

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Running for Governor: City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, seeking the Democratic nomination for Governor, spoke last week at the Senior Center, introduced by Councilmember Gifford Miller. Vallone promised a better future for Roosevelt Island if he can go all the way, defeating incumbent George Pataki. He’s received a crucial endorsement from U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

RI’s Small Merchants Feeling Pinch of Gristede’s and Change

News Analysis
by Dick Lutz

“It’s a delicate balance, and it’s been upset.”

Roosevelt Island’s small merchants are hurting, bruised by a confluence of circumstance that has turned against them. The latest blow: the Gristede’s Megastore at Motorgate, and its expanded lines of merchandise that draw a limited population of customers away from the Island’s smaller stores.

But the challenges Island businesses face range from obvious to obscure, and from matters they can attempt to influence to others that seemingly defy any approach to a solution. The controlling factors are demographic, in part, and involve questions of policy that shape the demographics, but also policy that shapes the particular mix of business on Roosevelt Island.

At the beginning, 20-plus years back, those who nurtured the concept of affordable housing on this East River island recognized the need to nurture a delicate mercantile balance,

as well. They gave limited “exclusives” to many businesses, even while promising that the Island’s population would approach 20,000 within five years.

Now, with the population still under 10,000 and Southtown still years away even if construction were to begin tomorrow, many of the exclusives have been written out of commercial leases, and the balance is more delicate than ever. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) appears to be giving little attention to maintaining the balance.

Demographics

Meanwhile, the demographics – that catch-all word for the characteristics of a population, like age, economics, and family composition – the demographics are shifting.

Before the shoe-repair shop in a Rivercross storefront closed, its owner had fallen nearly a year and a half behind in rent, and business was down so much that there was no consideration of trying to save it. Long before, pressed by personal consid-

erations and the lack of incentive to build the trade here, the owner had put the Island location in the hands of his father, a retired shoemaker. Business, once pretty good, deteriorated more and more over time. The father was emphatic about the demographics: “It’s all sneakers. Nobody fixes tennis shoes.” In exaggeration



Pharmacist John Guerra recently laid off the equivalent of four employees.

rising from his frustration, he said, “Nobody here wears dress shoes anymore.”

Whether there has been a housing policy decision that increases the proportion of residents in sneakers over those dressing for success is, for the departed proprietor of the shoe store, a moot matter. The business just wasn’t there anymore, and he closed.

Gristede’s Megastore

But there was a policy decision involved in the expansion of the Island supermarket, and in allowing it the latitude to compete with the Island’s smaller merchants. Immediately threatened by departments at Gristede’s are the flower shop and the bakery. In a less focused way, Gristede’s has the merchandise to draw business from the card shop, the hardware store, and the deli, particularly among residents of River Road, who now find that the merchandise they require is available at a closer establishment where there’s also the attraction of being able to make an impulse purchase outside the scope

See Pinch, page 7

Shuttle Route Extended

	Queens	RI	63 / Lex	57 / 7th	Times Sq	34 / 6th
To Manhattan →					6 a.m. - 9 p.m. only	
Minutes after hour	:16 →	:18 →	:20 →	:24 →	:30 →	:32
	:36 →	:38 →	:40 →	:44 →	:50 →	:52
	:56 →	:58 →	:00 →	:04 →	:10 →	:12
	← From Manhattan					6 a.m. - 9 p.m. only
:14	← :12	← :10	← :06	← :00	← :58	
:34	← :32	← :30	← :26	← :20	← :18	
:54	← :52	← :50	← :46	← :40	← :38	

Starting Monday, subway shuttle service will be extended to Herald Square during the 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. period, Monday through Friday. Two eight-car trains will maintain the every-20-minute schedule that started in February. Overnight and on weekends, the MTA plans to continue the current schedule and route, with trains shuttling between 57th/7th and 21st Street, Queens. All service from Herald Square will use the downtown platform.

Dissidents Form Rival to RIRA

Jessie Rademaker, Nellie Velez and several other Islanders have formed the Roosevelt Island Community Association (RICA) in an effort to replace RIRA, the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. In the group’s announcement, a flyer called *RICA News*, the group demanded “Patrick Stewart must resign” as President of RIRA. Velez and Rademaker had unsuccessfully opposed each other and

Stewart in a bid for the RIRA Presidency in the November 1996 Island-wide election.

The group’s announcement reads, in part, “In a bold move a small group of dedicated Roosevelt Islanders... decided that enough is enough.”

