

Next scheduled issue
December 5

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

RIOC Board Moving To Curb Jerry Blue

News Analysis by Dick Lutz

The Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) appears to be assuming a stronger and more direct role in management of Roosevelt Island. Perhaps responding to the wake-up call of a resident vote November 3, the Board took two key actions at its meeting last week to rein in Dr. Jerome Blue, the President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC):



In the "old days" – in this case the 1960s for Roosevelt Island – there was no Tram, no subway, no bridge to Queens. Traffic to and from Welfare Island, as it was then known, was via this elevator building connected to the Queensboro Bridge. This photo and others are part of an Historical Society exhibit, *Portrait of a Changing Island: 19th to 21st Century Maps of Roosevelt Island*, which will be previewed Sunday (November 22), 1:00-4:00 p.m., at the Cultural Center (548 Main Street) as part of a Blackwell family reunion. **Story, page 8.**

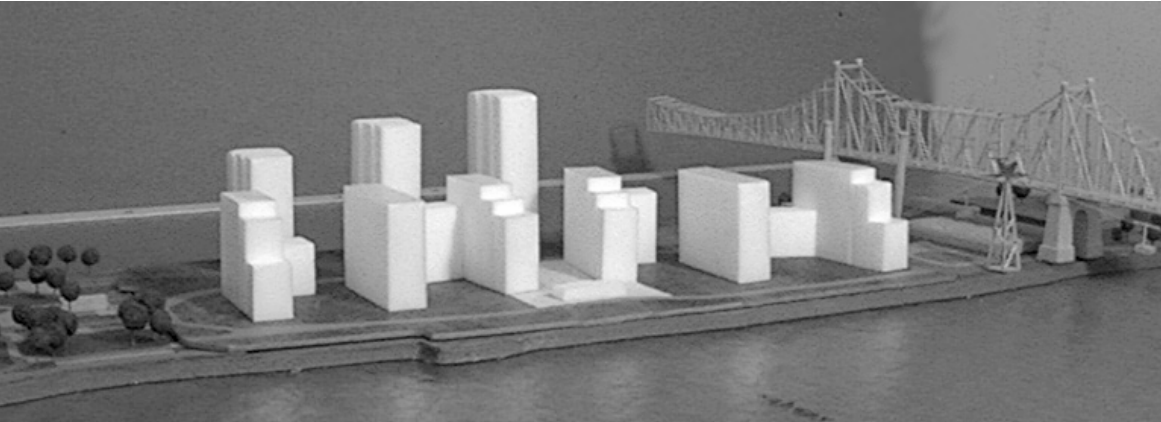
- Residents Association President Patrick Stewart and Susan Whitaker, Chair of the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations (RICO), will join the RIOC Board of Directors. They were nominated to the RIOC Board in February – over nine months ago – by New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, but their names have not yet been sent to the State Senate by Governor George Pataki. While this means they will be non-voting observers, it puts both in a position to be the community's watchdogs in RIOC affairs. RIOC Board Chair Joe Lynch took the step over Blue's objections.

- Lynch also announced two RIOC committees to consist of members of the community and RIOC Board members. That specifically excludes Blue, who also objected to this action in private. Lynch asked that members of the community interested in serving on these committees provide him with a letter describing their qualifications and interest.

Other handwriting on Blue's office wall: A month ago in a minor power struggle of sorts, Lynch rolled over Blue objections to funding voting machines for the RIRA election by lining up the necessary Board votes when Blue tried repeatedly to raise impediments to providing the money. It was that power struggle, in fact, that moved the RIOC Board from nearly passive observers of Blue's management at RIOC to acting on a newly-realized belief that the style and substance of his management bears closer observation.

The two new Board committees are in Planning and in Capital Investment, two missions that center on the very areas Blue has taken as his primary focus on Roosevelt Island – development.

Southtown Plan Revealed



Just styrofoam for now. This model shows, from a Manhattan viewpoint, the form and placement of buildings proposed for Southtown by the architectural firm of Davis Brody Bond. It calls for nine structures ranging from three towers with a maximum height of 28 stories to six stepped designs with segments 8 to 16 floors in height. A review of the plan by Jeff Hochman appears on page 7, along with site diagrams and an additional photo of the model.

About three dozen Roosevelt Island residents heard plans for Southtown described last week in a Tuesday night session with the architects hired by The Related Companies. **(Review of the plan, page 7.)**

Chief architect Max Bond of Davis Brody Bond described the planning thus far as "conceptual," saying, "We will listen to your comments, and then try to refine these plans based on your comments." He then described a favored plan that would eventually see

nine buildings on the Southtown site, which covers 19.3 acres between the Tramway and the Main Street split south of Rivercross.

Residents at the meeting raised questions about construction traffic, the housing "mix," community service space, commercial space.

There were no announcements about funding or other progress toward a start of construction. A phase one plan consisting of two buildings was discussed.



Al Weinstein
1913-1998

Roosevelt Island's Grand Gentleman of the Tramway died late Thursday. Pages 2 and 3.

Rivercross Privatization Runs Into a Snag: RIOC

Rivercross won't be privatized anytime soon. That's the word from the cooperative's Board of Directors, disseminated in a memo last week.

Two years ago, after a vote to work up a plan to take the building out of the State's Mitchell-Lama program, residents working on the project had hoped that a final shareholder vote on the matter would be imminent by now.

Privately, Rivercross proponents of privatization lay the blame for the snafu at the feet of Dr. Jerome

Blue, President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. Blue had told the Rivercross Board of Directors he would support the building's privatization plan in exchange for a payment, to RIOC, of \$250,000 a year. The Rivercross Board agreed to the condition, only to discover that Blue didn't have the authority to make that deal.

As the memo to residents put it, "the privatization process... reached an impasse primarily due to the disagreement among state agencies as to the legal right of RIOC to carry out the letter of intent signed this past February. That agreement, which provided for the extension of our ground lease, was predicated on RIOC's being able to receive an additional \$250,000 annually from Rivercross as tax equivalent payments.

"At a recent interagency meeting it was decided that only UDC [the Urban Development Corporation]... has the right to receive tax equivalent payments. This decision renders our agreement with RIOC invalid, and UDC has been unwilling to consider a comparable arrangement. Without that arrangement, there is a greater risk of substantially higher taxes being imposed on Rivercross following privatization."

The Board memo goes on to state that its own mandate, approved by residents, to come up with a plan that would require no more than a ten percent increase in maintenance, cannot be satisfied under current conditions – no agreement to limit tax liability, and no ground lease extension to 2027.

"While it seems unlikely that Rivercross will be privatized within the foreseeable future, we continue to actively explore possible solutions," says the memo.

A shareholders' meeting has been set for December 1 to allow residents to learn more.

Islanders

Ron Roth Is Tevye in MST's *Fiddler on the Roof*

by Kevin Gates

Nancy Howe, Director of The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, peers over her glasses and says, "You can't even consider doing a show like *Fiddler on the Roof* unless you have a really strong Tevye, so before we committed to doing this show, I called Ron Roth to see if he would be interested in playing Tevye." The answer was a resounding "yes."

Ron Roth, a 22-year resident of Roosevelt Island, was born in New York City and studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. His interest in performing began at an early age. He says, simply, "As a kid, I wanted to be the center of attention." As the man matured, however, so did the motivation. Acting, he says, "is the ultimate time machine. For that brief moment, you can be anyone, anywhere, and you can take the audience with you. For that moment, you're timeless." What keeps Ron going, though, is that acting is never a completed process. "Every day, you learn something new. Where else can you do that?"

