

The Main Street **WIRE**

Saturday, December 14, 1996

in association with **Website NYC10044**

Residents Association

RIRA Begins Anew With New Officers & Outlook

"I'm nervous as hell."

With that admission, newly-elected RIRA President Patrick Stewart opened a new chapter in RIRA's life as the organization representing the interests of residents to governmental bodies both on the Island and off. **An interview with Stewart appears on page 11.**

"We are in a unique place, out here in the middle of the East River," said Stewart, "and there is a difference between it and any other place I've ever been... a sense of community here that one doesn't often find. That's our strength."

Stewart spoke of taking steps to make the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation more effective. "We have problems," he said. "The list of work to be done is long and difficult. We have an opportunity to do many good things, and I intend to do those things, with your help."

In formal actions, the Common Council agreed to demand of RIOC that RIRA be included in any negotiations with the MTA on takeover of the Tram, and to invite RIOC President Jerome Blue to attend RIRA's January 8 meeting.



Joyce Mincheff

Santa's Helpers: Their truck had to be towed from Drum, PA, but Alex Shepherd and others in Scout Troup 59 came through with Christmas trees, on sale at Motorgate for the 21st year.

Housing Mgt & RICO: Conflict Over Jordan

Roosevelt Island Housing Management has told the Board of RICO, the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, that it will not cooperate in the organization's quest for a HUD grant while Richard Jordan has any role in the organization. Jordan, who was hired two years ago to head RICO, and paid with Island public purpose monies, has been serving as an unpaid volunteer in recent months.

Doryne Isley, General Manager of Roosevelt Island Housing Management, informed the RICO Board of her decision in a meeting last Friday. She later told *The WIRE*, "I have lost all professional confidence in Jordan's ability to lead that organization."

RICO has been organizing to seek funds from HUD to provide social services for island residents. "Housing's cooperation is essential," said Shirley Margolin of the RICO Board, "as a source of referrals." Margolin herself had resigned the post of RICO Treasurer in October, saying Jordan would not provide access to the necessary documents.

The HUD application is a multi-step process. Jordan told *The WIRE* in an interview last week that RICO had been recognized as a HUD counseling agency that could then receive HUD funding after additional steps. Isley told *The WIRE* that Jordan "misrepresented the nature of the relationship be-

tween his office and Housing Management" in the documents submitted to HUD. "He misused my name and the names of several others in the application," she said.

But Isley said she will cooperate with the RICO Board in its at-

See RICO, page 3

The Long, Slow Effort to Co-op Island House

by Dick Lutz

A determined Island House group is fighting delay, discouragement and decay in a renewed effort to transform the building into a cooperative. The path to the goal is largely uncharted, and it's strewn with the litter of Roosevelt Island's past and present as a creation of the state.

It won't be easy.

Right now, the nascent cooperators await one of two seemingly simple events: An agreement between the building's owners and the state, as mortgage holder, to get it out of receivership - or state foreclosure on the mortgage, badly in arrears. Either act could move things forward a small step. Each has been pending for over two years. That's the delay... and a cause of some discouragement.

Meanwhile, there's the decay. The building has a punch list of

problems as long and varied as a circus train. That, too, is discouraging.

Beginnings

The building's problems go back to its beginnings, in the 1970s, when this community was laid out

I'm convinced that in spite of all the inertia and the decay and the arrears and the owners' taxes and the uncertainties of Albany, to mention only a few of the obstacles, Island House and Westview will someday convert to owner occupancy. And that will be a great day for Roosevelt Island. -Tim Johns

as the bright future of an historic but ill-used island in New York's East River. The grand concept envisioned 20,000 residents living in safe and affordable housing, many using a busy subway, a happy and productive part of Manhattan's work force. Some 1,600 would call the 400 apart-

ments of Island House their homes. They would pay reasonable rents to an owner whose costs would be lowered through the special concessions made possible by the Mitchell-Lama Law.

But it took another decade before a Q train would rumble through on its way from Queens to Manhattan. A cable car was in prospect as a temporary solution, but skeptical New Yorkers weren't all that sure about getting to work and school that particular way.

Many who did settle in Island House were attracted to neighboring buildings when they were completed. Rivercross offered the promise of cooperative ownership, and Westview appealed to many.

As a result, many Island House apartments were empty for some

See Island House, page 16

Purge of Staff Continues as Blue Remolds RIOC for Bad Budget Times

RIOC President Jerome Blue recently dismissed four employees, including the organization's counsel, **Ralph Martinez**. Because of the way the firings were handled, by a deputy and late on a Friday, some are calling the episode the Friday Night Massacre.

The latest firings bring the total of RIOC staffers dismissed, or departed for other reasons, to over a

dozen. In addition to Martinez, the November 22 dismissals included:

- **Terry Arcarola**, who had served as secretary to the Director of Facilities.
- **George Tactikos**, Director of Facilities, only recently brought to the island in that capacity.
- **Terry Rutman**, who at one time served as Manager of Human Resources.

Resident RIOC Board members Ron Vass, David Kraut and Willard Warren all told *The WIRE* they were not consulted by Blue on the firings. "I'm scared," Vass commented, "because this action wipes out the organization's institutional memory."

The WIRE has repeatedly sought an interview with Dr. Blue to ask him about these firings and other matters. No interview has been granted.

For the most part, those dismissed have been unwilling to speak on the record while seeking new positions. Martinez commented, however, that no efforts were made to insure a smooth transition to a replacement attorney.

In fact, it appears all the firings were immediate, with no discussion of severance, transition, vacation pay due, or other matters normally covered at time of dismissal. All the firings were handled by Michelle Goodwine, Director of Human Resources, not Blue. Tactikos is reported to have found a note on Monday morning, apparently placed under his office door on Friday.

Earlier Blue dismissals included **Allyce Russo**, who was largely responsible for development of the Octagon Park project and had been in charge of Planning and Development for several years; her secretary, **Laura Da Vila**; **Jerry Lieber**, head of engineering; Miriam Gonzales, who had been secretary to Jean Lerman, former RIOC President, who was replaced by Albany early this year; **Neil Shadalow**, Director of Finance;

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and **Beth Landau**, Director of Community Relations. Other departures included **Jonathan Sinagub**, who had taken over Planning and Development from Allyce Russo; and **Lynn Abraham**, public relations consultant.

Board member Kraut told *The WIRE* that RIOC "personnel matters are beyond the purview of the Board." Members of the grounds crew, who asked not to be identified by name, told *The WIRE* they are disturbed about the Tactikos dismissal, saying that he was a supervisor who showed them respect.

Michelle Goodwine, current Director of Human Resources and Community Relations, indicated that the recent firings were aimed at reorganizing to create more efficient and effective services. When asked why the individuals were fired without notice, she offered no answer. Goodwine indicated that Public Safety Director Peter Norwood will be adding the duties of Director of Facilities to his responsibilities. Norwood commented that the combined positions would facilitate more effective coordination of efforts.

At Thursday's RIOC Board meeting, approval was given to the hiring of Frank J. Rubino, a Blue classmate, as RIOC Counsel, and Anthony Bonnair as financial chief.

It really helps when you say to an advertiser, "I saw you in the Main Street WIRE."

RICO, from page 1

tempts to provide services for Island residents. "I have confidence in the Board," she emphasized.

RICO was created with a portion of public purpose funds which became available during construction of Manhattan Park. In lieu of sales taxes on construction materials, the builder made payments into a fund held by RIOC. The money is earmarked for social services. RICO was set up to help guide their use. The intent in creating RICO was to assemble staff capable of leveraging the public purpose funds by seeking outside funding for Island organizations.

RICO's performance under Richard Jordan has come into question because the organization spent some \$325,000 of the public purpose monies without a formal budget. When funds ran out, Jordan continued as a volunteer, but with funding from an unnamed source. RICO Chairperson Sayyidah Ahmed told *The WIRE* last Friday that the Board has asked Jordan for information on the source of that funding. "We asked Richard for a character

letter [on the donor] two months ago," said Ahmed. The Board still awaits the letter.

Island Humans in Dogfight Over Canines

by Debra Mount Cornet

"I hate dog court!" proclaims Thelma McIntosh, Manager of Roosevelt Island Management Corporation. As point person for her employer on this issue, she seems to be spending a fair amount of court time squaring off with Island residents, despite her protestations.

Not the budget, or the crime, or hints of scandal that pepper Island talk fuel as much passion as the subject of dogs. Part of the heat, as indicated from passing conversation and letters to the editor, seems borne of a lack of clarity on the matter.

The rule, as many residents always thought, is not simply "No Dogs Allowed." The Island streets are no different from any other city street: dogs are allowed, if leashed. The Scooper Law applies as well. Thus, according to Attorney Karen Copeland, who represents several clients in current dog litigation, they are thus allowed to "visit" the buildings.

The seeds of the present controversy were probably planted in 1988 when Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. It prescribes that in public housing, such as Eastwood, residents who suffer from "a mental, physical or

neurological disability" must be allowed to own a dog. Visibility of the condition is not a factor and judges must use this law to guide their rulings in such cases. Despite this, since then a number of residents and management have squared off, among other things, on the definition of "disability."

