
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Mary Peppito ◆

December General Meeting: The Crisis in Israel & Gaza

In November a dozen local Democratic elected officials spent three days in Israel, during which they saw for themselves the impact of the October 7 Hamas attack and Israel's response. These officials visited some of the most impacted towns and engaged in critical conversations with local government and community leaders about the deepening crisis, including the desperate need for humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip. Join us to hear from some of these officials who observed firsthand this "emergency that belongs to everyone," in the words of Assemblymember Amanda Septimo of the Bronx.

**Manhattan Boro President Mark Levine
Councilmember Gale Brewer
*other speakers invited***

Please join us on Zoom

Thursday, December 14

Club business 7:00pm

Forum 7:30pm

Register: bit.ly/2023decforum

for more information: DistrictLeaders@BroadwayDemocrats.org

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Volume 48, Issue 10

December 2023

President's Corner

George Santos is Gone. Now Let's Evict Mike Johnson (and Save Democracy)

Mary Peppito

As we bid a (not so) fond farewell to George Santos, we find ourselves facing a more critical threat to our democracy: Mike Johnson, the current Speaker of the House. It's time to unite and take action to ensure that the NY3 Congressional seat vacated by Santos, returns to blue.

Just in case you need reminding, the lies which led to Santos' expulsion are well documented: he didn't graduate from Baruch College as he claimed, or play on their winning volleyball team; he didn't work for Citigroup or Goldman Sachs; he wasn't the landlord of 13 properties, and in fact had been in housing court for his own rent problems; he did not run a dog rescue charity, instead he raised money for a veteran in need and then personally pocketed that money; his family did not flee Nazi Germany; etc., etc. etc. What *finally* got him booted from Congress – what was finally too much for even his Republican colleagues to stomach - was his misuse of campaign funds for luxury purchases, Botox and OnlyFans, and to pay down personal credit card bills and other debts. He is facing multiple federal charges relating to these frauds.

But back to Speaker Mike Johnson. His track record is alarming (if not so sordid as Santos'): he continues to defend insurrections and was an ardent supporter of the baseless claims challenging the 2020 election. His affiliation with Trump and his efforts to decertify swing state vote totals pose a severe threat to democracy.

A Republican majority in Congress is a threat to democracy. According to Liz Cheney (no raving liberal), "we have to ensure that we don't have a situation where the election might be thrown into the House of Representatives that is overseen by a Republican majority." Further, in a recent CNN interview, Cheney said that Johnson, after the 2020 election, "was willing time and again to ignore the rulings of the courts, to ignore what state and federal courts had done and said about the elections in

these states in order to attempt to do Donald Trump's bidding." He'll do it again.

The expulsion of Santos from the NY3 Congressional seat provides an opportunity to chip away at the small Republican majority in Congress. A special election, expected to be held in February 2024 will provide a preview of our chances in November. Given the expedited election schedule, leaders, not primaries, will select the candidates. Tom Suozzi has emerged as Democratic front runner in a crowded field, having held the seat before Santos, and being a centrist which is compatible with the region. However, recent political shifts in Long Island and Republican gains make this race highly competitive. Money is expected to pour in on both sides and there are already 16 candidates from both parties vying for this seat.

This is a call to action. NY3 is not just a local concern, but a bellwether seat for Congressional races in New York. We urge you to contribute to this fight in any way possible – donate, call, write, knock on doors. Let's work together to reclaim this seat, which has been a Democratic stronghold for the past decade. Your support is crucial in tipping the balance and safeguarding democracy.



District Leader's Report

Primary Elections 2024: The Old and the New

Curtis Arluck

We are tentatively heading to an election cycle similar to what we've had in every Presidential election year since the club's founding in 1975: two primaries, one for President and National Convention Delegates, one for all the other offices. While costly, this system makes some sense for we contemplative New Yorkers: to retain any influence in the selection of the Presidential candidate—not a major consideration this year, when President Biden is facing no serious primary race—New York and the other states need to hold their primaries early, preferably in March. This is much earlier than the NY primary for the other offices has ever been. Old

habits die hard, so the two primaries in every Presidential election year looks here to stay.

NY's Presidential Primary election calendar is already set. Petitioning begins *next week*, on December 12, ends on January 12, and the election will be held April 2. If no candidate or delegate slate files against President Biden/his district delegate slates, this primary won't be held and the polls won't open.

