



November 2013

Staten Island Democratic Association

est. 1961 as Staten Island's reform Democratic Club

www.sidems.org

At our Next Meeting:



• **Mark Hannay**

Director

Metro New York Health Care
for All Campaign,
on the ACA and the
federal Budget

• **Nominating Committee Report**

Tuesday, November 19, 8:00 P.M.

**** NOTE LOCATION: Karl's Klipper ****

40 Bay Street, 718-720-4442



Editorial Policy

Items for publication must be submitted to the newsletter no later than the last Friday of the month before the meeting. Please send items to: cmaxbauer@yahoo.com.

Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and not of S.I.D.A.

Chris Bauer, Editor
(917) 576-9248

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“I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical.”

- Thomas Jefferson
1787

**Meeting will be
November 19
at Karl’s Klipper
40 Bay Street**

S.I.D.A. President's Message

November 2013

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly was heckled off the stage at Brown University last month. An organized group of people, opposed to the Bloomberg - Kelly policies which have turned 'stop and frisk' into a racist quota system, asked the school to cancel his speech. When Brown refused, about 100 activists showed up and, in their words "canceled it for them."

Was silencing Kelly the best way to change the system? Our own club has experienced a fair share of heckling and disruptions, and will undoubtedly encounter more in the future. A long-time member has suggested that a more fitting name for our club would be the Staten Island Disagreement Association.

Disagreements and arguments should be expected at our meetings, since our members are passionate about their beliefs -- just like those people that heckled Kelly. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, as it demonstrates how involved our membership is with political issues. The alternative, complacency, is something few people in S.I.D.A. would enjoy.

Our goal should be to find the distinction between an argument that promotes a greater public understanding of issues, as opposed to a shouting match that leaves things unresolved. The person who yells the loudest isn't always the winner; liberals know that dissent can't be silenced.

Most of the club is happy with the city-wide election victories, but we shouldn't become complacent about that either. Elections aren't solutions, as we've seen with President Obama. We will argue over the best strategies to implement civil and economic rights, just as we've argued about peace in the Middle East.

When we disagree and argue, and occasionally lose our tempers and scream obscenities, let's remember why we're doing this in the first place. Members of S.I.D.A. share an activist view of the world; we have lots of other things we could do on the third Tuesday of the month, but we think it's important to spend a few hours talking and listening to each other.

This is why it's so important to avoid personal attacks, labels, innuendoes, or ascribing motives when we argue. We might be on opposite sides of an issue tonight, but be standing side by side in a rally tomorrow. Arguments should stick to ideas and suggestions, and we should recognize that disagreement doesn't always mean that one side is right and the other one is wrong.

I'm not convinced that keeping Kelly from speaking at Brown was the best answer. Sometimes we need to hear things that we don't like, if only to focus our own responses. Let's keep our ears and minds as open as our mouths.

*Sincerely,
Tom Shcherbenko
President*



Mark Hannay

Mark Hannay, Director of the Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign, will be our guest speaker at the November 17 General Membership Meeting. He will discuss the Affordable Care Act (ACA, or Obamacare) as well as the federal budget. The following was taken from their website www.metrohealthcare.net

The Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign is a citywide multi-constituency health care justice coalition. We were founded during the health care reform debate of the early 1990s, and have continued to bring together community groups, labor unions, professional associations, and faith communities to fight for universal health care and other health care justice issues central to that goal.

Staff

Mark Hannay is the Director of Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign. Mark began his career as a health activist in the early 1990s as a member of ACT UP/New York. Soon thereafter, he helped found New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage, a coalitions of disease-related voluntary health organizations that serve and represent people living with serious and life-threatening illnesses and diseases.

During the Clinton health care reform period of 1993-4, Mark worked as a Public Policy Associate at Gay Men's Health Crisis, where he focused on health care and insurance issues for people living with HIV.

Since 2002, Mark has also co-hosted the weekly "Health Action" program broadcast on WBAI/Pacifica radio. Mark is a member of the Steering Committee of Health Care for All New York (HCFANY), a consortium of groups across New York State working for state-based health care reform. He also serves as a member of the New York City Regional Advisory Committee of the New York State Health Benefits Exchange.