The path that led Ron to acting has become a familiar one, followed by such talents as Robin Williams, Eddie Murphy and Billy Crystal. About twenty years ago, Ron began doing stand-up comedy. "It was the quickest way to the footlights," Ron says. "You walk in, go to the stage, and for fifteen minutes, the show is all yours."

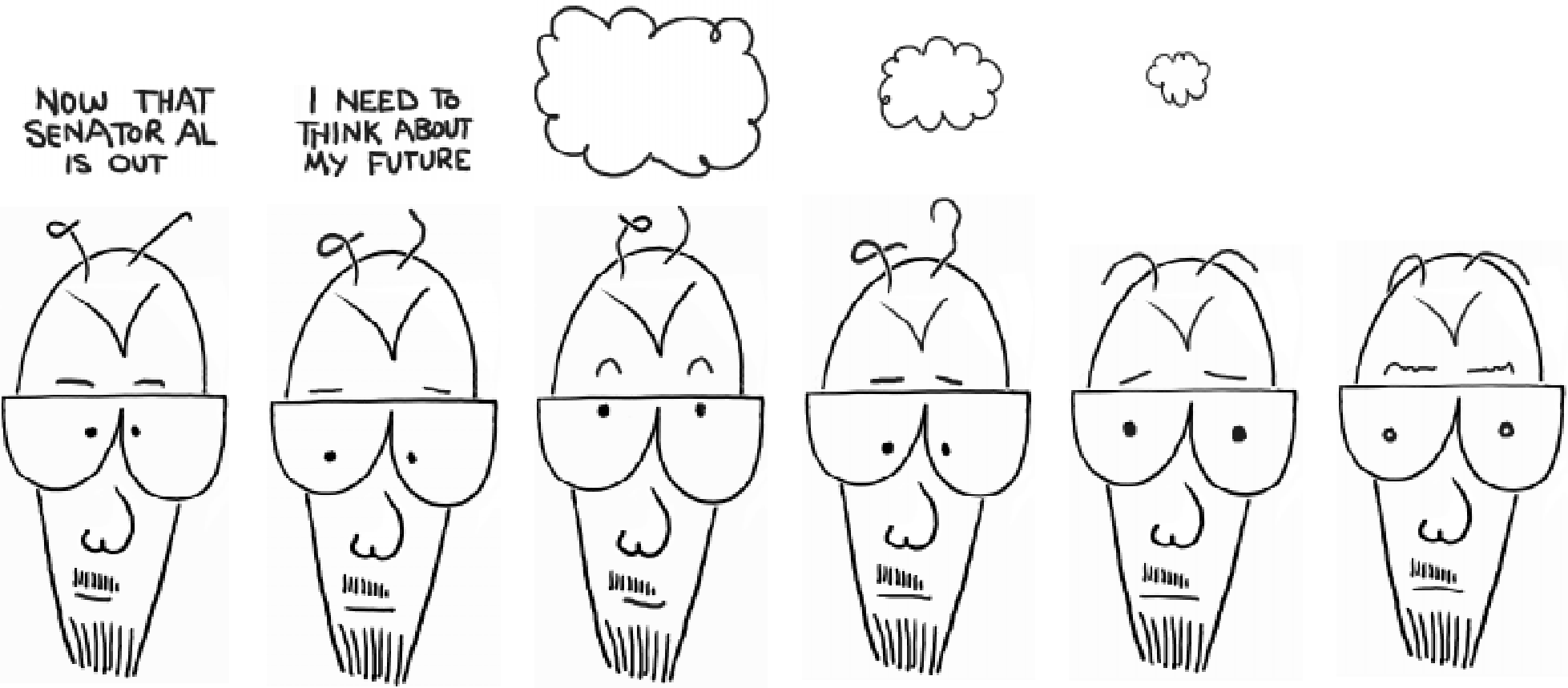
Ron was even recruited by the government of Finland to teach a stand-up comedy workshop. "The suicide rate is really high there, so I guess the government thought that the people needed more humor." Although it was an interesting experience, Ron is skeptical about the success of the project. "They were pretty funny, but most of their gags were about suicide."

Along the way, Ron has stayed busy and his list of credits keeps growing. Among numerous stage credits, Ron has appeared in regional theater (*The Miracle Worker*, *Plaza Suite*, *Wait Until Dark*, *The Crucible*), and has appeared on television programs such as *America's Most Wanted* and *A Current Affair*. In addition, Ron has turned in well-reviewed performances in several feature films, such as *Bonfire of the Vanities*, *Green Card*, and *The Super*. *Fiddler* will mark his fourth appearance on the Main Street Theater stage.

Of all the roles Ron has played, though, he says that the role of Tevye may be the most satisfying. "Tevye has everything – comedy, drama, pathos – everything." It is also one of the few roles that is at once a leading man and a "character." As Ron says, Tevye is "the kind of role an actor dreams of."

An acting teacher once told Ron that it takes 20 years to become an actor. Since then Ron has spent over 20 years honing his skills in the comedic and dramatic arts. Tevye is a role that Ron is ideally suited to play. As the tailor in *Fiddler* would say, "It is a match made to measure."





Pages of Thought and Opinion

A Thanksgiving Appeal

While I don't often use this column to make a full-length appeal for funds for local groups, this is one that I hope you will permit me. This seems quite in keeping with the Thanks-giving issue of *The WIRE*.

For the past 16 years, the Roosevelt Island Men's Shelter has provided a temporary haven for some of New York City's less fortunate. Now, the Shelter is facing a crisis itself and is calling on all of us to respond.

Budget Cuts

Due to recent budget cuts, the Shelter is having trouble meeting operating costs that may affect its future. The dedicated locals, several of whom have been volunteering with the Men's Shelter since its beginning, have issued a joint appeal for help from the Island.

Twice a week for eight months, six men are provided with a warm bed, a home-cooked dinner, a breakfast and a take-out lunch for the next day. The men are screened and referred here by the New York City Partnership for the Homeless.

The volunteers, who operate the Shelter in teams, prepare meals in their own homes, as there are no cooking facilities at the site. They also serve the food and sleep overnight at the Shelter.



Slim Fare

The Partnership for the Homeless provides a budget of \$25 a week — it was \$36 last year — to cover the cost of 12 dinners, 12 breakfasts, 24 sandwiches and beverages (fresh juices, etc.). Not much to nourish six men adequately for two days.

Carolyn Yohannes, a long-time volunteer, has been coordinating this program for the past two years. She tells us the Shelter is trying to raise \$1,600 this year to supplement the meager annual budget and would like to have as many people as possible participate in the fund-raising effort to show that the community cares.

Contributions may be made payable to the Men's Shelter and addressed to the R.I. Men's Shelter, c/o Carolyn Yohannes, 510 Main Street #450, New York, NY 10044.

Mr. Tram

You also could direct your thoughts at this time to our tireless Protector of the Tramway, Al Weinstein, who died late Thursday at New York Hospital. There's more about Al on page 3, and we'll have more next issue.



When words fail, sometimes a picture can stand testament in their stead.

In my mind, there is a picture of Al Weinstein standing at a microphone, giving literal hell to Jerome Blue and the RIOC Board of Directors, addressing them nonetheless in words and tones at once respectful and firm. He is dressed to appear before a World Parliament. He is prepared. He is defending his beloved Tramway on his own behalf and on behalf of every resident of Roosevelt Island. He is a man with a mission, and his zeal is both palpable and irresistible. He speaks with a youth and vigor that would be enviable in a charging executive of 35, though his presence commands the respect due a man in his 80's, as is Al.

