

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

Norwood Leaving Public Safety Post

Peter Norwood is leaving. After four years as chief of Public Safety, Norwood has accepted a post as Director of Norfolk's Bureau of Emergency Services. He'll manage the 911 system and prepare for man-made and natural emergencies – flood, aircraft crashes, hurricanes, and the unexpected. He won the job over some 60 other candidates.

Norwood had run the Mayor's emergency unit under Ed Koch.

"I love this place," Norwood said on Tuesday, speaking of Roosevelt Island. "I wouldn't hesitate to live here. I hate to see some of the ugly things that happen, but this is a great place."

He continued, "I'm too old to cry, but I was taking the plaques off my office wall the other day, and that was like the tolling of the final bell."

Norwood will be saluted at a farewell party Thursday (July 30), 6:30-10:00 p.m., at the Manhattan Park Theater. The event is sponsored by the 114th Precinct and the Roosevelt Island Community Precinct.

The resignation was announced July 9 at the Board meeting of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). At the meeting, Ron Vass, RIOC Board member and chair of its public safety committee, paid tribute to Norwood and suggested that his second-in-command, Jim Fry, be considered for the vacant position.

Norwood told *The WIRE* that he feels some significant changes have been made in his four years here. He recalled that when he started in 1994, there were frequent incidents in which some Public Safety officer and some Island youth would end up in a hospital emergency room. "That's changed," he said. "It's a matter of training. Things could get even better as time goes on."

Norwood said he's pleased with levels of liaison with the New York

Police Department. He noted that few residents attend Precinct-Community meetings held every two months, saying, "They're sending a message that everything is fine." He noted that recently, in a co-operative program with Public Safety, some 20 NYPD officers went through Eastwood floor by floor, making their presence known and getting acquainted with the building.

Public Safety is responsible for "vertical patrols" in all Island buildings except Manhattan Park, and half the cost of the unit is paid by residents through rents and cooperative maintenance charges.



The Tramway is down for maintenance...

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Subway Shuttle Schedule
See page 7

Grannis Bill Aims At Home Rule for Island

Home rule for Roosevelt Island.

That's the promise of legislation introduced in the State Assembly by Pete Grannis, who represents the Island.

The bill provides for an elected community body – like the RIRA Common Council – to hold power and hire professional management. If it becomes law, it will end control over community affairs by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). RIOC's assets and many of its employees would shift to a new unit of government called the Roosevelt Island Community, which would operate the Island and manage planning and development.



"The most compelling argument for this bill," Grannis said Wednesday, "is the complete withdrawal of any State support for the Island. If the State's not supporting the Island, then the State should let the Island govern itself."

The bill, numbered 11422, could provide a rallying point for Island residents weary of RIOC President Jerome Blue's unwillingness to work with the elected Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA). But with the current legislative session over, the bill will have to be reintroduced in January and be assigned a new number.

The bill is closely parallel to draft legislation developed last year by the Maple Tree Group (MTG), resident volunteers who met for six months to consider the Island's services and discuss alternatives to the present management structure. MTG was formed by Rivercross resident David Bauer, a retired City Manager and consultant to local governments.

The bill provides for a Board of Directors made up of Island residents elected by Island voters. It calls for a public process in setting Island policy, with a professional administration responsible to Island residents.

(While part of New York City, Roosevelt Island is leased from the City by the State, which administers its affairs through a RIOC President, appointed by the Governor, who reports to a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor.)

Prospects for the legislation, introduced June 19 and referred to the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions, are uncertain. After a committee review, possible revisions, and presuming a favorable report, the bill would have to be passed by both the Assembly and Senate, then signed by Governor George Pataki. Its chances are considered better in the Democrat-controlled Assembly than in the Senate or the Governor's office. According to Bauer, even the most optimistic estimate of when a transition to home rule could occur would put it late in 1999.

"I always feel good about the prospects when we're doing the right thing," Grannis told *The WIRE*, "but we'll have to do a lot of education, because Roosevelt Island is a unique place, and a unique arrangement in terms of governance." No sponsor for the Grannis bill has been designated in the State Senate.

The findings of the Maple Tree Group took into account the Island's changed financial situation, brought about by the Governor's failure to include funding for the Island in the State budget. Original plans for the Island called for it to be fiscally self-sufficient at a population level of 20,000, rather than the present level of just over 8,000. The current administrator, RIOC President Jerome Blue, has refused to seek State funds for Island services or development, even when made available by Grannis.

