



May 2015

Staten Island Democratic Association

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www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:

Meeting:



- **Adam Weissman**

of Global Justice for Animals
and the Environment on the T.P.P.

Tuesday, May 19, 2015, 8:00 P.M.

Charlie Brown's Steakhouse, 1001 Goethals Road North



Editorial Policy

Items for publication must be submitted to the newsletter no later than the last Friday of the month before the meeting. Please send items to: 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

S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President.....	Joann Olbrich	Member at-Large.....	Rosemary Palladino
Vice President.....	Susan Chew	Ex Officio.....	Michelle Akyempong
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S.I.D.A. President's Statement

May 2015

As we approach the 2016 presidential election, and the fight to “fast track” the Trans-Pacific Partnership takes place, there is a great deal of discussion over the plight of the middle class and poor in America.

The huge disparity in the share of the wealth held by the wealthy in the United States vs. the share held by everyone else has never been so great, only in the years directly preceding the Great Depression did the disparity come close. No other modern industrial country has such a massive disparity. As the wealthy enjoy ever increasing wealth and power, the income of the middle class has stagnated and lost value, and millions have fallen into poverty. While both major parties have begun to address this problem, the solutions offered by the Republicans are the things that have contributed to the growing disparity in the first place.

It was no accident that the middle class experienced great growth and prosperity in the decades after World War II: programs and policies had been put in place that caused that growth. One of the most important elements was the growth of labor unions – there is a direct correlation in the growth of union membership and the growth in middle class income, as well as a direct correlation in the decline in union membership, and the decline of middle class income.

Another important factor was that the federal government put in place programs that helped care for the people of this country, such as Social Security and Medicare. Those programs helped reduce the large percentages of seniors living in poverty, and made it possible for their children to use their resources to care for their own families, send their children to college, etc. The New Deal, the great public works programs of Eisenhower, the Great Society all boosted the American middle class and reduced poverty. There always was opposition to these programs and to the taxes that paid for them. But it was only with the election of Reagan in 1980 that the forces that opposed everything and anything that benefited the vast majority of people in the United States began to gain control over the policies of this country.

The people were fed a steady stream of lies about how policies that benefited only the wealthy would cause the wealth to “trickle down,” that the wealthy needed to have huge tax cuts because they were the “job creators,” and that those who lived in poverty were lazy and deserved their poverty. The Supply Side Swindle began a massive transfer of the nation’s wealth upward to the most wealthy, and was accompanied by a massive transfer of the nation’s tax burden from the wealthy and onto the backs of the middle class and working poor.

The 1980’s ushered in an age of unbridled greed: mergers and hostile takeovers that resulted in downsizing, the outsourcing and transfer of what used to be American jobs overseas, aided by tax breaks for the corporations moving manufacturing jobs elsewhere. In addition, automation and computerization reduced the number of good paying jobs available. In the decades after World War II, as productivity rose, the salaries of workers rose as well. But since the 1980’s enormous increases in productivity have resulted only in increased income for the corporate executives and stockholders, while the workers received little or nothing for their hard work.

This was due in part to the decline in union membership. In the 1970’s there were campaigns to pass the cynically and deceitfully named “right to work” laws that endangered the existence of labor unions, but it was with the election of Reagan in 1980 that the assault on unions became an



official part of the policies of the Republican Party. Without the protection of labor unions, the American workers have no protection from unfair practices.

While the wealthy always have had a large influence in electing to public office those who would do their bidding, such Supreme Court decisions as “Citizens United” have stripped away the little protection that the people of the United States once had in controlling how much influence the wealthy could exert in elections.

Another factor in the destruction of the American middle class has been trade policies that have benefited global corporations at the expense of the working people not only in the United States but the rest of the world as well. We should have learned our lesson with NAFTA, but now the corporate powers are pushing our government to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership, that threatens great harm to working people. We need to find out as much as possible about this threat, in order to have the ability to fight against it.



- Joann Olbrich



Adam Weissman on the T.P.P.

Adam Weissman will speak about the Trans-Pacific Partnership at our May 17 General Membership Meeting.

