

Next issue:
August 27-28

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Kids Win Award

Christina and Julia Burnette found a yellow pouch containing money and important cards on Main Street in June, turned it in to a Public Safety Officer, and on Wednesday of this week became the first recipients of the new Public Safety Community Service Award. Christina, who couldn't be present for the press conference, is pictured at right; above are her sisters, Julia and Katura (who stood in). The award, presented by Residents Association President Patrick Stewart and Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation President Robert Ryan, was a \$100 savings-bond gift certificate for each.



Self-Governance Legislation Is Facing an Uncertain Future

News Analysis by Dick Lutz

"This has been a rollercoaster from the beginning."

Those were David Bauer's words Thursday night after a telephone conversation with Assemblymember Pete Grannis. He went on to say, "One day we're up, the next we're down, in terms of achieving what the people on the Island have expressed their desire for."

At that particular moment, Bauer said he felt somewhere between an up and a down. "Pete has said he will explore further what might be done to work with the Senate and Senator [Olga] Mendez on this. We appreciate that effort."

Grannis told *The WIRE* he sees problems in the version of the legislation generated by Senator Olga Mendez's office in consultation with representatives of the Governor. Those concerns center on the Island's financial needs, and in particular its capital requirements.

Those are the same concerns advanced by Residents Association President Patrick Stewart, in both public and private statements, and in his *WIRE* column (July 4 issue). Stewart has cited a long and expensive list of capital requirements that went begging during the three-year tenure of Dr. Jerome Blue in the Presidency of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. Blue had declared the Island "self-sufficient," but only, Stewart says, by maintaining the Island "to an obviously decreased standard, so long as he neglected to address... the infrastructure maintenance that had historically cost \$5 to 6.5 million a year."

As Stewart points out, a neglected infrastructure can turn on you.

One of the ambiguities lurking in the legislation has to do with just how much a reconstituted RIOC would be required to fund infrastructure maintenance and other capital needs from existing Island revenue streams. An MTG negotiating group had attempted to resolve that ambiguity in the Island's favor on a recent Albany trip by asking Senator Mendez to rewrite the bill to insure State help if the Island faced a capital need exceeding half a million dollars.

By Thursday the word had come from Mendez's office that the Governor's office seemed to be "softening" on the capital matter, but had concerns about other revisions requested by MTG – concerns that could not be resolved quickly.

In an MTG meeting Monday night (July 26), members had asked Patrick Stewart to withdraw his opposition to the current form of the legislation, citing a danger that without a resident-controlled RIOC Board, a good deal of ill-advised development might be undertaken soon. Stewart, leaving the meeting early, told MTG members that he had not made up his mind, but felt that flaws in the Mendez version of the legislation would keep it locked up in an Assembly committee.

After Stewart's departure from the MTG meeting, members of the organization talked about alternative scenarios (the subject of an editorial, page 2). Under the first scenario, the State Legislature would pass the current bill (and the Governor would

presumably sign it into law), flawed or not, in order to take development decisions out of the hands of a RIOC President and RIOC Board, all of whom are non-resident (save David Kraut – interview, page 8). Such a move might later require amendments, but MTG members felt that residents would have an easier time coping with the financial problems that would come with self-governance than with a RIOC development engine that might be unresponsive to residents – perhaps even unstoppable.

Under a second scenario, the self-governance legislation would be improved, but it would not be enacted for some time, and election of a RIOC Board composed of Island residents would not occur until November, 2000, at the earliest. The fear is that in the interim, some irretrievable approvals of unwanted development might be given by the current RIOC Board.

Voting at the end of the meeting, MTG members unanimously supported taking action to get immediate passage of the existing bill. In the difficult trade-offs available, the group felt it important for a resident Board to take control, to forestall any development not in residents' interest. It was saying, in effect, that the financial problems under self-governance would be more manageable than the risks and problems residents would face under the present system.

But by Thursday, it appeared unlikely MTG would get immediate passage. There were the financial concerns put forward by Grannis, an uncertain schedule for the State Senate, and a commitment already in place from Mendez to seek involvement in the process of redeveloping legislation by the new President of RIOC, Robert Ryan.

Grannis told *The WIRE* the Legislature will be busy throughout the Fall season, and that work can continue on finding a workable formula that will satisfy his concerns, be acceptable to the Governor, and meet Roosevelt Island's needs. Mendez said Thursday afternoon that "next year" she wants to bring Grannis in at the very beginning to pursue self-governance legislation for Roosevelt Island "with a united front."

Rivercross Surcharges Are Doubled, But Fall Short of Committee's Demand

Rivercross owner-residents whose income is over Mitchell-Lama limits will pay doubled surcharges starting January 1. The charges will now be scaled from 2% to 20%, instead of a limit of 10%.

The change doesn't satisfy the building's Committee for Maintenance and Privatization Fair Play, which has filed suit asking for a scale that tops out at 50%, like other Mitchell-Lama buildings on Roosevelt Island.

