



January 2011

## Staten Island Democratic Association

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

*www.sidems.org*

### At our Next Meeting:

- NYC Public Advocate  
Bill de Blasio



- Congressman  
Michael McMahon

- Executive Committee Election

Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 8:00 P.M.,  
**at Karl's Klipper**, 40 Bay Street - (718) 720-4442



### 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](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

## **S.I.D.A.'s President's Message**

Even though the U.S. has not seen a more prolific two year legislative session since the 1960s, President Obama and the Democratic-controlled 111th Congress must feel like Rodney Dangerfield, they just don't get any respect.

During the past two years Congress passed and President Obama signed into law, legislation that:

- Significantly expanded the Children's Health Insurance Program to cover an additional 4.3 million children and expanded health care coverage to millions of the uninsured with the passage the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- Saved millions of jobs, with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, better known as the stimulus bill.
- Extended unemployment insurance seven times and established and twice extended a COBRA subsidy.
- Reset the statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit regarding pay discrimination with the passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. Repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell and expanded federal hate crimes law to include crimes motivated by a victim's gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.
- Provides critical support services to the families who care for our nation's most severely wounded soldiers with the passage of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 and in order to ensure reliable and timely funding for veterans' health care, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009 authorizes appropriations for medical care programs one year in advance of the start of each fiscal year.
- Provides health care coverage to those who worked at the World Trade Center site after the attack through the Zadroga 9/11 First Responders bill.
- Addresses the causes of recent economic crisis by making sweeping changes to all Federal financial regulatory agencies through the Dodd-

Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and enhances criminal enforcement of federal fraud laws, especially mortgage fraud, securities fraud or commodities fraud through the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009.

- Expands the consumer rights of credit card holders, through the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009.
- Gives the Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco products and the ability to initiate food recalls and hold importers responsible for the safety of the food which they bring into the country through passage of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.
- Designated two million acres of wilderness for protection, added three new parks to the National parks System and designated ten new National Heritage Areas.
- Extends the tax cuts for the middle class and establishes a payroll tax holiday.
- Ratified the New START Treaty with Russia.

I understand that we are disappointed that the Bush Tax cuts for the wealthy were extended and that a public option was not included in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. I personally am disappointed that we have not made more progress on developing green technology and on addressing global warming. However I suggest that we look at the last two years as the glass being half full, not half empty.

Sincerely,

*Richard Reichard*

*President, S.I.D.A.*

## **Public Advocate Bill De Blasio**

Bill de Blasio was sworn in as New York City's Public Advocate on January 1, 2010. The Office of the Public Advocate is part watchdog, part ombudsman, part reformer—it's the one place New Yorkers can turn when government has failed them. Public Advocate de Blasio works directly with constituents to hold New York City government accountable. And when systemic problems exist that deprive New Yorkers of their rightful voice in City decisions, or that deny them the services they need, the Public Advocate fights to change laws and policies to get things working again.



In his first year in office, Bill de Blasio has expanded the role of the Public Advocate and pushed to make it the most responsive office in government. He has focused on engaging the public based on the fundamental belief that treating New Yorkers as stakeholders in their government leads to better policies for our City.

As one of his first acts in office, Public Advocate de Blasio launched the Department of Organizing and Constituent Services to engage New Yorkers and neighborhood groups directly in the machinery of government. The Department provides resources in seven languages on mobilizing neighbors and accessing different parts of City government to win change. Community organizing plays a central role in each of the campaigns undertaken by the Office of the Public Advocate.

Since taking office, Public Advocate de Blasio has made transparent government a priority. It began with the creation of an online portal for City Council Members to post the grant applications they receive and approve for funding—which resulted in a comprehensive mandatory program that will open up all grants by members to the public eye. The Public Advocate's efforts have continued by posting his Office's meetings with registered lobbyists online.

A fierce supporter of tenants' rights, Public Advocate de Blasio has sought to hold landlords to account when they fail to provide basic housing standards. He pushed for tougher



penalties on landlords who fail to provide heat and hot water. And by creating NYC's Worst Landlords Watch List, he has given tenants the power to publicly shame landlords who violate the law and allow their buildings to fall into dangerous disrepair.

Public Advocate de Blasio has received national recognition for his work to rein in the excessive influence of corporate political donations made possible by the Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling. The founder of a national coalition of local and state elected officials, he has secured changes to the policies of major corporations like Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase, who have pledged to refrain from unlimited and anonymous political spending. Using his seat on New York City's pension board, Bill de Blasio has fought to leverage the City's enormous pension investments to hold businesses accountable for being good corporate citizens.

As an ex-officio member of the City Council, Public Advocate de Blasio has introduced legislation on a wide range of issues, including preventing housing discrimination, protecting L.G.B.T. youth, establishing independent budgeting for oversight offices and agencies, tracking youth's involvement with the foster care system, requiring recycling in schools, increasing public disclosure of corporate political spending, establishing a subway riders bill of rights, banning Styrofoam in government offices, and a creating a website to track Freedom of Information Law requests.

Prior to his election as Public Advocate, Bill de Blasio served in Mayor Dinkins' Administration, and under then-Secretary Andrew Cuomo at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He was elected to represent District 39 in the New York City Council in 2002, where he served as Chairman of the General Welfare Committee.

Bill de Blasio lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn with his wife Chirlane, and their two children, Chiara and Dante.