The RICA announcement continues, “The continuing actions of RIRA and the elite so called community leaders have reached the point that

See RICA, page 7

Tram Tokens Are History

Check your pockets. You may have a piece of history there. Tram tokens are no longer for sale.

“The agency can no longer account for all the tokens minted by previous administrations,” according to RIOC Communications Director Michael Greason, “meaning that parties may have improper access to tram tokens. RIOC has received over a thousand tokens from out-of-state agencies, and it is clear that they are being used on a regular basis elsewhere in the country. It is unlikely that someone would purchase a tram token for \$1.50 and then use it on

the Garden State Parkway in lieu of 25 cents! In addition, token vending machines and turnstiles are frequently given to RIOC at little or no cost by the MTA.

The system of using tram tokens does not meet with the scrutiny applied to it by financial auditors and the State Comptroller, and this RIOC administration, in an effort to strengthen the weak internal controls it inherited, has increased the usage of MTA tokens while we take a closer look at this situation and the controls governing the tram tokens. MTA tokens are also more practical since they can be used elsewhere in the City.”



Just One Week From Snowmen to Swings



And from sledding to sunbathing. All in a week’s weather for Roosevelt Island. Winter lasted one day, and didn’t come until the second full day of Spring, Sunday, March 21. By last weekend, picnickers and sunbathers were out in force in near-record temperatures, catching the rays at Octagon Park.

Here We Are Again... That Going-Your-Way Gang From the MTA*... On the bad side... On the good side...



We realize our public address system is either so loud you can't understand it...

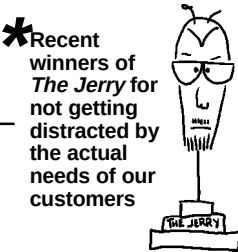
Or so weak you can't hear it...

And that when it *is* working, we don't make timely announcements about service disruptions... *but...*

We're doing continuous air quality monitoring to make sure none of our asbestos or fumes get into station air...

And rest assured, if they *do*...

We'll make an announcement!



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Pages of Opinion

Happy Holidays

Let me begin by wishing everyone who celebrates them the very best of holidays. May you and yours enjoy the day and every day.

Who Says What?

In what they termed a “bold move” in their flyer, “a small group of dedicated Roosevelt Islanders” has united to expose the Roosevelt Island Residents Association as a “private club,” and, they claim, its elections have “always been false.”

What the flyer neglects to tell those who read it is that a majority of those listed have campaigned actively and have been elected to RIRA’s Common Council over the years. So much for their new Roosevelt Island Community Association.

Blot on The Blotter

In this issue, The WIRE prints The Blotter exactly as received from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). Previously, the incident reports were released from the Public Safety Department after being reviewed by Director Peter Norwood or Deputy Director James Frye. At that point, The WIRE would attempt to write narratives of the incidents for our readers because of the daily time pressures on the PSD officers.

Good Work, Ceci

There is a proud Mom strolling Main Street these days and telling everyone about her daughter, Cecilia. Mom is Eugenie Martin and she is rightfully sharing news about “Ceci,” who currently is a senior at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

A campus newspaper featured a photo of the attractive Ethnic Studies major at work on a mural with kids from the county Juvenile Assessment Center. Ceci and two other students created the project that focused on the realities of the criminal life.

The Martin family came to the Island in 1978 and “Genie” long has been giving Ceci a role model to emulate when one is talking about taking on civic duties.



Duty Bound

It looks to me as if an attempt was made to remove the gull droppings on the pier commented on in this space last issue and for that thanks are due. Unfortunately, it also appears that some of the older dooty is going to need more work unless it is intended to become a permanent memorial to seagulls that pass.

Honorable E. Virgil Conway, Chair
MTA New York City Transit
347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017
Re: Transportation services on Roosevelt Island during tunnel repairs.
Dear Mr. Conway:
I am writing to you on behalf of my constituents on Roosevelt Island who are experiencing great difficulties as a result of the MTA’s work on the tracks in the 63rd Street tunnel. While I understand the need for these repairs, this project, barely one month old, has been troublesome from its outset for Island residents in a number of ways.

First, the S shuttle currently scheduled to run in place of the B and Q train service every twenty minutes for the duration of the repair project has been unreliable, with riders reporting several lengthy service disruptions during which they were forced to wait on station platforms without being informed of the reasons for or the expected duration of the delays.

Second, shuttle riders, reportedly, have had to deal with various health threats, including foul air from improper ventilation, smoke from track fires and possible exposure to asbestos and carbon monoxide.

