

Next issue:
January 22-23

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



The Roosevelt Island Day Nursery held a fund-raiser party last Saturday at the Community Center on River Road. This girl was one of hundreds of parents and children who attended. She had the delight of a painted face to wear home.

Patrick Stewart

State Senator Mendez To Back Self-Governance

"That is a good idea." So spoke Olga Mendez, Roosevelt Island's delegate to the New York State Senate, Monday night at a working session of the Maple Tree Group (MTG). She was responding to a description of MTG draft legislation that targets replacement of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) with a locally-elected Board of Residents empowered to hire professional community management.

Residents endorsed the self-governance concept with a 92 percent vote on a ballot question in the Residents Association election last month. Mendez pledged her cooperation in fine-tuning the draft legislation and coordinating its provisions with Governor George Pataki, whose November reelection she supported. "I am game," Mendez said. "I have become a pragmatic politician. I want to help the people who elect me. I am game to do whatever I can to help the Island... I want to do some real studying and discussion with you to put together something that can go through."

Mendez, who was invited to the meeting by Ron Vass, Chair of the Drive for Democracy, to help the group work on the specifics of its legislation and the strategy necessary to move it through the legislative process, was accompanied by her Legislative Counsel, Jorge Vidro. Vidro said he has been reading the regular weekly reports of MTG activity supplied by the group's founder, David Bauer. He told the group, "This is do-able. We have to make sure we're coming from a position of strength." He promised an effort to find parallels with other State-supported housing operations.

Mendez had foreseen the need for greater Island self-governance just over a decade ago in a legislative package she put before the State Senate. It read, in part, "The corporation (RIOC) shall develop proposals regarding increased representation in the operation and management of such Island by the residents thereof as state subsidies to such Island are eliminated, development pursuant to the development plan is completed, and the financing of the Island's development, operation, and management becomes self-sustaining."

On Monday night, the Senator said, "The goal is self-government, and there will be some obstacles to that final goal. We will need to find a formula that will pass both the Assembly and the Senate, and then get the signature of the Governor. We should keep in mind that it might be done in a series of steps."

The Senator praised both the Roosevelt Island concept – a community that is mixed economically and racially, with elderly residents and handicapped residents – and the strong community spirit she says has always been evident on Roosevelt Island. That prompted a comment from Residents Association President Patrick Stewart that the Island spirit has been sapped in the past two and a half years by an unwillingness of the RIOC administration of Dr. Jerome Blue to work with residents through



Senator Olga Mendez listened Monday night as a member of the Maple Tree Group described draft legislation calling for Island self-governance.

DHCR Chief Seeks Islanders For New Planning Committees

The Acting Commissioner of the State's Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) has called for Island residents to put their names forward for two committees he has formed to advise the Board of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) on Island matters. Commissioner Joseph Lynch, who chairs the RIOC Board of Directors, put out the call at last week's RIOC Board meeting.

At the same time, he delayed action on two controversial proposals championed by RIOC President Jerome Blue – an eldercare facility once intended for Octagon Park but now proposed for land occupied by the Sportspark, and twin 24-story hotel/condo towers for Southpoint – by referring them to the new committees. "They will not appear on the [RIOC Board] agenda again until these committees have had an opportunity to review them," Lynch said, effectively tabling the matters for at least a month.

The Commissioner's move is being interpreted as a slap at the style of RIOC President Jerome Blue. Both committees will report to the RIOC Board; neither will include Blue nor report to him. Furthermore, the formal announcement asking for applicants for one committee reads, in part, "Committee efforts will focus on providing a consistent, comprehensive, community-sensitive and economically feasible development process." Blue has

been criticized for an approach to development that is not community-sensitive. The same paragraph in the announcement puts a priority on "quality of life," a factor Blue has been accused of ignoring. (Full text of the announcements, page 10.)

(In another move Blue opposed, two community representatives joined the Board for the first time, albeit as non-voting members. Photos below.)

RIOC President Jerome Blue was taken aback briefly at last week's RIOC meeting, in a moment of contrast that showed just how beleaguered his RIOC regime has become. During his President's report, he made brief mention of repairs under way at Blackwell House, the Island's venerated landmark he's been accused of allowing to deteriorate.

There was a bit of applause. Blue stopped in his rapid-fire delivery of the pro forma report, looking up, flustered.

Board member David Kraut asked, "Is that a first?"

Blue responded, "I believe it is," before continuing with his report.

The new committees are Strategic Planning, and Capital Planning and Development. Each will be chaired by a RIOC Board member and will include two other RIOC Board members. In addition, five other members will be chosen by the RIOC Board.

In other actions:

- The Board denied an application from the Organization for African-Korean Solidarity (OAKS) for public purpose funds for a gospel music concert held in October, electing not to set a precedent of funding events after they have been held.

- In an executive session prior to its public meeting, the Board denied further funding for Young Adult League (YAL) classes. YAL's proposal had included a significant chunk of administrative salary money.

- The Board announced a meeting schedule through December of 1999, including evening meetings in May and October for community convenience.



As DHCR Commissioner Joseph Lynch, left, seated next to RIOC President Jerome Blue, chaired last week's RIOC Board meeting...



...RIRA President Patrick Stewart (foreground) and Susan Whitaker (background, left) of the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, sat in for the first time.

the elected Common Council of RIRA, the Residents Association.

Stewart also discussed his concerns over lack of maintenance on the Island, while Lee Edelman suggested that a claimed million-dollar budget surplus at RIOC is probably due to the neglect of maintenance. Edelman discussed the need for a full engineering survey as part of a changeover in Island management. Funds for such a survey, estimated to cost \$250,000 to \$500,000, are to be the subject of a revision of the draft legislation.

The Maple Tree Group holds open meetings Monday nights at 7:30 in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd; the next meeting is scheduled for January 4.



Trellis Deliverer Attacked, Injured

A Trellis employee, Obaydull Haq, was attacked and injured Sunday night while making a delivery in 580 Main Street. He was struck in the head with a beer bottle.

