

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Attorney Jim Kaufman was among the residents keeping up a drumbeat of criticism of the RIOC administration of Dr. Jerome Blue at Thursday morning's meeting of the RIOC Board of Directors.

Historical Society Forming Committee to Save Blackwell

The Roosevelt Island Historical Society is forming a committee to ensure the future of Blackwell House, with a first public meeting scheduled for 7:30 Tuesday night (August 18) at The Cultural Center, 548 Main Street.

Blackwell House is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. The building, currently the subject of a long-running landlord-tenant dispute between the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and a bankrupt tenant, is one of the last few farmhouses remaining in the City, and Roosevelt Island's oldest structure. Its deterioration was documented in the last issue of *The WIRE*, and was noted by Residents Association President Patrick Stewart at the July meeting of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

"RIOC has left the house to rot and ruin," said Judith Berdy, Vice President of the Historical Society, in announcing formation of the special committee. "RIOC has shown no interest in this or any other landmark

on the Island. They must be removed from responsibility immediately."

Berdy said that volunteers are needed to help with a variety of tasks related to preservation of Blackwell House. They include contacting various public officials, doing a survey of the outside of the building, publicizing the plight of the building, and working toward legal authority for a full inside inspection and access for doing repairs.

Berdy said the committee, once constituted, may create a conservancy to oversee Blackwell House and other Island landmarks.

Before the building was rented out a few years ago, the Historical Society used it for social occasions, and it was also let for private functions.

"It's time all Islanders rallied around Blackwell House to ensure its future," Berdy said, adding that RIOC excuses for non-maintenance should be rejected. "At some point someone must take responsibility," she said. Berdy can be contacted at **688-4836** or by e-mail at Blackwellhouse@usa.net.

Octagon Park Out For Eldercare

Project Goes Forward; Site An Open Question

But RIOC's Resolution Provides No Formal Prohibition of Octagon Site

Octagon Park will not be the site of an eldercare facility, according to a consensus of the Board of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), but the proposed Engel-Burman development moved a step forward at Thursday's RIOC Board meeting.

Four members of the RIOC Board voted for the resolution, but the two resident Board members split. Ron Vass asked for language in the resolution specifically prohibiting use of Octagon Park, but didn't get it and voted no. David Kraut, who chairs the RIOC Board's Development Committee, voted yes. The meeting chair, DHCR Acting Commissioner Joseph Lynch, told Vass that leaving mention of Octagon Park out of the resolution was adequate to express the Board's intent.

Selection of a site remains open. The Roosevelt Island Residents Association and Community Board 8 have gone on record opposing development of the Island's open spaces, other than the designated site for Southtown, between the Tramway and Blackwell House.



Richard Wade

Residents Rake RIOC

"Community Association" Backs Blue

Lynch headed off some anticipated criticism of RIOC and the RIOC Board by announcing, as the meeting started, that the decision had been made to drop consideration of Octagon Park, but several residents used the public comments portion of Thursday's session to criticize the agency anyway.

Dr. Richard Wade, a city planner and very early resident of the Island, found fault with a recent RIOC survey on home ownership. "No serious social scientist would make any conclusion from this survey. There are not many people on the island who ever received it. I have a feeling there are many packages of mail in the RIOC bunker on Main Street." Wade referred to the fact that no more than 27 residents from any building responded to the survey. (**Editorial and cartoon, page 2**).

Wade said he found it remarkable that RIOC President Jerome Blue would sponsor publication of such a survey. "No one in that RIOC bunker lives on the Island... Everything RIOC does shows contempt for this community. The Island has dozens of survey experts. We will be glad to give remedial lessons to RIOC, and without charging the taxpayers anything."

Residents Association President Patrick Stewart read a lengthy prepared statement taking the RIOC Board to task for what he called its failure to fulfill its minimum responsibilities. Stewart's comments appear as the RIRA President's Column in this issue of *The WIRE* (page 3).

Attorney Jim Kaufman, a member of the Residents Association Common Council and its Vice President for Island Services, put on record an extensive commentary on RIOC management, primarily based on the corporation's management of alternative bus service during the recent Tramway hiatus for maintenance work.

"You have a system out of control," Kaufman said. "You [Blue] knew for months when the Tram was shutting down. You should have known that two out of five buses were down." Kaufman said a simple transplant of a compressor, a 45-minute task, would have brought another bus into service. "The supervisor, knowing that there is no oversight, felt he didn't have to provide any answers."

