

Next issue:
July 2-3-4

The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

**Blue Out, Replacement Named;
Self-Governance Moving in Albany**

**Blue Finds An Exit
After Three-Year Ordeal**

News analysis by Dick Lutz

Jerry Blue is out. This time it’s for real. The official announcement of his departure came Thursday morning at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), though the news had spread Island-wide Monday evening and Tuesday morning.



Blue’s replacement as RIOC President is Robert Ryan, a Senior Vice President of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC). It is not known how the change fits with the anticipated passage of self-governance legislation for the Island (see separate story, this page) – whether Ryan is a temporary and transitional appointment, or is intended by the Governor to serve long-term – or whether the legislative move was simply the straw that broke the back of the Albany administration’s willingness to continue risking the public-relations disaster Blue seemed to represent. The controversial Blue held the job of RIOC President for three years, but was never accepted by more than a handful of residents as right for the position. To those who opposed him, he seemed to stagger from one mistake to another. His few active defenders took the position that he was only doing what his ultimate boss, the Governor, wanted him to do. At one point, a small group even tried to hang the tag of “racist” on those who opposed Blue’s policies and style, but that idea never gained a moment of traction with thinking residents. Even Governor George Pataki ultimately became disenchanted with Blue’s inability to get along with residents. In November, shortly after Blue’s patron, Senator Al D’Amato, was defeated in a bid for reelection, Blue was called

to Albany and asked to resign. He responded, “I’m not ready yet,” and Pataki’s advisors apparently decided to dodge the consequences of a public firing. “They counted me out,” Blue is said to have told members of his staff in January, “and I’m going to do the dance down Main Street.” With that, he gathered a phalanx of male staff members and walked See **Blue**, page 6



New RIOC Boss: Robert Ryan

“Coming over on the Tram this morning, I was thinking what a great opportunity I have here.” Robert Ryan, 43, became President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Thursday morning in a sudden shift that had residents blinking in surprise most of the week. For that matter, it had Ryan blinking, too – he’d known about his new assignment for “about a week,” as he put it. “I was very excited by the warm welcome I received this morning,” Ryan told *The WIRE* in an interview shortly after his appointment. Indeed, residents flocked to the front of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd to introduce themselves to Ryan, who responded to their “Mr. Ryan” by correcting them: “It’s Rob,” he said repeatedly. Ryan took several opportunities to portray himself as open, a listener, willing to learn – as a public servant, in short, who sees Roosevelt Island residents as his “bosses” and “constituents.” He said, “I want to listen,” in a brief speech after the RIOC Board approved a resolution confirming him. “I work for all you people. I know that I have a lot to learn. I don’t claim to have all the answers. See **Ryan**, page 6

**Two-Year MTG Effort May
Soon Bring Elected Rule**

Roosevelt Island may be about to get self-governance. Over the past few weeks, developments in Albany have made it possible – perhaps even likely – that both houses of the State Legislature will pass a bill within the next ten days, and that Governor George Pataki may sign it into law. Passage is by no means certain, but reliable sources have indicated the bill may be on a fast track. The proposed legislation, drafted by the Maple Tree Group (MTG) and introduced by Assembly-member Pete Grannis, then revised and introduced by Senator Olga Mendez, is in final stages and poised to be considered before the Legislature adjourns for the summer next week. On November 3 as part of the election of RIRA Common Council members, Island residents responded to an advisory question by voting overwhelmingly to support self-governance as described in the Grannis legislation. Essential provisions of the bill, both then and in its present form, give Island residents the right to elect a Board of Resident Directors, and through the elected Board, to hire professional management, a change from the present system in which the Governor appoints RIOC Board members and the President of RIOC. Of those voting, 92 percent favored the self-governance legislation. The Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) subsequently endorsed the proposed legislation by a vote of 16-0, with three members abstaining. The bill (**full text, page 8**) provides for replacement of the existing RIOC Board of Directors with a Board composed of seven Island See **Self-Governance**, page 15

**Town Meeting Wednesday Night
Will Update Status of Legislation**

The Maple Tree Group has scheduled a community-wide Town Meeting for Wednesday night (June 16) at 8:00 to bring residents up to date on the self-governance bill, its provisions, and its status. At press time, the Legislature was expected to adjourn by about Wednesday; if that schedule is kept, by then the legislation will either have passed both houses of the Legislature, or it may have to be reintroduced in January.

Islanders

Creating a Crossroads for Roosevelt Island

by Anusha Shrivastava

David Bauer, the avuncular Rivercross resident who has led the Maple Tree Group through a two-year process that may soon result in self-governance for the Island, isn’t celebrating just yet. He knows the legislative process and knows the fate of many best-made plans. Yet the plan that caught the eye of 92% of Island voters at the November election may find its way through the lawmaking process soon. As convenor of the Maple Tree Group, 71-year-old Bauer is seen by its members as a personification of Kipling’s character in *If* – the man who “keeps his head when all around are losing theirs.” “David is a very calm, judicious person who has the ability to keep a discussion in the meeting to the subject at hand and focus on the salient issues cogently,” says Lee Edelman, a member of the Group. Another member, Sherie Helstien, describes him as “a very even-handed, fair man, ideally suited to be point person for the movement toward self-governance.”



Ethel Romm adds: “David has made the Maple Tree Group a think tank for the Island. Among all the organizations on the Island, this is the one with the best manager of an agenda. David is a remarkable and gifted leader who has the capacity to melt tensions.” Dick Lutz, Managing Editor of *The WIRE*, who has followed MTG activities closely, says of Bauer, “His greatest gift is a down-home dignity that clearly arises from a native caring for everyone he touches – both their person and their ideas.” One of the techniques Bauer uses to keep his group working together is to let everyone talk in a round-robin at the end of the meeting. “It is a wonderful technique which enables the quiet ones at the meetings to express their opinions or else a small group would hog the limelight,” says Mary Camper-Titsingh. Laurence-Marie Brodsky describes Bauer as “an extraordinary leader, down-to-earth and articulate. He gets the best out of each member of the Group, takes in what we bring and says the right thing at the right time,” says Brodsky.

See **Bauer**, page 12

Pages of Thought and Opinion

Essentially Heroic

Watching the recent telecast of the Essence magazine awards, I found myself falling in love with one of the honorees. Tragically, the object of my affection is a child born with AIDS and abandoned by her mother. Adopted by a caring couple and raised to understand what she might face in the future, this lovely teenager has chosen to spend the years left to her speaking to her peers in schools and at public meetings about her illness and its prevention.

During the program, Essence announced it was launching a war against street gangs and guns, noting people of color were the primary victims of violence today. The magazine pledged to do everything in its power to break that cycle. Write on!

Better Late Than...

Originally, I had planned to write a Mother’s Day column, but couldn’t hack it. The thoughts still are in my head, though, so I’ll pass them on.

One of my Mother’s favorite lines was: “If you can’t say anything good about someone, don’t say anything.” Well that would certainly eliminate Jerome Blue from my vocabulary.

One of my Grandmother’s favorite lines, when one of the family or a close friend would chide her about what they felt might be considered by others as outrageous conduct was: “That’s all right. If they’re talking about me, then that means they’re letting somebody else alone.”

That was the apparent role destined to be played by Dr. Blue, as stand-in for the Governor. I think that George Pataki never has forgiven us Islanders for our overwhelming votes against him. Maybe he never will, but I hope I’m wrong. We’ll soon know, won’t we?

The Last Word

It is with great regret that I have decided to retire as Editor of *The Main Street WIRE*. For some time now, I have not felt as if I were pulling my weight as a member of the staff and that Dick Lutz, our Managing Editor, was being called upon to undertake more and more of the responsibilities for the paper. For that, I will always be grateful to him and he knows that I will always be available to help out whenever needed. And I reserve the right to write a Letter to the Editor now and then.

There are many of you who also have contributed to the success of *The WIRE* over the years. So many, in fact, that I will not try to list you, but I thank you all. To you, our readers, I thank you, too, for your loyalty, gracious words and comments, and wish you good reading.



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:** PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk (any wordprocessing software) left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*; to 72260.20@compuserve.com by ASCII text e-mail; 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 subject to editing for length and clarity.**



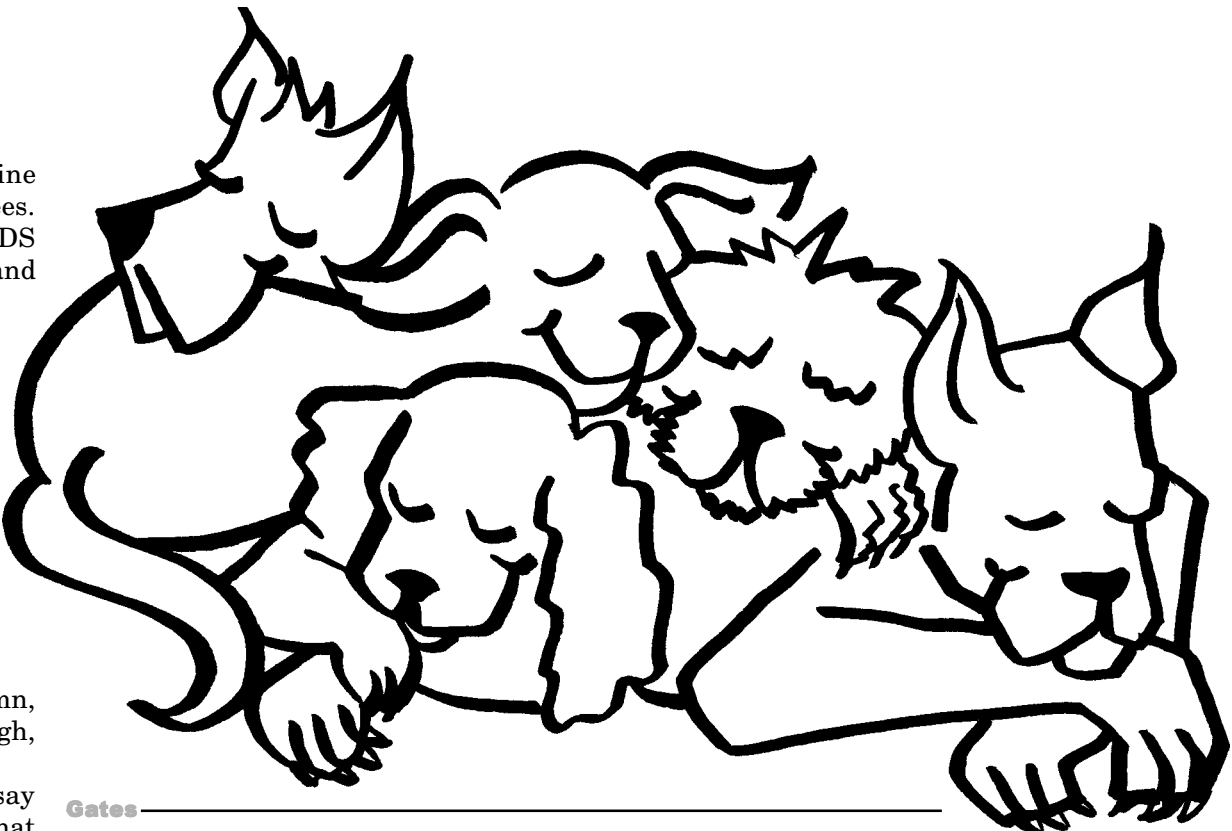
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Gates

Two-Story Luxury Condominiums... Who Needs 'Em?

by Opponents of Minischool Conversion

We Need Schools

The Masterplan and General Development Plan designated the minischools as school classrooms. There is at present a serious shortage of classrooms in New York City for as many as 120,000 students. Roosevelt Island’s minischools could ease that shortage and should be offered, since that is their purpose. And when Southtown is built, our island will have need of even more classrooms. Will another school have to be built later on? Or will our students have to leave the island to attend school?