Third, riders continue to complain of frequent escalator and elevator breakdowns (a common source of complaints in the past). As you can appreciate, these outages are particularly inconvenient and disconcerting for the many senior and disabled residents who rely on this service.

I strongly urge that, during the remaining track and signal repairs, the MTA monitor this project more closely to insure that riders are properly notified about service disruptions, station equipment is properly serviced and maintained, and repair work is carried out in ways that fully protect the health and safety of passengers and your work crews.

There are two other actions that would greatly improve conditions for TA customers on Roosevelt Island. First would be the introduction of free walking transfers between the 57th Street/7th Avenue station and both the Columbus Circle and 57th Street/8th Avenue stations. While the MTA has been forthcoming in accommodating customers by providing free walking transfers between the 63rd Street/Lexington Avenue station and the 59th Street/Lexington Avenue station, a number of Island residents have expressed the need to extend the option to the West Side subway lines as well.

In addition, while residents of the Island also travel to and from Manhattan via the Roosevelt Island Tram, they are still not able to take advantage of the convenience and savings of MetroCard on this service. It is my understanding that negotiations on extending the MetroCard to the Tram are ongoing between your agency and Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). Would you please inform me of the status of those negotiations and give me your best estimate of what it will cost both the MTA and RIOC to implement this measure. With the problems associated with the work on the tracks, it is even more important that MetroCard availability on the Tram be implemented as soon as possible.

I look forward to your response regarding these matters.

Alexander B. Grannis
Member of Assembly

Letters

To the Editor:
Monday’s five-hour shutdown of the Tramway without any provision for bus service to and from Manhattan is yet another example of solely political cost-cutting against the best interests of the Roosevelt Island community.

RIOC received thousands of dollars for the use of the Tram and other Island areas. Given the many inadequacies of the subway, RIOC could easily have provided its own bus service and won the plaudits of the community.

Al Weinstein
[**Editor’s note:** Weinstein provided the following letter to Dr. Jerome Blue, President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), indicating that he was unable to secure a timely meeting with RIOC officials when, at 4:10 p.m., he was informed they were “having lunch.”]
Dear Dr. Blue:

Yesterday, Wednesday, March 25th, I left a message for Mr. Greason suggesting that he be kind enough to phone me as I had a few special thoughts to convey to him.

Since I have not heard from him as of now, Thursday, March 26th, 3:30 p.m., I am taking the liberty of writing to you directly. It is my intention to go to your office at this time to see if it is possible for you or Mr. Greason to meet with me briefly since it is an urgent matter.

We have taken note of the announcement that the Tram will be shut down on Monday, 30th March, from 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. We are astonished that no suitable alternative bus transportation, to and from Manhattan, is being provided. The subway is not acceptable for a variety of good reasons. We are under the impression that some special buses would be provided, as was the case numerous times in past years.

The shutdown will prove difficult for the disabled, some special handicapped residents, the Seniors, many students arriving in mid-afternoon from school, and particularly those whose parents do not want them to use the subway, as well as the community at large, and others. This shutdown is for a profitable venture.

Five hours is a long period of time and suitable transportation is always a vital necessity. We are therefore making a firm request that alternative bus transportation,

Letters continue on page 7

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to officials, and will consider publication *Name Withheld* basis, but the writer's name, address, and telephone number must be provided. **Preferred methods of submission:** IBM-compatible 3.5-inch floppy disk (any wordprocessing software) left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*; by ASCII text email (72260.20@compuserve.com); or typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to (212) 755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. **All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.**



Saturday, April 4, 1998

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Fax **755-2540**

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Jim Bowser - Editor
Dick Lutz - Managing Editor
Copy Editor - Sharon Bermon
Advertising Manager - Ellen Levy
Circulation Manager - George Rubin
Circulation Manager - Sherie Helstien
Founding Publisher - Jack Resnick

Sophia Adams, Amy Ambrosino, Russell Aragon, David Bauer, Judy Berdy, Audrey Berman, Kitty Berman, Maurice Bleifeld, Nancy Cruickshank, Pearl Cooper, Morris Diamond, Arlise Ellis, Riquelmia Espanol, Enrique Fernandez, Claire Friedland, Elba Gomez, Ben Haberman, Teresa Hasing, Janet Jamell, Peter Kaplan, Matthew Katz, Nina Lublin, Joan Matula, Clarissa McClary, Chris Mendis, Myrna Mendis, Kathie Niederhoff, Julia Palermo, Jeff Palmer, Joan Raimone, Frances Salten, Ron Schuppert, Bernie Schwartz, Raye Schwartz, George Spelvin, Pearl Thomas, Kay Thompson, Maggie Warner

I have asked *The WIRE* to re-publish a column I wrote a year ago, in February, 1997. It is reprinted in its entirety at the end of this column. Over the last year, RIRA has embraced and fought for a number of issues, and perhaps it is as well that I summarize them here.

