



April 2012

Staten Island Democratic Association

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www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:



Sam Massol



Rich Florentino



Jamie Kemmerer

Citizens United Panel



Anthony Mascolo

Candidate 62nd

Assembly District

Endorsement Votes

Congress, NYS Senate, Assembly

Tuesday, April 17, 2012, 8:00 P.M.

**** NOTE LOCATION: Crown Palace****

1267 Forest Avenue (at Jewett), 718-876-7888



Endorsement Votes/New Location

At the April 17 General Meeting we will have endorsement votes for the following offices:

- United States Congress
- New York State Senate
- New York State Assembly

The April 17 Meeting will be at the following location:



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
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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. President’s Message

April 2012

The Citizens United Supreme Court Decision Must Be Overturned

A few weeks ago I read, in our own Staten Island Advance, a column by Jim Hightower, “Attack of the Billionaires.” He wrote about a meeting of, “some 300 uber-rich corporate plutocrats and their political hirelings—all intent on obliterating President Barack Obama’s re-election bid with an unprecedented deluge of viciously negative attack ads.” The meeting was hosted by the billionaire Koch Brothers in February of 2012 in preparation for what Charles Koch called, “the mother of all wars.”

Newt Gingrich’s, Rick Santorum’s and Mitt Romney’s top SuperPAC donors were among the wealthiest .000063 % of Americans who—so far—poured at least \$100,000 each into SuperPACs to pervert our elections, according to Hightower. As he concluded, “We can thank five corporatists on the Supreme Court for enabling this elite few to put up unlimited, secret, corporate dollars to buy our democracy out from under us.”

Barney Frank wrote on March 31st that, “Once again, Republicans have voted to destroy Medicare while slashing taxes for Big Oil and Billionaires. It’s time for these extremist Tea

Partiers to go...Republicans have turned their backs on the middle class and working families and sold us out to the unaccountable special interests that fund their campaigns.”

James Carville, on the same day, put it another way. “Between breakfast and dinner, on March 29th, Republicans in Congress voted to give Big Oil more tax breaks, cut seniors off from their Medicare, and give millionaires even more tax cuts. It’s enough to give you heartburn.”

Five days later, in early April, I was reading a description of Van Jones’ book, *Rebuild the Dream*, which said: “The American Dream means different things to people, but the center of gravity is always the same; an ordinary person – who was not born with great wealth, but who is willing to work hard and play by the rules – should be able to find employment, live in a good community, make progress financially, retire with dignity, and give his or her children a better life.” Van Jones claims that this dream is fading, with too many people working harder than ever, while falling further behind. All the while, the rich get richer.

The ordinary people who should have the ultimate influence over elected officials have been over-whelmed and swept aside by the SuperPACs which have become the primary vehicles for unlimited spending from wealthy organizations and individuals. According to a *New York Times* Opinion piece, “When Other Voices Are Drowned Out,” (3/25/12) “the Supreme Court’s 5-to-4 ruling in *Citizens United* in 2010 was shaped by an extreme view of the First Amendment: money equals speech, and independent spending by wealthy organizations and individuals poses no problem to the political system...” The article further claims that “the flood of money unleashed this election season (2011 - 2012) is a direct consequence of this naïve, damaging view, which has allowed wealthy organizations and individuals to drown out other voices in the campaign.”

The problem with *Citizens United* is that it makes it possible for Big Money, Big Oil and Gas, and “too big to fail” Big Banks and Wall Street interests to put people into office who support their political agendas or financial interests. “But when outside spending is unlimited, and political speech depends heavily on access to costly technology and ads, the wealthy can distort this fundamental element of democracy by drowning out those who lack financial resources.”

We saw the corrosive effects of Big Money in the Fossella and Grimm campaigns, and the 2010 mid-term elections nationally. We are hoping that in this upcoming campaign cycle, the people of Staten Island and our nation will not be taken in by the effects of the *Citizens United* ruling by the Supreme Court. However, as Hightower reminds us, we are in the billionaires’ “self-proclaimed war to enthrone their ilk over workers, consumers, the environment, and democracy itself.”

We can’t sit back, either here on Staten Island, or throughout the country, and let ourselves be marginalized by Big Money. We have to support our candidates in every way possible. We have to work as hard as we can to take our positive message to the people, and finally, we have to do everything in our power to overturn the *Citizens United* decision.