Since RIOC maintains that Roosevelt Island is now self-sufficient, do we really need to sacrifice our children’s schoolrooms to provide RIOC with the modest amount of \$250,000 in annual income that it hopes to earn from the condominiums?

We Need Southtown

Development on Roosevelt Island should be concentrated on Southtown, not on random and unnecessary changes that defile the original plan.

Roosevelt Island has been acclaimed by urban planners worldwide for its concept that fluidly incorporates buildings and open spaces. The design of our present development will be violated by adding stories to the minischools. Not only will the views from

version to luxury housing, which negates the fundamental objective of providing affordable middle-income housing close to Manhattan Island?

Furthermore, there is an explosion of luxury housing in the East 59th Street area of Manhattan. How do we know that there will even be a demand for such housing on our Island, when there are more viable alternatives in Manhattan?

We Need Planned Communities

Residents on this Island chose to live here, in part, because this was a planned community. Ad hoc changes to the plan, such as the minischool conversions, will totally subvert this original intention. Purposeful involvement for the good of the entire community has been a hallmark of Roosevelt Islanders. Luxury housing has little to offer towards that spirit in this close-knit Island community.

We Need to Be Consulted

Virtually every community group on the Island has voiced opposition to this project.

The Roosevelt Island Residents Association declared the conversion plan to be “an attempt to change the very nature of the community.”

The Rivercross Board of Directors unanimously adopted a resolution opposing the additional story on the minischool conversion plan as being “contrary to the General Development Plan for Roosevelt Island.”

The Westview/Island House Taskforce presented petitions with 500 signatures to RIOC opposing the minischool conversion plan.

See **MiniCondos**, page 12



Members of the RIOC Board’s Capital Planning and Development Advisory Committee (and others) toured the minischools last week, guided by developer Diane Wilson, who described her plan to turn them into luxury condominium residences.

a great many apartments in the surrounding buildings be destroyed, but property values of these same apartments will be adversely affected without due process, in order to benefit a very few.

The proposed condominiums will also suffer from difficult access. The temptation to use the riverside promenade for vehicular access will become irresistible, and the pedestrian bias that was the foundation of our community will be lost, possibly forever. Furthermore, once the Masterplan and General Development Plan are altered without seeking an Amendment and without the involvement of the residents and the local Community Board, a precedent will be established for further violations.

We Need Justification

Roosevelt Island was built with tax-free or low-interest bonds issued by New York State to provide badly-needed affordable housing. It is unconscionable to use such money to subsidize luxury condominiums. What justification can there be for the minischool con-

If I had a shadow of an illusion that Public Safety was doing its job adequately, that notion evaporated Tuesday night.

About to cross Main Street, I observed two of Jim Fry’s finest in conversation at the bus kiosk near the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. I, and they, observed a yellow cab speeding – really speeding – south. One of the officers held up an arm, and the cab came to a complete stop at the stop sign – then laid rubber tearing away, quickly exceeding both a safe speed and the Island’s limit.

“Did you see that?” I asked, knowing they had.

“Yes, he was speeding,” one acknowledged.

“And you didn’t stop him.”

“No. We have no evidence...”

“It was obvious he was over the limit.”

“Have you ever been to traffic court?” one asked, clearly angry that I was expressing discontent with their lethargy in the face of dangerous use of a motor vehicle. His uniformed companion joined in, “You can’t get a conviction...”

I interrupted. “So you let him get away with it?”

“...can’t get a conviction and it’s a waste of time.”

“And a waste of his time, too,” I argued. “If you take him to court and he loses an afternoon, he won’t be likely to speed here again.”

Each shook his head at this idea.

“Or at least stop him,” I said. “At least stop him and warn him. Tell him not to do that here.”

Both laughed.

I left, wiser – and sadder – for the encounter. **DL**

island
observer

My wife, Karen, had an interesting conversation at the recent Career Day at PS/IS 217 with a New York City Police Detective, who was there to speak to the kids about his work. At the luncheon following the event, the Detective was talking to his lunch mates about his initial reaction to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani’s initiative on Quality-of-Life crimes. He said that, at the time, he thought the initiative was just plain silly. Here he was “up to his knees in bodies” and Giuliani was worrying about boom boxes.

But he went on to say that he had been proven wrong, and that he, and other “hard-nosed old-liners” in the Police Department had come to see the efficacy of the Quality-of-Life push, and that they were willing to credit the general drop in crime levels to the stricter enforcement of minor crimes. He said it seemed that, in communities that were willing to tolerate minor infractions with no penalties, it was easier for the perpetrators of those minor infractions to escalate into more serious difficulties.

**RIRA
President’s
Column**

This was a casual conversation amongst a few participants in the Career Day event. It was not an official pronouncement, but more an “owning up” of a guy who had had his mind changed against the odds, and was surprised at the outcome. As it happened, there was not a teacher present to overhear the conversation, but had there been, it’s likely the teacher would not have been surprised. As a one-time professional soldier, I am certainly not surprised.

Actually, it doesn’t much matter whether it’s a Cub Scout outing or the City of New York. The rules are the rules. When the rules are applied equally across the board, and everyone knows what they are, and the penalties for any infraction are seen as inevitable for anyone and everyone, the rules tend to be obeyed.

It is human nature to try to get away with as much as you can, and equally human nature to learn pretty quickly what you can get away with and what you can’t.

Our laws are pretty clear-cut. There are certainly enough of them. And the laws of the City of New York apply as equally on Roosevelt Island as they do in Manhattan or the Bronx.

But the law enforcement is not the same. Not the same at all.

Governor Pataki ran on the same Law-and-Order platform that Giuliani did, and never fails to bring it up at any speaking engagement. It is surprising to me that his management here has been so unresponsive to this issue, that this community, under his direct protection, should feel they must seek protection from the City.

RIOC regularly states that the Island is a crime-free community. The residents know better. Since the residents can see that Public Safety, for whatever reason, has no direction to pursue the crimes that are evident even to the casual watcher, what are we to believe about the crime we cannot see?

In this community, even the victims of crimes themselves must apply through the Freedom of Information Laws to find if an incident has been processed...if it has actually happened in the eyes of Public Safety.

The high season of Quality-of-Life crimes is upon us once again. Perhaps it would help if Public Safety posted signs publicly reminding the community what the New York City regulations are about undue noise, loitering, drug sales, public drunkenness, bicycle riding, littering and the other issues that become more prevalent and intrusive with the return of fine weather.

It certainly would help that there be better posting of the 15-mile-per-hour speed limit on Main Street than the single rusted-over sign that is no longer even readable.

But nothing will help until the decision is made to enforce the laws that already exist; to see the crime before one’s eyes, and to do something about it.

And am I to say nothing of Jerry Blue and his departure? Were I a more politic man I surely would say nothing at all. The consequences, fiscal and otherwise, of Blue’s tenure will be with us for some time to come, and Robert Ryan surely faces a job of work. But I personally owe Jerry Blue a debt of gratitude.

I have gained a deeper respect for principles of American government that I had largely left unexamined in any real pragmatic way, principles that work as they were designed to work when the community is committed to making them work for the good of the community.

Without Blue I would not have come to know this community so well, and I would not value it so dearly. It is fair to say that most of us have spoken at least once about RIOC to a neighbor to whom otherwise we might never have spoken at all. Many of us have learned of capacities in ourselves, and in our neighbors, that we did not know were there until they needed to be exercised. We certainly have learned a little more about what’s worth fighting for, and why. We have become more of a true community, a better community, and certainly a stronger community. Jerry Blue leaves us far better equipped to shape the future of our community.

All that being said, I wish Jerry well in his future endeavors.

**Your business card
in the July 4 WIRE**
See page 13



Patrick Stewart

Barbara Ostlund



Barbara (Waldstein) Ostlund, June 1942 - May 1999

To many of us here today, Roosevelt Island is a place we call home. Over 20 years ago, it took special people to venture to this unique, beautiful, precious and exciting Island. We were like pioneers, without conveniences, transportation, major shopping and entertainment. But we made it work. We organized sports teams, social events, library groups, theater groups, religious groups.

For many of us, other residents are not just the people living next door; they are more like friends and family. We saw our kids play and grow up together.

Barbara’s two children, Abby and Justin – beautiful and creative – were among the children of Roosevelt Island. Living together in a multi-cultural, multi-age community, and with the physically-challenged, is something most people don’t get to experience, and it is what made Barbara – and all of us – so special.

To Barbara, this was her home. Her presence was felt throughout the Island. One would see her famous strides as she passed by.

Barbara was a vibrant member of this Roosevelt Island family. She could and would converse freely with everyone. She had many interests that enriched her conversation: ballet, literature, antiques.

Barbara was spiritual, with meditating, chanting and yoga, which she enjoyed so much. She took in a lot of the spirit of the Island and enjoyed different experiences. She attended the new Christian Redeemed church and enjoyed the singing, the spirit and the friendliness of the church. Cal and Barbara had many wonderful times traveling, and returned to share their experiences.

For many, the Green Kitchen-Andy’s–Trellis was our little sanctuary, and it became a place for Barbara to hang her hat. If we needed to laugh, cry or vent our feelings, she was always there.

Barbara was a true Roosevelt Islander in spirit, venture, and fun, and that is in all of us here on Roosevelt Island.

Let her vibrant smile and spirit continue.

Judith Arond

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

Sat., June 12, Mother Cabrini Flea Market, Good Shepherd Plaza.

Sat., June 12, 7:00 p.m., Sensational Seniors Fashion Show, Senior Center, 546 Main Street. Refreshments and door prizes. Donation \$5. 750-3952.

Sat., June 12, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Once Upon A Mattress, Main Street Teen Theatre. Chair seats, \$8; mat seats, \$5. Reservations recommended; call 371-4449.

Sun., June 13, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Once Upon A Mattress.

Mon., June 14, 7:30 p.m., Once Upon A Mattress.

Wed., June 16, 8:00 p.m., Town Meeting on Self-Governance, discussing legislation now in process.

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

Tue., June 22, Moving Up celebration for Pre-K and kindergarten students at PS/IS 217.

Thur., June 24, 10:00 a.m., Graduation Ceremonies for 8th-graders, PS/IS 217 Auditorium.

Thur., June 24, 7:00-10:00 p.m., PS/IS 217 Senior Prom, Manhattan Park Theater.