First and foremost, RIRA seeks the reinstatement of American democracy for the residents of Roosevelt Island, which each of us was forced to surrender unknowingly when moving here. The State of New York simply does not have the right to withhold democracy from us. The loss of representative government in our local community, the stripping from us of any voice in our own local affairs is a grievance that we are bound to pursue until the State concedes its error, and redresses this unconstitutional and illegal situation by restructure.

Until that has been done, and at least an equal number of Roosevelt Island residents as non-residents are given seats on the RIOC Board of Directors, we have demanded of RIOC that they formally acknowledge RIRA and its Common Council as the only duly-elected representatives of the residents, and, as such, the formal voice of the residents in matters touching upon their welfare, as each of the prior administrations of RIOC has done before them.

Past that, this administration of RIRA has taken specific stands against RIOC on the following issues: maintaining the current full service of the Tram with no reduction of service; the reinstatement of Tram passes to schoolchildren; the seeking of a more vigilant patrol by the Public Safety officers, both inside and outside our buildings to better guarantee the safety of the residents, most particularly the elderly and the handicapped; the reversal of massively increased fees for playing fields and the Sportspark pool; immediate inclusion of the Tram in the Metrocard system (Roosevelt Island is the last remaining two-fare zone in the City of New York); the reinstatement of the Tramway Console Operators as a prudent safety measure; a guarantee of safe air for subway passengers during its reconstruction; a demand that Southtown be constrained within its original definition in the Master Plan, and that its construction be kept to the most minimal disruption of the community; a demand that the State comply with its legal obligation in maintaining a sound infrastructure of the Island; an attempt to retain Southpoint as a memorial park for F.D.R.; the prevention of the loss of the Good Shepherd Chapel as a place of worship and as a community center, and the prevention of its designation as normal “commercial space;” the reinstatement of the long-standing provision of alternative transportation during any period the Tram is down; attempts to prevent the misappropriation of Public Purpose Funds; and an endless stream of attempts to enforce RIOC’s compliance with their own legal obligations to supply the residents with information to which they have a defined legal right.



Patrick Stewart

Each of these stands against RIOC has been taken reactively. That is, none of these issues has arisen except that in each case RIOC has made a proactive move that RIRA has attempted to stop. In the sixteen months that I have been President, the sole instances of RIRA’s initiating any issues have been the recommendation to RIOC of the award of Public Purpose funds for the Library, the Counseling in Schools program for PS/IS 217, and the Boy Scouts’ van.

I absolutely believe that it is a disgrace that so much hard and largely thankless work has been necessary to balk the attempts of a State agency that is defined as a public benefit corporation from implementing the long list above. Were it not for the sincere dedication to the community welfare that has been volunteered by the Common Council, the Task Force, and a few other hardy and selfless souls, no doubt each of RIOC’s attempts would have been successful.

Think what might have been accomplished if RIOC had not made it necessary to spend all of our time resisting their assaults.

No matter how rigorously I examine this outline of the past sixteen months, I can find not the slightest taint of anything that could be called “racist” by any stretch of a sane imagination. I, for one, intend from this point on to ignore any further accusations that are solely supported by the distortions and outright lies of the group who continues to propagate them.

I cannot defend against something that simply is not there. And so, in reprinting what were my first words on this subject, I make them my last.

The specter of racism has been on my mind a great deal lately.

Over the past weeks I’ve heard the charge of “racism” put forth into Island affairs where it simply has no place. Don’t misunderstand me. I personally believe that the healing of the very real racism that exists throughout our culture is the single most important issue facing our country today. A long time ago my family and I made a commitment to do whatever we could to fight it wherever we find it.

Racism is too important to be used as a diversion in struggles where it is truly not an issue. The very word engenders such passion on both sides that we are instantly diverted from whatever point we were discussing, no matter how crucial the original point is to our joint welfare.

What color do you have to be to want peace and safety for your children?

What color do you have to be to demand that their schools provide an adequate education? What color do you have to be to deserve a government that holds itself responsible to its citizens? What color do you have to be to get angry if the benefits of your citizenship are taken away from you, or if the services your tax dollars are intended for are withheld? What color do you have to be to miss old-fashioned common courtesy, to be exasperated if you’ve just missed the minibus, or to be outraged if a local price is twice what it is in Manhattan? What color do you have to be to long for greater community within your own community? How old do you have to be? How well educated? Male or female?

