

Judge Turned Activist

BY KAREN SMITH

Last week got I on a bus at 6:00 am to go to Washington for demo in front of US Supreme Court on Arizona anti-immigrant legislation

Two days later I was in a room at the Bklyn Boro Pres's Office with a diverse group of community activists discussing the development of a community health needs assessment for north central Brooklyn as one way to deal with the Governor's threat of closing 5 hospitals in that community

Yesterday I was sitting around the table in a community organization

in Clinton with housing activists developing a 3 year housing campaign for affordable housing in NY

None of that could I have done as a Judge, which is why I left the bench. What I discovered when I left was that there are hundreds of grass root community groups throughout the 5 boros (and even the surrounding suburbs) working for social change. The challenge for all of us is how to come together and find the common themes and struggles so we can work together. My commitment is to continue working to find those commonalities and supporting groups, in coming together for a common goal and improving the lives of working people.

Our challenge here in Chelsea is to take back our community. Other communities are fighting gentrification as well. We need to reverse the effects of gentrification.

We have to be clear of who we represent and equally clear about who we elect to represent us. We are the 99% and we have chosen throughout the years to engage in battles in support of our 99%- the 99% of Chelsea residents who live in rent stabilized and rent controlled apts, such as London Terrace or the small buildings and brownstones scattered throughout our community, the good people of Penn South who have successfully fought to remain

affordable, the public housing tenants who live in the Chelsea/Elliott houses and in the Fulton Houses, the young students who have moved into our neighborhood and are living 3 or 4 in a small apartment, and the homeowners facing eviction from predator banks.

I applaud the club in its renewed activism the last few years in holding important forums, like the recent forum on 'Stop and Frisk' and the plans to get more active in the housing struggles.

As we all know, it is not enough to hold forums. We

have to organize, be more active, recruit new and younger members from our community, seek out our fellow Chelsea residents in public housing, to have an honest dialogue about how we can help one another bring back Chelsea as the diverse community it once was.

While most of us would like to see the Chelsea Market expansion stopped, we also have to find out if that is real. If it isn't, then we have to get in there and get the most for our communities, like training programs which lead to real jobs, as we are only as strong as our weakest link.

We also have to hold our neighbors like the Highline, accountable. The \$25 million dollar art project is an unacceptable expenditure of monies needed elsewhere in our community, like bathrooms in our community parks.

One last point. Our politicians work for us, not us for them. CRDC is a progressive club. We need to find a way to actively support the people we place trust in, so that they can resist the pressures put on them by not progressive forces—BUT THEY MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT THEY DO, HOW THEY VOTE, AND WHAT THEY SAY. And we have to become a force, for what we think matters. So if someone who has been our friend and champion for years votes under

cont'd on pg 6



The Honorable Karen Smith speaking, after accepting the Esther Smith award at the CRDC Brunch



Tom Duane retiring from the State Senate

"Big Shoes to Fill"

Tom Duane leaves very big shoes to fill. Tom has been an extraordinary legislator — smart, tireless, and fiercely dedicated to human rights and social justice. He has been extraordinarily effective in protecting tenants, preserving affordable housing, protecting the community from excessive development, strengthening LGBT rights, and ensuring access to health care for everyone.

Tom has been a great partner, and his staff has been wonderful to work with over the years. I will miss him as a legislative colleague, but continue to value him as a friend, a constituent and a leader on issues that matter. Whatever he does next, I hope it's something where we continue to work together.

—Assembly Member
Richard N. Gottfried

Brad Hoylman and Mark Levine Win Support of CRDC

At a special June 5th meeting, Brad Hoylman, current chair of Community Board 2, won the support of CRDC for the State Senate sea of the 27th district which Tom Duane is vacating. At the May 17th general meeting, Mark Levine overwhelmingly won the CRDC endorsement for NYS Senate's 31st seat.