In June 2012, Mark was awarded the Tisch Community Health Prize, given by the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.



October Minutes

General Meeting October 15, 2013

President Shcherbenko called the meeting to order at 8:07 p.m.

Executive Secretary's Report

Executive Secretary Mark Herman spoke about the upcoming general election and was very happy that we have good Democratic candidates leading in three city-wide races. He explained that the Nominating Committee ballot will list the names of all members in good standing. He reminded members that the Nominating Committee election is very important because the Committee will help decide the leadership of the club for the coming year. Mark told members that they can vote for up to nine people only or their ballot will be discarded.

Joann Olbrich made a motion to close balloting at 9:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Bobby Digi. The motion carried. Paul Scublinsky, Sharon Santana and Rosemary Palladino volunteered to count the ballots.

First Guest Speaker

New York City Council Member Letitia (Tish) James, Democratic Candidate for New York City Public Advocate, thanked everyone for their vote in the recent run-off. She mentioned that she was also successful in winning on Staten Island. Ms. James explained that she wants to radically change the office of Public Advocate as she wants to be an activist Public Advocate. Ms. James spoke about many of the ideas she has planned if elected in November. She said she is humbled by S.I.D.A.'s support and she thanked many of the members for their help with her campaign. After Ms. James spoke she took questions from members

President Shcherbenko urged members to make sure they vote in November and give their overwhelming support to progressive candidates. President Shcherbenko announced that Peter Killen's name was left off the ballot and urged members to add his name to the ballot. He also mentioned that names are listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by first name.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Joann Olbrich presented highlights from the recent Executive Committee meeting.

By-Laws Committee

Committee Chair Joann Olbrich reported that two of the three of the proposed By-Laws were approved at the September meeting. A motion was approved to table voting on Article X Committees Sec I Audit Committee. Rosemary Palladino made a motion to accept the newly proposed change. Belinda Dixon seconded the motion. Joann announced that the proposed change will be published in the next newsletter and will need a 2/3 vote to pass.

Joann also announced that on Election Day voters will decide on six ballot proposals to the NYS Constitution. She said she will hand the information out so members can familiarize themselves with these proposals.

Surprise Guest Speaker

President Shcherbenko interrupted Joann's report to welcome a surprise visit from John Liu (Current New York City Comptroller and a former Democratic candidate for Mayor). John thanked members for supporting Tish James for Public Advocate. He said it was a great victory and he thinks she will make a great Public Advocate. He said that he came out to Staten Island to say thank you to S.I.D.A. for their support in his campaign for Mayor. He reminded members that Staten Island elected him as Comptroller. Although John will be stepping down as Comptroller in January, he said he will never be out of the picture. He wants to continue to help create necessary changes in the city. Mr. Liu mentioned he is proud of how his office held the Bloomberg Administration accountable. In closing, John said it's an amazing city as long as committed activists continue to work hard. He said he would continue to work hard overseeing contracts and audits until the end of his term.

Third Guest Speaker

Lindy Crisitelli, internationally renowned facilitator and educator, spoke about "Stand Up and Lead," a free Island-wide Interactive program sponsored by the U.F.T. Brave campaign. The event is going to be held at the College of Staten Island on Saturday, November 2. It is designed to address issues that impact self-esteem, leadership development and communication skills for tweens and teens. Mr. Crisitelli handed out fliers with information and urged S.I.D.A. members to attend the event and support these young girls.

John Mancuso

John Mancuso, Democratic Candidate for 50th Council District, reported that he has been working hard to make history and win on Election Day. He gave an update on his campaign activities and asked members to consider making a contribution. John said he needs \$9,000 more to meet his fundraising deadline to get matching funds. He said he is working around the clock, it's a winnable seat and he wants to see Staten Island get their fair share. John spoke about various upcoming events. He asked members to volunteer for his campaign and he thanked S.I.D.A. for all their support.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Bonnie Rothman reported that we raised approximately \$4,200 from the recent banquet. The bank balance as of October 13 was \$10,503.30

September Minutes

Minutes from the September meeting were accepted as published in the newsletter.