Dennis A. Brown
President



Citizens United Panel Discussion

We will have a panel presentation and discussion on the Citizens United Supreme Court case at our April 17 General Membership Meeting.



Presentation Description

Citizens United was a **terrible** decision by the Supreme Court, that opened the floodgates for unprecedented amounts of money in elections. But it is a **wonderful** opportunity to get voters engaged and involved in reforming our political process and undoing the damage done since the 1980s. Join us to learn more about the effects of Citizens United and how New York could help lead the way for the rest of the nation in meaningfully restoring our electoral process.

After discussing the Citizens United decision and the proposed amendments to overturn it, we will also discuss the campaign underway to create a statewide public campaign financing system in New York. We'll conclude with Rich Florentino's discussion on the rise of corporate power in the electoral process and the appropriate role of corporations in our society.

Panel Members

Sam Massol

Sam Massol is Common Cause NY's Associate Director. He joined Common Cause in Feb 2012. Before joining Common Cause, he spent several years as a Political/Community consultant and community activist in New York and Northern California working on environmental justice and housing issues. Sam has a B.A in Political Science/Theatre Arts from CUNY: Hunter College and an M.A. in Non Profit Management from Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy.

Jamie Kemmerer

James Kemmerer has been a small business owner for over 10 years. The pressures of the economic recession, the intense political division and the growing government dysfunction driven by ever increasing sums of money in politics inspired James to become an activist, an author and a blogger. As a community activist James has worked with a wide range of individuals, groups and coalitions across Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens. James has a BA in American Studies and Religion from Dickinson College, and an MPA from American University.

Rich Florentino

Rich Florentino is a retired engineer with over 40 years of experience in Water Quality. He has dedicated his retirement to the improvement of his community and is a founding member of Occupy Staten Island and the initiator of the Community Democracy Working Group. Rich has also participated in Occupy Wall Street and it's Visions and Goals Working Group. He is active in Peace Action of Staten Island and is a member of the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island.



Anthony Mascolo

Anthony Mascolo is a Democratic candidate for the 62nd Assembly District. He will be a guest speaker at our April 17 General Membership Meeting. The following was taken from his campaign website <http://www.votemascolo.com/>. Please note there will be an endorsement vote for the 62nd Assembly District at the meeting.

Anthony Mascolo is a partner in the law firm of Bosco and Mascolo, Esqs. LLP where he helps to resolve cases for members of the community who have suffered injuries due to accidents. Having grown up in Manor Heights, SI, he is married to the former Marie Rodsky, also a Staten Islander. Married for 32 years, they have raised 3 children on Staten Island. Their children have attended or have graduated from Staten Island schools such as the Wagner College Kindergarten, St. Joseph Hill Academy, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Msgr. Farrell High School, PS 23, St. Patricks School, Genesis at Xaverian, and St. Joseph by the Sea.

Tony obtained a B.A. in Political Science from Binghamton University and his Juris Doctor from Fordham Law School in Manhattan. Always eager to continue his education, Tony is currently studying Immigration Law on the graduate level at the CUNY School of Professional Studies.

Tony is a graduate of Msgr. Farrell High School right here on Staten Island. He was inducted onto the Msgr. Farrell High School "Wall of Fame" for meritorious service to the school having run such projects as the installation of lighting on the Track and Field Facility and Football Field. He has served as a Trustee of Msgr. Farrell and is currently serving as its legal counsel. For 19 years Tony taught a practical law course pro bono at Monsignor Farrell helping to educate young students in the practical application of the law to their lives. He also served as President of the Football Parents Club.

Tony has been a member of the Knights of Columbus since the 1980's and presently is a member of the Fr.Drumgoole Council in Richmondtown.

Tony founded the Plescia Memorial Supermeet which for many years was a showcase of young track talent on Staten Island and presently is a director of the MF Spiked Shoe Club, which will be co-sponsoring the CYO grammar school championship meet in June of 2012 here on Staten Island.

Tony has been an active member of the Richmond County Bar Association, where he served on the board of directors.

He is currently a member of the Staten Island Trial Lawyers Association, the New York State Trial Lawyers Association, the New York State Bar Association, American Immigration

Lawyers Association, and holds a seat on the Board of Directors of the New York Academy of Trial Lawyers.

