

Next issue:
May 7-8

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

Abruptly, RIOC Cancels a Board Meeting; Residents Counter, Plan a Town Meeting May 4 Session on Development, Potential Litigation, Mitchell-Lama

Threat to Affordable Rentals In Mitchell-Lama Time Bomb

The clock is running out for New York City's affordable Mitchell-Lama housing.

Under the law, owners of buildings like Eastwood, Island House and Westview can buy out their State-guaranteed mortgages after 20 years. In a hot housing market, it's tempting to forego their property tax exemption, take the buildings out of the Mitchell-Lama program, and hike the rents to market rate.

For a while, it looked as though that might happen to Island House, but the owner backed off when confronted by members of the Island House Ownership Committee, who had been working toward turning the building into a cooperative.

Three bills passed in February by the State Assembly address this problem. The legislation, which cleared the Assembly by better than a two-to-one margin, is now in the State Senate's Housing Committee. One bill would extend the protection of rent stabilization to all Mitchell-Lama rentals, which are not currently protected if occupied after 1974. That applies to all three Mitchell-Lama rentals on Roosevelt Island.

Another bill would extend the Mitchell-Lama period before buy-out eligibility to 50 years, from the present 20. A third would increase the period of notice to tenants from three months to one year, giving them more time to make plans if their building is bought out.

All three bills were originated by Assemblymember Vito Lopez and supported by Roosevelt Island's representative, Pete Grannis. Grannis said on Wednesday, "Saving this affordable housing is a very high priority during this legislative session. It's really surprising that I have not seen a level of concern from the New York City administration, faced with the loss of all these affordable units." Lopez said the legislation needs a Republican sponsor in the Senate, saying the logical Senator would be Roy Goodman, whose district contains a number of the buildings that would be affected.

Lopez urged that residents who would be affected by Mitchell-Lama buy-outs communicate forcefully to members of the legislature. "The Senate needs to be gotten interested in the crisis," he said, adding that if the bills fail to

See Mitchell, page 6



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
Stood up by the RIOC Board of Directors, about 50 residents stayed for a session chaired by RIRA President Patrick Stewart, to discuss ways of dealing with RIOC development plans and other matters.

Coming Events

The next three weeks will be a period of heavy duty for Island activists, their numbers increased recently by a series of RIOC moves on development.

Town Meeting Tue., May 4

Resident leaders are putting together an Island-wide "Bring Your Checkbook Town Meeting" for 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 4 to raise money for a litigation fund, pass the word about RIOC development plans and their impact on quality of life, and rally residents for an effort to save affordable Mitchell-Lama housing. City Councilmember Gifford Miller will attend the meeting, at Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

"We've concluded that legal action will be required to have a voice in operation of this Island," said Linda Heimer, RIRA Vice President for Government Relations. "We hope residents will contribute generously, but, with checkbook or without, we need broad support at the May 4 meeting."

Common Council Meeting

The RIRA Common Council will meet Wednesday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, in a session open for public comment.

RIOC Evening Meeting

The RIOC Board of Directors is next scheduled to meet Thursday, May 13, at 7:00 p.m., in one of two night meetings scheduled each year to give residents an opportunity to attend, observe its work, and state their views.

by Dick Lutz

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) cancelled its Board of Directors meeting Wednesday morning. Residents met anyway, and made plans for a Town Meeting and to raise money for litigation.

The RIOC Board had been expected to vote on as many as three development projects, and nearly 50 residents showed up to view the proceedings, many with the intention of speaking out on the proposed construction. When they found the cancellation notice on the door of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, they stayed for a meeting conducted by Residents Association President Patrick Stewart.

After listing issues facing Island residents, Stewart said, "We are being hit in just about every way. Every time we turn around, there is something new." He described two overall concerns - proposed development on the Island, and buy-out threats at Mitchell-Lama buildings (separate story, column 1).

The three development projects in prospect are conversion of the Manhattan-side minischools into condominiums, proposed use of designated parkland at Southpoint for a twin-tower hotel and conference center, and Southtown. While Southtown - new apartment buildings on land north of the Tramway and south of Eastwood and Rivercross - is widely accepted as both necessary and likely, the others are controversial and opposed by many residents.

Many had feared the formal step of conditional designation of SSJ Enterprises as developer of Southpoint might be voted at the cancelled Wednesday meeting, or that final approval might be given to the addition of a second floor to the minischools. (Related column and letter, page 2.)

The 16-unit "minicondos" plan has aroused the ire of residents whose river or Manhattan views would be degraded by a second-story addition, and the concern of others who wonder about the impact of half-million-dollar condominium residences on an affordable-housing Island.

See Residents, page 6



Mary Camper-Titsingh amended RIOC's cancellation notice with an invitation to residents to meet anyway.



Byron Gaspard urged residents to work for self-governance.

Marking 20th Year, Day Nursery's Seiden Is Still "Big Sara"

by Anusha Shrivastava

Children call her "Big Sara" even though she is very petite, standing all of four feet and a few inches. A handyman who came looking for her asked for "the little girl who runs the Day Nursery" even though she is a grandmother, sporting short salt-and-pepper hair. A colleague mildly hints at her being a "control freak." Young mothers see her as a role model. Her past pupils remember her as being "very sweet." Marcia Ellis, a teacher in her school, says she is best described as a "universal Mommy." She thinks she is just "a very organized person" who likes to "be present for everyone - parents, teachers and children." Clearly, Sara Seiden, the Director of the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery, is a woman of many parts.