Another picture puts Al in his chair at a meeting of the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, on which he served for many years, sent by Rivercross voters to speak for them. They knew, of Al, that their own love for the Island's icon of aerial transit would be in good hands. Al waits, impatiently, to be recognized by Patrick Stewart. He waits, and across the room I can feel his anxiety that his fellow delegates may leave before he is able to make his point. Then, at long last, he is recognized, and he

speaks. Here, he is among colleagues, and he allows himself to rail. He shares information that nobody else has, and from that platform of his special relationship with both the Tramway and his RIRA cohorts, he marries passion and an argumentative skill into a warning of terrible things that may happen if the Council is not alert. But they are alert, for Al Weinstein has spoken and they have heard.

In another picture, Al is in Trelis with Fran. He has just returned from the United Nations, where despite his retirement earlier this decade, he has the privilege of an office and duties that honor his skill in the profession of stenographic reporter. He is telling Fran about his day. But I pass by, and he interrupts himself to stop me and be sure I am aware of something *The WIRE* should report — about the Tram, of course. Or he might be stopping me only to say, "That was some issue," always encouraging, always appreciative, always ready with a kind word.

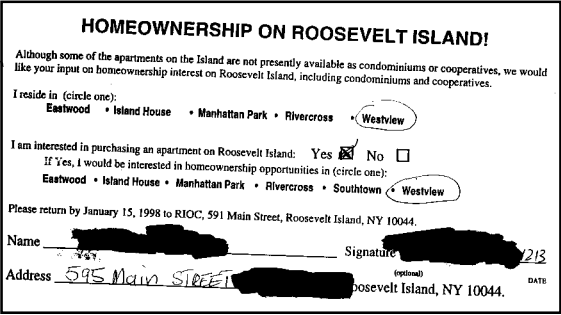
There is a voice picture of Al, too. When I close my eyes, I can

Letters

To the Editor:

At a recent RIRA meeting I complained about the secrecy surrounding RIOC operations on this Island as well as its documented incompetence.

Nothing illustrates this better than the RIOC survey of all residents on the proposition of home ownership. Though over 3,500 questionnaires were sent out, only 79 were returned despite the fact that virtually no one is opposed to home ownership. Indeed it is one



of the sturdiest of American ideals. An elementary course in statistics would have let the project go. Yet RIOC's newsletter was dominated by the results. Its slick, expensive

hear him asking for "just five minutes," in person, of course, because he knows that he is a better advocate when he can look me in the eye and press me for the attention the Tramway deserves. Often, I would put him off, pleading other demands for those five minutes. But more often, I would find the five minutes — which, of course, would become 20 before he finished with me — and I would listen attentively. This is, after all, Al Weinstein, Defender of the Tramway.

There is the moment when Al sees me with my mother, who is his age, and stops us to deliver himself of kind words about her son, knowing that this is a kindness not just to me, but to her. He is gracious, charming, and working his special mischief of compliments carefully and joyfully rendered.

I have many pictures of Al Weinstein in the gallery of my mind. His own favorite picture of him, among many I took, appears on page 1, and it shows him at his constant best: a diplomat, an advocate, a gentleman, a friend to all the Island, and a great bearer of the passion he would leave with us, ask us to remember and share, and to carry forward in his name.

Goodbye, Al, we will miss you so much.

Dick Lutz

newsletter published the results with graphs and all. RIOC had thus tossed a good deal of taxpayer's money down the drain.

But I was interested in helping 79 of my neighbors. I have been a Housing Commissioner in Chicago where we pioneered in moving our tenants into ownership. I have been a HUD consultant on the same thing. It is a complicated question involving sophisticated banking, publicly-supported mortgages, and a specialist in real estate. It is also a field full of charlatans and scam artists.

I wanted to prepare a packet on the subject of home ownership for the 79 neighbors who answered the questionnaire.

I arrived at RIOC headquarters and asked to review the questionnaires. I was told that they were not immediately available. I returned to the bunker two days later and was told the "conference room had to be cleaned." I agreed to wait. An hour later I was told it would be "forty-five minutes to an hour" until it would be ready for me to see the documents. Finally, I left telling them to call me. My phone rested tranquilly. I then went to the bunker again and I was handed 79 questionnaires returned by my neighbors.

It is hard to imagine that the documents had all the names and addresses of those interested in home ownership blacked out. They looked like FBI files — almost everything redacted. For the first time in American history, a list of people seeking home ownership had somehow become a clandestine ideal to be hidden from their neighbors.

It was clear RIOC felt it did not need my help. But it has taken on a very serious issue. You cannot promise people something as important as owning their own homes and do nothing about it. To be blunt: That is cruel. Though I shouldn't, I still believe there is enough sense of responsibility in RIOC to provide professional advice and counsel to the people whose hopes they have ignited.

Despite my disappointment, I remain ready and anxious to help.

Richard C. Wade

COMING UP

compiled by Claire Friedland • phone/fax 317-8523

Today (Saturday, November 21), 9:00 a.m., **Community Cleaning of Good Shepherd Chapel.** Just show up ready to work. Donations for cleaning supplies gladly accepted.

Today, PS/IS 217, **Family Portrait Day** (open to all – not limited to PS/IS 217 families).

Saturdays, 11:00 a.m., Time-Warner Cable channel 34, **Charlie’s House**, produced by the Roosevelt Island Youth Program.

Sun., Nov. 22, 1:00-4:00 p.m., preview of Historical Society exhibit, **Portrait of a Changing Island: 19th to 21st Century Maps of Roosevelt Island**, at the Cultural Center.

Sun., Nov. 22, 7:00 p.m., **Community Thanksgiving Celebration**, Cultural Center, 548 Main Street; an evening of music, poetry, readings, and stories.

Mon., Nov. 23, 7:30 p.m., **Maple Tree Group**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Planning the form of Island self-governance, and campaign for the necessary legislation.

Tue., Nov. 24, 6:30 p.m., **Weight Watchers** (second meeting), Senior Center. Information: Marilyn Engstler, 838-4747.

Mon., Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m., **Maple Tree Group**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Planning the form of Island self-governance, and campaign for the necessary legislation.

Mon.-Tue., Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 6:00-10:00 p.m., Cultural Center, **Holiday Crafts Bazaar**. Information: 756-5069.

Wed., Dec. 2, 7:45 p.m., **Photographic Society of Roosevelt Island**, Island House Community Room. Information: 752-5034.

Fri., Dec. 4, 8:30 p.m., **Main Street Theatre’s** production of **Fiddler on the Roof**. Information: 371-4449

Fri.-Sat., Dec. 4-5, next issue of **The Main Street WIRE**.

Deadlines: Advertising in the paper, Fri., Nov. 27; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Nov. 30. **Future issues:** December 5, 19 (Christmas issue); January 23, 1999; February 6, 20; 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 notice at the time*, are invited to call **826-9055** to make their interest known. **Phone/fax** for news, (212) **826-9055/755-2540**; urgent/breaking news, 917-353-1647; phone/

fax for advertising inquiries, (212) **751-8214/755-2540**; phone & fax to list your Island organization’s event here without charge, **317-8523** (provide call-back number for possible follow-up).

Sat., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Sun., Dec. 6, 10:00 a.m., **Roosevelt Island Art Association**.

Sat., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Sun., Dec. 6, 1:30 & 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Mon., Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Wed., Dec. 9, 8:00 p.m., **Roosevelt Island Residents Association**

Common Council meeting. Public welcome to address the Council at the beginning of the session; no registration required.

Thur., Dec. 10, *note new time, 1:00 p.m.*, **Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation** Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Fri., Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Sat., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Sun., Dec. 13, 1:30 & 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Sun., Dec. 13, Special guest performance, **The Morgan Scott Ballet Company**, Coler Hospital. Times & tickets: **848-6043**.

Mon., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., **MST’s Fiddler on the Roof**.