The assault, apparently part of a robbery attempt, occurred at the time of Public Safety's shift change, about 11:00 p.m.

Public Safety no longer supplies blotter information to *The WIRE*, but Trellis management reports one of the attackers has been arrested after being identified by Haq.

Season's Greetings from The WIRE

and Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

Pages of Thought and Opinion

It’s Time, Charlie

I have a suggestion for a longtime friend of Roosevelt Island, Congressman Charles Rangel. Isn’t it about time for you to take a seat in the United States Senate? The opportunity soon will exist with the announced retirement of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

Charlie and I go back to a night, that now seems ages ago, when I hosted one of the first parties on the Island to welcome our new Representative and to have him meet some of those folks who then were active in civic affairs here. And, fortunately for us, many of those same people still are.

Over the years, our friendship has been constant, easily surviving the redistricting that moved Roosevelt Island away from Charlie – or maybe that should be the other way around. At one point, I called him to suggest that he campaign for Mayor. He phoned later to tell me he had declined making the run and the Party was endorsing David Dinkins.

While no longer representing us, Charlie still has visited here on several occasions, usually when invited to take part in a special event. And, as usual, he becomes the center of many admirers. Over time, he also has developed a national following for his wisdom and rational reasoning on affairs both in the States and worldwide.

Say It Ain’t So

That reputation should carry over to the Senate and likely assure him an important place among his colleagues there. Too, Charlie, I hear some whispers that our current Senator, recently defeated for reelection, just might be considering another run, this time for the seat apparently to be vacated by Daniel Patrick.

The merest suggestion of that sends shivers both up and down my spine with the attendant possibility the voters might restore you-know-who to power in the not-too-far distant future.

So please, Charlie, consider becoming Senator Charles Rangel and I promise I never will ask you to do anything more for Roosevelt Island. Until the next time.



Happy Days

This is the season of the year that most of us look forward to. Whether or not we celebrate Christmas, Kwanza, or Chanukah, most of our days and nights are spent bustling around seeking an appropriate gift for those we love. It is also, however, a period when we need to focus some of our energy and effort on those who are less fortunate than we are. Some-time over this holiday period try to remember them, too.

As you join with your friends and family in celebration take the time to reflect on your blessings, recharge your spirits and rededicate yourself to living a life that contributes to the well being of others. Happy Holidays!



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Editorial (212) **826-9055**
Urgent news **917-353-1647**
Advertising **751-8214**
Fax **755-2540**

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Editor – Jim Bowser
Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Contributing Editor – Sharon Bermon
Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
Circulation Managers – George Rubin, Sherie Helstien
Founding Publisher – Jack Resnick

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Guest Shot:

Dick Wade

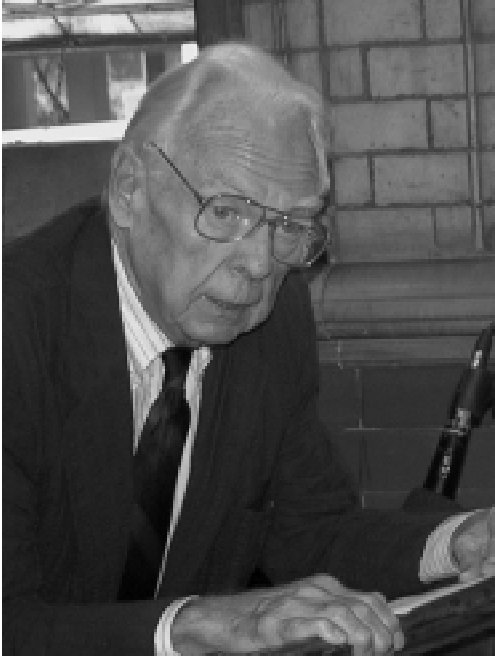
Editor’s note: Dr. Richard C. Wade made the following remarks to the meeting of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board of Directors last week, after learning that a proposal to build a luxury hotel on Southpoint was on the agenda. (The matter was referred to newly-created committees – see story on page 1.)

Well, here we are again. The RIOC [Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation] Board is once again resurrecting its glory days. Suddenly the two 24-story-high jumbo hotel with its associated desecration of important landmark buildings appears again on the agenda. The Eldercare project, once sunk up north, suddenly pops up again in the south. For residents, nightmares never seem to go away. Walter Mitty is not dead, he lives on in RIOC.

The RIOC Board knows full well that the projects will never be built. The environment and historic preservation reviews have not been taken. The City, which owns the Island and leases it to the State, will never agree to such a radical change in purposes of the original plan. No community organization, such as Community Board 8, Municipal Arts Society, public parks advocates to say nothing of Island groups – in fact, except for the RIOC Board and a couple of developers – favor this gross invasion of the Island.

Three years ago, RIOC had four tasks:

- The maintenance of the Island’s infrastructure. The seawalls are in serious trouble. Even Main Street is in trouble. Everywhere you look the expected services have deteriorated.
- The development of Southtown. Everyone knows that the Island needs new residents to sustain our commercial enterprises. Yet after three years nothing has been done, except to put a crane on the lot to suggest something was happening.
- To get our own library into the Public Library System to afford residents and their children the same opportunities as other New York neighborhoods.
- To integrate the Tram into the city’s transit system to sustain the Island’s life line to Manhattan. Yet



this board has persistently viewed the tram as an amenity, not a necessity. If it weren’t for Al Weinstein, the smallest tall man on this Island, the board almost got away with it. And the board still makes any suggestion for improvement as hostile judgment. It still does not understand that the tram is here to stay and inevitably will improve its service.

Southtown remains unmolested and its periphery has become a parking lot. Landmarks are sliding into disrepair. RIOC continues to follow “development” chimeras with Marriott Hotels and Eldercare arguing that they would produce “revenues.” No doubt casino gambling will be the next suggestion. Meanwhile, Southtown remains the essential next step to make the Island self-sufficient.