Another route to dog ownership here also exists. If a resident obtains a dog and management becomes aware of it, there is a 90-day window for a removal action to be made. If it isn't, the dog may stay. But even compliance with either the disability law or 90-day window does not always mean owners can avoid a day in court. Management can still charge that the pet is a "nuisance." However, the law states that it must provide "a substantial interference with the tenancy of others." The ambiguous term "substantial" paves a path straight to a judge.

So far, seven cases have been heard, with four owners allowed to keep their dogs, two still pending, and one eviction. But these residents, including disability cases, don't just walk into court one day, say a few words and wait for a verdict. They go sometimes 10 or more times, getting continuances and adjournments. And this means legal fees soar. Ms. McIntosh estimates that these cases have cost over \$10,000 to management. So why do they do it?

"I'm not anti-dog," said Ms. McIntosh. "But I have to act at the request of the community." She noted the receipt of an anti-dog petition with 400 signatures. She did acknowledge, however, that this group seemed to be more vocal than those who had no opposition.

Owners who have gone to court don't feel that management has taken such an objective position. In fact, several said that they felt harassed. "I'm afraid," said one successful litigant. "Every time I turn around there's another paper under the door about court." Several of the owners who won cases had the ruling appealed by management, or brought to court again with the "nuisance" law. They also complain that management provided a van to transport anti-dog witnesses to court. (One defendant dogowner said he anonymously rode in the vehicle and discovered that one witness who accused him of breaking the Pooper Scooper law, didn't even know him.) One judge did state that management should get more "credible" witnesses.

Two of the cases involve children with Attention Deficit Disorder. Management questioned these cases and required medical testimony to confirm the diagnosis. "It's very important for my son to have this relationship and to have this responsibility," said one parent. Another mother whose case is still pending after 12 times at

court said, "Let them spend a day with my son and then question ADD!" Doctors have recommended the pets as therapy.

The courtroom doesn't provide the only battle ground. It has spilled over into the street. Dog owners walking their pets hear taunts and see finger-wagging from residents who inform them that "You can't have that dog here." On election day, a list of "unsuitable" candidates owning dogs was seen posted, according to several sources, in the management office window. Doryne Isley, General Manager of Roosevelt Island Housing Management, emphatically states that it could not have been there and would never have been allowed.

On the other side, some have complained that they step in dog residue (in fact they provided McIntosh with a rather vivid photo) and are frightened by growling, snapping dogs.

Since dogs are part of our landscape here, and have been for years, the issue demands resolution. Ms. Isley says that an amicable solution should be sought. "I would favor a council of some kind that involved perhaps the Task Force and the community. It would include those both for and against the presence of dogs. Something we could all live with." Those forced to traipse back to court agree; at least on that point.

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Letters

Attention Doryne Isley,
R.I. Housing Management

Recently I have observed that the lobby/hallway lights in the 625/595 crossway have been put on a "sensor" system.

In view of the security problem in Westview this seems ridiculous. If I were an elderly person coming home at 11:30pm I would be most uncomfortable walking into a long, dark hallway already the scene of muggings...

I supported RIHM's policy of locking the 595 and 575 lobby doors as entrances. The lobby lights being shut off where people have already been robbed seems most contrary to ANY type of security effort. I'm looking forward to your reply.

Damon LaScot
Westview

To the Editor:

At the RIRA nominations meeting I heard many complaints about RIOC and the RIOC Board.

They certainly are not doing a great job in Public Relations, but their prime duties and responsibilities are taken care of - for example

- Transportation - buses & Tram
- Grounds are taken care of
- Motorgate (work is being done there)

- Increased Public Safety
- Working on Future Development

The new RIRA Board should try to work with RIOC, inform them of all their concerns and complaints and changes they would like from them instead of constantly knocking them.

Sitting down and discussing things in a nice fashion, sometimes goes a long way.

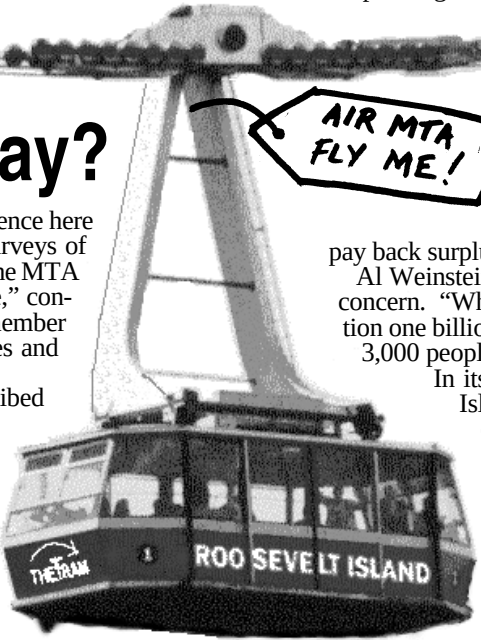
Fay Vass
Eastwood

An MTA Tramway?

Minibus drivers confirmed the MTA's presence here last week conducting what appeared to be surveys of minibus ridership. RIOC is negotiating with the MTA to take over the Tram. "It's a whole package," confirmed James Kaufman, Island resident and member of Governor Pataki's Transition Team, "buses and tram together."

Negotiations with the MTA have been described as "very preliminary" by Michelle Goodwine, RIOC Manager of Community Relations, in a discussion with City Council member Gifford Miller. Miller sees both "opportunity and pitfalls" in an MTA takeover. "Any deal would need to be looked at carefully," he said.

Miller mentioned possible benefits, including possible link-ups to the rest of the



MTA system through free transfers, and removing the ongoing budget deficit from RIOC's shoulders. Asked what would happen if the Tram became financially viable with the building of Southtown, he said a deal could be structured to pay back surplus. "The devil is in the details," he commented.

Al Weinstein, head of RIRA's Tram Committee, sees cause for concern. "What kind of service can we expect from an organization one billion dollars in debt that has announced plans to lay off 3,000 people?" he asked rhetorically.

In its December 12th town hall meeting, the Roosevelt Island Residents Association approved a motion to request all existing documents and records of the transportation negotiation and to seek a place at the table in further negotiations.

Public Safety Blotter

Larceny, Nov. 1- A member of the Warner Bros. film crew reported the theft of his Motorola GP300 portable radio which he had placed on a lift used to hoist cameras and other equipment during filming here. An area search was conducted with no results. The 114th Precinct was summoned and wrote a report.

Assault, Nov. 3- Two Roosevelt Island youths who had been engaged in a fight in the Queensbridge Development earlier in the evening, returned to the Island and continued to fight. Emergency Medical Assistance was summoned and treated a youth at the scene.

Assault, Nov. 11- A woman was choked by a cohabiting resident in her apartment. The perpetrator was caught and taken to the 19th Precinct where a summons was issued.

Robbery, Nov. 21- An Andy's Restaurant deliveryman was held up, late at night, making a delivery to 536 Main Street. Two male perpetrators, one wielding a gun, forced the victim into a staircase where they robbed him of \$15.45 in food and \$48.00 in currency. The Public Safety Department conducted an island-wide search that yielded no results and offered to make late night deliveries along with the Andy's deliverymen.

Burglary, Dec. 1- A woman in 546 Main Street awakened to find that her apartment had been broken into while she slept and items were missing. The Public Safety Dept. and 114th Precinct responded. Signs of dents and prying around the door lock were found.

Burglary, Dec. 2- Gaining entrance to an Eastwood apartment through the adjacent AVAC room

Doryne Isley of Housing Management responded to a *WIRE* question about Eastwood burglaries in which entry was gained by penetrating walls from AVAC rooms. She said management has completed the work necessary to secure all six AVAC rooms where adjacency to apartments might permit such access.

by creating a hole in the sheet rock dividing wall, burglars ransacked the apartment, wrote graffiti inside the front door and stole several items. The Public Safety Department and 114th Precinct were summoned and an investigation continues.

Burglary, Dec. 2- A second report of a break-in occurred in which the perpetrators gained access through a large hole in the AVAC storage room, leading into the bathroom closet of an Eastwood tenant. Roosevelt Island Housing Management secured the AVAC door.

Criminal Mischief, Dec. 3- Two Public Safety Officers noticed damage to sheetrock walls in the AVAC rooms of 580 and 560 Main Street. Roosevelt Island Housing Management responded with one of its maintenance crews to make repairs.

Trespassing, Dec. 5- Public Safety Officer Eugene Rodriguez arrested James Necco when he witnessed suspicious behavior in Motorgate. (See story, this page.) A criminal summons was issued and a hearing on the matter is pending.

Robbery, Dec. 5- Two perpetrators forced a delivery man from an off-Island Chinese Restaurant into a stairwell and took his wallet reportedly containing \$200 and his driver's license.

Burglary, Dec. 5- A woman returned home from an extended absence to find her patio door had been bent in. Several items were missing from her apartment. NYPD responded and wrote a report.

Criminal Mischief, Dec. 11- A complainant indicated that his car parked in Motorgate had been broken into. Public Safety responded and noted broken window glass. None of the vehicle's contents were missing.