He has been honored by the Staten Island Advance for Sports Service at its 1999 Staten Island Advance All Star Dinner as Service to the Community Person of the Year. He is active in community affairs, having served at various times on the Committee of Management of the Staten Island YMCA, the Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame, the Monsignor Farrell Alumni Association, and the Spiked Shoe Club.

He has served as a Director for Binghamton University Alumni Association and has been honored at Binghamton University as a member of its College in the Woods "Wall of Fame" for service to the school. Currently, he, along with his wife, host Binghamton University Admissions Events held here on Staten Island, where he brings Binghamton University to meet applicants to the University.

Mr. Mascolo believes that Staten Islanders deserve the best in legal representation and strives to have his law firm achieve that goal for its clients. He believes that a lawyer should have a great knowledge of his clients needs and values and strives to stay connected with the Staten Island through his community efforts. He will bring that same mind set to the job of a NYS Assemblyman. The community will be his clients and he will bring their needs and values to the forefront of his advocacy for the South Shore of Staten Island.



Gary Carsel

Gary Carsel is a Democratic candidate for the New York State Senate, 24th District. He was scheduled to speak at our April 17 General Membership Meeting, but due to a death in the family, he will be in California. His campaign submitted the following statement. There will be an endorsement vote for the 24th Senate District at the meeting.

Without quite as much spectacular melodrama as Odysseus's, Gary's life, nonetheless, has been an odyssey. Gary began his odyssey when at the age of 30 he left behind a job at Capitol Records as a Contracts Administrator and ventured out from his native Los Angeles to pursue life as a playwright in New York City. While in New York City, Gary was a regular at the legendary William Packard's Playwriting classes at HB Studios, before he earned a masters degree in Playwriting from Columbia University.

By the time he moved to Christchurch, New Zealand, in the mid-1990's, Gary had plays produced in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. While in Christchurch, New Zealand, Gary continued to write plays in the form of a monthly late-night series of shows called Dumped in Space, also a collection of one-minute plays, called Newsbytes. Most importantly, his daughter Casey was born.

With the birth of Casey, Gary became increasingly involved with the community. He joined the board of Casey's day care center, and he became the President of the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation.



Upon returning to New York City in early March, 2001, Gary embarked upon a career as a mediator. Following mediation experience with the New York Metropolitan Area Better Business Bureau, the Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution in the Bronx, and Civil Court in the Bronx, Gary landed a job with the New York Center for Interpersonal Development, here in Staten Island, as a mediation coordinator. Gary served for 7 years as the Civil Court Mediation Coordinator for Richmond County. Recently, Gary stepped down from his Mediation Coordinator position to devote all his energies to representing the people of the 24th Senate District in Staten Island.

Gary's involvement with Staten Island Democratic Association ('S.I.D.A.') has played a special part in his life, not only because he is a S.I.D.A. Executive Committee member and a past Treasurer, but most importantly, because S.I.D.A. introduced him to his bride-to-be, past S.I.D.A. President, Patricia "Anne" Taylor.

Gary and Anne are both active members of Temple Emanu-El in Port Richmond, regularly attending Shabbat services. In addition, Gary is also a board member and webmaster for the Lathrop Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund, a board member of the Sundog Theatre, a NAACP member, a member of the Planning Committee for the Theatre Rehabilitation for Youth (TRY) fundraiser which took place in March, on the Board of Governors for the South Shore Democratic Club, he is also a Democratic State Committee member for the 62nd Assembly District of Staten Island. An avid exercise enthusiast, Gary is a member of the Staten Island Bicycle Association, and the Staten Island Athletic Club.

Gary recently appeared in all his glory, in the 2012 Bare Facts calendar to benefit the Theatre Rehabilitation for Youth (TRY), and the Staten Island Philharmonic.



View from the First Row

LAWLESSNESS AND DISORDER – RIPPED FROM TODAY'S HEADLINES

“Nashville Charter Schools Blasted Over Racial Imbalance”

The Tennessean

“Charter Schools Face Discrimination Complaints”

Chronicle of Philanthropy

“Colorado Charter Schools Enroll Fewer With Needs”

Denver Post

“Charter Schools Enrolling Low Number of Poor Students”

Miami Herald

“Budget Analysis: Charter Spending Squeezing Education Budget”

Gotham Schools

NYC's DOE will spend \$51 million to open more than two dozen charter schools next year, according to a report by the Independent Budget Office (IBO). According to the preliminary

budget, the DOE would have to impose a \$64 million cut to general education spending next year, but the IBO estimates there will need to be \$203 million in cuts. The IBO estimated \$51 million in costs for the new schools — a figure that city officials did not dispute.

