

President's Column

by Lynn Kotler, CRDC President

Recently, a club member said to me "Gee, I don't remember the last time we [CRDC] demonstrated for a cause we believe in." Well, that certainly changed when on May 3, CRDC members were out on Ninth Avenue between 17th and 18th Streets demonstrating their support for local small businesses being threatened with eviction so that their landlords can replace them with chic boutiques and high-priced restaurants. Many Ninth Avenue tenants have been in their locations for over thirty years. If they are evicted or do not secure lease extensions, then they will have no place to go and we will see yet another all too familiar sign in the window "Thank you Chelsea. Closing after thirty years."

I was reminded that the recent demonstration is exactly what our club is built on: community activism. CRDC has always stood up for causes that its members believe in. We take proactive roles to educate and empower our community residents to make it a better place to live. Our elected officials were at the demonstration to lend their support as well. A number of them voiced their concerns that short of legislation there may not be anything that can be done to ensure that the tenants remain in their shops.

We are losing our small businesses one by one. With them go part of our community identity and culture. This is not only a Chelsea issue, it is happening throughout our City. Rest assured that the fight is not over. It is important that CRDC continues to be visible in our community, supporting causes and issues that are important to us, voicing these concerns to our elected officials and holding them accountable to us and our community residents.

The May 3rd demonstration would not have happened without the hard work and dedication of our club members. Special "thank yous" are due to longtime Club member Gloria Sukenick and to Andrew Berman. Also thanks to our newest member, Jesse Smith Campoamor who organized a successful demonstration that not only brought out residents and other concerned New Yorkers, but our elected officials and TV and press news coverage, including NY1 and Channels 4 and 5. Kudos to other CRDCers who handed out flyers throughout our community: 1st Vice-President Judy Richheimer, and members Joanne Sinovi and Meryl Stein. Thank you to our members who attended the rally including: Paul Groncki, Marvin Kohl, Maarten deKadt, Linda Longstreet, Lee & Joanne Sinovi, Katherine Roberts, Linda Feldman, and Phyllis Gonzalez.

These events happen when you get involved and make them happen! I look forward to seeing all of you at our BBQ on June 1st.

GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 19 • 7:00 P.M.

Hudson Guild, 441 West 26th Street
(btw. 9th & 10th Aves.)

AGENDA:

Nuclear Folly?

"Why Nuclear Power Can't — and Won't — Solve the Climate Crisis"

Guest Speaker Karen Charman

is managing editor of the journal *Capitalism Nature Socialism*. She is also an independent investigative environmental reporter whose work has appeared in *The Nation* and other publications.

May Meeting Endorsements:

Congress

Jerrold Nadler 8 CD
Carolyn Maloney 14 CD

State Senate

Tom Duane 29 SD
Liz Krueger 26 SD

State Assembly

Richard Gottfried 75 AD

Democrat State Committee 75 AD

Doris Corrigan
Paul Bokun

Surrogate Court Judge

Milton Tingling

CRDC Judicial Delegates

Lynn Kotler, Doris Corrigan, Paul Groncki, David Caraway, Maarten DeKadt, Judy Richheimer

Alternate Delegates

Jon Nalley, Andrew Berman, Jesse S. Campoamor, Lee Sinovi, Emily Giske



Gloria Sukenick, CRDC Housing Chair addressing the crowd

A Little This – A Little That!

By Gloria Sukenick, CRDC Housing Chair

For those who were among the missing at the Save Our Stores rally on May 3, let me tell you, it was a clear indication that Chelsea gentrification is a matter of great concern to our neighborhood. The threatened loss of the long time mom-&-pop stores on 9th Avenue between 17th and 18th Streets (the last un-gentrified block on 9th) brought a sizable crowd to the streets.

Addressing the crowd were State Senator Tom Duane, State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried and, to illustrate the fact that this is a city wide problem, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and City Councilman David Yassky, from Brooklyn spoke to the issue. Representatives from Speaker Christine Quinn's and Comptroller William Thompson's offices also spoke to this issue.

Everywhere in New York City, the displacement of neighborhood small stores that have become part of the fabric of the community with blocks that consist of 3 drugstores or very high end food stores, restaurants and boutiques and/or banks. It is rumored that Scott Stringer has some proposals that would address this issue but they will come too late to help these store owners.

One possibility would be lease renewals offered at rents that are not up in the stratosphere but in the realm of reality. That would require some heavy negotiating on the part of our elected officials with the building's new owner, Morris Moinian, as well as pressure from the community. I will keep you informed.

On to other items of interest. Last month Andrew Berman addressed another crucial issue, the shrinking supply of affordable housing and the lack of any new housing that would meet the increasing need. The West Chelsea rezoning promised 27% affordable housing, but that's all it was – a promise. What was needed was a mandatory demand that a percentage of affordable housing be included in any new construction in the rezoned area. The developers are filling their pockets and giving nothing back to the existing community. And as gentrification continues, the community finds itself priced out of the neighborhood. Let's hope that the coming change in administration will offer good news to those seeking an affordable, decent home.

Keep Fighting!

Rail Yards Deal Collapse – Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire?

By Andrew Berman, CRDC Executive Committee Member

Many on the West Side breathed a sigh of relief when the deal between Tishman Speyer and the MTA for

gigantic "Hong Kong-on-the-Hudson"-style development of the west side rail yards collapsed in early May. But this is by no means the end of plans by the City and State to spur mega-development on the yards, much less around Penn Station or on top of the Port Authority Bus Terminal; in fact, the City and the MTA said they would re-open the door to the other bidders in what is clearly an effort by Mayor Bloomberg to get this moving before he leaves office.