Brad Hoylman



Mark Levine

EDITOR'S SPOTLIGHT

'Miss Muriel' And The BRC

The Chelsea Reform Democratic Club is proud to have supported the 26th Street Bowery Residence Committee facility with Steven Skyles-Mulligan, our president, serving on it's advisory board from its early days of planning, construction and local protests, to its current days of full operation and local protests with Muriel Beach, CRDC's Executive Board member, serving now. Muriel reports that the BRC has gone beyond even her lofty expectations. And she should know. She volunteers there two days a week, one day running Bingo in lock-down Detox (even this past Christmas Day) and another upstairs teaching how to do laundry, use a microwave, recycling, and other skills needed for those that graduate Chelsea and move on to housing.

I recently sat down with Muriel Beach, and was surprised of her many causes in activism and charitable work, most notably fighting against the Vietnam war, helping AIDS patients in the 80's and 90's, and more recently on the front lines of aging issues. When I asked her about her work at the BRC, her face lit up and she painted a picture of the BRC that is quite different from the original one portrayed by neighborhood naysayers.

Naysayers portrayed a neighborhood taken over by crack addicts, crime and mayhem. "Mother's with baby carriages showed up and said they would be attacked, that children

wouldn't be safe, and that there would be predators." The group even hired Rudy Guiliani's law firm to fight the project.



by Donathan Salkin, CRDC Vice President

The picture that Muriel paints from the inside looking out, is so different. Addiction to drugs and alcohol, or a bottomed way of life can't be cured with a quick pill or operation. In order to get the commitment from a new patient (or 'client', as BRC refers hereon) to overcome their diseases takes the total commitment from everyone in the BRC's 12 story facility: from the door and security personnel, cleaning staff, counselors, cooks, volunteers, nurses — all the way up to the top honcho. And that's exactly what Chelsea's Bowery Residence Committee's facility does, seven days a week, 365 days a year. At the top is Executive Director Muzzy Rosenblatt, one of those rare hands-on, high level charity execs, that doesn't play golf all the time. Says Muriel, "Muzzy is so committed to the men, women and work to be done. It's a commitment that I haven't seen in a long time."

Muzzy has fostered a culture of total respect and positive resolve throughout

the facility. Bad manners and down-beat attitudes are left at the door. New clients quickly learn the rules from both staff and peer pressure. Everyone says sir and maam and is each treated with respect. Miss Muriel, as she's called, told me, "The BRC Standards are really high. When they're not willing to abide by the rules, maybe the clients will need a homeless shelter but not a BRC homeless shelter. These people are working so hard to reestablish a whole new life. But what you have to realize is that most of these clients don't even remember the last time they were treated with respect. And on the street, they had a protected shield and cut themselves off. In order for them to come back to society they have to give up that shield and they become very vulnerable."

And where did Miss Muriel, at 84, develop a backbone to handle a group of 20, or so, men in a locked-down detox room for hours at a time?

Muriel's favorite time was this past Spring, Graduation Day. "Everyone was there: all the staff, volunteers, graduates and family members, and we were all so happy!"

And where did Miss Muriel, at 84, develop a backbone to handle a group of 20, or so, men in a locked-down detox room for hours at a time? There's no sugar-coating detox. Muriel's level head, thick skin, sharp tongue and, quite possibly, a good uppercut, can be traced

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UPDATE OF CLUB RESOLUTION: BOWERY RESIDENTS COMMITTEE / JULY 14, 2010

I have been serving on the BRC Advisory Board and as a BRC volunteer counselor since Christmas 2011 and am highly impressed with the efficiency of the operation, particularly with the competency and performance of the staff. In my relationships with clients, I have also been impressed by their respect to one another, to the staff, and to me as a volunteer.

The overall mood and tone of the residence is "well-mannered, respectful and calm". I've never felt threatened or uncomfortable. This is all "a



by Muriel Beach, Executive Board, CRDC

far cry from the promised conditions from those who had rejected and been opposed to this facility coming to Chelsea."

Since BRC moved to 25th Street in July 2011, 2200 individuals have been served with 1100 "successful outcomes". There are several different programs at the 25th St facility and the breakdown is as follows:

Chemical Dependency Center: 24 beds, 1201 individuals treated and 934 graduated to further treatments for their addictions.

Fred Cooper Substance Abuse Service Center: 202 individuals served and 53 graduated.