Sara lives in Forest Hills with her husband of thirty-eight years,

Henry Seiden, a clinical psychologist. She has two grown-up sons who are married. Sara studied in various public schools in New York and graduated from Barnard College. Armed with a degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University, Sara took over the Day Nursery in 1979 when the school became an incorporated entity. She had been running her own nursery school for over eight years prior to this assignment. "I like to think I have grown a good school to which people send their children because of its merit and not only because it is a neighborhood school," she says.

Take, for instance, the case of Lauralee Schreiber. By her own admission, Lauralee is the "over-protective parent of a three-year-old." "I was willing to snoop around schools, unseen, before I could decide where to send Zo,"



she admits. "Sending one's child to the correct school is the most passionate decision one can make because you are entrusting your child to someone else. For me, meeting Sara was the deciding factor, as she put to rest all my fears and apprehensions." That is the kind of confidence Sara Seiden and "her" school inspire in people.

Sara's educational philosophy is very clear. "Education," she says, "should be child-centered and developmentally appropriate. I want children to feel that school is a happy, exciting place to be, where they can feel safe, successful and nurtured. Since this is their first school experience, it should be a happy one, where their emotional, social and cognitive development is taken care of. They should be able to make independent choices, interact and live with their peers and move smoothly to their next

developmental stage." Helke Taeger, Sara's administrative assistant of nineteen years, points out that Sara is particular about things that are age-appropriate. "She believes in hands-on experiments and fantasy playing. Some parents don't see eye-to-eye with her as they feel this is not structured enough. Since she has strong opinions on the issue, there is some friction, but if there is one thing Sara is not, she is not meek."

Going on to describe Sara further, Taeger says Sara has "a lot of energy and has really extended herself. Roosevelt Island should count itself fortunate. Sara has created a nursery school second to none. She is fighting to get more aid for the school as enrollment is down. This is because of changing demographics. People in Rivercross have grown old, so fewer children attend

See Seiden, page 6

Pages of Thought and Opinion

A Time to Act

The apparent determination of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to ignore the prime tenets built into the creation of Roosevelt Island, and embodied in its Lease for the property, has led both agencies into a narrowing path from which there is little hope of liberation.

When RIOC-DHCR publicly seek ways to distort the intent of the Lease and the General Development Plan in order to justify commercializing parkland at Southpoint, both agencies demonstrate that they have drifted from the path of good purpose and have been drawn to a course of expediency and short-term gain.

That's not what Roosevelt Island is about.

Now, Island residents, who do know what it's about, need to harness the legal system to realign government with their interests – and, for that matter, with government's best interests.

As a resident, you have a stake in putting things right. Come to the May 4 Town Meeting. Bring your checkbook. Think wisely and generously about your future here, and be prepared to fight for it.

Secret Government

When government goes behind closed doors to do its work in secret, away from public scrutiny, citizens are right to be suspicious – suspicious that those who govern are working for their own interests, and not for the interests of the people.

Jerry Blue's bunker management at RIOC is a perfect example that taints everything around it: The State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) looks bad for its association with an operation that does all it can to keep its activities hidden. The State as a whole looks bad. The Governor, in particular, has continued to associate himself with a tinhorn despot, endorsing – by his failure to act to have his RIOC Board appointees remove Blue – a shabby operation that threatens to take the Island down with it.

Is the Governor so callous that he can blithely allow this to continue? Are his appointees on the RIOC Board, who have the power to dismiss Blue, so loyal to the Governor's misplaced interests that they are paralyzed in the face of migraine-caliber mismanagement?

By his administration's secrecy, and by his continued use of faked liaison committees drawn from his clique, Blue has made residents of Roosevelt Island the *subjects* of an experiment gone awry, rather than *participants* in a great experiment in broadly integrated housing.

In this country, government is supposed to be responsive to the people – open, and subject to regular scrutiny. Because Blue's RIOC administration is anything but, residents can only assume that decisions are made in private because they are made against residents' interest. Residents believe they are excluded from the process for the worst reasons.

And the State administration, as a whole, is his co-conspirator, smeared with the sleaze that oozes from Blue's bunker.

When will the Governor wake up?

DL



The WIRE

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Reading the face of events can be dangerous. What *seems* obvious *may* not be truth.

But there's a reliable old rule when reading the actions of politically-motivated people and governmental bodies: **Don't ignore the obvious.** So this column will now read the face of events and reach an obvious conclusion. Reader heed, buyer beware.

For some time, RIOC and DHCR appear to have been driving hard toward critical steps on two very controversial development projects – the SSJ Hotel towers on Southpoint parkland, and second-story expansion of the Manhattan-

island observer

side minischools. Both projects are dreaded by a large number of residents, favored by a tiny handful, and considered by a significant chunk of the Island community only with weary apathy.

Events:

The regularly-scheduled RIOC Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 8, was postponed – at the very last minute. Lack of a quorum was the reason given, but...

Read the face of the event: Most likely, the votes weren't quite assured to go ahead on either of the projects. The announced replacement date was Wednesday (April 21) of this week.

Then Frank Angelino called a meeting of the RIOC Advisory Committee he chairs – the one that gets to give non-binding advice to the RIOC Board of Directors – the one that has had its resident members wondering: Will we vote on these projects? Will our advice actually count for anything? Angelino called the meeting for this past Monday evening, outside the range of days previously agreed to by the committee as convenient for its members.

Read the face of the event: It's obvious RIOC and DHCR wanted a supportive vote by this committee – or at least a neutral tie vote – in time for Wednesday morning's RIOC Board meeting. In fact, one committee member who had to leave the meeting early was assured that any vote would be taken while he was still present.

As it turned out, there were enough votes at the advisory committee meeting to vote a recommendation *against* the project. Angelino announced early in the meeting, "We won't be taking any vote tonight," a contradiction of what he'd earlier led its members to believe. Later, he was asked why there would be no vote. "Well, for one reason, there are some people missing," he said. *Right:* The missing members were the ones who would have produced a go-ahead vote, or at least a tie vote.