"Since the State was sidestepping its commitments," Bauer said, "it only made sense to seek home rule so that Island residents could make the hard choices necessary." Such choices presumably would include a streamlining of Island management, currently staffed at about \$4 million, and closer liaison with the community on development.

In recent months, members of the RIRA Common Council have objected strongly to proposals to convert parks into commercial developments. These have included a Marriott Hotel, consisting of two 27-story towers at Southpoint, and an up-scale Eldercare facility sited on Octagon Park. RIRA has also objected to RIOC's unwillingness to allow meaningful resident involvement in planning for Southtown, and to attempts to cut back Tramway service.

The full-length Grannis bill, available for downloading and viewing on Website NYC10044 (www.nyc10044.com), is also available to Island residents on paper, upon request to *The WIRE*, by leaving a message giving your name and address at (212) 826-9056 (single copies only).



David Bauer, facilitator of the Maple Tree Group, as he briefed members of the RIRA Common Council on the group's proposed legislation last Fall.

Matterson Heads Seniors

by Sharon Berman

Charles Matterson, recently retired from a 20-year career at AT&T, is the new President of the Roosevelt Island Senior Association (RISA).

An Island House resident since 1976, Matterson has a long history with Island organizations. He was active in Little League for many years as a coach, manager and player-agent, and has been an active member of the Island House Task Force as a Floor Manager and leader in the 1991-92 Rent Strike. He currently represents Island House on the Common Council of the Residents Association.

Matterson says he has three major goals for RISA – to increase membership, to encourage current members to become more involved, and to expand activities available to members. RISA officers and Board members, currently planning activities for fall, are especially interested in increasing the number of off-Island trips.

Cool for Seniors

During this period of record heat, the air-conditioned lunchroom in the Senior Center, 546 Main Street, is open 9-4 daily for all senior and disabled residents.

Matterson would like to see more seniors take advantage of RISA programs. "The lunch program is a bargain at 75 cents, as well as a wonderful opportunity to socialize, but it's only one of our activities. Interested seniors should drop by the Center and find out about all our events and programs."



FDR Day Slated For September 12

FDR Day – a day of sports for the disabled – returns to Roosevelt Island September 12. The event, sponsored by Housing Management, Coler/Goldwater Hospital and the Coler and Goldwater Auxiliaries, will run 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Capobianco Park.

The day will feature an exhibition basketball game, an arts and crafts exhibition, a mini flea market, clowns, face-painting, and free rides for kids. An adults-only disco dance will cap the day 4:00-7:00 p.m. at Manhattan Park Theatre Club.

The event is coordinated by Marilyn Engstler, Housing's Director of Community Relations; Eastwood resident Fay Vass, and Linda Dianto, Director of Recreational Therapy at Coler/Goldwater. Volunteers are needed. Call 838-4747 or 755-4089.



Caught in the drizzle, this couple made good use of the July 4 *WIRE* at the Southpoint fireworks show.

Be a *WIRE* Volunteer. Details on Page 2.

Home Rule

At last.
At last, a clear route to elected self-government for Roosevelt Island, refined to concept by David Bauer and the Maple Tree Group, tuned up a bit by Assemblymember Pete Grannis, and put before the State Assembly.

At last.
On first examination, separating Roosevelt Island government from its State roots seems nearly impossible. So inextricably entwined is the day-to-day management of our infrastructure with the long-range need to develop the Island, and with the laws that create affordable housing, that we falter in attempting to parse the parts.
But the evidence tells us it must be done:

- The Island no longer receives State funds.
- The Governor has sent us a political hack who constantly scores zero on every meaningful measure of competence.
- The vision for this Island, still held lovingly in the hearts and minds of residents, is in danger of being lost. It no longer

exists, even vaguely, in any official institutional memory at the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.
The vision is too good to allow Jerry Blue and George Pataki, with the sneering endorsement of Al D’Amato, to poison it and auction off its parts.
But to save the vision, great works must be accomplished.

Passage of the Grannis bill, which will be reintroduced next legislative session, is very far from assured.

Imagine any small town of 8,000 in New York State trying to get government’s attention. It is not an easy matter. And to command the attention and consideration necessary for something as complex as changing our governance... now *that’s* a challenge.