The Library has been included into the New York Public Library system. But that was done by the residents, over 20 years, not by RIOC. Indeed, Dr. [Jerome] Blue [President of RIOC] did not even ap-

pear at its formal opening when every elected official from the state legislature and city government participated.

This Board will soon be gone. They have severely damaged this Island. We have not only lost three years when we could have begun Southtown, restored the seawall, improved the physical plant, and begun important social programs to involve all Islanders. Instead we have a cloud of secrecy that stems from the chronic paranoia of a Board that fears the people it is supposed to serve.

The singular achievement of this RIOC Board has been to unify the residents. It has transformed the Roosevelt Island Residents Association from a small advisory committee into the authentic voice of the community. In short, this

board has done nothing to take care of its patrimony, to plan for the future, or to accept the fact that we who live here ought to be at least consulted when decisions that affect us are made.

When this board is gone, we’ll still be here. Mr. President, please, leave us an Island that can still be repaired and can still redeem the promise invested to us by the original ideal.

This is about the 8 percent.

Last month, RIRA’s ballot question on self-governance for Roosevelt Island scored 92% among those who voted on the issue – 9 out of 10 voting to reduce the State’s role in management of Roosevelt Island to a minimum, and provide for local, elected supervision of a professional administrator.

Eight percent voted no. Why?

While there was some confusion with another ballot question – this one on the general election ballot – on which Democrats were urging a *no* vote, there were also some people whose vote against democratic local rule was anything but a mistake. One reason given was particularly troubling. It was...

“I don’t know of five residents I’d trust to run the Island.”

There are several things that are disturbing about this view.

First...

To some extent, it springs from the view that monthly RIRA meetings are seriously disorganized, accomplish little, and sometimes degenerate into a gradual abandonment of proceedings around quitting time, 10:00 p.m. The worry is that a supervising Board of five residents might behave similarly.

If that happened, it would indeed be a matter of some concern. But a smaller group would surely work more efficiently and with greater focus of responsibility. Eventually, if not immediately, a smaller group with real power over the Island’s present and future would attract highly qualified Islanders willing to

act on their very real concerns about our home.

RIRA’s role, incidentally, would not be reduced, but would be enhanced. That’s because elected Islander Board members would need to pay attention, harness RIRA’s ability to interact with the population, and carefully consider the views RIRA would bring to the matters the elected Board considers.

island observer

But back to a response to this concern about an elected Board of Island Residents being in control.

Second...

It suggests that the current situation is preferable: A panel of mostly strangers, their essential motivation governed by political concerns that have almost nothing to do with Roosevelt Island, unfamiliar with the Island as a dwelling place, paid too little to care very much, coming once a month to rubber stamp the actions of a political appointee who holds the job not by virtue of qualifications, but by virtue of connections and a crony’s clout. And *that* level of control only when the administrator chooses to let them in on what he’s doing – too rare of late.

Just about *any* five Islanders are likely to care more, be present more, be more familiar – and therefore likely to do a better job.

Third...

The Board of five residents would not directly “run” the Island. They would, instead, hire professional management to handle day-to-day operations. Imagine any City Council: Some of the elected members might be highly qualified professionals, but many are, quite simply, citizens who care and are willing to keep an eye on things.

Fourth...

It’s worth keeping in mind that these resident board members would be answerable to the community that elected them, us, not to the Governor. As residents, we’d have the power to deny reelection to any member who proved unworthy of our support.

Fifth...

...and possibly most important: Residents would get to know these five people. They’d have to get it right or be subject to a lot of Main Street campaigning.

Would it be perfect?

No, only as perfect as democracy itself. Only as good as we, as residents and citizens of our community, are willing to make it by hard work, paying attention, and participating.

That’s the crux of it: **Participation.** Right now, participation gets you little, because RIOC isn’t listening – or at least wasn’t until recently when DHCR Commissioner Joe Lynch got truly fed up with RIOC President Jerry Blue. Whoever the players, with an elected Board of Residents and professional management, your participation is likely to deliver a lot more genuine bang. **DL**



The Main Street Theatre presented *Fiddler on the Roof* as its Fall fund-raiser. The production closed last weekend but for those who performed and those who saw it, the glow continues. More pictures and a review on page 7.

Letters



To the Community:

Fran Weinstein and the son of Al Weinstein, Robert Weinstein, thank you sincerely for your kindness and sympathy at a time when it was deeply appreciated.

To The Editor:

I recently had a visitor who used to live on Roosevelt Island. She remarked that the deterioration on Roosevelt Island is coming pretty close to making a slum out of the island. When I asked her for specifics she pointed to:

- the ugly repairs that have been made in the pavement by the subway/bus stop that give a very unattractive first impression to visitors,
- the parked cars on the pavement by the subway entrance, as well as the “parking lot” that seems to have developed across from the Island’s tram station,
- the broken pavement everywhere,
- the dirty sidewalks,
- the broken window on the front of the Eastwood school,
- the badly damaged cement trashcan in front of the Delicatessen shop,

• the lack of covers on most of the trashcans even though some covers are hanging at the side. (There are three unused cement trash cans on the plaza between the chapel and Rivercross. Couldn’t one be substituted for that broken one?),

• the delapidated condition of the Blackwell House.

I myself have observed that a broken vertical blind in RIOC’s office window facing Main Street has never been repaired over the last two years! This sort of neglect cannot be covered up by banners on our lamp posts that say “Welcome” or by the placement on Main Street of wooden plant containers, with puny pine trees, that are aesthetically not compatible with the other planters or our buildings and kiosks.

Is our Island turning into a slum because of RIOC’s neglect?