“Teach for America’s new partnership with largest for-profit charter network”

Washington Post

Teach for America is partnering with charter network, Imagine. It has come under scrutiny for its complicated real estate deals that generate millions of public dollars for Imagine. Essentially Imagine opened schools and then sold the buildings in which the schools operated to a company that then leased them back to Imagine at often extremely high rates, which are, of course, paid for out of public money. Beyond the rent, the paper also reported that Imagine’s charter schools must pay 12 percent of their budget for management costs. The standardized test scores in that city’s Imagine schools are below the state and city average.

“Fired exec: Charter-school chief fudged books”

Daily News

The founder of one of the city’s largest charter schools falsified financial records and okayed illegal construction work while serving as its principal, according to a suit filed by former school COO Gene Fisch, Jr. Stacy Winitt, executive director of the New Heights Academy in Manhattan, allegedly justified her shady practices by claiming her school was “too small to get caught”. New Heights, which has about 760 students in grades 5 through 12, budgeted \$888,000 in federal grants and \$11.7 million in state grants last year, according to its annual report.

Fisch also says Winitt ordered demolition work inside the building without a permit, “with the intention not only to deliberately violate the law, but to do so deceitfully.”

Meanwhile, the State Board of Regents yesterday pulled the plug on Brooklyn Southside Charter HS whose questionable finances are being eyed by the state Attorney General.

“Charter Schools Are Not the Silver Bullet”

In These Times

In recent years, major studies suggest that, on the whole, charter schools are producing worse educational achievement results than traditional public schools. Education technology companies promote them for their profit potential. Opponents of organized labor like the Walton family embrace them for their ability to crush teachers unions. Are charter schools living up to their original mission as experimental schools pioneering better education outcomes and reducing segregation? According to new data, it looks like those objectives are not being realized.

“Aggressive marketing by charter schools, soliciting applicants”

NYC Public School Parents

The Bloomberg administration claim that in the rapid proliferation of charter schools they are responding to parent “demand” ignores the aggressive recruiting methods they use to build up their “waiting lists.” Eva Moskowitz has hired paid recruiters to “poach” students for her charters. Not to mention her extensive and expensive advertising campaigns, in which she spent [\\$1.6 million dollars](#) on marketing efforts alone in 2009-2010, amounting to \$1,300 per incoming student.

“Report: Most city charter schools receive more per-pupil funds”

Gotham Schools

Reversing its earlier findings, the city’s Independent Budget Office has concluded in [a new study](#) that most New York City charter schools receive more funding per student than their district school peers.

(All articles are edited.)

- Loretta Prisco



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 March 15, 2012

Printed March 15, 2012

Council is Right to Refute Bad Citizens United Decision

Last year, in a 5-to-4 decision, the Supreme Court struck down portions of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law and ruled that corporations have the same free-speech rights as people.

In his 2011 State of the Union speech, President Obama said, “the Supreme Court reversed a century of law to open the floodgates for special interests...”

President Obama’s words appear to have been right on the money. Spending by special interest PACs has exceeded the money spent by candidates and has become an issue even in the current Republican primary.

There are several bills pending in Congress that would amend the Constitution to overturn the Citizens United case and plug the hole that is allowing special interest money to flood our political process.

On Jan. 4, 2012 the City Council passed a resolution (1172-2011) “...supporting an amendment to the Constitution to provide that corporations are not entitled to the entirety of protections or “rights” of natural persons....” Councilwoman Debi Rose was a co-sponsor of the resolution.

This year, the Staten Island Democratic Association voted to support the Council resolution. The resolution can be found on our website www.sidems.org, in our January newsletter.

- Dennis Brown

If a non-member writes a response to a member's letter, we will print that response in the spirit of furthering discussion.

On-line April 1, 2012

Printed April 2, 2012

Promoting Radical Left Agenda is Typical Obama

This is in response to Dennis Brown's "Council Is Right To Refute Bad Citizens United Decision," (March 15, 2012). Mr. Brown writes just like a typical liberal Democrat: distort the facts and the truth to promote a radical agenda.