The crux of the issue has to do with maintenance charges in the building. The committee demanding higher surcharges maintains that if over-income residents were paying surcharges scaled to 50%, a recent 4% increase in maintenance charges would have been unnecessary. It claims that lower-income residents are effectively forced to subsidize high-income residents under a lower schedule, and that the coop's Board should act to maximize

Percent Excess Income	DHCR reg's	Surcharge percent Rivercross schedule
1-5	0	2
5-10	5	4
10-15	10	4
15-20	15	8
20-25	20	8
25-30	25	12
30-35	30	12
35-40	35	16
40-45	40	16
45-50	45	20
50-up	50	20

First column shows the percentage by which an existing occupant's household income exceeds the maximum limit for entry into the building in a given apartment; second column shows surcharge amount above base rent or maintenance prescribed in DHCR regulations; third column shows the new surcharge schedule for Rivercross owner-residents.

all sources of revenue, including surcharges, before imposing maintenance increases on all residents.

The Board has taken the position that the lower surcharge schedule has historical roots dating back over 20 years ago, when the building was hard to market, and that the State's Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), which supervises the building under the Mitchell-Lama program, has allowed the lower surcharge schedule to exist unchallenged ever since.

The Fair Play Committee's suit is actually against DHCR, asking for a judgment ordering Deputy Commissioner Otis Jones ordering him to enforce the agency's regulations on surcharges. The legal papers point out that with maximum surcharge, housing costs would not exceed about 13% of income for

a Rivercross resident paying maximum surcharge.



Seniors in Fashion Bash

Island Seniors put on a fashion show recently as a fund-raiser for the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association (RISA). A few of those participating were, left to right: Joan Matula; Ruth Davidson; clockwise from left, Sonya Jang, Won Sook Ham, Pil Bong Kim, He Bong Kim; Norma Simon, Byron Gaspard, Elizabeth Doe; June Terry; Lynn Bilt; Bubu Arya.



Controversy (Continued)

If we thought controversy would leave Roosevelt Island with the departure of Dr. Jerome Blue, we had it wrong. Chances are there will always be plenty to go around.

Even if the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation’s Capital Planning and Development Committee and the the RIOC Board of Directors have the good sense to deep-six the plan to add a second story to the mini-schools, there are still enough bad ideas to fuel fights well into the next millenium:

- Plunk a 31-story eldercare facility down where part of the Sportpark sits, and you accomplish two things:
 - You lose part of a facility that could be valuable for residents of Southtown.
 - You ruin the visual line of the Queensboro Bridge.
 - You site a facility in a desperation zone, chosen only because (a) Octagon Park was off limits, and (b) there’s a reluctance to allow it into Southtown.
- Put a twin-tower hotel onto Southpoint and you lose the quiet character of what David Kraut describes (interview, page 8) as a genus loci, and you get, in return:
 - Four Main Street cab trips per guest for every hotel room in the complex, as they come and go from LaGuardia (again, read Kraut’s comments).
 - Garbage trucks on regular Main Street cruises, because the plan doesn’t include extension of AVAC.
 - Supply trucks – a lot of them.
- And there’s bound to be controversy over the plan for SRO-style apartments on wings extending west and south from the Octagon, an idea that remains to be explored more thoroughly and considered more carefully than has been done to date.

The Residents Association (RIRA) plan to raise a legal fund to be prepared to fight any of these plans that don’t fit the long-term interests of existing and future residents is a good idea, and we look forward to it gearing up once again.

But frankly...

Power to the People

Frankly, we would have preferred self-governance. A RIOC2 Board of Directors dominated by residents empowered to hire professional management would go a long way toward re-orienting Island development to the intent originally articulated in the Master Plan for Roosevelt Island.

That’s a controversy in itself, of course, with two opposing points of view:

- Patrick Stewart, President of RIRA, would prefer legislation, which would be unlikely to take effect for a year or more, that would address the Island’s capital funding needs in a firm and definitive way.
- Members of the Maple Tree Group, who conducted the two-year drive to find a formula for self-governance that would work for all the interests involved, would like to see it *now*, in the form presently before the State Senate – to accept a law that may not solve every last financial problem on the Island, but gives residents power to deal with the problems, and some control over development.

Stewart’s preference risks at least a year of fighting against development projects that are bad ideas for Roosevelt Island, drawing on a severely diminished reserve of resident energy for a series of costly legal battles that have uncertain prospects for success. On the other hand, MTG’s plan risks the possibility that an imperfect law might take effect and remain in place, unamended, for years.

The WIRE would prefer the MTG course: Take self-governance, then tackle whatever problems and imperfections it brings. Those problems will be political, philosophical, and economic, and they can be dealt with. A resident-controlled Board, assisted by professional management, will at least try to secure enforcement of the Lease – a contract between City and State that requires the State to invest here. The second course risks the possibility of getting self-governance, if at all, only after too many really bad ideas have broken ground and become unmovable concrete.