Read the face of the event: No vote was taken because there has been a judgment within DHCR that – if at all possible – the Southpoint and minicondo matters should move forward only with some appearance of backing, or at least neutrality, on the part of this advisory committee.

In fact, nothing substantive was accomplished in the advisory committee meeting – unless you count the precedent set by Angelino in deciding not to take a vote because people were absent.

Read the face of the event: The *only* real purpose of the meeting was to produce political cover for a go-ahead vote by the RIOC Board.

Then, *late Tuesday*, after dozens of residents had made plans to stay on-Island, some skipping work for the purpose, RIOC posted a last-

Letters

To the Editor:

The riddle about RIOC is why Dr. Jerome Blue always dances with the rich. While Southtown has lain fallow, a refuge for ducks, geese, and, now, a covey of grackles, for three years, Dr. Blue has busied himself courting the high end of the social ladder. First, it was the twin 26-story towers and condominiums for the Marriott Hotel, accompanied by the desecration of three of the Island's landmark buildings. He then trumpeted an Eldercare project which would eat up precious acres of parkland to accommodate wealthy seniors. That was followed by a wacky idea to build million-dollar condominiums in and on top of our vacant minischools. Characteristically, his plan is loaded with all kinds of items designed to protect rich residents from disagreeable contacts with Islanders.

Together these developments would cost about one billion dollars, to say nothing of abandoning the central purpose of this community. Dr. Blue has never believed that our mission of low and moderate income housing is to relieve a critical shortage that is worse now than 20 years ago. Yet Dr. Blue persists in believing that what this Island needs most is a generous dose of rich people. The well-to-do never have trouble finding shelter and need no subsidy. History contains very few episodes where the upper crust were among the homeless.

Indeed, Dr. Blue doesn't even believe that our founding fathers established the Island for residential, not commercial, use beyond the service

needed for the community. In the past every RIOC administration fought off the predators. Real estate vultures have hovered over this Island for years, but Dr. Blue has now invited them into his headquarters, where they have made their nest.

Worse still, this commercial rape is taking place in public view. Finding residents who favor this Blue print would be a research project. But Dr. Blue persists in the path of reckless endangerment. He has poisoned our public life, refused any meaningful dialogue with the people who pay their generous salaries, treated the Island like "just another piece of real estate" and, even in the smallest matter, he has thrown a blanket of total secrecy over his actions. Moreover, he has allowed elementary maintenance to deteriorate and stuffs our mail boxes with a newsletter whose objectivity makes the Serbian media look like Channel 13 by comparison.

Thus it is not for light or transient reasons that I suggest Dr. Blue perform a great service to this community by allowing us a fresh start in redeeming the promise of this Island. He doesn't believe in it, and he doesn't trust the people who live here. I cannot believe that he is comfortable in his isolation.

It would be statesmanlike of him to resign and let the residents continue to build what is internationally acclaimed as the most successful "New Town" anywhere and let us redeem and enhance the dream that brought so many of us here in the first place.

Richard C. Wade

To the Editor:

Just the other day while I was at work at the Tramway, I was thinking about my friend, Mr. Al Weinstein. I've been working at the Tram for 23 years and we saw each other just about every day. Mr. Weinstein would always share his new ideas with me on how to improve Tramway service, in addition to his ideas on how to prevent RIOC from closing the Tram down. I would like to share with you one of the many wonderful memories I have of him.

Al approached me one day and told me that he was going to form a special committee – a committee that would be totally committed to keeping the Roosevelt Island Aerial Tramway in service, not only for the residents of Roosevelt Island (which were always Al's first concern) but also for people that worked on the Island, children that attended our school and of course visitors that perhaps one day might become residents.

Well, as we all know, he did in fact create and chair his Tram Committee and I, along with many other people who live on Roosevelt Island, are indeed very thankful to Mr. Weinstein for doing so.

Al, we all miss you.

Gregg Paravati

minute notice that Wednesday morning's RIOC Board meeting was cancelled. Too late, of course, to spread the word, but...

Read the face of the event: The RIOC meeting was cancelled because RIOC and DHCR had failed to maneuver Angelino's advisory committee into producing political cover for a go-ahead vote by the RIOC Board.

Early Thursday morning, RIOC told a *WIRE* reporter that its May 13 evening meeting would instead be held at 11:00 a.m. On a follow-up call to check, the change of time was confirmed, and in response to a question about the reason for the time change, RIOC supplied only a "No comment."

By noon, DHCR Commissioner Joe Lynch had overruled RIOC and put the meeting back to 7:00 p.m. But...

Read the face of the event: RIOC wanted a morning meeting to make it easier for RIOC Board members to vote yes on controversial development; they might find it more difficult with hundreds of residents looking on.

Now, step back from the immediate events. View the big picture painted in Day-Glo colors over the past two years.

For RIOC President Jerome Blue, development – *any* develop-

ment, whether it complies with the overall idea of Roosevelt Island or not – *any* development has been his whole reason for being. Should he fail to deliver up the Southpoint parkland and (perhaps to a lesser extent) the minicondos, his stormy tenure here will have been for nothing. The people in the political structure around the Governor will have studiously ignored Blue's overall incompetence, the steady deterioration of the State's investment here, and the potentially explosive resident anger over Blue, without getting *any* productive result for all their bearing up, hunkering down, and pushing on.

In the breeze, one can almost hear a conversation between Jerry Blue and DHCR Commissioner Joe Lynch, Blue saying, "Ignore the damned residents. Take the vote, take the heat, and get on with it," and then Lynch deciding: "There is a better way: We can deliver for the Governor without producing politically dangerous flak. Be patient, Jerome. Sooner or later, the residents will tire of the fight. Their leadership will be lulled, and we'll have an opening. Be patient."

