



May 2020

Staten Island Democratic Association

est. 1961 as Staten Island's reform Democratic Club

www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:

- **Councilmember Debi Rose,**

City's efforts to address COVID-19 pandemic



- **Bobby Digi,**

the impact of COVID-19 on Staten Island small businesses



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



Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 7:45 P.M.

Via Zoom, see page 3



Richard Currie

December 15, 1941 – April 16, 2020

Instructions for Monthly Meeting via Zoom

Due to the shelter in place mandate in New York State the May 19 General Membership Meeting will take place via remote conferencing. The instructions are listed below.

**Staten Island Democratic Association
General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, May 19
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.

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

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

Table of Contents

• Richard Currie.....	2
• Zoom Meeting Instructions.....	3
• S.I.D.A. President’s Statement	5
• Letters	7
• April 2020 Minutes.....	8
• Debi Rose.....	10
• Bobby Digi.....	11
• Upcoming Meetings	13
• Renewal Form.....	13

“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

June	June 1
July	July 6

S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President..... Radhakrishna Mohan	Member at-Large	Jasmine Robinson
Vice President	Member at-Large	Charles Roland
Executive Secretary	Member at-Large	Sharon Santana
Corresponding & Recording Secretary	Member at-Large	Tom Shcherbenko
Treasurer	Ex Officio.....	Michelle Akyempong
Social Secretary	Ex Officio.....	Bobby Digi
Member at-Large	Ex Officio.....	Rosemarie Mangano
Member at-Large	Ex Officio.....	John Mastellone
Member at-Large	Ex Officio.....	Joann Olbrich

S.I.D.A. President's Statement

As of May 8, 2020, COVID-19 in:		
	Total Cases	Deaths
World	> 4.1 million	> 285,329
U.S.	> 1, 300,000	> 80, 542
New York	342,317	26,878
Staten Island	> 12,586	> 866

May 2020

From Pandemic to Political Crisis!

The head-spinning COVID-19 statistics above, is crystal clear of its deadly impact on the lives of people in the world and the U.S. No one will ever miss this very grim picture except those of narcissistic nature, who only think about themselves and oblivious of what is happening in the real world.

This is exactly the way Coronavirus pandemic is being addressed in our country, with our President pulling all the tricks up his sleeve to misguide and misdirect the people of this great country, for purely political gains, leading the country into a total disastrous path, putting the lives of seniors, essential workers and even youngsters lives in danger, having lost more than 80,000 American people already. This gut-wrenching tragedy of families impacted by this virus has no effect or bearing on our President and his team who continue to do whatever they wanted to do in utter disregard to our nation's security and safety with a 'my way or high way attitude'. For the Trump Administration the economy matters, not the precious lives of American people.

President Trump's Mantra to address COVID-19:

- Injecting disinfectant to cure Coronavirus
- Hit the body with a tremendous ultraviolet or just very powerful light
- Inhaling bleach to kill Coronavirus
- It will go away itself in the summer
- Open up the meat industry by evoking Defense Production Act (hesitated to do for PPE's and masks)
- Open up businesses to go on with life as usual
- C.D.C. guidelines pushed to exist on papers than on enforcement
- State governors should do their own plans to address COVID-19 including to get procurement in the open market by competing with other states

How many more people we are going to lose by the time his presidency is challenged at the ballot. Do the Republicans Senators and Congress Representatives have any inner conscience to see what the President is doing to the country and stand by and tolerate all this political pandemic play by

him. Can anyone of them open their mouth and stop the President in his wrong-doing in acting as a health expert and not listening to the scientists and experts in the field. Just yesterday, May 7th, we heard the news that the President's personal valet tested positive, and the Vice President's own Coronavirus Task Force Press Secretary also tested positive. At this point how many more will be affected by exposure to these people at the White House.

On top of this, the Trump administration has retaliated against a whistle-blower, Dr. Rick Bright, director of the federal Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, by removing him at this most critical time, when the nation needs his expertise to do research for a cure. There were indications already that the Coronavirus Task Force services of Dr Anthony S Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx are no longer needed, as if the country is turning around a corner. The next day the President reversed his statement.