Of course, no other community faces this problem, because Roosevelt Island is the last place in the United States where residents have no voice in local government, and no redress against the random acts of an incompetent and reckless feudal baron.
This challenge, if it is to be met, will take every effort this Island’s resident leaders can muster, and outside help, as well. The Grannis bill is the call to arms.

-DL



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Photos: If you photograph a community event and would like to make your work available to *The WIRE* for possible publication, please leave prints (retain your negatives) addressed to *The WIRE* at the lobby desk at Rivercross, 531 Main Street. Prints (color or b/w) or TIF scans to 3.5-inch disk preferred. Slides acceptable with adequate lead time to have prints made. Please provide identification, information for a credit line, and a phone number, along with a caption and other relevant information. Materials will be returned if return information is provided. Questions? Call (212) 826-9055.

Letters

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to officials, and will consider publication on a *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. We cannot take dictation of letters by telephone. **All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.**

To the MTA:
It’s nice to be able to write a letter of appreciation to the MTA these days, but that’s what this is.
The incident occurred late Saturday afternoon when I exited the shuttle from Manhattan to Roosevelt Island, and realized that I had left a bag full of groceries on the train. I notified the station supervisor, Ms. Yvette Williams, thinking that this was a lost cause. But she said she’d try, and within 20 minutes she not only confirmed by phone that the package had been turned in at 21st Street by a very kind passenger, but she also arranged to meet the conductor with the package on the next train and to hand it over to me. This all required a good bit of coordination but it all went as smoothly as if this was a very valuable piece of merchandise.
I do want to commend Ms. Williams and the other staff members who cooperated so helpfully. I only wish I knew whom to thank for turning over the bag to the conductor.

Claire Friedland

Volunteer for The WIRE

The Main Street WIRE relies on many Island volunteers to fill important jobs in the distribution process, and there’s a role for **you** if you’re willing to help. On Fridays, when *The WIRE* comes off the press, we have a stuffing crew at work from about 9:00 a.m. to about 2:45 p.m. (lunch is provided). Later on Fridays (and early Saturday), volunteers deliver the newspaper to every apartment door on the Island, as well as to merchants, the hospitals, and other locations. It’s hard work, but an important service to the community. If you’d like to join this dedicated group, please call **935-6043**, or 935-7534, or 826-9056. (Leave your number if a machine answers, and we’ll call you back.)

Just short of midnight on the Fourth of July, my date and I were involved in one of those “isolated incidents” on Main Street. It proved to me there is no end of surprises in people’s behavior.
The fireworks had been over, at that point, for nearly two hours. After a short time to freshen up from the wetness of a drizzly Southpoint experience, we set out from 531 Main Street, heading north for 40 River Road. Walking the sidewalk outside Westview, under shelter, we were passed by a group of about eight youths headed the opposite way. Though focused on our conversation, each of us nonetheless observed that there was a certain machismo about this group. In retrospect, it’s a transparent conclusion that the evening’s fireworks had provided too little stimulation, and they were out looking for additional excitement. For them, additional excitement translated as “trouble.”
Walking five abreast, they made no effort to allow us to pass. Unavoidably, one of them – who while approaching pretended not to notice us coming – engaged my shoulder with his in a somewhat aggressive claiming of right-of-way. But I am a larger, heavier person than he, and he got the worse of the encounter he seemed so much to want. Very likely, he *wanted* the worse of it so that the encounter might be construed as a provocation.
I said, “Excuse me” – neutral tone – and the two of us kept walking.
Perhaps 25 feet farther on, a bottle flew past our heads and smashed on one of those concrete posts outside PS 217. Later, we saw that it was a beer bottle, still wet with brew, suggesting there was some influence of alcohol involved. When we turned, it was clear one of them had thrown it – the whole group was waiting for reaction.
I am personally determined that Roosevelt Island shall not become yet another place where gangs of young toughs own the nighttime streets. I couldn’t help myself. With the group now perhaps 35 feet away, and in one of the more impulsive moves of a short and imprudent crimefighting career, I decided to give chase, and I did.
Flashback: Six years ago, also walking outside Westview, I encountered a young girl, perhaps 14, trying to smash a bottle on the curb. It wasn’t casual. She found it difficult, and brought it down hard, repeatedly, on the curb, until it shattered, leaving glass under the tires of the cars parked there. Incensed at such behavior on this Island I call my home, I grabbed her, told her she was under arrest, and started dragging her toward Public Safety. (This is not a course I recommend, incidentally; it amounts to kidnapping.) I shortly gave up my effort to turn her in, but I doubt she ever smashed glass on Main Street again. Now, she would be 19 or 20, and perhaps more responsible.
Flash forward, now, back to July 4, 1998: The gang dispersed on the run, except for one just a bit taller than I, who stood his ground holding up a paving stone in his