Such imagined conversations are highly speculative, of course. On the other hand...

Read the face of the events.

DL

After 5 months of serving on the RIRA Common Council, one thing strikes me again and again. As we're succeeding in getting more high-level political attention and as we're successfully positioning ourselves within the key decision-making bodies on issues such as development and growth – the more we seem to be communicating the message that we're embattled and losing.

Why is this so? In part it's because we've taken to gauging our success by whether Jerry Blue gets fired. We made it personal when the reality is that you don't get to choose your political opponent; and as attractive as it seems, removing someone you dislike outside of regular political channels is always a tough, usually impossible task. Just ask Henry Hyde.

Look at the facts. Over the last couple of years, through the hard-work, persistence and skill not just of Common Council members but a broad swath of Islanders, we've actually succeeded in drawing attention to legitimate questions about some of the deficiencies and dangers in Dr. Blue's policies and performance. Two years ago Dr. Blue was sent here with the undisputed authority and the mandate of a

The RIRA Column

This edition's guest columnist is Graham Cannon, RIRA's Director of Communications. Graham is currently Director of Strategy and Communications for Time Inc. New Media. Before joining Time Inc. New Media, Graham was Deputy Communications Director for U.S. Ambassadors Madeleine Albright and Bill Richardson at the UN. He was responsible for a range of strategic media initiatives, including those for Bosnia and Iraq. Prior to that position, he was a Senior Adviser to the International Operations Subcommittee of the House of Representatives, where he specialized in international broadcasting and communications. He also served as Press Secretary and Legislative Assistant for California Congressman Howard L. Berman in Washington and Los Angeles. Graham has reported for the *London Daily Mail*, BBC and NBC Radio, and Microsoft's on-line publication, *Slate*.

popularly-elected governor to implement a policy of reducing, preferably to zero, the island's dependence on public funds while figuring out a way of developing as many revenue streams as possible for the State out of the island's assets. Today, his power to act is under steady erosion. His own boss, DHCR Commissioner Joe Lynch, responding to concerns that Dr. Blue was struggling, told the New York Times that "if we can help him do his job, that's a good thing," in other words, the bureaucratic equivalent of a knife in the back. Lynch not only helped engineer the appointment of RIRA President Patrick Stewart and Island resident Susan Whitaker to the RIOC Board, but he created two new committees, half of whose members are residents, including Stewart, to advise RIOC on future development for the Island.

And now that we've gained a seat at the table, I'd suggest channeling our energy and enthusiasm towards developing three strategic goals. First, and most important, we can't simply

oppose everything, while reacting defensively from crisis to crisis – we have to proactively figure out and then articulate what we're actually for. Second, we should recognize that progress from here on out will depend as much on clever and nuanced negotiating tactics as on our proven skill at campaigns and sloganeering. So we'll have to become fact-bearing experts in every relevant detail of city and state policy, law and regulation. Third, as we become more enmeshed in politics we'll need to do more of what we're already doing – building the broadest network of personal relationships and alliances, on and off the island, that are the lifeblood of successful political endeavor.

To begin with, I propose we move quickly to draft and approve, possibly by Island-wide referendum, a statement of principles that reflects who we are and what we seek for ourselves. Our own Charter 2000. For instance, where do we stand on development? Do we oppose mini-schools because some views might be impeded, because of construction traffic or because the developer misled us? And what's our alternative for utilizing what are currently vacant, decaying buildings? How about Southpoint? Is our position no development ever, or do we support negotiating limited development in return for some public parkland? Are the Island's original General Development and Master Plans always inviolable? Can they be amended to address issues never envisaged by the original planners?

Defining where we stand becomes more urgent even as new avenues for dialogue emerge, because I'm also convinced that we'll have to take to the barricades many times as we address these critical issues over the next few years. I'm sure that we'll have to block Main Street once or twice before we'll get action on abating construction traffic access for Southtown or head to court to enforce a commitment or oppose a variance. But ultimately these tactics will work only if they derive from an alternative, complete strategy.

1990's Manhattan is about to hit our Island with full force. Let's make sure that we're ready to meet it.



Graham Cannon

With a Bash and an Exchange of Love, Roosevelt Island Says Goodbye to Father Gorman

Roosevelt Island said goodbye on April 11 to its Priest of 14 years, Father Joseph Gorman. With tributes and food both overflowing, Gorman's parishioners, joined by his many non-Catholic friends, let sentiment rule as he returned to the Island for a farewell party.

Each tribute had its own character and qualities.



Here's one by Marilyn Engstler, Housing's Director of Community Relations.

"I knew from the moment I saw Father Gorman, 14 years ago, walk-

ing from Island House to Eastwood, dressed in a sports jacket and cap, that there was something very special about him. I would see him from the management desk routinely cross from Island House to Eastwood each day, and wonder who he was until one day someone pointed him out as the priest who had taken Father McCarthy's place.

"Little did I know that Father Gorman would be such an important person in my life.

"From 1988 to now, I would call him throughout the year, asking if he could say a prayer in the hope that whatever community event I was doing at the time would be safe and harmonious, and ask for good weather.

"I love the way Father Gorman would make the Sign of the Cross on my forehead on Ash Wednesdays. I always thought he made mine the clearest and largest.



I'll miss the way he acknowledged me when I would receive communion on holy days that fell during the week – saying 'I'm glad you came,' – not as if he was saying, 'It's been a while.'

"But most of all I'd like to thank him for letting me grow under his wing from a young woman of 25 years to a woman of [cough]. Thank you for all your support, and your gentle and kind demeanor.