Mr. Brown quotes Obama the Almighty, who stated that the Supreme Court decision reversed a century of law. Obama is a liar. The Citizens United decision reversed *Austin vs. Michigan Chamber of Commerce*, which in a 1990 decision, upheld a prohibition on political expenditures independent of campaigns. Also, not mentioned by Mr. Brown, and also missing from all of the liberal media, is the fact that Citizens United also gives the same rights to unions (along with non-profits), but you won't hear that from a liberal Democrat.

It's always about the Big Bad Corporation. Oh, there is still a prohibition on contributions from foreign entities. Last, no one was whining when the movie *Fahrenheit 9/11* was promoted during the 2004 campaign.

Once again, another example of the hypocritical left, led by that radical of all radicals, Obama, distorting facts, and ignoring logic and reasoning.

- Steve Yannolo

On-line March 21, 2012

Printed March 21, 2012

New Yorkers Must Press State to Ban Fracking

New York state and city residents are facing contamination of our water and environmental destruction from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for gas in the Marcellus Shale in New York State .

Being energy intensive, the net effect of fracking to air quality is a result dirtier than coal. Fracking — exploding shale to release gas — uses millions of gallons of OUR clean water and hundreds of chemicals: Endocrine disruptors which affect children's growth; carcinogens and neurotoxins. The Environmental Protection Agency determined water contamination in Pavilion, Wyoming , is due to fracking fluid.

Don't let this happen to us!

The Marcellus also contains a higher-than-normal radon count, which will reach your stoves, heaters and dryers.

Please call our state legislators and ask them to sign S4220A and A7218A, banning fracking in our state. Sen. Diane Savino is our only state legislator who signed the bill. Call Gov. Andrew Cuomo — 212-681-4580 — to tell him you don't want fracking in New York State.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation Environmental Impact Statement was completed last year and the DEC received more than 70,000 comments, the most comments received on any issue, most against fracking. People understand that without water, there is no life.

What will it take for our state legislators to understand this as well?

- Susan Chew

[The writer is the founder and chairwoman of New Yorkers for Clean Water, Inc.]

On-line March 21, 2012

Printed March 21, 2012

It was Democrats and Marchi Who Got the Landfill Closed

Why is it that Guy Molinari claims the credit for closing Fresh Kills, when it was Sen. John Marchi and Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano's legislation that truly closed the Fresh Kills landfill and it was then-Councilman Mike McMahon who kept it closed as chairman of the Sanitation Committee.

The Advance need not search past their own archives to see who did the screaming and who did the actual work of making sure Staten Island was never dumped on again.

Yet in Judy Randall's March 12 article "Guy Molinari lambastes Mayor Bloomberg for considering Staten Island for trash-to-energy plant," Ms. Randall once again editorializes in her article, stating, "Molinari, one of the principal architects of landfill closure in 2001."

Followed in the same article, "But Molinari — famous in his heyday for opposing and halting problematic projects from taking hold here."

For some unknown reason, Ms. Randall fails to mention neither Guy Molinari as a principal architect of Mayor Bloomberg's winning campaign nor his unending support for the mayor that now plans to reopen Fresh Kills to waste disposal. Strange.

- *Paul Cinquemani*

On-line March 25, 2012

Printed March 25, 2012

Teacher Data Reports are Unreliable Measurements

A doctor suggests medicine for a probably fatal illness. She quotes a success rate of 99.9 percent, but it may advance the disease. Take it?

But there's a 53-point margin of error. Thinking twice?

And so it is with the Teacher Data Reports — a 53-point margin of error! A teacher's career rests on a seriously flawed score.

The National Academy of Sciences warns data to evaluate teachers are so unstable that they cannot be reliable to make decisions about teachers.

Some say correctly calculated data would be useful. I disagree.

Common sense dictates that humiliating a teacher won't improve teaching. Why does a high-scoring student in fourth grade fall below standard in fifth? A child doesn't "forget" how to read.

Why does a student who was not successful after attending school 10 months a year for seven years, go to a six-week, 30 1/2-hour summer program and achieve? Do we hire magicians for summer school? Why not cancel year-round school and send children to a summer program?

Diane Ravitch said "We will someday view this era as one in which the nation turned its back on its public schools, its children, and its educators."

Sadly, true.

- *Loretta Prisco*

On-line March 25, 2012

Printed March 25, 2012

Separating Fact from Fiction about the Affordable Care Act

What is in the Affordable Care Act and what is just political spin, separating fact from fiction.