Sat., June 26, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Giant Flea Market at Motorgate, sponsored by RISA.

Fri.-Sun., July 2-4, Fourth of July Fireworks and **Business Cards Issue** of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., June 25; **business cards for cards page(s), Monday, June 21**, decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., June 28; bag materials due July 1. **Future issues:** 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**.

Sun., July 4, Southpoint, **Macy’s Fireworks**. Tickets scheduled to go on sale Friday, June 18.

Wed., July 7, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., July 8, 11:00 a.m., RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., July 17, Mother Cabrini Flea Market, Good Shepherd Plaza.

Sat., July 31, Mother Cabrini Flea Market, Good Shepherd Plaza.

Wed., August 11, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., August 12, 11:00 a.m., RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., August 28, Mother Cabrini Flea Market, Good Shepherd Plaza

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.

At the Senior Center

Every week
Note: July 1-August 31, activities in the Senior Center will be limited due to summer vacation.

Mondays
9:00 **Stay Well** (exercise)
10:00 **English as 2nd Language**
10:00 **Computer Class**
12:30 **Line Dancing** (*new*)

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

Wednesdays
9:00 **Stay Well** (Stretch)
10:00 **English as 2nd Language**
12:30 **Games**
12:30 **Provocative Discussion Group**

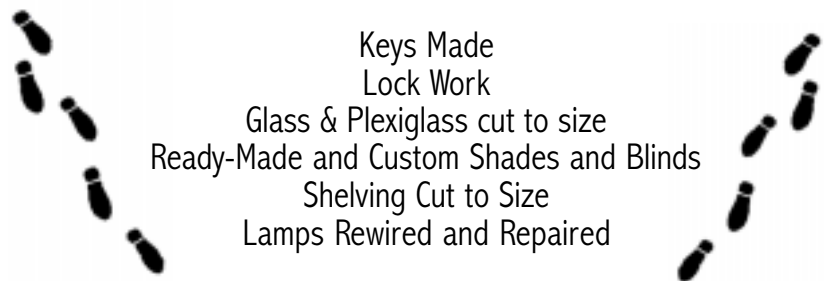
Thursdays
10:00 **Tai Chi**
12:30 **Movie**

Fridays
10:00 **English as 2nd Language** (conversation)
10:00 **Creative Arts**
10:30 **Blood Pressure Screening** (to 11:30)

Special Events
Fri., June 25, **June Birthday Party**, 12:30 p.m.
Sat., June 26, **Giant Flea Market**, Motorgate, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

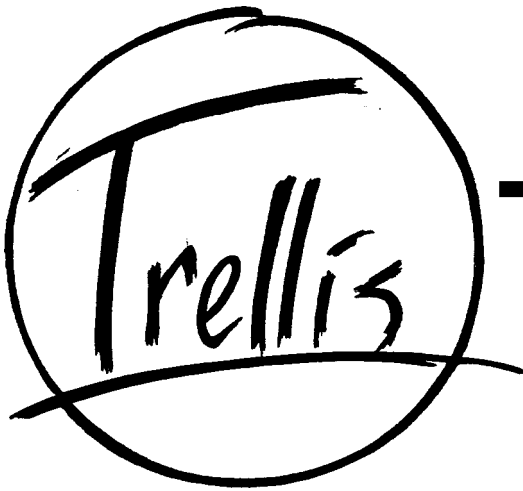
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Apartment Share

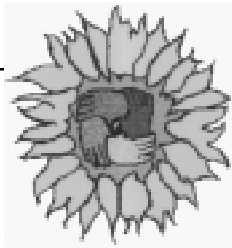
One furnished (unfurnished if preferred) master bedroom available in 3-bedroom apartment in Westview (625) with 2 single adult female sisters.

Spacious, sunny bedroom: Floor to ceiling window, walk-in closet, own bathroom, spectacular view of Manhattan and East River. Overlooking courtyard. On 3rd floor with doorman.

Neat, quiet, non-smoking females preferred. \$725/month including utilities (negotiable). Have cat; will keep her in our part of the house.

Please call Janet or Jean at (212) **308-5167** between 8:00PM-9:30PM Mon.-Fri. and 1:00-4:00PM on weekends. Have answering machine.

Note: You must go through Roosevelt Island Management's screening process to be approved as our roommate.



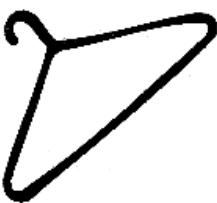
**TO OUR FRIENDS
AND NEIGHBORS
ON ROOSEVELT ISLAND**

***THE R.I. GREENS HAD OUR
FIRST MEETING AND VOTED TO
ADVOCATE FOR THE FOLLOWING:***

- Self-Governance
- Preservation of green/open spaces, gardens, and landmarks
- Rent regulations and tenant protection.
- Better schools and **NO** mini-school condos.
- Tram transfers/MetroCard
- Better reports from Public Safety
- Shopping buses
- Save Southpoint - **NO** Hotels
- No Corporate sell-out of R.I.
- Promotion of the Arts

Join us at our next meeting,
Thursday, August 19, 7:30 p.m.,
Island House Community Room.
Information: **308-6722**

FAST,
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RELIABLE,
COURTEOUS



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F111

Blue from page 1

from the RIOC office to the Tram station, then to Motorgate.

During his tenure, Blue focused on bringing development to the Island – getting Southtown on track and on finding other ways to turn the Island’s assets into cash flow. He proposed turning most of Oc-tagon Park into a 25-story commercial eldercare facility, but was beaten back by residents unwilling to part with designated parkland. The eldercare facility, which many feel should be part of Southtown, has more recently been re-sited, at least tentatively, on part of the Sportspark’s footprint, just south of and hard by the Queensboro Bridge. Blue pro-posed turning the bulk of 10-acre Southpoint into a complex of two 25-story hotel towers and a conference center occupying the ruins of the James Renwick-designed smallpox hospital. That idea re-mains alive, as does another plan to put a second story on the Island’s west-shore minischools to turn them into luxury condomini-ums.

Blue’s administration was so fractious that Joseph Lynch, the Commissioner of the State Depart-ment of Housing and Community Renewal, took over the job of chairing the meetings of the RIOC Board of Directors. Often, over re-cent months, Blue’s proposed agenda for those meetings would be largely scrapped at Lynch’s di-rection.

Blue also directed his administration’s efforts at making Roosevelt Island self-sufficient. He was so determined to do so that he refused funds that could easily have been available to RIOC, had he only been willing to request and

accept them. Blue claimed success in the quest for a balanced budget at the beginning of 1999, but resi-dents who have attempted to rec-oncile the claim with the facts sus-pect the claim relies on mirrors and masking tape more than reality. The suspicion is that Blue is pour-ing one-shot income, like funds from a settlement on the crane-



Tramway accident of February, 1998, into day-to-day operating requirements.

In what often appeared to be des-peration attempts to increase in-come and reduce expenses, Blue:

- increased fees charged to Island organizations for use of playing fields (1997), then backed off when faced with a vehement community reaction;
- attempted to cut off night Tram service at 9:45 (1998), an idea that was never implemented because community reaction was so swift and so solidly against it;
- slashed maintenance of the Main Street roadway, possibly an-ticipating that Southtown construc-tion vehicles would tear it up any-way;

• made an effort to take over scheduling of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, which serves as a community center, and collect fees for its use;

- raised fees at Motorgate;
- eliminated console operators at the Tramway, a move opposed ve-hemently by the late Al Weinstein as a breach of safety; indeed, ab-sence of a console op-erator was later cited as a contributing fac-tor in the crane-Tram collision of February, 1998, in which a dozen residents were injured;
- charged Rivercross for using sidewalks to erect scaffolding in-tended to protect pass-ersby during concrete repair;
- reduced staff in some departments, then ordered special-ists to do work outside their specialties in time-consuming on-the-job learning;
- spent down the Island’s supplies set aside during previous administrations with-out replacing them;
- imposed high fees on the Sportspark swimming pool, caus-ing cancellation of a YWCA program used by Island youth.

Blue’s administration of Island affairs was a significant factor in the start of the Maple Tree Group (MTG), which wrote the self-gov-ernance legislation now in the State Legislature, though MTG members pronounced the Island’s problems more “systemic” than Blue-related. Whether it was Blue’s moves in attempting to achieve self-sufficiency, or the complete elimination, within two years, of the State subsidy that had grown to over \$6 million, Blue’s administration seemed designed to illustrate the prob-lems in a management system that had no compelling mandate to answer to residents for its poli-cies and actions.

Ryan from page 1

I have to get up to speed on a lot of issues. I want to sit down with all the stakeholders – residents, business people, developers – everybody... hopefully, we can work together. You may not always like what I come back to you and say. Some days, I may have to be the bad cop. But I’m here to make it better. The Governor understands the concerns of every-one here and I’m thrilled to be here.”

Ryan was applauded warmly. He has come to Roosevelt Island via the political campaign and public service trail. He ran the Governor’s 1994 campaign, then worked on his transition team. From there, he went to Empire State Development Cor-poration (ESD) as Executive Director for Port Authority Affairs, a liai-son function. In summer, 1997, he became ESD’s Senior Vice-Presi-dent for Communications. In that job, he oversaw the *I Love NY* cam-paign and ESD’s Office of Television and Motion Pictures.

Ryan, who is divorced, lives on 39th Street on the East side. He has twin daughters, 16.

Ryan said all the right things in his in-terview with *The WIRE* – repeating his intention to listen, learn, and consult. He agreed to resume the *RIOC President’s Col-umn* in *The WIRE*, a communications op-portunity his predeces-sor had dropped after a few months.

He starts work Mon-day morning. “I’m a pretty quick study,” he said. “I’m a good judge of people, and I’m good at analyzing. My opinion isn’t that important... I have to be a funnel for a broad range of views.” Asked if he has any particular march-ing orders from the Governor, he said, “Not yet,” but he expects them to come. “The Governor is a firm believer in seeing things run in a busi-nesslike fashion, and keeping a rein on the tax dollars.” Asked if he’ll feel free to request State money if he sees a need, he said, “Yes.” Then he added, quickly, “I don’t know what the answer will be. If there’s a problem, [the Governor will] sit and listen, and then make a decision.”

Asked about the best job he’s ever held, Ryan expressed great satis-faction in having worked on Pataki’s initial campaign for Governor, then added, “But this has promise. This could be the best.”



At the end of Thursday morning’s RIOC Board meeting, Ryan was greeted by a swarm of residents.

Blue so curtailed the flow of in-formation from his office to Island residents that Patrick Stewart, President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA), ac-cumulated a foot-high stack of re-quests and responses for docu-ments exchanged under the Free-dom of Information law.

Blue ignored RIRA and its elected Common Council, and while he ad-hered to that policy for nearly three years, RIRA stood fast as the focus of resident efforts both to unseat Blue and to roll back the decisions he ap-peared to make without resident con-sultation beyond a handful of die-hard supporters.