left hand, prepared to bring it down on my head. I brought my right arm up to protect my head and eyes, and later found I had a torn sleeve and swelling brush-burn where his weapon glanced off my elbow. This amounted to a second attempt at mayhem by his group – and certifiable stupidity on my part.
Nonetheless, I made a grab for him, but he slipped away and ran.
I was then beset by a shorter but huskier youth, in blue slacks and bright red shirt, who had been waiting in supportive ambush behind one of the pillars that line the Westview underpass. His contribution to the melee was a fist smashed to the side of my head, which spun me around and put me off balance just enough for him, too, to make a getaway.
And then, the most remarkable thing happened. Retreating, leaving the scene, he picked up a tiny girl child, wearing a pretty dress, who was standing, waiting, crying, against one of those concrete pillars. She was pre-school age – surely no more than three – terrified by what she had seen.
I sensed I could have pursued this individual and caught him. I’m no longer a fast runner, but I can make good speed in short bursts, and with his encumbrance he would have been easy to overtake.
But what would have happened? The child would have been at risk, and might have been injured seriously. I stopped. I let him run.
And then, I realized: Here was a young father, perhaps 17 or 19, out with his rowdy chums, completely willing to risk his own infant daughter in a street brawl started by hurling a beer bottle at a passerby.
There is simply no end to the surprises in human behavior.
Postscript: The youths were black. I am not. I mention these facts because I doubt the bottle would have been hurled at a same-race couple. Thus, with great regret, I see a racial component in this incident. This distresses me no end, but nowhere near as much as seeing that young father so casually put his child in danger.
And a second postscript: You may recall that Roosevelt Island was thick with police on July 4. Public Safety officers were joined by blue uniforms from the City force. Fortuitously, Peter Norwood, departing Chief of the Roosevelt Island force, was on hand within seconds of the last blow being struck in my incident. His presence was pure coincidence, but he took charge in a way that makes me truly sorry that Roosevelt Island is losing him. He was joined almost immediately by five other Public Safety types, but in the moments that had passed, it was clear the youths – perhaps just passing through from Queens – were surely gone and probably uncatchable. This particular “isolated incident” was over, and the participants free, unchastened, and likely to do the same thing, same time, next year.

-DL



Eight Generations Later, A Blackwell Homecoming

by David E. Blackwell

The writer is an eighth-generation descendant of Robert Blackwell. He can be reached by e-mail: Bsisland@aol.com

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Roosevelt Island – Blackwell’s Island in my own reckoning – and my joy at the opportunity to tread where my ancestors did was indeed ruined by the sad condition of the James Blackwell House on the Island. This visit was also the occasion to meet another Blackwell descendant and cousin, Mary Anne Magnuson of Connecticut, at whose urging expressed through our internet acquaintance, we made the trip to attend the Lighthouse program on June 23, and to meet members and friends of the Historical Society.

Blackwell’s Island looms large in the imagination of the descendants of Robert Blackwell. We are told from our earliest memory about our English ancestor who arrived soon after the conquest of New Netherlands by the



Duke of York in 1664, and became a merchant and assemblyman in New York Colony. We are also told about his grandson Colonel Jacob Blackwell who sent his own plea to the King of England on the eve of the Revolution, and went on to organize and lead the Queens County militia. In the war, his estate, “Ravenswood” (on Long Island) and Blackwell’s Island were overrun by the British and occupied for the duration of the war.

Everyone has family history associated with some place and time, and in most families there are many people who make it a point to pass along the core of this history. While the thousands of descendants of Robert Blackwell have long since dispersed across the country, there is one image that keeps us all in mind of our family and by which we know we are cousins: Blackwell’s Island. The very name evokes the images of swift river currents plied by Indian canoes and traders in skiffs under the overhanging bower of primeval trees.