Jack Ryan Residence: 600 men served and 70 graduated to independent housing.

Reception Center: 100 individuals served and 25 graduated to independent housing.

Metropolitan Apartment Program: out of 87 people transferred to this facility on January 30, 2011, 9 have since graduated to independent housing.

back to her career in dealing with the tough men that ran our city's longshoremen industry.

One of Muriel's first jobs, while still in college, was on the waterfront, meeting with various local heads of the International Longshoremen Association to obtain information of their hiring practices and wages. The job took her all over town, even to the piers in Jersey City, but it was one trip to Brooklyn, that Muriel remembers most.

"I had set up a meeting with Anthony 'Tough Tony' Anastasio, who was head of Brooklyn's Locals. It was arranged through a friend, at a paper who was owed a favor from Tough Tony. The meeting was in Brooklyn and was difficult because Tough Tony's brother Albert, head of 'Murder Incorporated' had been murdered not so long before, shot in a barbershop up in the Sheraton." She continues, quieting as if someone else might hear, "Tony led me into a room where the windows were bricked over. It was a fortress. Tony sat down behind a big desk. I sat down, took out my yellow pad and asked Tony some not so easy questions, but I was determined to do it. Tony turned out to be a very nice gentleman and he gave me the information I needed, and then offered his driver to get me back to Manhattan. What's funny is that when the driver dropped me off, he looked up at the building and said 'Miss Beach, be careful, there are a lot of gangsters up there.' This from a man who I saw had a gun in a holster, under his suit jacket!" Muriel laughs.

After receiving her Masters Degree at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Muriel moved to Chelsea and became head researcher of the NY Shipping Association where working relationships with Tough Tony and other tough men of the shipping industry continued for many years, both in New York and during the strikes, going to Washington DC. Their relationships even proved valuable in putting some fear into her fiance who got a case of cold feet. Muriel and Ben got married. That was all over fifty years ago!

And what did Muriel have for dinner with the clients in lock-down detox this past



"This is what we wore to work back then."—Muriel Beach at work

Christmas Day? Her face lights up again. "Cornish Hens, wild rice, roasted almonds and string beans, corn bread, fruit juice and apple pie." A very respectful menu!

With the commitment of people like, Miss Muriel, Steven, Volunteers, Muzzy, and his entire staff, the facility is restoring productive lives, to wayward people. The Chelsea community should treat the facility with the respect that it deserves and the naysayers should spend some of that Guiliani money to keep the BRC well

funded and running, at it's high level of industry excellence.

On a personal note, over fifty years ago, my father drove the family through the Bowery and using the car ride as a lesson, told my brother and I that the Bowery was where a distant uncle of his was last seen. Yes, the scene is implanted in my mind. But naysayers should revisit that stigma and take a BRC tour, because this isn't my father's crazy uncle's BRC, any more!



Muriel receives Hudson Guild's Elliott Award from NY Assembly-man Richard Gottfried in 2009.

Happy Fathers Give Away Brides

Our club's own Christine Quinn ties the knot with Kim Katullo, as both dads revel in the moment



PHOTO BY WILLIAM ALATRISTE



SPRING BRUNCH

Thanks to all that joined the celebration of community activism at the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club's spring brunch, and to those below that contributed so much in keeping our club alive and well.

Angel

Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Hon. Richard Gottfried
Hon. Mary Dorman, Donathon Salkaln

Benefactor

Arthur Aufses, Hon. Carolyn Maloney
Hon. Christine Quinn, John Johnson
Ken Jockers and David Freudenthal
Hon. Tom Duane, Hon.. Deborah Glick
Hon. Paul Groncki

Patron

Hon. Brad Hoylman, Corey Johnson
George Silver, Paul Balsler
Steven Skyles-Mulligan

Sponsor

Stuart Beckerman, Burt Lazarin
Jessica Lappin, John Tepper Marlin
Julie Menin, Hon. Keith LT Wright
Maarten deKadt, Mark Levine
Hon. Robert Jackson, Steven Shore
Theresa McKenna, Hon. Tom Schuler



Assembly Member Keith L.T. Wright
with District Leader Mary Dorman



Assebmlyman Richard Gottfried with Justin
Hoy and Lesley Doyel of 'Save Chelsea.'