## **Congressman Michael McMahon**

*Congressman Michael McMahon will be a guest speaker at our January 18 Annual Membership Meeting. His office provided the following statement*

Mike McMahon has served the Staten Island Community for many years. He has served as counsel to Assemblywomen Elizabeth Connelly, Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano and City Councilman Jay O'Donovan. He was elected to the New York City Council in 2001 and served until 2008. In 2008 he ran and was elected as the first Democrat in 30 years to the U.S. Congress from the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

In just a year and a half in office, Rep. McMahon has established himself as a passionate and forward-thinking elected official; an independent and thoughtful voice for the people of Staten Island and Brooklyn; and a hardworking public servant.

His legislative priorities demonstrate his hometown values and lay the foundation for his agenda: working to get our economy moving again, paving a path for fiscal responsibility, reducing the tax burden for middle class families, improving our homeland security against foreign threats, increasing educational opportunities, and providing our veterans and seniors with the support and respect they deserve.

A member of the centrist New Democratic Coalition, he was chosen to be Freshmen Class Whip for the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, named Vice Chairman of the Maritime Transportation and Coast Guard Subcommittee and invited to join the prestigious U.S. Department of State (DOS) and National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) Public-Private Partnership Steering Committee. Rep. McMahon was selected to serve on the House's influential Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, as well as the prestigious Committee on Foreign Affairs.

In February 2010, Rep. McMahon was rated the most centrist Member in the House of Representatives by National Journal Magazine's annual 'Vote Ratings', demonstrating his independent and balanced approach to legislating. Just before taking office, the New York Times called then-newly elected McMahon "a moderate who is not particularly wedded to the right or the left...many of his colleagues in the [New York City] Council say he is more of a pragmatist who is less concerned with political philosophy than with evaluating issues case by case."

Rep. McMahon has sponsored 15 bills. He has also cosponsored 247 bills, 13 of which have been signed into law, ranking Rep. McMahon in the top 4% of members in terms of legislative success. Some of those bills include:

**VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT ACT (H.R. 1308), NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS ACT OF 2009 (H.R. 3423), DERIVATIVE TRADING ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISCLOSURE ACT (H.R. 3300), THE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMUTER TOLL FAIRNESS ACT OF 2009 (H.R. 3960), THE ELIZABETH A. CONNELLY ACT (H.R. 4544), IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS SANCTIONS ACT (H.R. 4647), THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PRESERVATION ACT OF 2010 (H.R. 5418), THE SUPPORT WORKING PARENTS ACT.**

**Rep. McMahon co-sponsored or supported many important pieces of legislation that came before the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. A small sampling of those bills include: AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) including the McMahon amendment to increase transit funding and the mass transit tax break, AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA), THE JAMES ZADROGA 9/11 HEALTH AND COMPENSATION ACT OF 2009 (H.R. 847) COSPONSORED, 'DON'T ASK DON'T TELL' REPEAL: COSPONSORED , LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT (H.R. 11) COSPONSORED, THE 2009 HAITI CHARITABLE DEDUCTION ACT (H.R. 4462) COSPONSORED, THE AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT OF 2009 (H.R. 2454), NEW ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION TO GIVE AMERICANS SOLUTIONS ACT (H.R. 1835) COSPONSORED, CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT (H.R. 627), THE IRAN REFINED PETROLEUM SANCTIONS ACT (H.R. 2194), THE INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT (H.R. 2701),**

Below is a short list of some of the federal funds Rep. McMahon has secured for his district:

- \$39.6 million for access improvements throughout the phase 1 corridor of the Staten Island Expressway.
- Over \$11 million in Small Business grants to 45 small businesses in our district.
- \$175 million to rehabilitate the St. George Ferry Terminal Ramps: This is the largest stimulus project in the City of New York. The project will focus on the eight vehicular ramps and one pedestrian bridge located within the terminal site.
- \$2.5 million to expand the Park-and-Ride in Eltingville.
- \$1.9 million to expand the Park-and-Ride in Huguenot.
- Approximately \$18.3 million of the Title I funding and \$19.1 million in IDEA funding will be awarded to eligible Staten Island schools.

Approximately \$3.4 million in ARRA funding, designated for community health centers was awarded to Beacon Christian Health Clinic and Community Health Center of Richmond (\$1.7 million awarded to each).

- Over \$1.7 million in two grants to CSI to expand its research of electronic properties of various materials and its High-Performance Computing Center, respectively.
- \$46.7 million for upkeep of the Staten Island Ferry fleet. .
- Approximately \$60 million for State Emergency Stabilization support to keep teachers in their jobs.
- \$381,490 for a ferry access and traffic mitigation shuttle for St. John's University.
- \$7.7 million Department of Transportation grant awarded to the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority to complete construction of the Charleston Bus Annex on Arthur Kill Road in Staten Island.
- \$700,000 for a City-Wide Terrorism Emergency Task Force.
- \$476,000 to complete phase I of the expansion project of SIUH's Emergency and Trauma Center and \$600,000 to complete Phase II of the project.

\$12.1 million in capital and rental support was awarded to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul who will use the funds to construct seventy-nine one-bedroom units for low income elderly persons at the former Markham Gardens site in West Brighton.