Mon., Dec. 14, **Toastmasters**. Visitors welcome. Information: 751-9577.

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.

Al Weinstein died late Thursday just as *The WIRE* was going to press, hence the outdated references in some articles in this issue. *The WIRE* will carry additional information in the December 5 issue.

Al Weinstein is dying. He is at New York Hospital, where he has been for the past 11 days, in a room directly overlooking his beloved Island. On an early visit it cheered him that he could see our windows, though his own are not visible to him. Fran has been with him, of course, every moment the hospital will allow, as has their son, Robbie.

At our initial meeting following the election, the RIRA Common Council created a Certificate of Public Service, which Shirley Margolin, Linda Heimer, and Judith Berdy were then able to present to Al last week while he was still conscious. He was moved, but it seemed to me to be wholly inadequate, and I told him so. The entire Council felt the same, but although we were frustrated with its inadequacy, we wanted to be able to give to him tangible evidence of our respect and admiration for his contribution to the Island, as well as a token of the Island’s universal affection.

At the time, although we knew he was dangerously ill, we were not aware that his illness was fatal.

I doubt anyone on the Island knows the extent to which we are indebted to Al Weinstein. It is not too much to say that we owe the fact that we still have the Tram at all to his unremit-

ting diligence. There simply is no aspect of the operation of the Tram that Al does not know from the ground up, and which he has not safeguarded with his assiduous zeal. There are very few on the Island who have not heard at least one of his impassioned speeches on behalf of the Tram at a Town Meeting, or a RIOC Board meeting, or in some other venue.

RIRA President’s Column



Al Weinstein

“Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,” he would begin, and you knew you were in for it. Before I entered our community political life, I have to admit I would sometimes think on these occasions, “Here we go again...”

But not anymore. For some time now, when I look at my not entirely distinguished-looking friend, I see a veritable mythic warrior of giant stature whose genuine nobility is exceeded only by the size of his pure and gentle heart.

Al has chaired the Tram Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association for as long as it has existed. And he came to that position from prior championship of Tram issues before RIRA existed. There are many of us who think of it as Al’s Tram, and rightly so.

RIRA will by Resolution of the Common Council ask the Commissioner of DHCR to rename the Tram Plaza the *Al Weinstein Memorial Plaza*. It is only fitting. It is only right.

Although everyone associates the Tram with Al, not everyone knows that he spent 48 years at the UN, as a stenographic reporter, starting in 1948 and retiring in the early ’90’s at the Security Council level. He is a respected member of the State, national, and international associations of stenographic, court, and parliamentary reporters, and he was kind enough to ask Karen and me to their annual luncheon at the UN early this summer. Kofi Annan was the guest speaker. (Al could often be seen walking to work with Annan in years past.) The Delegates Dining Room is so positioned that almost all of Roosevelt Island is in view. The Tram is easily seen.

“Distinguished ladies and gentlemen...” Al began.

I cannot count the number of times when, during some Tram imbroglio, I have heard one person or another say of Al, “What would we do without him?”

We are going to have to find out.

I will deeply mourn his passing. It is the loss of a friend who, for me, *defines* the word “gentleman.” It is also the Island’s loss of a champion who defines the words “public service.”

Patrick Stewart

Website Seeks A Webmaster

Website NYC10044 is looking for a volunteer Webmaster.

The job entails updating the website that operates in association with *The Main Street WIRE*.



“*Website NYC10044* is an easily accessible repository of Island history,” said Dick Lutz, *WIRE* Managing Editor who founded the website two years ago, “but we also have a chronology of the Island today, and it hasn’t been updated for a long time. We know that legislators and others refer to it, and without regular updates it has gone stale.” The site has had nearly 19,000 “hits,” or user accesses, in the last two years. “The material is available and ready in electronic form,” Lutz explained, “and it’s just a matter of turning it into web pages.”

To function as Webmaster for the site, a volunteer would need experience in website management, and the appropriate computer equipment as well as on-line access. For further information, call *The WIRE* at (212) **826-9055**.

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.**



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Saturday, Nov. 21, 1998

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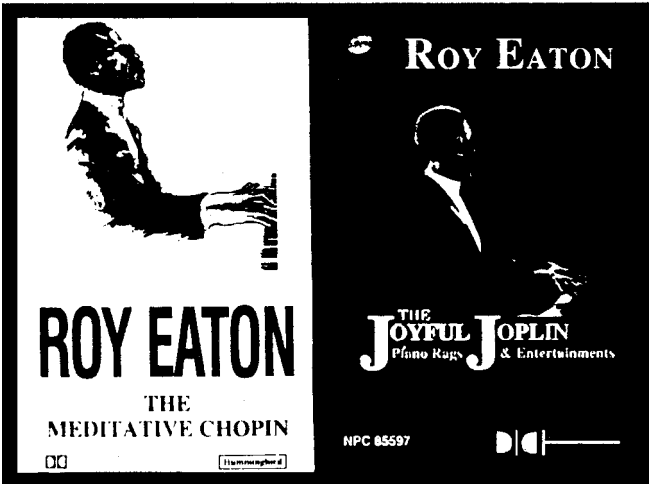
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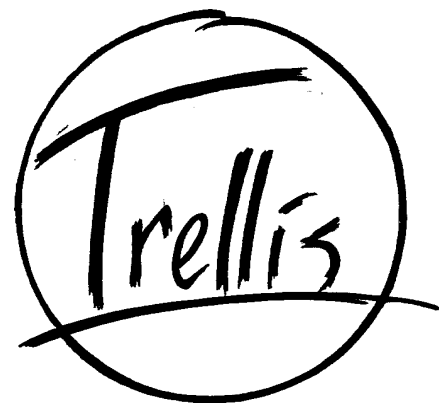
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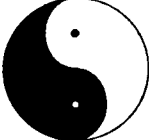
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A New Take on Southtown's Future

Commentary by Jeffrey Hochman

Editor's Note: Jeff Hochman works for the City of New York in urban planning, and serves on the Common Council of the Residents Association, chairing its Planning Committee. *The WIRE* asked Hochman for his comments on the Southtown proposals put forward last week.

Southtown architects Davis Brody Bond and Gruzen Samton have produced two plans under the guidance of a senior member of the team, Max Bond. Seventeen years ago, when I started as an Assistant Planner for the Department of City Planning, Max Bond had just been appointed to the City Planning Commission. As the only African-American and a progressive architect, he argued for and against many projects during the mayoralty of Ed Koch.

Seeing him all these years later as Southtown's senior architect reassures me that the community has at least a fighting chance for a fair design by a firm that listens to the community.

That having been said, some comments on the two proposals, the second of which is illustrated here and is favored by the developers.

Option I

This design has lower, bulkier buildings covering 21% of Southtown's 19.3 acres. The continuation of Main Street is about 100 feet east of the subway station, a boulevard of two parallel roads something like Park Avenue in Manhattan. The tall side of each building – 13 floors – fronts this dual roadway, stepping down to 10, then 8 floors, toward the river. This is the opposite of many tall buildings built before 1961, which typically step back on their street side.

The 1961 Zoning Law insisted that tall buildings be set back after every five floors. The short part of each building would be at the sidewalk, giving pedestrians a sense of intimacy and neighborhood, in contrast with high rise apartment buildings that seem to destroy that sense of community. Jane Jacobs, in her famous 1961 book, *Death and Life of American Cities*, wrote that any building so tall that mothers cannot see and call their children are too high.

The open space around the buildings may be too small for adequate playgrounds, other than benches. What would we put in these open spaces? Because they are not open to the street, they could become an area of neglect or a haven for crime. The soccer field would be placed in the southeast corner of the site. There would be a loop/cul de sac from the road to the subway station. Speculation was that there might be some retail – perhaps a candy store/luncheonette/cafe to welcome people to Roosevelt Island. The same could occur near the Tram.