Blue apparently felt monumen-tal pressure in the RIOC job. Resi-dents were a constant source of ir-ritation to him, according to staff members who talked with *The WIRE* from time to time on condi-tion their jobs not be jeopardized. “He was explosive after meetings,” one said, “and whenever *The WIRE* came out.” Though Blue professed to ignore the Island’s newspaper, he was actually an avid reader who devoured every issue as soon as it was available, then threw it in his wastebasket – then insisted copies be available when he wanted them. (While *The WIRE* has strived to report objectively on Blue and his administration in news articles, the paper often found fault with his ad-ministration in analysis pieces, or editorialized against his secrecy and unwillingness to work with residents, as well as his projects. In an attempt to provide a balance of opinion, *The WIRE* asked Blue to write a *RIOC President’s Col-umn*. He did, for a while, then abruptly stopped supplying it.)

The WIRE was banned from the RIOC office at 591 Main Street at one point, in a move that lasted just one week. Thereafter, staff mem-bers were sent out to retrieve a dozen copies from one or another Island merchant; Blue wanted them for reference, but didn’t want to see

staffers reading the newspaper, or to see it around the office. “We had to have them, but they were not to be visible,” said one RIOC employee.

On one occasion, when *The WIRE* published an editorial car-toon showing Blue superimposed on a badly torn awning over the staircase at Tramway Plaza, Blue exploded at his Chief Groundskeeper, according to staff members who witnessed the con-frontation. “I don’t need this f***ing cartoon s**t,” Blue is quoted as shouting. The witnesses said the staffer who was the object of Blue’s anger responded, “It’s not my f***ing department,” remind-ing him that the awning did not fall in the category of “grounds.”

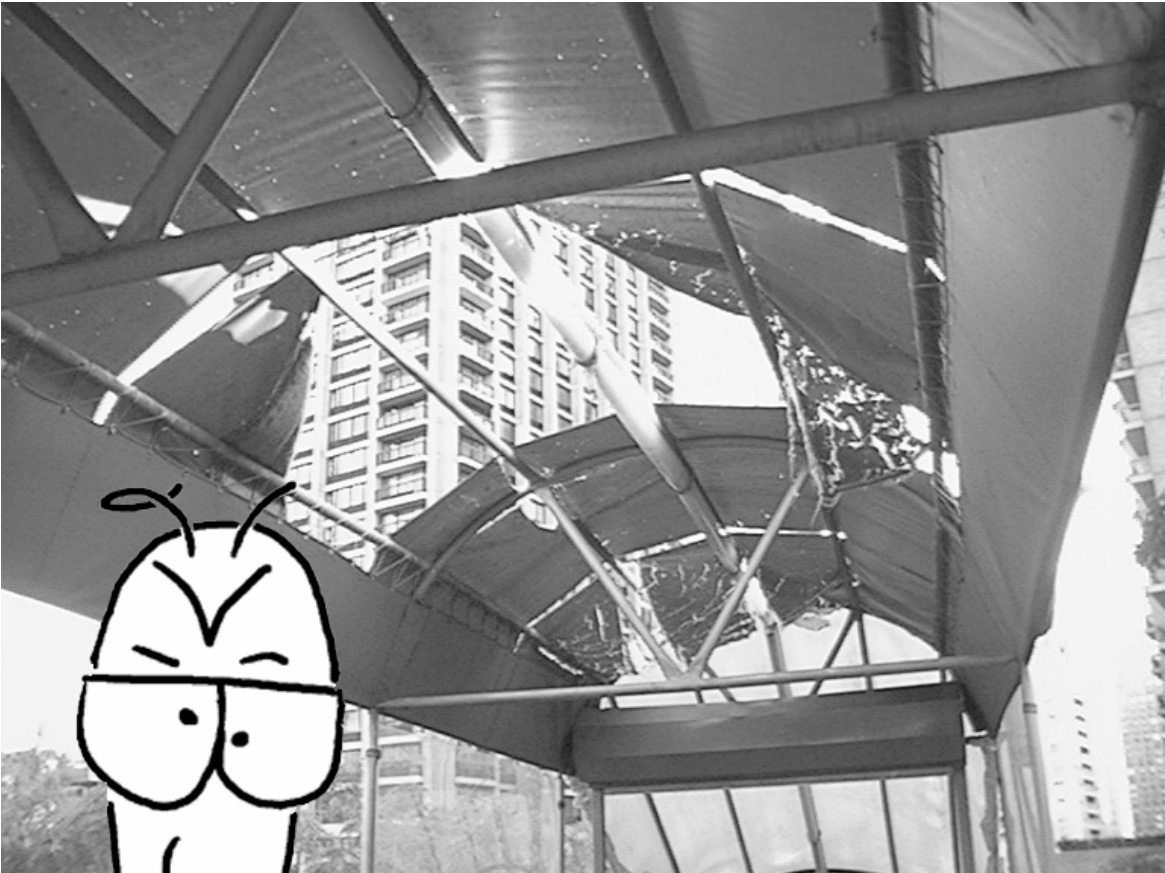
Blue is said to have reserved his most coarse tantrums for female members of the RIOC staff. Re-gardless of rank, they were required to knock before entering his office – a protocol rarely required of male staff members.

During the last year of Blue’s RIOC Presidency, his sessions of railing at one staff member or an-other approached daily frequency, say those who were in a position to observe him. He is said to have been tense before meetings, despite a role-playing rehearsal in which a staff member voiced questions that might be expected from members of the community or the RIOC Board of Directors. “After meet-ings,” a staffer told *The WIRE*, “the rule was to stay out of his way.”

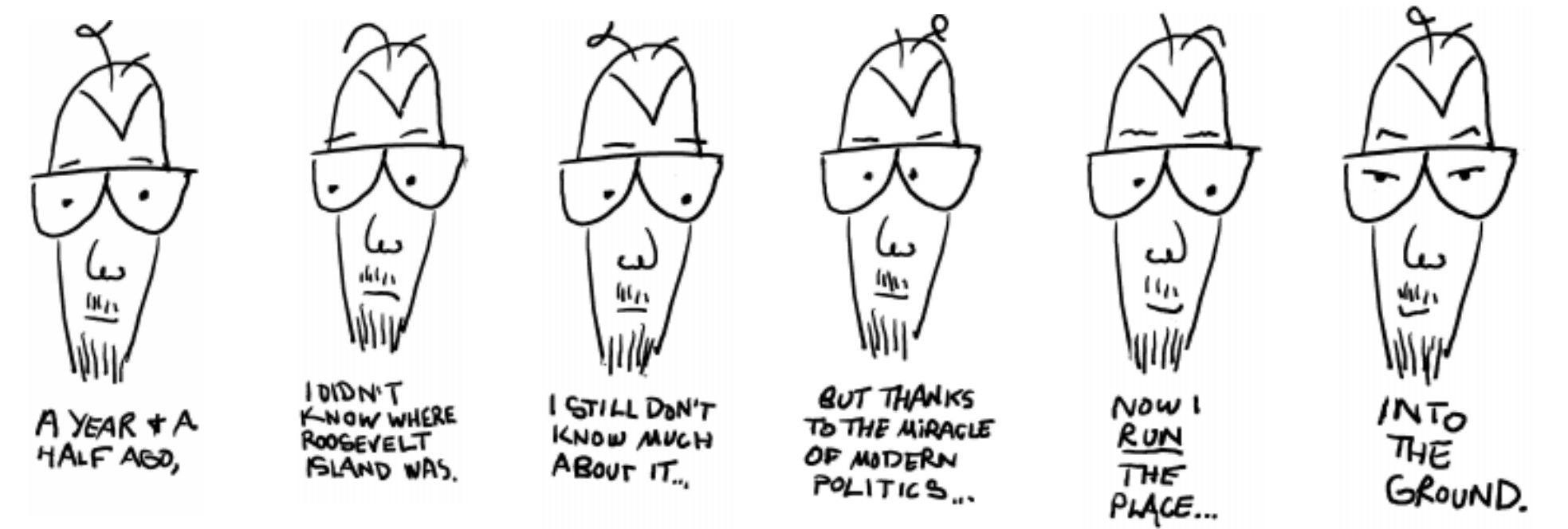
Staff members used words like “paranoid,” “secretive,” and “con-trol freak” in describing Blue’s demeanor and approach to his job. One said, “He’s desperately afraid of somebody knowing something more than he knows.”

Blue was nominated by the Gov-ernor to become Commisioner of the State Division of Human Rights, and the nomination was re-portedly confirmed Tuesday in an *in camera* (closed) session of State Republican Senators.

Blue reportedly went ballistic with a RIOC staffer after seeing this *WIRE* editorial cartoon, published October 24, 1998.