- \$100,000 to the North Shore Rescue Squad for a new ambulance.
- \$50,000 "Museums for America" grant was awarded to the Staten Island Children Museum by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- \$1.8 million to rehabilitate the 86<sup>th</sup> Street subway station in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.
- \$2.4 million from the Federal Highway Administration's Ferry Boat Discretionary Grants to replace oil barge #4 in the Staten Island Ferry fleet.

This is just a short list of some of the accomplishments of Rep. McMahon's tenure in Washington and does not include all of the work of his district offices in helping constituents with governmental issues and of his involvement in local issues.

## Minutes

### **General Membership Meeting December 21, 2010**

President Richard Reichard called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

#### **Minutes**

Joann Olbrich made a motion to accept the minutes as published in the newsletter. Joy Robins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

Vice President Dennis Brown presented highlights from the Executive Committee meeting held on November 30, 2010. He mentioned that candidates running for office will give brief statement tonight and will need to present a 200-word statement to Chris Bauer for January's newsletter. He mentioned that John Lavelle showed the Executive Committee some pages from the new web site. There was also discussion about holding various monthly events such as the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Social Security. He explained that this was one of President Reichard's ideas. Dennis mentioned that he contacted John Vincent Scalia, owner of the Old Bermuda Inn, about hosting the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Social Security.

Dennis gave kudos to President Reichard for his various ideas to promote the Democratic Party and for all his work as President of S.I.D.A. during the past two years. Dennis also mentioned that he was starting an on-line petition to remove Justice Alito from office for violating judicial ethics. President Reichard said that Justice Alito attends political fundraisers and should be removed from the bench for violation of judicial rules. He said that he would send links for the on-line petition.

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

Social Secretary Liz Price said that the recent holiday party was a great event. She is planning the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner for September. Club members interested in helping with this event should contact Liz.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Gary Carsel reported the following:

Balance – 11-30-10\$ 7,043.97

Balance – 12-21-10\$11,180.47

Gary reviewed recent expenses and income with club members.

**Guest Speaker  
State Senator Diane J. Savino**

Senator Savino said she felt we needed to mourn the current state of the Democratic Party and discuss the future. She said we have to think back to where we were in 2008, think about what happened and what the voters wanted. She said that we took back the government from the Republicans, we were in debt and we had to capture the heart and soul of people. Senator Savino said that the stimulus package wasn't big enough and not enough people were able to get back to work.

Senator Savino feels that people want change but they don't know what they want. She said that we need health care reform in this country and that the costs have escalated well past the rate of inflation. Senator Savino spoke about changing the New York State Senate Conference. She also said that we need to find someone to run for Congress in two years. We need someone who believes in economic justice for all. The government needs to regain the trust of the people. After her presentation, Senator Savino opened up the floor to questions.

She mentioned that people are fickle now and the government has to go after the people with new solutions. The problem in New York State is finding ways to attract people to run for office. She also mentioned the Democrats need a rationale for why they need to be in charge again.

Senator Savino mentions that she is proud of her many accomplishments while in office. She also mentioned that the Democrats have done a lot, but it hasn't been reported.

Senator Savino blamed some of the problems on the "Master Card" mentality. She mentioned that people used to save for things by putting them on layaway and paying them off. But then came the credit card. People want instant gratification. She compared this to people wanting the government to provide that instant gratification. Senator Savino said that people want what they can't afford immediately.

President Reichard thanked Senator Savino for her interesting presentation. He said that they blame Democrats when things go wrong. If the Democrats want to come back, they have to become the party for good government.

### **Executive Committee Candidates**

President Reichard gave candidates running for club office an opportunity to speak before the club.

He mentioned that there are two candidates running for President. Whoever doesn't win President would become Vice President.

The Candidates for Club Officers that spoke were: John Lavelle, President; Dennis Brown, President; Mark Herman, Executive Secretary; Marie Dwyer, Corresponding & Recording Secretary; Tom Scherbenko, Treasurer; Liz Price, Social Secretary. Candidates for At-Large Positions that spoke were: Susan Chew, Peter Killen, Roy Moskowitz, Rosemary Palladino, Loretta Prisco, Bonnie Rothman and Paul Scublinsky.

President Reichard thanked the candidates for their presentations. He also mentioned that members would need to vote for 5 at-large members. Loretta Prisco reminded the candidates to submit their 200 word statements to Chris Bauer by January 1, 2011.

### **New Business**

Tom Shcherbenko mentioned that the South Shore Dems are holding an event on January 9. He made a motion to buy a ¼-page ad in their journal (\$35.00) and to purchase a ticket for the President (\$55.00). David Jones made a friendly amendment to take a ½-page ad for \$75.00 and to use it to advertise our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The friendly amendment was accepted. The motion to purchase the ad and buy the ticket passed unanimously.

John Lavelle mentioned that Mike Arvanites proposed that we do a reciprocal thing with other clubs. He said that Mike proposed that each club give the other clubs a complimentary ticket and ad for their event. This proposal is being referred to the Executive Committee.

Joann mentioned that she had spoken to Chairman Gulino and Loretta Prisco about reviving County's Public Policy Committee. Loretta mentioned that she would contact Chairman Gulino after the holidays.

Joy mentioned that the Lathrope Voorpsuy Memorial Scholarship application is available and that she can send out more.

President Reichard announced that the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 29 at his home. The speakers for the January 18 meeting will be Congressman Michael McMahon, and New York City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio. He also mentioned that we would have the election of officers.