To add fuel to the fire, almost 47 states are lifting their stay home policy as of May 10th with the result, besides health experts' warning, the coronavirus case are bound to rise in the immediate future with 25 states are already showing an upward trend in the virus spread. Does it matter? No, it is business as usual.

With Michigan's Governor's office under siege by so-called 'Stay Home Policy' liberators with guns and automatic weapons is another dangerous sign that the nation shifting into politically triggered crisis with no solution yet to cure COVID-19. The states are being influenced to open up early even though not enough test kits and P.P.E.'s are available for frontline workers and the general public. How this gamble is going to play out is that thousands of people lives are in danger with the imminent spread of this dangerous virus.

Meanwhile, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo is handling the situation in a deft and the best way possible, by a data driven approach and not yielding to pressures to open the economy early and to lift the stay home order. In New York as of May 10th, with more than 342,000 cases and more than 28,000 precious lives lost, though the curve is flattening with an average of 200 lives lost for the past 5 days, there is an optimism that in the next few days we can see the possibility of containment of COVID-19, but the Governor Cuomo warns that it is in the hands of the people of this state and their behavior towards this virus. There is a plan to open up for construction and other key businesses in upstate New York, with seven upstate places identified. New York City may see an extended 'Stay home' order for some time. While New York State, with a deficit of 13.5 billion, is yet to get the Federal stimulus package, there is a possibility of cuts and lay-off's including those of essential services. We all only hope they Federal aid comes sooner than later before any damages happens.

Locally Mayor Bill de Blasio is doing his best to get New York City moving forward by providing masks to the general public in parks and other areas including opening COVID-19 testing sites where people can go to get tested. The subways were cleaned and with homeless people evacuated to other shelter places. Mayor Bill de Blasio has already signaled that there will be layoff's including the essential workers if the Federal subsidy is not coming soon enough.

In Staten Island, there have been more than 12,000 cases and more than 800 deaths as of May 10th with 30% of deaths having occurred in nursing homes alone. Some positive signs showing up are fewer people being admitted into hospitals and with some patients released to go home after their recovery.

As the people in U.S. and the states are going through this pandemic, a different scene is unfolding on a day-to-day basis at the national scene, with the White House Press briefings becoming more of a President's show rather than the experts and scientists diligently providing much-needed facts and vital information on COVID-19 to the American public.

A silver line of the COVID-19 crisis is the news that there is a possible remedy available for those in the advanced stages of coronavirus by using a drug called Remdesivir that helps regain breathing in patients.

With wishes that everyone stay healthy and safe,

Radhakrishna Mohan

S.I.D.A. President

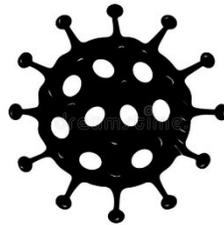
*"Ask not what your country can do for you,
ask what you can do for your country."*

- President John F. Kennedy



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.



On-line April 22, 2020

Printed April 26, 2020

Trump's Slow Response is to Blame

Trump has been president for over three years. He can't continue to say he "inherited a broken system" to justify his administration's slow response to the coronavirus pandemic.

If a manager/head coach tried to blame his team finishing in last place on the team's manager/head coach from three years ago, you would be calling for the manager/head coach to be fired.

Just as we look back at a team's season and judge the decisions made, we will look back and judge the decisions made by the Trump administration.

When all is said and done, I believe two decisions made by the Trump administration will be judged to have been instrumental in the coronavirus spreading like a wildfire.

The decision not to restrict travel from Europe until March 11. On Feb. 28, Europe showed a spike in coronavirus cases. How many people flew to the U.S. from Europe in those 12 days? How many were infected?

The decision by the HHS secretary on Jan. 31 to require private labs to obtain an "emergency use authorization" from the FDA before their test could be used. This resulted in very few people being tested because of the problems with the CDC test.