Nabbed in Motorgate



Public Safety photo
James Necco

Special Patrol Officer Eugene Rodriguez arrested Island resident James Necco in Motorgate Dec. 5 at 1:25 AM, after observing suspicious behavior. Necco had no car parked in the garage but was looking into parked vehicles. His arrest follows an order for increased Motorgate surveillance by Peter Norwood, Public Safety Director.

Necco had been arrested on Roosevelt Island in a 1995 burglary at 30 River Road and had been convicted. He has now returned to the Island and lives with his grandmother at 560 Main Street.

Necco had previously been convicted on three counts of burglary off Roosevelt Island, and was sentenced to 5 years probation. The robbery, on the Island, occurred on the same date of his sentencing on the prior conviction.

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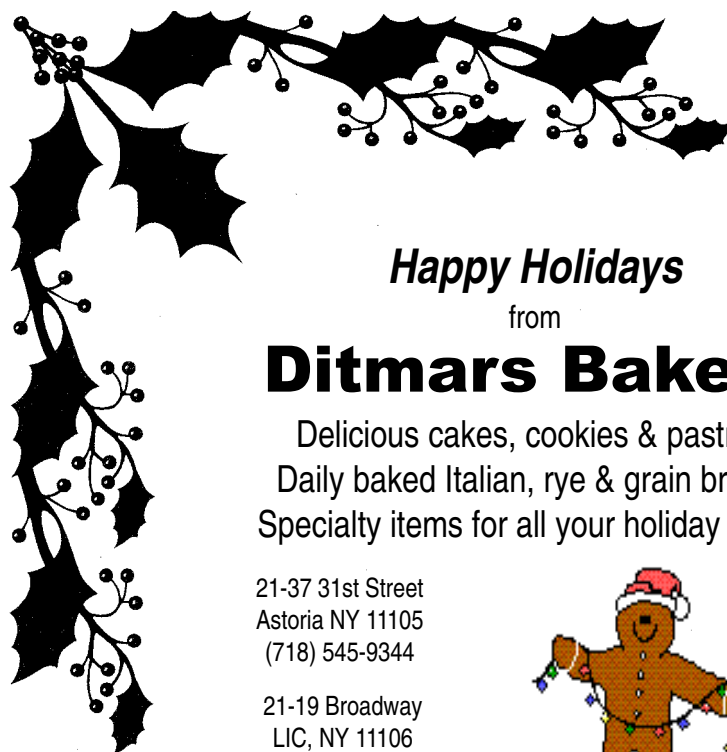
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If you’ve been wondering...



Website NYC10044

...That sculpture in the subway station is titled *Convex Disk at Roosevelt Island*. It was done by Robert Hickman on commission from the MTA. Here’s how Hickman described the work for *Website NYC10044*:

My work is based upon a subjective struggle attempting to achieve order in disorder. It is an attempt to structure and freeze multitudinous fragments for a moment. My sculpture incorporates aspects of both the systemic and chance in incredible complexity.

I use reconstituted transparent fragments and rhythmically structured thin scraggly lines.

My process involves the hand-made creation of thousands of like glass polygons. From these pieces I structure and unite layered systems. My lines are created with the application and removal of black grout which reveal the thin interstices between the individually cut tessere.

My pieces deal with light, line, structure, and process as attributes of material. This use of material creates a painterly effect. A pictorial quality emanates from its structure. I am intrigued by the transparent and chance properties of glass, as well as projections into other dimensions.

Convex Disk at Roosevelt Island essentially resembles a satellite dish which is transmitting and receiving enormous bits of data. The five hundred pound disk consists of over two hundred thousand cut and reassembled pieces of clear glass. Every one of these pieces has six surfaces and twelve edges which respond to the surrounding light. The parabola shape has been pointed toward Manhattan, with its back against the remaining boroughs. The steel armature was salvaged from a warehouse, having originally served an architectural function. Its non-symmetry and slight wear undermine the disk’s information-age simulacrum. This notion corresponds to the continued usefulness found in platonic forms, and the never-ending stream of technology.

The marvelous New York City subway mosaics have been a vital source of inspiration for artists and commuters since their inception. With this monolithic icon, the MTA has brought the ancient medium of mosaic into the digital age.

All Right!



Kristina Munsch, 5-year Island resident and a Junior at Art & Design High School, won an academic recommendation to participate in the National Young Leaders Conference held in Washington DC. The recent conference, designed to “acquaint the leaders of tomorrow with the leaders of today” exposed Munsh to the art of politics and debate on a national scale.

Visits to the Pakistan Embassy and to the office of Congresswoman Pat Schroeder highlighted the trip along with participation in debates about English as the sole official language of the U.S. and inclusion of illegal aliens in the nation’s education system.

Through the program, Ms. Munsch secured an internship at Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney’s office, where she currently works two days per week.



Roosevelt Islander Sallie Toussaint competed in the 1997 Miss New York USA Pageant, finishing as a finalist among 66 contestants. The competition, held on the last weekend of November, feeds into the Miss USA Pageant taking place in Shreveport, Louisiana on February 5th. Contestants were judged for poise, personality and beauty of face and figure.

Ms. Toussaint, who is a pre-med student at Hunter College, serves as a volunteer at Goldwater Hospital and as a mentor for homeless youth. She’s been an active participant in the drama club, debate team and State Championship Volleyball Team of her high school.

The age cut-off for the contest is 26, so Ms. Toussaint intends to keep trying over the next four years until she wins.

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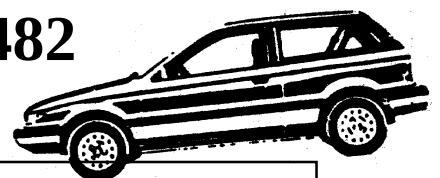
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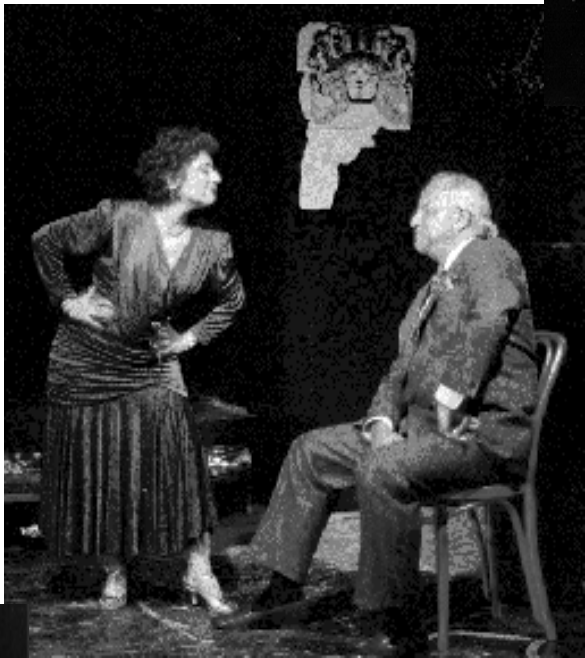
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Monday	16 th	6 – 8 pm
Thursday	19 th	6 – 8 pm
Friday	20 th	6 – 9 pm
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New RIRA President Patrick Stewart: A Sense of Ourselves as a Community

What is your first priority?

STEWART: I look on this island as a very special small town, and I believe that what happens to any one person in this small town happens to all of us. I also believe that although you do not have to like your next-door neighbor, you do have to find a way to get along with him, to respect him... because if we cannot, we will all go down the tubes together. What happens to one happens to all. Finding the road to greater unity within this community is my number one priority, because, without it, eventually we will have no community.

Number two is the budget.

I guess as everybody on the island knows by now that we are dealing with serious budget problems. The capital budget for Roosevelt Island has been reduced from \$6 million per annum to zero dollars per annum. The operating budget for Roosevelt Island has been reduced from \$2 million to \$600,000. I do not understand how this can be done to us. We are, after all, taxpaying citizens of the state and the city of New York. It is my understanding that the primary role of the city and the state is to supply exactly these needs to this community. So you have to ask the question, how could this come to be? When you have an answer to that, then you have to ask: What are we going to do about it? And the logical thing to do about it is to enlist the aid of our governmental representatives.

As to how it can have happened, I believe that the Governor probably received some bad advice. I'd like to think that. I'd like to think that the Governor is sufficiently intelligent and sympathetic to the needs of all the citizens of New York to not allow this to happen. So I have to put it over to somebody making a mistake.. And once you've made a mistake, it's hard to own up to it.

How can we tackle diplomatically the question of what appears to some residents to be a lack of stewardship...?

We have been trying for some time to handle Dr. Blue diplomatically. I, myself, have attended 5 or 6 meetings with him where essentially the same questions were asked: about the budget, about his vision for the island in the future, about Southtown, about Southpoint, about any number of things, in fact, about public safety, about any number of things that affect the well-being of this island.

We always have been given the same answers: either "I am working on it," or "I haven't been here very long and I am still learning about this place," or "I'll get back to you."

Is there any suggestion here that Jerome Blue is dismantling the Island deliberately as a political exercise on behalf of somebody?

Well, for lack of better information, it certainly one of the things that comes to mind. And that's unfortunate. The bottom line is that we don't know what Jerry Blue is up to on this island. The reason that this kind of speculation is possible in the first place is that we have not been given any credible answers at all. If he had shared his plans with us from the beginning, then we might have a different feeling about Jerry Blue than we do. We might be able to see more specifically what he is and is not doing, what his plans are and what they are not.