New Business

Loretta Prisco proposed the following resolution which was seconded by Joy Robins:

"Whereas, State Commissioner of Education John King has led an assault on public schools by initiating high stakes testing, forced co-locations of schools, closing of schools, the evaluation of teachers based on the results of standardized tests, advocating for charter schools at the expense of traditional public schools, and, whereas, State Commissioner John King has cancelled four town hall meetings at which parents and educators could seek information about high stakes testing, common core, and in Bloom, a system which would gather personal data on all children to then be made available to vendors, S.I.D.A. calls on the New York State Board of Regents

including our representative Regent Cea to join the statewide move to ask for John King's resignation.”

The motion passed unanimously.

President Shcherbenko reminded members attending County's Gala on October 24 to let him know if they are interested in sitting with S.I.D.A.

While waiting for the results of the Nominating Committee election, there was a discussion about the various New York State ballot proposals that voters will decide on during the upcoming election.

Nominating Committee Election Results:

Loretta Prisco, Chair*	17
Susan Chew.....	15
Peter Killen	13
Richard Reichard	13
Joann Olbrich.....	10
Bobby Digi.....	10
Chris Bauer	9
Marie Dwyer	9
Cindy Lowney.....	8
Belinda Dixon	8
Alex Baltovski	7
Tom Shcherbenko	7

* According to the club's constitution the person with the highest number of votes will chair the committee.

President Shcherbenko mentioned that the Nominating Committee will meet soon and the chair will present a report at the November meeting. He announced that the next Executive Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 8:00 p.m. at 203 St. Paul's Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Marie Dwyer
Corresponding &
Recording Secretary*



Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee, which was selected at the October 15, 2013 General Membership Meeting, met on October 31 at the home of Susan Chew. Committee members Susan Chew (Committee Chair), Chris Bauer, Bobby Digi, Belinda Dixon, Marie Dwyer, Cynthia Lowney, Joann Olbrich, and Richard Reichard nominated the following candidates:

2014 SLATE

President

Thomas Shcherbenko

Vice President

Joann Olbrich

Executive Secretary

Mark Herman

Corresponding & Recording Secretary

Marie Dwyer

Treasurer

Bonita Rothman

Social Secretary

Liz Price

Member At-Large

Five to be elected, listed in alphabetical order:

Alex Baltovski, Carl Chew, Susan Chew, Bobby Digi, Richard Florentino, Cynthia Lowney, Roy Moskowitz, Nick Popolo, Loretta Prisco, Sharon Santana

All nominees will have the chance to address the club at the December 17 General Meeting. In addition, each candidate will be expected to submit a 200-word statement for the January newsletter. Statements should be submitted to newsletter editor Chris Bauer at cmaxbauer@yahoo.com no later than January 1, 2014. Elections will occur at the Annual Meeting of the Association on January 21, 2014.

As stated in the S.I.D.A. bylaws, the Nominating Committee report shall set forth the procedure for nomination by petition. Therefore, if any additional people would like to run for a position on the Executive Committee, they may do so as explained by the following section of the bylaws:

ARTICLE VIII Elections

Section 2: Nominations

b) Nomination by Petition Additional nomination may be made by petition signed by 15% of those members in good standing or 15 members, whichever are fewer, as of the final date for the submission of such petitions namely the December meeting at which all candidates shall be presented to the membership as an order of business. Nominating petitions shall be submitted to the Corresponding and Recording Secretary, or in his or her absence to an officer designated by the President or Acting President.

c) Nomination from the Floor Nominations from the floor may be made only in the event that no eligible candidate has been otherwise nominated for an office.

d) Notice All names of persons nominated will be included in the mailed notice of the annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Chew, Chair
Nominating Committee



Conscience of a Liberal

The Conscience of a Liberal: Or Why I am not Running for the Executive Committee of S.I.D.A.

*By Joy Robins
(Past President 2001-2002)*

I got a call from Susan Chew, as chair of the Nominating Committee, to ask me if I would run for an at-large position on the SIDA Executive Committee, better known as “the Board”. I told her “No”, without hesitation and I told her briefly, why. She said she would keep the reason confidential, since she is the soul of discretion as well as integrity.