Mary Camper-Titsingh

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.**

COMING UP

compiled by Claire Friedland • phone/fax 317-8523

At the Senior Center Every week

Mondays

9:00 Stay Well (exercise)

Tuesdays

10-11 Blood Pressure Screening

1:30 Bingo

Wednesdays

9:00 Stay Well (Stretch)

10:00 English as 2nd Language (Beg)

11:00 English as 2nd (Intermediate)

1:30 Lotto (Games)

Thursdays

12:30 Movie

Fridays

10:00 Billiards/Pool Table Open

10:00 English as Second Language

12:30 Blood Pressure Screening

Saturdays

7:30 Bingo & Games

Special Events

Sat., Dec. 19, 8:00 p.m., Holiday Open House

Thur., Dec. 24, 10:00 a.m., Holiday Crafts

Thur., Dec. 31, 7:00 p.m., New Year’s Eve Party

Wed., Jan. 6, 1999, (new time) 7:30 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, including inauguration of new members, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Members of the public are invited to address the Council at the beginning of the meeting.

Fri.-Sat., Jan. 22-23, next scheduled issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Jan. 15; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Jan. 18. **Future issues:** 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, *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 your call-back phone number for possible follow-up).

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.

Life has certainly picked up its pace, as it inevitably does over the Holidays, and last weekend I participated in three very different, and somehow very similar, community events.

On Saturday I accompanied Zoë to her Holiday Fest party, given by the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery. It was a wonderful afternoon. The large Occasion Room at Manhattan Park overflowed with kids and their families and friends, and everyone had a wonderful time. There were raffles, and something Karen says is a Silent Auction, and lots of different activity tables, and some of the best food I’ve had in a while. As the clown was departing, in came Santa Claus, which clearly topped the children’s day. My personal favorite (after the food) was the Musical Chairs played by the parents.

The event was put together by the parents as volunteers, and what a phenomenal lot of work it must have been. In this case, though, its success exceeded the effort.

Sunday afternoon, Karen, Zoë, and I went to the matinee of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Anyone who saw the show will tell you it was wonder-

RIRA President’s Column

ful. Ron Roth was every bit as good as Herschel Bernardi, Mary Jo was a delicious fiddler, the singing and dancing were flawless, the costumes and sets were perfect. Anyone would have a hard time pointing out a single thing that was ‘amateur’ about

the entire production. Zoë was bedazzled, and so was I.

And what a lot of work *that* must have been, and like the Holiday Fest, all done for others, for community, for service, for the joy of doing a job well done to be enjoyed by others.

Sunday evening I went to my 16th Christmas Carol Candlelight Service at Good Shepherd. It was Karen’s 21st, and the tenth time she’s sung baritone with the Ecumenical Choir. You simply cannot come out of that event and not be wrapped in the happiness and magic of the holiday season. And again, the lush decoration of the church with its masses of poinsettias, the gifts brought by the children for the patients at Coler Hospital, the creation of the rehearsals. all done as a gift to the community, and for the joy of a job well done.

It certainly was a jammed-packed weekend, but nothing in it came as a real surprise. I’ve come to expect the very best of the Roosevelt Island community, with its enriching diversity, its remarkable talent pool, its small town fervor, and its big city sophistication. We’re a very special group in a very special place.

Well, Monday’s mail brought all this home to me in a particularly forceful manner. In it was this month’s *RIOC News*. After basking in all that competence, professionalism, and open-hearted sharing all weekend long, I was reminded once again that in RIOC, Roosevelt Island does not have the mirror of the community it wants, needs, and deserves, but instead has its direct counterpart. A sort of “bad twin.”

Blue’s characterization in the newsletter that the Resident Advisory Board “*unanimously agreed to the use of Sportspark as the future site*” for the proposed Eldercare facility is far more of a fantasy than *Fiddler on the Roof*. He mentions it twice, as if to reassure himself. The only thing unanimously agreed to by the committee was that the site was preferable to using state parkland, which is illegal.

The reality is this. Back in May, June and July of 1998, RIRA asked many questions about the Eldercare Facility, which still remain unanswered six months later. While we were not against the facility in principle, the positioning of it in Octagon Park, a designated ecological park, was simply not acceptable.

There are major questions about the newly proposed site. Not the least of which is the legality of knocking down a major portion of Sportspark, which is a community facility built with both HUD and State funds. Then there is the question of the bondholders, no small issue, and the legality of destroying assets under bond. RIOC hardly possesses the authority to override these considerations, any more than they did to plunk it down on parkland.

Other serious questions remain: There’s no confirmation that the project is even within the confines of the Revised Master Plan for development of the Island; the required proper environmental studies have not been done.

One of the most important questions put forward was about its availability to Roosevelt Islanders. The closest I could come to getting an answer to that was one of the developer’s “ballpark figure” of \$2,500 to \$4,900 per month per person. Hardly middle income, and beyond the reach of most of us.

There has been no discussion or evaluation of the infrastructure demands of such a project, or who is to bear the expense of these demands. Neither has there been discussion of how this construction would impact the community in the face of simultaneous Southtown construction.

There are many, many more issues, both large and small, that will need close and careful consideration. Luckily for the community, that consideration will be in the hands of the two newly-created RIOC Board Committees, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Capital Planning and Development Committee. Each of these committees report directly to the Board of Directors, as does Jerry Blue report to the Board. In creating these Committees of the Board, Commissioner Joe Lynch has given the community good reason to yet again be grateful for his farsightedness, his diligence, and his experienced concern for community input.

I want to take this opportunity to express my own gratitude to this remarkable community, and to wish each of you the special joys of the holidays. I hope, and believe, that 1999 will be a much better year for all of us on Roosevelt Island.



Patrick Stewart



from
**Rose
Associates,
Inc.**

Season's Greetings

from the Scouts of

**Boy Scout Troop 59
and Cub Scout Pack 59**

Help Roosevelt Island's Scouts by
buying your **Christmas Tree** from us.

Beside Motorgate

(Near Gristede's, by the circular bike stand)

Friday	Dec. 11 th	6 – 9 pm
Saturday	12 th	9 am – 6 pm
Sunday	13 th	1 – 6 pm
Monday	14 th	6 – 8 pm
Thursday	17 th	6 – 8 pm
Friday	18 th	6 – 9 pm
Saturday	19 th	9 am – 6 pm
Sunday	20 th	1 – 6 pm
Monday	20 th	6 – 8 pm
Sunday	21 st	6 – 8 pm*
Wednesday	22 nd	6 – 8 pm*

*If enough trees remain

**Good, fresh, inexpensive trees we
bring directly from the tree farm.
Good value. Good cause!**

**Best wishes for the Holidays
and a Happy New Year
from all of us at**



MANHATTAN PARK

ON ROOSEVELT ISLAND

and

Roosevelt Island Associates Inc.

