
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Amy Porter ♦

March General Meeting

U.S. Presidential Endorsement!

We'll break into groups for the first 15 minutes of the meeting. (Look for your candidate's sign!) "Committeds" will have the opportunity to discuss their choice with fellow supporters, and "undecideds" will have a chance to eavesdrop and, perhaps, be convinced to join a group.

For the rest of the meeting, members will give short speeches in support of their candidate and talk about how they came to their choice. We hope that undecided members will compare notes about the issues and questions that are most important to them in making their decision.

In order to be eligible to vote in this endorsement, you must have attended one of the Club's prior nine meetings and be current on your dues.

Thursday, March 12

7:45 p.m. registration

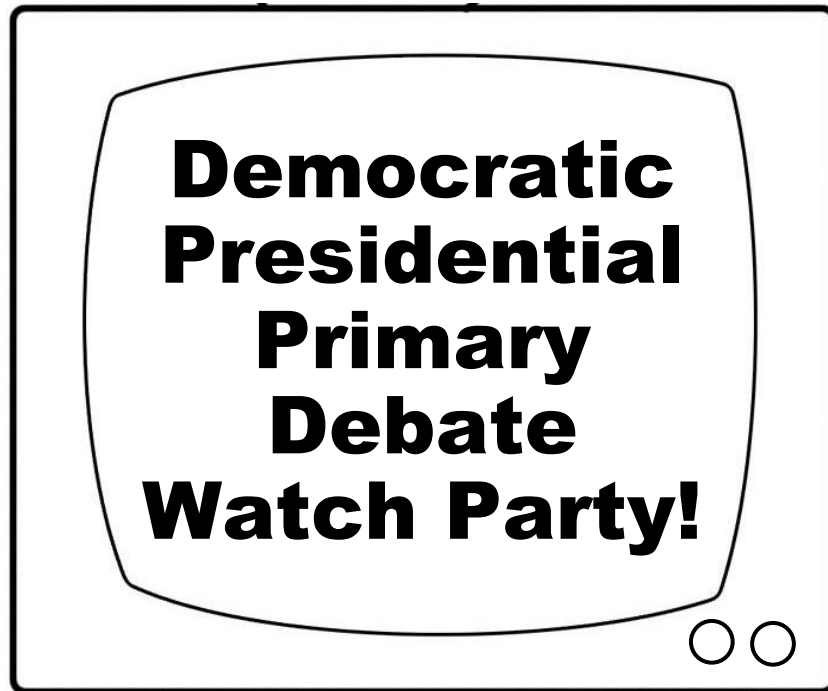
Meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. sharp!

Bank Street College

610 W. 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

◆ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ◆ President: Amy Porter ◆



Sunday, March 15

Join **Broadway Democrats**, **Three Parks Independent Democrats**, and **West Side Democrats** to watch the next Democratic Presidential Primary Debate!

Debate starts at

8:30 pm

but come early to meet and greet!

Amity Hall Uptown

982 Amsterdam Avenue between 108th and 109th Streets

RSVP here: tinyurl.com/debate-3-15-20

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March 2020



Broadway Democrats campaigning with Congressman Nadler, State Senator Jackson, and Assemblymember O'Donnell

L to R: Sen. Jackson; Club President Amy Porter; Cong. Nadler; District Leader Curtis Arluck; Steering Committee members Gretchen Borges, John George and Barbara Trelstad; Assemblymember O'Donnell

District Leaders' Reports

Hitting the Streets

Curtis Arluck

I am writing this on the morning of Super Tuesday, so when you read this you will know a lot more than I do now about the direction of the Democratic Presidential race. What is clear is that the field has narrowed considerably, so the club's experiment with having caucus-style "supporter meetings" at the beginning of the discussion at our March 12 endorsement meeting won't be as complicated as originally thought. Even as I sit here, there are only five Democratic Presidential candidates of any kind still alive, and I don't see our meeting as having oversized Gabbard or, hopefully not, Bloomberg Caucuses.