Mary Kain made a motion that everyone has a Merry Christmas. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 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 December 8, 2010

Printed December 8, 2010

### **Blame Senate Republicans for Stalling the Zadroga Bill**

At a press conference at Borough Hall last week, a group of worried Republicans, including Congressman-elect Michael Grimm joined Borough President James Molinaro in an attempt to spin the reasons for the delay of the passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 health-care bill.

Their spin is that both Democrats and Republicans are responsible for the delay. However the facts indicate that it is the Senate Republicans that are holding up passage of the bill. On September 20<sup>th</sup> Democrats in the House passed the bill with the support of only 17 Republicans. Since then the bill has been held up in the Senate because Democrats can't get around a Republican filibuster.

In an attempt to put the blame for the delay on Democrats, Mr. Molinaro criticized the Senate for adding "so many extraneous amendments to the bill that it resembled a Christmas tree."

However, a quick review of the Senate bill (S.1334) reveals that there are no amendments to this bill. The real reason for concern among Republican lawmakers is Senator Mitch McConnell's pledge not to allow a vote on this bill until the tax cuts for the top 2 percent are extended.

Their rallying cry ought to be "Millionaires and billionaires before first responders."

- Richard Reichard

Printed in *New York Daily News*  
Online December 9, 2010  
Printed December 9, 2010

### **Traitors**

Staten Island: Regarding their refusal to pass the Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, one thing is very obvious about the Republicans in Congress: They are lying, heartless bastards.

- *Joann Olbrich*

Online December 10, 2010  
Printed December 10, 2010

### **Give Yourself a Treat: Go See Harbor Lights Production**

Two weeks ago, our neighbors, Tamara Jenkins and Jay Montgomery, founders of Harbor Lights Theater Company, suffered a devastating fire that caused severe damage to their home and the theater company's offices.

Yet despite this traumatic experience, they went on to complete the run of their last (screamingly funny) show, "I Hate Hamlet." The two are now in rehearsal for their next show, "An O. Henry Christmas," which will be presented on Dec. 10, 11 and 12 at the Music Hall of the Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden.

Tamara and Jay have developed what is probably the most consistently high-quality, progressive theater experience available on Staten Island. They not only perform; they teach theater arts to young people. Their presence in our community is something we should celebrate and support. There is no better way than to order tickets now for their next show.

Ticket prices are reasonable and are priced on a sliding scale, to accommodate as many theatergoers as possible. We urge our neighbors to support Tamara, Jay and the high quality theatrical experience they provide our community, show after show. More information is available at their Web site: <http://www.theharborlightstheatercompany.org>.

- *Dan Icolari*

Online December 10, 2010  
Printed December 13, 2010

### **Obama's Tax Deal with GOP is America at Its Worst**

The tax deal President Obama made with Senate Republicans is an affront to all Americans. It gives money to those who don't need it as a condition of giving it to those who do.

It will add to already massive debt when we need to develop infrastructure. The effects last far beyond the original construction.

During the Clinton administration, our taxes helped put millions of people to work, paid our nation's debts and left a \$2-trillion surplus.

This is not the America where I grew up during the Depression and World War II. People helped stricken neighbors and worked together.

During World War II, we had shortages and rationing. People showed silver stars for family members in service and gold stars for those who gave their lives. Many volunteered for the war effort.

We were a community, working together with common goals and values. Today's rule seems to be, "Watch out for number one." Then, the number was "all of us." We shared what we had, including hardships.

*- Ralph Dickar*

Online December 26, 2010

### **We Have a Shortage of Hospital Rooms, Not Hotel Rooms**

Reading recent reports about the hotel investors on Staten Island, I can only wonder why there is a need for such an investment.

For the residents of Staten Island I feel the immediate occupancy rate deficiency is quality hospital rooms.

Maybe these investors can reach out to the health systems in Manhattan and evaluate this pressing need and establish an affiliation for a community hospital on Staten Island.

There are a number of us here who find this idea a much needed priority. In addition to having a choice of a health system compared to

the current local environment, this would provide local employment as well.

A new community hospital would certainly a boost to Staten Island.

For those of you who are currently having issues with the health systems here as some recent letters have stated, you can call the New York State Department of Health Centralized Hospital Intake Program hotline number at 1-800-804-5447 about your concerns.

This is one resource which should be utilized when you feel there are no other alternatives as some of us don't get a chance to follow up on such issues.

- John Healey

Online December 26, 2010

### **Why Cathie Black Should Not Have Been Allowed to be Chancellor**

State Education Commissioner David Steiner shouldn't have given Cathie Black a waiver to become chancellor because:

- She sits on the IBM board and Dell won't get contracts;
- She can't know our children. She sent hers to a boarding school and probably doesn't know her own;
- Teachers won't be able to get a Pepsi as she sat on the Coca-Cola board;
- She doesn't know how to spell "Cathy";
- She sits on the board of a 450-children charter, pays its head \$442,000, with a 75-percent teacher turnover;
- At 66 years, wearing stilettos and pointy shoes, she cannot stand for 6 hours as teachers must;
- Asked if Cosmopolitan, one of her magazines, was going to charge for the sex tip of the day, she responded "Yeah, \$2.99, cheaper than a hooker";
- Imagine negotiating wages with a woman owning a \$47,600 bracelet;
- She won't tolerate school lunches. Her favorite meals are osso bucco at Babbo, and lobster at The Palm;
- "Frontline" reported that rogreers called in death squads to terrorize and murder unionists at Colombian Coke plants. As a member of the company's public issues and diversity committee, Black must've been aware of the allegations;
- All of the above.