Facts:

The Affordable Care Act prevents insurance companies from denying coverage due to a pre-existing condition and from putting a lifetime limit on coverage.

It allows a child to remain on their parents' coverage until the age of 26; 2.5 million Americans, age 19 to 25 have been able to obtain coverage.

It requires insurance companies to provide free preventive care and screening for medical conditions such as cancer and diabetes.

It eliminates the Medicare prescription drug doughnut hole by 2020.

It provides Medicare recipients with prescription drug discounts. Nearly 3.6 million Medicare recipients saved \$2.1 billion on their prescription drugs in 2011.

Fiction:

There is no death panel.

It does not allow illegal immigrants to obtain health-care coverage.

It does not require everyone to pay 3.8 percent when they sell their house — only those with incomes over \$200,000 (\$250,000 for couples) who make a \$200,000 profit (\$250,000 for couples) on the sale of their house.

It does not increase the national debt. In fact on Jan. 5, 2011 the Republicans passed legislation that admitted that repealing the act would increase the debt.

- Richard Reichard

On-line April 1, 2012

Printed April 1, 2012

Besides Their Duties, Women Pols Must be Wary of Snakes in the Grass

Re: Lorraine Scanni, Richard J. Murphy Sr., Bobby Zahn, Your Opinion, Sunday Advance, March 11, 2012.

Our elected ladies, Debi Rose, Diane Savino and Nicole Malliatokis travel our highways daily between Staten Island and City Hall, Staten Island and Albany, to do the people's business. That's the day shift.

They also attend local community, business, and civic group meetings or functions to listen to our concerns.

That's the evening shift and you, now, want them to pull a night shift to watch Jimmy Fallon [Fallon], David Letterhead [Letterman], Bill Maul [Maher], Ed Schlitz, and somewhere in between, listen to Slush [Rush] Limbaugh.

I guess they shouldn't chance to sleep. Should they hire a driver and sleep on the road so they can stay up and watch these shows? The next time you hear Slush Limbaugh and friends slur, slander or slither around making disparaging remarks about women, give these ladies a call so they can respond. But why single out these ladies?

You have five males (Republican, Conservative and Tea Party electeds) who didn't even get an honorable mention in your letters. They didn't speak out on behalf of their Republican/Conservative women.

Why? Sarah Palin and Michelle Bachmann are political figures and most of this was political humor, whereas Sandra Flukes is a private citizen.

- Emanuel Braxton

On-line April 1, 2012

Printed April 1, 2012

Fracking in New York State Will Pollute Our Pure Water

Be objective when considering the controversy regarding hydraulic fracturing for natural gas (“fracking”) in New York State.

On one side we have huge energy companies, the politicians they support and people who would gain financially.

On the other side of the debate are the scientists, environmentalists, professionals in the medical fields, people who have been harmed by the process, and thousands of citizens who have done the research and learned that there is no such thing as “safe hydraulic fracturing.”

The rationale for drilling is to make our country energy-independent, but did you know that those energy companies have been exporting gas to other countries?

The rich get richer and the people suffer with the horrors of toxic waste water, polluted drinking water and serious medical problems from contamination and we are still no closer to being energy independent.

The information is there for you to read. I invite you to do your own research and then tell your representatives in Albany and Rep. Michael Grimm: “No Fracking in New York State.”

- Jay Bocchicchio

On-line April 4, 2012

There are Many Important Benefits from the New Health Care Act

As we pass the two-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, it is important to acknowledge the benefits it provides for all Americans and to separate the myth from the reality.

Fact: Young adults like my own two children, are able to remain as dependents on their parents’ insurance plans until age 26.

Fact: Seniors with Medicare who have hit the Part D “doughnut hole” are getting help paying for their prescription drugs.

Fact: Small businesses can now get some relief from employee health care costs with the help of new tax credits.

Fact: People with pre-existing conditions can now obtain health insurance coverage.

Fact: Insurance companies can no longer put lifetime caps on essential benefits.

Fact: Insurers are prohibited from dropping enrollees when they get sick.

Fact: Qualified health plans are prohibited from charging co-pays or deductibles for preventative services and screenings. The facts speak louder than any rhetoric. When we talk about the lives being saved because people can now get the health care they need — there simply is no price you can put on that.