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD CHRISTMAS SERVICES

*As of Sunday, December 6, 1998
the Church of the Good Shepherd
celebrates 23 continuous years
of ministering to all believers and seekers
on Roosevelt Island.*

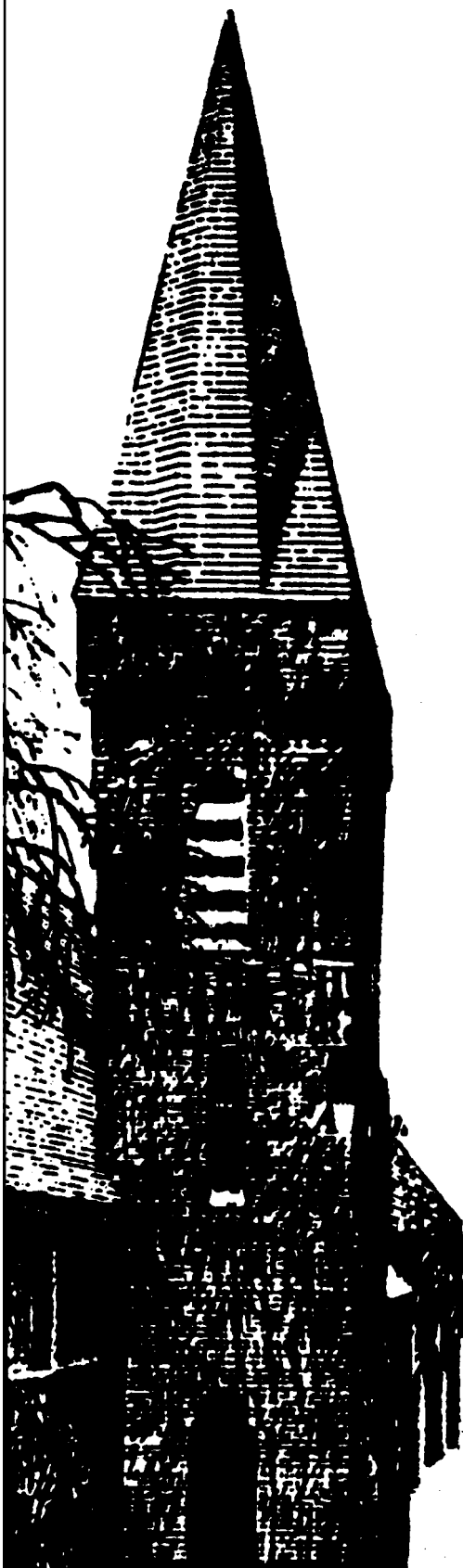
If you missed our *Traditional Candlelight Christmas Service with Choir* this past Sunday don't miss our other special Christmas services:

- *The Sunday School Christmas Program* is Sunday, December 20 at 4:00 PM in the Lower Community Room. You do not need to have a child in Sunday School to have your heart warmed by this touching service. Come and encourage our Island's young people!
- Christmas Eve Service *Family Service of Holy Communion*, December 24 at 8:00 PM, Main Chapel.

Please also join us for our regular schedule of Services:

- Sunday School 9:00 AM each Sunday. Classes for all ages.
- Vicar's Prayers 9:50 AM each Sunday. Quiet meditation prior to our Main Worship Service
- Main Morning Worship each Sunday at 10:00 AM promptly. Join us for our Gospel Sermon and traditional Hymns from our choir.
- Our Adult Bible Group meets each Tuesday evening at 8:00 PM in the Oval room downstairs.
- Our Teen Venture group meets immediately after the main Sunday Service, at 11:00 AM downstairs in the Church. This group offers our young people Christian guidance in dealing with the many challenges they face today, *as well as free pizza and soda.*

*For more information on all Good Shepherd Services and Programs,
contact the Reverend Oliver Chapin at (212) 486-0529*



Southtown: Another Take on a Design

Editor's note: In 1990, the architectural firm of Thoreson and Linard produced an alternative proposal for Southtown and made it available to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. No Southtown development occurred, but with the renewed interest in the site, the plan has surfaced again.