- Loretta Prisco

Printed in *The New York Times*  
Online December 31, 2010  
Printed December 31, 2010

## Reforming Juvenile Justice

Re "Mayor Wants City Oversight of Young Inmates" (news article, Dec. 22):  
The city-versus-state debate about juvenile justice reform in New York  
distorts reality and oversimplifies the solution.

Mayoral control is not a silver bullet. Now, the city and state both struggle to provide children with comprehensive services, and to operate facilities that are undercapacity, have shockingly high recidivism rates, and lack public accountability and transparency.

No matter who controls the system, meaningful, long-lasting reform will depend on a number of key principles. We need a mechanism for independent and external oversight, a commitment to decreasing the number of detained and incarcerated youths, and sustained fiscal support for alternative programs.

Policy makers must also incorporate the experience and wisdom of young people and their families and communities into the operation of the system. And of critical importance are built-in checks and balances to ensure that no single government official or agency can unilaterally operate the system behind closed doors.

- *Gabrielle Prisco*

*The writer is director of the Juvenile Justice Project of the Correctional Association of New York*

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**Happy Birthday Ralph!**  
**You are the love of my life.**

♥ ♥ ♥ Joy ♥ ♥ ♥

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## **Executive Committee Candidate Statements**

*We will elect our Executive Committee at our January 18, 2011 Annual Membership Meeting. In addition to having an opportunity to present themselves at the December 21, 2009 General Membership Meeting, the candidates were asked to submit a 200 word statement for publication in the newsletter. Here are those statements. The Nominating Committee received interest from two members for the Presidency, Dennis Brown and John Lavelle. The Nominating Committee's decision was to nominate both for the positions of President and Vice President. Both nominees agreed to serve in either position. As a result, we will have two ballots. The first will be for the election of President. The results will determine the candidate for Vice President on the second ballot.*

Office.....**President**

.....**Vice President**

Candidate..**Dennis Brown**

I worked at Mt. Loretto in 1970; joined BLAST; moved back to Yonkers, became a Democratic District Leader; was nominated for N.Y.S. Senate in the Yonkers/Bronx district; moved back to Staten Island in 1973; married Frances Ruffino ; was endorsed by S.I.D.A. and Citizen's Union in 1978 for the N.Y.S. Assembly Primary (60<sup>th</sup> A.D.)

Work experience: Assistant Director, Y.P.I.S. of Staten Island; C.R.C. and Director of Vocational Rehabilitation, Richboro Community Mental Health Council; Supervisor of Special Projects at N.Y.C. D.O.E.; Director of Contract Administration at N.Y.C. H.P.D.; V.P. at NYSBA; Contractor and Carpenters Union member; Instructor: construction skills and OSHA.

Memberships (Past and/or Present): Community Board 2; Project Hospitality; NYACC for Scouting; Staten Island Economic Development Planning Committee; N.R.P.A.; Last Chance Pond Wildlife Refuge Foundation; Holy Rosary Parish Council; South Beach Civic Association; Capuchin Franciscan Leadership Council; Democratic Organization of Richmond County; Gaeta Democratic Club; Executive Committee Member of Staten Island Democratic Party.

I propose to foster your active involvement in S.I.D.A. governance, policy development and action. I would like to empower you to continue and enhance your activism and action in response to your highest ideals and principles. We need to fight for constitutional rights, progressive leadership, reform and good government on all levels.

Office..... **President**  
**Vice President**  
Candidate. **John Lavelle**

I would like to thank the Nominating Committee for the honor of being nominated for President of this organization. It would be a privilege to serve as your President, and I hope you consider my candidacy.

S.I.D.A. has been the reform club and the conscious of the Democratic Party on Staten Island for 50 years, and we are needed now more than ever. We faced a year of terrible losses after a decade of tremendous gains. We need to regroup and be ready for 2012 to re-elect President Obama and have strong democratic candidates that promote our values for all political offices on Staten Island. We witnessed a political club, independent of its party, exert tremendous influence this year. S.I.D.A. has the ability to do the same next year. I can provide the type of leadership needed to help us accomplish this.

Over this past year, I was very excited to take the lead on the creation of the Legal Committee and the redesign of our soon to be re-launched website. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve as President and work with the Executive Committee and membership to bring even more good ideas and tools to fruition. Thank you.

Office.....**Executive Secretary**  
Candidate...**Mark Herman**

I am running for reelection as Executive Secretary. I have been a member of S.I.D.A. since its beginning in 1961 and am the last founding member.

I have been very active in the club and in the Democratic Party these last 50 years. I have served in every elected office in the club, have been a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, was a District Leader for 10 years, Commissioner of Elections for five years, and am currently a State Committeeman from the 61<sup>st</sup> A.D.

I love our club and feel it is relevant enough to last another 50 years, and remember, a bad Democrat is better than a good Republican!

Office.....**Corresponding and Recording Secretary**  
Candidate . **Marie Dwyer**

I would like to thank the Nominating Committee for asking me to run again this year. I have served as the club's Corresponding & Recording Secretary for the past eight years and consider it a great honor. I would really like to continue to work with S.I.D.A.'s Executive Committee this coming year.

I find reporting on the various General and Executive Committee meetings both challenging and rewarding as I strive to do the best job I can.