I have been tracing the descendants of Robert Blackwell for some 30 years, and with the advent of family history on the internet it has suddenly become possible to find living descendants working their way backward up their lines, often with the knowledge that they will connect to Blackwell’s

See **Blackwell**, page 6

I am lucky enough to be spending a lot of time this summer with my young friend Zoe, who is, as she frequently reminds me, almost three. She clearly sees this as reaching her majority, where she will begin, at last, to participate in the grownup world as the equal that she knows herself to be.

Our travels have brought me to parts of the Island I haven’t been in 16 or 17 years... the toddler playground, Blackwell Playground, the sprinklers behind Blackwell House, and Blackwell Park in general. And then, of course, my trusty bicycle is polished up and out again.

Many of us have raised our own kids here largely because this community provides the opportunity for the kind of safe, unsupervised play and exploration that was so important to our own childhood in smaller places and in gentler times. It gives some additional scope to the average city child’s constant stream of adult-supervised activities.

Our youngest child, now 28, moved here when he was seven, and he still thinks of his “old” Island as a 9-year-old’s paradise because so much of the Island was yet to be developed, and so was a constant source of exploration. To a parent it was also filled with the kind of danger all kids face as they master increasing skills each year. There were trees to fall out of, rocks to skin knees on, perilous jumps from jungle gyms turned commando forts in imagination. There were bullies, as there al-

RIRA President’s Column

ways are, and the occasional scary big kid... life is replete with dangers if you’re nine years old, or eleven, or thirteen.

But the dangers that our kids faced then were not put there by the State of New York. Many that they face this summer are exactly that.

Blackwell Park is still kid-heaven in the summertime. There’s plenty of grass, and always a breeze. The two playgrounds are full, the basketball courts and soccer fields are busy. Water-balloon fights and games of tag abound in and around the sprinkler where the toddlers play and the older kids quench their thirst and cool down from their more boisterous activities. The older children are surprisingly considerate of the toddlers, and all seems well on these golden summer afternoons.

Until you begin to look closely.

Many safety bars are missing from playground equipment, particularly galling in the toddler lot, but just as unsafe in the bigger playground. There seems to be no money for adequate grounds-keeping, so the padded surface of the toddler lot is heavily strewn with misplaced sand that makes young footing particularly unsafe. Where parts of the equipment have broken away, jagged ends protrude where hands are meant to reach for a safety bar.

The larger playground has but one trash container, where three or four are sorely needed, several of the sprin-

See **President’s Column**, page 6



Patrick Stewart

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland • 317-8523

Thur., July 30, 6:30-10:00 p.m., Farewell & Salute to Peter Norwood, Director of Public Safety, with music by Juanita Fleming. Manhattan Park Theater. Sponsored by Roosevelt Island Community Precinct and the 114th Precinct.

Wed., Aug. 5, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public invited.

Thur., Aug. 6, 8:30 p.m., TV Program with Islander residents Patrick Stewart, Shirley Margolin, and Linda Heimer, Time-Warner Channel 34.

Sat., Aug. 8, 11:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., People’s Expo 1998, sponsored by People of Color. Sportspark. Vendors, music, job listings, more. Tickets \$1 before July 29, \$3 after. **539-6020**.

Thur., Aug. 13, 10 a.m., RIOC Board meeting, Good Shepherd Chapel. Open to public. Register in advance to address the Board by calling **832-4840**.

Thur., Aug. 13, New York Junior Tennis League Tennis event, 3-5 p.m., Tennis Courts. Games & more, open to all 5-18 years of age.

Fri.-Sat., August 14-15, next scheduled issue of **The Main Street WIRE**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., August 7; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., August 10. **Future issues:** August 29; September 12, 26; October 10, 24; November 7, 21; December 5, 19; January 9, thereafter generally every two weeks. 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 advance notice at the time, 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**.

Sun., Sept. 2, regular meeting of **Roosevelt Island Art Association**, 546 Main Street, 12th floor. Live model. Call **517-0564**.

Sat., Sept. 12, FDR Day. Watch this column for additional information.

Sat., Sept. 12, Youth Soccer Registration for ages 5-13. Season starts September 18.