Today, I woke up in what to me is the middle of the night and suddenly realized that I don’t want my reasons kept confidential. The club, in my opinion, really needs to know.

I am not a charter member, like the venerable Mark Herman. I was busy raising children and struggling to survive as a single mother back then, and I lived in New Jersey. None- the- less, I go back far enough to have witnessed some serious changes in the club.

When I was just dating Ralph Dickar, then “Treasurer for Life” and now my husband of 21 years, he took me to an SIDA meeting. I was blown away! For one thing, a black woman was President! Helen Settles brought in Al Sharpton as a speaker when he was still fat, sassy and controversial. (I had him back when I was President, which was still well before he became a skinny statesman.) I fell in love with the club (and Ralph). This was really my spiritual home.

It has been a long time now since a woman has been President. I think about the many “President worthy” women in the club and hope that one will soon run. I have thought about why so many have been hesitant. They seem to be taking on more socially liberal leadership, like Susan Chew, who stepped up to lead the anti-fracking fight with New Yorkers for Clean Water. Or before her, Sally Jones, who led in resurrecting the Peace Movement on Staten Island and in New York State, in Peace Action. Others like me, past President Anne Taylor and current Vice President Joann Olbrich, joined the leadership of The Lathrope Voorspuy Memorial Scholarship Fund to look for and support future liberal leaders. Joann has long been a leader in the Feminist Movement in its modern manifestation, in New York Women and its predecessor. She currently serves as the President of the Staten Island Women’s Political Caucus.

I think it is a fact that women tend to care more about people and less about power than do men.

Where is the socially liberal action that the club used to take, such as making sure that our meetings are handicapped accessible and that even members who are struggling financially can

attend our functions? The county party jacked up the price for their “Gala” to a point where it is even prohibitive for middle class Democrats to attend unsubsidized. I know our “golden boy” is no longer the head of the party on Staten Island, but aren’t we a strong interest group in the party? What are they doing with all that money? For that matter, what are we doing with all our money?

What difference does it make if we don’t have a budget or we keep it secret from the membership and don’t let them debate it or vote on it? A budget is a list of priorities! If we now have cleared up the problems we had in keeping track of our money and we have plenty of money, why aren’t we supporting more socially liberal causes? Do we still prioritize socially liberal actions?



Constitution Change

The following revision to the Staten Island Democratic Association Constitution was discussed at the September 24 General Meeting and then voted to be put before the club at the October 15 meeting. The proposed revision will appear in the November and December newsletters and will be voted on at the December 17 General Meeting.

Article X: Committees

Section 1: Audit Committee

Now

There shall be an Audit Committee which shall examine and audit the books of account of the club within 30 days following the election and qualification of a new Treasurer and at such other times as the President or the Executive Committee shall direct. A report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee at the first meeting following such audit.

Proposed

There shall be an Audit Committee which shall examine and audit the books of account of the club every year, within 30 days of the Annual Meeting and election of club officers; and at such other times as the President or the Executive Committee shall direct. A report of the Audit shall be submitted to the Executive Committee and to the members at the next general meeting following such Audit.



Letters

We in S.I.D.A. like to make our views known. The following are some of the letters written by S.I.D.A. members that have appeared in print. Unless otherwise indicated, all letters were in the Staten Island Advance and/or posted on the Advance's website www.silive.com. Unless explicitly stated, the views herein are those of the authors and are not the views of S.I.D.A.

The following was published by the Daily News.

On-line October 9, 2013

Printed October 9, 2013

Instant Revisionism

Staten Island: Right-wing extremist propagandist Charles Krauthammer blames the Democrats for the treasonous extortion and sabotage by Republicans in the House of Representatives ("Dems to blame for shutdown," Oct. 4). I guess he would also have blamed the Lindberghs for the kidnapping of their child.

- Joann Olbrich

On-line October 10, 2013

Grim Outlook? End the Government Shutdown

Our congressman is on record as being opposed to the government shutdown and saying that he is joining with others to try to end it. Well, he needs to put his John Hancock where his mouth is and sign on to the production of a discharge petition.

This will get the House to vote at least on whether to keep the shutdown going. Why should we believe him if he can't or won't do even this? His constituents are suffering right now because of the shutdown and we want to see some action; posturing is simply not enough.