As my good friend, and fellow Common Council member, Al Weinstein, said at our last R.I.R.A. meeting, more than ever on Roosevelt Island we need a sense of unity, a sense of common purpose. Unity concerning the issues affecting our Island is our only hope. Every loss we suffer, we all suffer.

Every hurt we sustain hurts us all. Divided, we will surely fail.

*RIRA
President’s
Column*

Who Can Eat? Conversation Abounds

by Elizabeth Unruh
(with eating assistance provided by Dorothy Bowser)

Living on Roosevelt Island requires both an appreciation of diversity and a spirit of adventure. Therefore, the recent notice in *The Wire* announcing an upcoming outing of the newly-formed Dining Out group to a Greek restaurant in Queens, piqued our curiosity. We were inquisitive about who those diners were, and why they were inviting others to join them. However, it took some courage to place a call inviting ourselves to break bread with a group of strangers in a restaurant that wasn’t listed in any of our “foodie” bibles. But being typical devil-may-care Roosevelt Islanders, we swallowed our fear and made the call to Harry Small, the Dining Out coordinator.

Last Friday we joined seven other Roosevelt Islanders at Tavern On The Park, a Greek restaurant in nearby Astoria. We went along with the group, working from the assumption that food would be the central focus. It didn’t take long to realize that eating was secondary to the development of good will and good conversation. We inquired about how the group got started and Harry explained that the project was in response to an assignment in a course he was enrolled in. He was expected to design an experience that would eventually contribute something to the community. He envisions the Dining Out group as one that will eventually move in the direction of community service. For example, it might offer seniors who ordinarily would not have an opportunity for off-Roosevelt Island dining the companionship and conversation provided by such a group.

To date, Harry has led three restaurant outings and is looking forward to the next dining out experience scheduled for Friday, April 24, 1998 at 7:00 p.m. The group will be traveling to Green Field, a Brazilian Churrascaria on Northern Boulevard in Corona, Queens. Diners will share in a fixed price buffet (\$17.95) of assorted barbecued and roasted meats.

Car service to and from the restaurant will be available at a cost of approximately \$5.00. For additional information about an opportunity to join with “friends” in an enjoyable adventure, call Harry Small at **583-0064**. Buen Gusto!

Padraig Czajkowski

Padraig Czajkowski, a four-year Island resident, died March 21. Of Irish nationality, he was born in England in 1940 of an Irish mother and Polish father. He was educated in Ampleforth College, York, and at the Universite de Paris.

From 1966 to 1979, he taught English at the International School of Geneva and at the University of Geneva, and was an instructor in French at Lincoln University, Oxford, Pennsylvania for two years. In 1981-87, he worked as an editor in Geneva for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He then served as a consultant on humanitarian assistance assignments in Europe, Africa and Central America, including an emergency program to track migration trends in Romania, and preparation of a report examining social policy toward children following collapse of state socialism.

He settled on Roosevelt Island with his wife and youngest daughter in 1994. He was diagnosed with a brain tumor two years later, which was the cause of death.

Survivors include: Elvira Perez-Czajkowski, his wife, who continues in residence at 40 River Road with his youngest daughter, Veronica, 6. He is also survived by a son, Peadar, 28, and a daughter, Clair, 22, both living in Switzerland; and by a daughter, Penelope, 12, in Paris. His mother, Ellen, 90, survives him and lives in London.

A memorial service will be held at St. Paul’s Church, Brooklyn, on Saturday, April 25th, at 10 a.m. Additional information: Debra Orenstein at **308-2464**.



COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland • 317-8523

Tonight, Sat., Apr. 4, 7:00 p.m., **Main Street Theatre** goes Western with *The Mostly Monty*, line dancing, vittles, and live country music. \$20/person. **371-4449**.

Sun., Apr. 5, 10:00 a.m., **Roosevelt Island Art Association** regular meeting, 12th floor, 546 Main Street. Live model sessions. **421-5939**.

Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m., **Strollercize** meets at the playground behind Blackwell House. In the event of rain, meeting place is at the front of 531 Main Street. For further information, **308-4584**.

Wed., Apr. 8, 8:00 p.m., meeting of the **Common Council** of the **Roosevelt Island Residents Association**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Members of the community are invited to address the Council; no advance registration required.