Derailing the Fast Track to Corporate Rule

Congressional Democrats and grassroots activists are fighting efforts by Republicans to pass legislation that would help railroad the Trans-Pacific Partnership (T.P.P.), Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T.T.I.P.), and Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), a series of massive “NAFTA on steroids” trade deals through Congress -- deals that threaten our jobs, environment, food safety, access to affordable medicines, internet freedom, banking regulations, and even democracy itself while dramatically expanding corporate power. Instead of standing with Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and all but one of New York's House Democrats, President Obama is following in the footsteps of Bill Clinton, during whose presidency the US joined NAFTA, the World Trade Organization, and normalized trade relations with China -- at the cost of millions of U.S. jobs.

Congressman Donovan has said that he will continue Rep. Grimm's commitment to opposing these deals, but in Washington, he'll be feeling pressure from groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Learn more about the threat posed by these new trade deals and find out what Staten Islanders do to ensure that Rep. Donovan feels as much pressure on this issue from We the People as he does from the 1%!

Presenter

Adam Weissman is the founder of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment (G.J.A.E.), an organization addressing the threat posed by free trade agreements to animals; the environment; safe, ethical, and sustainable food; and the human rights of environmental defenders. Adam also represents Global Justice for Animals and the Environment in TradeJustice New York Metro, a coalition of organizations from diverse social movements working together to resist the NAFTA model.



Global Justice for Animals and the Environment website:

<http://gjae.org>

or

<http://freetradekillsanimals.org>

TradeJustice New York Metro website:

<http://tradejustice.net>



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

Online April 14, 2015

Will Island be Fooled into Electing Dan Donovan?

When listening to the news the other day, I was shocked to hear that Staten Island's Willowbrook and Tottenville are now "heroin capitals" of New York City! Is this what 12 years of Dan Donovan as District Attorney has brought us?

Dozens of Sandy victims have been cheated, defrauded and ripped off by insurance companies and contractors, without a single indictment by D.A. Donovan. Donovan could not

even get an indictment for as little as "reckless endangerment" with a *videotape* of Daniel Pantaleo assaulting Eric Garner, resulting in Garner's death, ruled a homicide by the coroner.

Now, the same people who gave us Cut, Run and Cash In Susan Molinari, fine family (and family) man Vito Fossella, and convicted felon Michael Grimm are telling us to elect Donovan to Congress, even though Donovan does not have a single day's experience as a legislator.

Donovan's opponent, Democrat Vincent Gentile, has 18 years of experience as a legislator in the State Senate and City Council, and a proven record of getting positive results for not just the people of his district, but the entire city and state.

Will the people of the district be fooled once again into electing someone put forward by those whose past candidates have been national embarrassments?

- Joann Olbrich

Online April 24, 2015

If You Oppose GOP Budget Plan, Vote for Gentile

With the passage of the Republican budget plan by the House on March 24 we now have a way to clearly differentiate between the two candidates running for Congress.

The Republican budget calls for moving Medicare to a voucher system and increasing the eligibility age to enroll in Medicare. The current eligibility age is 65.

The Republican budget calls for increasing the Social Security full retirement age and changing how the yearly COLA increase is calculated.

Under current Social Security law full retirement age for someone born in 1960 or later is 67. For someone born prior to 1955, the full retirement age is 66. For those born between 1955 and 1959 the full retirement age is 66 years plus a number of months.

If someone takes Social Security before full retirement age, their monthly benefit is reduced.

Therefore raising the full retirement age would further decrease the monthly benefit for those taking Social Security earlier, such as at age 62.

The Republicans also want to change how the yearly Social Security COLA is calculated. Their new COLA formula, which is called Chained-CPI, according to AARP, "would have a detrimental impact on the economic well being of older and disabled Americans and their family members...."

The Republican budget prohibits Congress from addressing the insolvency of the Social Security disability trust fund unless Social Security is changed to allow payroll taxes to be diverted to private accounts.

Unless addressed, the disability trust fund will become insolvent in 2016 resulting in a 19 percent decrease in benefits.

Elections are about choices.

You have a clear choice in the May 5th special election.

If you agree with these changes to the Medicare and Social Security systems you should vote for Dan Donovan.

If you disagree with these changes you should vote for Vinnie Gentile.

- Richard Reichard



April Minutes

General Meeting April 21, 2015

President Olbrich called the meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. She announced that the endorsement vote for Staten Island District Attorney originally scheduled for the evening was cancelled per Matthew Small's request.