We want positive action on this, not to mention an end to the effort to not raise the debt limit, that is: to not pay the bills that the Congress has already agreed to.

- Bonita Rothman

On-line October 13, 2013

House GOP Resorts to Blackmail and Calls It Negotiation

The House Republicans' attempt to defund Obamacare in return for a continuing resolution to keep the government functioning for six weeks is NOT a negotiating stance; it's blackmail.

In addition, they are trying to blame it on the Senate and President Obama. In fact, the Senate has been calling for negotiations on the budget for months.

Obamacare was debated in both houses ad nauseum, passed into law, signed by the president, upheld by the Supreme Court, and yet House Republicans still wasted taxpayer money to vote to repeal it over 40 times.

AND it has nothing to do with the continuing resolution to keep the government functioning. Even more importantly, it has nothing to do with raising the debt ceiling, which, as they well know, but don't want you to know, DOESN'T increase our debt.

It just allows us to pay the debt that Congress has already voted to spend.

Do they even care about the 800,000 federal workers furloughed by their actions? By the harm to our already fragile economy? This is a jobs-killer if ever there was one.

This blackmail ploy by House Republicans is a perversion of our democratic system and a very dangerous precedent.

- Susan Rappaport

On-line October 15, 2013

When One Dog Kills Another Dog, Owner Must be Held Responsible

It was like an echo when, at the end of September, a dog was killed on Staten Island by another dog. It was only June of last year when another dog was killed by a dog on Staten Island.

Precious little has happened in the intervening year-plus to hold a dog's owner accountable for causing the death of a dog.

When a dog attacks another dog to the point where the dog kills the other dog, there is always the potential of the dog attacking a human, though the current law fails to recognize this.

New York State law also fails to recognize that for many pet owners their pets are best friends, and members of the family.

With Fabian's Law, Arizona recognized the potential, and present, harm of a dog-on-dog attack. Why can't New York State recognize the harm of a dog-on-dog attack?

- Gary Carsel

On-line October 20, 2013

Councilwoman Rose has Taken a Responsible Stance Re: The Wheel

The NY1/Staten Island Advance debate between Council-member Debi Rose and Mark Macron has given the voters a clear understanding of both candidates' positions on the Wheel and outlet mall.

While both candidates expressed support for jobs, only Council-member Rose said that infrastructure and transportation issues were of equal importance.

Unlike Ms. Rose, who has brought to the bargaining table with the city and the developers, the infrastructure and transportation issues raised by her constituents through the St. George Civic Association and Community Board 1, Mr. Macron appeared not to understand the importance of these quality-of-life issues.

Council-member James Oddo, who has an insiders' knowledge of the negotiations has said this regarding Council member Rose's handling of the negotiations: "Council-member Rose is doing a very good job."

Council-member Rose based on her involvement with these projects since their inception and her understanding of all the issues is in the best position not only to get Staten Island the best deal but to assure that the city and developers keep their commitments.

Let's not give them an opportunity to back out of the agreement.

Re-electing Council-member Rose will say to the developers and city that they will have to abide by the agreement.

- Richard Reichard

On-line October 21, 2013

John Mancuso Looks Out for Regular People First

The fundamental difference between Democrats and Republicans could not be more apparent than in John Mancuso's and Steven Matteo's opinions in their recent debate on the matter of The Wheel/Outlets development.

Matteo would vote "Yes" to development without union labor. Mancuso would vote "No," and that unions should hire locally into their apprenticeship programs.

Matteo can evidently only see development via concessions to big business, i.e., Trickle Down Theory that has devastated middle class people in this country for decades now. How long

will it take for us to stop playing suckers? Billionaires get their billions by playing the game to benefit themselves not regular people.

Mancuso showed his instinct to look out for regular people first. Ensure the economy serves them first with decent jobs and wages. If development can't do that, it is the kind of development we can't allow — resulting once again in money flowing up and out.

With an attitude like Matteo's profits will continue to go up while workers wait again for benefits to trickle down. Mancuso is strong enough to say "No. Enough! People First!" I am so glad to support a Democrat like him.