Without this information, speculation is rampant throughout the community. What is Southtown? Who knows? Who are the contractors? Who knows? What's it going to be? Who knows? What's the fate of the Tram? Who knows? Jerry Blue is an officer of a public benefit corporation, and as such, has an obligation to share information categorized as public. And it would seem to me that it would be wise on his part to be candid with us, so that we can cooperate with him to everyone's advantage. There's nothing I would rather have happen than to have Jerry Blue have a successful operation on this Island. But we have the right know what he's doing.

And I have to be able to go to him and say, Yes, Jerry, we agree with you, or no, we don't. Or here are the things we agree on, let's move forward on those and here are the things we don't agree with, let's see what we can do to resolve them.

Let's say you conclude, now or later, that whatever he's up to is not acceptable?

Well, I'm fast reaching that conclusion, if I haven't, in fact, already reached it. What can we do? We can do what citizens all over the United States do. We use our state senators and state representatives. We can use our federal senators and representatives. We can use various government agencies that are available to us for help and assistance. We can use the Freedom of Information Act to find out

what is going on. All of these remedies are part of the government of the United States of America and the state of New York, and I am a firm believer that any holder of public office who steps out of bounds with regard to his authority or job specifications, the citizens have due recourse. And this citizen, for one, intends to use those resources to the greatest extent that I possibly can.

But that all takes time. How long can you wait?

I think the process has already begun... that some of our both local and national representatives have begun to take some action in our behalf, in terms of finding out what we need to know. The new RIRA has a great deal of talent, thank goodness... people who are talented in many areas, like communications, management, government, the arts, community service, all sorts of things. And it's my intention to use all of our skills and talents to the utmost to put forth what we need to get done. How long does that take? It takes 24 hours to get it into being. How long does it take to get people to react to it? It depends on how hot you can make the kitchen, I guess.

In a utopian Roosevelt Island, what would the role of RIRA be?

To listen and respond responsibly to the desires and needs and wants and opinions of the citizens. To act when there's need for action, to counsel when there's need for counsel, to provide comfort when there's need to comfort. That's what I think RIRA should do. It's a quasi-governmental body. It's a social welfare body. It's an educational body. It's an institutional body. It has many, many roles, I think, all of which are there to create a better community for all the citizens who are here... and in creating that community, to get what we need to get.

How can you get residents involved where they have not been involved?

I have talked with several groups of people. I think that in the past citizens haven't been adequately made aware of RIRA activities, and that has been a real communications problem. What we intend to do in the future is actively solicit, by word of mouth, and by pen and paper, active citizen participation, in both RIRA and town meetings and RIRA committees as they currently exist or in ad hoc committees as they come to be. I talked to a couple of young, mother friends and I said "What do you

How We Voted

President		
Clinton	1,708	Dem
Dole	261	Rep
Dole	18	Con
Perot	69	Ind
Clinton	62	Lib
U.S. Representative		
Maloney	1,554	Dem
Livingston	223	Rep
Lavezzi	22	Con
Leighton	24	Ind
Maloney	85	Lib
State Senate		
Mendez	1,447	Dem
Gomez	59	Con
Castellanos	49	Ind
State Assembly		
Grannis	1,473	Dem
Murphy	235	Rep
Torres	33	Con
Murphy	59	Ind
Bruschi	26	Lib
City Council		
Miller	1,615	Dem
Stephens	192	Rep
Bryk	23	Con
Bryk	20	Ind
Miller	60	Lib

R.I. Residents Association		
President		
Stewart	666	63%
Rademaker	209	20%
Velez	134	13%
Parker	21	2%
First Vice President		
Schuppert	253	24%
Hill	250	23.7
Rivera	218	21%
Kaufman	192	18%
Common Council		
Eastwood (7)		
Rademaker	130	
Christianson	114	
Warren	112	
Knox	108	
Mincheff	107	
Dorsey	105	
Pope	103	
Reyes	95	
Kaufman	84	
546 Main Street		
Blumberg	no contest	
Mutula	no contest	
Westview (3)		
Breslin	95	
Palermo	84	
Gardner	64	
Wazani	51	
LaScott	48	
Island House (3)		
Farance	106	
Berdy	86	
Castine	80	
Brooks	74	
Cornet	74	
Rivercross (3)		
Weinstein	184	
Hochman	109	
Cohen	100	
4 River Road (1)		
Shaw	28	
Coleman	21	
Manhattan Park (5)		
Risley	no contest	
Midkiff	no contest	
Palmer	no contest	
Small	no contest	
Damsel	no contest	

think of bringing your kids to meetings," and I got a very positive response to that. I've also mentioned it to the new acting principal of the school, who also seemed to be positive in her response. I think that first you have to know about RIRA and what it is and why it is, and then you have to know where it meets, at what time, what the agenda for the meeting is. There needs to be a place on any agenda for people to introduce new issues. The community needs to know how to reach their RIRA representatives. We need to be approachable and available. Otherwise, you don't know what's going on, and if you don't know what's going on, you can't very well effect a solution...

With all humility, I have to say that I have experience in business, military, arbitration, the law, and so on. Ron Schuppert, First Vice President, is a highly-skilled and team oriented. Luckily we have a great number of competent, dedicated people for the necessary committee appointments.

Pre-School Offers All-Day Child Care

The Roosevelt Island Day Nursery School will offer full-day care for preschoolers aged 3 to 6, beginning in September, and is launching a major fund-raising effort this month to provide scholarships and to create the new service.

The school currently provides two daily sessions, both ending at 3:00 pm. The extended program will offer a comprehensive early childhood curriculum with certified early development teachers.

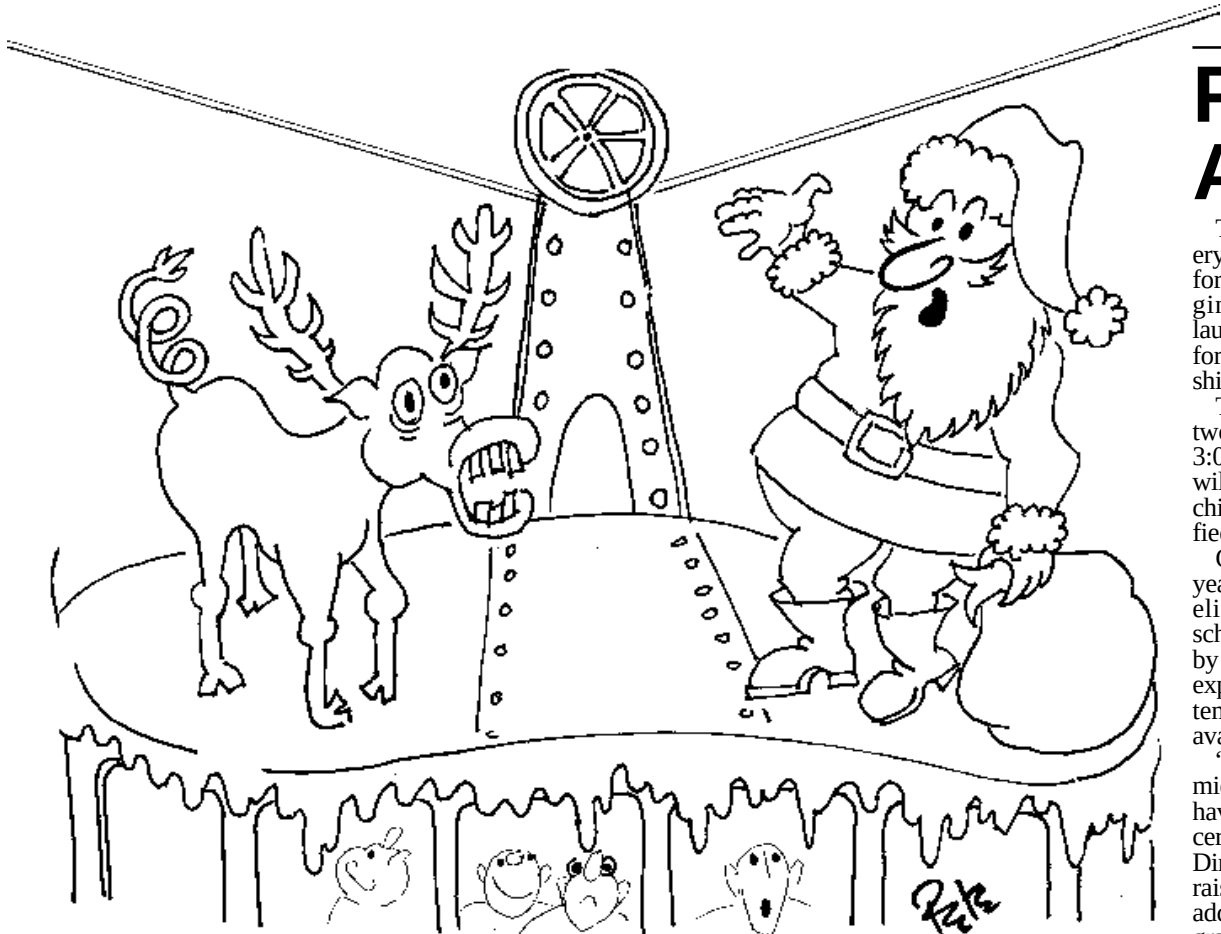
Children who will become 3 years old by December, 1997, are eligible for the program. The school is polling residents to learn, by February, how many families expect to enroll a child for the September start-up. Information is available at (212) 593-0750.