At the Senior Center

Every week

Mondays

9:30 **Stay Well** (exercise)

12:45 **Arts & Crafts** Quilt Project

Tuesdays

10-11 a.m. **Blood Pressure Check**

1:30 **Bingo**

Thursdays

12:30 **Movie**

Fridays

12:30 **Oldies Movie**

Saturdays

7:30 **Bingo & Games**

Special Events

Sat., Aug. 1, 12:30 p.m., International Lunch. Please bring one dish.

Wed., Aug. 12, Atlantic City trip

Wed., Aug. 12, General Meeting

Keep Kids Away

Blackwell Deterioration Continues; It’s Now a Danger Zone

The Island’s oldest building is in trouble.

Blackwell House, a designated landmark and a responsibility of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, isn’t being maintained.

At this month’s meeting of the RIOC Board of Directors, Patrick Stewart, President of the Residents Association, asked members of the Board to join him post-meeting for an examination of the back of the historic building for an inspection.

“It is symptomatic of [deterioration of] the rest of the Island,” he told the Board during the public comments session. Afterward, the only Board member to join in the inspection was Island resident Ron Vass.

Blackwell is the subject of litigation – RIOC against a tenant who has failed to pay rent, but has filed for bankruptcy and therefore cannot be evicted easily under State law. However, nothing in the



Porch floor

lease prevents RIOC from maintaining the property for which it is responsible, as far as *The WIRE* has been able to determine.

A front attic window has been open, through several serious rains, since late April. From across Main Street, it’s apparent that the building’s roofline is sagging.

Stewart suggested the rear of the building, a place where children play nearby, is a serious hazard. The points of nails protrude from a separated section of railing. The porch floor is rotting, as are the steps. Railings are loose and unlikely to provide adequate leaning support for anyone off balance.

Tony Morenzi, representing Assemblymember Pete Grannis at the RIOC Board meeting and in the inspection of Blackwell, said RIOC should fence off the area as a public safety hazard if it cannot muster the funds to correct dangerous conditions.

There is apparently no effort being made to maintain the building, or even to secure those parts of the structure that might present an immediate hazard to a child, or even an unaware adult. The building’s condition may have invited some attention from vandals, as well, though the origin of the most visible deterioration is clearly simple neglect.

Blackwell is one of several Island landmarks that are the responsibility of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, as part of its mandate to maintain and develop the Island. Others include the Lighthouse at the North end, currently undergoing refurbishment using funds from the Friends of Roosevelt Island Landmarks; the Octagon; the Chapel of the Good Shepherd; Strecker Laboratory; and the Smallpox Hospital, also known as the Renwick ruin. Most have been the subject of alarm calls from residents concerned about their decay.



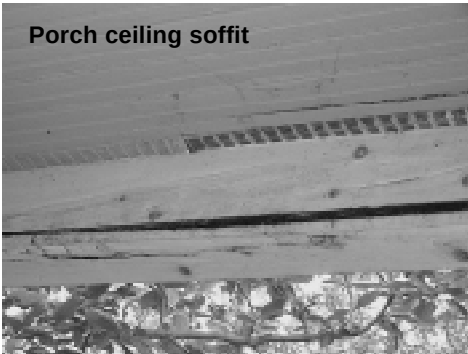
Porch railing & rusty nails



Steps



Stairway railing support post



Porch ceiling soffit

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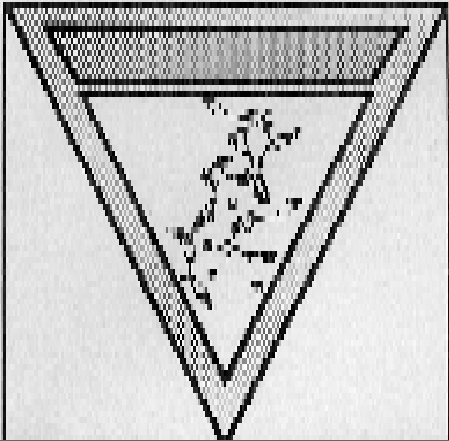
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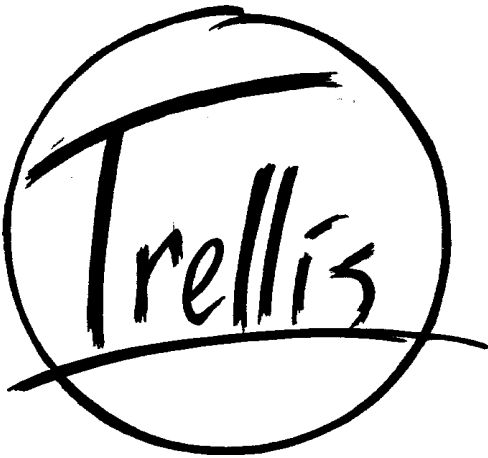
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Have You Heard the Street Reviews?