We were out petitioning for our local candidates both Saturday and Sunday. The temperatures were

cold, but the enthusiasm was great. (See accompanying picture) Jerry Nadler was a rock star; people were lining up to take selfies. Since we're Reform Democrats, we resisted the temptation to say, "only if you sign the petition first! And Robert Jackson and Danny O'Donnell were both cheerleaders for Jerry and stars in their own right. (Danny's Mets cap seemed more appropriate for Spring Training then for a frigid March day, but you have to show the colors.) People of course were full of questions and concerns about the Presidential race. I asked Jerry Nadler, who's supporting Elizabeth Warren, what if it came down to Biden and Sanders. He said, 'My heart's with Bernie but my head's with Joe.'" My sentiments exactly. And next Thursday, all eligible club members will have their chance to weigh in.

There is still much to be done locally. We have four more weeks to petition. Jerry Nadler faces a very well financed challenger. Her money entirely

comes from her rich family, but Trump and the Republicans are on the sidelines cheering her on. We will be out every weekend, and some late afternoons/evenings as well. If you want to petition/volunteer, on the streets or in your buildings, email me at Curtisdems@aol.com. Only through continuing action will we get rid of those at the top who are thwarting our Democracy, and keep in office our great local elected officials who are preserving it.



Talking About Presidential Candidates

Paula Diamond Román

I'm writing a very different article than I expected. We've gone from twenty-nine presidential candidates, from a variety of states, a diversity of demographics, and an average age of fifty-seven, to four and a half candidates. Four of those remaining candidates are white, from the East Coast, and between 70 and 78. (The half of a candidate, in case you were wondering, is 38-year-old, Asian, Polynesian and white, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard from Hawaii; she hasn't made the last few debates and has no delegates but seems unwilling to tap out.) Unfortunately, between the time I decided to write this article and the moment I sat down to write it, two of the most interesting candidates dropped out.

Senator Amy Klobuchar and Mayor Pete Buttigieg are among the most interesting of the long list of former candidates. Both were largely competing for the same constituency; Buttigieg very briefly looked like a real threat to the supposed front runners. In addition, both Buttigieg and Klobuchar have now endorsed Biden, and both have accumulated delegates who, assuming there is a second round of voting at the DNC convention, will go to Biden. What saddens me about their loss is that they added something different to the mix of candidates: one was a female moderate from a "fly-over state" with a somewhat recent family history of coal-mining immigrants; the other was the ridiculously smart, first openly gay candidate to win a presidential primary. They made the race more compelling and a more interesting race brings out more voters.

I will also miss Andrew Yang and Tom Steyer who had no business being in this race but who raised interesting issues at every debate they participated in, unlike our one remaining Ritchie Rich.

To add a little *zhuzh* to our presidential endorsement meeting, we're going to begin by

breaking up into groups for fifteen minutes. (Just look on the wall with a sign for your candidate!) This gives "committeds" the opportunity to discuss why they have chosen their candidate with fellow supporters and "undecideds" the opportunity to eavesdrop and, perhaps, even, be convinced to join a group. Some of our members have been active in campaigns and have great stories to share! (Originally, I had suggested that we run a caucus, somewhat in the style of a haunted house or love shack at an amusement park, but the events in Iowa were too recent and traumatic.)

The rest of our endorsement meeting will be given over to our club members discussing the candidates. In addition to giving short speeches in support of their candidate, I hope club members will talk about how they arrived at that choice. I also hope that undecided club members will compare notes about the issues and questions that are most important to them in making the decision.

While I am concerned about maintaining a level of interest in the presidential primary process to spill over to our efforts for November, I'm convinced that, after the DNC convention we will come together to remove the current stain on the White House and elect a Democratic president. We're Democrats; after we disagree, we re-group and agree on what's important.