Kaufman's attitude on Blue's administration of the Island, while close to that of others who have decried the RIOC administrator's ability, qualifications, and style, may carry more weight than most Islanders' views: Kaufman is a Republican, and has the ear of key GOP figures, including Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Blue's political sponsor in the State administration of Governor George Pataki.

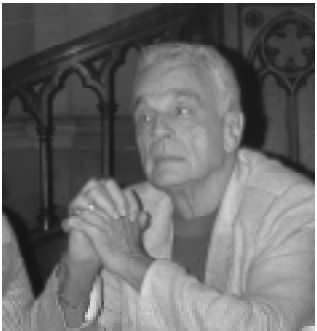
"There was no oversight about driver and mechanic vacation time," Kaufman told *The WIRE* in a lengthy review of Blue's administration of the Island bus system. "There is no contingency plan for drivers being out. So on several occasions there was only one bus running on the Island, meaning you waited as long as 45 minutes between trips."

Kaufman had earlier expressed his disgust openly at the August 5 meeting of the Common Council of RIRA, the Residents Association, telling of arriving at the Landmark Building in Manhattan – the bus stop for the temporary shuttle service – only to have the Island-bound bus leave 20 minutes ahead of the announced schedule. "The driver left, creating his own schedule, because he wanted to go home. I subsequently was told that six people who arrived [between 12:10 and 12:30 a.m.] were left standing. Again, nothing was done about this."

"There is absolutely no day-to-day oversight," Kaufman continued. "Despite Blue's protestations to the contrary, he doesn't require the supervisor to report to him. The supervisor feels he can act with impunity because no one asks any questions. He was running bus number one without air conditioning despite warnings from the Commissioner [of DHCR, the State body nominally responsible for overseeing RIOC] that the temperature inside that bus was in excess of 100 degrees. He ran a real risk of someone collapsing on that bus."

He continued, "As with everything else on this Island, there is never any planning for eventualities. There is no

See **RIOC**, page 7



Ron Vass

Islanders

A Newcomer Digs In

by Anusha Shrivastava

Byron Gaspard is a 50-year old avuncular gentleman who loves jazz and has a keen interest in herbology. Three months ago, he moved to Eastwood from East 83rd Street, drawn by the serenity and closeness to nature offered by Roosevelt Island. His apartment overlooks the river and he loves listening to the water as the tide changes. However, very often this simple pleasure is disrupted by blaring music and loud calls of young adults on Main Street. A few weeks ago, being unable to sleep after a hard day's work, he asked a young group, "Keep it down." The noise continued.

Unlike many people who would have despaired and muttered under their breath before walking off, Gaspard decided it was time to do something. His background in clinical psychology made him believe that if someone took the time to talk to the youth, they might not behave with such disregard for other people's comfort.

"Most of them are just being young adults, being rebellious. They need a good job, feel the pressure, and want to talk to someone about this – a person who may not necessarily be a family member. They need cultural and



community groups. As tenants and residents of this Island, we can empower ourselves and provide this support, maintaining what's unique about this Island – a feeling of community," he says with passion and a deep conviction in his voice.

He contacted Public Safety and offered his services as a volunteer. His three decades of work as a substance and alcohol abuse counselor in state correctional facilities, coupled with a master's degree in clinical psychology from Fordham University, gives him the requisite credentials.