DL

The WIRE made a mistake last issue. I made a mistake. In a sea of 8,700 words chronicling the ups and downs of the Maple Tree Group’s effort to bring resident-dominated management to the Island, there appeared this sentence:

MTG members, who had been vetting every change in the legislation for fatal flaws and “deal-breakers,” agreed after impassioned debate to present what they had accomplished and learned for the approval of the elected RIRA representatives.

It should have read: ...for the approval of the community.

The error had somehow survived a fact-checking process involving six people, including four or five with first-hand knowledge of the details (one may not have seen that portion). They had been asked to

island observer

contribute to the piece, and to check it for accuracy.

Such an error would normally produce only a blink, and then only for readers tightly familiar with the substance and details of the story. But the drive for self-governance is a hot issue these days, and those who feel distressed by one aspect or another of the effort *noticed*.

There had developed a rather contentious disagreement over whether and how MTG should have kept the Residents Association Common Council informed of developments in its work on self-governance legislation; RIRA President Patrick Stewart, who called an emergency meeting of the Common Council to take a vote on whether legislators should be petitioned to kill the bill, *noticed*. He had called the emergency meeting, after all. MTG had not requested one; some members had even opposed going public with a bill whose provisions were still in the flux of Legislative push and pull. For that reason, and for other reasons too far from the point to be recounted here, MTG had passed up an opportunity to brief the Council at its only regular meeting during the period involved.

So the error made it appear that MTG was eager to present its work to the Common Council, when MTG was actually staying with its normal M.O. – working quietly with the legislators, nudging things along, hoping that, against all odds, the legislation might become law.

In fact, MTG had concluded that nothing in (or out of) the legislation was a deal-breaker at that point, feeling it hewed to the essentials of the line established in its original draft of the legislation, supported by a 92% November vote, and by a February Common Council 16-0 vote.

As things turned out, when the legislation was presented to the Council, it again backed the MTG effort 17-3, with 3 abstaining.

Then, after the vote, there were further changes, and more can be expected. It’s all subject to the give and take of the State Legislature’s lawmaking process, and in the final analysis, the Governor, Senate and Assembly will decide. The Common Council’s influence might or might not be a factor at the final bell.

While we wait, there are lessons to be learned:

- In a matter of controversy, a few errant words *matter*.
- No fact-checking process is perfect.
- No newspaper is, either, including this one.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

I always enjoy the view and the changes of season around the Blackwell House as I pass it very often, and the following condition I’ve noticed bothers me greatly. I hope it will be taken care of soon by the proper authorities.

About one year ago the handrail on both sides of the stairs at the entrance of Blackwell House invited my attention. The right-side handrail was leaning outward as if falling down and after a few months I noticed some small stones supporting the bottom of the leaning post of the hand-rail that made it stand straight. A couple of weeks later it was leaning again and those supporting stones were not there. I couldn’t understand why it wasn’t properly repaired.

About ten days ago I returned from a short trip and I noticed that the entire handrail was not there anymore, it had been completely removed. Only the handrail on the left side was left standing, which looks so strange.

To my knowledge Landmarks are preserved as a valuable heritage. I do hope that not only the handrail will be restored, but that the rest of the house will be taken good care of.

Oak Soon Hong

To the Editor:

Delightful as it is to have the spray from the fountains near the Blackwell farmhouse cool the air these hot days on our Island, residents should take a closer look at the continuing deterioration front and back of that historic landmark, our Island’s oldest building. The golden rain tree’s delicate blossoms cannot hide the missing bannisters on the right-hand side of the front steps. Cracked paint on the windows and sills permits the weather to rot the raw wood beneath. Dead branches from overhanging trees, that have landed on the roof, are not doing the curled roof shingles much good.

The appalling extent of the neglect of the farmhouse is most visible, however, on the east-facing rear side of the Blackwell house. The only attention it seems to have merited recently is the stringing of yellow “Caution do not enter” ribbons at one end of the back porch, whose broken porch railings have been tossed over the brick wall that encloses the weed-choked colonial garden to the south. The rain gutters are overflowing with debris and flourishing plants. The paint is peeling off the house sides as well as around the windows.

At the very least the grass could be cut and the hedges could be trimmed. How can we instill respect and appreciation for the privilege of living on Roosevelt Island when we condone the neglect of one of its prized links with the post-Revolutionary period in United States history?

Mary Camper-Titsingh

To State Senator Olga Mendez

Dear Senator Mendez:

I am encouraged by the proposed legislation that would replace the current appointed Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation with an elected body. I have the following comments about the proposed legislation as it was printed in the June 12 issue of *The Main Street Wire*.

According to Section 5, paragraph 3:

The requirements of all local laws, ordinances, codes, charters or regulations shall be applicable to the construction, alteration or improvements of any building or structure on Roosevelt Island.