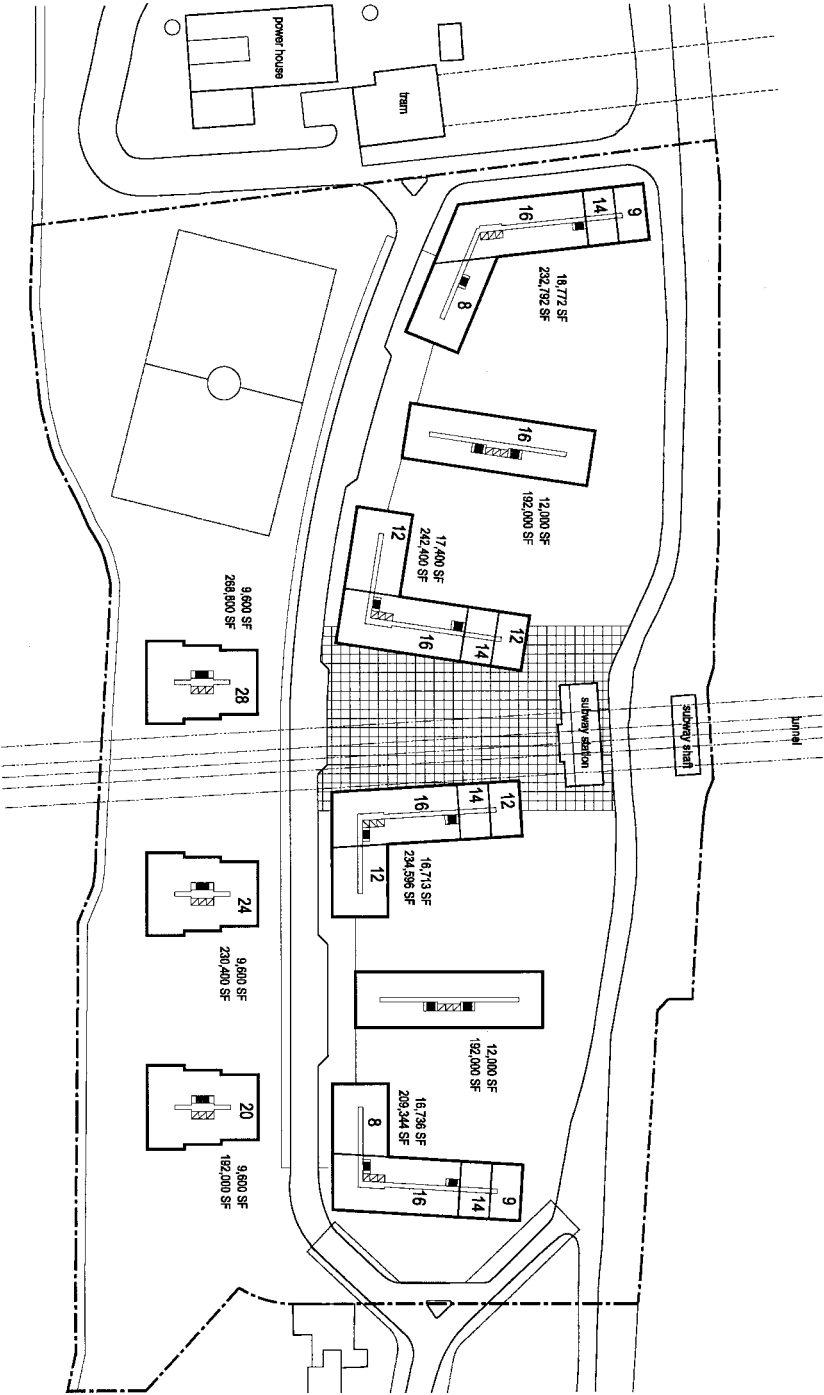
The Thoreson firm wrote a critique of the plan reviewed in a recent *WIRE* by Jeffrey Hochman. *The WIRE* asked Hochman to comment on the Thoreson plan and on the firm's review of the Davis Brody Bond plan. For reference, both plans are reproduced here, with the Bond plan turned for easier comparison.

by Jeffrey Hochman

Some of the Thoreson and Linard (T&L) criticisms of the Davis Brody Bond (DBB) plan for Southtown mirror my own. In their 1990 creation of their design, they worked from the following guidelines (shown in italics):

To respect the unique lineal, island qualities of Roosevelt Island by continuing Main Street from its present location through the Southtown site to the Tram, allowing for vistas to the Queensboro Bridge and the water to east and west.

Comment: To continue Main Street in the same direction instead of Davis Brody Bond's approach of diverting



Davis Brody Bond, 1998

the road east towards the Queens side of the Island would allow residents to see the Tram and the bridge. But in consequence, buildings on the Manhattan side would be much closer to the river. The walkway on that side of the island would remain, with the spacing similar to that between Island House or Rivercross and the river. This would continue the walkways with views on the west side of the Island and open space on the east (Queens) side. It is not a bad idea, but it is a trade-off.

To maintain the vision of a pedestrian-oriented Main Street with low-scale buildings facing the street.

Comment: This is similar to my idea of having buildings set back so that a four-story building would be at the building line (called *streetwall*), giving the pedestrian a sense of neighborhood that a smaller scale would allow.

To retain as much open space as possible with an extensive park area from Blackwell House to the Tram along the Queens side of the island, and to save the existing trees where feasible.

Comment: This is fine as long as the open space is used as active park land and not unusable, possibly unsafe space.

To respect the scale of existing buildings, including Blackwell House.

Comment: A good plan would have existing buildings in symmetry with the new development, not isolated. The paved area around the church between Rivercross and Island House gives all three buildings a connection.

To provide for a practical development plan that can be built in phases as the market dictates, with a compact and efficient infrastructure that will minimize disruption to the residents of the island.

Comment: DBB would also build in phases.

To maintain coherence to, and continuity of, the existing development of the Island with the new development of Southtown.

Comment: This would mean that the buildings and road would be compatible with the present development.

Direct Criticisms

Thoreson and Linard had direct criticism of the plan put forward by Davis Brody Bond:

The plan lacks a unifying design concept, it ignores the island qualities of the Southtown site and the rest of Roosevelt Island. The proposed placement of the first building just to the south of Rivercross blocks the sight lines of Main Street and will cut off the existing community from Southtown. This is similar to what the construction of the Pan Am (now Met Life) Building did to the vistas and continuity of Park Avenue. In addition, this placement divides the Island physically and psychologically.

Response: I agree with this comment. Possibly the building can be moved so there will be a continuous sight line from Southtown to the present development.

The planning scheme is reminiscent of Le Corbusier's cite verte - towers sitting in isolated splendor on a green carpet with cars zipping happily around them on elevated roadways and airplanes joyously flying about. This approach has been abandoned in Europe and the USA as unworkable and in many instances detrimental to the social fabric.

Response: The tallest buildings proposed by Davis Brody Bond are too tall. Le Corbusier's towers in the park separated the buildings from their neighborhood, resulting in open space that became unusable. I agree with the T&L comment.

