

Spring Fling 2019

(Let's put one semantic spoiler to bed right away. There is no Socialist candidate or program in play. Medicare-for-All is not Socialism. No one is suggesting that doctors become government employees, a la England 1946. Free public college is not European Socialism. Many American public colleges used to not charge tuition, back in the day. A graduated income tax is not Socialism. It was made part of the Constitution over one hundred years ago. The Green New Deal is not Socialist, unless Republican Teddy Roosevelt was a Socialist.)

What is most important, many folks say, is beating Trump in 2020. But, I submit that beating Trump requires a Democratic Party that is racially inclusive, that welcomes immigrants, that supports public education, that encourages labor unions, that believes health care is a right, and that insists that roads, airports, commuter rail lines, water tunnels and the like be rebuilt now, not someday, and that the planet be made safer, not more dangerous.

Civil rights, voting rights, prison reform and personal liberty must be on our banner as well. Democratic candidates for President now include Hispanic Americans, African Americans, Gay Americans, White Americans, Native Americans and lots of women, all of whom are Americans. Do you see a pattern there? Diversity is not our problem. It is our glory!

Let's nominate a couple of them for President and Vice President and get to work!


The author represented the 69th District in the NYS Assembly from 1977 until 2002, in which he served for a time as Chair of the Higher Education Committee.

DR



We want to hear what *you* have to say! Email submissions to the editor (in MS Word, please) at palmonrode@gmail.com.

Please note that we will consider all submissions, but we reserve the exclusive and final right to decide what to publish.



Spring Fling 2019



The Broadway Democrats Newsletter – May 2019

FIRST
CLASS

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