"Providing scholarships to middle- and low-income families have always been a principal concern of ours," said Sarah Seiden, Director of the school. "Our fund-raiser will enable us to cover the added costs of an expanded program, and provide scholarships, as well."

Fund-raising activities will be more creative and diverse this year as the School's principal annual fund raiser, Vidbel's Circus, normally held around Memorial Day, cannot be staged this year. Seiden said that Robert Antoneck of RIOC informed her that preliminary work and equipment storage will be undertaken at the traditional circus site, the planned grounds for Southtown, before that time.

Fund-raising efforts will begin with a direct appeal to all residents, family of alumni, and to Roosevelt Island merchants. A thermometer identifying progress toward the goal of \$25,000 will be on display in the storefront of RICO, the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, on Main Street.

In addition to scholarships provided through fund raising, assistance for children from low-income families can be obtained from the New York City Agency for Child Development. The school, a licensed program, provides assistance in applying for vouchers.



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Friday • 1-5

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A voluntary offering will be taken.
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the patients at our Island hospital.
- **Sunday School Christmas Program,**
December 22nd at 4:00 PM, Lower Community Room
- **Family Service of Holy Communion,**
December 24th at 8:00 PM, Main Chapel

Please also join us for our regular schedule of Services

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Quiet meditation just prior to our Main Worship Service
- Main Morning Worship each Sunday at 10:00 AM promptly.
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- Our Adult Bible Group meets each Tuesday evening
at 8:00 PM in the Oval room downstairs.

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neighbors

by Jim Baehler

Diana Brill

WIRE: Let's start at the beginning, Diana. Where were you born?

DIANA: I grew up on Long Island and had a typical suburban upbringing.

WIRE: Were there other family members involved with the theatre?

DIANA: No, I was the first person in my family to go into the arts.

WIRE: What impelled you to do that?

DIANA: I saw *The Red Shoes* when I was about four years old and I told my mother I wanted to be a ballerina. She enrolled me in a local dance school and I knew from the time I started that that was what I was going to do.

WIRE: There must have been a million young girls who saw that movie and had the same reaction. What was different about you? Why did you stay with it?

DIANA: First, I was naturally athletic, second, I was disciplined, third, I had access to New York City, and fourth, I had the support of a wonderful family. By the time I was 11 years old I was going to Manhattan several times a week to Ballet Russe to take lessons. When I was 13 I was a student at the High School of Performing Arts.

WIRE: How old were you when you began dancing professionally?

DIANA: I got my first professional job as a June Taylor dancer when I was 14.

WIRE: So when I used to sit home on Saturday night and watch the Jackie Gleason show and they brought out the June Taylor dancers, I was watching you.

DIANA: I was on the show just before it moved to Miami but I did not follow it to Miami. My first jobs with June Taylor were summer tours and industrial shows. Since I was going to school at the time, most of the work was in the summer.

WIRE: Did you have to audition for these jobs?

DIANA: No, June Taylor had one of the best dance schools in New York and I studied there while I attended the High School of Performing Arts so she knew me from the time I was 11 years old.

WIRE: I get the sense here that your training cost your parents a lot of money.

DIANA: It did but as soon as I started earning money I paid for my lessons.

WIRE: How old were you when you did your first Broadway show?

DIANA: I got my first Broadway show when I was 16. It was called *Thirteen Daughters* and starred Don Ameche. He played my father and I was one of the daughters who couldn't get married until each of the older daughters had a husband. The play was set in Hawaii and Don Ameche played a Chinese mandarin who was married to a Hawaiian princess and who followed the old customs. The complications came when the oldest daughter became a missionary and decided not to marry.

WIRE: It sounds like *Fiddler on the Roof* with hula skirts.

DIANA: That's right, and they've never given up on the show. It's like the national show of Hawaii and is still being produced. The best part is that I got my Equity card and could then appear in other Equity shows. The show had wonderful choreography by Rod Alexander. He had a dance act with Bambi Lynn and choreographed the movie of *Carousel*. I think he was one of the best choreographers of all time. It was so good that Ed Sullivan put us on to try to get people to buy tickets to the show. I still have a kinoscope of those Ed Sullivan shows.

WIRE: What came next?

DIANA: I joined the Bob DeVoye Trio and we did a ballet adagio act that toured the U.S. and abroad.

WIRE: How old were you then?

DIANA: I was 17, we worked together until I was 20.

WIRE: So from the age of 17 until 20 you toured the world.

DIANA: And the United States. We were regularly on the Ed Sullivan Show and a featured ballet act at Radio City Music Hall and the Latin Quarter.

Anyone who saw the recent Main Street Theatre production of *Follies* or any of the other similar shows in past years must have wondered how the cast of less-than-professional dancers achieved such show-stopping competence. First there was the energy and dedication of the cast and then, most importantly, the guidance of an internationally-known choreographer, Diana Brill, a long-time Roosevelt Island resident. The Wire thought that Diana would be a suitable subject to inaugurate a new feature of the Wire that will introduce to you some of the interesting neighbors we have here on the Little Apple.

Diana's girl-next-door appearance and youthful smile make it difficult to believe that she has a 21 year-old daughter and a son in college. She has lost little of the energy that she previously expended on the stage but we did catch up to her recently and she agreed to share some of her experiences with our readers.

WIRE: Who were the other dancers?

DIANA: Two ballet dancers, Bob DeVoye and Fred Favorite. It was a well-known dance act and very demanding. Since it was an adagio act, I was thrown all over the place.

WIRE: You must have been physically tough to do that act.

DIANA: I weighed 100 pounds and there was nothing I wouldn't try.

WIRE: How tall are you?

DIANA: I'm five feet two.

WIRE: Was your lack of height a handicap as a dancer?

DIANA: No, the only disappointment was that I was never hired by Bob Fosse. He never, ever hired anybody short.

WIRE: If you didn't look like Ann Reinking you didn't work for him?

DIANA: Right, but I was never out of work as a dancer.

WIRE: What were your strong points as a dancer?

DIANA: I was fast, I could jump and turn and, most importantly, I had no fear. Of course, I've learned since then that there are things to be legitimately afraid of but at that age I was fearless. Like most dancers, I was disciplined and dedicated to what I was doing. I worked hard, and I took dance classes every day.

WIRE: When you were traveling the world, what experiences do you remember?

DIANA: It was an education that I wish my children could have had. I was introduced to Asian, South American, and European cultures at an early age. I took ballet classes in every country I was in and visited museums whenever I could. It was an enriching experience that provided me with friendships that I still have.

WIRE: On the other side of life's experiences, you were a young woman traveling the world. What kind of romantic entanglements did that involve?

DIANA: I was like a nun! The act was so difficult that there wasn't time or energy for dating. And also, Bob and Fred were very protective, they were like my chaperones. My parents loved them - they used to tell guys to stay away from me. But I never knew that until I was older.

WIRE: You didn't have Stage Door Johnnies in top hats offering flowers outside your dressing room?

DIANA: I did have people who would wait to see me or write to me and send me flowers but it never developed into anything serious.

WIRE: If you had to do it again, would you do it any differently?

DIANA: I would do it exactly the same. When I left the trio I went back to Broad-

way and did four more shows.

WIRE: What were those shows?

DIANA: *Do I Hear a Waltz?* Then I did *La Grosse Valise*, a French farce. After that, *Mame* - the original production with Angela Lansbury.

WIRE: What was she like to work with?



DIANA: She was wonderful and I still work with her. I just did the *Broadway Fights Aids* benefit honoring her at the Majestic Theatre. We raised one and a half million dollars for AIDS.

WIRE: Is she easy to work with?

DIANA: Yes! I absolutely adore her. She's a great lady.

WIRE: What came after *Mame*?

DIANA: *The Happy Time* with Robert Goulet but that was only briefly. I left to become Dance Captain at *Mame*.

WIRE: What was that like?

DIANA: Extraordinary! It was my job to train all the stars who were going to play *Mame* in productions in the United States and overseas.

WIRE: That was for all the world touring companies?

DIANA: To get ready for the dance sequences I trained Susan Hayward, Ginger Rogers, Celeste Holm, and Ann Miller.

WIRE: What sticks out in your mind about working with these actresses?

DIANA: Susan Hayward was so vulnerable and so sweet, and scared to death to go on stage.

WIRE: Had she done any stage work before she started in the movies?

DIANA: No.

WIRE: So the stage must have been intimidating; you can't do a retake if something goes wrong.

DIANA: She was absolutely terrified and her voice eventually gave out.

WIRE: Tell us about Ginger Rogers.

DIANA: She entertained us with wonderful stories about Fred Astaire. The kind of choreography that she had to do in *Mame* was not suited to her. It was cakewalks and struts and a Charleston number. Celeste Holm approached everything from an intellectual point of view. Ann Miller was an honest-to-goodness old-time star and, wow, could she tap!