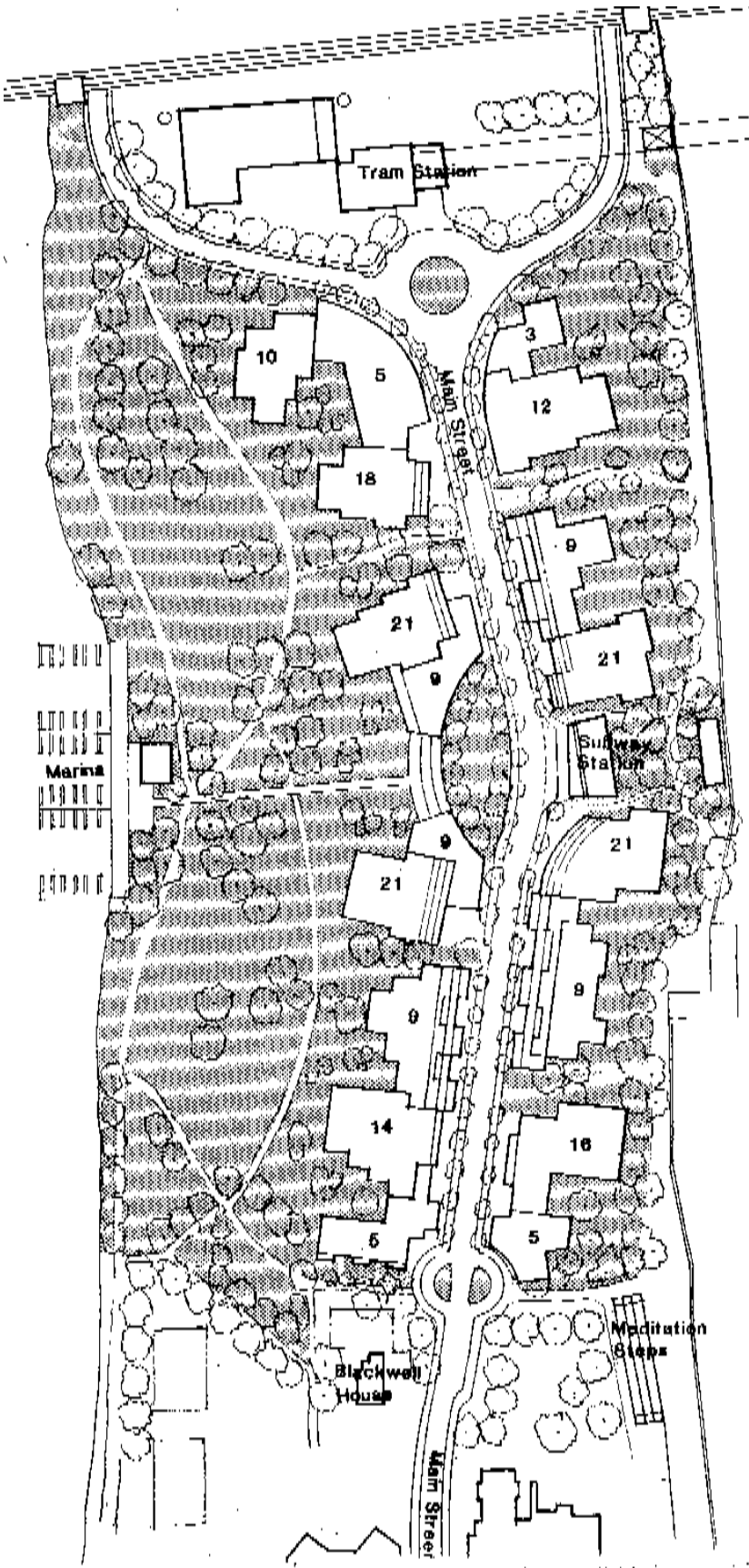
The concept of Roosevelt Island was responding specifically to its geography in addition to its vision as an auto-free setting. Roosevelt Island is, and will be in the foreseeable future, a predominantly residential environment. It is not a place of work or manufacture. In such setting vehicular traffic generated is minimal, especially with a minibus system, tram and subway in operation. We see no purpose to a dual road system. The western leg acts as a barrier for people wanting to reach the water's edge.

Response: Agreed, but the roads need to be wider than in the current development. In Northtown, the narrow road produced a canyon effect that nobody wants repeated. Traffic can always be slowed by speed bumps and stop signs. In addition, there still needs to be an emergency road for fire trucks and ambulances.

The use of only three basic building designs is not a promising start. Other than economic necessity, there is no need for high towers on Roosevelt Island to insure water views.

Response: Building designs can be changed, but how many different designs do they want?

Although totals of open space are approximately the same in both plans, such tabulations are of limited value.



Thoreson and Linard, 1990

Effective open space is the essence of good planning and that is not evident in this case, as also noted in Jeffrey Hochman's review in The WIRE. The opportunities for a great park space, offered by our plan's consolidated open space, are lost in this plan.

Response: I agree. Good park space is important.

Thoreson and Linard's 1990 Plan

Reading T&L's comments on the Davis Brody Bond design reveals a good deal about their plan: Shorter buildings with setbacks along a Main Street (on both sides) that extends the current road. Main Street would remain narrow (they say now that it could be a little wider), basically a repeat of current development. This would be different, because the setback would give the pedestrian a more intimate neighborhood feeling walking down Main Street. There would be about ten buildings on both sides of Main Street. The format would resemble the current development (Rivercross, Island House, Eastwood). Although the Queensboro Bridge and the Tram would be visible, Manhattan skyline would not.

The buildings would be very close to the west side (Manhattan) leaving room only for a walkway similar to what exists near Rivercross and Island House. On the east side (Queens) there would be much open space, but unless it is an active park with facilities it would be wasted. Finally, since there is no emergency road planned on the east side of the Island, this would be needed for any emergency vehicle (police, ambulance, firetruck).

In summary, I feel that a combination of both plans would be beneficial to the future of Southtown.

Fiddler on the Roof Another Major Hit for Main Street Theatre



Tevye, played by Ron Roth, stops and talks to God about something on his mind, above. Right, Tevye's wife Golde (Karen Puritz) listens as Yente (Brenna Stein) talks about her role as matchmaker. Below, three of Tevye's daughters sing *Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match*. Left to right, Marielena Logsdon as Hodel, Sonya Kolba as Tzeitel, and Caitlin Donovan as Chava, a role also played by Elizabeth Daley (inset).