- Rich Florentino

On-line November 1, 2013

Printed November 1, 2013

Don't Let State Give Pristine Forest Land to Mining Company

An amendment to the state Constitution would allow NYCO Minerals, a private company, to continue mining operations in Essex County and allow the state to convey 200 forest preserve acres to NYCO.

However, Article 14 of the state Constitution reads in part:

The lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or exchanged or be taken by any corporation public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."

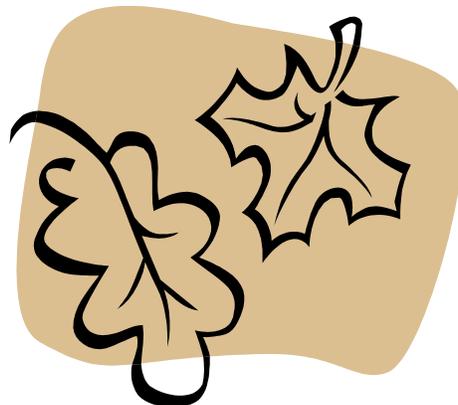
Mining in pristine, public lands causes irreparable damage industries cannot correct, and it takes many years for forests to become fully reforested.

Mining causes contamination of water aquifers and surface bodies of water, impacting the water we drink and property of residents. We must continue maintenance of the ecological value of pristine forests through opposition to any further mining operations.

Further, a "land swap" would establish a terrible precedent. The state Constitution protects the forest for all future generations, and this amendment would erase that safeguard for the benefit of for-profit mining corporations.

- Susan Chew

[The writer is the founder and chairwoman of New Yorkers for Clean Water.]



Staten Island Women's Political Caucus

**Staten Island Women's Political Caucus
Holiday Party,**

 **Sat. Dec. 14, 1 PM** 

 **Elm Park Inn, 238 Morningstar Rd.**

\$30 (Please bring cash) 



Bring unwrapped gifts to be raffled



and nonperishable food items to be donated.



For information call Joy Robins, 718-816-4128



All Dems Holiday Party



All Dems Holiday Party

Join your fellow Democrats
in Celebrating the 2013 Holiday Season!

at Da Noi
138 Fingerboard Road

Thursday, December 5, 2013
7 PM – 11 PM

\$50 gets you food, beer, wine, soda
cash bar available.

For Information contact:
Liz Price at Lizhprice@aol.com or 718-687-2788



Upcoming Meetings

November 19, 20133	December 17, 2013
General Meeting Karl's Klipper, 40 Bay Street	General Meeting Location TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Hannay, Director, Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign, on the ACA • Nominating Committee Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Harrison on Tort Reform • Presentations by Executive Committee candidates • Constitution amendment vote

It's Time to Join or Renew Your S.I.D.A. Membership!

To become a member, renew membership, or make a donation, call Bonita Rothman at (917) 596-3724, or complete and return the coupon. Voting privileges begin 45 days after joining.

✂

2013 DUES	DONATION
_____ \$15 - Family	_____ \$5
_____ \$10 - Individual	_____ \$50
_____ \$5 - Senior, Student, Unemployed	_____ \$100
	_____ Other _____

Name _____

Address _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Make checks payable to S.I.D.A. and send to: S.I.D.A.
P.O. Box 140371
Staten Island, NY 10314-0371

S.I.D.A. Executive Committee

President..... Tom Shcherbenko	Member at-Large Loretta Prisco
Vice President Joann Olbrich	Ex Officio.....Michelle Akyempong
Executive Secretary Mark Herman	Ex Officio..... Dennis Brown
Corresponding & Recording Secretary Marie Dwyer	Ex Officio..... Gary Carsel
Treasurer Bonita Rothman	Ex Officio..... Paul Cinquemani
Social Secretary Liz Price	Ex Officio..... Belinda Dixon
Member at-Large Richard Florentino	Ex Officio..... Richard Reichard
Member at-Large Richenda Kramer	Ex Officio..... Rosemarie Mangano
Member at-Large Roy Moskowitz	Ex Officio..... John Mastellone
Member at-Large Rosemary Palladino	Ex Officio..... Richard Reichard
	Ex Officio..... John Sollazzo