Farewell Amy Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg, Tom Steyer, Deval Patrick, Andrew Yang, Michael Bennet, Cory Booker, John Delaney, Julian Castro, Marianne Williamson, Joe Sestak, Kamala Harris, Steven Bullock, Beto O'Rourke, Wayne Messam, Tim Ryan, Bill de Blasio, Jay Inslee, John Hickenlooper, Kirsten Gillibrand, Mike Gravel, Seth Moulton, Eric Swawell, and Richard Ojeda.



HELP THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS GROW!

*Pass this newsletter on to a friend
or a new neighbor*

DUES: SENIORS \$10/yr, ALL OTHERS \$25/yr

SEND TO: **BROADWAY DEMOCRATS**
P.O. BOX 1099 CATHEDRAL STATION
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10025



President's Corner

Amy Porter

We had a great turnout and terrific time at our last joint Debate Watch Party with Three Parks and West Harlem Dems in February. We were very pleased that Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell came to watch with us. Thanks to Barry Weinberg, President of West Harlem Dems, for joining with us and bringing his members. We were delighted to meet new people from all over the city and to see Broadway Dem members who have not come before, including Laura Friedman, from Morningside Heights Community Coalition, and Ed Sullivan. Thanks to Cynthia Doty, District Leader of Three Parks, for her continued presence and support. Thanks to Paula Diamond Román, our District Leader, for her support and to Gretchen Borges and Pat Almonrode, our newsletter editors, and to Barbara Trelstad for her help at the door. It was particularly gratifying that Meika Mustrangi, John George and Mav Block, who had come to a couple of our past Debate Watch Parties, came to greet and watch this time with us as our new Steering Committee members! As always special thanks to Dan Cohen, my incredible co-organizer, and Curtis Arluck, our District Leader, and staunch supporter.

For our next Debate Watch Party, we will be joining with Three Parks again and for the first time with West Side Democrats (formerly Community Free, Ansonia and Park River Independent Democrats) at Amity Hall on March 15. Check out our Eventbrite invitation for further details. We look forward to seeing you there!

At our last club meeting, we had a little preview from Ed Sullivan and Bob Liff about the diverse opinions we expect to hear at our upcoming Presidential Endorsement meeting. (Bob proclaimed he would vote for his cat over Trump. Now there is a rumor going around that Bob's cat might show up to ask for your vote.) We are looking forward to hearing from all of you at our upcoming Presidential Endorsement Meeting, where Paula has planned a fun event.

Finally, congratulations to our Website Group, Dan Zweig, Mav Block and John George, for creating a new website for Broadway Democrats. We have waited a long time for this day and are thrilled! Be patient with us as there will be some kinks to work out and more changes. Meanwhile, this new website will allow us to add other functions that our old one could not. It is an important foundation for us in launching an updated social media presence. So stay tuned for more to come!

250 days until the 2020 election – What we can do now!

Mary Peppito *GoBlue 2020*

Looking for ways get involved in the effort to restore *sanity* to our government? Here's GoBlue 2020's calendar of upcoming events!

Saturday March 7: 8:00am - 6:30pm

Voter Registration in Philadelphia with SwingLeft group "Downtown East for Progress." Sign up at the link below and email Mary Peppito (marybpeppito@gmail.com). Note that GoBlue 2020 plans to send a group to Philadelphia *on the first Saturday of every month* for voter registration.

<https://swingleft.org/event/register/mobilize:222864?source=%2Fevents&s=u>

Wednesday March 11: 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Letter writing via VoteForward/SwingLeft. Further details to come. Letter writing and other events are being hosted frequently at locations on the Upper West Side. Go to <https://swingleft.org/events> for details.

