



August 2020

## Staten Island Democratic Association

*est. 1961 as Staten Island's reform Democratic Club*

*www.sidems.org*

At our Next Meeting:

**Tommy Scarangelo,**  
Governor Cuomo's Staten  
Island Representative



**Daniel Cassella,**  
ATU Local 726 President,  
"COVID-19 and the Toll on  
ATU Workers"



**Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 7:45 P.M.**

**Via Zoom, see page 2**



## Instructions for Monthly Meeting via Zoom

*Due to the shelter in place mandate in New York State the August 18, 2020 General Membership Meeting will take place via remote conferencing. The instructions are listed below.*

**Staten Island Democratic Association  
General Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, August 18  
7:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

This meeting can be attended audio and video by computer, audio and video by cell phone, audio only by landline phone.

**AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE ZOOM MEETING BEING HACKED, THE ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE E-MAILED TO THE MEMBERSHIP AND THE INVITEES THE DAY BEFORE THE MEETING.**



## Editorial Policy

Items for publication should be submitted to the newsletter no later than the last Friday of the month before the meeting. Please send items to: [cmaxbauer@yahoo.com](mailto:cmaxbauer@yahoo.com).

Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and not of S.I.D.A.

*Chris Bauer, Editor*  
(917) 576-9248

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*“I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical.”*  
- Thomas Jefferson  
1787

## Newsletter Submission Deadlines

September.....	August 31
Ocotber .....	October 5

### S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President..... Radhakrishna Mohan	Member at-Large .....	Olusoji Oluwole
Vice President .....	Member at-Large .....	Jill Pincus-Latman
Executive Secretary .....	Member at-Large .....	Jasmine Robinson
Corresponding &	Member at-Large .....	Charles Roland
Recording Secretary .....	Member at-Large .....	Sharon Santana
Treasurer .....	Member at-Large .....	Tom Shcherbenko
Social Secretary .....	Ex Officio.....	Bobby Digi
Member at-Large .....	Ex Officio.....	Joann Olbrich

### AMERICA IN PAIN Salute to a Legend and Civil Rights Icon John Lewis

America lost a man who embodied civil rights as the first right of anyone whether Black, White, Hispanic, Asian American or any ethnic group living in U.S. In a free and democratic country what else can one expect except for this basic fundamental rights. In Congressman John Lewis, who was called the Conscience of Congress, we saw hope, confidence and someone you can look to for justice, and now with his passing we wonder who will fill this big void and vacuum that he left for us. One wonders, even with the presence of such great people like John Lewis, why our U.S. Congress did not make any big progress in equal rights and systemic racism. How can we even dare to look for any other person to replace as he himself was able to convince the stone headed elected officials in U.S. Congress. Just imagine, we have a President who neither helps to get anything better nor helps himself by speaking to his own conscience. And the end result: turmoil, pain, and anguish the American citizens are walloped on a daily basis with no real solution seems to be around.

**America is in pain**, a pain that may lost more than what people are hoping for, unless there are drastic steps taken in the right direction. Yes, it is easier said than done especially with the looming Presidential elections, it is only getting to worst with all the political games taking over precedence than any other important things such as COVID-19. Speaking to that, our President Donald Trump, has rightly put it as 'It is what it is.' Not that it matters that the number of deaths has crossed 156,000 people so far and still going up day by day with no solutions in near sight to stop these deaths. He has shown no sympathy whatsoever nor any sense of sadness when he said that as if nothing could be done which could have been addressed in the first place, a failing of which has led to this gloomy and pandemic situation. Who is going to take responsibility for this, not our President, as he doesn't believe that his failure has led to do this horrible situation nor the 'Yes' people around him who confined to themselves carrying out his menial orders or the Republican Elected Officials whose first priority is to protect the President at the cost of American citizen's misery. So the only game changer at this point is the Presidential election. With almost 300 million people on unemployment, with no decision to extend the \$600 unemployment benefit with Republicans arguing to reduce it to \$400, there is an ongoing battle as of today, with no positive indication that some good news will reach the unemployed people who are facing evictions, homelessness and COVID-19 fears and not to mention the loss of local businesses and over packed hospitals reeling under this pandemic situation.