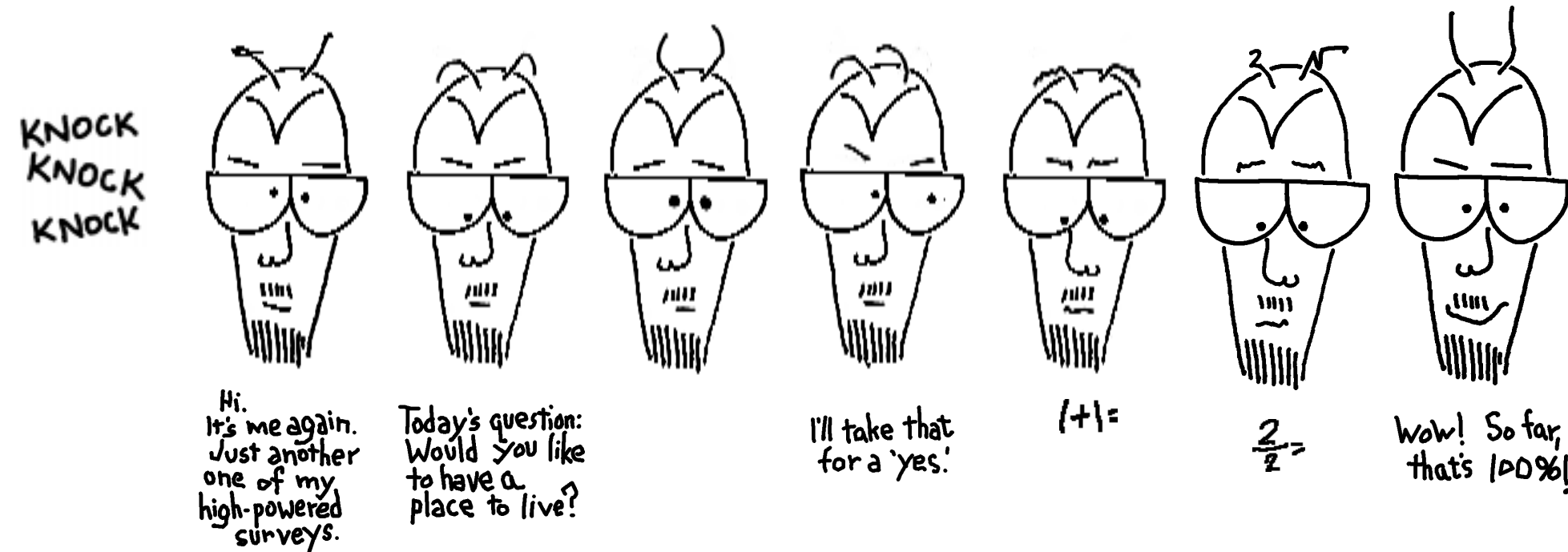
On a personal level, he is deeply influenced by his mother – a social worker – and his God-fearing father who worked in a hospital. Some of this comes across when he says, philosophically, "We are a very cosmetic society, we change our hair-style, our appearance, our rugs and couches... What we actually need to change is ourselves, our thoughts. We need to be more focused on what is inside. We need to grow in a holistic manner. We, especially the youth, need to air our thoughts and think positive."

See **Gaspard**, page 6

Inside:
Island's
'Unseen'
Sights
page 5



Weekend Entrepreneurs A young Westview resident offered his toys for sale (50 cents to one dollar) last Sunday in Good Shepherd Plaza, saying he planned to spend the proceeds on a CD player. He attracted an enthusiastic pair of young shoppers and an indulgent pair of parents in this transaction. (Other sidewalk merchants, bottom of page 3.)



Pages of Opinion

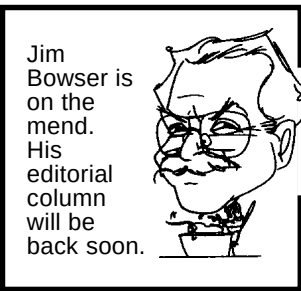
George Pataki's Island Brain Trust

The latest *RIOC News* has brought us a real news flash: Out of four Rivercross residents who responded to a RIOC poll, 100% want to own their apartments in Rivercross. For those who may not understand the meaning of “100%,” this data is supported by a graph, carefully labeled to show that zero percent of the four want to own apartments in Eastwood, zero percent want to own in Island House,

zero percent want... Well, you get the idea. *RIOC News* fills two pages of the 6-page publication with graphs based on responses from a grand total of 82 Island residents (out of 8,300-some) startling us with the percentages of Island House residents who would like to own apartments, and so on.

Governor George Pataki gives his full endorsement to this foolishness, of course, and to the spending it takes to mail it to every apartment on the Island. All so Jerome Blue can claim the Island is “better than ever” as a result of his “efforts to end the failed policies of the past.”

Lest a fragment of doubt remain, RIOC’s survey is completely invalid: The wrong questions, badly framed, ineptly distributed, inappropriate methodology, bumbling execution, hair-brained reporting. It fails every criterion applied to such survey work by those who know how to do it. Most residents obviously recognized this; no building provided more than 27 responses.



But RIOC will do anything, it seems, to fill *RIOC News* and avoid reporting what is actually on the alleged minds (if anything) of those unelected free-riders who run the Island from 591 Main Street.

We have our own news flash for Pataki and Blue: The Island is most definitely *not* better than ever, and the policies of the past were vastly preferable to the truly failed Blue administration.

In fact, Blue’s management by blunder has introduced substantial uncertainty about the Island’s future. Where there was once confidence, there is now worry and fear.