They're talking about Trellis

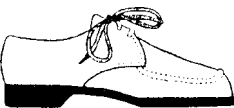
“That new fella at the restaurant is doing a really good job.” That’s a comment heard “on the street” last week as Trellis was serving the Jazzmobile crowd.

Fact is, things are better at Trellis, the gathering spot where Islanders and their guests can dine on a new menu with a range of appealing possibilities.

If you haven’t tried Trellis for a while, you’re in for a pleasant surprise. Come on in... Then add your voice to the good street reviews we’re getting these days.

752-1517

*Better and better every day.
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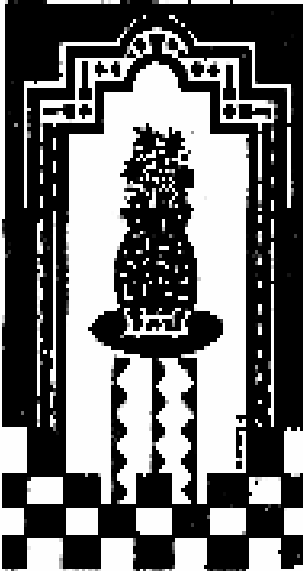
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REMINDERS
Vendor space still available (212) 539-6020
No smoking and no drugs allowed
No pets
No radios, rollerskates/blades or bikes
Proper behavior required
No outside food or beverages allowed

Blackwell from page 3

Island. Mary Anne and I found each other in such a way several months ago. Our in-person meeting on the Island was tremendous. On the Island time stood still, while the river currents passed us rapidly as the ages have done.

This new connection made by sixth cousins separated in lineage since 1715, and made on this Island, is all the more poignant as we stand before the James Blackwell House. It is clearly in danger of permanent damage and ultimate collapse due to the present possession under lease by a disinterested tenant. We have to ask the questions, “How does our heritage come into the hands of a lessor who can allow it to decay?” “Why can’t the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation exercise its superior property rights as a landlord to stabilize the condition of this house?” Clearly more money than the rent will be lost as the house declines. Clearly the use of the house for minor income has placed us all – Blackwell family and citizens of Roosevelt Island and New York – in jeopardy of a cultural loss.

We are currently researching the status of the landmark designation of the house. In the meantime let me simply state that the house is the single remaining landmark representing the Blackwell Family on the original estate. Its owner, James Blackwell, was the great-grandson of the immigrant ancestor Robert Blackwell and his second wife, Mary Manningham. Considering that Mary’s mother, the widow Bridget Manningham, had a financial interest in the island as early as 1668, and that James Blackwell’s children and grandchildren grew up and were married here up until his sale in 1828 to the City, seven generations of our fam-

ily over 160 years are represented by this house. The family has associations with the conquest of New Netherlands of 1664; the loss of the colony to and its recovery from the Netherlands in 1673/4; the conduct of the Indian wars from 1690’s to 1715; the French and Indian War of the 1750’s; the American Revolution including attendance at New York Provincial Congresses, and the military and business development of the Federal and War of 1812 periods.

I can only ask that concerned citizens of Roosevelt Island renew their efforts to have the Operating Corporation take charge of the situation before this valuable piece of New York heritage is lost. To actually visit and walk along the shore of the Island was a thrilling opportunity for us to come face to face with our past, but the present condition of the James Blackwell House speaks only of irreparable loss. A few dollars of rental revenue are not the point, rather it is the preservation of our history in tangible form.

I implore RIOC to take charge of this situation before it is too late. As word spreads among our family network about the advancing decay of the house, more of us will be writing this paper, the RIOC, and State and local officials. I will be writing more history articles as well. As a degreed architect who has long taken an interest in the historic preservation issues in my own community in New Jersey, I have recognized that derelict houses can become like strangers whom we do not care about. We must know them by name and know the details of their lives. James Blackwell was a delegate to the 2nd New York Provincial Congress in 1775, and newspaper articles are available that detail the many weddings and events regarding his family of 11 children on Blackwell’s Island in the decades thereafter.