For the other offices, the situation is a bit murkier. We know what offices are up: U.S. Senate (Gillibrand), Congress, State Senate, State Assembly, Civil Court Judgeships, Democratic State Committee, Judicial Convention Delegates. Based on previous recent election calendars, the primary election for these offices would be held June 27, with petitioning beginning February 27 or March 5 and ending five weeks later. (If designated by the State Committee, U.S. Senate candidates don't have to petition.) What makes this whole calendar tentative is that there is a lawsuit as yet undecided by the NY Court of Appeals challenging the Congressional lines. If this lawsuit is successful, these lines may be redrawn by the Redistricting Commission and/or the State Legislature. This could well mean that the Congressional primary would be delayed, since the new lines probably wouldn't be ready in time for a late February/early March start of petitioning. It might then cause the Legislature to delay the primary for the other offices as well, to avoid there being *three* primary elections in 2024—though if we gaze back to those somber Covid days of 2020, there were three primaries.

And now for the politics. For **Congress**, most of our district is now in the 13th CD, represented by **Adriano Espaillat**, but west of Broadway and south of 113th Street is in the 10th District, represented by **Jerry Nadler**. Unless these lines change yet again, we will be endorsing in both districts. Neither Congress Member has at this point attracted significant opposition.

For **State Senate**, the lines are set. Our entire area is in the 30th district, represented by **Cordell Cleare**. I am aware of no opposition at all to Cordell; her 2022 primary opponent Shana Harmongoff just announced her candidacy for State Assembly in the adjacent 70th AD.

The **69th AD**, from which **State Assembly Member, Democratic State Committee, and Judicial Convention Delegates** are elected, has been slightly redistricted, and its lines are now set until the 2032 elections. In our area, only two blocks are affected. We lose the northwest Frederick Douglass Circle, "Café Amrita" block, and gain the

northwest Morningside Heights, "Pisticci and Toast" block. There is a vacancy for Democratic State Committee, as the incumbent **Dan Cohen** was this year elected Democratic District Leader from the area to our south and so will not be seeking re-election to the State Committee. Perhaps someone from our club will run for this position!?

Most importantly, as many of you have heard, our beloved Assembly Member **Danny O'Donnell** will not be running again. Danny has served the district with determination, effectiveness and panache for 21 years. He'll still represent us for one more year, and we know that in that year we'll all want to pay tribute to Danny for a job well done—and Danny will continue his outspoken advocacy for the district and the causes we hold dear.

Naturally, many fine candidates have already expressed their interest in running for this seat. Unless the election calendar is again upended, we will be endorsing for Danny's successor at our February meeting. Then and in the weeks leading up to it we'll have an opportunity to hear from these candidates. I am far from making my own personal endorsement, but I have to say that as someone who moved into my current apartment a few months before Ed Sullivan was first elected and was honored to work with and campaign for Ed and Danny for all these years, I am excited that another Morningside Heights resident and Broadway Democrats member, Liam Elkind, is seriously looking at entering the race.

And then there is that little matter of saving our democracy in the Presidential election...

Constitutional Notice

At a Special Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Broadway Democrats, held November 1, 2023, the following changes to the Club's Constitution were suggested for approval by the membership:

(1) Article V, Section 2, Terms of Office and Eligibility

Delete the last two sentences so that the Article reads:

"The Club's officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Club each year and shall serve until and through the next year's annual meeting and until a successor shall have been elected and shall have qualified."

(2) Article V, Section 4d

In the last sentence insert the word “oral” so that the sentence shall read:

“The Treasurer shall render an oral account of the financial condition of the Club at each meeting of the Steering Committee and at the meetings of the membership.”

These changes will be put before the membership for a second vote pursuant to Article XVI of the Constitution.



State Committee Report

Committeeman Daniel Marks Cohen

It occurred to me as I was writing this that it is going to be my final report as your State Committeeman, as I was elected District Leader in June and in keeping with the concept of Ryan’s Rules, I did not wish to remain in both roles simultaneously. I have committed to resigning from my post as State Committeeman by year end. So, this is an end to a (tiny) era, thank you for your support for me over all this time.

I have served as State Committeeman for over a dozen years, elected in September 2010 in a competitive primary against Bob Ginsberg, who had previously held the post for decades, until he lost it in the 2008 primary to Larry Hirsch, who subsequently moved out of state and could not continue in the role. Bob sought to retake his old post in the following cycle, and I stepped forward after several other candidates withdrew. It was a competitive primary, and I won with 55% of the vote. Bob periodically threatened to run several times after that election, but he never did.