Saturday March 14

New York Voter Registration Training (to be held in Morningside Heights; further details to come)

Sunday March 15

All day: Voter Registration in CD-11 (further details to come; possibly at 86th St. and 4th Ave. in Brooklyn)

8:30pm: Debate Watch Party!
Amity Hall Uptown
982 Amsterdam Avenue
between 108th and 109th Streets

Wednesday March 18: 7:00pm - 8:00pm

1 hour conference call on registering PA voters: "FLIPPIN' PENNSYLVANIA - Voter Registration 101 Training Call with Field Team 6!" Registering Democrats is *the best* way to take back the White House, flip the Senate, and expand our House majority. Sign up to learn how to help register voters and turn swing states blue! Sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/Flippin-Pennsylvania>

Saturday March 21: 2:00pm - 3:00pm

GoBlue 2020 Planning Meeting (location TBA)

Sunday March 29: all day

Voter Registration in CD-11 (either Staten Island or South Brooklyn; (further details to come)

Saturday April 4: all day

Voter Registration in Philadelphia (further details to come)

And Stay Tuned!

“How Angry Are You?” Fundraiser for Maine Senate Democratic Candidate to replace Susan Collins (further details to come).

For all the very latest, be sure to check in at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1906655419569727/>

RL

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.

RL

It's Still Bernie!

Ed Sullivan

My endorsement of the candidacy of Bernie Sanders for President of the United States still holds despite the serious attacks on him by some who consider themselves among the Democratic Party's elite.

Some are freaked out by the word “socialist.” They don't seem to realize that the battles between remnants of world communism are over. They're over. The “Cold War” didn't end when President Ronald Reagan said, “Mister Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” (Although that was a clever way of taking credit for what was already inevitable.) The Cold War ended when the Soviet Union finally realized that criminalizing any criticism of their regime left them with no method of correcting mistaken policies.

All human endeavors make mistakes. But the United States, with boisterous but effective “checks and balances” built into our constitutional government, can adjust its policies to changing conditions, whereas the Soviet Union was stuck with the wisdom of its leaders, some long dead, however unwise that wisdom may have turned out.

Jumping on Bernie Sanders for calling himself a Socialist has the left-over odor of the mid-twentieth century battles between followers of Stalin and those of Trotsky – interesting to historians, no doubt, but kind of a yawn to young folks who are looking forward to the battles of the twenty-first century.

“Bernie Sanders is a Socialist; he admits it.”

“Really?”

Then there are those who insist upon labeling as “socialism” all government programs that take over human services from indolent or incompetent capitalist institutions. These are the capitalist versions of the Kremlin troglodytes; Social Security, or Medicare for seniors, or Medicaid, or public pre-school classes, or tuition-free community colleges, or phasing out college loans, or public works programs, etc., all seem like socialism to them, and they look with disfavor, bordering on panic, when Bernie seeks to expand them.

In fact, that's one reason why Bernie is clearly leading the pack of contenders for the Democratic nomination. Young people like his ideas, while the caution of the geezers seems irrelevant to them.

And let's not leave out those who were Republicans once but felt abandoned by the rise of the Trump ogre.

They have come together in some kind of Kansas whirlwind, sometimes identified as MSNBC, which gathers in former GOPs to bemoan their loss, and to warn us Democrats that, if we don't adopt the policies of the George Dubya gang, we Dems will lose to Trump in the forthcoming election. MSNBC, which used to be a solid enough counter to FOX News, is now acting as the Judas Cow, luring progressives into the Midwest Wasteland and the Dade County Backwash, where progressive ideas are smothered in the crib and where the specter of Fidel Castro rides by night.

For if the Democratic Party endorses for President someone whom has not been blessed by the exiles of southern Florida, can *Darkness at Noon* be far behind?

The author represented the 69th District in the NYS Assembly from 1977 until 2002, during which he was Chair of the Higher Education Committee.

We want to hear what *you* have to say! Email submissions to palmonrode@gmail.com (in MS Word format, please).

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



Fun Fact: We're #1! (in inequality)

Allison Downing

Over the past decade New York State's population of millionaires grew 72%, and we have the world's highest concentration of billionaires, whose combined wealth is greater than 300% of our entire state budget.

And some less-fun facts: Our children await \$4 billion in court-ordered school funding, 92,000 people are homeless, more than 500,000 lack stable rental housing, our health care system is deteriorating, and state-level budget cuts are forcing increases in property and local taxes - all while basic services decline.