If this is correct, would that mean that the city’s Zoning Resolution and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure would apply to Roosevelt Island? While I strongly support this, I believe this may conflict with the Island’s Master Lease and GDP. Would they have to be amended? You should note that the Island is within an R7-2 zoning district. This would mean certain aspects of the Southtown development and the entire Southpoint hotel proposal would require zoning actions to be constructed.

The bill provides for election of directors at the first general election held 30 days from the bill’s effective date with subsequent elections held every two years in odd-numbered years. In order to assure the maximum participation, I suggest that elections be held in even-numbered years. This would coincide with Presidential and Gubernatorial elections which generally have the highest voter participation. In addition, what would be the procedures for selection of candidates and the counting and certification of ballots? These do not appear to be included in the bill.

Finally, since voters (and I assume Board members) must be Island residents, how can Island businesspersons be represented? I know that Community Board members include businesspersons who may not be residents of the community district on which they serve.

I believe this proposed bill is legislation that will assure the proper growth of Roosevelt Island consistent with the goals of the State, City and Island residents. I hope you take my suggestions into consideration as the bill moves through the Legislature.

Laurence Parnes



Published by **The Main Street WIRE**
©1999 Unisource2000™ Inc.
531 Main St. #413
Roosevelt Island, NY 10044

Saturday, July 31, 1999
News (212) **826-9055**
Urgent news **1-917-353-1647**
Advertising (212) **751-8214**
Circulation (212) **935-7534**
Fax (212) **755-2540**
email **nyc10044@rcn.com**
in association with **Website NYC10044**
Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Chief Feature Writer – Anusha Shrivastava
Chief Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
Circulation Managers – George Rubin, Sherie Helstien
Founding Publisher – Jack Resnick
Editor Emeritus – Jim Bowser

Sophia Adams, Amy Ambrosino, Russell Aragon, Rafael Asenjo, Sonia Asenjo, David Bauer, Judy Berdy, Steve Bessenof, Laurence Brodsky, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Graham Cannon, Melanie Castine, Lynn Chambers, Malcolm Cohen, Pearl Cooper, Shirley Cruz, Morris Diamond, Arlise Ellis, Norm Ellis, Enrique Fernandez, Sarita Fonseca, Claire Friedland, Karen Ganzi, Atul Golchale, Jayashree Golchale, Teresa Hasing, Linda Heimer, John Hennessey, Peter Kaplan, Mickey Karpeles-Bauer, Matthew Katz, Ruth Limmer, Curtis Lowery, Nina Lublin, Lena Lutz, Hazel Lynch, Clarissa McCraley, Donny McIntyre, Merle McLean, Myrna Mendis, Jill Milner, Terry Moses, Bruce Munsch, Louise Munsch, Sandra Narine, Juan Nieves, Nancy Olivera, Joan Raimone, Steve Raimone, Ethel Romm, Margery Rubin, Beryl Seaforth, Ron Schuppert, Bernie Schwartz, Marilyn Sherman, Stuart Solway, Velda Sosa, Victor Sosa, Joyce Speziale, Karen Stewart, Pearl Thomas, David Tsreshkin, Elena Vrinceanu, Rece Walford, Maggie Warner, Robin Williams, Nina Winteringham, Rose Woods

There’s a lot going on. Maybe it’s the sun that’s keeping everything at the boil. Between the elevators, and the broken sprinklers, and the limping air conditioners, no one has a chance to cool down, let alone cool off. While there are many issues competing for RIRA’s attention, I’ve taken it as my personal task to focus on containing RIOC’s proposed development for the Island.

I’ve been involved in a great deal of activity around the proposed mini-school development, and I’ve become more firmly convinced than ever that the project should not go forward. It is not a matter of views being spoiled, it’s how they’re spoiled and why. The original plans were less offensive, and in keeping with at least the physical design of the Island, if not the middle-income spirit.

But clearly someone sat down and figured out that they couldn’t make enough money with the space they had, so they wanted more.

And because someone has figured out they couldn’t make enough money without more space for luxury housing, the State of New York may well decide to try to compromise the General Development Plan (GDP), and the intentional sloping design of these middle-income buildings. Understand, the State of New York will make the same

money no matter how tall they are. It’s the developer profit at issue here.

Of course, the State of New York will make no money at all if nothing is developed, and clearly there is an opportunity there for housing, but it remains to be seen what they will try to give up for \$250,000 a year in ground rent.

We are not finished with this issue yet, but at least things seem to be moving forward on a reasoned basis, for a change.

I’m impressed with Rob Ryan. He has been dropped into a boiling situation as well, and asked to get up to speed in a very short period of time. It’s early days yet, but he’s been frank and open and has taken so far a considered, and clearly experienced, approach to these matters. It’s his job, after all, to develop here as well as to manage the existing community, but I have seen no sign so far that he shares the “develop at any cost” that’s been so prevalent at RIOC.