Will we ever (?) be able to stop saying to Pataki, and to Alfonse D’Amato, erstwhile sponsor of both Pataki and Blue: **Shame, shame!**

Victory on Octagon Park

Residents who spoke out with strong views against the taking of Octagon Park for an upscale eldercare facility can now congratulate themselves for prevailing on the matter, at least for now. Southpoint, meantime, remains in jeopardy.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

I read the *island observer* of July 25 with great interest. A year ago, a male friend and I were involved in an incident similar to the one described. We were walking down the street one evening when a couple of young men loitering on the sidewalk tried to bait my friend into a fight. Fortunately, a Public Safety officer came to break it up.

When I first moved here, only four summers ago, I would use the river walks at all hours with no fear. Now, I’m afraid to walk alone down Main Street after 9 p.m.

However, in fairness to the entire community, I must say that I’ve heard the same complaint voiced by respectable Roosevelt islanders of all races: our nighttime streets have been taken over by bands of young thugs. And you know things are getting ridiculous when even our Public Safety officers are being mugged.

If crime has decreased in the rest of New York City, why is it on the rise here? I suspect that it has something to do with our political stepchild status. Since Roosevelt Island is a charge of New York State, New York City officials probably don’t much care what happens to us.

Racial resentments have flared over this issue, and that’s too bad. Demagoguery can only make things worse. The indisputable truth is that we’ve got a crime problem here, and that no one can deny that it exists, in the name of political correctness. But hurling racial accusations back and forth won’t help matters; better we should ap-

To the Editor:

I am writing this, my first letter to the *WIRE*, with somewhat of a heavy heart. It is in response to your *island observer* column in the July 25 issue. I have been an island resident for over 18 years and I know that your love for this island, and your good intentions for its welfare are beyond question. But I feel an unfortunate subtext to your column that I’m sure you are not consciously aware of, and that could be damaging to the “island-as-multi-everything-Community” that was the vision of its founders.

Perhaps the best way to express my concern would be to ask you to look within for the answer to some key questions regarding your July 4 encounter.

1) After having concluded that the group approaching you was “machismo,” “looking for trouble,” “aggressive,” “claiming right-of-way,” “wanted...provocation,” all of which were subjective conclusions from a distance without any words being exchanged, could your “Excuse me” response possibly have been as neutral as you wanted it to be?

2) You were on a date. Wanting, like any man, to “look good” to your lady, after such provocation wouldn’t your hormones have been churning? (Perhaps explaining your admittedly imprudent chase.)

3) Shouldn’t we, as adults hold ourselves to higher standards of behavior than adolescents? Their egos are much more fragile than ours, their judgment – less prudent, their reactions – more volatile. That’s the definition of adolescence. Knowing this, provocative encounters can be avoided.

4) Would anything more have happened if you had simply picked up the beer bottle, tossed it into the nearest trash basket and continued to walk on?

And then comes your postscript. This was the most disturbing part of your column.

5) Is it possible that the events related would have played themselves out the way that they did, regardless of the racial component, but primarily due to adolescent, socio-economic, and class factors equally prevalent in Howard Beach,

ply our energies to a methodical search for a practical solution.

Example: just as we fought for our library to be part of the New York City Public Library system, we need to lobby for our Public Safety Department to become a precinct of the New York City Police Department. We need cops who can protect themselves, so that they can protect us. Again, I don’t think that anyone in his or her right mind can object to law and order in the name of so-called political correctness. Because we’re talking about making our streets safe once more for absolutely everyone who lives here; for all of our residents and their children.

Our neighbors are getting intimidated, assaulted and robbed, and the Island’s managers are responding by trying to sweep these criminal incidents under the rug (no sense scaring away potential investors). I’m truly afraid that it will take a real tragedy – a murder or a rape on Roosevelt Island – to mobilize the community into lobbying to protect itself.

We need many more New York City Police officers, and we need them now. Hopefully, if the thugs stop feeling at ease here, they will find someplace else to hang out. And parents who don’t want their truant teenagers to get arrested, clubbed or shot by some awful mistake (unfortunately, it happens) will just have to find ways to keep them off our streets at night.

Patricia Duarte

Bensonhurst, or Yonkers? Would 5 Black teens from Hunter High School, for example, have behaved in this manner? Also your assumption that this would not have happened to a same-race couple is clearly refuted by black on black crime statistics.

In short, to attribute unfortunate incidents like this to racial tensions, only reinforces stereotypes that already exist as part of our inherited American programming.

To be a “racist” in America is not a pejorative accusation, but a **definition** of our unavoidable lifelong programming. To be racist is not exclusively a white phenomenon, but in the words of Gunnar Myrdal, a fairly neutral observer from Scandinavia, – “An American Dilemma.” Black, white, red or yellow all suffer equally from this inheritance.