"I wish you all the best always. I will miss you."



COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

Thur., Apr. 29, Former Mayor David Dinkins and Assemblymember Pete Grannis will be co-**Principals for a Day** at PS/IS 217.

Tue., May 4, 8:00 p.m., **Town Meeting** on Island development and Mitchell-Lama issues, with Councilmember Gifford Miller.

Wed., May 5, 8:00 p.m., Meeting of the **Common Council** of the **Roosevelt Island Residents Association**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., May 5, 8:00 p.m., **Energetic Healing Course**, Westview Community Room, 625 Main Street. (Monthly through August, first Wednesday.)

Thur., May 6, 8:30 p.m., Time-Warner cable channel 34, **CB8 Speaks** program on self-governance for Roosevelt Island, with Assemblymember Pete Grannis, RIRA President Patrick Stewart, and Maple Tree Group member Matthew Katz.

Fri.-Sat., May 7-8, Mothers Day issue of **The Main Street WIRE**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Apr. 30; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., May 3; bag materials due May 6. **Future issues:** May 22; June 12 (Father's Day issue); July 3 (Fourth of July/Fireworks/Business cards issue), July 31; Aug. 28 (Labor Day/Back-to-School issue); Sept. 11 (Rosh Hashanah issue), Sept. 25; Oct. 9, Oct. 23 (Halloween issue); Nov. 6, Nov. 20 (Thanksgiving/Business Cards issue); Dec. 4, Dec. 18 (Christmas/New Year issue); Jan. 8, 2000; Jan. 22, 2000. Advertisers wishing to be included in unscheduled **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, **317-8523**.

Thur., May 13, 7:00 p.m., **RIOC Evening Board of Directors Meeting**.

Fri., May 21, 5:30 p.m., Time-Warner cable channel 34, **CB8 Speaks** program on self-governance for Roosevelt Island, with Assemblymember Pete Grannis, RIRA President Patrick Stewart, and Maple Tree Group member Matthew Katz. (Repeat of May 6.)

Sun., May 23, **Auction on the River**, goods and services auction to raise funds for self-governance effort.

Sun., May 23, 1:00 p.m., **Senior Day at the Senior Center**. Information, **750-3952**.

Sat., June 19, all day, **Third Annual Roosevelt Island Day**. Information, **838-4747**.

At the Senior Center

Every week

Mondays

9:00 **Stay Well** (exercise)
10:00 **English as 2nd Language** (Beginner)*
10:00 **Computer Class**
12:00 **English as 2nd Language** (Intermediate)*
12:30 **Putting on a Show**, Play-Comedy Workshop (every Mon. & Fri.)
12:45 **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesdays

9-10 **Korean/English Class**
1:30 **Bingo and Games**

Wednesdays

9:00 **Stay Well** (Stretch)
10:00 **English as 2nd Language** (Beginner)*
11:00 **English as 2nd** (Intermediate)*
12:30 **Games**

Thursdays

10:00 **Tai Chi**
12:30 **Movie**

Fridays

10:00 **Creative Arts**
10:00 **English as 2nd Language** (conversation)*
10:00 **Blood Pressure Screening** (to 11:30)
12:30 **Putting on a Show**, Play-Comedy Workshop

Special Events

Mon., Apr. 26, **MetroCard Bus**, 10:00-12:00
Wed., Apr. 28, **Medication Safety Lecture**, 12:30
Fri., May 7, **Show** (put on by Island Seniors)

***Note:** English as a Second Language cancelled until May 12

Gifts, Fashions Offered at Prima-Things

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

The proverb “good taste is easy to recognize” may apply to Ladi Adoba’s shop at 599 Main Street, located next to the Grog Shop on Roosevelt Island. The shop, called “Prima-Things,” offers fashions and gifts that are not especially high-priced.

On a recent visit, an Harve Benard women’s summer suit in grey and white linen hanging in the shop window was flanked by a long African robe in grey cotton brocade richly trimmed with white embroidery. “We call that a Boubou and it’s a very comfortable robe for men, too,” laughed the pretty Ms. Adoba, who hails from the West African country of Nigeria. “I’ve called



Ladi Adoba

my shop Prima-Things because I try to offer things of prima quality.” As she held up some fully-lined women’s pants and skirts in brown wool crepe, beige silk or black velvet, she explained, “I’m specializing in women’s clothing in sizes 12 to 22. There seems to be a lot of demand for attractive clothes in those sizes.” On the racks are long-sleeved silk blouses in animal prints,

sleeveless shells with matching hip-long cardigans in pale metallic knit, silk scarves in jewel tones, even an amusing yellow-and-black striped hat with handbag to match.

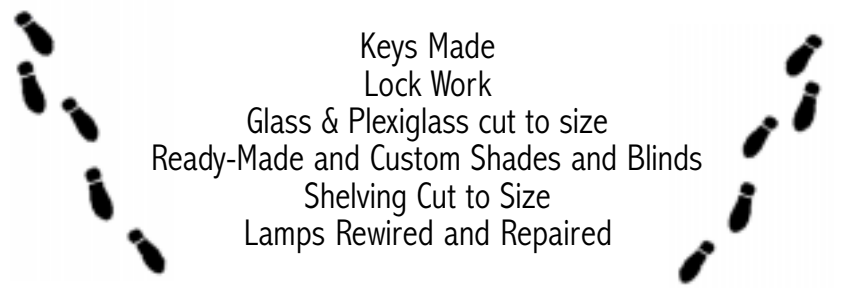
“I can also design formal and casual clothes to be made to order,” Adoba explained as she drew attention to the many fashion sketches that decorate the wall behind the counter. “I received a Bachelor’s Degree in Fashion Design from London’s College for Applied Arts when I was living in England. I used to have a shop in Nigeria and when I first came to New York I shared a shop with some friends. I opened Prima-Things here last October, and Islanders are now getting to know me.”