There’s nothing wrong with further development in and of itself. And I know of no group on the Island that is against development per se. But RIRA will continue to demand that any development here be appropriate for the community, as defined by the GDP.

The community understands that we will not survive and flourish without the ground rents from further development. Southtown is a must if we are to become genuinely self-sufficient, and without genuine self-sufficiency we will never be free of State control. Our job now regarding Southtown is to work with RIOC to find ways to not destroy the quality of life on Main Street during construction. (Let alone not destroy Main Street itself.)

Ryan understands, at the same time, that we will not give one inch on the parkland issue; that we as a community are irrevocably opposed to the SSJ/Marriott project.

The Eldercare Project is plagued by the same parkland issue, as it is now situated on the Sportspark site, as well as plagued by height issues.

But I have the strong sense, at least for now, that RIOC’s intention is to work with the community in resolving these matters through negotiation, as well as the other pressing areas that need resolution – infrastructure maintenance and Public Safety, to name but two.

It seems that the self-governance bill is on hold, at least until next legislative session at the beginning of next year, which will give the Common Council time to try and resolve the financial issues which have become so controversial, both on the Island and in Albany.

In a conversation with Olga Mendez, thanking her for the tremendous effort she has put forth on behalf of self-governance for the Island, she brought up her first meeting last Fall with the Maple Tree Group, which I attended. At the time, her own recommendation was to approach the legislation in stages, with increased resident participation on the RIOC Board as the initial step, much as she had done with her first self-governance bill for the Island in 1986. I agreed with her last fall, and agree with her now, and believe it is where our efforts are best placed. Such a move, including permanent seats for the elected presidents of both RIRA and RICO, begins to give the residents the voice that is their democratic right, yet leaves the fiscal responsibility squarely with the State, as it should be until we are genuinely fiscally self-sufficient. Since those who have worked with him on this issue believe George Pataki supports self-governance for Roosevelt Island, surely he will cooperate in making these changes, which are now within his exclusive power.

In any case, we owe a large and genuine debt of gratitude to Olga Mendez, as we do to Pete Grannis and the Maple Tree Group, for all of the hard work that has gone into this legislation.

Volunteer for *The WIRE*

The Main Street WIRE relies on many Island volunteers to fill important jobs in the distribution process, and there’s a role for **you** if you’re willing to help. On Fridays, when *The WIRE* comes off the press, we have a stuffing crew at work from about 9:00 a.m. to about 2:45 p.m. (lunch is provided). Later on Fridays (and early Saturday), volunteers deliver the newspaper to every apartment door on the Island, as well as to merchants, the hospitals, and other locations. It’s hard work, but an important service to the community, and satisfying. If you’d like to join this dedicated group, please call **935-6043**, or 935-7534, or 826-9055. (Leave your number if a machine answers, and we’ll call you back.) ***The WIRE* and Website NYC10044 also seek news and feature writers. Call 826-9055.**



Amphitheatre Performances

Actors’ Equity members Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe are among the performers in the Amphitheatre Repertory Program being staged by Islander Lila Gilbert Mondays, Wednesdays, and Sundays at 6:00. Above, recently, they performed Noel Coward’s *Private Lives*, to be seen again Wednesday at 6:00. A complete listing of the events appears below in ComingUp.

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

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

Sun., August 1, 6:00 p.m., **A Classical Variety Show**, with Engle Conrow, Edmund Johnston, Mel Haughwout, Eve Marlowe. Scenes from *Shakespeare*, *The Fantastics*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Lost in Yonkers*. Eastwood Amphitheatre (behind 510-540 Main Street). Free.

Mon., August 2, 6:00 p.m., **Sing-Along Garden of Songs**, by Eve Marlowe. Audience participation for the whole family. Free.

Tue., August 3, 6:30 p.m., **Weight Watchers**, Senior Center. Every Tuesday. Call 832-3456 for information.

Wed., August 4, 6:00 p.m., **An Evening with Noel Coward**, with Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Sun., August 8, 6:00 p.m., **Going Places**, performed by Irene Clark and Dina Esperanza Mann, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Mon., August 9, 6:00 p.m., **Love Letters** by A. R. Gurney, with Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Wed., August 11, 6:00 p.m., **A Classical Variety Show**, with Engle Conrow, Edmund Johnston, Mel Haughwout, Eve Marlowe. Scenes from *Shakespeare*, *The Fantastics*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Lost in Yonkers*. Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

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

Sun., August 15, 6:00 p.m., **Last Days of Lincoln**, historical drama with letters of the period. Free.

Mon., August 16, 6:00 p.m., **An Evening with Dorothy Parker**, performance by Louise Poster in the Summer Repertory Program at Eastwood Amphitheatre (behind 510/540 Main Street). Parker’s play, ***Here We Are*** with Richard Egan and Rosemarie de Witt.