You, as Editor of our beloved *WIRE*, have the particularly unenviable position to be the “Solomon” of our island. For the most part, you wear the mantle well. In this case, I think it slipped a bit.

Roy Eaton

Last issue’s *island observer* column seems to have stirred the stream of reader thought. Comments center on two components of the piece – my simple-fact identification of our assailants as black, and my suggestion that racism may have been involved in the perps’ hurling a beer bottle at my date and me.

In letters we publish this issue, one reader suggests the incident may have been little more than youthful hi-jinks, obliquely suggesting (I think) that attributing the sin of racism to those involved might itself be racism.

His is a respected opinion, but... I was there. I don’t buy the notion that attempting to force people off the sidewalk, then hurling a beer bottle at them, is an acceptable product of a kind of urban *rumspringa*. I see it as an attempt to inflict serious injury, and the near-perfect aim as proof of the intent. And youthful fun-seekers would have dispersed when chased. These people instead attempted further mayhem.

Given the clear intent to injure, underlined and confirmed by a second attempt, I think it remarkable for anyone to acquit the perps, incident unseen, of racism – as though such a group would conspire in assault and battery, but stop short of racism.

Actually, I would be delighted to have those involved step forward, identify themselves, and issue their own disclaimer of any racist motive. My bet is they are unlikely to take responsibility for either their actions or their motives.

DL

It is an honor to be chosen to sit on a Board of Directors in today's society. Those so chosen are presumed to be of distinguished repute for probity, integrity and rectitude, let alone proven business acumen. To accept such a position, especially when it is the Board of a state public benefit corporation, is to enter upon the solemn duty of oversight for the welfare of the public served by that corporation.

The Board of Directors of RIOC are no exception. They have, each of them, had distinguished careers marked by public service. Their responsibilities are clearly set forth. The matters with which they must make themselves familiar are singularly uncomplicated for a state agency... there are perhaps six or seven documents, none inordinately long, none overburdened with legal or other jargon. Their collective responsibilities are clear and straightforward. As RIOC's Articles of Incorporation state, "The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by a Board of nine directors that "shall exercise all of the powers of the Corporation."

Directors agree to define the mission and participate in strategic planning to review the agency's purposes, priorities, financial standing, and goals.

Directors must be prepared to approve the selection, compensation, and if necessary, dismissal of the senior executives, and to assure regular evaluation of the executives' performance. "Any officer elected or appointed by the Board may be removed by the Board whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation will be served."

Directors must assure financial responsibility by approving the annual budget and overseeing adherence to it, contracting for an independent audit, and controlling the investment policies and management of capital or reserve funds.

Directors agree to oversee and evaluate strategic business plans and support management in carrying out those plans.

Directors must evaluate how well the board is performing and maintain an effective organization, procedures, and recruitment.

Directors must set aside any potential conflict between their personal or individual business interests to support the well-being of the community which they serve.

Why, then, are these responsibilities unmet? What has led such a distinguished group of exceptional persons into an ongoing breach of trust towards the citizenry they serve?

RIRA President's Column

For more than two years the RIOC Board of Directors has sat unprotesting and silent through RIOC's consistent mismanagement. The following is a list of questions regarding their most obvious dereliction.

Why have they allowed RIOC to disregard the lease agreement between the city and the state of New York which specifically requires RIOC to maintain, develop and improve the value of Roosevelt Island within the confines of the General Development Plan?

Why have they abrogated their responsibility to defend the citizens and land of Roosevelt Island, particularly in regard to the repeated attempted incursion into designated parkland?

Why have they allowed maintenance and repair of many parts of the Island infrastructure to go untended for more than two years, creating the inevitable prospect of tens of millions of dollars in avoidable costs?

Why have they permitted and encouraged non-responsiveness to legitimate public inquiry?

Why have they allowed the outright refusal to acknowledge the legally-elected representatives of the residents? RIOC played a major role in creating RIRA in the first place.



Patrick Stewart

Why have they allowed RIOC to pursue frivolous expeditions into the commercial and development communities?

Why have they failed to supervise the Corporation's planning and execution process, specifically with regard to the Southpoint Marriott project and the Engel-Burman eldercare project?

Why have they allowed RIOC illegitimately to usurp authority and subvert the formally established DHCR procedure for the award of Public Purpose Funds?

Why have they passively defaulted on their responsibility to guarantee that the State Comptroller's audit demands are met?