What this collapse unfortunately does not mean is that the city or the MTA are fundamentally rethinking their approach to the development of the yards. The yards plans stressed maximum development that would vastly increase traffic and pollution, and stress infrastructure and services like subways and schools, with very little in return to offset these burdens upon the local community and very little direct benefit for the average New Yorker. None of the bidders offered much in the way of affordable housing, but Tishman actually offered the least of all.

While the MTA's desire to get the maximum return on the sale of the yards is understandable, there are many other things the City – and especially the west side – need besides the luxury housing and office buildings the rail yards plans largely consist of. Affordable housing is certainly one (throughout the 1960's and 70's thousands of units of affordable housing were built over railyards and railway cuts in the Bronx and Brooklyn). A hospital would be another – we keep hearing how St. Vincent's is now the only hospital between 59th Street and the Battery on the west side, and the only way for it to build a new facility is with a giant condo project to finance it and with a huge new hospital tower on narrow residential streets. But if space were provided on or around the yards, this might change that equation.

— continued on page 5



Assemblymember Richard Gottfried addresses the rally

Photos taken at May 3rd Rally in Chelsea by Lynn Kotler and Jere Moss



State Senator Tom Duane addressing the rally.



Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer addressing the rally.



Neighbors in support of Merchants.



J.D. Noland, Chair CB 4 addressing the rally.

The club wants to thank the organizers: Gloria Sukenick, Miguel Acevedo Andrew Berman and Jesse Campoamor. See articles on page 1 and page 2



Phyllis Gonzalez, Community Activist states her support for merchants.



Jesse S. Campoamor, Gloria and Andrew Berman checking the program.



Flashing the 9th Avenue traffic



Quite a crowd, press and all!

Rail Yard Deals Collapse — continued from page 2

The rail yards deal collapse should be seen as an opportunity – not to rush to bring new developers in for more of the same – but rather to turn the plan into one which truly benefits the west side and provides for the needs of all New Yorkers.

Andrew Berman is Save Chelsea's representative to the Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee.

New York Courts Tell Same Sex Couples Who Want To Wed: Go To Canada

By Paul A. Goetz, CRDC Executive Committee Member

“When any society says that I cannot marry a certain person, that society has cut off a segment of my freedom.”

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1958

The Court of Appeals decision two years ago in *Hernandez v. Robles* denying same-sex couples the right to marry was truly disheartening to those seeking marriage equality. The *Hernandez* decision is in sharp contrast to the California Supreme Court's recent decision granting same-sex couples the right to marry and may lead many New York gay and lesbian couples to conclude that they will have to move to Canada, California or Massachusetts if they want to get married. But these couples are not without recourse; it will just require some traveling.

In February of this year the Appellate Division Fourth Department, an upstate intermediate appellate court, decided in *Martinez v. County of Monroe* that a same-sex marriage entered into in Canada must be recognized in New York. The plaintiff in *Martinez* married her girlfriend in Canada and returned to New York where she sought spousal health care benefits from her employer, Monroe Community College (“MCC”). MCC denied the benefits on the ground that recognition of *Martinez's* same-sex marriage was contrary to the public policy of New York as articulated by the Court of Appeals in *Hernandez*. The Fourth Department disagreed.

The court in *Martinez* acknowledged New York's longstanding history of recognizing valid out-of-state marriages even if the marriage would be void under New York law. The court noted that there are two exceptions to this rule: New York will not recognize a marriage specifically prohibited by New York law; and, it will not recognize a marriage abhorrent to New York public policy. Unlike several other states, New York does not have a law specifically prohibiting same-sex marriage. Therefore, MCC was left to argue that same-sex marriage is abhorrent to New York public policy even though

this exception has been limited to marriages involving polygamy or incest.

The court in *Martinez* correctly observed that the Court of Appeals in *Hernandez* merely determined that the New York State Constitution does not require recognition of same-sex marriages solemnized in New York. The Fourth Department noted that the Court of Appeals said in *Hernandez* that the Legislature may pass legislation recognizing same-sex marriages. Therefore, the Fourth Department concluded that the Court of Appeals indicated that it is not against New York public policy to recognize same-sex marriage.

Also in February of this year, using similar arguments, the Supreme Court in New York County decided, in *Beth R. v. Donna M.* that a same-sex couple married in Canada were legally married under New York law and were, therefore, entitled to seek a divorce in New York.

These court decisions highlight the necessity of ensuring that the New York bench is populated with individuals committed to ensuring the civil rights of all New Yorkers and who will not allow discrimination simply because it has always been allowed.

Petition Petition Petition

By the time you read this, Club petitioning will be well underway. We are gathering signatures for our endorsed candidates, as well as the Club's slate of Judicial Delegates and Alternates.

While a schedule has not been completed at the time of the newsletter's printing, if you would like to help contact Tom Schuler at 212-924-5920.

Save The Date

October 7, 2008

**Chelsea Reform Democratic Club
50th Anniversary Celebration
Honoring Doris Corrigan**

**Chelsea Art Museum,
Home of the Miotte Foundation,
556 W. 22nd Street, NY, NY 10011
Details to Follow**

PO Box 1120
Old Chelsea Station
New York City, NY 10113-1120

Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



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*Gathering signatures for endorsed candidates,
Judicial Delegates and Alternates*

Save The Date: October 7, 2008

*Chelsea Reform Democratic Club 50th Anniversary
Celebration Honoring Doris Corrigan*

Join CRDC Today!

It is never too late 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.

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\$25 Individual \$40 H'Hold \$50 Patrons

\$10 Ltd. Income \$15 H'Hold Limited Income

Make checks payable to CRDC and mail to:
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New York City, NY 10113-1120

Questions? Call 212-924-5433, email us at info@crdcnyc.org, or visit our website at www.crdcnyc.org