**Speaking of Presidential election**, as of this writing the Democratic Presidential nominee, Joe Biden, is biding his time to choose his widely anticipated Vice President nominee, from among the many Black American front running female Senators, Governors and Mayors including some White woman Senators, especially Elizabeth Warren and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. Well, let us keep our fingers crossed that Joe Biden picks a great candidate as together they prove the hope of America.

Turning to our own Staten Island local politics, Congressman Max Rose and Civilian Court candidate Allyn Crawford are facing tight races, as is Brandon Patterson who is trying win the Republican 64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Republican seat back for Democrats as it was last held by

Democratic Assembly woman Janele Hyer-Spencer. Also our new Assemblyman Charles Fall has an Republican opponent, not sure at this point, how tough the race will turn out to be. With Senator Diane Savino and Assemblyman Michael Cusick looking forward to not such a tough race, the Staten Island Democratic candidates are poised repeat the previous election successes.

Just to note some **local events** taking place, with Peace Action of Staten Island conducting an event on August 8<sup>th</sup>, to highlight the 75<sup>th</sup> year since Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombing with an outdoor exhibits at the Unitarian Church from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Councilmember Debi Rose is conducting a Non-Violence marching event to pay tribute to Congressman John Lewis from August 10 to August 16 in different neighborhoods in Staten Island, starting at 6:00 p.m. **SEVEN DAYS OF GOOD TROUBLE: MARCHING FOR NON-VIOLENCE, ONE NEIGHBORHOOD AT A TIME** - Come join your neighbors in making a loud, visible statement that we will not tolerate gun violence in our communities. Resources from government and nonprofits will be available to all. Masks must be worn and will be provided to those who need one.

District Attorney McMahon is creating a Youth Advisory Council to ensure the experiences and voices of our young people are represented in the D.A.'s Office. The Council will meet regularly beginning in August 2020, and members will be expected to serve for one year.

**As of August 7, 2020, the status of COVID-19:**

<u>Cases</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
<b>World</b>	
19 million +.....	714,000+
<b>U.S.</b>	
4.8 million +.....	159, 588
<b>New York</b>	
423,637.....	32,294
<b>Staten Island</b>	
14,641.....	1,077

**Unemployment:** There are more than **30 million** with 1.7 million applying for unemployment in the last week of July 2020.

Wishing everyone to stay healthy and safe,  
*Radhakrishna Mohan*  
*S.I.D.A. President*  
*"Ask not what your country can do for you,*  
*ask what you can do for your country."*  
*- President John F. Kennedy*



## Daniel Casella

*ATU Local 726 President Daniel Cassella will be a guest speaker at our August 18 General Membership Meeting and will speak on the toll COVID-19 has had on ATU workers. He provided the following biography for publication in the newsletter.*

A Staten Island resident for 50 years, Danny is the President/Business Agent for the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 726, which represents over 2,000 active and retired Bus Operators and Maintenance Personnel of the New York City Transit here on Staten Island.

He attended Susan E. Wagner High School and Wagner College here on Staten Island.

A former business owner and a former member of ATU Local 1181, he became a New York City Transit Bus Operator and Local 726 member in 1995 and worked his way through the Union ranks to become Financial Secretary/Treasurer in 2002. He remained in this position until 2010 when he was elected President/Business Agent.

Danny is also a delegate to the ATU International Convention, ATU New York State Conference Board, ATU New England Joint Council, and New York City Central Labor Council. He is the President of the ATU's Canadian/American Council and a board member of the South Shore BID.