Wed., August 17, 6:00 p.m., **An Evening with Noel Coward**, with Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Sun., August 22, 6:00 p.m., Summer Repertory Program, **Last Days of Lincoln**, performed by Edmund Johnston, Dana Bate. Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Mon., August 23, 6:00 p.m., **A Classical Variety Show**, with Engle Conrow, Edmund Johnston, Mel Haughwout, Eve Marlowe. Scenes from *Shakespeare*, *The Fantastics*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Lost in Yonkers*. Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Wed., August 25, 6:00 p.m., **An Evening with Dorothy Parker**, performance by Louise Poster in the Summer Repertory Program at Eastwood Amphitheatre (behind 510/540 Main Street). Parker’s play, ***Here We Are*** with Richard Egan and Rosemarie de Witt.

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

Sat., August 28, next scheduled issue of ***The Main Street WIRE***. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Aug. 20; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Aug. 23; bag materials due Aug 25. **Future issues:** Sept. 11, Sept. 25, Oct. 9, Oct. 23 (Halloween issue), Nov. 6, Nov. 20 (Thanksgiving issue), Dec. 4, Dec. 18 (Christmas/New Year issue); Jan. 8, 2000, Jan. 22, 2000, and generally every two weeks thereafter. 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., August 29, 6:00 p.m., **Going Places**, performed by Irene Clark and Dina Esperanza Mann, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.

Mon., August 30, 6:00 p.m., **Love Letters**, by A. R. Gurney, performed by Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe, Eastwood Amphitheatre. Free.



Patrick Stewart

***Katherine Teets Grimm,
M.D.***

Board Certified Pediatrician and Allergist

501 Main Street • Roosevelt Island • 753-5505

Office Hours

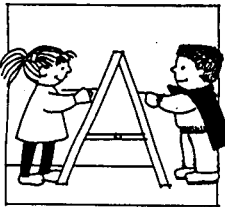
Monday & Thursday • 9 a.m. - 12 noon
Tuesday • 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday & Friday • 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

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.

It's time to register for September 1999

**Roosevelt Island
Day Nursery**

**Part-time and full-time programs
for children ages 2.6 through 5 years**



545 MAIN STREET 593-0750
FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE

***BRACES
AREN'T FOREVER,
SMILES ARE!***

**We offer free orthodontic consultations to children
and adults who are residents of Roosevelt Island.
Please call for an appointment.**

Dr. Gerald Sweder and staff

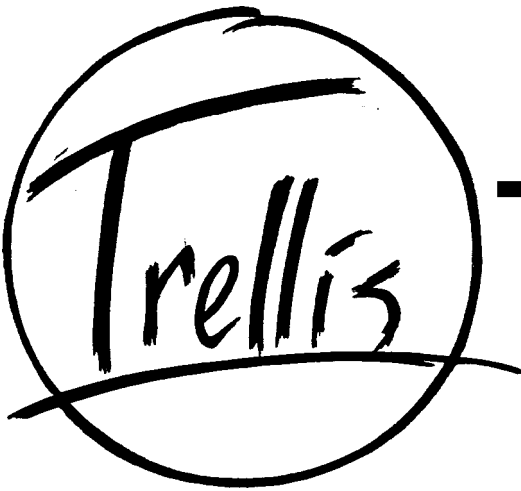
200 W. 57th Street 501 Main Street
212 757-2285 212 752-8722

**DENTAL NEWS
FLASH!!!**

Dental Patients Have Rights Too.

By LM Itskowitch D.D.S., P.C.
501 Main St. Roosevelt Island
752-8722

BE INFORMED: When you are offered a choice by your employer
as to in- or out-of-network dentists, read carefully. In many instances,
depending on the work that is needed, your out-of-pocket expense
can be zero with either choice. Make the wise decision with the
freedom to select your own out-of-network personal dentist.



***Thursday is Now
Musical, Too...***

Just like Friday and Saturday nights
at Trellis, 6-10 p.m. It's indoors
Thursday nights, and outside, under
canvas, Friday and Saturday. Come
enjoy good sound, good food, good
friends – at Trellis.

See you at Trellis
752-1517

*Better and better every day.
At the heart of the community,
next to the historic Chapel of the Good Shepherd*

TWIN CAR SERVICE
936-6666

**We have been providing quality service to
Roosevelt Island residents for over 20 years**

TWIN is licensed by the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission
(Base#865)

All drivers are Taxi & Limousine Commission approved
24-hour service, 365 days a year

Service to and from anywhere - Manhattan & Queens our specialty

SERVICE INFORMATION

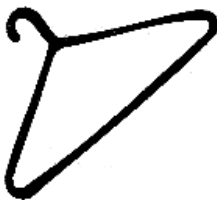
Hourly rate available
Airport Service
Flat rates from \$12
Accounts Welcome
Comfortable A/C sedans

**AIRPORTS WELCOME
HOME SPECIAL**

Save \$7 from JFK
Save \$2 from LGA

Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express

**FAST,
EFFICIENT
RELIABLE,
COURTEOUS**



758-1778
571 Main Street

***Roosevelt
Island
Cleaners***

*New State of the Art
Dry Cleaning Machine
To Serve You Better*
Your Neighborhood Cleaners
We DeLiver
Free deliveries on orders \$15-up



TIRED OF BANK FEES?