The job, mostly ceremonial, has given me a chance to visit all three clubs in the 69th and give reports about the State Committee. On occasion there I was able to exercise the power to vote for someone running statewide in the annual state Democratic Party conventions. My vote had more weight due to the higher turnout in the 69th AD over virtually any other district in the state. Still only about 1% or so, but enough that a good handful of us downstate members with high-voter turnout districts could place someone on the ballot without collecting signatures statewide if they got 25% of the weighted vote. Perhaps the most fraught moment was in the leadup to the 2018 gubernatorial election, when Cynthia Nixon was running for Governor as a protest to incumbent Cuomo’s reactionary and centrist policies. Two clubs, Broadway Democrats and Three Parks Democrats, were overwhelmingly in

favor of supporting Nixon to send a message to Cuomo. At Hofstra in the spring of 2018, a handful of us voted for Nixon over Cuomo, you could have heard a pin drop in the room of 1,000 people as we registered our dissent one by one in a roll-call vote. I caught flack for it from Cuomo loyalists afterwards, but then it faded once Cuomo resigned.

As State Committeeman I was also one of the founders and an officer of the Progressive Caucus, initially created as a reaction to the perception of misogyny and compromised leadership of the existing Reform Caucus but it eventually grew to become the main vehicle for reform in the State Party, and most of the resolutions we vote on in the body today come from the Progressive Caucus. Sadly, the biggest issue has yet to be addressed – which is Jay Jacobs continued leadership of the State Party and its dismal performance over the past several election cycles. That Jay is an *improvement* over previous party leaders is indicative of how awful our state organization has been for years. My work on making the NY State Democratic Party nimbler and more responsive to its constituents remains unfinished, I intend to continue the work in my role as District Leader, but someone else will have to carry it on my place as State Committeeman.

As I write this final report, I also want to reflect on the recent decision by Assemblyman Danny O’Donnell not to seek re-election. It has been an honor to work alongside him in his fight for progressive values and I have celebrated the victories and mourned the setbacks and defeats. His presence in Albany, his independent voice, and his sense of humor, will be missed and impossible to replace. I briefly considered running to succeed him in the primary next year but the impact on my family is too much. As many of you know, I ran for City Council in 2021 and that campaign was hard on my family. My son is 11, and spending time in Albany fighting for the needs of this district would mean spending proportionately less time with my son, time that we would never get back. I will not be a candidate for the Assembly this cycle. But perhaps there will be another opportunity to serve in public office, and I will see how the future unfolds.

Former Assemblyman Ed Sullivan offered me a great piece of advice, which was “be prepared for luck.” I was not prepared this time - but I will be for the next one, should it emerge in the years to come.

Thank you for all the love, advice, and support over the past dozen-plus years. It has been an honor to serve as your state committeeman, and I look forward to working with you in 2024 as we save our Democracy, reelect Biden, keep the Senate, and take back the House.

Disclaimer: unless otherwise indicated, items herein reflect the views of their authors only. They are published as a part of our club's commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas on topics of interest, but their publication should not be construed as an endorsement by the editor, the Steering Committee, or the Broadway Democrats club.

Leadership Matters

Allison Downing

Pick up any copy of the *Harvard Business Review*. It will be full of extensively researched articles by highly accomplished, compensated people concluding that strong leadership at every level is critical to the successful achievement of any organization's goals. Organizational progress and policies suffer mightily if stakeholders have to spend energy working around poor leadership.

With that in mind, let's review the record of Jay Jacobs, our state's Democratic Party chair: November 2023 saw a *third straight* election in which Democrats and Democratic priorities in New York State lost ground. Not great leadership! At all!

In 2021, Democratic election-integrity State Constitutional amendments were trounced at the polls because the Republicans organized and the State Democrats sat it out. In 2022, we lost four Democratic Congressional seats (*two* in Nassau County, Jay Jacobs' home base!), thereby providing 80% of the seats the Republicans needed to take control of the US House of Representatives (and if someone tries to tell you that loss was the Court of Appeals' fault for their decision in the redistricting case and not the State Democrats' fault, ask them who appointed the conservative judges who made that decision – spoiler alert it was Andrew Cuomo who also appointed Jay Jacobs). And just now, in 2023, Democrats lost a number of elections in places we should not have: yet again in Jay Jacobs' Nassau County backyard and in the Bronx, plus multiple other losses around the state.