I really enjoy working with S.I.D.A.'s Executive Committee to help plan interesting meetings, and events but most importantly uniting to help get more Democratic Candidates elected to public office on Staten Island and in Brooklyn .

I have learned so much about politics as an S.I.D.A. member and officer. Most importantly, that each one of our voices count and that we need to take a stand for what we believe in.

I look forward to the coming year wish all the members and my fellow officers a very happy and successful New Year.

Office.....**Social Secretary**  
Candidate...**Liz Price**

I was very happy when the Executive Committee asked me to take over the job of Social Secretary after Alex moved last summer. I really enjoyed contributing to making the September banquet and December holiday party big successes. Now I'm thrilled that the nominating committee has suggested that the club elect me to the position.

As I mentioned when I ran for the Executive Committee last year, I've spent my life working for non-profit organizations that ranged from community circus and theatre to providing legal assistance for immigrants and people affected by H.I.V. I fought to protect tenants from condo conversions in Chicago, was the business manager for a multi-lingual community newspaper in San Francisco, and currently do legal research for the elderly. I worked for the Mobilization for Peace Jobs and Justice and Reagan's attacks on working people around the world.

I see S.I.D.A. as the club that can do the most good for the progressive liberal Democrats on Staten Island. I hope that you will vote for me so that I can continue using my community organizing skills to make our club bigger and stronger.

Office.....**Treasurer**  
Candidate.....**Tom Sherbenko**

I truly appreciate the nominating committee's suggestion that the club elect me Treasurer. I've been in awe of Gary Carsel's work and promise to keep to the high standard that he set.

I know I can handle the accounting. I've been teaching sixth grade in Canarsie for eleven years. Before that, I was a computer programmer for almost twenty years.

My interest in politics goes back to the New Democratic Coalition of 1968. After watching the Democratic National Convention debacle, we spent a lot of time and money campaigning for reform candidates like Paul O'Dwyer and against incumbent right-wing Democrats. Is a bad Democrat always better than a good Republican? Probably, but in 1969, we campaigned to get registered-Republican Mayor Lindsay reelected on the Independent and Liberal Party lines (he changed his registration two years later).

S.I.D.A. embodies that same spirit of progressive, liberal values. S.I.D.A. should lead the way to ending the wars in Asia, exposing and fighting racism, standing up for working people and labor unions, protecting undocumented immigrants, abolishing the death penalty, and promoting real national health care. At the same time, we should support and encourage Democratic candidates, as the alternative will only be Republican control.

*The statements for Members at-Large are printed in the order they were received. There are eight candidates running for five positions.*

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate..**Susan Chew**

Thank you for nominating me for Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee of the Staten Island Democratic Association. I served in this position from the end of 2007 until 2009, when I became the Social Secretary for 2009. This year, I took up the cause of protecting our water from hydraulic fracturing drilling for natural gas in New York State,

including our watershed. In this regard, I wrote a white paper which I brought to the Issues Committee. Loretta Prisco (Issues Committee Chair), Richard Reichard (President), Bonnie Rothman, Paul Scublinsky, and I fine-tuned the paper, and it was presented to the Club's membership for endorsement, and was unanimously accepted. This year, I was also honored with the Peggy Johnston Club Service Award. It has always been an honor to be a part of this lively group of Democrats. I have found that I have received much in return for my participation, including but not limited to, the assistance and encouragement that the members have given me in our mission to protect our water.

I hope that you will vote for me once again for a Member-at-Large, and will always continue to do all I can to be a respected member of the S.I.D.A.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate...**Bonita Rothman**

I first became involved politically as a member of Common Cause where I organized a telephone tree of the members in my Congressional District (no computer in those days) so that I could contact and get feedback from others. At that time I was living in Philadelphia and I interviewed the candidates for office and issued a press release about them. At the same time, with the League of Women Voters I organized and held a Candidate's Night for the community. I also did background research about coal mining which combined with lobbying by those in Scranton was able to get a mining bill passed in the state which made for cleaner air.

I have lived on Staten Island since 1975 and have taught writing at C.S.I. and at Wagner College. For several years I was a volunteer tutor with Learning Leaders and worked with students at Susan Wagner High School.

I joined Move-on early in its development and helped to organize it on Staten Island holding meetings and making calls. As a member of the steering committee I was able to meet with Congressman McMahon to lobby for his support for the Healthcare Bill. I've handed out leaflets, held meetings at my home and supported rallies for healthcare.

I've been a member of S.I.D.A. for a number of years now and during that time I've manned telephones and canvassed for signatures before elections. I've worked on a position paper with respect to education with Loretta Prisco and I've worked with Susan Chew on the issue of hydro-fracking.

I would be honored to be part of the Executive Committee.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate .... **Peter Killen**

After retiring in 2000 as a Detective Specialist, from the N.Y.P.D., I volunteered for the following candidates in their runs for elected office: Frank Barbara, Norman Siegel, Janele Hyer-Spencer, John Luisi, James Pocchia, Tony Avella, and Michael McMahon.

I am the Past President of the Bay Ridge Community Council and the Men's Club of Bay Ridge. I am currently the President of the A.A.R.P. Bay Ridge Chapter 3036 and the President of the Bay Ridge Lions Club Inc. I sit on the executive boards of the Bay Ridge Community Service Organization, the Bay Ridge Council on Aging, the Bay Ridge Ambulance Volunteer Organization (BRAVO), and Shore Ridge Cares and am the Executive Director of the Bay Ridge Consumer Federation, where I fought the M.T.A. Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority's \$1.00 administrative fee on all EZ-Pass Holders and WON.