Judy Wessler with retired Justice Karen Smith



Phyllis Gonzalez



Linda Longstreet, Steven and
Donathan Salkaln

CRDC CELEBRATES ACTIVISM AT 2012 SPRING BRUNCH!

One of the most challenging aspects of planning our annual brunch is selecting the people and organizations to honor. In our community this is true not because there are so few options, but because there are so many. We are privileged to have a range of passionate, involved neighbors and neighborhood organizations and I am frequently fortunate enough to have a personal acquaintance with each of them.

Assembly Member Keith L.T. Wright, the New York County Leader, was given the "headline" award – the one we typically give to an officeholder who is making a difference. Over the years, I remember giving this honor to State Senator Liz Kreuger, then-State Senator Eric Schneiderman, then-Lieutenant Governor David Patterson and our own District Leader Tom Schuler, among others. County Leader Wright may not always seem as progressive (or lefty) as we might like, but he is always open to discussion and willing to give ideas a fair hearing. As he referenced in his acceptance speech, District Leader Mary Dorman has even persuaded him to change his mind on several occasions.

Over the years, CRDC has collaborated with many other community organizations. One of our closest collaborators has been Save Chelsea, able led by Lesley Doyel and Justin Hoy. Together we helped turn back efforts by The General Seminary to build a monstrosity on 9th Avenue, and we are currently joining forces to help stop overdevelopment at Chelsea Market. While ardent in pursuit of their causes, both Lesley and Justin have admirable command of the complex facts of zoning and ably defuse heated arguments with their own respective brands of humor.

It was truly a privilege to celebrate the return of retired Justice Karen Smith to progressive



by Steven
Skyles-
Mulligan,
President,
CRDC

activism by giving her the award named for her mother, our late State Committee Member, Esther Smith. Karen brings to her work a far-ranging passion, a deep compassion, a fearless willingness to challenge the way things are and creative ideas for forging tighter bonds in our community. She has been unstinting and generous in her advice and always gracious when her thoughts and mine are not in perfect accord.

The first time I met Phyllis Gonzalez, the recipient of the second annual Doris Corrigan award, she was managing the bustling polling place at PS 33. Phyllis was undauntedly cheerful in managing the many different personalities on hand on that particular day – and for many years after that. In my interactions with her over the years, I have found her to be gentle and patient, but persistent in pushing for what is good for our community. She has been an especially effective leader for the Chelsea-Elliott Tenants' Association, and all of us in the neighborhood owe her a debt of gratitude for the Chelsea Recreation Center.

Finally, as I said during my presentation, the greatest honor of being president of a club like ours is the chance to get to know and work with all the extraordinary people who choose to get involved. It's wonderful when people are enthusiastic about issues and ideas. From where I sit, though, it is nothing short of miraculous when they are willing to roll up their sleeves, get their

*"The greatest honor of
being president of a club
like ours is the chance
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involved."*

hands dirty and do the work that needs to be done. On behalf of the club's senior leadership, I recognized two such individuals, Linda Longstreet and Donathan Salkaln, both of whom work continually and uncomplainingly on behalf of the club, tackle even the largest tasks without complaint and seldom turn me down when I call with a request. The recently refurbished clubhouse is a testament to their efforts.



CHELSEA
Reform
Democratic
Club

Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill

COMMENT ON ECONOMICS

Policies Independent Of The Democratic Party

Are Barack Obama's policies better than Mitt Romney's policies are likely to be? Without a doubt. But are they seriously flawed? Also without a doubt. In this coming election, therefore, we need to support the Democratic presidential candidate while raising our voices to criticize his shortcomings.

Jobs for all Americans looking for work, whether they are officially counted in the unemployment statistics or not, remain critically important. The April unemployment statistics moved from 8.2% to 8.1% but do not represent an improvement. 342,000 workers have been unemployed so long, that they stopped looking for employment and therefore were not part of the unemployment computation. Three times as many workers stopped looking for work as the small net gain of 115,000 jobs occurred in April.