- Teresa Caliarì Olya



Minutes

General Meeting March 20, 2012

President Brown called the meeting to order at 8:12 p.m. A motion was made by Joy Robins to approve the January and February minutes with the **following corrections to the February minutes:**

- David Goldfarb pointed out a correction that **Ed Murphy was not a former S.I.D.A. President.**
- Also the line in regard to Mark Murphy **“He feels that everyone should pay the same tax rate” will be deleted.**
- Peter Killen also pointed out that we should delete the line **“Suggestion was made to call it “Your vote counts”.**

President Brown offered condolences to Social Secretary, Liz Price who had recently lost her father.

Guest Speaker

Gabrielle Prisco of the Correctional Association of New York (daughter of Loretta and Gene Prisco) gave a very informative and interesting presentation about the Close to Home Initiative in the Juvenile Justice System in New York State. The initiative introduced by Governor Cuomo in the Executive Budget provides a pivotal opportunity to recreate the justice system for NYC City youth and communities.

After her presentation, Ms. Prisco took questions from many members in attendance. She urged S.I.D.A. members to send letters to our legislators stating that we believe children should be placed in prisons close to their homes and that we believe in transparency and oversight.

President Brown gave Congressional Candidate Mark Murphy an opportunity to speak briefly. Mr. Murphy announced that the convention will be held on Thursday, March 22. He urged members to come out to support him.

Vice President’s Report

Vice President Rosemary Palladino presented highlights from February’s Executive Committee meeting.

Executive Secretary’s Report

Executive Secretary Mark Herman said that there is a lot happening politically right now. He reminded members about the County Convention scheduled for March 22. He mentioned that Lou Tobacco was not seeking re-election for State Assembly in the 62nd District in November. He reported that the County’s Executive Committee interviewed S.I.D.A. member Gary Carsel. Finally, Mark announced that petitions for Congress would be available on March 20th.

President Brown introduced Jessica Scarcella and Kevin Elkins. Jessica announced that petitions for Congress are available for pick up at County headquarters (35 New Dorp Lane). She mentioned that petitioning technically starts after the convention on March 22.

Political Action and Strategy

Chair Richard Reichard reminded members that there will be a rally in support of the Affordable Health Care Act on Saturday, March 24, at 11 am across from Congressman Michael Grimm's office on New Dorp Lane. He said that the Supreme Court will be hearing the case for the HCA the following week. He urged members to attend the rally. He wants people to know that the Affordable Health Care Act is good for them.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tom Shcherbenko reported a balance as of March 20 of \$9,916.48.

2nd Guest Speaker

Gary Carsel, candidate for Assembly, 62nd District, mentioned that he had announced his candidacy early. He interviewed with County's Executive Committee and was heartily received in January. He said since then he had formed a campaign committee, set up a web site etc. He explained that at a recent Executive Committee meeting, he found out that someone else was looking to challenge him for the seat. Mr. Carsel said that he got into the race to make the community better. He plans to stay in the race. He thanked the members for their time and support. He also took questions from members in attendance.

Motion

Joy Robins made the following motion for our endorsement vote of the 62nd Assembly District to waive our tradition of not doing an endorsement vote at the same meeting at which the candidate speaks because of time constraints, providing that the membership is informed that there will be an endorsement vote at that meeting. The motion carried with one opposed.

News from County

Kevin Elkins, Deputy Director of the Democratic County Committee of Richmond County, mentioned that due to the re-districting process it has been chaotic. The Convention will be held on Thursday 3-20. They have tried to give people as much notice as possible. Petitions right now are solely for Congressional candidates and you don't have to be a county committee person to carry petitions. Petitions for state races will go out in June.

Publicity and Public Relations

Chair Roy Moskowitz reported that he thought that there was a good write up on the recent Executive Committee meeting in the *Staten Island Advance*. He also reported that Phil Jonas got good coverage of his recent event on the front cover of the *Staten Island Advance* and NY 1 covered it as well.

Issues Committee

Chair Loretta Prisco reported that the committee is working with Richard Reichard on a new position paper, "Energy and the Keystone Pipeline". After they are done with that they will be working on a "Job Creation" paper which is an idea from Roy Moskowitz. Loretta also mentioned that she is thinking of doing a paper on Juvenile Justice.

Membership Committee

Chair Peter Killen reported that he is happy that Gene Prisco joined the committee. He also introduced two new members, Esperanza and Rita.