Besides women’s fashions and leather sandals for men and children, her shop carries interesting tie-dye, batik and African print fabrics in lengths of four to six yards. A handwoven royal blue with silver thread, called Asoke, can be used as a shawl, headwrap or table runner. There are lots of African gift items such as enormous wooden salad bowls, calabash gourds typically decorated by the Hausa tribe of northern Nigeria, colorful baskets and flat raffia trays used in Africa for winnowing the chaff from grain, also bracelets in woven Kente fabric from Ghana, a country west of Nigeria. In addition the shop carries Mikasa crystal bowls and vases from Japan, as well as American-made silverplated coffee or tea sets with trays. There are cookbooks, spice racks, over-sized coffee cups, Mary Kay cosmetics, bath gels in charming heart-shaped bottles, delicate silver earrings and necklaces, etc. The most charming gift items, however, are the funny little “Teapot cottages” displayed in the window and priced from \$1.99. “These might make amusing Mother’s Day gifts,” she suggested.

Her shop, “Prima-Things,” is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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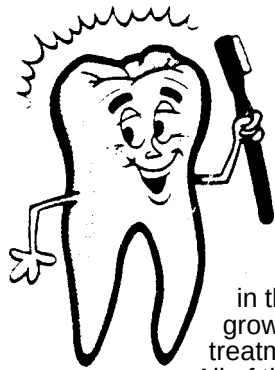
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Dental Digest

by L.M. Itskowitch, D.D.S.

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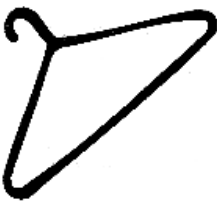


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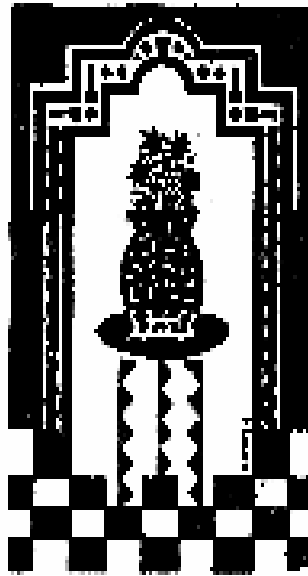
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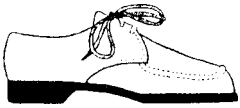
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J & M SHOE REPAIR

Residents from page 1

The Southpoint hotel plan is opposed by residents who see it as an assault on the General Development Plan for the Island, which specifies that the ten acres of Southpoint are to be developed as open space – a park – to benefit residents of the Island and the City. In addition, Southpoint is seen by many as reserved for a memorial to Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Stewart told residents at the meeting, “We have a RIOC that is very unresponsive to us in every way.” He said little is returned to residents for the taxes they pay, and said the State administration appears to want Roosevelt Island to become a “profit center” for the State. “So what do we do about that? What is expected of us?”

Byron Gaspard, a member of the Residents Association Common Council representing Eastwood, responded. “There are things we can do to put a big dent in the dirty politics that RIOC is doing.” Pointing to the work of the Maple Tree Group on legislation for self-governance, he said, “We have a movement toward self-democracy on this Island. Have we written a letter to the Governor or to our Assemblymembers in support of that? The Maple Tree Group is doing a good job. They are fighting for something we all want. We all should be fighting for that.”

Gaspard continued, “We are victims in almost every facet of services on this Island. We have a Public Safety [Department] that is insensitive to the security needs of the Island. We really have to start looking at the facts.” He asked residents to attend a meeting of his RIRA Public Safety Committee Wednesday night (April 28, 7:00 p.m.) at PS/IS 217.

“They’re getting \$1.6 million for a system that doesn’t meet the needs of this Island,” he said.

John Weatherhead, who is President of the Rivercross Board of Directors, attended the meeting to voice his own opinion. “The issue, as I see it, comes down to the GDP [the General Development Plan, part of the Lease by which the City has given the State control of Roosevelt Island]. This was sup-

posed to be a planned Island, and that’s what the GDP was all about. The Island was set up to accomplish certain goals, and we’ve lost sight of that. RIOC has declared that [the GDP] is simply a piece of paper and they’ve attempted to build a legal case that they’re not bound by it. I disagree with that. It’s just short-term ad hoc planning for whatever is driving the interests of the moment. It’s not good for this Island.”

Weatherhead agreed with others that a litigation fund is needed, and called for a portion of it to be used for professional assistance in working out a strategy for reaching government with Island residents’ message. Citing the large number of concerns facing residents, Weatherhead said, “We need to pick our issues.” He recommended drawing a line in the sand over the minicondos matter, calling it “immediate.”

Rivercross resident Shirley Margolin read portions of a communication from the School Construction Working Group (SCWG), expressing an interest in exploring use of the minischools as schools. SCWG is attempting to solve the problem of inadequate classroom space in the City. Margolin said that her contact with the group was inspired by a statement several months ago by RIOC President Jerome Blue asking for alternative suggestions on use of the Island’s minischools. She reported that RIOC was not cooperative, however, and she was unable to show the minischools to a representative of SCWG who was to visit the Island Tuesday.