Why have they ignored RIOC's failures to provide constructive economic development for the Island, particularly in regard to the mini-school Dormitory Authority agreements?

Why have they allowed preferential treatment for some Island merchants to the detriment of others?

Appointments to this Board are prohibited from being a matter of simple political expedience. Why, then, does this board seem so determined to leave the impression that political expedience is its primary concern, and that the interests of the state, and the welfare of the people of the Island, matter not at all?

CB8 Opposes Taking Island's Open Spaces

Community Board 8 has joined Island leaders in calling for protection of Roosevelt Island's open spaces. In a resolution sent to Governor George Pataki and officials of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, the Board stated:

Whereas the original General Development Plan of 1969 for Roosevelt Island (and the amendment in 1990) called specifically for development of a "New Town," north of the Queensboro Bridge, and a future developemnt to be known as "Southtown," but barred further development of what was clearly designated as open space;

Whereas the proposed development of high rise buildings on the properties designated as Octagon Park and Southpoint Park would affect the unique nature of the Island itself and is inconsistent with the original General Development Plan;

Whereas these open spaces are specifically designated in the General Development Plan for the use by the citizens of New York: "Welfare Island is ideally located to provide New York in future years with additional beautifully-landscaped open space on which to play, stroll, reflect, and become refreshed;"

Be it resolved that Community Board #8 opposes any commercial or residential development within Octagon and Southpoint Parks, proposals for which are being currently sought by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.

The CB8 resolution was criticized at Thursday morning's RIOC meeting by members of the Roosevelt Island Community Association, who back RIOC's plans for Island development.

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland • 317-8523

Thur., Aug. 20, 3:40 p.m., Free Baseball Trip to Shea Stadium, **Mets vs Phillies**, sponsored by Public Safety. Transportation charge, \$3. **832-4545.**

Fri., Aug. 21, 5:30 p.m., TV program with Residents Association President Patrick Stewart, and residents Shirley Margolin and Linda Heimer, TimeWarner Cable channel 34.

Fri.-Sat., August 28-29, next scheduled issue of **The Main Street WIRE. Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., August 21; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., August 24. **Future issues:** 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. *Plan now to include your business card in the November 21 Thanksgiving issue.*

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

Tue., Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m., Registration for all dance, exercise, acting, and voice classes, **Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance.** Classes begin week of Sept. 14. Call **371-4449** for information.

Thur., Sept. 10, 10:00 a.m., RIOC Board Meeting, Good Shepherd Chapel.

Sat., Sept. 12, FDR Day, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sports, exhibitions, health fair, disco dancing. Volunteers are needed. Call **838-4747, 223-0847, or 755-4089.**

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

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Wednesdays

1:30 **Bingo**

Thursdays

12:30 **Movie**

Fridays

12:30 **Oldies Movie**

Saturdays

7:30 **Bingo & Games**

Special Events

Wed., Aug. 19, 7:00 p.m., RISA General Meeting (*New Beginnings* lecture).



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Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from 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 e-mail (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.**

The WIRE needs a volunteer willing to deliver bundles of the paper to Coler and Goldwater Hospitals. A shopping cart is a help, and the total time involved is about 45 minutes each time *The WIRE* is published. If you're willing to help, please call **935-6043.**



More Weekend Entrepreneurs The Saturday flea market in Good Shepherd Plaza drew a typical August crowd last weekend: Not that many shoppers, but those who came had time to look. Meanwhile, Kitty Odunfa offered her wares, imported from Africa, at a sparsely-attended People of Color event at the Sportspark. Irving Anderson has been offering his line of African imports at a stand near the subway station on several days this summer. Food shoppers have had a treat, too, at the Saturday Greenmarket at Motorgate.