Option II

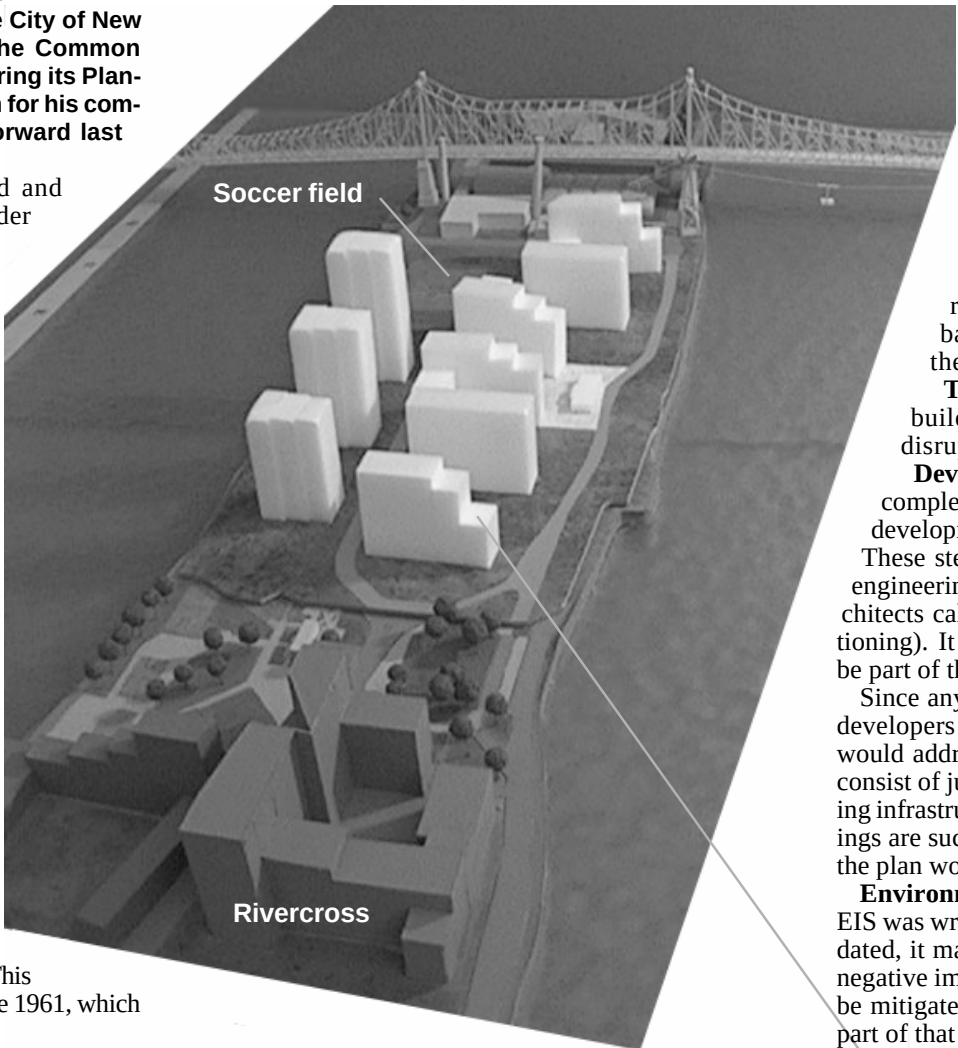
This option has a continuation of Main Street similar to Option I. One large two-way road is twice the width of existing Main Street. On the Manhattan side, there are six high-rise buildings. Three vary from eight to 16 floors, while two are 16-story towers. The buildings on the southern and northern end of Southtown have nine floors on the river, stepping up to 14, then 16 floors, then back down to eight, with segments of eight and 16 stories fronting the street. On the Queens side of Main Street, there are three towers with open space between them. The northernmost building is 20 stories, the next 24, and the southernmost, 28.

The building coverage in this plan is only 15% with 77% open space, a proportion much more consistent with the open space the community wants. As in Option I, the soccer field is positioned in the southeastern section of the site.

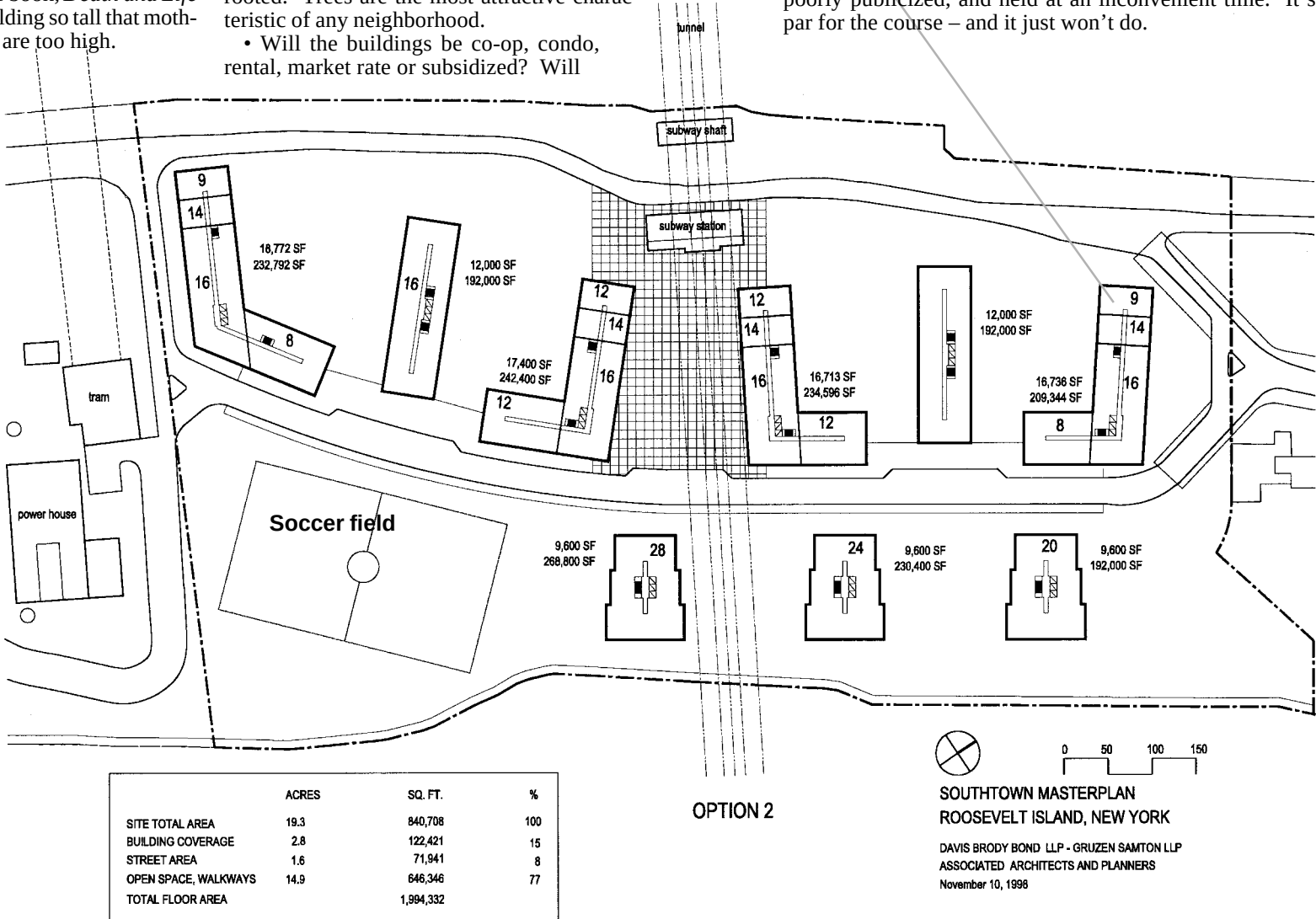
Issues

There are many issues here:

- These buildings would interfere with light and air on the Island, casting a shadow over existing buildings. My recommendation would require the buildings to have more windows to provide more light and air.
- Some Rivercross shareholders would lose part of their view of Manhattan and the Queensboro Bridge. An adjustment of the buildings' heights might help.
- There needs to be assurance that the walkways on the Manhattan and Queens side remain, and are well-maintained. The Roosevelt Island community should insist on this assurance to continue the feeling of living in a park.