It wasn't until Feb. 29 that the FDA eased the "emergency use authorization" guidelines, allowing private lab tests to be used and therefore we did not see a significant increase in testing until mid-March.

The weeks of delay in allowing the private lab tests to be used prevented community-based surveillance, which could have helped contain the spread of the coronavirus.

- Richard Reichard



April 2020 Minutes

General Meeting April 30, 2020 Via Zoom

President Mohan called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. via Zoom. He apologized for having to cancel the April 21 meeting due to problems encountered using Zoom. President Mohan thanked various Executive Committee members for their assistance testing the Zoom application to ensure that that future meetings would be successful. He also thanked members for their work in updating the club's mailing list. President Mohan also mentioned that he wants to create additional committees on the Executive committee including a Youth Committee, Labor Committee and an Organizing Committee.

President Mohan spoke about the toll that the Corona virus has had on New York. He hopes the Governor and Mayor will work together to coordinate re-opening New York City. President Mohan gave kudos to the front-line health care workers and Congressman Max Rose for all their hard work during this pandemic.

1st Guest Speaker

Kevin Elkins, the Staten Island Borough Director for Congressman Max Rose, Kevin told members that Congressman Rose was deployed with the National Guard for two weeks. During that time staff continued to work with constituents assisting with various issues. Congressman Rose's staff have helped constituents with unemployment insurance claims, stimulus checks, and they have delivered P,P,E, to various organizations on Staten Island. The Congressman has helped pass multiple stimulus bills and continues to work with his colleagues and to advocate for his constituents. Kevin also explained that the Congressman wants to make sure that State and Local government get the money they deserve. After his presentation, Kevin took questions from several members in attendance.

2nd Guest Speaker

Dr. Ramachandran Nair, an infectious disease and internal medicine specialist, thanked President Mohan for the invitation to share important information about the COVID -19 virus with members. He mentioned that Quest Labs has started antibody testing. Dr. Nair told members to avoid shaking hands with others and that it's important to wash hands frequently, wear face masks, and maintain social distancing of six feet from other people.

Dr. Nair mentioned that anyone experiencing significant shortness of breath should call 911 for assistance. He also provided advice for those with cough and fever. He mentioned that people

over 60 with other conditions need to be very careful. Dr Nair mentioned that the best treatment for COVID-19 is to acquire immunity. Dr. Nair told members that their primary doctor can provide a referral for antibody testing. After the presentation Dr. Nair took questions from several members in attendance. Vice President Liz Price told members to stay safe.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman provided members with the current bank balance. She mentioned that she deposited money for dues received. Bonnie mentioned that the April newsletter wasn't printed because the printer has been closed. President Mohan mentioned that the newsletter is the club's lifeline and we will be working on the May issue.

Executive Secretary's Report

Executive Secretary Dennis Brown mentioned that the meeting was a replacement since the previous meeting on April 21 was zoom bombed. He was part of the committee that worked to take additional security precautions, including adding a co-host. Dennis mentioned that he hopes more members will join the next meeting. He gave kudos to Congressman Max Rose for all his hard work and thanked Dr. Nair for his informative presentation. Dennis told members to stay active and alive.

Social Secretary's Report

Social Secretary Pearl Minsky reported that we do have dates scheduled for the annual picnic and banquet but not sure what will happen due to the pandemic. She also mentioned that she wants to add some entertainment for the picnic.

By-Laws Committee

Committee Chair Joann Olbrich mentioned that the latest edition of "Robert's Rules" includes provisions for teleconferences and she plans to purchase a copy of the book.

February and March Minutes

President Mohan made a motion to accept the February minutes as published in the newsletter. The motion carried. There are no minutes from the March meeting as it had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Human Rights Committee

Committee Chair Clara Ogburn reported that the committee has not held any recent meetings.