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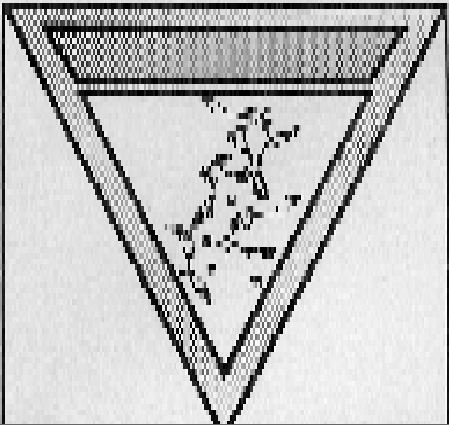
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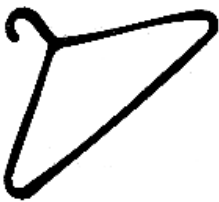
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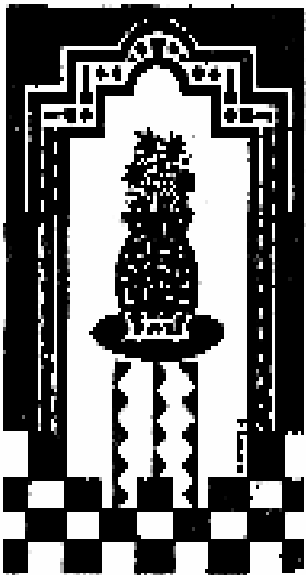
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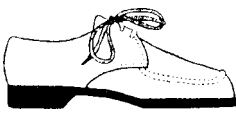


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Roosevelt Island’s Unadvertised Scenic Specials

Everyday, Yet Unusual, Sites Around the Island

by Maurice Bleifeld



The engrossing story in the July 25 issue of *The WIRE* by David E. Blackwell, the eighth-generation descendant of the family that originally owned and named this island, served, once again, to focus on our venerable landmark building, Blackwell House.

And, if one were to mention other well-known local sights, of course there is the Tram, as well as landmarks such as the Lighthouse at the northern tip, the century-old Church of the Good Shepherd, and the historical ruins of the old Smallpox hospital.

However, there are other “unadvertised sites” that deserve to be seen and noticed by residents and outsiders alike for their particular attractions. Here is a sampling:

The Massive Tower of the Queensboro Bridge

This monolith composed of huge granite blocks is rarely ever seen up close by travelers crossing its upper levels. But down below, at ground zero, only a short distance away from the Tram station, one can come up close to the tower to touch it, feel it and look up high to appreciate its monumental strength and proportions. Positioned there at the edge of the river, it serenely rules its surroundings with its lasting massive presence.

Cherry-Tree Walk

Just south of the Bridge Tower, there is a medium-sized boulder which bears a bronze plaque proclaiming the name of this river-front path as Cherry-Tree Walk. Stretching southward as far as the eye can see, there are scores and scores of Japanese flowering cherry trees that grace the landscape with their profusion of white and pink flowers during the early days of each April. No need to venture far away to the Cherry-Tree Festival at that time in Washington, D.C., or to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden. To stand under the flowering trees right here on the Island and to be enveloped by the beauty of the rich floral umbrella is an experience not to be missed.

River Vista

Anyone leaving the underground world of the subway and walking out of the station into the open air is treated to a view that few Metrocard passengers can enjoy anywhere else in the city. Here, stretching northward are the “swift river currents” that Blackwell wrote about. Lined with flowering shrubbery and green trees, the vista is refreshing enough to make one take a deep breath of the open air and shed the cares of city streets just left behind. In a world that relies on tranquilizer pills for relaxation, this site is a natural gift for the kind of release that Thoreau once sought at Walden Pond.

Meditation Steps

The long, wide, wooden, terraced steps facing the river, and Manhattan beyond, offer a respite to individuals who seek out this quiet spot where they are free to meditate, read, lounge in the sun, watch the boat traffic, daydream, converse with someone, work on a laptop, stare at the city skyline, or just enjoy the quietness of the view. The nearest thing to it is sitting on a park bench, but there is really no comparison for the inviting feeling of roominess under the over-arching sky.

Tree Tops at the Tram

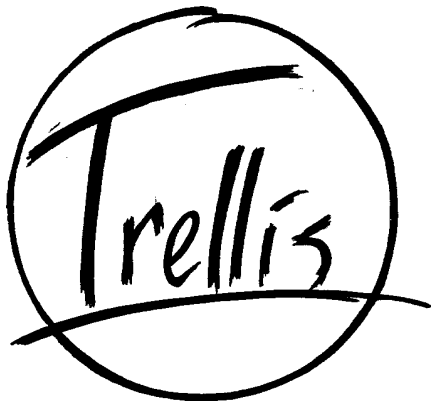
When you walk the stair to or from the Manhattan end of the Tram, you will find yourself on the level of the tall, graceful branches of the honey locust trees that line the plaza below. From this height, you are so surrounded by these green, leafy fronds that you cannot even see the ground below. The view brings to mind the tree-top observation posts that people who go on African wild-life safari remember as an unusual experience in their adventure. True, the street level has its share only of pigeons and sparrows, rather than lions and elephants. But the arboreal canopy up above has its special appeal, making it another of the “unadvertised sites” available only to those using the Tram on the way to or from Roosevelt Island.



