

CHELSEA Reform Democratic Club

newsletter

January 2009

Serving the neighborhoods of Chelsea, Madison Square, Flatiron, Rosehill

Doris Corrigan, *Editor*

President's Column

By Lynn Kotler, CRDC President

It's 2009! Where did 2008 go? No doubt December was filled with holiday parties and family get-togethers, but what happened during the course of the year? Thanks to all of you, it was indeed a very productive year for CRDC.

2008 was a record-long campaign season with historic results. CRDC members petitioned on the streets of Chelsea, participated in phone-banking efforts, provided assistance in battleground states and worked at polling sites in our district. Thank you to members Doris Corrigan, Andrew Berman, David Caraway, Jesse Campoamor, Matthew Kalishman, Judy Richheimer, Marvin Kohl, Paul Groncki, Tom Schuler and Mary Dorman. We can't wait to see President-Elect Barack Obama and the Democrats in action!

In May, Gloria Sukenick brought to our attention the plight of small business owners in Chelsea, who are being replaced by large and economically powerful chain stores. Gloria organized the screening of "Twilight Into Night," a documentary addressing the loss of small businesses in New York City. Under Gloria's leadership and with the help of Miguel Acevedo, CRDC helped organize a demonstration on Ninth Avenue, which was not only attended by many elected officials but also received ever important media attention. Hopefully, with our continued efforts, small businesses will survive and thrive in New York City!

Sunny skies shined on our annual BBQ held at the Fulton House Garden! Chef Paul Groncki cooked us a feast, satiating members, new friends and elected officials. The success of this

event would not have been possible without the efforts of our members Tim Gay, Linda Longstreet, Elyse Roberts, Paul Goetz, Tom Schuler and Doris Corrigan.

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Chelsea Art Museum was truly a highlight. Our co-chairs Tom Schuler and Mary Dorman worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the event by securing event space, a caterer and entertainment. We honored long-time club member Doris Corrigan for her commitment to our Club over many years; the Esther Smith Award was presented to member Laura Morrison for her unflinching public advocacy and service; Steven Skyles-Mulligan was recognized for his leadership as the past president of CRDC; and the Chelsea Waterside Park Association was recognized for revitalizing Chelsea's waterfront.

Fittingly, **we capped off the year with our holiday party at Dusk Lounge**, a wonderful establishment in Chelsea. Members, elected officials and judicial candidates all attended. Hats, gloves and scarves, which were distributed by Hudson Guild to needy community residents, were generously donated by CRDC partygoers. We tip our hat to all that made this event so successful.

Yes, this year has been both rewarding and challenging. Our successes would not have been possible without our officers — Judy Richheimer, Linda Longstreet, Paul Groncki and Luke McAuliffe; our executive board — Andrew Berman, Marvin Kohl, Gloria Sukenick, Elyse Roberts, Paul Goetz and Maarten deKadt; our State Committee Woman — Doris Corrigan; and our District Leaders — Tom Schuler

GENERAL MEETING

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 22
7:00 P.M.**

Fulton Center Hudson Guild
119 Ninth Avenue
(Btwn 17 & 18 Sts.)

ON THE AGENDA:

State Senator Tom Duane

What Is Going On In Albany?

Also On The Agenda:

Nomination of 2009 Club Officers and Members-at-Large

The Nominating Committee will report on suggested candidates. Further nominations will be taken from the floor.

The Election will be held at our February 19 meeting.

and Mary Dorman. I would also like to thank our "behind the scenes" members who have worked to ensure that we have a timely newsletter, that our events are captured and preserved in photographs and that our designs are state of the art: newsletter editor — Doris Corrigan; newsletter proofreader — Pam Chen; club photographer — Jon Nalley; and graphic designer — Nicole Norton; and each and every one of you who have helped throughout the year.

I have enjoyed being CRDC president this past year. I wish all of you a happy and healthy New Year and look forward to 2009.

Eastern Rail Yard Project

By State Assembly Member Richard Gottfried

This is the statement read by Assembly Member Dick Gottfried at the Dec. 1 Public Meeting regarding the Related/Goldman Sachs submission for the Eastern Rail Yard Project.

I represent the 75th Assembly District in Manhattan, which includes Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, Midtown, part of the Upper West Side, and Murray Hill. The district includes the Eastern and Western Yards.

I commend Related/Goldman Sachs for their outreach to the community on this project. I believe outreach and openness to community input makes a better process and will produce a better result.

School capacity. In view of the growing school overcrowding problem in New York City, especially in School District 2, the current school plan for the Rail Yards should be expanded and should come on line sooner.

I suggest that additional school capacity, beyond what is proposed for the Western Rail Yard, be incorporated into the cultural facility. It could be "themed" to take advantage of that co-location. The school or schools should be locally zoned schools, open to the whole community. It is essential that the schools include adequate dedicated school playground facilities.

High Line. Everyone involved in the planning and development of the Western and Eastern Rail Yards needs to understand how important it is to the community that the High Line and its unobstructed view corridors be preserved and enhanced, and to incorporate that proposition in their plans.

Removal of the High Line spur at the southeast corner of the Eastern Rail Yards is unnecessary and would violate New York's commitment to maximizing the preservation and revitalization of the High Line. This is not acceptable. It is hard to fathom why in the last six months, there has not yet been a solution to this problem as other issues have been resolved. Related should work with Friends of the High Line and the community to develop a creative solution that preserves and enhances the High Line and the planned building. This can and must be worked out.