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## July 2020 Minutes

### **General Meeting July 21, 2020 Via Zoom**

President Mohan called the Zoom meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. He reminded the S.I.D.A. members and the participants about the ground rules to conduct the meeting smoothly. He thanked all the participants for having taken time to attend the meeting. He reminded members that Charles Rolland is the Sergeant at Arms and will give members access to speak.

President Mohan made a motion to accept minutes from June meeting as published in the newsletter. Dennis Brown mentioned that Terry Troia's name needed to be added to the minutes and that he would send an email with details to Secretary, Marie Dwyer.

President Mohan spoke about the COVID-19 situation and provided members with some statistics. He urged members to use caution and stay safe. He also spoke about the recent loss of civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis, and he provided two short videos clips about Congressman Lewis. President Mohan asked members to observe 2 minutes of silence in honor of the deceased Congressman.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Guest Speaker**

NAACP Staten Island Chapter President Ed Josey told members that it was a pleasure to be there. He thanked S.I.D.A. for their support in the People's Caravan event held on June 28. He spoke about the history of systemic racism in America.

After his presentation, Mr. Josey took questions from several members. President Mohan thanked Mr. Josey for his work building on the legacy of other civil rights leaders. He hopes that

Mr. Josey will return sometime in the future to share more information with S.I.D.A.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Guest Speaker**

Assemblyman Charles D. Fall told members that they would be voting on one of his bills regarding Urgi Care centers. He also said there would be a public hearing bill about a homeless shelter. Assemblyman Fall announced that he had face masks available for anyone who needs them. President Mohan thanked Assemblyman Fall for his bill on the homeless shelter. He also thanked him for his leadership and for all the work he does in Albany. After his brief presentation he took several questions from members in attendance.

### **Vice President's Report**

Vice President Liz Price provided members with important highlights from the June 25 Executive Committee meeting.

### **Executive Secretaries Report**

Executive President Dennis Brown reported on the People's Caravan held on June 28. He thanked Clara Ogburn and all the members of the Steering Committee for their hard work. In addition he also thanked NAACP, CURT, and Reverend Terry Troia for their participation and work. Dennis told members he is looking forward to Phase II with an event scheduled for July 22 at Veterans Park from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

### **Social Secretary's Report**

Social Secretary Sharon Santana reported that she is still doing research for ideas for a virtual fundraiser and she plans to provide an update at the next Executive Committee meeting.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman provided the bank balance and spoke about money she received as well as bills that she paid.

### **Media, Public Relations & Web Design Committee**

President Mohan reported that he is taking care of sending emails to members.

### **New Business**

President Mohan introduced Lionelle Hamanaka of the Committee to support Int 289-A. Ms. Hamanaka told members that the legislation which requires a licensed person on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of double decker buses is co-sponsored by Councilmember Debi Rose. Ms. Hamanka urged members to support this safety bill. Dennis Brown made a motion to support the bill and the motion carried. President Mohan told Ms. Hamanaka that he would send a letter stating that S.I.D.A. supports this initiative.

There was discussion about the procedure and protocol for submitting Issues Papers.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Marie Dwyer  
Corresponding &  
Recording Secretary*



## Letters

*We in S.I.D.A. like to make our views known. The following are some of the letters written by S.I.D.A. members that have appeared in print. Unless otherwise indicated, all letters were in the Staten Island Advance and/or posted on the Advance's website [www.silive.com](http://www.silive.com). Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and are not the views of S.I.D.A.*

*Online July 19, 2020*

*Printed July 26, 2020*

### **Column Convinced Me to Vote Biden**

**I** was undecided as to whether or not to vote for VP Biden, but Hugh Hewitt's Op-Ed column in the *S.I. Advance* convinced me.

He alleges that a Biden administration would have a goal of amnesty for SOME (emphasis added) undocumented persons, the border wall will be defunded or stopped, and will we have universal vote by mail.

We get all this and we get rid of a narcissistic, incompetent cheater.