Could the government have created jobs for those folks looking for work? Undoubtedly. A 2011 report by the Urban Land Institute tells us: "The US needs to spend \$2 trillion to rebuild infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water lines, sewage treatment plants and dams reaching the end of their planned life cycles." This should be the basis of putting unemployed Americans back to work and the administration can begin to implement right now through an executive



by Maarten de Kadt, Vice President, CRDC

order. Congressional approval is not needed. Unfortunately our government, moving in the opposite direction, is poised to cutback public spending even further. Economist John Stephenson tells us: "The fiscal cliff is expected to arrive at the beginning of 2013, when the Bush-era tax cuts are set to expire and \$1 trillion in spending cuts are set to kick in." That large a cut in spending will make economic life

in this country even worse.

The Obama administration urgently needs to move forward by advocating increased government spending as a centerpiece of its upcoming campaign. Clearly, citizens in France and Greece by electing more liberal governments have indicated their increased annoyance with European austerity policies. It can't be too long before voters in this country follow suit by expressing their disgust with the US's form of austerity. But if the major parties here maintain their erroneous policy of cutting back government spending perhaps it's time to follow the advice of economist Ismael Hossein-zadeh. Some liberals he says are "trying to build bridges between the Democratic Party and the Occupy

movement in an effort to channel the protesters' energy to the party's electoral machine." Instead he urges OWS to "chart a political movement of the working people and other grass-roots independent of both parties of big business." But we are a long way from a significant third party even though the Working Families Party (and unfortunately, the Tea Party) may represent a step in that direction.

If the Obama administration is to gain four more years in the White House it should not be permitted to plan for four more years of the same thing. Needed expenditures on infrastructure reconstruction must occur in order to jumpstart the economy and create more jobs. Budget deficits must be diminished over time by gradually returning the taxing

"The US needs to spend \$2 trillion to rebuild infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water lines, sewage treatment plants and dams reaching the end of their planned life cycles."

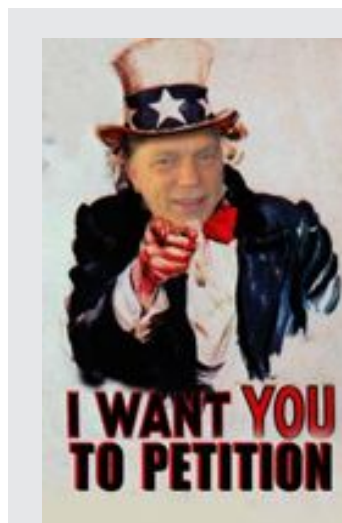
structure back to those days when more wealthy among us really did pay more. A Romney administration would be far worse than reelecting the current President especially for those people who survive on the margin of the difference between the Republican and Democratic sets of economic and social policies. However, turning a blind eye to the shortcomings of the past four years of Obama would be a serious mistake. We should offer the president our support, but critical support.

Judge Turned Activist *cont'd from pg 1*

pressure from the governor to support the bill for a sixth tier, for workers' pensions, weakening workers' rights, we have to ask him to come before us and explain why. And we have to be prepared to give him solace and shelter, if he votes against such bills in the future,

And we also have to be critical in our support of the people who seek our support. Since when does a progressive club such as ours give uncritical support to a person who stops legislation on paid sick leave or waters down a living wage bill, so that it only applies to 500 workers in this City. And while I agree with Keith Wright that we have to support Obama, we have to do it critically.

We need to discuss these things with an open heart and with candor, and if you are willing to accept these challenges, I'm in it with you. That's in large part why I left the bench. Thanks.



"Petitioning begins on Tuesday, June 5 and continues through July 7. We are gathering signatures for our endorsed candidates for State and Local Office. This includes State Senate, and Assembly, Surrogate Court Judge, Civil Court Judge and Democratic Party Officials, Democratic State Committee and Judicial Delegates."

—Tom Schuler

EYE ON ALBANY

Taxation With A Lot Less Representation

The very seeds of our great country were sown by outraged activists that shouted "Taxation without representation!" Well, what do you do as a populous, when it's "Taxation with a lot less representation?"

