

## Democrats Look to Expand Majority in the U. S. Senate

While all eyes are focused on the spirited race among the Democratic contenders for the presidency and party activists are undertaking the time-consuming task of gathering signatures for their favorite candidates for New York's presidential primary, other critical races are shaping up throughout the nation heading toward the 2008 General Election.

Besides the challenge of electing a new president, 34 Senate seats are up for election, along with the entire House of Representatives. With the Democrats currently holding a bare 51-49 edge in the Senate, they are looking for every opportunity to enhance that majority. Fortunately, our party will be defending only 12 seats while the Republicans must preserve 22.

Political insiders cite at least seven Senate seats currently held by Republicans as potentially up for grabs. These include Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, Minnesota, Colorado, New Mexico and Oregon. In addition, seats held by the GOP in Kentucky, North Carolina, and Nebraska could also be competitive by Election Day. Democrats, on the other hand, are seen to have just two incumbents facing potentially tight races: Tim Johnson of South Dakota and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. Current polling shows both holding their own and each leads potential challengers in fund raising.

*By Tom Schuler,  
CRDC District Leader*

It is crucial that Democrats win additional Senate seats. The current make-up of the United States Senate makes it extremely difficult to move forward with any progressive legislation under the constant threat of Republican filibuster. As we have seen these past few months, even with a majority, Democrats have been unable to change course in Iraq, expand child health care or amend the failed "no child left behind" initiative.

Pundits strongly believe that the next president will be a Democrat. Besides reversing course on the disastrous Bush policies, he or she may be able to nominate at least two members to the Supreme Court, along with many members of the federal judiciary, particularly at the key appellate level. It is vital that the Democrats hold a near filibuster-proof majority (60 seats) to counteract any Republican attempts to prevent fair-minded, honest progressive judges from being appointed. With a year to go, all these races are in full swing. With the outcome in New York a foregone conclusion, we may need to take a road trip to actively support one candidate or another (Maine is mighty pretty in the fall!)

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*This is the first in a series of articles reporting on the critical races leading up to the 2008 general election.*

## GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY,  
NOVEMBER 15, 2007 • 7:00PM

Hudson Guild  
441 West 26th Street  
(btwn. 9th and 10th Avenues)

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## AGENDA

### THE FUTURE OF THE HUDSON YARDS

**Guest Speaker:**  
**Ann Hayes Levin, Chair**  
**Clinton Land Use Committee**  
**Community Board 4**

**Club Business Meeting to follow**

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## Save The Date

### CRDC Annual Potluck Holiday Party

**Sunday, December 9, 2007**

**at Dusk Lounge,  
147 West 24th St  
(btwn 7th & 6th Aves.)**

**5:00 – 8:00 PM**  
**Wheelchair Accessible**

*Please plan to bring a non-perishable food item  
(15 oz or smaller)  
to contribute to  
St. Peter's Food Pantry.*

## Salvation Army's Tenant Evictions

### *Spurs Legislation to Protect Tenants and Preserve Affordable Housing*

*By Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried*

Twenty-five women are fighting the Salvation Army in court. The Salvation Army wants to evict these low-income tenants who live in two low-cost residences for women, the Parkside Evangeline on Gramercy Park and the Ten Eyck on East 39th Street, in order to empty the buildings and sell them to the highest bidder for market rate development. Many of the original 600 tenants were elderly and had lived in the buildings for many years.

This fight is about protecting the individual tenants and trying to preserve 600 units of affordable housing. In a rent-regulated building, one of the most important rights tenants have is the right to stay in their apartments even when the building changes hands. The Salvation Army is taking advantage of an exemption in the rent law that says "housing accommodations run by institutions operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes" are exempt from rent regulation as long as a tenant is directly related to the charitable or educational institution.

Because of this exemption, the Salvation Army tenants did not have this right, according to Supreme Court Judge Milton Tingling. The tenants organized to fight the evictions with the help of Met Council, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh, Councilmember Dan Garodnick, Councilmember Rosie Mendez and me. They are being represented in court "pro bono" by Marc Landis of Phillips Nizer and Legal Services of New York. One argument they are using to defend the tenants is that the Salvation Army is no longer operating the buildings exclusively for charitable purposes.

### *We Need a Legislative Fix!*

There are situations where this exemption enables a charitable or educational institution to do its job, such as a school that requires students to leave a dormitory after graduation, or a charity that provides its staff with housing for the length of employment. But this case shows that a charitable or educational institution can abuse the common good, especially when it comes to housing.

I am working on state legislation to change this by making it clear that once the building is no longer used exclusively for charitable or educational

purposes, it becomes rent stabilized and also making it illegal for these institutions to empty a building before selling it. The tenants would stay and be awarded rent stabilized leases. I will introduce the legislation in the upcoming legislative session in Albany, with State Senator Liz Krueger as the Senate sponsor.

For more information, please contact Shannon Flaherty in my community office, at (212) 807-7900 or flahers@assembly.state.ny.us. I welcome your support!

## CRDC Needs You!

*By Lynn Kotler, CRDC Vice President*

*"Paul Revere earned his living as a silversmith. But what do we remember him for? His volunteerism. All activism is volunteering in that it's done beyond earning a living and deals with what people are really passionate about. Remember, no one gets paid to rebel. All revolutions start with volunteers."* Susan Ellis

We are in a crucial time and we need you. The only way our Club will achieve its goals is through your support and help. The 2007 year may be a slow time for politics, but do not get lulled into a false sense. Each of us has the responsibility to ensure the vitality of our Club.