Open space and sustainability. More needs to be done to maximize open space. The development team needs to work closely with Michael Van Valkenburgh, the team selected to complete the Hudson Yards Boulevard and Park design. Open space in the Eastern Rail Yard should

be aesthetically and functionally linked to the Boulevard and Park, the High Line and the Hudson River Park. Additionally, the developers should improve green building sustainability by incorporating green roofs, using materials and resources that would increase the site's LEED certification; and improving water efficiency by incorporating storm water recapture. The developers should also to work to improve indoor environmental quality.

Parking and traffic congestion. The proposed text amendment on parking makes sense. Parking should be limited in the Eastern Rail Yard and the site should be developed in such a way to encourage use of public transit. Traffic congestion in this area already interferes with the quality of life of my constituents. Reducing traffic will improve the efficiency of transportation and the City's economy. The total number of parking spaces allowed under current zoning should be reduced. The available parking should be limited to use by on-site residential and commercial users. Any parking facility built on this site should mitigate commuter traffic.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments and look forward to working with the City Planning Commission, the MTA, Related/Goldman Sachs, and the community to improve the project.

Same Sex Marriage

By State Senator Liz Krueger

As a strong supporter of marriage equality, I am very concerned about the potential use of same-sex marriage legislation as a bargaining tool. While at this point it appears that there are not enough votes to pass marriage equality legislation in the State Senate, our goal should be to build support for this legislation, and to keep our options open for bringing it to the floor at the earliest possible moment when it can pass.

I certainly do not want us to risk having this be a bill brought to the floor without knowing we had the votes to pass it; because in Albany if something doesn't fly it can sometimes take a decade to get back on track...and we don't want to risk that situation. That is why I will be working everyday with supporters of marriage equality to convince my colleagues of the importance of passing this legislation.

This means we will have to work the way Danny O'Donnell moved this bill through the Assembly -- by reaching out to every member, addressing their concerns, making sure the votes were there. He even succeeded in getting Republican Assembly members to vote for the bill. That's what we need to do in the Senate. I do believe

we can and will move this bill through before the end of our first session in the majority and know that Governor Paterson will sign the bill. That is why it is critical that Democratic leadership not make any promises to anti-gay members that would limit our ability as a conference to move marriage equality legislation, and I have made my opposition regarding using marriage equality as a bargaining tool clear to our conference leaders.

I will continue to push for passage of this important legislation. I believe the state's recognition of same-sex marriage will be the only way to create true legal, social, and fiscal equity for the LGBT community. The State of New York should be ensuring equal protections for all New York couples — regardless of the sex of the two partners.

Here Is Hoping 2009 Is Better Than 2008

by Andrew Berman, CRDC Executive Committee Member

2008 marked the end of the eight-year reign of the Bush Administration and (hopefully) of the forty-year reign of Republican rule of the NY State Senate. These alone and their replacement with President-Elect Barack Obama and a New York State Senate ruled by a progressive Democratic majority give great reason for hope for 2009. But of course this only paints part of the picture.

2008 also saw some less rosy developments which will carry over into 2009. While there may be some satisfaction in seeing less-than-honorable titans of finance and

real estate paying for their excesses and greed, we know in the end that it is average people who will likely be most hurt by the ever widening economic collapse.

And here in New York City, rather than regime change, we got regime extension, with the Mayor and the City Council voting themselves a reprieve from current term limits without returning the question to the voters who put such limits there in the first place.

Did anyone else find it ironic that the excuse for the sudden change in a term limits law they had previously called sacrosanct was the economic collapse which they all presided over? Or that they then asked for a similar reprieve from campaign finance rules so that any money they had spent on a different race would not count against them in their new efforts to seek reelection?

Nationally, while I remain very hopeful about Barack Obama's ascendancy to the presidency, and have no illusions that I will always agree with him, his choice of Pastor Rick Warren to give the invocation at his inauguration sent a chilling message. Warren has compared gay marriage to bestiality and pedophilia, is adamantly anti-choice, and favors creationism over evolution.

With so many more thoughtful and less divisive religious leaders out there, could President Elect Obama not have found anyone better?

Forecast for 2009: unclear. But no matter who's in power in Washington, Albany, or City Hall, it will take a lot of work to ensure that the progressive and humane agenda we fought so hard for is actually carried out.

SOME OF CRDC'S GUEST SPEAKERS IN 2008

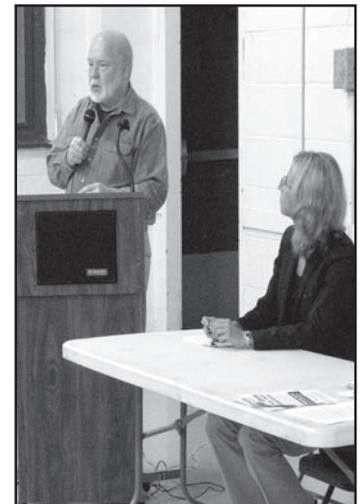
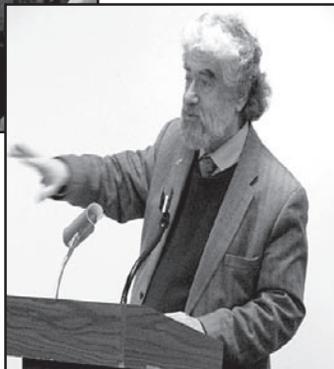


Pam Chen, Esq., Former Assistant U.S. Attorney For Eastern District
Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery In Plain View



Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President
State Of The Borough Update

Michael Zweig, Professor of Economics at Stony Brook
addressing Current Economic World Situation And The Center For Study Of Working Class Life



Michael Mckee, Tenants PAC
speaking on Efforts To Win Back The State Senate



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Some of CRDC's Guest Speakers in 2008

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