Does your bank charge you a fee for everything you do?

- If you fall below a specified balance?
- A per-check charge fee?
- A monthly service fee?
- An exorbitant bounced check fee?
- A cashier's check fee?
- A pre-payment penalty for paying a loan off?

If you are tired of paying outrageous fees – join

Montauk Credit Union!

MCU – Your Financial Neighbor

559 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044
Phone (212) 643-3900 Fax (212) 588-1123

IF YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER OF THE CREDIT UNION, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? Call today for more information.

All member accounts insured up to \$100,000 by the NCUA

There are two *unique* ways to reach Roosevelt Island...

There's the Tram, of course. And for advertisers, there's the reach of **The Main Street WIRE**. Every issue is delivered to every residential door on the Island. Tell your favorite Queens or Manhattan merchant to reach your neighbors through **The WIRE**. (212) 751-8214.

JAY'S SEA WORLD FISHMARKET

530 Main Street • Roosevelt Island
(212) 935-1702

Japanese Sushi

- Veggie Roll Combo
- California Roll
- Tuna Roll
- Tuna Combo
- House Moriawase
- Super (Sushi Combo)
- Veggie Tempura

Fresh Sushi Delivered Every Day!

Smoked Fish

- Salmon
- Mackerel
- Trout

Ready to Eat (Microwave)

- Cajun Marinated Catfish
- Lemon Pepper Marinated Catfish
- Salmon Teriyaki

Mon-Sat, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Closed Sundays

JAMAICA HILLS FOOTCARE CENTER

Dr. Ronald J. Beauvais

Podiatrist / Foot Specialist

MEDICARE ACCEPTED

**Medical & Surgical Treatment
of ALL foot disorders**

**Specializing in treatment of
Senior Citizens' Foot Disorders
and Diabetic Foot Care**

HOUSE CALLS AVAILABLE

**718-206-0011
toll-free 1-888-801-3221**



We repair all kinds of shoes

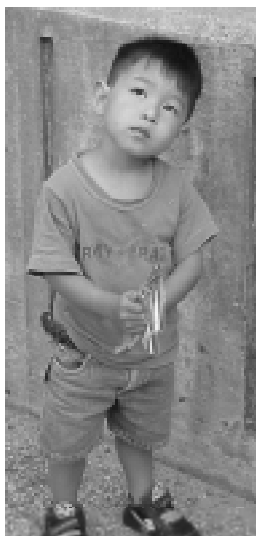
Expert on cowboy boots,
luggage, pocketbooks
Accepting most major credit cards
Mon.-Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sat. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



**1163 2nd Av (betw. 61st & 62nd)
(212) 755-5559**

J & M SHOE REPAIR

Scenes from the Island's Family Album



Photos
Margery Rubin
George Rubin
Website NYC10044



David Kraut, former President of the Residents Association and the sole Island-resident voting member of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, was interviewed by Anusha Shrivastava and Dick Lutz.

The WIRE: Why don't you give us a brief overview of the past three years – but how long have you been on the RIOC Board of Directors?

David Kraut: I fought my way onto the RIOC Board in the spring of 1994. I ran for president of the Residents' Association in 1992 on the platform the president of the Resident's Association should be on that Board as a representative of the people. Actually, the Senate and the Governor decide who is on the Board, but I guess I made so much noise about it that they gave me a provisional appointment for two years. But the public law that established RIOC also says that you are on the Board until your replacement is appointed. You know that Patrick Stewart and Susan Whitaker have provisional appointments to the Board. Whether Pat Stewart as RIRA President becomes my replacement or not, I don't know.

W: Back to the main question, it's been quite a ride for us in the past three years...

DK: I think it's been less of a ride for me than it has for the population generally. Jerry Blue is the third president I've worked with, including Rosina Abramson and Jean Lerman, and the only difference with Jerry Blue is that he was more difficult to work with than they were. But qualitatively there isn't that much difference, because whoever is the RIOC President comes with a mission and a set of instructions, and, as a Director of the Corporation, my job is to work with whoever is in the job, and make whatever accommodations are possible.

It wasn't that different with Dr. Blue than with his predecessors. I remember times I walked into the room and found Lerman and Vice President of Operations Chafetz looking up at me guiltily as if I'd caught them scheming. It seems endemic in the relationship between the community and the RIOC President and the Directors and the RIOC President, particularly a Director who is a member of the community. So I am a little less upset about the Jerry Blue period than a lot of people are.

I liked the guy personally. He screwed up a lot of things in a lot of ways. He did a few good things along the way, too. It's been pretty rough, especially on me sitting here in the middle and walking the line between the community and the RIOC President. The guy made a lot of mistakes but you don't have to go out of your way to demonize him. We'll just judge him on his record.