- Playgrounds and benches should be available throughout the open space. Without playgrounds and benches, the open space would go unused.
- The trees currently on Main Street should not be uprooted. Trees are the most attractive characteristic of any neighborhood.
- Will the buildings be co-op, condo, rental, market rate or subsidized? Will



	ACRES	SQ. FT.	%
SITE TOTAL AREA	19.3	840,708	100
BUILDING COVERAGE	2.8	122,421	15
STREET AREA	1.6	71,941	8
OPEN SPACE, WALKWAYS	14.9	646,346	77
TOTAL FLOOR AREA		1,994,332	

the number of rooms attract families or single people? The buildings should reflect the mix that currently exists on Roosevelt Island. All upper middle class, yuppie, or low-income should not predominate in any part of the Island. Moreover, the racial mix should continue in each building.

• Finally, will people leave the current buildings on Roosevelt Island to move to these new buildings (if they can afford to)? When Co-op City was built in the 1960's, many middle-class people left the rest of the Bronx simultaneously, causing deterioration in those neighborhoods. Of course, some people will move to the new buildings, but caution should be taken not to abandon the old for the new.

There are other considerations:

Commercial Space: A couple of convenience stores should help residents on a day-to-day basis, but new commercial space should otherwise be limited in Southtown. The

additional population should help the existing retail finances, but a little competition would help in lowering prices and making the stores more desirable.

Island Welcome: This area, near the Tram station and subway, can become an entrance to Roosevelt Island, where presently none exists. Repositioning the soccer field to the Manhattan side of Main Street would enhance the sense of open space for arriving Tramway passengers, and allow many residents to retain their view of the Tram embarking and landing. The Tram, after all, is still the Island's icon.

Traffic: These plans provide cut-ins at each building so that cars can load and unload without disrupting traffic.

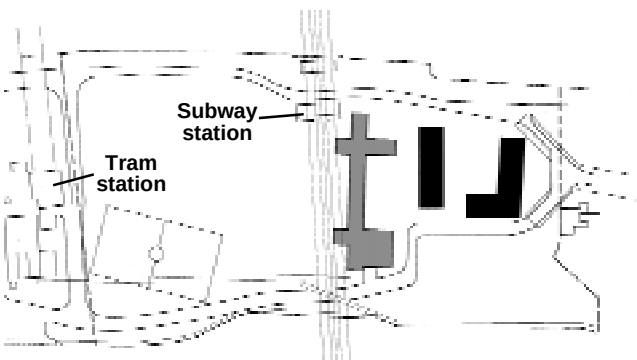
Development: At this point, the architects have only completed schematic drawings. The next two phases of development are *design development* and *final design*. These steps will distinguish the size of the apartments, engineering (plumbing, structural, electrical, and what architects call HVAC – heating, ventilation, and air conditioning). It is very important that Roosevelt Island residents be part of this process.

Since any market is uneven and changes frequently, the developers are proposing phased development. Phase I would address only the northernmost part of the site, and consist of just two buildings positioned to connect to existing infrastructure that serves Rivercross. If those two buildings are successful, then financing for additional phases of the plan would be set in motion.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): Although an EIS was written in 1989 for Manhattan Park, if it is deemed dated, it may have to be rewritten. An EIS will cover the negative impacts on the Island and suggest how they might be mitigated, if that is possible. A public hearing will be part of that process and a delay could be introduced at that point.

Conclusion

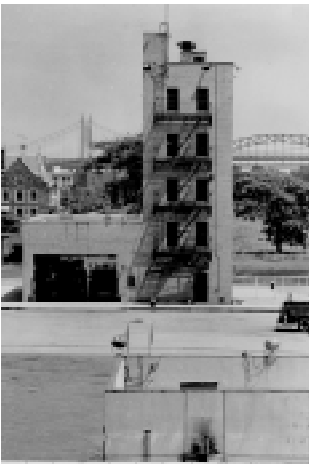
Although this is a good start for a plan, Roosevelt Island residents should participate actively in every step. RIOC's most recent meeting on Southtown was announced late, poorly publicized, and held at an inconvenient time. It's par for the course – and it just won't do.



In phase one, the Nurses Residence (gray) would remain standing and only two buildings (black) would be built, connected to infrastructure that serves Rivercross.

Members of Blackwell Family in Island Reunion Tomorrow

Descendants of the original European family to own Roosevelt Island will return to their “ancestral home” tomorrow (Sunday, November 22) for an afternoon reunion.



New York City firefighters trained on Roosevelt Island in its pre-residential years. This tower was part of the training facility.

Developed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), showing

all the structures existing at that time, including the ferry terminus, a barn, medical research facilities, the City Home, five houses of worship, and the famous elevator building

Activities, in the event organized by the Roosevelt Island Historical Society (RIHS), include a presentation by Blackwell family members and Judith Berdy, RIHS Vice-President, a tour of the Island, and a preview of an upcoming map exhibit prepared from the Historical Society’s collection..

The highlight of the exhibit is a 33-foot long blueprint-style map of the Island in as it was in 1936, developed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), showing



Lonely Church in the Fields The Chapel of the Good Shepherd stood amid acres of unmowed grass in the mid-’60s when urban planners were just beginning to conceive plans for the residential island Welfare Island was later to become as the renamed Roosevelt Island, “Manhattan’s Other Island.”

(photo, page 1) that was once the primary means of Island access. Both cars and people were transported from the Queensboro Bridge to the Island’s surface in the elevator. Photos and historical descriptions will be used to highlight the information on various maps.

A reception for guests and RIHS members will follow.

Members of the Blackwell family are working actively to apply pressure on the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation to arrest the deterioration of Blackwell House, the Island’s oldest existing structure, then turn it over to a responsible guardian.

All RIHS members and Island residents are invited to participate in the day. For further information, contact Judith Berdy at **688-4836**, by e-mail at BlackwellHouse@usa.org, or by fax to (212) **207-8845**.



Broadway on Main Street

MST Opening *Fiddler on The Roof* Friday, December 4

by Esther Cohen

“To life, to life le chaim!” “Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match...” “If I was a rich man...” These are a few of the memorable lyrics from the upcoming Main Street Theatre benefit production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, opening Friday, December 4.

The musical, with book by Joseph Stein, music by Jerry Bock and lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, is based on folk stories by the Yiddish author Sholem Aleichem, of Czarist Russia, at the turn of the century. *Fiddler* tells of love, tradition and the struggle for power. In the small village of Anatevka, Tevye, a poor Jewish milkman, and his sharp-tongued wife Golde, face a dilemma. Three of their five daughters are



Villagers have just been told they must leave their town of Anatevka. Standing: Brenna Stein as Yente, Joe Vacirca as Avram, David Kraut as Lazar. Sitting: Ron Roth as Tevye, and Karen Puritz as Golde.

breaking with the age-old custom of matchmaking by choosing their own suitors. The play is sentimental, humorous, philosophical and full of song. For the first time in Main Street Theatre history, the cast includes

adults, teens and children in a musical for everyone to enjoy. Ron Roth plays Tevye and Karen Puritz, Golde. Brenna Stein is Yente and David Kraut plays Lazar Wolf. The daughters are Sonya Kolba as Tzeitel, Marielena Logsdon as Hodel, Caitlin Donovan and Elizabeth Daley as Chava. Fyedka is played by Ned Dishman. Shprintze and Bielke are played by Alison Walter, Bianca Beach, M. J. Geier, Sasha Diamond and Ellie Phillips, who will all split the roles.