WIRE: Where did you meet Worth and Nancy Howe of the Main Street Theatre?

DIANA: I met Nancy first. We were doing an industrial show. Soon after that I went to Texas to work in a regional theatre

and I met Worth who was the local character actor for the theatre. He was an incredible actor. We were doing *Hello Dolly* and Worth played Cornelius; he was the best Cornelius I have ever seen, absolutely incredible. When I was back in New York and working on a road company of *Hello Dolly* we were having trouble casting Cornelius. I told the director the best Cornelius he could ever hire would be Worth Howe. He came to New York to be in the show and met Nancy who was also in the show and they've been together ever since.

WIRE: Your career now is as a choreographer, not a dancer?

DIANA: I stopped performing when I had my children and now work full-time as a choreographer. I prefer choreographing because I always had stage fright as a performer. I handle pressure better as a choreographer.

WIRE: What shows have you done recently?

DIANA: I just did a Spanish version of *Hello Dolly* in Argentina and *Mame*, which was the opening production for the new Jerry Herman Theatre at the University of Miami. And for the fifth time I did the Triangle Show at Princeton University.

WIRE: Who would you say are the most talented people you've worked with?

DIANA: Angela Lansbury can do anything; she sings, she dances, she can do comedy, she can do drama, she can be funny, she can be tragic, she can do classics, she can do farce, there's nothing she can't do. She's like an idol to me.

WIRE: Any newcomers?

DIANA: I just worked with Karen Ziemba, she's going to be the star of *Steel Pier*. She won a Tony for *As the World Goes Round* and she did *Crazy for You*. She's an exceptional performer who sparkles on stage.

WIRE: You now have a second career that is somewhat of a departure from show business?

DIANA: A few years ago I realized that I was probably going to need another source of income. Regional theatres can't afford to do musicals any more. There used to be 90 Equity dinner theatres in the country; there's maybe six left. There are 26 Equity summer theatres out of 300. There are only about 100 union choreographers in the country and most of them are barely making a living.

WIRE: So you looked at that and said...?

DIANA: "I need something that I can do when I'm not working on a musical show." I went through different choices and one day I happened to think of massage therapy. So I went to school and got my license and it's worked out even better than I imagined.

WIRE: How long did it take you to get your license?

DIANA: It was a three-semester program at the Swedish Institute. Then you take a state board exam; I was surprised at how difficult it was. What I didn't expect to get from the work is the joy that I feel helping people and making people feel good. I thought, "Wow, I really like what I do."

WIRE: What do you like most about living on Roosevelt Island.

DIANA: Oh gosh, I just feel so enriched and so fortunate to live here. I moved here when my daughter was two and I had a six-week-old baby boy. My children grew up here and I formed friendships that I will keep for the rest of my life. Roosevelt Island is so unique. I love my home, I love my friends, I love the cultural diversity. I love the fact that I can walk down the street and say hello to 20 people along the way. I think it's a unique, special place. I think we're just blessed here.

WIRE: Thank you, Diana.





Season's Greetings

from the Staff and Board of the
ROOSEVELT ISLAND OPERATING CORPORATION
of the State of New York

December 18, 1996
President's Forum on Southtown
Good Shepherd Chapel
2-3 P.M.

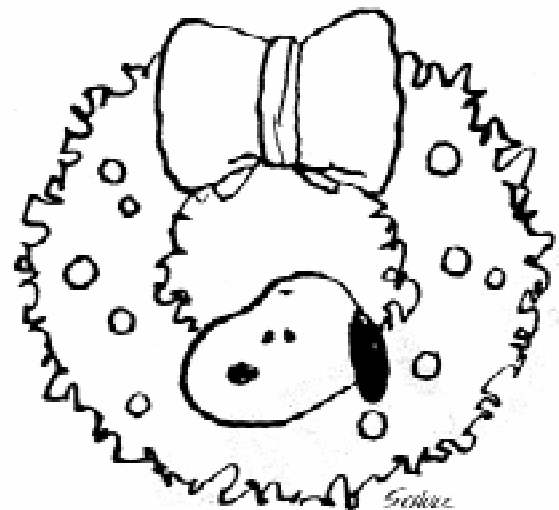
RIOC Board of Directors Meetings Calendar (Meetings are held at the Good Shepherd Chapel)

January 9, 1997	10 AM
February 13, 1997	10 AM
March 13, 1997	10 AM
April 10, 1997	10 AM
May 8, 1997	7 PM
June 12, 1997	10 AM

For further information, contact RIOC at 212-832-4540.

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Snoopy New Year From
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**and
Roosevelt Island Associates inc.**

Spruce-Up Repairs Planned

“Management is taking on a new look and a new attitude,” conveyed Doryne Isley, General Manager of Roosevelt Island Housing Management Inc. in a recent interview with *The Wire*. Isley, whose authority extends over Eastwood, Island House and Westview is committed to “sprucing up” the buildings under her control.

Acquiring a new Maintenance Director, Fred Cubero, formerly Director of Maintenance for the Plaza Hotel, may be a good beginning. Cubero, who began on December 6th, replaces outgoing Bob Thomas who resigned from the post at the beginning of December.

Bids have gone out on much-needed repair work including water penetration and a study is currently being conducted for new carpet. A contract estimated at one million dollars has been awarded for a new Eastwood roof and work should begin in the Spring.

The Westview pool has reopened as repairs there continue. Filter and paint work have been completed but pool operation may be interrupted intermittently while management tackles the heating and light system as well as cosmetic needs. Constructing the scaffolding for the project alone could cost as much as \$12,000.

Three vestibules in Island House are scheduled for a facelift, 555, 551 and 575 Main Streets.

Another less-visible transformation could take place: the way management buys electricity. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation is investigating the possibility of purchasing power at special rates reserved for NY State agencies through the Power Authority of New York State, rather than Con Edison. The subsequent reduction in electrical charges could mean freeing up monies to be devoted for further maintenance and repair.

PTA Sponsors Night on Town

Everyone is invited to celebrate the holidays at the annual PTA-sponsored “Night on the Town” on Tuesday evening, December 17 at PS/IS 217. The event begins at 6:45 PM with an international buffet dinner, followed at 7:30 PM by a concert featuring the school chorus and band. Admission is a dish that serves 8 to 10 people. Last year’s event was well attended despite a major snowstorm. The PTA does not promise better weather, but hopes for an equally successful party this year. For further information, call PS/IS 217 at 980-0294 and ask for the PTA at extension 2108.

Youth Center Party Today

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program’s 15th annual Christmas Party is scheduled today (Saturday, December 14), 1:00 pm to 6:00 p.m. The schedule includes a movie at the Manhattan Park theater, and a party at McDonald’s, after which the children will be visited by a very special visitor from the North Pole bearing gifts.

In the evening, a Christmas dance will be held at the center for teens 12-18, 8:00 p.m. to midnight. Santa will be found dancing the night away to DJ Jamaal.

The Youth Center has decorated the Blackwell House Christmas tree for the sixth year, in cooperation with the Roosvelt Island Operating Corporation. The tree will be lit daily, 4:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m., until January 2.

Price-Costco Opens

by Judith Berdy

Eagerly anticipated by the shopping-deprived, the first megastore in Western Queens has arrived, and it’s just 5 blocks from us in Long Island City.

Price Costco (a merger of Price Club and Costco) is a membership shopping club with a family fee of \$35 (plus tax) a year. Business memberships are also available at the sign-up area just inside the doors.

Built on the site of 3 former steel warehouses, Costco is *big*, (130,000 square feet). Aisles are wide, clear of obstructions, and easily navigated.

The shopping experience: Outside, begin by picking out a mega-sized shopping cart. Inside, you’ll find acres of merchandise on floor-level racks with pallets of other goods stored above. Feeling indulgent? Select a 54” television set and bring it home. Thinking smaller? There’s a selection of china and giftware as well as sections of clothing, small appliances, auto supplies, home-office items and housewares. The pharmacy has a health and beauty section. Lever 2000 bath soap was a great buy at ten for \$5.99- if you’re willing to store ten bars of soap. Similarly, there are great prices on bathroom tissue, paper towels and paper plates.

There are good buys on fresh meats and produce. The prepared food section is fun with an employee at each corner giving out

samples. You can order platters of seafood, sandwiches or meats. The enormous frozen-food section has great deals and the well-stocked bakery section offers four-pound cheesecakes and giant carrot cakes. In the cereal section you’ll find about a dozen brands, but each in only one large size.

Check-out is quick through a well-staffed cashier area. The cashier can only take payment from the member, but will subtotal your bill if you’re shopping with a non-member. No bags are provided but recycled cartons are available and employees will help you pack. Payment can be check, cash, or Discover Card.

Since the variety is limited, you probably won’t give up your favorite supermarket to shop here. And, because the quantities are quartermaster size, you’ll do well to share the experience, and the purchases, with a friend. If you take the 15-minute walk to get there, you can find or call a car service at the store to bring your purchases home. It’s about \$5, but you’ll come out ahead by buying Costco’s bulk sizes.