Issues Committee

Committee Co-chairs Richard Reichard and Jasmine Robinson had no report,

Announcements

Helen Settles announced that the NAACP's Metro Council is hosting a Club Census Party on May 1 from 5:00 -10:00 p.m. The Staten Island Branch will provide a live presentation from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Joann Olbrich explained that a quorum for our meeting is 15 members or 15% of the membership, whichever is less.

President Mohan told members that he will send out an email regarding the date of the next Executive Committee meeting. He also mentioned that the deadline for the newsletter is May 4 and will check with Chris Bauer about possible extension.

Joann reported that long time member Richard Curry passed away recently.

President Mohan reported that scheduled speaker Chris Smalls was unable to attend the meeting. He also mentioned that we now have 180 club members. President Mohan told members to stay healthy and safe.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 pm

*Respectfully submitted,
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary*



Councilwoman Debi Rose

Councilwoman Debi Rose will be a guest speaker at our May 19 General Membership Meeting and will address New York City's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The following biography was taken from her N.Y.C. Council website.

Councilwoman Debi Rose

Councilwoman Debi Rose is a second-generation Staten Island native and the first African American from Staten Island elected to any public office. She won the race for the 49th Council District seat in 2009 by a 32-point margin, and was re-elected by similar margins in 2013 and 2017.

Subsequent to her November 2017 re-election, Councilwoman Rose was appointed Deputy Majority Leader and Chair of the City Council's Committee on Youth Services. In addition, she sits on the Aging; Education; Justice System; Resiliency and Waterfronts; Rules, Privileges and Elections; and Transportation committees, as well as the council's Budget Negotiating Team. As Chair of the Youth Services Committee, Councilwoman Rose led the successful fight to restore summer youth programs in the city budget and expand the Summer Youth Employment Program to include slots for 70,000 young New Yorkers.

Councilwoman Rose has secured millions of dollars in public investments in the North Shore during her years in office, leading to a new Renaissance on the North Shore. She has successfully worked to create thousands of jobs, build and renovate nearly a dozen parks, expand waterfront access and increase student capacity in North Shore public schools by more than 1,200 seats.



Trump wants to be the nation's cheerleader when what we need is a quarterback.

Bobby Digi

Former S.I.D.A. President Bobby Digi will be a guest speaker at our May 12 General Membership Meeting and will talk about the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses on Staten Island. He provided the following biography.

Bobby Digi

Bobby Digi, social entrepreneur, community organizer, and educator, has devoted his life to strengthening and building community locally and globally. He is currently President of NiDO-NY (Nigerians In Diaspora Organization New York chapter).

Born in Brooklyn to parents of Nigerian descent and raised in multi-ethnic Park Hill/ Stapleton on Staten Island, Bobby has always been inspired to bring people of diverse backgrounds together to discover solutions to challenging issues. Leading by example, Bobby utilizes his educational and professional opportunities to give back to the community and inspire the next generation of leaders.

Bobby received a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Staten Island (C.S.I.-CUNY) where he completed a quadruple major in Finance, Economics, Accounting and Business Management. While attending CSI and working at Doctors Hospital of Beth Israel, a conversation with a doctor about the need many doctors shared for having their vacation homes maintained inspired Bobby to create Henry's Home Improvement, Inc., the first of many entrepreneurial ventures that Bobby would found.

After graduating, Bobby took his entrepreneurial passions global by creating Thello Entertainment, Inc., a Japanese/New York based record label. It would be the first African American owned entertainment label establishes in Tokyo representing and bringing diverse artists together from around the world.

After seven years in Japan, Bobby returned to Staten Island to strengthen the Thello brand. He saw the need for a live music venue and production studio, so he created Notes Lounge, which became the premier performance venue on Staten Island, attracting top performers, artists, musicians, fashion designers, politicians, tourists and locals for a unique cultural experience.

The global success that Bobby had achieved made him a recognized role model and leader. This inspired the founding of Island Voice, Inc. in 2007. This not-for-profit would give Bobby the platform to become a social entrepreneur and empower those most in need locally and globally with a focus on youth empowerment.