I will also be fighting to stop any hydro fracturing in New York State in order to keep our waters safe and pure.

As a Member at-Large of S.I.D.A. I will do everything in my power to promote the election of Democrats on Staten Island and in the City and State and with S.I.D.A. continue the fight for justice and democracy in our country.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate...**Roy Moskowitz**

I was born in Monticello, New York in 1962. I moved to Staten Island from Manhattan in 1994, initially living in New Springville before moving to Castleton Corners in 06.

I was 14 when I volunteered for my first political campaign, Morris Udall's 76 presidential bid. In 1984, I was Presidential Candidate and California Senator Alan Cranston's Syracuse University Coordinator.

After graduating from Syracuse, I worked as a broadcast and print journalist and have spent most of my professional life in advertising, marketing and PR. I blog about politics and other topics at the Daily Gotham ([dailygotham.com/blog/roy\\_moskowitz](http://dailygotham.com/blog/roy_moskowitz)), Culture Kitchen ([culturekitchen.com/roy\\_moskowitz/blog](http://culturekitchen.com/roy_moskowitz/blog)) and Room Eight ([r8ny.com/blog/roymoskowitz](http://r8ny.com/blog/roymoskowitz)).

Locally, I played a progrescant role in extending Mid-Island express bus operating hours and handled Steve Harrison and Debi Roses' campaign media and P.R. I am a County Committee member and maintain the Island Democratic Party website. I implemented an online fundraising tool for the County Party, which I can also do for S.I.D.A.

I joined S.I.D.A. in 2005 and am also a DORC, Gaeta and North Shore member. I'd like to regularly schedule journalists (I recruited journalists Errol Louis and Ben Smith to speak at S.I.D.A. in 2007), think tank policy wonks and famous political consultants as meeting speakers. Other programming ideas include political speech contests and book clubs. I'd like to also work on establishing an S.I.D.A. PAC.

I am an unabashed liberal, which means I believe in liberty, equality, peace and justice.

To win elections, it's imperative for the Democratic Party to better communicate its accomplishments and prevent right wing lies from being perceived as fact. We need to rebrand Republicans and the Tea Party as selfish, heartless and un-American. Ultimately, Democrats lose elections because conservative constituencies to their credit consistently vote, while Democratic leaning groups fail to regularly do so. We must be more successful at persuading youth, blacks, Latinos, and single women to show up on Election Day.

Office.....**Member at-Large**

Candidate...**Michelle Akyempong** Akyempong (phonetically – a chum pong)

Happy New Year to everyone. I would like to introduce myself to some and re-introduce myself to others. I am running for Member-at-Large of S.I.D.A.

I am currently the Recording Secretary for the Democratic County Committee. I am also Vice President of Legislation & Political Action for DC 37 – Social Service Employees Union – Local 371, 18,000 members strong. As a community activist involved in other organizations, I share the progressive political passion and views of many S.I.D.A. members.

In this great past election year, I have assisted with the mission of S.I.D.A. We had speakers from different areas of the political arena. We had debates on issues of health care and war. We even had differences of opinions. I enjoy the historians speaking about “back when”.

I would like your continued support in voting for me as a Member- at- Large. Thank you in advance.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate....**Loretta Prisco**

I am asking once again for your support for election to the Executive Committee of S.I.D.A. Sometimes I wonder if this request is more in my own interest! The opportunity to be on the Committee of the most active and most progressive Democratic club on Staten Island is a thrill.

I am glad to be part of a group that is interested in and allows me to bring the critical issues of education to the table and a group that allows for diverse opinions.

We have grown from a club that was on the outside pushing in, to a dazzling club that is recognized as adhering the true principles of the Party and actively working for economic and social justice. We don't hide from it – we aggressively and passionately push for reform. The only thing one gets from begging on one's knees, isn't worth having – and we all recognize that. Yes, democracy is time consuming and difficult – our meetings are long and hard work. Sometimes I take an Excedrin before going to a meeting! But that is what is necessary, and I want to continue to be part of this exciting work. Thank you.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate....**Rosemary Palladino**

I have been a member of S.I.D.A. for about 10 years and was honored to be asked to run for the Executive Committee. I feel I would be a good addition because I believe in listening before I talk.

I know a lot about government and city services from my work as District Manager of Community Board 1 and Commissioner of the N.Y.C. Board of Standards and Appeals. I am a member of several Dem clubs and the County Committee. I have worked for many candidates including Karen Burstein, Bill Murphy, Janele, and McMahan, and look forward to supporting more strong dem candidates in the future.

I am a cofounder of Staten Island Stonewall, an organization dedicated to harnessing the power of Staten Island's L.G.B.T. community, which has sponsored candidate forums and issued endorsements in local elections.

My partner, Marianne Brennick, and I have been together for 37 years, and have lived in Sunnyside, Concord and now Grasmere. We've gone to Albany to lobby for civil rights for same-sex citizens and intend to continue to do so until it is no longer necessary. I recently retired from State service and intend, eventually, to start a private law practice here. Thanks for your consideration.

Office.....**Member at-Large**  
Candidate....**Paul Scublinsky**

As I am new I thought I'd document how I became involved with S.I.D.A. and the Staten Island Democratic Party. It did not start all that augustly.