Thur., Apr. 9, 10:00 a.m., **RIOC Board Meeting**. Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Individuals wishing to address the Board must register in advance at 832-4540.

Fri.-Sat., Apr. 17-18, next scheduled issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Apr. 10; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Apr. 13. **Future issues** May 1, 15, 29, and thereafter generally every two weeks until summer. **Unscheduled extra** editions may be published as news and advertising support warrant; advertisers who would like to be included in one or more **extra** editions, without warning, are invited to call **826-9055** to make their interest known.

Phone/fax for news, (212) **826-9055/755-2540**; phone/fax for advertising inquiries, (212) **751-8214/755-2540**; phone & fax for events, **317-8523**.
Sat., Apr. 18, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., **Flea Market** at Motorgate, co-sponsored by Roosevelt Island Disabled Association and Roosevelt Island Senior Association. Information, **223-0879**.
Sat., Apr. 18, 1:00 p.m., annual **Little League Parade**, Main Street.

At the Senior Center

Every week:

Stay Well (Exercise), Mondays 10-11 a.m., Wednesdays 9:30-10 a.m.
English as a Second Language (ESL), Beginner, Mondays 11-12.
ESL, Intermediate, Mondays 12-1.
Bingo, Tuesdays 1:30 p.m.
English Classes, Mon. 12-1 p.m., Wed. 9:30-10 a.m., Fri, 10-11 a.m.
Arts & Crafts, Mon. 12:45-2:30 p.m.
Movie, Thursdays 12:30 p.m.

Scheduled activities & events:

Tuesdays, 10-12 a.m. & 1-3 p.m., **Tax help**.
Tue., Apr. 14, 8:00 p.m., **General Meeting**
Wed., Apr. 15, **RISA Atlantic City trip**
Thur., Apr. 16, 1:00 p.m., **Volunteer/Birthday Party**
Fri., Apr. 3 & 17, 12:30 p.m., **Oldies But Goodies Movie**
Sat., Apr. 18, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., **Flea Market** at Motorgate

RIOC Blotter

Beginning with this issue, the Public Safety Blotter is no longer supplied directly to *The WIRE* by the Public Safety Department. Instead, it is now issued by RIOC. Narratives are printed here as *received* from RIOC; there has been no opportunity to review the incident reports or overall statistics first-hand.

3/15, **Larceny**, 510 Main St. On 3/15 @ 9:30 PM, delivery person placed food delivery on floor, when unknown perp. picked up bag and ran. Victim stated he chased perp., who kicked him and fled scene.

3/16, **Crim. Mis.**, 575 Main St., A Housing Mgmt. Employee discovered that some unk. person(s) had scratched swastikas on the elevators. Members of NYPD 114 Pct. investigated the incident attempted to retrieve fingerprints and notified the Bias Unit.

3/21, **Assault**, 580 Main St. Floyd Smith, 18, 4 River Rd., was arrested by PSD for assaulting a former resident of R.I. Victim complained of pain in her upper chest, left & right side of face, back of neck & a headache. Victim was taken to Western Queens Comm. Hospital by FDNY/EMS.

3/22, **Dog bite**, 536 Main St. (Courtyard) A large dog on a leash, being walked by a youth, attacked a little boy, who was playing on a sled and bit him several times. It appeared that the youth lost control of the Rottwaller, which bit the victim on both arms and right knee. A witness reported that after biting the youth, the dog dragged him several feet. The victim was transported to the hospital by FDNY/EMS and Housing Mgmt. was notified.

3/24, **Assault**, 510 Main St. A PSD officer was struck in the face while intervening in a dispute between a resident of 510 Main St. and the perp., who is a non-resident. The perp. fled the scene and was arrested by other PSD members several hours later. The injured officer was transported to Elmhurst Hospital by FDNY/EMS, treated and released. This incident is the subject of a continuing investigation.

Fax or phone event information to **317-8523**. Please provide a phone number for follow-up. There is no charge for listing Island events here.

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Passover Easter



SPECIALS

WINES

Kendall Jackson Chardonnay	\$9.99
Corbett Canyon White Zinfandel	3 for \$9.99
Santa Margherita Pinot Grigio	\$14.99

SPIRITS

Dewar's Scotch 1.75 Lit.	\$30.99
Smirnoff Vodka 1.75 Lit.	\$17.49
Bacardi Rum 1.75 Lit.	\$18.99 2/\$35
Absolut Vodka 750 ml.	\$13.99

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sports
bar**

*will be celebrating their
first year anniversary party
saturday april 11*

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LOTS OF FUN

513 main street

This Easter,
let your kids discover
something more meaningful
than painted eggs.