Through a partnership with Wagner College, Island Voice hosts an annual Youth Empowerment Summit that gives young people a "voice". Professionals from the community lend advice on leadership development, education and job readiness. This program has benefited over 7,000 youths.

Through Island Voice the first African Heritage Parade on Staten Island was formed in 2008. It celebrates the diverse African Diaspora and has grown to be a signature event attracting locals and tourists alike.

Island Voice hosts the annual Shaolin Chess Tournament. Digi believes that if children learn the game they can apply those lessons and strategies to making well thought out life decisions. Island Voice also sponsors the Holy Moe Basketball Tournament in Park Hill in order to surround youth with positive mentors and provide safe outlets to channel energy during the summer months. Bobby has used Island Voice to advocate for women's rights and the return of the 276 Nigerian

girls kidnapped by Boko Haram. Locally, he has organized for the Annual Father's Day pledge that unifies men to pledge against all forms of violence against women.

Digi is a founding member of an early childhood initiative that adopts the collective impact method to address educational disparities on Staten Island. Several years later and many more community stakeholders onboard, the group is called Equity Alliance of Staten Island (EASI) and promotes PK-12 educational equity in the borough. It has secured over \$1 million for early learning programs.

In 2015, recognizing that gun violence had become an epidemic in the North Shore community that he grew up in, Bobby and two other community leaders implemented Occupy the Blocks, in order to empower the men of the area to secure their blocks while simultaneously connecting the youth to resources and opportunities to keep them on the right path. Within months of the implementation of Occupy the Blocks, gun violence decreased and other communities were looking to replicate the successful model.

When Superstorm Sandy hit Bobby realized that he and his neighbors on the Bay Street corridor had been severely impacted, they asked him to advocate on their behalf. He co-founded the North Shore Business Association and was elected President. It provides services, information and support for local businesses. Bobby lead press conferences, rallies and panels on the recovery efforts. After testifying before the New York State Senate, Bobby was appointed by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to the New York Rising Committee. This resulted in the distribution of \$28 million in recovery funds. Bobby has also advocated and secured \$250,000 for the study of the St. George Promenade.

Bobby launched his consultancy group in 2014. Bobby Digi LLC, based in New York City, specializes in social-political campaigns, branding, marketing, small business development, community outreach, and job training.

Bobby Digi also founded Canvas Institute of Arts, Culture and Civic Engagement. He was appointed to both Mayor Bill de Blasio and Borough President James Oddo's transition teams. He was president of the Staten Island Democratic Association (S.I.D.A.), chairman of the Tompkinsville business development committee and a member of the Bay Street Corridor Advisory Council, Department of Justice Community Relations Service Council, and Staten Island African Advisory Council. He is a member of JASRAC and ASCAP and the only foreign member to sit on the Japanese music panel Link Di Vibes.

In 2019 he won one of the 16th annual Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship awards and was appointed to an advisory position with the M.I.T. compassion system program and invited to attend a one-year certification program. Digi also has an Honorary Program Degree in Not-for-Profit Management from Columbia and is graduate of the Citizen Police Academy. He has received The United Nations Excellence in Humanitarian Services Award, Staten Island Black Heritage Most Influential Award, and the Staten Island Democratic Association Tyrone Butler Community Service Award. He has received many other citations from state, city, and local entities for his active role in community development and empowerment.



May 19, 2020	June 16, 2020
General Meeting, 7:45 p.m. Via Zoom, see page 14	General Meeting, 8:00p.m. Venue T.B.D.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councilmember Debi Rose, N.Y.C.'s efforts to address the COVID-19 PANDEMIC • Bobby Digi, COVID-19 Impact on Staten Island Small Business • Tommy Scarangelo, Governor's Staten Island Representative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker T.B.D.

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.

✂

2020 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$25 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$20 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ \$15 - 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.
P.O. Box 140371
Staten Island, NY 10314-0371

For internal use only:
 Comp: _____ Received \$: _____ Deposited \$: _____ Entered Sht: _____ Computer: _____