New Yorkers for Clean Water

Susan Chew reported that Food and Water Watch formed “New Yorkers against Fracking” and New Yorkers for Clean Water joined with them. Susan urged members to call members of the NY State legislature to ask them to sign The Fracking Ban Bill. She mentioned that Senator Savino has already signed on to it.

Gun Violence Prevention

Phil Jonas thanked everyone who attended the recent event. He said the event raised awareness about legislation. He urged members to call Senator Lanza, Dean Skellos and Senator Savino to urge them to sign the Micro stamping bill.

New Business

President Brown announced that we will hold an endorsement vote for local candidates at the April 17th meeting.

Liz Price announced that the North Shore Dems are holding their annual dinner on April 19th. She made a motion for S.I.D.A. to purchase a full page ad in their journal and one ticket for President Brown. The motion carried. Liz Price also announced that Peter Killen is being honored as Democrat of the year by Brooklyn Democrats for Change scheduled for May 3, 2012. She made a motion for S.I.D.A. to purchase a full page ad for \$100 and one ticket for President Brown for \$75.00. The motion carried with one abstention.

Loretta Prisco made a motion that we write a letter supporting the Close to Home Initiative. The motion carried with one opposed.

S.I.D.A. Member at-Large Michelle Akyempong spoke out against the new Tier VI pension. She mentioned that Assemblyman Titone voted for it and she feels he needs to be called to the carpet for his decision.

President Brown announced that the next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 27, 8:00 p.m. instead of Wednesday March 28. The meeting was moved because of other events scheduled for March 28.

The location of the April meeting will be discussed at the Executive Committee meeting.

The waitress at the Pepper Jack Grill restaurant apologized to the members for problems with service at the meeting. She said that they were not prepared for us. There was discussion as to whether or not we want to go back to the Pepper Jack Grill. President Brown said the Executive Committee will discuss it and get back to the membership via email. He also mentioned that members should contact the Executive Committee with their comments and concerns.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary*



Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund Brunch



**You are invited to the
Ninth Annual
Lathrope Voorspuy
Memorial Scholarship Fund
Awards Brunch**

This year at our fundraising brunch we are awarding our scholarship to three outstanding Staten Islanders:



Jay Weichun



Diana Shcherbenko



Roy Moskowitz

Come celebrate with us!
Sunday May 20, 2011, 11 AM to 3 PM
at the Colonnade Diner, 2001 Hylan Blvd.

Suggested donation \$50 per person by May 1,
\$55 later and at the door.

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

LVMSF Basket Appeal

**Please Help fill our Baskets for the
Lathrope Voorspuy
Memorial Scholarship Fund Brunch!**



**Help make our basket raffle
the best ever!**

**If you have a suitable
basket, or items to help
fill one please contact
Joann Olbrich by May 1,
at 718-356-4715.**

**The Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund is
a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation. Your gifts are
tax deductible.**

**The mission of the Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial
Scholarship Fund is to encourage grass-roots
activism by underwriting students in selected
programs that train for community organization or
for political candidacies.**



Upcoming Meetings

April 17, 2012	May 15, 2012
General Meeting Crown Palace, 1267 Forest Avenue	General Meeting Location TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens United Supreme Court Decision Panel Discussion • Anthony Mascolo, Candidate 62nd Assembly District • Endorsement Vote for Congress, NYS Senate, & NYS Assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Tom Shcherbenko at (718) 420-0252, or complete and return the coupon. Voting privileges begin 45 days after joining.



2012 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$15 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$10 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ \$5 - Senior, Student, Unemployed	_____ \$100
	_____ Other _____

Name _____

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

S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President	Dennis Brown	Member at-Large	Roy Moskowitz
Vice President	Rosemary Palladino	Member at-Large	Loretta Prisco
Executive Secretary.....	Mark Herman	Ex Officio	Belinda Dixon
Corresponding &		Ex Officio	Shawn Dwyer
Recording Secretary	Marie Dwyer	Ex Officio	Gary Carsel
Treasurer.....	Tom Shcherbenko	Ex Officio	Joann Olbrich
Social Secretary	Liz Price	Ex Officio	Nick Popolo
Member at-Large	Michelle Akyempong	Ex Officio	Richard Reichard
Member at-Large	Phil Jonas	Ex Officio	John Sollazzo
Member at-Large	John F. Lavelle	Ex Officio	Mark Zink