In 2000 I was not that different from most Staten Islanders. I was a registered Democrat but a conservative one. I split my tickets and that year voted mostly Republican and was drifting towards the Republican Party. George W Bush changed that. I felt deeply betrayed by the lies George W Bush told that got us into a needless war in Iraq. Humiliated by the notion that torture would become routine American policy. And the incompetence and corruption of Bush's right wing policies opened my eyes to thoughts and ideas I had dismissed. And starting in 2007 did volunteer work for Obama.

After Fossella withdrew on a lark I attended the Democratic Convention just to see who they'd endorse for the open seat. My curiosity piqued I applied for an open seat on the Democratic Committee and attended a meeting of the only club that had a website with a date and time. S.I.D.A.

My goal then and now was simple. To listen and learn and educate myself. And despite what my ego may tell me I still have much to learn from all of you. That is why I'm here and why I wish to serve the club.

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**DEAR MEMBERS OF S.I.D.A.:**

S.I.D.A. has a great heritage of 50 years of service and we have been a strong voice and vehicle for positive change. I see our strength continuing to come from the individuals who make up this Club, their passion for equality, sound environmental practices, social justice and peace, and their commitment to fighting for what they believe in. My platform and ideas are to foster these ideals and issues; to lead the club into this new year with a renewed mission and enthusiasm to reform and assist good government on all levels; to produce policy studies and recommendations and influence public policy; and to encourage and support highly-qualified public servants and candidates for office.

In Executive Committee I proposed a special committee to prepare for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and I'm happy that Liz Price will be at the helm of that committee as Social Secretary. I envision John Lavelle as our contact with the developer of our new website, and also our Legal Committee chair, and I trust it will be very active this year. I hope Joy Robins and Ralph Dickar will head up a special Archives Committee to prepare a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Report. In that vein also, I would like an oral history of facts and issues to be recorded and compiled from Mark Herman and many of our longtime members. I want to see advocacy for special issues continued by Loretta and Gene Prisco, Susan Chew, Joann Olbrich, Rosemary Palladino, and Michelle Akyempong. I am hoping that Peter Killen will chair an active new member recruitment program this year, and I look to Bonnie Rothman and Paul Scublinsky for specific organizing and demonstration actions and research to take our message to the streets and speak truth to power. I would like to have Roy Moscovitz step up and handle public relations for the Club, and develop monthly pre- and post-Meeting publicity as well as event promotion. My wish is that Tom Shcherbenko will do at least half as good a job as Gary Carsel did as Treasurer, that Marie Dwyer will continue to serve us ably as Corresponding and Recording Secretary, and that our outgoing President, Richard Reichard, will serve in this 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year as head of our Speaker's Committee, continuing to bring in great guest speakers. As well, it is my hope that Chris Bauer will continue to give us his time and talents to bring forth the most comprehensive political newsletter on Staten Island.

Finally, my platform and ideas would be hollow if they were not based on, and dependent upon, each and every member of S.I.D.A. for involvement, enthusiasm, and action. This has always been a Club of "activists" and I call upon you now to significantly increase your efforts; to attend and participate in our monthly meetings, events and activities; to debate issues and vote for solutions; and to be the potent force--based on ideas, ideals, and principles of service that S.I.D.A. was founded on—to wield political influence and carry us forward into a more vibrant and hopeful future.

**-Thank you. Dennis A. Brown – Vote January 18, 2011**

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[CleanWaterNY@aol.com](mailto:CleanWaterNY@aol.com)

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## Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship

**The Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund  
A 501 I 3 Nonprofit Community Organization  
P.O. Box 140371, SI, NY 10314-0371**



“The mission of the Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund will be to encourage grass-roots activism by underwriting community members in selected programs that train for community organization or for political candidacies.”

Names of candidates must be submitted by **March 7, 2011**.

To submit names, call Joy Robins at 718-816-4128.

Send applications by mail to:

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Staten Island, NY 10314-0371

or by e-mail to [joyrobins@si.rr.com](mailto:joyrobins@si.rr.com)  
or via the web at [www.lvmsf.org](http://www.lvmsf.org).

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Training Program you are applying for:

Do you have housing in the location, if not included in the program, and a means of getting to the program?

1. Why are you interested in learning community organizing/campaign skills?
2. What do you most hope to get out of the training program?
3. What previous social justice/organizing/campaign efforts have you been involved in, either as a volunteer or paid?
4. Thinking of your previous experiences, tell more about one particular thing that you did. Explain why you either felt great satisfaction in the experience, or did not feel satisfied.
5. How would you apply the skills you learn in this program?
6. Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?
7. How did you hear about this scholarship?

**List of Suggested Programs:**

(Other programs will be considered at the request of applicants.)

<http://www.midwestacademy.com/>

The Midwest Academy – Training That Works For Citizen Organizations

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

Southern Empowerment Project

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

Emily's List

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

The Women's Campaign School at Yale University

<http://www.eleanorslegacy.com/html/program.html>

The Agnes Varis Campaign Institute of the Eleanor Roosevelt Legacy

[http://www.wellstone.org/camp/category\\_page.aspx?catID=3752](http://www.wellstone.org/camp/category_page.aspx?catID=3752)

Camp Wellstone

<http://www.highlandercenter.org>

Highlander Center, New Market TN.

<http://www.whitehouseproject.org>

The White House Project