Minutes

David Jones made a motion to accept the minutes for March as published in the newsletter. Mary Kain seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Susan Chew presented highlights from the most recent Executive Committee meeting. She announced that Earth Day is on April 22. She also urged members to sign a petition that she planned to circulate, asking legislators to veto building the LNG port:

We urge the members of S.I.D.A. calling on Governor Cuomo to veto the application by Liberty Natural Gas LLC to build the Port Ambrose liquefied natural gas terminal off the coast of New York. We as Staten Islanders know the horrible effects of LNG storage.

Susan also reported that Congress is pushing legislation to fast track the T.P.P. (Trans Pacific Partnership) and she advised members to call their State Senators asking that they not sign this legislation.

Executive Secretary's Report

Executive Secretary Mark Herman reminded members that the special election for Congress would be held in two weeks. He said there were two good debates held.

He feels that if voters on the North Shore show up to vote, Vinnie Gentile will have a good chance to win the election. Mark spoke about the race and its ramifications. He also mentioned that District Leaders and county committeemen are up for re-election this year. The date for county's convention hasn't been announced yet. Finally he said that it is important for S.I.D.A. members to keep strength in the Democratic Party.

President Olbrich mentioned that she asked the County Chair for the date of the convention. She asked members to let her know if they are interested in being on the county committee.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman reported a balance as of April 9 of \$10,453.89

Journalists Forum

President Olbrich turned the program over to Social Secretary, Roy Moskowitz. Roy introduced Will Bredderman (a reporter from the *NY Observer*) and Nicholas Rizzi (a reporter/producer from *DNA Info.* covering Staten Island). Roy mentioned that Melissa Rabinovitch (Executive Editor, NY 1) was also invited but had to cancel.

The reporters spoke briefly about their backgrounds and took questions from many S.I.D.A. members. They spoke about the upcoming Congressional race in the 11th District, the impact of the

I.D.C., criteria that drive national elections, campaign reporting facts or analysis, media outlets views on Staten Island, and how to get reporters to cover stories, to name a few topics covered.

President Olbrich thanked the reporters for coming to the meeting and thanked Roy for arranging the forum.

Gentile Campaign

Nick Popolo, the Treasurer for Vinnie Gentile, the Democratic Candidate for Congress, mentioned that S.I.D.A. has been very generous with their donations for Vinnie's campaign.

He added that the campaign is looking for people to help by making phone calls, canvassing door to door etc. Nick mentioned that there are lawns signs available and to let him know if you need one. He added that he expects the campaign to send out several mailings before Election Day.

President Olbrich reported that County is looking for people to help with Vinnie's campaign. She asked if every member would do something to help.

Social Secretary's Report

Social Secretary Roy Moskowitz reported that Gabrielle Prisco and Bobby Digi are going to be sponsors for the Prisco Essay Contest and are donating \$500 each.

He also mentioned that the City Council speaker has agreed to accept one of the awards for the upcoming banquet. He urged members to send suggestions for honorees for other awards, and he intends to finalize plans by June.

New Business

John Macbeth thanked all the S.I.D.A. members who supported the recent Selma march.

Dennis Brown said that Marianne Brennick sent an email out to members thanking everyone for their well wishes while she is healing from her surgery.

President Olbrich reminded members that S.I.D.A. signed up as participants for the Peace and Planet Expo. Sally Jones reported that 2,000 flyers had been distributed and she thanked all those who helped. She also mentioned that on April 26 they are planning to take the 12:30 ferry from St. George to the Peace and Planet Event. She said it will be a great event and she urged members to attend.

President Olbrich mentioned that she will forward information to members about the upcoming court date for David Jones.

She also said that she plans to inform members about the date for County's next convention. She added that people can attend as guests and to let her know if you are interested in becoming a member of the County Committee.

President Olbrich thanked Sanjay and Charlotte for the wonderful fundraiser they held in their home on March 29 for Vinnie Gentile.

Helen Settles announced that a candidates' forum is scheduled for April 28, 7:00 – 9:00 pm at the Family Life Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 pm

Respectfully submitted
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary



10 Reasons to Vote Republican

The following appeared in Daily Kos.