Details: Price-Costco is at Vernon Blvd. and Broadway in Long Island City. Hours are 10-8:30 Monday through Friday, Saturday 9:30-6, and Sunday 10-5, with some extended weekend hours through the holidays. There’s a 500-car parking lot. The telephone number is 718-204-7679.

Committee Members Added

Principal Selection Process Continues at Island School

Four of five vacancies on PS/IS 217’s Principal Selection Committee were filled December 10 in a special meeting, bringing the total number of parents serving in an advisory capacity to nine - just short of the maximum allowed by Board of Education standards.

Newly elected to the team are Sheryl Glenn, Carmen Miranda, Iris Velazquez-Ayala and Martine Fournier. They will join returning parent rmembers from last year’s committee, Patricia Benson, Diane Crawford, Sandra Morabito, Essie Owens O’Brien and Karen Smith. A Board of Education appointee, Sandi Vargas, and two teachers from the school, Jeff Slivko and Joy Franjola, round out the group.

Vacancies on the committee had been created due to families moving off the island or withdrawing their children from the school. Restructuring the committee was allowed by the Board of Education because of the high number of departures. Generally, openings go unfilled when losses occur.

Diana Armenakis, President of the school’s PTA, commented that lack of continuity in the school’s Principals has been “terrible for the students, parents and teachers

alike. It takes a while to get to know a school and accommodate the needs of a community,” she said.

Meanwhile, Armenakis expressed satisfaction with Ann Hockman, Acting Principal. “She accomplishes things quickly, has created needed programs and is a hands-on person, but there’s no guarantee she’ll get the job even though she has applied.”

The selection process is a lengthy one in which the selection committee can only make a recommendation subject to approval by the Superintendent of Schools and the New York City Schools Chancellor. The committee is required to recommend 5 candidates or more. While open to the committee’s influence, the Superintendent and Chancellor may reject all recommendations and send the committee back to the square one, prolonging the process indefinitely.

The 1995 departure of Dr. Kenneth Forman from the Principal’s position triggered the search. He left for a school on Long Island, closer to his home. Ann Hockman is the second Acting Principal to fill the void in the past two years.

Comparison Shopper

Kay Thompson

17-23 Nov 1996	Trade Fair	Pathmark	Associated	Sloan's
1 doz medium eggs	1.09	1.59	(lg; no med) 1.29	1.39
½ gal 2% milk	1.35	1.54	1.35	1.69
½ gal Tropicana orange juice	1.99	3.39	2.99	2.50
16oz Breakstone sour cream	.89	1.19	1.59	1.29
7oz can Reddi-Whip	1.79	1.99	2.19	2.99
1 pkg frozen Hot Pockets	2.79	2.69	2.99	3.29
10oz Birdseye frozen peas	.69	.75	.89	.89
Lg can Progresso minestrone	1.89	.99	1.69	1.79
Sm can College Inn chicken broth	5/\$2 or .69	5/\$2 or .69	.85	5/2.29 or .99
14oz Pepperidge stuffing mix	1.89	1.99	1.99	2.59
Mrs Smith's pumpkin pie	1.99	1.99	2.99	2.99
2 liters Diet Coke	.99	.79	.99	1.69
1 liter Canada Dry tonic	.89	.79	1.09	1.09
½ gal Apple & Eve cider	1.99	2.49	1.99	2.59
48oz Apple & Eve cranberry juice	1.99	2.59	2.69	3.19
Ocean Spray cranberry sauce	.59	3/1.99 or .67	1.19	1.39
Barilla Pastas 1 lb	1.29	1.19	1.25	2/\$3 or 1.50
Hellmann's mayonnaise 32oz	1.99	1.69	2.99	2.99
Scott Towels (80 count)	.59	1.19	1.09	1.39
Ragu spaghetti sauce - 14oz	1.49	1.49	1.35	1.59
Chock Full o' Nuts coffee 13oz	2.89	3.39	2.99	2.99
Chopped chuck - 1 lb (for 2-3 lb)	1.69	1.99	1.59	1.79
Shady Brook turkey (10-14 lb)	.69* or .99	.59* or .89	.59* or .89	see note 1.29
Cereals				
Banana Nut Crunch 15½ oz	3.59	2/3.99 or 2.00	3.19	3.59
Total 12oz	3.69	3.79	3.59	4.49
Product 19 12oz	3.69	3.89	3.39	4.19
Fresh produce				
Bag of yellow onions	2 lb/.69 or .35	3 lb/.99 or .33	2 lb/.59 or .30	2 lb/.99 or .50
Romaine lettuce - lg head	.99	1.19	.79	1.59
Scallions (bunch)	2/.99 or .50	.49	2/.69 or .35	.69
Zucchini 1 lb	1.29	1.49	.59	1.29
Yams 1 lb	.59	.39	.49	.59
Broccoli - lg bunch	1.29	.79	.99	1.49
Granny Smith apples 1 lb	1.29	.99	.59	1.69
Bananas (lb)	2/.99 or .50	.69	3/1.00 or .34	.79
Mandarin Tangerines	5/.99 or .20	5/1.00 or .20	8/1.00 or .13	5/.99 or .20
Lemons (each)	10/.99 or .10	.25	10/1.00 or .10	(ex lg) 2/.99 or .50
Limes (each)	10/.99 or .10	.16	12/\$1 or .09	4/.99 or .25
Total (using unit prices)	52.60	54.61	55.84	67.74

*Trade Fair and Pathmark, \$25 purchase required for lower price; Associated, \$35. Sloan's special turkey price, \$.89 with coupon, \$50 purchase required, was announced after this survey was completed. Kay Thompson will be away during the winter months, but The WIRE and Website NYC10044 plan to continue this feature on a regular basis. If you'd like to substitute for Kay, please call 826-9055.

Island House, from page 1

time. It wasn't until 1978 that occupancy reached 95%. And through that period, the state-held mortgage slid deeper and deeper into default: By 1979, interest arrears approached \$6 million. The dream of an island village within a city was still real, but execution of the dream had encountered its first real glitches.

Foreclosure?

When interest on the Island House mortgage was still past due by 1989, the state initiated foreclosure proceedings against both Island House and Westview. Sovereign Construction, the general partner in both buildings, went bankrupt, but was bought in 1993 by Charles Lucido of Dallas, Texas, who had been an early partner in Island House. He thus became General Partner and the man to deal with on the buildings - for a workout agreement on the debt owed to the state, and if that could be put in place, on any plan to coop the building.

By early 1994 the stage was set: Lucido was interested in finding a formula to make the building a co-operative, and it looked like a deal was about to be made on a plan that would satisfy the state on those arrears in mortgage interest. There was even a promise from the state agency responsible for collecting on state-held mortgages that, by the end of 1994, either a workout agreement would be in place, or the agency would foreclose. Either development would pave the way for cooping. Island House residents eager to become co-operators got ready to stoke the flames of resident interest, and then...

Over in Rivercross, a resident complained of odors from another apartment, then sued. An engineering study showed there were gaps between floors and walls that allowed passage of the offending scents. In turn, that raised questions about firestopping - the ability of the construction to confine smoke and flames to one apartment. It was a Rivercross problem, but Island House is the same construction, so there was a question: Would an Island House workout deal be reached only to be followed by an expensive round of repairs? Workers started drilling test holes in the walls of vacant Island House apartments. Everything stopped.

Ultimately the firestopping matter was cleared, but 1995 became a lost year for the Island House coop effort. At the end of 1996, everything is exactly where it was in early 1994: No workout agreement, and no cooping plan under way.

And so it has gone. Delay and discouragement.

Decay

And decay. Island House renters are footing the bills for the building, and much of their rent dollar goes into paying off that mortgage backlog, leaving little cash for a maintenance backlog, little for repairs. The roof leaks into top-floor apartments. The facade leaks. Stairwells are a mess. Great sheets of wallpaper have been torn loose in hallways. A beautiful pool has become an eyesore. The building staff has grown lax in the knowledge it is not likely to be held accountable for unfunded repairs. Routine maintenance has fallen so far behind that one resident has created an Internet page listing the problems.

Maintenance aside, by Spring of 1996 it looked as though a deal might be imminent.

Committees were formed in both Island House and Westview. Funds were solicited from residents. There was activity, interest, and anticipation. But again, delay brought discouragement. At this writing, the workout deal has yet to be cut, though tax consequences suggest reason to believe it'll be done by year's end.

If not, the coop committee in Island House may press the state to go ahead with foreclosure, as it seemed ready to do in 1994. That was the specific promise, actually, in a letter from Vincent J. Sama, President of New York State's Mortgage Loan Enforcement & Administration Corporation (MLC), to State Assemblyman Pete Grannis.

In any case, committees in both Island House and Westview are moving forward, taking a survey to measure resident interest. Even there, problems abound. As attractive as homeownership may seem on first take, the worse the building gets, the less interested its residents may be in acquiring title, even though acquiring title is the only sure way to take control of the building's destiny.

And there's the problem of a transient population - those who have little interest in becoming owners, either because they are short-term renters or because they think they're likely to move out before seeing any benefit from ownership.

One estimate puts that segment of the Island House population at nearly a third of the apartments. While it takes only 15% participation to go forward with a coop plan in which the rest can remain renters, that meager level of participation and involvement can be worse for a building's future than a pure rental situation. It leaves the original owner, holding up to 85% of the apartments, in control. The new resident-investors are unable to take charge of things like maintenance and selection of a management company.

