

Annual Club Dinner

Former Mayor John V. Lindsay and former City Council President Carol Bellamy will present awards to the 1987 honorees, Amsterdam News Editor Bill Tatum and City Councilmember Miriam Friedlander at the 30th anniversary dinner of the Village Independent Democrats on Friday May 8.

"This anniversary is indeed special," say dinner co-chairs Allen Roskoff and Mary Rogers Boegner, "not only because of the number of years VID has led New York City in issues and causes that fight for all New Yorkers, but because of the more than 175 patrons and sponsors who have already committed to attend and support VID, not just for one night but for years to come."

The event is being held at the Tower Suite of the Time-Life Building at 6th Avenue and 50th Street. The dinner will also honor Cindy Fine, member of Community Board #2 and Steven Null, director of the Coalition for Fair Business Rents. For information on tickets, call 243-6555.

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COMMUNITY FORUM VIEWS OF READERS

Call to Help Refuseniks

BY CATHERINE M. ABATE

At the core of my social and political philosophy is the strong belief that government has an overriding responsibility to protect and nourish human rights. We Americans take for granted the right to emigrate as well as the right to pursue religious and cultural traditions. Although written into the Soviet Constitution and subscribed to by Soviet government in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, there are many Soviet Jews who are not afforded these fundamental rights.

Two weeks ago, I returned from the State of Israel where I participated in the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith sponsored Women in-Leadership Mission. While there, I spent an evening with several former Refuseniks who successfully emigrated to Israel. One of them Miriam Aimbinder told me her story and that of her parents—Esfir and Boris Orlov.

Miriam emigrated, after years of delay, in 1974. She is a living validation for the existence of the State of Israel. By emigrating to Israel, she could fulfill her dream to live as a Jew. Miriam has one other longing. She has not seen her parents for all of these thirteen years. They have applied for exit visas since 1977 and they have been repeatedly rejected. Miriam fears that time will run out for her parents. They are over eighty years

old and in poor health. They have no relatives in the Soviet Union and no one to care for them. They have not seen their oldest grandchild since 1973 and have never met their other two grandchildren.

Many times in the past, Americans concerned for human rights have succeeded in breaching the barriers for people like the Orlovs. Floods of letters and telegrams addressed to Mr. Gorbachev and his predecessors have resulted in freedom for hundreds of Refuseniks.

While we can't change the Soviet system, we can change the lives of individual people. It is important to victims of this kind of oppression to know that they are not alone. Letters telling of efforts to affect fulfillment of their dreams are life support systems for them.

Individual persons can make a difference. Please write to Eric Greenberg, Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, 8 W. 40th Street, NYC. Your letter of support and caring can make a difference for Esfir and Boris Orlov.

Catherine M. Abate is a Village resident who is executive deputy commissioner of the N.Y. State Division of Human Rights and is a former Village Democratic District Leader.