Budget Justice is a coalition campaign asking our state electeds to raise revenue from the very richest New Yorkers to address these problems and make our state a better, fairer, safer home for all. We reject as false the austerity narrative which we have been forced to live under for a decade. Our 9,000 most fortunate neighbors (billionaires and ultramillionaires) need to pay a fraction more to lighten the burdens our most vulnerable bear.

A number of revenue measures have been advanced in Albany and many more are in development. For the 2020 legislative session, we are focused on fourteen reforms that together could raise more than \$35 billion with new or increased progressive taxes on extreme wealth, luxury second homes, ultra-high incomes, big corporations, and Wall Street. More about these proposals here: <https://tinyurl.com/rf74kyk>.

And the Budget Justice coalition is not alone in thinking that monumentally wealthy New Yorkers should pay more. Recent polling shows that an extraordinary 92% of New York voters favor passing legislation that would address the state budget shortfall by raising taxes on wealth over \$1 billion, on incomes over \$5 million, and on luxury homes. (See <https://tinyurl.com/spnl9b9> for more information on the poll.)

There are dozens of advocacy groups aligned on these priorities, including Alliance for Quality Education, Fiscal Policy Institute, New York Renews, New York State Council of Churches, Patriotic Millionaires, Riders Alliance, Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice, along with most, if not all, of the Indivisible and similar activist groups in the city. West Harlem Progressive Democrats and Village Independent Democrats are active in the campaign, and Three Parks, Uptown Community Democrats, and a growing list of other Democratic clubs have hosted or requested presentations on the campaign.

Please go to nybudgetjustice.com to learn more and imagine a state where we all can prosper.

The author is a co-founder of Indivisible Harlem, a former municipal finance lawyer, and a wannabe novelist. She joined Broadway Dems last year and is a County Committeewoman.



Stay in touch and find out more at www.broadwaydemocrats.org

or

facebook.com/groups/BroadwayDemocrats/



Fighting Wage Theft

Miriam Rabban

Did you know that wage theft amounts to \$1 billion in wages illegally withheld each year from workers in New York State, according to the U.S. Department of Labor? Wage theft occurs when employers do not pay workers for all the hours that they have worked, or fail to pay the minimum wage or overtime as required by law.

Employers get away with wage theft because labor laws have loopholes that make them difficult to enforce. Even when workers win Labor Department decisions and court judgments for owed wages, too many employers fraudulently transfer assets, shut down and re-open under a new name, or declare bankruptcy to avoid payment.

You may remember that community members supported workers at Saigon Grill or you may even have joined the picket lines in front of that restaurant yourself. In 2007, Saigon Grill delivery workers organized to fight against wage theft and planned to file a federal lawsuit. Not long after, Saigon Grill closed the delivery department leaving the delivery

workers without jobs. A federal judge issued an order that workers were owed \$4.6 million. Subsequently the owners reached a settlement agreement with the workers to pay \$3 million. But, the owners closed the Saigon Grill. A new restaurant was opened and the new owner was ordered to pay \$1 million within a year, but the owner refused to pay and then shut the restaurant down. Despite a court order, workers were left without being paid for wages owed. This case illustrates the need for vastly improved enforcement.

Wage theft hurts law-abiding businesses, which struggle to compete with scofflaw businesses that can charge less by cheating their workers. Businesses on the West Side have closed down, undercut by others that are able to charge less when they do not follow laws for minimum wage and overtime pay, or do not pay workers for all the hours they have worked.

The New York State Assembly and Senate both passed the SWEAT (Securing Wages Earned Against Theft) bill in June 2019. SWEAT gives critically needed tools to workers and the Department of Labor to stop employers from transferring and hiding their assets by freezing the assets of employers at the outset of a wage claim. The bill was developed from collaboration among workers directly affected by wage theft, attorneys, and sponsors of the bill (Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and State Senator Jessica Ramos.) More than 80 organizations statewide support the legislation.