Stewart from page 3

kler heads are broken, and drains are tended to almost solely by parents. There are any number of play areas where broken glass is everywhere. Everywhere. And once there, it’s there for good.

Blackwell House, one of our five National Historic Landmarks, is quite simply a serious accident waiting to happen. At the last RIOC board meeting I spoke from the floor about the various clear dangers it presents to the kids who inevitably play around it in the summertime. The porch floor and ceiling are visibly rotting, banisters and posts are dangerously loose and can be pushed in 60 degree angles. Next to the kitchen is an open area filled with broken furniture, nails and other dangerous trash and garbage. At this meeting I asked that the members of the board accompany me there for five minutes following the meeting to see the obvious dangers to our children, but, naturally, not one of the outside directors came, nor did they bother to send a representative.

Joe Lynch, the acting commissioner of DHCR, has even said to me that because the lease of Blackwell House to a private tenant was in litigation, there is little he could do.

Does one of our children have to be injured or killed to make the State pay attention to the public safety of the community and to the public access of property for which it is specifically responsible?

On the east perimeter road, just south of the front of the Nurse’s Quarters, on the grounds of those quarters, there is what appears to be a hexagonal air shaft with openings in each side sufficiently large to allow a child (of exactly the age likely to do so) to crawl through and fall twenty or so feet. That child could yell bloody murder forever, and nobody would ever know he was there.

What the hell do the people of this Island have to do to make the State of New York honor its obligations as set forth in its lease with the City and in the General Development Plan, which the lease states is its mandate? Is it really so that the State can continue to perform as it has, and that we have no recourse? No recourse, that is, but to wait for the inevitable tragedy?

Katherine Teets Grimm, M.D.
Board Certified Pediatrician and Allergist

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The Summer Barbeque/Picnic Basket

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After trips – to Washington, D.C.; Alexandria, Va.; San Diego (where prices are really high); St. Thomas, VI; and San Juan, PR (which is where many people from St. Thomas shop) – *The WIRE*’s Comparison Shopper is back in the land of competitive pricing and bargain hunting, where shopping is the only Olympic sport. We’ve missed her (and she says she’s missed us).

Notes: Items marked n/a were not available at store at time of visit. Lowest prices are in **bold** type. Items in *italics*, not available at all stores surveyed, are excluded from totals for all stores. **1**–Special promotion, not available at Gristede’s Roosevelt Island. **2**–All Perdue chicken legs with backs except Gristede’s.

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SPORTSWIRE

Youth Soccer Fall '98 Schedule Set; Registration September 12

The Roosevelt Island Youth Soccer Association (RIYSA) has announced its Fall 1998 soccer schedule. Registration, player assessments, practices and scrimmages will begin September 12 (the weekend after Labor Day).

Games will begin Friday, September 18 and Saturday, September 19. The season will end Saturday, November 21. League play is scheduled every Friday evening for junior and senior division teams, and Saturdays for kinderkickers (ages 5-6), minors (7-8), juniors (9-10), and senior (11-13) divisions.

Due to record-breaking enrollments in all age divisions last year, the Association expects many boys and girls 5-13 to register for this season. Early registration is recommended.

Because Labor Day falls later this year, there will be less time for registration, and a firm deadline of Saturday, September 12 will

be observed. The Association says it can't guarantee a place in the program for children whose registrations are submitted after that date.

The registration fee has been reduced to \$60 per child this year. This covers all activities, insurance, uniform and trophies for each child. Shinguards will not be supplied this year (except for the kinderkickers) since returning players were issued shinguards in past seasons. New players will be required to purchase their own shinguards.

Announcements will be posted in September on the Main Street kiosks. Volunteers are needed as coaches and referees, and are critical for the success of our league. Anyone is welcome to volunteer, whether or not s/he has a child participating. Those interested are asked to call Ian Kross (President) at 935-6598 or Jay Levine (Vice-President) at 688-3358.



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Minutes after hour	Queens	RI	63 / Lex	57 / 7th	Times Sq	34 / 6th
	To Manhattan →				6 a.m. - 9 p.m. only	
	: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

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