In 2010, when Andrew Cuomo, running for Governor and many other politicians ran for seats in Albany's State Senate and Assembly, they signed a pledge to have future redistricting plans drawn by an independent panel. Soon after, these same people that were elected, made one of their first matters of business, to discard that pledge. It was last seen floating down the Hudson River, past the city, and heading toward Fresh Kills.

This blatant disregard of the public's trust is mind boggling at the least. At the most, it has resulted in the State Senate with an extra seat (63rd) in Republican friendly upstate and the probable Republicans control of the State Senate, for the next ten years. Expect very few reforms.

With the State's population growth primarily in New York City, along with prison population now counted as where they



Lee Sinovoi,
Executive
Board,
CRDC

are from, and not where they are incarcerated, how did a new seat upstate come about?

On a late Sunday night, the redistricting plan was agreed upon by Governor Cuomo (D), Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D) and Senate Leader Dean Skelos (R). It was part of a 'combo deal' that included pension reform, DNA

database, casino gambling, and probably steak fries and a super-sized drink.

Groups such as Common Cause are outraged because upstate districts have nearly 5% fewer people than the average state district and downstate districts have 3 to 4% more people than the state average. The new district

lines hurt minorities, as their vote, along with the rest, are worth less. Shouldn't the city's districts pay 8 or 9 percent less in New York State taxes, as that is the disparaging degree of representation?

As the State Senate sat down to vote on

the bill, Senate Democrats walked out and did not vote. They instead went to court not only to challenge where the 63rd seat was placed but to also contest the bizarre district lines (Chelsea's own State Senator Tom Duane's district was dramatically altered). After the Court of Appeals upheld the lines (the federal court has not given its final approval yet) Dean Skelos has since had the gall to complain about the money the Democrats cost the state by going to court. How much money did the Republicans cost the state

by going to court to challenge the law that counts the people in prison as from their home district? Their challenge was dropped a day or so after the lines were approved (I have heard the amendment might change it)?

It burns me that Republicans in Albany are probably now savoring a cigar, enjoying the fact that they not only gutted Tom Duane's District, but they 'Sixty-Three'd' the Democrats.

— with Donathan Salkaln

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CRDC Street Fair Season Rolling

Evelyn Suarez wins "Doris Corrigan Lunch" Award

On Saturday, May 19th the CRDC kicked off it's 2012 summer street fair season with a date on 6th Avenue and Twentieth Street. Helping set up the 'Big Tent' was Will Newsome, Doris Corrigan, David Warren, Steven Skyles-Mulligan and Donathan Salkaln, who went a little nuts with a spray can of WD-40.



Will works the cause getting signatures

The club spent the afternoon petitioning, helping out PROP (Police Reform Organizing Project) and Urban Justice, in getting signatures against the NYPD's 'Stop & Frisk' program. Joining the festivities were Muriel Beach, Lee and Joanne Sinovoi, Johnny Johnson, Edward Gordan and Evelyn Suarez. Over one hundred signatures were collected and Evelyn won a "Doris Corrigan Lunch" at Dallas BBQ's, for getting the most signatures in the least amount of time.

Street Fair: Sunday, July 22nd, 8th Ave.,

With Eighth Avenue the new dividing line of the Congressional districts of Jerrold Nadler and Carolyn Maloney, it will be of interest to where the street fair Gods place our tent this year. On Nadler's westside or Maloney's eastside?

Please bring causes and petitions.



Working the table



Evelyn wins the "Doris Corrigan Lunch" at BBQ's

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

Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 21st, 7 PM

New To Chelsea: Carolyn Maloney

Elliott Center, 441 West 26th Street,
(between 9th & 10th Avenues)

Thursday, July 19th, 7 PM

Milk, Not Jail

An upstate group unites ex-cons & dairy farmers
Elliott Center, 441 West 26th Street,
(between 9th & 10th Avenues)

Sunday, July 22, 12-3 PM

CRDC Street Fair

Eighth Avenue

Sunday, September 9, 4-7 PM

CRDC BBQ

The Frying Pan, Pier 66A

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