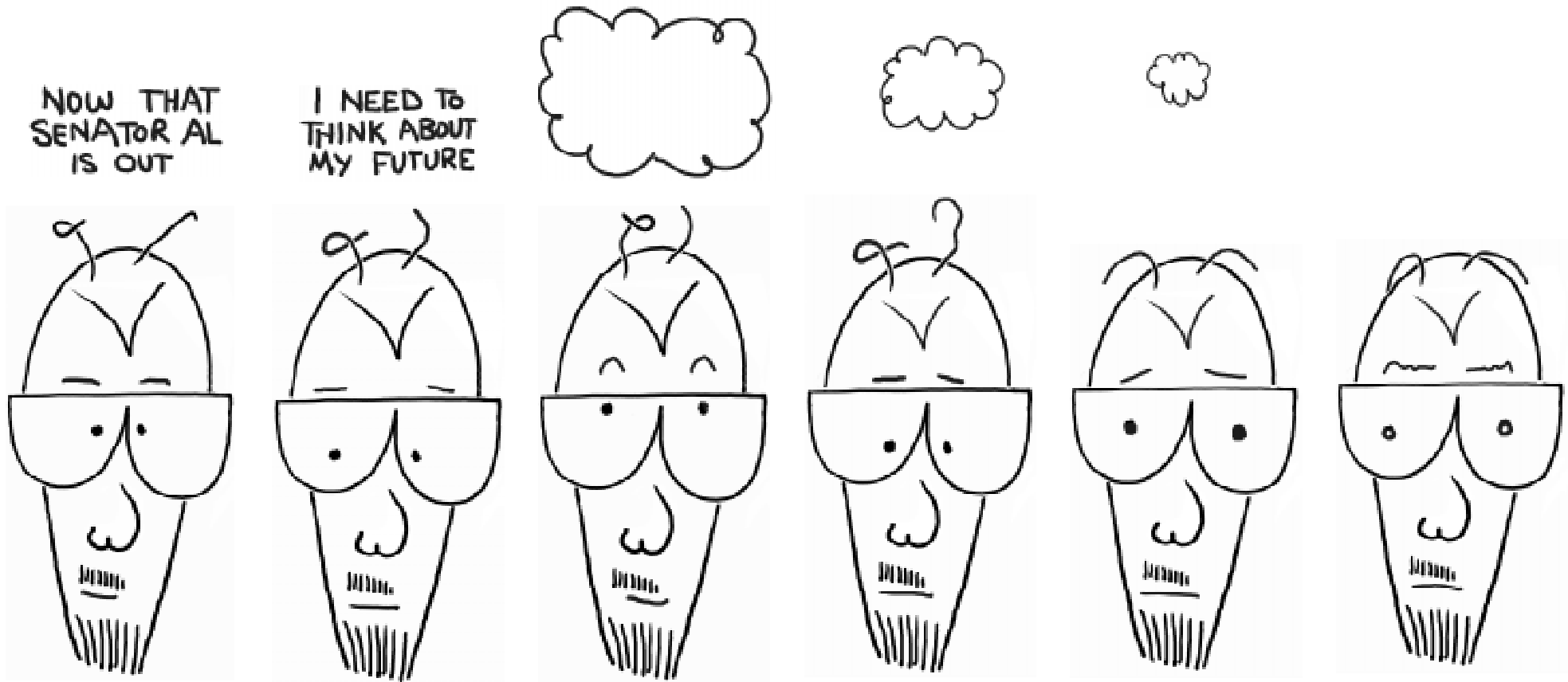
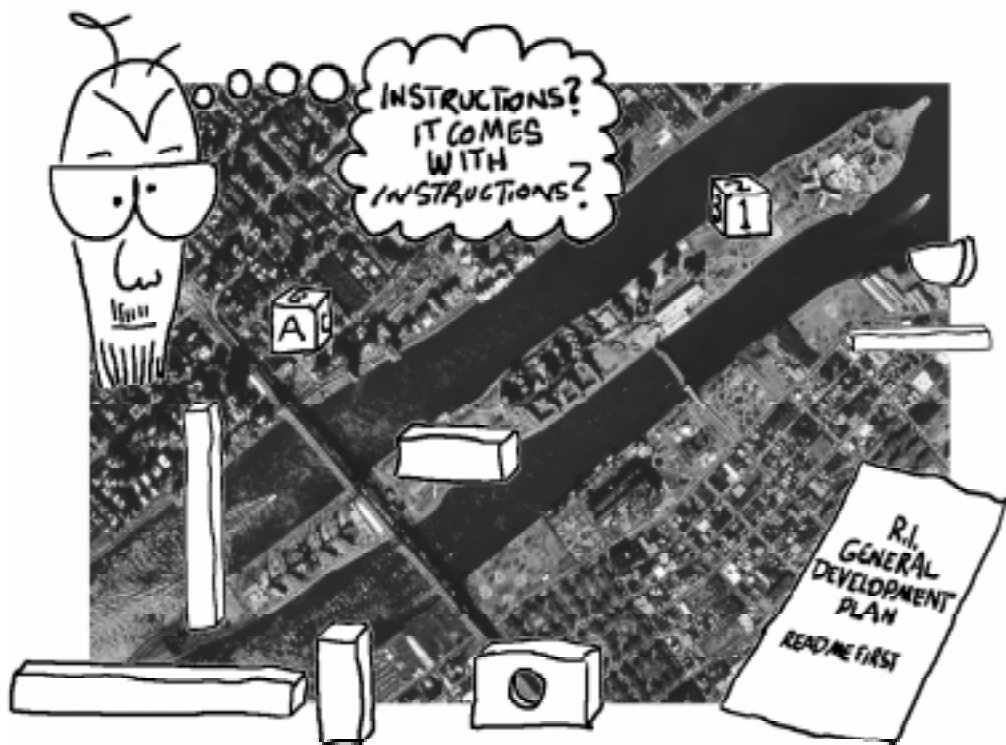
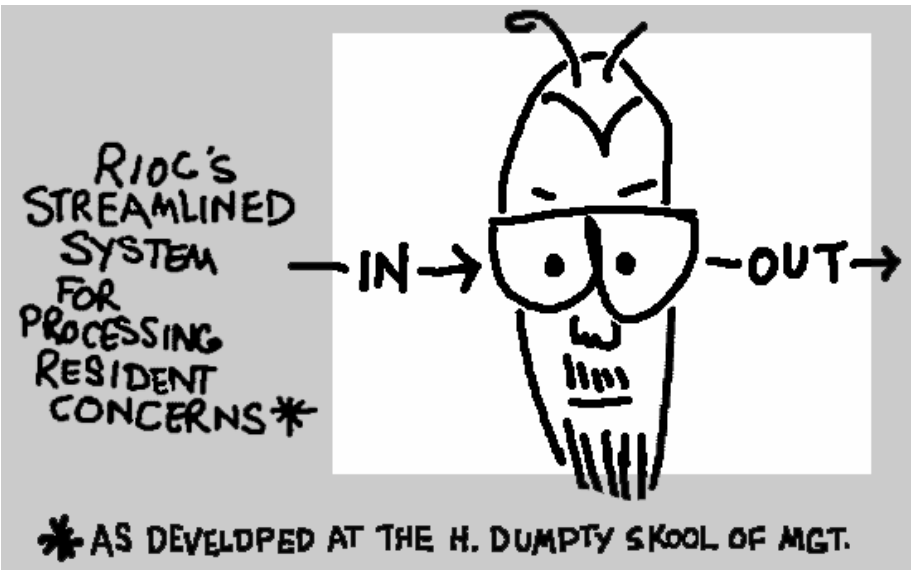


Hello. My name is Dr. Jerome Blue. Welcome to the Roosevelt Island Tramway. Every day in every way, Roosevelt Island is better than ever. Please look around and notice how everything we do meets the same high standard.



Blue as Cartoon Fodder

During Dr. Jerome Blue's three years as head of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, he was a frequent subject of *The WIRE's* editorial cartoons. Below, a jibe at Blue's resolute ignoring of the General Development Plan for the Island. At bottom, a cartoon – some six months early – anticipating Blue's departure from the position.



Legislation Nearing Possible Passage

NEW YORK STATE SENATE
Introducer’s Memorandum in Support
submitted in accordance with Senate Rule VI, Sec. 1

Senate Bill #: S.4223-A
Assembly Bill #: A.7280-A
Senate Sponsor(s): Senator Olga A. Mendez
Assembly Sponsor(s): Assemblyman Pete Grannis

Title: An Act to Amend Chapter 899 of the Laws of 1984, relating to creating the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, in relation to the powers of such Corporation.

Purpose: To reorganize the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, in order to give residents a higher degree of self-governance.

Summary of Provisions: Section 2 defines a “Community Election” and a “resident” for purposes of such an election. Section 3 establishes the composition of the new Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board (RIOC) composed of 7 members, 2 appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York, the remaining 5 to be elected by the residents of Roosevelt Island. The bill outlines the organization, powers, duties, regulations, and limitations of the newly recomposed RIOC. Section 12 allows for the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to provide RIOC with assistance and services as RIOC may deem necessary. Section II sets an effective date.

Existing Law: Currently, Chapter 899 of the Laws of 1984 provides that the RIOC Board be comprised of 9 members, 2 of which will be the Commissioner of DHCR who shall be the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Board and the second the Director of the Division of the Budget. Of the remaining 7 members the Governor will appoint two recommended by the Mayor of the City of New York and 5 which he shall appoint at his discretion. Only 3 of the 9 members of the Board are required to be residents of Roosevelt Island.

Justification: RIOC was created in 1984 to manage Roosevelt Island, oversee its continued development through the master plan and allocate state capital funding and operational support. In recent years, however, state assistance has evaporated and the Island has become increasingly disenchanted with RIOC management. This bill would provide for resident management of the Island thus giving a greater sense and measure of self-governance by requiring that the RIOC board be comprised of duly elected residents, and authorizing the newly comprised board to manage the affairs of Roosevelt Island.

Legislative History: New Bill.

Fiscal Implications: None

Effective Date: Sixty days after it becomes law.

Editor’s note: Full text of the proposed legislation is reprinted here. Boxes contain explanatory material and are not part of the legislation. Language shown in bold type is new material that changes the existing law on governance of Roosevelt Island. Material deleted from the existing legislation is not shown.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section I. Chapter 899 of the laws of 1984, relating to creating the Roosevelt Island operating corporation, subdivision 5 of section 3 as amended by chapter 55 of the laws of 1992, section 8 as amended by chapter 770 of the laws of 1988 and paragraph 2 of subdivision a of section 8 as amended by chapter 804 of the laws of 1990, is amended and a new section 15-a is added to read as follows:

Section 1. **Legislative declaration.** The legislature hereby finds, determines and declares that: (a) the city of New York and the New York state urban development corporation have entered into a lease and related agreements providing for the urban development corporation to use its statutory powers to create on Roosevelt Island a new community which would retain and heighten the benefits of urban living while preserving a sense of scale and open space for Roosevelt Island residents and New York city as a whole; (b) the urban development corporation **and its successors have** constructed the first **phases** of the island’s development, including public facilities, pursuant to a general development plan for Roosevelt Island, updated **from time to time, which plan** contemplates significant future development on the island, including the provision of additional housing, commercial, civic, recreational and other facilities; (c) the urban development corporation **has transferred** all its rights and obligations with respect to the development, operation and supervision of both such existing and such proposed development to a public benefit corporation which **has been** under the supervision of the commission of housing and community renewal; and (d) it is in the public interest that the public benefit corporation plan, design, develop, operate, maintain, and manage Roosevelt Island, that such

corporation have vested in it such powers as are necessary or convenient to effectuate those functions.

Section 2. **Definitions.** As used in this act, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. “City” shall mean the city of New York.
2. “Commissioner” shall mean the commissioner of housing and community renewal.
3. **“Community election” shall mean an election held on Roosevelt Island for the purpose of electing the five members to the Roosevelt Island operating corporation as required by section three of this act. Community elections are to be held at the same time as a general election held in an odd numbered year.**
4. “Corporation” shall mean the Roosevelt Island operating corporation created by this act.
5. “Development subleases” shall mean (a) the sublease dated August 1, 1980 between the urban development corporation and the city, (b) the ground lease, dated October 30, 1972, between the urban development corporation and North Town Phase II Houses, Inc., (c) the ground lease, dated April 25, 1973, between the urban development corporation and North Town Phase III Houses, Inc., (d) the restated ground lease, dated November 30, 1977, between the urban development corporation and Rivercross Tenants’ Corporation, **and (e) the ground lease between the corporation and Manhattan Park dated August 4, 1986 and all other related leases.**
6. “Division” shall mean the New York state division of housing and community renewal.
7. “Lease” shall mean the lease, dated December 23, 1969, as heretofore or hereafter amended, among the city of New York, the New York state urban development corporation and the Roosevelt Island operating corporation, pursuant to which the city leased substantially all of Roosevelt Island to the New York state urban development corporation for development substantially in accordance with the development plan referred to therein.
8. **“Resident” shall mean, for the purpose of section three of this act, a person over the age of eighteen residing on Roosevelt Island for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding any election held to select directors to the Roosevelt Island operating corporation board including any election held to fill a vacancy to the Roosevelt Island operating corporation board as required by subdivision two of section three of this act.**
9. “Roosevelt Island” shall mean the island located in the East River, city and county of New York, extending from approximately fiftieth street to eighty-sixth street in Manhattan.
10. “Safe affordable housing for everyone, inc.” shall mean the New York corporation organized under article 6-A of the private housing finance law and under the supervision and control of the commissioner.
11. “Tramway franchise” shall mean the franchise for the Roosevelt Island tramway granted by the city to the urban development corporation on February 19, 1974.
12. “Urban development corporation” shall mean the New York state urban development corporation.