There's more. Getting a cooping plan accepted by enough residents depends on the cost of saying yes to the coop offer. The lower the price of each apartment, the greater the participation. But the building's owners must be satisfied with what they receive as compensation when ownership passes from their hands.

Tax Matters

The price for an Island House apartment wouldn't have to be high, except for the fact that the building partnership is a tax shelter - an investment that reduces an owner's tax liability from other holdings. At selling time, all that sheltered income will generate a capital gains tax. To get out with the seller's taxes covered, buyers would have to come up with \$9 million - plus \$30 million to assume the mortgage debt. The \$30 million would be covered by a new mortgage, but the \$9 million works out to an average price of \$5,000 a room, putting a six-room Island House apartment at \$30,000. That alone could discourage some residents from opting to buy their apartments, despite the longer-term potential for gain.

The solution might be a special price for insiders - whatever it takes to get a good level of participation, and a higher price for newcomers. But it's not clear that the state would go along with such a special deal in a Mitchell-Lama conversion. It's an uncharted path.

Given the pace so far, the effort could go on into the next century. And while that's

There was a new porter cleaning the hallway carpeting, and a resident said "It's never looked this good." The porter said he thought it should be better. The resident asked the porter, "How old do you think this carpeting is?" The porter estimated 20 years. It was only two years old. -Audrey Berman

I think we've been very, very passive, waiting for this closing, except for Tim Johns. But for two years we've heard nothing but "Any day now." -Audrey Berman

Quite frankly, I think a lot of people are concerned about the committee's motives. Some thing we're motivated by greed and that we're going to price people off the island. But the real motivation is to maintain affordable housing, and to improve conditions. The people on the committee are people who want to stay here. -Audrey Berman

I'm pleasantly surprised at the attitude of the tenants I've met... attitudes that you wouldn't expect to find in a place like New York City. They have that small community approach to their properties and the island, and yet they're very sophisticated people. Roosevelt Island is a unique place to live and compared to Manhattan it'll always be a unique place to live. -Charles Lucido

And there's the bigger problem: If a new housing company is formed and a new long-term ground lease made necessary, what will our ground rent be? And our tax equivalency payments? We all know RIOC needs money, and eventually all of the buildings will be asked to pay more ground rent and more taxes. But how much? How flexible will RIOC be? From the viewpoint of home ownership, the real problem is that the housing company won't own the land, and the value of these buildings will be much affected by that and the long-term lease arrangement. It's like owning a mobile home — only these buildings are not mobile. -Tim Johns

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not far off, the year 2005 will bring a rude shock. That, for Island House, is Tax Equivalency Adjustment Date, when the building's state-sponsored real estate tax abatement will end, and the tax collector will be asking for more in tax on real estate value.

All things considered, residents considering a coop plan will be faced with a long list of delayed repairs, potentially high mortgage financing costs, reluctance among some residents to contemplate any change, and a higher tax component of either their rent bill or their cooperative maintenance charges. More rocks in the road.

What about RIOC?

And even if everything else seems to be falling into place, there's a pesky "ground lease" that the law says has to be renegotiated with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), so that it has the same expiration date as the current mortgage. That must be handled before a workout agreement can be signed with Charles Lucido and Sovereign Construction. And

while such a simple agreement might have been easy a year ago, working with RIOC now is a whole new ball game: There's a new administration, and last month RIOC President Jerome Blue fired General Counsel Ralph Martinez, with no provision for transition to a replacement, and no word so far on whether a replacement will even be hired.

Then, too, there's all the uncertainty and worry over the state's commitment to support this island it has leased from New York City. With a capital budget of zero, reduced from over \$5 million last year, and an operating subsidy cut in half, potential Island House cooperators have to wonder about the long-term viability of the island as a residential community.

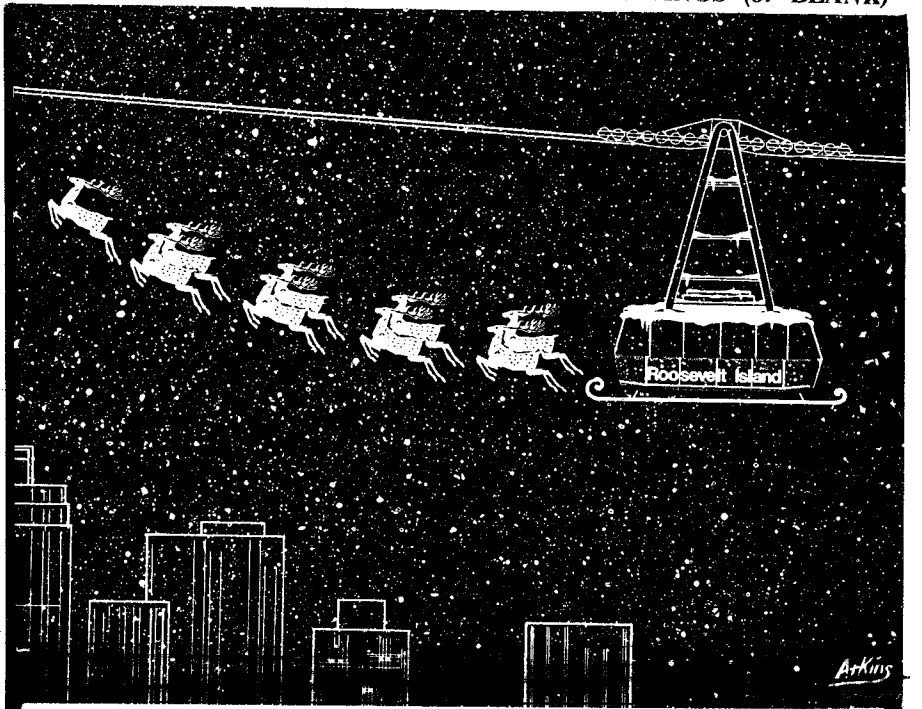
Even so, the Island House folks working on the process remain on standby, awaiting that moment when the long-delayed deal between the state and the Island House General Partner is signed.

Any day now.



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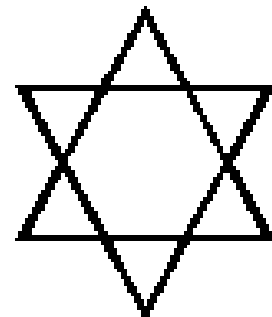
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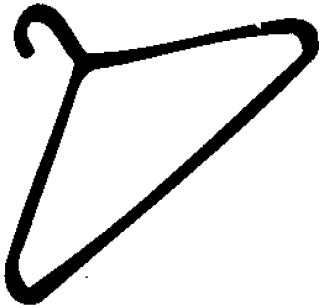
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Soccer Season Wraps

The Youth Soccer League wrapped up another successful season recently with playoffs and an all-star senior game. This year, some 220 athletes competed in Kinderkickers, Minors, Junior and Senior divisions.

Kinderkickers, a developmental league which gives youngsters their initial contact with soccer, was handled by Jay Levine.

The minor division saw one of the biggest upsets in RIYSA history. The team, coached by Zenel Perezic, went from not scoring a goal during the regular season to a two-game sweep of the playoffs. A goal by Hugo Genes and excellent mid-field play by Dennis Perezic were the keys to the team's victory.

In the Senior Championship, the Blue Tsunami, coached by Mike Babcock, came out on top of Kenny Kaplan's Silver Raiders with a 4-1 victory. Three goals by left-footer Chris Palek and a goal plus two as-

sists by Nii-Ato Bentsi-Enchill, as well as superior defensive play by Michael Kirkman and Seth Kaufman led the Tsunami to the championship.

In the Minors, the Blue Dragons, led by Fabian Medina, Alex Dominguez and Allesio Moro, proved that the regular season was no fluke. With a League-leading 38 goals for and three against- including a goal and an assist by Amanda Kross- the Dragons swept through the regular season and the playoffs. Only the outstanding play of sweeper Sef Dorani of Neal Schickner's Teal Team kept the championship game close.

A first-ever all-star senior game capped off the year. The Red Team, coached by Steve Kaufman and Paul Sokoloff, won an exciting 3-2 victory over Joern Kornhuber and Opher Pail's Green Squad. Two goals by Alex Shepard and the game-winner by Kenny Hovi iced it for the Red.

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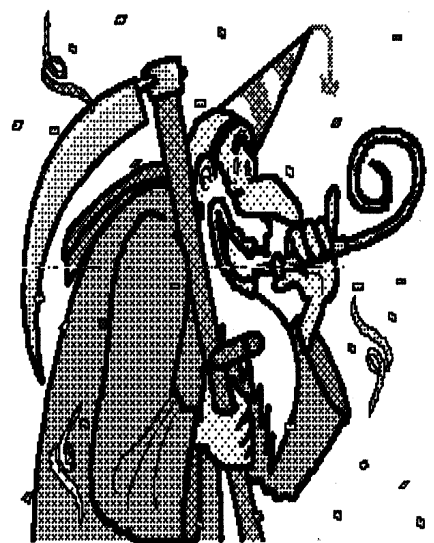
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