Linda Heimer, RIRA Vice President for Government Relations, addressed the group, calling for a change of tactics in the form of litigation. To get a handle on the Roosevelt Island situation, she said, “We have tried everything. We have had numbers of demonstrations. We have had petitions. We have met with officials. We have had the media come here. We have done everything citizens in a democracy are supposed to do to right an unjust situation. It hasn’t worked.” RIOC is still unresponsive, she pointed out. Heimer described a meeting with City Councilmember Gifford Miller about what to do if the RIOC Board attempts to go forward with the SSJ hotel proposal. “He suggests that we set up a litigation fund and take legal action. We must raise money for this fund. When we asked how much might be needed, he said, ‘A few hundred thousand dollars,’ and we laughed, and then we cried. But we have to get started. We need legal help.”



Linda Heimer: “We need legal help.”

Seiden from page 1



from that building. Those who live in Manhattan Park pay such high rents that they can often not afford to pay our fees. Sara personally helps and guides parents so that they can apply for scholarships.”

“She is great to work for, as she is very fair and very supportive,” adds Taeger. “She has a way with children, being able to calm them down when they are upset or angry.” Wanting to have direct contact with every student in the school, Sara takes a music class for them, where she plays the drums and recites nursery rhymes. “There is something delicious about kids,” says she. “They are direct, warm and forthright, and that is why I love working with them.”

Christina Kirkman, 15, and her brother, Michael, 14, went to the Day Nursery almost a decade ago. They still drop in to visit Sara. “My general impression as a child was that Sara was always there for you,” says Christina. Michael thinks before saying, “Sara is a very tender and sweet lady who really cares for children.”

Nellie Negrin Finnegan, a former school Board member and teacher whose sons went to the school almost twenty years ago, reminisces, “As part of the activities of the Board, Sara started the Kiddy Olympics at the school. Sara insisted that all kids would win, not just those who got the top three spots. Kids got wonderful pleasure out of it. Not only that, I remember that in all of this, Sara handled

anxious parents very well, too. Sara is a rare combination of administrator who is professionally and personally very well suited to understanding and running a diverse organization. She has constantly worked to improve the physical setup of the school. Often, she had to go after the powers that be and, though she pushed them, she never alienated them. These efforts directly affected the quality of care the kids got.”

Sara thinks the school is small enough as an institution for her to enjoy running it. “It is continually refreshing to work here. There are new challenges every day, so it is never boring. I am totally absorbed by it all and I think it is very satisfying work. My personal goal is to keep the school viable and a growing institution. The Island is endlessly fascinating in that it has a large international community, and I want to make the school a reflection of this nature.”

Sara’s assistant, Helke Taeger, believes there should be “a parade for her on Main Street.” For now, to show appreciation for all her efforts in running the school so well and to mark her 20th year at the school, a party is being organized for Sara on Sunday, May 1, at the Manhattan Park Community Room. The party will serve as a fund-raiser for the school. Tickets are \$23 per person, and can be picked up at the Day Nursery, 545 Main Street. Drinks, hors d’oeuvres and dessert will be served. For information, 593-0750.

Mitchell from page 1

pass in some form, some 70-80 percent of Mitchell-Lama residents could suffer tripled rents.

Roosevelt Island may not be as threatened as other Mitchell-Lama rental buildings, as long as RIOC, which controls the ground leases on Island buildings, is willing to use its power to hold rents down. Without RIOC support, however, Island buildings could face the same fate as others now going market-rate.

A list of key legislators with contact information appears at right.

Arbor Day Friday In Tree City USA

by Maurice Bleifeld

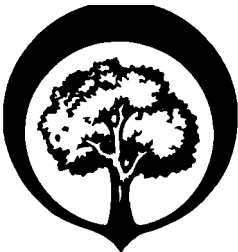
For the sixth year in a row, Roosevelt Island has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation. This national award will be presented during the Arbor Day ceremonies on Friday, April 30, by Michael Curley, State Forester assigned to the Long Island City Office of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. At 10:00 that morning, the Island’s Tree Board will conduct a tree-planting ceremony on the river side of the Westview building, facing Manhattan.

During the program, two Kwanzan Japanese flowering cherry trees will be planted. In designating this location, the Tree Board stated its goal as conserving the “necklace of cherry blossoms” originally envisioned by Alice Fordyce and Mary Lasker in their philanthropic plantings along the edges of Roosevelt Island.

At the tree-planting ceremony, third-grade students of Ms. Debbie Lanaghan’s class will offer a choral recitation of the poem *Trees* by Joyce Kilmer. They will also make individual statements about the value of trees. Musical selections will then be presented by the School Band of PS/IS 217 under the direction of Dr. Ulrich Hartung.

At the same time, eight additional trees will be planted elsewhere on the Island. Earlier this month, 13 flowering cherry trees were planted along the east seawall adjacent to Eastwood. This replenishment of the tree population of the Island resulted from an arrangement made on Roosevelt Island Day last June by Marilyn Engstler, Director of Community Relations, with Doug Still of the Queens Trees Office of the Department of Parks.

The Tree Board expects that this total addition of 23 new trees will help fulfill its goal for the year: To replace every missing, dying or dead tree with a new one.



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Some Key Legislators

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fax 518-426-6946
email mendez@senate.state.ny.us
- Assemblymember Pete Grannis (D)**
212-860-4906, 518-455-5676
fax 212-996-3046
email grannis@assembly.state.ny.us
- Sen. Roy Goodman (R)**
212-298-5515
fax 212-298-5518
email goodman@senate.state.ny.us
270 Broadway, Suite 2400, NYC 10007
- Sen. Joseph Bruno (R)**
518-583-1001, 518-455-3191
fax 518-455-2448
email bruno@senate.state.ny.us
368 Broadway, Saratoga Springs 12866
- Sen. Guy J. Velella (R)**
718-792-7180
fax 518-455-3264
email velella@senate.state.ny.us
2019 Williamsbridge Road, Bronx 10461
- Sen. Frank Padavan (R)**
718-343-0255, 518-455-3381
fax 518-455-2008
email padavan@senate.state.ny.us
- Sen. John J. Marchi (R)**
718-447-1723, 518-455-3215
fax 518-426-6852
- Assemblymember Vito Lopez (D)**
718-963-7029, 518-455-5537
fax 518-455-5789
email lopez@assembly.state.ny.us
- Assemblymember/Speaker Sheldon Silver (D)**
212-312-1400, 518-455-3791
fax 518-455-3770
email speaker@assembly.state.ny.us

Strikers Add Second Traveling Team

Over last summer, The New York State Champion Roosevelt Island Strikers added a second team. There are now both U-16 (under 16 years old) and U-19 (under 19) traveling teams. Both teams ended the first half of the season well, with the U-16 in third place and the U-19 in second place.