Section 3. **Establishment of corporation; organization of board.**

1. To effectuate the purposes and provisions of this act, there is hereby created the “Roosevelt Island operating corporation”, which shall be a body corporate and politic constituting a public benefit corporation and a political subdivision of the state of New York.
2. The board of directors of the corporation shall be composed of **seven directors. Of the seven directors, two directors, both of whom shall be residents of Roosevelt Island as defined by this act, shall be appointed by the mayor of the city. The remaining five shall be five residents who have received the most votes in the initial community election. The initial community election shall be held on the first general election held after thirty days from the date this act has become effective, and the first meeting of each newly elected board for the purpose of being sworn into office and organizing itself shall be held within ten days following the election.** Each director shall serve for a term of four years and until a successor shall have been **sworn into office, except that in order to create a**

See Section 3. Election every two years.

Voting eligibility extended to all residents over 18, including the Island’s population of non-citizens.

All members of RIOC Board to be elected by residents, except for two appointed by the Mayor. All Board members must be Island residents. All Island residents eligible for the Board, including non-citizens.

board with staggered terms, of the five residents originally elected to the board, the two residents receiving the lesser number of votes shall serve until the next general election in an odd numbered year, and the three residents with the larger number of votes shall serve until the second general election in an odd numbered year. At the first meeting following each biennial election, the board shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson to serve for a two year term until the newly elected directors of the board are sworn in. Any action taken by the directors of the corporation shall be taken by a majority vote of the directors then in office.

Vacancies that occur in the board shall be filled by vote of the remaining directors on an interim basis until the next general election in an odd numbered year. The elected public officials who represent Roosevelt Island **in the national, state, and city legislatures** shall be representatives to the board of directors of the corporation entitled to receive notice of and attend all meetings of such board **with the right to hear and be heard** but shall not be entitled to vote. Failure to give such notice shall not affect the validity of any action taken at a meeting of such board. **All meetings at which three or more directors of the board are present shall be open to the public, with notice of time and place of the meeting posted prominently in a public place designated for such postings at least three business days prior to the meeting, except in the event of an emergency, which action shall be ratified by the board at the next following regular meeting.**

3. A director of the corporation shall not receive a salary or other compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties as a director. A director of the corporation may engage in private employment or in a profession or business, unless otherwise prohibited by law from doing so.

Section 4. **Powers of corporation.** The corporation’s powers shall be limited to carrying out the development, management and operation of Roosevelt Island. In carrying out such development, management and operation, the corporation shall have the power to:

1. Sue and be sued;
2. Have a seal and alter same at pleasure;
3. Make and alter by-laws for its organization and internal management and make rules and regulations governing the use of its property and facilities;
4. Make and execute contracts and all other instruments necessary or convenient for the exercise of its powers and functions under this act. **Purchases and contracts involving the expenditure of ten thousand dollars or more over a period of time shall be awarded by the board of directors to the lowest responsible bidder thereon only after the receipt of sealed bids or proposals called for by at least ten days of advertisement in a publication generally available to the potential bidders for the item. Sealed bids shall not be required if the item to be purchased can only be supplied from one supplier, or if necessary to cope with an emergency situation declared as such by a competent authority;**
5. Acquire in the name of the corporation by purchase, grant or gift, or by the exercise of the power of eminent domain pursuant to the eminent domain procedure law, or otherwise, real or personal property, or any interest therein deemed necessary or desirable for the development, management or operation of Roosevelt Island, including, without limitation, leasehold interest, air and subsurface rights, easements and lands under water at the site of Roosevelt Island or in the general vicinity thereof, and to subject such property or interest therein to a purchase money or other lien or security interest in connection with the acquisition and development thereof, provided that the corporation shall have no authority or power to issue any notes, bonds or other debt obligations, whether for the purpose of financing the development of Roosevelt Island or otherwise;
6. Hold and dispose of real or personal property for its corporate purposes;
7. Appoint officers, agents and employees, prescribe their duties and fix their compensation in accordance with a staffing and compensa-

Vacancies on the RIOC Board to be filled by a vote of the remaining members of the Board.

Elected representatives of the Island in City, State, and federal legislatures to be non-voting representatives to the RIOC Board.

All Board meetings open to public.

Sealed bids required for suppliers and contractors.

Elected RIOC Board empowered to hire professional management.

Would Give the Island Self-Governance

tion plan **developed by the board;**

- 8. Engage the services of private consultants on a contract basis for rendering professional and technical assistance advice;
- 9. Procure insurance against any loss in connection with its activities, properties and other assets, in such amount and from such insurers as it deems desirable;
- 10. Charge and collect fees, rents and other charges for the occupancy or other use of real or personal property owned, operated, managed or regulated by the corporation;
- 11. Accept any gifts or grants of money or property, or financial or other aid in any form, from the federal government, the state, or the city (or any instrumentality of any such government) or from any other source and, subject to the provisions of this act and other applicable law, to comply with any conditions of such assistance and execute any contracts or other instruments in connection therewith;
- 12. Invest any funds of the corporation, or any monies under its custody and control not required for immediate use or disbursement, at the discretion of the corporation, in obligations of the state or the United States government or obligations the principal and interest of which are guaranteed by the state or the United States government, or in any other obligations in which the comptroller of the state is authorized to invest pursuant to section 98 of the state finance law;
- 13. Enter into such agreements with the state, the urban development corporation and the city as the parties thereto deem appropriate to effectuate the provisions of this act;
- 14. Assume and perform the obligations and responsibilities of the urban development corporation under the lease, the tramway franchise, and all other contracts, leases, and agreements heretofore entered into

Elected Board becomes responsible for all development.

by the urban development corporation relating to the development, management and operation of Roosevelt Island (except that the corporation shall not assume any of the rights, duties and responsibilities of the urban development corporation **or the corporation** in relation to any bonds or notes issued, or mortgages or security agreements held, by the urban development corporation or any of its subsidiaries) and exercise all of the rights of the urban development corporation **and the corporation** with respect thereto;

- 15. **Establish a budget prior to thirty days before the start of each fiscal year for the needs of the corporation;**
- 16. Create or abolish departments or offices for the operation of the corporation, which are not otherwise provided for by this act;
- 17. Authorize the employment positions and fix the compensation of employees of the corporation;
- 18. **Supplement any of the services provided by other governmental agencies in such a way that will make the services to residents of Roosevelt Island better and more complete than otherwise possible; and**

Island remains part of New York City. Elected Board to supplement City services as needed by residents.

19. Do and perform all other acts necessary or convenient to carry out the foregoing in connection with the development, management, or operation of Roosevelt Island.

Section 5. Rules and regulations; approval of development plan amendments; applicability of local laws.

- 1. The corporation shall promulgate such rules and regulations as it shall deem appropriate to provide an opportunity for residents of Roosevelt Island to comment upon any major amendment of the development plan for Roosevelt Island referred to in the lease at a public hearing held prior to its adoption by the corporation.
- 2. The corporation shall not enter into any agreement for the design or construction of any improvement provided for in any amendment prior to approval by the board of directors.
- 3. The requirements of all local laws, ordinances, codes, charters or regulations shall be applicable to the construction, alteration or improvement or any building or structure on Roosevelt Island.

Section 6. Powers and duties of urban development corporation; lease and tramway franchise.

Elected Board becomes responsible for the Tramway and observing the provisions of the lease and General Development Plan.

- 1. The corporation shall perform all obligations of the urban development corporation or any of its subsidiaries with respect to the development, management and operation of

Chronology

___ 1997 ___

July 4
Island protest demands “Democracy Now for Roosevelt Island.”
Several hundred residents sign “Petition for Democracy.”
Formation of Maple Tree Group (MTG) announced in *The WIRE*.

July 7
Maple Tree Group formed at initial meeting.

August
A resident member of the RIOC Board of Directors, Willard Warren, dismissed by Governor Pataki, replaced with non-resident Frank McKenna, leaving only two residents (David Kraut and Ron Vass) on the Board.

September
Assemblymember Pete Grannis asks Mayor Rudy Giuliani to fill his two slots on the RIOC Board.

October
Maple Tree Group issues report faulting Island’s governance, saying “citizens have no systematic input into the process of making decisions about matters that touch them directly.”
RIRA President Patrick Stewart and a group of residents meet with Deputy Mayor Rudy Washington, urging that the Mayor nominate residents for the RIOC Board.

October 27
Residents Association stages protest at Tramway Plaza in Manhattan. Residents march to the Governor’s New York City office and present a list of grievances.

November
Maple Tree Group announces draft legislation calling for a Board of Residents to replace RIOC Board. Over 80 residents participate as the bill is fine-tuned over the next several months.

___ 1998 ___

Summer
Grannis Bill introduced in the State Assembly.

August
Ron Vass resigns from RIOC Board of Directors. His letter tells RIOC President Jerome Blue, “You have turned the Island’s population against you.”

September
Over 100 members of the community attend a Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) meeting to hear about the Grannis bill and kick off a renewed “Drive for Democracy.” RIRA puts the self-governance question on the November ballot.

October
At a Town Meeting, Grannis describes self-governance legislation and tells residents, “It won’t be easy,” but says he sees a real chance of eventually getting self-governance for the Island.

November 3
In RIRA election, 92% of voters back Grannis bill.

December
State Senator Olga Mendez agrees to back self-governance.
Island residents Susan Whitaker (of the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, RICO), and RIRA President Patrick Stewart are seated as non-voting members of the RIOC Board. (As of June 1999, they have still not been confirmed as voting members; only one Island resident, David Kraut, is a voting member.)

___ 1999 ___

February
Acting Commissioner Joe Lynch of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) becomes Commissioner
Lynch names residents and others to two advisory committees to the RIOC Board of Directors.
RIRA Common Council votes active support for Grannis bill, 16-0 (3 abstaining).

March
Lynch tells MTG the Governor is interested in finding a formula for Island self-governance.
Faced with several development projects deemed undesirable, RIRA’s Common Council votes to raise funds for litigation.

May
Mayor Rudy Giuliani holds a Town Hall Meeting on Roosevelt Island, tells residents, “I’d be happy to work with you to liberate Roosevelt Island.” He assigns his counsel to work with RIRA President Patrick Stewart on the problem.

June
Senator Olga Mendez introduces revised self-governance bill in the State Senate.

Roosevelt Island including, without limitation, all such obligations arising under the lease and the tramway franchise.