How can you help? Our administrative staff could always use a few more hands stuffing envelopes for our monthly mailings, petitioning the streets of Chelsea, assisting at the polls, staffing the CRDC booth at one of the street fairs, callers for our phone banks, hosting CRDC events/fundraisers, or assisting with our newsletter, just to mention some volunteering opportunities. Do you have specific skill set or ideas for our monthly meetings or a future forum? If so, we want to hear from you.

***Remember, volunteers do not get paid, but we are priceless. Make a difference, get involved.***

***Please keep a watchful eye for our CRDC Volunteer Round-Up***

We are delighted to announce that on Thursday, October 11th, longtime CRDC Member Katharine Roberts, Chair of our Health Committee, was awarded the DOROTHY EPSTEIN LEGACY FUND AWARD. She also received a copy of Dorothy Epstein's book *A Song of Social Significance: Memoir of an Activist*. Congratulations from us all!

## President's Corner: Anticipation

*Steven Skyles-Mulligan, CRDC President*

Some years ago a movie came out with the title, "Waiting to Exhale." I didn't see it and have no clue what it was about, but I found the concept very powerful. Right now, our nation—along with the rest of the world—is holding its collective breath waiting for January 20, 2009. There is great hope, for whatever comes next will be so much better than what we have. There is also a lingering fear that the crew currently in power will manage to do still more damage before they leave. And there is the unspoken dread that people who have shown so little respect for the Constitution and the rule of law might choose not to leave at all.

And yet, it is not too early to note the useful things that have emerged from the past six years. Of course they occurred in spite—and not because—of the administration's policies. My favorite—because it touches me personally—is that more Americans are aware of what's going on than ever before. My mother, who didn't vote for more than 30 years, has taken to following issues and going to the polls every chance she gets. The Republican Party is in disarray and virtually certain to lose several more seats in the Senate (*see Tom Schuler's excellent article on page 1*). Some pundits say their majority in the House will dwindle, too. Finally, the next president will have to be prepared to renounce some of the "unitary executive" authority the current administration has claimed. Senator Clinton has already indicated that she will do so and others will certainly follow. The reborn "imperial presidency" may well suffer crib death; may it rest in peace.

There is cause for hope—and we can choose to see a phoenix in the ashes (although there will still be plenty of ashes to clean up). Let's just pray that we don't get stuck with President Giuliani.

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## A Day at the U.S. Supreme Court

*By Lynn R. Kotler, CRDC Vice President*

On October 3, 2007 I awakened at 4:30 a.m. to catch a very early Amtrak train to Washington D.C. to hear the oral argument in the case *Margarita Lopez-Torres v. N.Y.S. Board of Elections et al.* at the United States Supreme Court. The case was of particular interest to me as the issue was the integrity of the judicial convention as a means to select judicial candidates in New York. I arrived early enough to stand outside the Supreme Court building and

contemplate how many of the most important laws of the land had been reviewed in those hallowed halls. The inside of the Supreme Court reflects the majesty of its exterior. Walking in, I could feel the profound history of the Court and picture my favorite justices, Marshall and Brennan, walked these same halls.

I proceeded through metal detectors and then a handbag search—a way of life these days. An usher escorted members of the audience to our reserved section. A panoramic view of the courtroom included architecturally designed marble friezes located at the top of each wall portraying allegorical representations of the law and historical lawmakers. The Supreme Court Clerk announced the Justices promptly at 10 a.m. The audience rose to its feet and each justice entered through a thick, velour curtain as if on a dramatic stage and proceeded to their respective throne-like, high back leather chairs. You could hear a pin drop.

The lawyers for the respective parties individually presented their oral arguments. All the justices (with the exception of Justice Clarence Thomas...surprise!) asked the attorneys questions regarding the law, as well as posing hypotheticals. The major issue before the Court was the constitutionality of New York's judicial electoral system. The position of N.Y.S. Board of Elections and New York County Democratic Committee is that the present delegate-convention system is constitutional and that the locally elected delegates advance the voters' interest at the nomination phase at the judicial convention in their selection of the State Supreme Court justice nominees. Respondent Lopez-Torres' (now the Surrogate of King's County) position is that the present system is unconstitutional and that there is no opportunity for individual voters to vote directly for judicial candidates at the nomination/primary stage. The United States District Court, Eastern District invalidated New York's method of electing State Supreme Court justices on federal constitutional rights, and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed its decision. At the end of the hour-long oral argument, it seemed that the Court is likely to overrule the Second Circuit's decision.

Our Club has taken particular interest in the judicial convention process. While the High Court may find that the present system is constitutional, there are flaws in how it works. At the judicial convention, delegates are unable to vote for their chosen nominee candidate if the candidate withdraws her or his name, thereby eliminating the need for a vote. Many of us feel that there is no actual choice of

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Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



### *Supreme Court — continued from pg 3*

candidate in this “withdraw to preserve your future chances” environment. Stay tuned for a decision in approximately three months. (By the way, what’s a trip to DC if you don’t stop in the gift shop for a tchotke? I picked up a Supreme Court snow globe, probably made in China, and a pen that no longer works. But who cares, it was all about being in the moment and the unforgettable experience.)

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*We were saddened to hear that longtime CRDC member and community activist Adam Honigman passed away on October 16. Our condolences to his son Daniel, who attends North Western University School of Journalism.*

## Join CRDC Today!

It is never too early to pay your 2008 dues, and remain a member of CRDC, New York City’s most progressive Democratic Club. Please fill out the coupon below and mail to our postal box or renew by going to our website [www.crdcnyc.org](http://www.crdcnyc.org).

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Questions? Call 212-924-5433, email us at [info@crdcnyc.org](mailto:info@crdcnyc.org), or visit our website at [www.crdcnyc.org](http://www.crdcnyc.org)