*(((Pic
here)))*

After they've found the eggs,
let your kids discover the true miracle of Easter.
Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Church of the Good
Shepherd
Schedule of Easter Services

- **Friday, April 10**
Good Friday Service 8:00 p.m. in the Main Chapel
The Call from the Cross
Music from our Choir
- **Easter Sunday, April 12**
6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service, Meditation Steps
8:45 a.m. Sunday School.
Celebrating the Living Christ
Main Chapel 9:50 a.m. Vicar's Prayers
Preparation for Worship
Main Chapel - 10:00 a.m. Easter Worship

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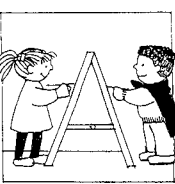
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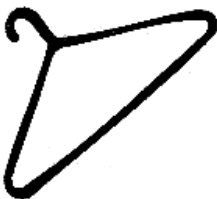
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Islander’s Play in Florida

Review by Maurice Bleifeld
Boca Raton, Florida: When my wife, Belle, and I learned that fellow Islander, Milton Marcus, had written a new play, “The Gardens of Frau Hess,” that was opening at the Caldwell Theatre in nearby Boca Raton, we decided we had to see it. When we arrived there, we located Marcus in the crowded lobby. He instantly recognized our friendly faces from back home, and told us how gratified he was with the favorable reviews and the abundant attendance. In fact, he mentioned, this particular Saturday matinee was being added to the regular performance schedule to accommodate the demand for tickets, since matinees are normally held only on Wednesdays and Sundays.

The theater itself was indeed filled to capacity when we took our seats. We just about had time to study the stage set depicting the luxurious living room of Frau Hess, when the strains of Wagnerian music arose, signaling the beginning of the play.

Frau Hess, vividly portrayed by the experienced actress Patricia Hodges, is seated at the grand piano, dreamily waving her arms in time with the swelling music. Her reverie is abruptly interrupted by the entrance of the smelly figure of a ragged concentration camp inmate named Isaac Baum (Ken Kliban). He has been unceremoniously plucked from “the barracks” as he calls the camp, to fulfill her request for a gardener to care for her prized gardens. His background as a university professor of botany had made him one of six unknowing candidates for the position.

This introductory encounter between the unfeeling, haughty wife of Rudolph Hess, Hitler’s second-in-command, and the half-starved, defensive Jewish inmate leads to a “danse macabre,” as Marcus calls it in his explanatory statement in the Playbill. The one-sided relationship between the two unveils elements of mutual rejection, emotional bonding, unthinking mental cruelty and interdependence.

This adds up to strong stuff. Marcus has created a vehicle for focusing on the human relationship between the worlds of the powerful and the helpless, between human weakness and human strength, and between blinding racism and intellectual rebuttal.

We are looking forward to seeing the play again when it reaches Broadway, so we can savor its deeper meanings. Marcus, however, modestly admits that “there are dozens of plays waiting to be produced there, so I’ll have to take my chances.”



Jim Reams

Patricia Hodges and Ken Kliban as Ilse Hess and Isaac Baum in Milt Marcus’s *The Gardens of Frau Hess*.

Pinch from page 1

of the smaller merchant’s line of goods. Residents’ thousands of small buying decisions – picking up a greeting card or bouquet while on a grocery-buying trip, for example – directly diminish the take for smaller Island businesses. Each small decision represents an insignificant bump in Gristede’s numbers, and each may be an insignificant dent for the competing merchant. But when considered cumulatively, though the purchases may amount to a small fraction of the supermarket’s overall business, they can cut a significant chunk out of the profit margin for a mom-and-pop-size store.

Bigelow Pharmacy
The “mom and pop” description doesn’t necessarily apply to the drug store, but pharmacist-proprietor John Guerra is definitely feel-

ing the pinch. Business is down, and he has cut store hours, decreased his own salary while increasing his own hours, and has laid off the equivalent of four employees. He’s in a sweat about the future.

“How could you allow this to happen?” he asks, speaking of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. “Why should it happen when Roosevelt Island is predicated on being a community with small businesses. To put in this kind of megastore is against what this community is about. Twenty-one years ago they could have put in a megastore and you wouldn’t have needed the small commercial space.”