"And this is mine!" Tevye explains to Perchik (right, played by Kevin Gates) that he has five daughters.



Hodel and Tzeitel lament the impending loss of their sister, Chava, as their mother looks on. At left, in a dream made up by Tevye to convince his wife that their eldest daughter should be allowed to marry the man she loves, Anita Michael plays the deceased wife of the butcher. Below, after contemplating arranged marriages, Tevye sings to his wife, *Do You Love Me?*



Review by Dorothy Bowser and Elizabeth Unruh

'Twas the night before Chanukah and all through the house electricity filled the air in anticipation of all that was to come. The volume decreased with the dimming of the lights, but one could feel the excitement growing in the darkened theater as the entire cast entered singing "Tradition".

Fiddler on the Roof, the most recent offering of our own Main Street Theatre, is one of the most popular musicals of our time. This rousing production, directed by Nancy Howe, provides a clear understanding of why *Fiddler* remains a favorite of so many audiences throughout the world.

The story, set in Tsarist Russia during the eve of the Russian Revolution, provides a vivid snapshot of Jewish life in the "Shtetl" during that period. Laughter and music are on center stage in a world on the brink of destruction.

Ron Roth plays a most amiable and humorous Tevye. One could feel the warmth and affection the audience felt for him as he struggled to confront the dilemma of upholding the traditions of his people in a milieu of rapid cultural and political change. If that wasn't enough he had to confront the changes on a more personal level as each of his marriageable daughters opted for love rather than the matchmaker's choice. Karen Puritz, cast as Golde, was most convincing in her role of an appropriately worried wife and mother also caught up in a world that was becoming increasingly more complex.

The music is excellent and was performed outstandingly by the company at large. The voices of Scott Kerstetter, as Motel, Sonya Kolba as Tzeitel, Marielena Logsdon as Hodel, and Kevin Gates as Perchik the student served to further enhance the quality of the songs. The talent of these four young performers is most notable.

One of the most unforgettable scenes in the show is the play's dream sequence. The staging, along with the musical performance, served to heighten the chaotic scene and provide theatergoers with a memorable moment of hilarity. The ghost of Grandma Tzeitel, played by Anita Michael, contributed most significantly to the noteworthiness of the scene.

The musical direction of Bob McDowell and choreography by Diana Baffa-Brill were first-rate and led these observers to wish for a larger stage so that the talents of this community company could be truly appreciated. Costumes and scenery also contributed greatly to the richness of the show.

In conclusion, this was a night we're glad we didn't miss. The energy and efforts of all of the performers were remarkable. To paraphrase that Grand Rebbe, Marilyn Atkins, a blessing on the heads of all involved in what may very well have been the finest Main Street Theatre Production to date.

Roses and accolades to all and to all a good night.



Left, Tevye hears Sonya's pleas that she be allowed to marry Motel rather than the butcher. When she succeeds, Motel (above) sings *Miracle of Miracles*. Below, the Russians dance to *L'Chaim*.



It was a good week for The Main Street Theatre. MST Director Nancy Howe (right) received word of a \$5,000 City grant arranged by Councilmember Gifford Miller and presented by his aide, Jessica Lappin.



Photos:
Marty Atkins
Website NYC10044

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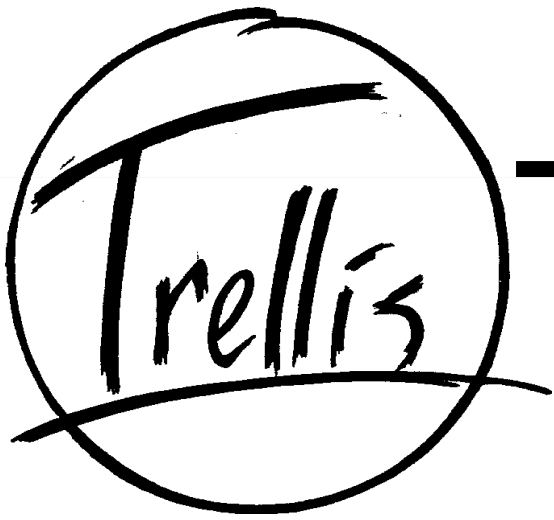
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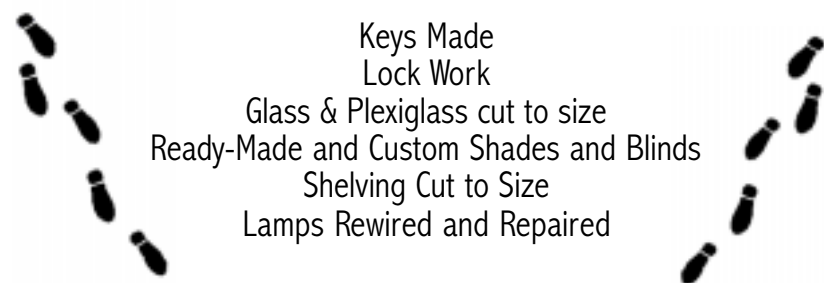
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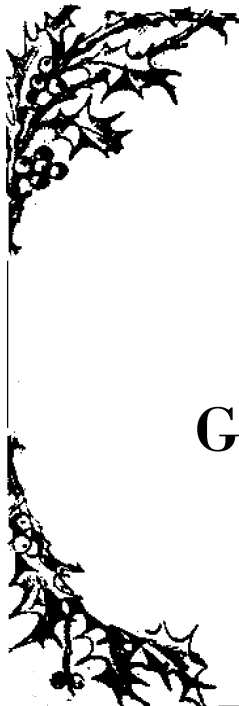
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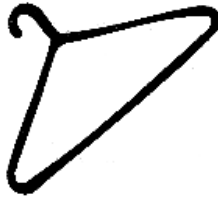
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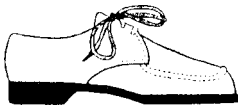
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