Fiddler is directed by Nancy Howe. Musical Director is Bob McDowell, Choreographer is Diana Baffa-Brill, and sets are by Elizabeth Gates.

Tickets are available at the Main Street Theatre November 30 to December 3, 6:00-8:00 p.m., at 548 Main Street (look for the red awning behind the video store). Performances will run two weekends beginning Friday,

December 4, at 8:30 p.m.; then Saturday, Sunday, and Monday at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 1:30. The following weekend, performances will be Friday (December 11), Saturday, and Sunday and Monday at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 1:30 p.m. All tickets are \$15. There is be a \$10 charge for seniors and disabled on Friday, December 11, only. Phone reservations are taken for off-Islanders, at (212) **371-4449**.

The annual benefit supports the scholarship program at The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance. Cast members have contributed not only their talent but also the costs of production.



Scott Kerstetter as Motel sings *Miracle of Miracles*, telling Sonya Kolba as Tzeitel that it's a miracle God has brought them together.

Cast members also include Anita Michael, Elizabeth Mialaret, Jani Foley, Veronica Shea, Deborah Drucker and Mary Jo Schrager as the Fiddler. Also featured are Scott Kerstetter, Kevin Gates, Marvin Davidowitz, David Kolakoski, Marilyn Atkins, Joe Vacirca, Joan Christianson, Joe Palermo, Barbara Parker, Eugenie Martin, Caroline Andersson, Irene Clark, Kathie Niederhoffer, Terri Resnick, Lorraine Lanham and Liana Zamora.

Weinstein, Defender of Island’s Tramway, Gravely Ill; Receives New Service Award

A Certificate of Appreciation has been presented to Al Weinstein by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA).

Weinstein is gravely ill, and at press time death was considered imminent. He is the subject of Patrick Stewart’s column in this issue of *The WIRE* (page 3).

At the November 11 Common Council meeting, a resolution was passed commending Al “for his continued service to the Roosevelt Island Community.”

Al has been on the Common Council for many years and has served as head of the Transportation Committee for the last two. He has served as residents’ representative in constant touch with all transportation issues, but he’s known Island-wide as the determined defender of the Tramway.

“Without Al’s diligence, Tram schedules would have been cut, service reduced, and even more staff laid off,” said RIRA President Patrick Stewart. “Al has contributed greatly to the betterment of life on Roosevelt Island, and we are proud to honor him with this award.”

Weinstein is the first recipient of the new Community Service Award.

Tree Pits Filled, Finally, With Trees

by Maurice Bleifeld

“The last of the empty tree pits on Main Street has finally been planted with new trees,” the Roosevelt Island Tree Board announced today. The Tree Board’s goal of an unbroken line of living trees along the Island’s major thoroughfare was achieved when seven young linden trees and one callery pear tree were installed alongside the area of Octagon Park and the tennis courts, north of the Fire Station.

The expense of the plantings was underwritten by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) from funds contributed by the Miramax motion picture studios in an agreement to replace trees it cut down at the old Nurses’ Residence during a recent filming of the new movie “The Yard.” Robert Antonek, who represented RIOC during the arrangements, settled for the financial reimbursement as one of the conditions for the use of the grounds.



Robert Antonek

With the advice of the Tree Board, linden trees were chosen to extend the present line of these trees along the entire length of Main Street. The callery pear tree was selected to replace a dead Kwanzan Cherry tree because of its narrower root line so close to the seawall there.

With the successful completion of these plantings, the Tree Board is looking ahead to the next tree replacement project along the seawall facing the Eastwood buildings. This is a carryover from the many activities of Roosevelt Island Day last June, when arrangements were tentatively scheduled by Marilyn Engstler, Director of Community Relations, to replace 13 dead or missing Kwanzan Cherry trees in the area. This group of flowering trees is to be planted early in April.

YAL Asking \$65,000 in Island Funds

The Young Adult League (YAL) has applied to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation for \$65,000 in Island Public Purpose Funds, seeking to continue its training program for a target group in the 18-25 age range.

During the past year, the program taught a number of enrollees how to use computers.

The RIOC Board tabled the matter at its meeting last week, after raising a series of questions, including a query about the size of administrative salaries in the program’s budget. Sources have told *The WIRE* that some \$45,000 of the grant request would go to a single administrator.

Other questions concerned whether the program under last year’s grant had actually reached its target audience, as claimed, and about the appropriateness of an additional grant, given the traditional “seed money” nature of Public Purpose Funds. Under the program’s rules, grants are intended for program start-up, but not for continuing support.

Sexy Seniors Stage Sophisticated Style Soiree

Photography by Margery W. Rubin



Marymount Students – Some 250 Strong – Get Manhattan Park Housing in Dormitory Crunch

by Narissa Schmidt

In addition to being a community with homes, schools, and parks, Roosevelt Island has become a dorm and a classroom for students attending Marymount College, located at 71st Street between Second and Third Avenues. The students reside in 10, 20, 30, and 40 River Road, and consist mostly of freshmen and a few upper termers. Students have been assigned living space on the Island because dorms previously used for freshmen are this year insufficient to house all of the freshman classes.

Most Marymount freshmen live at Dirsh, the designated freshman dorm on 92nd Street at Lexington Avenue. (Marymount does not have a campus, and dorms are scattered on the upper West and East sides of Manhattan.) However, this year there were not enough rooms to accommodate all of the freshman class, and arrangements were made for students to live on Roosevelt Island. Students also attend Common Grounds classes on Roosevelt Island, at the theater next to the River Road buildings and at 507 Main Street. Only freshmen attend this class, which covers Marymount and its policies, school work, and communication and organizational skills.

The cost of dorming on Roosevelt Island is equal to the cost of dorming in Manhattan, which is about \$6,700 per year. The downside to living on the Island is that in the Roosevelt Island dorms there are no cafeterias, and the students, separated from their classmates outside school hours, don't experience as much of a unifying experience as their counterparts in Dirsh do. This is partially affected by the fact that students living here are forced to spend a lot of time at school between classes. Marymount students live two per room, and each apartment has two to three rooms, making a total of four to six students per apartment. Each apartment has a full-size kitchen and two bathrooms, both fully equipped with showers and baths. There are no mixed-gender apartments, and students are spread throughout the buildings, with one apartment per floor.

One student said that he did not like this arrangement because the students do not have a hall or communal area in which to meet, and the noise complaints from the residents are more frequent than complaints from other students would be. However, many students acknowledge and appreciate the fact that their dorms, being apartments in very nice buildings, are much



Some of the Marymount students living on Roosevelt Island are Chad Sullivan (freshman, acting major), Brian Edwards (freshman, acting major), Nadine Friedman (freshman, theater major), Metha Brown (freshman, acting major), Kelly St. Killaire (freshman, undecided), Nathan Murray (freshman, dance major), and Susie Speranza (freshman, acting major).

more attractive than those at Dirsh. The apartments have wall-to-wall carpeting, are very new and well-tended, and many of them have balconies.