10 Reasons Why You Should Vote Republican.

October 2, 2010 by LaFeminista

1. You want to finance the wealthy?

You think the banking bailout wasn't enough for the elite? They need tax breaks to invest more in the developing world so their companies become more profitable? Please give them tax cuts to do so. Do you want to decrease unemployment overseas, give corporations tax cuts and breaks to finance their move to the land of cheap labor of their choice? So what if the workers are too young or kept in dormitories and the conditions resemble those of forced labor. You really want that stuff to be so cheap that you can afford it on the unemployment line? Well then:

Vote Republican

2. You believe victims of crime are whiners?

Two wrongs make a right?

Women who are raped and become pregnant should be forced to carry the baby of a crime?

That those complaining of sexual and moral abuse at work are just lazy and have no right to be treated equally at the workplace?

Vote Republican.

3. You believe government services are a waste?

That the fire department, police, schools and hospitals are a drain on the economy we cannot afford. That only the private sector could provide these at an affordable rate, and so what if you can't afford it? That protecting the environment serves no purpose and is a drain on corporate reserves when they are forced to abide by the minimum guidelines? You believe that market forces are enough to prevent poisonous baby food? You believe tearing apart mountains or flooding the sea with crude oil are all just part of a viable business model?

Vote Republican

4. You believe whites are the victim of racism?

That this is your country and you want it back, and you believe the days of slavery made you freer? You need someone to look down upon because your life is crap? You need to blame someone else for your own failure to compete in an open market, and it's all because minorities have some legal protection? You believe that illegal immigrants are taking your jobs away but if you were offered the same working conditions you would run away screaming?

Vote Republican.

5. You don't believe in social programs?

Well Medicare, Social Security, and SCHIP are drains on those who can afford not to need them. So they should be privatized and hence only serve those that can afford them in the first place. Just think of all that extra money in the stock market you can cheer its volatile rise and spectacular collapse. Heck that's the free market for you, so what if the big boys stole all your cash that's the American dream right there! Love it?

Vote Republican.

6. It's not what you do but what you say that counts?

That even if you are a total sleazeball but say the right things all will be forgiven. That you can lie and steal and waste tax payers money so thoroughly yet claim still to be fiscally conservative with a straight face, and that you can believe and admire others who do the same thing?

Vote Republican

7. Affordable health care is an affront to sanity

It was much better when the insurance companies could cover whom they liked. The rate hikes every so often filled you with joy? That only those with the resources should have access to what you believe was the best service in the world despite all evidence to the contrary?

Vote Republican.

8. Rules are only for poor people?

You believe that making the rich even richer is part of the American dream even though you are more likely only to get there if you win the state lottery? You believe that by supporting the grotesquely wealthy is your sure way into nirvana, and you will protect them come hell or high water even though they laugh at you?

Vote Republican

9. You believe we are on the road to socialism?

The only way to stop this is to hand over government to the corporations and that democratically elected politicians should bow to the will of the very few? The only good government is one that doesn't interfere with profit taking and is better neither seen or heard? That this rule by the elite is the way to go?

Vote Republican.

10. Your own freedoms are best guaranteed by removing the rights of others?

You believe that L.G.B.T. folk don't deserve the same rights as anyone else since this would infringe if not totally destroy your own, it would in fact cause you deep and abiding pain? You believe that the freedom to worship is a Christian right, and any other religion is just plain un-American, and Muslims have a special right to be hounded no matter what? You believe that to avoid the imposition of Sharia law one must impose Fundamentalist Christian doctrine first by applying old testament laws?

Vote republican.

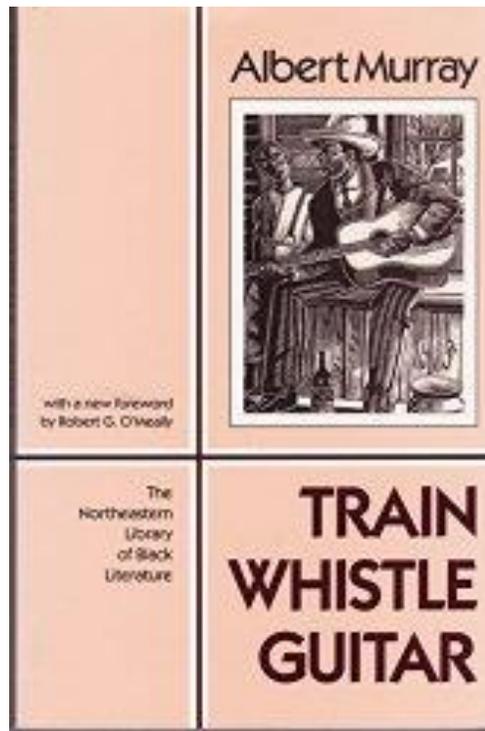
<http://m.dailykos.com/story/2010/10/02/907116/-10-Reasons-Why-You-Should-Vote-Republican?detail=email>



Best wishes to
Mark Herman!