- 2. The urban development corporation, the division and the corporation shall each use their best efforts to obtain any required consents to the assignment of the lease and the tramway franchise from the urban development corporation to the corporation and to any other assumption by the corporation of the obligations of the urban development corporation or any of the subsidiaries under any other contracts, leases, agreements or instruments entered into by the urban development corporation, or any such subsidiary, relating to the development, management or operation of Roosevelt Island (other than any bonds or notes issued or mortgages or security agreements held, by the urban development corporation or any of its subsidiaries) and, upon obtaining such consents, the corporation and the urban development corporation shall enter into such agreements and take such actions as shall be necessary to effectuate such assignments and assumptions, provided that in order to permit the urban development corporation to recover the investment which it has heretofore made in the development of Roosevelt Island, such agreements shall provide appropriate assurances satisfactory to the urban development corporation (a) for the prompt payment directly to the urban development corporation of (i) all sums from time to time due from lessees under the development subleases and (ii) all sums received by the corporation from the city in connection with the termination of the lease, and (b) for the amending or supplementing of the development subleases to the extent, if any, necessary to protect the rights of the holders of any mortgages on the leasehold interests created thereunder. Nothing in this act shall (a) constitute or authorize an assignment by the urban development corporation (or any subsidiary thereof) of any mortgage or security interest held by the urban development corporation (or any such subsidiary) on any real or personal property or interest therein on Roosevelt Island or any rights or obligations of the urban development corporation (or any such subsidiary) arising under any such mortgage or security agreement, (b) relieve the urban development corporation of any of its obligations under any bonds heretofore issued by the urban development corporation, or (c) otherwise affect the interests of the holders of any such bonds.
- 3. All revenues (other than state appropriations) derived from the contracts, leases, agreements or instruments assigned to or assumed by the corporation pursuant to subdivision two of this section shall be applied first to the payment of those obligations assigned to or assumed by the corporation.
- 4. The urban development corporation and the corporation are hereby authorized to enter into such agreements with the city as the corporation shall determine to be appropriate to amend, reform or supplement the lease (including the development plan referred to therein) and the tramway franchise in order to carry out the purposes of this act. The provisions of any general, special or local law notwithstanding, the city is hereby authorized to enter into any such agreements with the corporation and the urban development corporation.

Section 7. **Equal employment opportunities.**

- 1. The corporation shall not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status, and will undertake or continue programs of affirmative action to ensure that minority group persons and women are afforded equal opportunity without discrimination. Such action shall be taken with reference, but not be limited, to recruitment, employment, job assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rate of pay or other forms of compensation, and selections for training or retraining, including apprenticeship and on-the-job training. **All persons who have completed a probationary period with and are then employed by the corporation as of a date six months before the final adoption of this act may apply for and shall be given preference in filling positions on the revised table of organization created by the corporation.**
- 2. The corporation shall request each employment agency, labor union, or authorized representative of workers with which it has a collective bargaining or other agreement or understanding to furnish a written statement that such employment agency, labor union, or representative shall not discriminate because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status and that such union or representative will cooperate in the implementation of the corporation’s obligations thereunder.
- 3. The corporation shall state, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of

See **Legislation**, next page

Existing RIOC revenue streams maintained.

Existing RIOC employees to be given preference in staffing.



Legislator champions for the Maple Tree Group's bill – Assemblymember Pete Grannis, left, explained the legislation at an October Town Meeting. Senator Olga Mendez picked up the cause in December, after November's Island election demonstrated resident sentiments with a 92% backing of the bill. She was photographed during a December visit for a meeting with MTG members.



The line-up at a meeting of the Maple Tree Group last week at PS/IS 217: Rear, Lee Edelman, David Bauer, Vicki Feinmel, Ron Vass, Laurence Brodsky, Mary Camper-Titsingh; front, Matthew Katz, Sherie Helstien, Linda Heimer. Some regulars were absent, including Oak Soon Hong, Mickey Karpeles-Bauer, Dick Lutz, Kathie Niederhoffer, and Ethel Romm.

Legislation from previous page

the corporation, that all qualified applicants will be afforded equal opportunity without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status.

4. The corporation shall seek meaningful participation by minority business enterprises in the programs of the corporation and shall actively and affirmatively promote and assist their participation in the corporation's programs, so as to facilitate the award of a fair share of contracts to such enterprises. For purposes hereof, "minority business enterprise" shall mean any business enterprise which is at least fifty-one per centum owned by, or in the case of a publicly owned business, at least fifty-one per centum of the stock of which is owned by, citizens or permanent resident aliens who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or women, and such ownership interest is real, substantial and continuing.

Section 8. **Notice of claims.** 1. A notice of claim, served in accordance with the provisions of section 50-e of the general municipal law, shall be a condition precedent to the commencement of an action against the corporation, its officers, directors, and employees. No such action shall be commenced more than one year after it has accrued, except that an action against the corporation for wrongful death shall be commenced within the notice of claim and time limitation provisions of title 11 of article 9 of the public authorities law.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 113 of the retirement and social security law and any other general, special, or local law, the Roosevelt Island operating corporation shall provide to persons employed by the Roosevelt Island operating corporation any retirement, disability, death or other benefits provided or required pursuant to any agreement with a labor union of which its employees are members, and the Roosevelt Island operating corporation is hereby authorized to retroactively or in the future make such contributions as may be necessary to provide such benefits.

Section 9. Annual budget and report.

1. On or before September 15 of each year, the **general manager** of the corporation shall make and deliver to the **board of directors** a proposed budget for the operation of the corporation for **each** of the next **two** fiscal years. **At the same time the general manager shall publish in a paper of general circulation within the community a date for a public hearing within the next thirty days and a notice that the proposed budget is available for public inspection.** The budget shall include the total amount needed for corporate purposes, including the funds required by the corporation for operation of Roosevelt Island facilities and improvements, the source of all funds that the corporation expects to receive and such other information **necessary to project the financial future of the corporation.**

Open and timely budgeting and financial reporting.

2. The **general manager** shall submit to the **board of directors and to the residents of the community**, within ninety days after the end of its fiscal year, a complete and detailed report setting forth (a) the operations and accomplishments of the corporation administration, and (b) its receipts and expenditures during such fiscal year in accordance with categories and classifications established by the corporation, for its operating and capital outlay purposes.

Section 10. **Future management study.** The **board of directors** shall **appoint a committee of Roosevelt Island**

residents to study the future operation and management of Roosevelt Island at least once in each decade.

Section 11. Liability for community obligations; tax exemption.

1. The obligations of the corporation shall not be debts of the state, and the state shall not be liable thereon, and such obligations shall not be payable out of any funds other than those of the corporation, **nor shall the corporation be liable for any obligations of the state.**

2. It is hereby found, determined and declared that the creation of the corporation and the carrying out of its purposes is in all respects for the benefit of the people of the state and is a public purpose, and that the corporation will be performing an essential governmental function in the exercise of the powers conferred upon it by this act. The corporation and its operations, property and moneys shall be free and exempt from taxation of every kind by the city and state and any subdivision thereof. Except as herein above provided and except as may otherwise specifically be provided, nothing contained in this act shall confer exemption from any tax, assessment or fee upon any person, firm, corporation or other entity, or upon the obligations of any of them.

3. The board will have two hundred forty days from the date that the board first takes office to examine the contracts, obligations and commitments entered into by the corporation which the corporation identifies as an obligation of the board at the date the board takes office. The board may opt to accept any specific obligation or enlist an arbitration body to recommend whether the obligation is valid from the standpoint of appropriateness and conformance to legal procedure.

4. **Any expenditures of the corporation shall be in accordance with the adopted budget or a modification approved by the board of directors. Expenditures shall be made by check, countersigned by a member of the board of directors and the general manager, or by such other two parties as approved by the board of directors.**

Regular opportunities for residents to appraise the structure of Island management.

Section 12. **Division of housing and community renewal; assistance and services.** The corporation may from time to time request the division to perform such services and render such technical assistance to the corporation with respect to the development, management or operation of Roosevelt Island, **including but not limited to, developing an annual budget and report, developing an organizational structure, developing employee and employment criteria and any such matters** as the corporation deems necessary or convenient and may provide for the reimbursement to the division by the corporation of the reasonable cost of such services. The division is hereby authorized to perform such services and render such technical assistance as may be agreed upon between the division and the corporation pursuant to this section. In addition, the commissioner is hereby authorized to represent the corporation in any negotiations with the city concerning amendments or supplements to or reformations of the lease and tramway franchise as contemplated by section six of this act.

DHCR to assist the new RIOC in budgeting and other matters.

Section 13. **Operation of Motor Vehicles.** In addition to any other power conferred upon it by this act, the corporation is hereby authorized to prescribe rules and regulations governing the operation (including the parking, standing or stopping) of vehicles on Roosevelt Island; provided, however, that such rules and regulations shall not unreasonably restrict access to any city facilities situated on Roosevelt Island nor unreasonably restrict

parking by city of New York employees, their visitors and invitees **in the immediate vicinity of such city facilities.** The violation of such rules or regulations shall be an offense punishable upon a first conviction thereof by a fine of not more than fifty dollars, upon a second within a period of eighteen months by a fine of not more than one hundred fifty dollars, and upon a third or subsequent conviction thereof within a period of eighteen months by a fine of not more than one hundred fifty dollars, or by imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or by both such fine and such imprisonment. For purposes of enforcement and administration of such rules and regulations, including but not limited to conferring jurisdiction with respect thereto upon the applicable courts and administrative tribunals, all provisions of law relating to, and rules or regulations of, the New York city department of transportation not inconsistent with this act shall be applicable.

Section 14. **Separability of provisions.** If any section, clause or provision of this act or the application thereof shall be adjudged invalid, such judgment shall not affect or invalidate any other section, clause or provision of this act.

Section 15. Transfer of appropriations and assets.

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law, the director of the budget is authorized to transfer to the corporation funds **budgeted by the corporation and or** appropriated to the corporation for the fiscal year **in which the board of directors first takes office. The transferred funds shall be the proportionate amount for the months remaining in the corporation fiscal year** to carry out the provisions of this act, including providing for Roosevelt Island operations, capital improvement program and any other appropriate management expenses. **The amount of the budget involved in this transfer shall not be less than the average amount of the budgets used by the corporation over the last three completed fiscal years.**

"Old" RIOC required to transfer proportional funds to "new" RIOC at time of transition.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law, no part of such appropriations shall be available for the purposes designated until a certificate of approval of availability shall have been issued by the director of the budget and a copy of such certificate is issued by the director of the budget and a copy of such certificate is filed with the state comptroller, the chairman of the senate finance committee and the chairman of the assembly ways and means committee. Such certificate may be amended from time to time, subject to the approval of the director of the budget, and a copy of each such amendment shall be filed with the state comptroller, the chairman of the senate finance committee and the chairman of the assembly ways and means committee.

Section 15-a. **Caretaker role of corporation. During the period from the date this act becomes law until the board of directors of the community has been duly constituted in accordance with the provisions of this act, the corporation shall assume the role of caretaker of Roosevelt Island. As caretaker, the corporation shall make no contract, commitment or obligation with a duration of more than three months.**

"Old" RIOC restricted to a caretaker role during the transition.

Section II. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall have become a law.