Guerra doesn’t want to talk about how his numbers have dropped, but he is hurting, and he is incensed. He recognizes that he has long had to compete with the many casual purchases made at Manhattan drug stores or on shopping expeditions to Queens. But if he has to close the doors at Bigelow Chemists, the coup de

String Group Plays Haydn Friday

River Music and the Parish of St. Francis Cabrini will present a performance of Franz Joseph Haydn’s *Seven Last Words of Christ* at noon on Good Friday (April 10), performed by the Bordeaux String Quartet. The group includes Rebekah Johnson and Mia Wu, violins; Lisa Hefter, viola; and Scott

Ballentine, cello. The quartet was founded in 1982. All its members have advanced degrees from Juilliard. The music was first performed in 1787. The performance will be given in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Admission is free.

RICA from page 1

the only way to reform and correct the current situation is to form a new organization dedicated to one person one vote and equality for all – the young, the old, the disabled, the African-American, the Latino, the African, the Pacific Islanders, the Asian, the citizens, non-citizens the White, All joined together to bring true democracy on Roosevelt Island.” That portion of the announcement concludes, “Not just what the few elite want but what we all need and want.”

Linda Warren is listed as President of RICA. The flyer includes no information on how she was elected, or if elections are

planned. Others listed as founders include Velez and Rademaker, Dorothy Donald, Gwen Riles, Nagash, Patrick Uzoefune, and Lisa Knox.

Some members of the group are known to be planning a bid, through Rademaker’s Young Adult League (YAL), for a contract under the Beacon School grant recently announced for the Island, presumably in competition with the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, which is administered by Charlie de Fino.

The group lists Warren’s phone number for further information: **752-1388**.

grace will have been the supermarket expansion. “It’s not over,” he says. “There’s a gradual flow of business in that direction, and Gristede’s is just getting started.

“The merchants were lied to,” Guerra says. “We were told that this renovation was going to be so that the store would have a larger selection of food items under their own labels, that they could sell larger quantities of paper towels – that sort of thing – and draw customers away from Pathmark.

“But in the result, we have a store that is big enough to crush five or six merchants on Roosevelt Island.”

At stake for Island residents is the pharmacy. The prescription drug business, once a significant profit center for a small-town druggist, has been squeezed by managed care and controlled prices for medicine sold to Social Security recipients. It’s a high-cost trade, involving expensive stocks of costly pharmaceuticals, and high-priced professionals to dispense them. More than ever, the overall mix of sales is important to viability, and that means the “HBA” business – health and beauty aids – is crucial.

“But he’s got 2,000 square feet of my stuff down there,” Guerra says, still speaking of Gristede’s. “His HBA section is strictly on the winning line: Stocked on a replacement basis, and managed by five-dollar-an-hour help. He’s cut the cash flow of my business, and that’s why I’m in trouble.”

Guerra’s lawyer is negotiating with RIOC now, looking for some way to improve the situation for Bigelow Pharmacy. His difficulties are particular to his store, but general to many of the small merchants on the Island. He feels a 20-year investment, waiting for Roosevelt

Island to grow, slipping away, and he feels frustrated by having no way to deal directly with the problem.

What’s the answer? “The answer is that the supermarket should be a supermarket, not a card store, not a health and beauty aids store, not a flower shop, not a deli, not a restaurant, not a bakery. He should be a traditional supermarket. If he could make it as a traditional supermarket, he wouldn’t have to be a megastore.”

Uncertain Future
How it will play out – and whether it will play out as Guerra would wish – is probably a matter largely in the hands of RIOC. Bigelow and other stores are holding on for the moment, but some worry that the long wait for a Southtown payoff may prove fruitless if commercial space in that development adds more competition so close to the Island’s transportation terminals. As Guerra puts it, “It’s a delicate balance.”

Letters from page 3

to and from Manhattan, be provided. We suggest that the overall needs of the Roosevelt Island community are paramount. This is a formal request by the undersigned.

**Al Weinstein, Chair,
RIRA Tram Committee
and, by request,
RIDA, the Disabled Association
RISA, the Seniors Association
Officers of RIRA, the Residents
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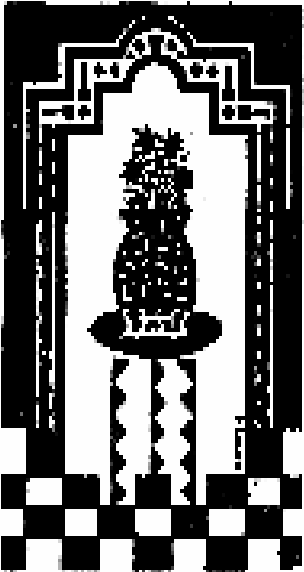
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