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Photos: Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com



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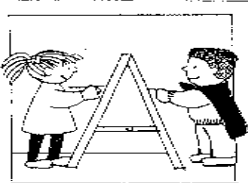
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Gaspard from page 1

Towards this end, Gaspard will now be available to talk to young adults on the Island about their problems, 24 hours a day, at his home number, **752-6819**. He is being given a small room in Motorgate from which he will operate in conjunction with Michelle Williams, the Youth Officer in the Public Safety Department. She can be contacted at **832-4545**. While Michelle runs a summer youth program that includes basketball tournaments and involvement with museums, he will talk to any of the 7 to 16-year olds who need counseling.

“I will enlist social workers, psychologists and people from other cultures to talk to parents and children. I want them to see what the Island offers – a safe community where you can walk around and spend time by the water, reading, relaxing, talking. None of this needs to be disruptive to others.” He adds, “Parents have stresses that they need to deal with, and many of them are trying to make both ends meet. But children also have special needs. They need parents to talk to. They need to feel they have a voice in the decision-making.”

Gaspard hopes this will be more than just a summer program. His long-term goal is a support service that people of the Island are comfortable with. “Young adults need to get out of their cocoons and see that the whole world is not hostile towards them. I want them to be able to talk to me and sort out their problems.” His wish list doesn’t end there. He would like to set up a referral service for those who need more advice. He even wants to set up a relaxation room with visual aids so they can be “anywhere in the world, vicariously.”

“I’m just another person in this community doing a service,” he says, “using my expertise where I can.” His partner, Michelle, mirrors his thoughts, saying, “He’s doing this for the community, to help in the way he can.”

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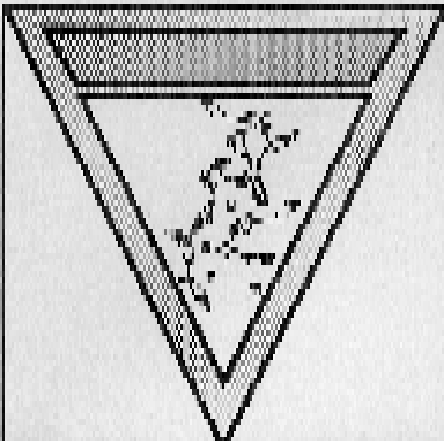
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SPORTSWIRE

Ohlson, Lincoln Top Island’s Runners in Sunday’s 10K Run

Fourteen Island residents completed the Roosevelt Island 10K last Sunday, a 6.2 mile race sponsored by the New York Road Runners Club. The top finishing male resident was Eric Ohlson of 10 River Road with a time of 40:19. The top finishing woman was Elaine Lincoln of 30 River Road who finished in 53:01.

The complete list of finishers:		Elaine Lincoln	53:01
Eric Ohlson	40:19	Suzanne Wolf	1:03:42
James Theis	44:10	Sharon Bermon	1:05:45
Marc Diamond	45:56	Elaine Belton	1:19:03
Frank Cherry	52:00	Karen Bdera	1:25:08
Angelo Sibilla	57:23		
Neil Weiss	1:00:45		
Takashi Ogawa	1:11:38		
Valentin Guerorguiev	1:14:06		
Nicholas Bdera	1:25:08		

The WIRE’s sports reporter position is open. If you’re interested in handling this valuable volunteer contribution to the Roosevelt Island community, or would like to propose a candidate, please call 826-9055.

Reminder

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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RIOC from page 1

contingency plan in place for anything. He [Blue] doesn’t deal with crises when they arise. He’s a laughingstock.”

Two speakers who identified themselves as members of the Roosevelt Island Community Association, called “an advisory and planning group,” read lengthy statements supporting Blue’s position on development of Southpoint, where a two-tower Marriott Hotel has been proposed. The statements were essentially defenses of Blue’s legal position, and contained extensive citations of the State laws governing RIOC. Both Lisa Knox and Jessie Rademaker took the position that State law supersedes the General Development Plan (GDP) for the Island. That plan was written during the conceptual design of Roosevelt Island as a planned community, and was incorporated by reference in the lease, given by the City, under which New York State manages the Island.

But the overriding theme of the public session was criticism of Blue and RIOC for failing to work with residents on plans for Island development. That note was struck by representatives of Assemblymember Pete Grannis, Representative Carolyn Maloney, City Councilmember Gifford Miller, and Island resident Shirley Margolin, as well as Residents Association President Stewart.

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