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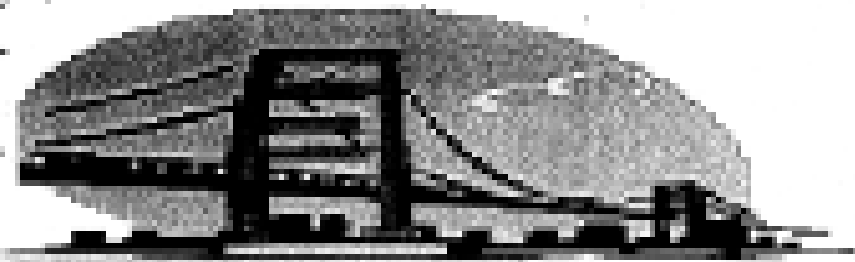
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See page 13



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A working session of the Maple Tree Group – Clockwise from far left: David Bauer, Lee Edelman, Vicki Feinmel, Sherie Helstien, Matthew Katz, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Tom Shaker, Kathie Niederhoffer, Ron Vass, Ethel Romm, Oak Soon Hong. Over 80 residents have participated in the group's work. Meetings, open to all, are held Monday nights at 7:30.

Bauer from page 1

Born in Syracuse, New York, David left his hometown only after graduating from Syracuse University in the early 1950s. He has an undergraduate degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in public administration. He moved through twenty-one different cities after leaving Syracuse, working as a consultant and town planner, managing various boroughs and towns in the New England area until he finally moved to Roosevelt Island 20 years ago.

In the '60s, he served as a member of the County Planning Commission of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and the Professional Standards Committee of the Connecticut Municipal Training Program of Hartford, Connecticut. He was also the President of the Connecticut Town and City Managers' Association and the Wethersfield Equal Opportunity Council. In the late '70s, David was a member of the Local



Government Personnel and the Risk Management Committees of the International City Management Association based in Washington, D.C. The early '80s saw him serve on the Board of Directors of the Chicago Dock and Canal Trust in Chicago.

On the Island, Bauer served a long period as the President of the Roosevelt Island Public Library, and a year as a member of the Board of the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations. "I was aware of the genesis of Roosevelt Island and the development of the planned community here," he says. "I moved here to enjoy that, and the grass and the trees. I loved every bit of it until I saw the current Island administration appointed. They had a changed attitude toward residents. When working in the mid-'90s on a project in L'viv, Ukraine, I realized how similar life in both places was becoming. Citizens had no input in the operation of the community. Decisions were being made for them. A fortress mentality existed – when

people wanted to find out something, they were given sketchy or no information. I thought a social disaster would occur here too."

In order to prevent or at least postpone this calamity, Bauer, whose personal motto is "if it is to be, it is up to me," decided that a survey should be conducted to see if Island residents were satisfied with the delivery of services on the Island. "When I realized that most of the people surveyed felt that services were woefully below standard, I put together

a draft to transfer responsibility to people elected by Island residents. Our group managed to gain the ear of Assemblymember Pete Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez. The Bill has been rewritten to meet the requirements of the Senate and the administration. Whether the Bill is passed or not remains to be seen, but at least we have made our point clear." Bauer continues, "I am an optimist – hopefully a realistic optimist."

What is next on his agenda? "I can't say for sure. I will do what needs to be done. I have only just so much energy and no grand masterplan. I am willing to look at doors of opportunity but I am neither a daredevil nor a Don Quixote," says Bauer. "I have a fear of being stuck in a rut. If I see things that need to be done, I go back to them. I try not to intrude on what others are doing because I know I am not all-wise."

Bauer's friends and fans think he is a sincere and hard worker who is dedicated to Roosevelt Island. Faye Vass says of him, "He is astute, he researches everything. He doesn't say anything he cannot back up and gets right to the point. I respect him because he is reliable and runs to do things himself." Matthew Katz thinks that apart from running a superbly organized meeting, he always manages to find a consensus because he remains so calm. "With his big glasses, his beard and his suspenders, when you talk to him, you feel you are in the presence of the Buddha," Katz says.

Minicondos from page 1

Patrick Stewart, President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, declared that "RIOC management's determination to act arbitrarily instead of seeking acceptable compromises with the residents... has cost the State of New York three years of extensive effort with nothing to show in return."

Shirley Margolin, a former Assistant to the Commissioner of DHCR, feels "there has not been sufficient exploration of alternative proposals that are more in keeping with the resi-

dential, middle-income nature of the present community and its Master Plan."

Richard Wade, former Commissioner of Housing in Chicago, Illinois, says: "... The well-to-do never have trouble finding shelter... our mission is to relieve a critical shortage of low- and moderate-income housing that is worse now than it was 20 years ago."

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This Weekend: *Once Upon A Mattress*

See ComingUp, Page 3, for times and ticket information



Main Street Teen Theatre Princess Winnefred (Ellior Marcus) tells her betrothed, Prince Dauntless (Ben Daley) to find a kingdom, so they won't have to live with in-laws. Background: Natalie Ortiz as Jester, Taryn Levine as Wizard. Below, Queen Aggravain (Caitlin Donovan) says, "Here's a nice consolatoin prize," as Sir Studley (Nicholas Ortiz) shows the court the plucked chicken. Looking on are Prince Dauntless (Ben Daley) and King Sextimus (J.D. Zamfirescu).



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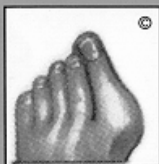
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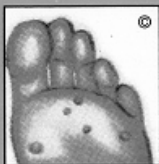
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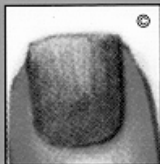
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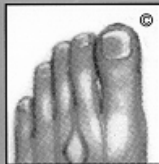
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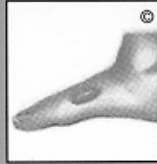
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Self-Governance from page 1

residents – five elected by residents and two appointed by the Mayor. The Board would have the power to hire and fire a General Manager, who would replace the RIOC President.

The entity operating Roosevelt Island would still be known as RIOC (informally, perhaps, “RIOC2”). Though the Grannis bill called for a name change to “Roosevelt Island Community,” it was felt too many agreements, working arrangements, and contracts would have to be reworked if the name were changed.

All residents over 18 who have lived on the Island for a year or more, including non-citizens, would be eligible to vote in community elections for Board members, and to serve on the Board. Elections would be held on general election day in odd-numbered years.

The primary development in Albany enhancing chances for passage of the legislation were signals of interest from the Governor – tentative in February, then firmer in

March. After the November 1998 balloting, MTG had asked Commissioner Joseph Lynch of DHCR (the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal) and State Senator Olga Mendez to present the idea of Roosevelt Island self-governance to the Governor. Though a Democrat, Mendez calls herself a “pragmatic politician” and supported Pataki’s re-election in November.

Presuming the backing of the Governor holds despite this week’s appointment of a replacement for Dr. Jerome Blue as RIOC President, it is believed the Republican-controlled Senate will pass the bill. Democrats control the Assembly, and it appears that the backing of Grannis and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver will ease its passage there.

Representatives of Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, as well as representatives of the Governor, have met with Jorge Vidro, an aide to Senator Mendez, to work out provisions of the revised legislation, which became available late last week, and appears on inside pages of this issue of *The WIRE*.

At the same time, another bill up for consideration by the Legislature would shift much of the financial responsibility for the seawall from the RIOC budget to the State and Federal governments.

The Maple Tree Group, which originated the general outline of a plan for Island self-governance, first met July 7, 1997, under a maple tree behind Blackwell House (thus its name). In weekly meetings open to the public over the past two years, the group worked out its plan under the guidance of Rivercross resident David Bauer, a retired City Manager and consultant to local governments. Bauer is known as the group’s “convenor.”

Over 80 residents have participated in MTG sessions, but a core of about a dozen regulars have done most of its work.

The dozen-or-so have included Bauer, Laurence Brodsky, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Lee Edelman, Vicki Feinmel, Linda Heimer, Sherie Helstien, Oak Soon Hong, Matthew Katz, Kathie Niederhoffer, Ethel Romm, and Ron Vass. RIRA President Patrick Stewart has also participated in the group’s discussions from time to time, as has RIRA Vice President Joan Christianson and RIRA Common Council members Judy Berdy and Byron Gaspard, as well as other members of the Common Council.

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MAIN STREET THEATRE & DANCE ALLIANCE

Elizabeth Kamaroff	Matthew Davidowitz
Nicholas Ortiz	Isaiah Artest
Nadine Anglesey	Elza Sudol
Emily Mure	Gina Phillips
Meera Tandon	Amanda Kross
Taryn Levine	Simina Cana
Christina Kirkman	Denisa Oprea
Caitlin Donovan	Susan Ahn
Ben Daley	David Cohen
J.D. Zamfirescu	Micheil Yohannes
Natalie Ortiz	Valentina Lugo
Isalah Artest	Nicholas Ortiz
Melissa Stein	Dounya Dorani
Aniela White	Victoria Sadkhina
Jed Resnick	David Kleinknecht
Ellior Marcus	Marilena Logsdon

We are located behind the video store, under the red awning.

Career Day '99 at PS217



Career Day Harvey Rosen of the Manhattan District Attorney's office talks with 5th-8th graders about the law, Thursday, May 27 at the Island school.

Katherine Teets Grimm, M.D.

Board Certified Pediatrician and Allergist

501 Main Street • Roosevelt Island • 753-5505

Office Hours

Monday & Thursday • 9 a.m. - 12 noon
Tuesday • 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday & Friday • 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Do not wait until last minute for camp check-up. Please make your appointment now.

Coverage provided at all times, when office is closed, by Dr. Grimm or by her group, Uptown Pediatrics.
We provide comprehensive health care to children and adolescents.
Dr. Grimm is also qualified to evaluate and treat allergy and asthma in adults.

Classified 751-8214

RENT A NEIGHBOR – Experienced cat, small pet & plant caretaker. House sit, deliveries & repairs, etc. Longtime RI resident. **980-8978**

NORDICTRACK PRO MODEL – Includes electronics package – \$750 list. Like new. Asking \$500 or best offer. Call Sherie or Matt, **935-7534**

ACUPUNCTURE on ROOSEVELT ISLAND – NYS license, treating low back pain, headaches, joint pain, anxiety, depression, menstrual/menopause symptoms, chronic asthma, gastrointestinal disorders, and more. Barbara Pittman **388-7313**

INDEPENDENT BROKERS NEEDED – Show people how to save up to 80% on dental work. This is not insurance. Incredible Home-Based business. Call **800-675-5155**, access code **01**.

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

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

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

LICENSED MASSAGE THERAPY – Island resident Diana Brill. Gift certificate available. (212) **759-9042**

EXPERT PIANO REPAIRS & TUNING – Prompt service. (212) **935-7510**. Beeper 1-917-483-1020

EXPERT PAINTER – Island references, **751-8214**

BURN CALORIES – Sierra Aerobic Conditioner (same idea as Nordic Track). Includes electronic motivator (tracks miles, calories burned, speed, etc.). Sturdy, folds away neatly. Little-used. Originally \$500. Asking \$125 or b/o. **832-3456**

Jack Resnick, M.D.

Board-Certified
Specialist in Adult Medicine
(Internal Medicine)

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832-2310

501 Main Street
Roosevelt Island, N.Y. 10044

32B-J Members

Dr. Resnick is on the panel of the Building Services Health Fund. Call the Fund at (212) 388-3900 to schedule your first appointment

506 Main Street

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