On Saturday, March 27, the Strikers U-16 battled with the first in the league, Flushing SC, on Roosevelt Island’s Blackwell Field. The score was 3-3. Flushing SC scored first. While still in the first half, a combination-play between Pape Moustapha Seye and Christopher Richards resulted in a nice left-foot shot by Christopher, finding the far post to tie the game at 1-1. Still in the first half, Flushing SC scored two more goals. During the second half, the Strikers kept pressure on the guest team. With 15 minutes left, the Strikers had a free kick, smartly played by their Captain, Lamine Seck, who passed the ball to Christopher’s left foot. Christopher then shot the ball and scored. With time running out and the opposing team using the clock at every opportunity, a nice shot again by Christopher bounced off the goalie. This ball found Sahid Sanusi, who pushed the rebounded ball into the goal for a 3-3 tie.

Strikers Players: Nii Ato Bentsi-Enchill, Tombo Berete, Sadek Betka, Aboubacar Camara, Alpha Diallo, Alexander Kornhuber, Nicholas Ortiz, Christoper Richards, Sahid Sanusi, Lamine Seck, Pape Moustapha Seye, Alexander Sheppard, Omar Sommereyns.

Captains: Lamine Seck, Aboubacar Camara.

MVP: Christopher Richards, Lamine Seck.

On Saturday, April 3, the Strikers U-19 met Polonia on their own turf in Brooklyn. At halftime, the Strikers were leading by the score of 1-0. The goal was accidentally scored by Polonia’s own defender after pressure was applied by Tombo Berete. Shortly after halftime, a Polonia player’s hand touched the ball in the penalty box, resulting in a penalty shot. The penalty was taken and scored by Mohamed Baradji. The Strikers’ two other goals were scored by Aboubacar Camara, who smartly dribbled past several Polonia defenders. The Strikers’ defensive line, which has allowed the fewest goals to date in the league, allowed Polonia only a few shots on the net. These were saved by the goalie, Bouna Coundoul.

The U-19 Strikers have not lost a game yet. They have a record of 5 wins and 3 ties and are ranked one point behind the leader, Gottschee.

Strikers Players: Mohamed Baradji, Tombo Berete, Aboubacar Camara, Moustapha Cisse, Bouna Coundoul, Mouhamadou Mbow, Papa Souleymane Sane, Lamine Seck, Pape Moustapha Seye, David Thrope, Aboubacar Toure, Lamine Toure, Ousmane Toure.

Captains: Aboubacar Toure, Papa Souleymane Sane.

MVP: Mohamed Baradji, Pape Moustapha Seye, Bouna Coundoul.

On April 10, the U-16 Strikers were scheduled to play UNIS on Randall’s Island. However, UNIS did not show up for the game, which may result in an automatic win for the Strikers.

On April 11, the U-19 played MSC International on Randall’s Island. After a scoreless first half, the Strikers destroyed the home team by a score of 5-0. Goals were scored in rapid succession by Papa Souleymane Sane (2), Aboubacar Camara (1), Aboubacar Toure (2).

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If you're interested in handling this valuable volunteer contribution to the Island community, or would like to propose a candidate, please call 826-9055.

Strikers Players: Mohamed Baradji, Aboubacar Camara, Moustapha Cisse, Bouna Coundoul, Badou Diagne, Garan Diarra, Macky Diop, Andrew Giacalone, Papa Souleymane Sane, Lamine Seck, Pape Moustapha Seye, David Thrope, Aboubacar Toure, Lamine Toure, Ousmane Toure.

Captains: Aboubacar Toure, Papa Souleymane Sane.

MVP: Aboubacar Toure, “Big Lamine” Toure.

Word is out in the Cosmopolitan Soccer League that the Roosevelt Island Strikers are the team to watch. Why don’t you? Home games are scheduled on Blackwell Field (until Octagon Field is reopened sometime in May):

U-16: Saturdays, April 24, May 8, May 22 at 2:00 p.m.

U-19: Sunday, April 25 at 12:00 p.m.

More games are to be scheduled. Dates are to be determined.



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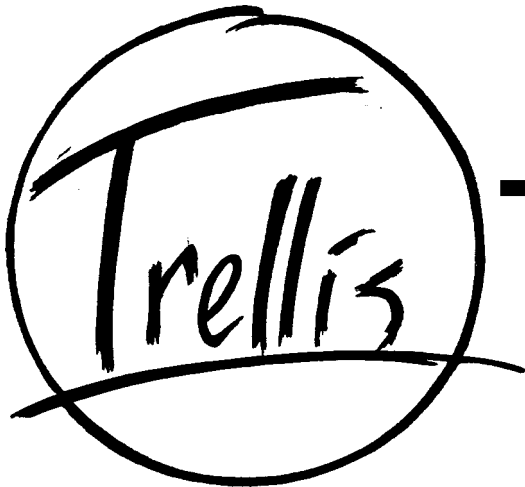
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