To assist the students, college employees called Residents, who are upper-classmen, live in the dorms. There are three Residents per building. There is also a Resident Director living with the students, to help them if they have any problems or complaints. Rules regarding living are not strict; students are allowed to have visitors, and do not have a curfew. Students interviewed say that, although they are not exposed to as many other students from Marymount, they do feel like a community, and feel very connected with the other students who live here.

Though students complain that transportation is difficult because of the subway shuttle's infrequent schedule, and that food on Roosevelt Island is overpriced, they also say that they like living here. A few feel Roosevelt Island is an oasis away from the hectic city and that they would not like living in Manhattan. They feel that the scenery is beautiful, especially the river and the view of Manhattan, and that it is nice to have so many trees and so much grass at hand. One cited the community as her reason for liking Roosevelt Island. She said that she felt very safe, and that it was a very family-oriented place.

Group Seeking Self-Governance Looking for Broader Participation

The Maple Tree Group has begun work toward implementing the November 3 mandate of Island residents in voting to seek elected self-governance of Roosevelt Island. The landslide mandate, 92%, voted yes on the ballot question in the RIRA election.

The group's leader, retired municipal manager David Bauer, has issued a call for broadened participation in MTG activities. "We meet every Monday, at 7:30, in the Chapel," Bauer said, "and we need the input and muscle of every Island resident to make things happen."

The group is developing ways to generate state-wide interest in and sympathy for the legislation introduced in the last legislative session by Assemblymember Pete Grannis, who represents Roosevelt Island. Grannis, who was re-elected November 3, will reintroduce the bill in a slightly altered form in the legislative session starting in January.

The Maple Tree Group is seeking ways to insure there will be adequate support in the State Senate for the bill. Because Grannis is a Democrat in the Democrat-controlled Assembly, and the Senate is Republican-controlled, there is a need for Republican involvement in the process of moving the legislation forward.

In a town meeting last month, Grannis told supporters of the legislation that if the bill can make it through the State Senate, it's likely the Governor will sign it, since he and the Senate work closely together.

For additional information on participating in MTG activities, residents can call Bauer at (212) 593-7259.

Island's Sister Regina Gets CYO State-Wide Award for Teen Work

Sister Regina Palamara of St. Frances Cabrini Parish was honored recently for her outstanding work with teenagers by placement on the Roster of Champions at the state-wide 20th Anniversary Awards Recognition Dinner given by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) of the Archdiocese of New York.

Sister Regina has been a pastoral minister at St. Frances Cabrini parish on Roosevelt Island for sixteen years, and part of her mission is working with youth through CYO and other activities. Her main objective in dealing with teens is to train them for leadership with an awareness of their Christian heritage and value system.

She's been responsible for CYO dances, the recent Halloween Haunted House, and International Dinners. The citation reads: "For her steadfast devotion to the youth as an Elementary School Coordinator for 7 years; for her work as Pastoral Minister at St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Parish...; for her training of young people for leadership with an awareness of their Christian heritage; and for her dedication to the poor and needy in all parts of the world."

Sister Regina is deeply involved with work for overseas missions in areas where help is most needed: Swaziland, Africa, Brazil and the Philippines. Money for these ventures is raised through flea-markets, donations and the Roosevelt Island Thrift Shop.

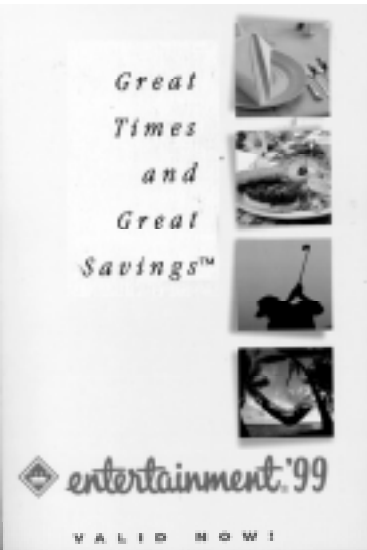
Sister Regina is a native of Southern California and has been a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Mother Cabrini) since 1956.



Wednesday afternoon, Sister Regina had some help showing her CYO award to *The WIRE's* camera.

PTA Offers Discount Entertainment Book in School Fund-Raiser

The PTA of PS/IS 217 is offering for sale the Entertainment discount book, which is filled with hundreds of 2-for-1 and 50%-off discounts for a wide range of activities, including restaurants, movies, car rentals, airline flights, and more. The book, from En-



tertainment Publications Inc., is available for \$20. For that price, buyers get hundreds of offers on all levels of dining, from Bombay Palace to The Lemon Tree, and from the Intrepid Museum to the Guggenheim. Other coupons are honored at Modell's, Florsheim and Kinney Shoes, Pearle Vision, Sam Goody, and many other stores.

The PTA says buyers will make back their \$20 expenditure many times over, and will be helping the PTA raise funds for PS 217. The discount book is also suggested as a gift for the holidays, or as a birthday present.

The book is available at the PTA office any morning between 9:00 and 10:00, or call the school at 980-0294 and leave a message at the PTA extension 2108.

PTA Offering Family Portrait Deal Today

Today (Saturday, November 21) is family portrait day at PS/IS 217.

Under the sponsorship of the PTA, a professional portrait photographer will take family portraits. This event is open to any family, whether or not their children attend the Island school. A package of one 10x13, one 8x10, two 5x7s, and 12 wallet-sized photos costs \$49.99 by check made payable to the PTA.

To make an appointment, readers can call the school at 980-0294 and ask for the PTA extension (2108).

Community Thanksgiving Set For Sunday

Roosevelt Islanders will join together in a Thanksgiving celebration Sunday night (November 22) at 7:00 in an evening of music, poetry, readings, and stories expected to last a hour to and hour and a half.

The event will take place in the Cultural Center (548 Main Street). The celebration has a revised format this year described by its organizers as "lots of fun."

The occasion is a reworking of previous years' "Interfaith Thanksgiving Service," which was primarily a religious event.



This tour group from Tokyo's Building Maintenance Society visited Roosevelt Island last week, touring the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and other Island buildings.

SPORTSWIRE

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**.

Subway Shuttle Schedule

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

In response to reader requests, wallet-size copies, too.

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	:36 →	:38 →	:40 →	:44 →	:50 →	:52
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Wednesday & Friday • 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

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MORNING LIFEGUARD needed on Roosevelt Island. Please call **308-7271**.

DIVERSIFY YOUR INCOME – Home-based business opportunity P/T, F/T, for Entrepreneurs, Medical & Business Professionals interested in increasing their income. Company is well-known, multi-million dollar, NASDAQ Preventative Health-Care. Call Island resident **1-800-281-5424** for 24-hour Recorded Message.

MAIN STREET THEATRE & DANCE ALLIANCE – Ongoing registration for dance and theater classes. **371-4449**. Unique or period clothing & furniture gladly accepted.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE – Provided by long-term resident on Roosevelt Island. Snacks, play, homework supervision. Evenings, weekend sitting also. Eugenie "Another Mother" (212) **223-0157**

CAT SITTER available on RI. My home or yours. References provided. Eugenie (212) **223-0157**

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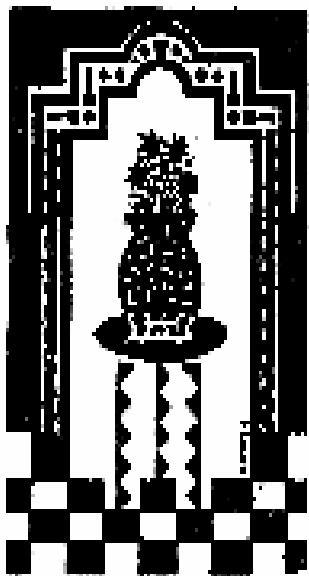
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Dr. Gerald Sweder and staff

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