Members Recommend

In Members Recommend S.I.D.A. members let us know which books or other things they have enjoyed. Bonnie Rothman's book club just finished reading this book and recommends it to the membership. Here is their review.



Albert Murray, in the first of his four semi-autobiographical novels, *Train Whistle Guitar*, portrays the life of a young black boy in the South of the 1920s. It is a coming-of-age story in the very best sense as he recounts the growing up of Scooter and his friend, Little Buddy Marshall, in 1920s Gasoline Point, Alabama. The idyllic rendering of this slow, southern universe, the struggles, the dreams and the frustrations of the town's inhabitants in this Jim Crow world are skillfully, albeit obliquely, alluded to by the author.

Initially there seems to be no obvious plotline, only the episodic happenings that characterize the life of any ten-year-old, but stylistically the scenes are described and pass before the reader's eyes as if in a movie whose musical background is jazz. Some scenes "read" like riffs from a saloon where you can imagine Louis Armstrong playing; other scenes are shoot 'em ups in the backwoods where the body is hidden from sight, and in our ears the author makes sure that we always hear the train whistle singing of places to go and see, just out of reach, even though the most important things are happening to Scooter right before his eyes.

A sense of puzzling mystery hangs over the tale from the very beginning. The reader wants to know what it is that he is reading about and Murray is able to keep that mystery going until the very end, so that when the relationships of the community are finally revealed the surprise opens the tale to a whole new interpretation for all the characters that you thought you knew. The story is a revelation in the best sense.



Peace Action of Staten Island



Peace Action Meeting
Thursday, June 11
6:30 - 9 p.m.

Unitarian Church of Staten Island
312 Fillmore Street @ Clinton Ave

Our mailing address is:

Peace Action of Staten Island
P. O. Box 201
St. George Station
Staten Island, NY 10301

<http://www.peacesi.org/>



Thank you to all the S.I.D.A. members who volunteered for the Vinnie Gentile for Congress campaign. I was proud to see how many of our members played an active role in fighting for this congressional seat.

- Joann Olbrich



Bulletin Board



Historic Old Bermuda Inn Friday, June 19, 2015 - 7PM

The Staten Island LGBT Community Center cordially invites you to be a part of the One Island, One Pride Dinner Dance . As a community, we have much to celebrate.

The Center has reached its goal in forming an independent not-for-profit, the Pride Center of Staten Island, Inc., which, with your support, will build upon the great success of the Staten Island LGBT Community Center and make our goal of an independent Pride Center a reality.

Join us to commemorate our past, celebrate our future and to honor this year's award recipients:

- One Island, One Pride Award: Michele Karlsberg & Aubrey Saunders
- Community Enrichment Award: College of Staten Island
- Barbara P. Sullivan Ally Award: Beth Fossella

The Center, Staten Island's only comprehensive LGBTQ resource organization, provides support and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Staten Islanders, friends, and families in a safe and welcoming environment. This past year over 4,000 people participated in the Center's programs and services. Your generous support will enable the continued success, expansion, and growth of the Center as we finalize the transition into the Pride Center of Staten Island. The Pride Center will carry forward the Center's important work and will enable us to expand our mission in support of equality, respect, and dignity for all people.

718-808-1360

<http://www.pridecentersi.org/one-island-one-pride/>



Bulletin Board Policy



Items posted on the Bulletin Board are done so at the request of an S.I.D.A. member and are for informational purposes only. A posting on the Bulletin Board does not imply endorsement by S.I.D.A.

May 19, 2015	June 16, 2015
General Meeting 8:00p.m. Charlie Brown's Steakhouse 1001 Goethals Road North	General Meeting 8:00p.m. Charlie Brown's Steakhouse 1001 Goethals Road North
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adam Weissman, founder of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, on the T.P.P. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaker TBD

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.

✂

2015 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$15 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$10 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ \$5 - Senior, Student, or 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 _____

Make checks payable to S.I.D.A. and send to: S.I.D.A.
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