Oh, I was only kidding about being undecided; there's no way I wouldn't vote for Biden.

*- Philip Blitz*

*Online July 24, 2020*

*Printed July 25, 2020*

### **On Statues and History**

Since those fighting against the U.S. for the Confederacy were traitors like Benedict Arnold, the decision to take down their statues should be an easy one.

The decision to take down other statues is much more complicated.

There are statues where the artist's depiction of the person is now being questioned.

The statue of Teddy Roosevelt outside the Museum of Natural History where the artist depicted Roosevelt riding on a horse with an Indigenous man and an African man trailing behind, walking, is now seen by some as depicting racial superiority and domination.

Roosevelt's great grandson said this about removing the statue. "The world does not need statues, relics of another age, that reflect neither the values of the person they intend to honor nor the values of equality and justice."

Not every statue of a person deserves to remain forever. A statue is how that artist depicted that person at that time. Future generations have the right to question the artist's depiction.

There are statues where the reason for erecting the statue becomes more important than the statue of the person itself.

In the 1890s, tens of thousands of Southern Italians immigrated to the U.S. These Italian immigrants faced discrimination and acts of violence. In New Orleans in 1891, 11 Italian immigrants from Sicily were lynched after being acquitted of murder. This was one of the largest mass lynchings in American history.

In 1890, with the 400th anniversary of Columbus' journey to the New World going to be celebrated in 1892, a decision was made to erect a statue to Columbus at 59th Street and Eighth Avenue.

Columbus was, at that time, an American hero, but not a hero for Italian immigrants. Italian immigrants embraced Columbus as a way to establish themselves as Americans.

Carlo Barsotti, the publisher of the Italian newspaper *Il Progresso Italo Americano*, developed a plan in which Italian American businesses would contribute small amounts of money to install the statue of Columbus. Barsotti raised a total of \$20,000, more than \$575,000 in today's dollars.

You cannot remove this statue of Columbus at Columbus Circle without removing the history of discrimination and violence experienced by Italian immigrants at that time.

There are statues of some of the founding fathers being questioned because they were slave owners.

This is true, there are those who fought in our American Revolution that owned slaves, including George Washington. Half of the those who signed the Constitution owned slaves.

The question is: Can we separate their ownership of slaves from the revolutionary idea of representative government and a constitution that gave us a framework of rights, but not rights for all, and a way for future generations to amend the Constitution.

History should never sanitize a historic figure's background, but I don't see how elected officials can sit in a legislative body and vote to remove a statue of a person who was responsible for establishing the type of legislative body they are now part of.

- Richard A. Reichard



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# **Wear a Mask**

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**Congratulations to  
Kamala Harris  
on becoming  
the Democratic  
Vice Presidential  
Candidate!**

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August 18, 2020	September 15, 2020
<b>General Meeting, 7:45 p.m.</b> <b>Via Zoom, see page 2</b>	<b>General Meeting, 8:00p.m.</b> <b>Venue T.B.D.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tommy Scarangelo</b>, Gov. Cuomo's Staten Island Representative</li> <li>• <b>Daniel Cassella</b>, ATU Local 726 President, "COVID-19 and the Toll on ATU Workers"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaker T.B.D.</li> </ul>

### It's Time to Join or Renew Your S.I.D.A. Membership!

To become a member, renew membership, or make a donation, call Bonita Rothman at (917) 596-3724, or complete and return the coupon. Voting privileges begin 45 days after joining.

✂

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2020 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$25 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$20 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ - Senior, Student, or	
_____ \$15 Unemployed	_____ \$100
	_____ Other _____

\_\_\_\_\_ Check (payable to: S.I.D.A.)    \_\_\_\_\_ Cash

I understand SIDA is a Democratic Party club. I (or we, if this is a Family Membership) am (are) at least 17 years of age and an enrolled Democrat, or intend to enroll as a Democrat upon becoming eligible.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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