With this history of failure, why does Jay Jacobs still have the top job in the New York State Democratic Party? The answer to that kind of question is almost always money. Governor Hochul is clearly willing to take hit after hit to New York's current Democratic majority for the sake of the money Jay Jacobs raises for her from real estate and other similar interests (an astonishing position, really, given that it almost cost her the governorship in 2022). A lot of people shrug and say that that is

just the way things work, but **it only works that way because we let it.**

Next year's elections are make-or-break for American democracy, and, infuriatingly, Jay Jacobs has allowed New York State to become a battleground state. All right, then, we will heed the call to the barricades. The first battle is to find new, competent leadership for New York State Democrats.

We have the time and energy NOW to replace Jacobs with a strong, energetic Democrat who can provide the leadership we will desperately need for 2024. I am not willing to wait one more year and hope and pray that we can somehow eke out victory in November 2024 despite a leadership vacuum, just to allow another mediocre leader to retire on a win. **Jay Jacobs has not earned that, and we cannot afford to offer it.** There is way too much at stake.

I ask everyone reading this to call Governor Hochul (518-474-8390) and Senator Schumer (212-486-4430) and demand that they request the resignation of Jay Jacobs. Suggested script: "My name is [-] and I am a constituent in zip code [10025]. I urge the Governor/Senator to immediately request Jay Jacobs' resignation from the New York State Democratic Party leadership. He has failed us three years in a row, and we cannot afford to risk a fourth year of losses next year. He must be replaced with competent leadership immediately. Thank you."

The New York State Democrats do not have a publicly-listed phone number so I urge everyone to use the "Contact Us" link on the nydems.org website, or email info@nydems.org with the request that Jay Jacobs step down effective immediately.

If you are feeling extra motivated, please also call Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (212-688-6262), Congressman Jerry Nadler (212-367-7350), Congressman Adriano Espaillat (212-663-3900), Senator Cordell Cleare (212-222-7315), Assemblymember Danny O'Donnell (212-455-5603), Council Member Shaun Abreu (212-928-6814), and any other New York State Democrats in any position of leadership, elected or not, that you can think of.

Note that they are all likely to tell you they can't do anything, but if enough of us make enough noise, they will, in fact, do something. One of the reasons Jay Jacobs said the Constitutional amendments failed in 2021 was because no one called him to tell him there was potential trouble getting them passed (I know! It's so maddening!). But this means that he should now definitely take calls from any electeds reaching out to him about potential issues they see

coming (Him! He's the issue!) because he has said that is how he figures out what to do.

I know asking electeds to do hard things (and yes, I am very aware that calling Jay Jacobs personally asking him to resign will be very difficult!) is going to meet with resistance, but doing hard things is part of the job of helping run New York State. And if the New York State Democratic Party is competently led, it will make every New York State elected official's life easier, so in the long term, it is in their own self-interest to get someone with some abilities into that job.

For more information, please check out the [Replace Jay Jacobs website](#) and read the letter and report posted on that site. There are Democrats around the state working hard to get us the leadership we need and deserve! Join us!

Happy Holidays, Broadway Dems, and may we all resolve to get better State Democratic Party leadership in the new year.

RL



We Want to Hear What You Have to Say!

Email submissions to the editor (in MS Word, please) at palmonrode@gmail.com

We will consider all submissions, but we reserve the exclusive and final right to determine what to publish.

RL



Broadway Democrats

Please join us for a holiday party

Ortomare Restaurant
994 Columbus Avenue

SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 10

2:00 to 4:00 PM



Please come and enjoy the food, drinks, and great company.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2-4pm
Ortomare Restaurant
994 Columbus Avenue

We'll also collect dues for 2024 so bring your cash, checks, gold bullion!

Dues are \$25
\$10 for seniors or students.

Questions? Contact us at bdemsgeneral@gmail.com or bwaydemsdistrictleaders@gmail.com

Send to: The Broadway Democrats, P.O. Box 1099, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025

Special Interests: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Name: _____ (title, honorifics, and pronouns optional)

Name: _____

To join the Broadway Democrats, please fill out the form below and mail with your check (made out to "Broadway Democrats") to the address at the bottom. Welcome!

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$25; senior dues are \$10.

Membership

The Broadway Democrats Newsletter December 2023

FIRST
CLASS

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Paula Diamond Román
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