Governor Cuomo vetoed the bill on January 1. Although he says that he recognizes that wage theft is a problem in New York State, he did not support the effective enforcement measures of SWEAT. SWEAT has been reintroduced this year in the Senate (#S7256) and Assembly (#A9008.) So far, Gramercy Stuyvesant Democrats, the Board of the Three Parks Independent Democratic Club and Village Independent Democrats have signed on to a letter to Governor Cuomo urging him to support the SWEAT legislation as passed by the State Assembly and Senate and not a weakened alternative. Supporters of SWEAT are asking Broadway Democrats to sign on as well. In addition, we hope to have an opportunity to bring postcards to Governor Cuomo to the next meeting of Broadway Democrats.

If you have questions about the legislation or want more information, please contact me via e-mail at merabban@gmail.com.

The author is a member of the Board of Three Parks Independent Democrats and a long-time resident of the Upper West Side.

RL

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CLUB CONSTITUTION

Two proposed amendments to the Club's Constitution, as stated below, were discussed at the February club meeting. Per the guidelines established in the Club's Constitution, they will also be discussed and voted on at the next club meeting (March 12):

"To create an officer's position of CORRESPONDING SECRETARY that would maintain the membership database/spreadsheet that includes dues, attendance and correspondence."

"To expand the \$10 Senior category to include students. Going forward, the membership dues categories can be changed by a majority vote of the steering committee. In addition, no one will be denied membership due to a financial hardship."

RL

Senator Pothole

Richard Seigel

If you google 'senator pothole – a nickname for Alfonse D'Amato – you get "*D'Amato drew the nickname Senator Pothole for his delivery of "constituent services," helping citizens with their individual cases. While some New Yorkers meant the nickname as a pejorative, many others saw it as a positive affirmation of his attention to getting things done.*"

We want our elected officials to be motivated to address our concerns in our community. We hope that they will use their influence to motivate the city bureaucracy to fix the things that we think are broken. We want them to intervene, especially when contacting 311 does not produce results.

Given the boundaries of two city council districts, our club is split into two districts. At times it seems that neither council member is motivated to address the needs of we who live on the district border.

There is a problem with the lighting in Riverside Park. It affects those of us who walk our dogs before work (in the dark) and after work (in the dark). The concerns have been heightened since the murder in Morningside Park.

We who use the park every day are still waiting for our Senator Pothole. Repairs are harder to achieve as the solution involves both the Parks Department and the Transportation Department. It seems that all involved are simply waiting for the seasons to change, and daylight to solve the problem. Perhaps our city council representatives could learn about constituent services from our Assembly member, Danny O'Donnell. He and his office have always followed through.

The author is Club Secretary, Director of Social Work at Metropolitan Hospital, and an Adjunct Professor at Hunter College School of Social Work.

☺ ☺ ☺

Eligibility to Vote in Club Elections

To be eligible to vote, you must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must have paid your dues.

Instant Runoff Voting

Per the Club Constitution, there will be only one ballot. Each voting member will rank their first, second, and third choices. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are redistributed in an instant runoff to the next candidate in the rankings. Any ballot which runs out of ranked candidates becomes a No Endorsement vote. No endorsement" is still a ballot option.

Balloting Procedures

The ballot box will stay open until 9:30 p.m. (or until five minutes after the last speaker has finished, if the meeting runs late).

Votes may be cast in person or by written proxy (limit one per voting member). The proxy giver must state the name of the proxy holder (i.e., the name can't be filled in later by the proxy holder). The proxy must be signed or verifiable, as by electronic transmission stating the person's name.

Please build in time to sign in, pay your dues, and allow us to determine your eligibility to vote.

Membership

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.

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!

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

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

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

The Broadway Democrats Newsletter – Mar. 2020

FIRST
CLASS

P.O. Box 1099
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New York, NY 10025

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 Paula Diamond Román
President: Amy Porter
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