W: Tell us about the successes.

DK: Remember, before RIOC was invented, this Island used to be run by one Director from DHCR and some administrative people. RIOC, all of a sudden, became this big agency. So they're wasting money by definition, because they are spending more money on the same operational and administrative stuff than before they had this big agency there. Anything you can do to improve operational efficiency has to be counted as a plus, and Jerry Blue did a good job on that. And if you look around this Island you will see that in terms of general appearance, we look as good as any other part of the City, including the Upper East Side.

Now the fact is that that's not good enough. This place should shine and that's going to take more operational money. But he did his job, to the degree he did it, with fewer staff and expense than any previous administration and that is a feather in his cap and that must be noted.

Another success is that he opened up the discussion process to a wider segment of the community. This seemed to bother a lot of people because in fact his relationship was outside the channels that we are used to. But in fact these people feel that they finally had access to the governing process and, regardless of the structural difficulties, the notion of opening up the communication channels to as broad a spectrum of the community as possible cannot be considered bad.

W: What are the minuses? If he had these successes, why didn't he stress these?

DK: He was far too secretive and his Board was highly irritated by that. And he had certain management deficiencies. Everybody had to report directly to him. Everything was in his hands. He made all decisions. It was a nebulous

David Kraut, Still Hanging In As RIOC's Last Voting Resident Board Member...

management structure or non-management structure, in my view, with bad results. Nothing gets done until the boss makes a decision. You don't know what's going on because there's no clear reporting up and down. There is no clear line of responsibility. And worst, it leads to secretiveness, which was the glaring deficiency of his nature. His Board was always surprised. Everything from the Eldercare facility to the hotel proposition on Southpoint to the second story on the mini-schools came as a complete surprise to the Board when it appeared on the agenda. I wondered why things were being brought to the Board in this way. We tabled everything for years because proper information wasn't available for the Board.

I think that Dr. Blue's main problem is that he is extremely shy and insecure, and that led to fear and defensiveness. Does this make him bad? Not necessarily. We all have limitations. Does it make him ineffective and unnecessarily irritating? I leave that to the public to the decide. My vote would be "yes."

Dr. Blue never understood that if you have three hundred people in a room screaming at you because of a decision you made, you have to either reconsider the decision or defend it. For instance, he never explained the reason we're developing on the Island.. No RIOC President ever has. And it will be just as necessary when we move eventually to a home-rule situation of one kind or another.

W: And that reason is...

DK: This Island is in imminent danger of sinking into the East River like the Titanic, and I mean physically sinking. The place is falling apart. We have been undercapitalized for years. We are deficient in our operational spending. We have huge expenditures facing us just to hold the Island together physically, and I am not exaggerating.

There is a \$6-7 million seawall capitalization required, for which the money was set aside prior to the Pataki election. And we lost it.

There is one place on the Island where the seawall is not high enough to meet the requirements of a hundred-year storm.

W: Where's that?

DK: The northeastern corner of the Island, roughly from the vicinity of Motorgate up to Lighthouse Park. It's the one last piece of seawall that hasn't been rebuilt, and it needs to be. I don't care what the Corps of Engineers says, you can see it. If you walk along up there, just to the side of the tennis courts, the road sinks down and the concrete is so wet that the railings are always rotting and have to be replaced. The grassy area between the sidewalk and the street is completely eroding, which means the area behind the wall is filling up with water. One good storm and that's going to get knocked down and it'll take out half the hospital when it does. It will flood the hospital and the ground will sink away. If you want evidence of it, all you have to do is to see what happened on the west side of the Island when there was a big storm two or three years ago and a big chunk of the seawall was washed away. We had to take every spare dollar we had to repair that. This was under Lerman. The Board voted in a hurry. We had some spare money.

This kind of thing can happen any time. But there's more. In your paper, Pat Stewart listed a whole bunch of capitalization areas which are going to have to be met, and I think his list is pretty accurate. Main Street is going to have to be replaced, sooner or later. Octagon Park has to be finished, etc. It comes to \$10-12 million of recapitalization.

And, we are about half a million dollars a year short on operational expenditure to make this place as it should be. Adding the Tram to Metrocard is going to cost about \$700,000 a year. Stuff like this. Where's the money coming from? That's the reason we're developing. I don't favor development for development's sake. I'd love to see empty space and open fields here but from where everyone else is sitting, here's this vast, mid-Manhattan, middle-of-the-river empty space – what are we doing with it? I think we should be developing to the point where we have sufficient income to support this Island, to keep it from sinking and to run it efficiently. That takes money, that takes development. And that will be true whoever runs this place.

W: Do you support the self-governance idea?

DK: Yes. It will happen, hopefully this year, although I have some reservations about the timing right now. But revolutions happen when they are supposed to. It doesn't matter that I see some deficiencies in the proposed system, it's going to happen, even if it's four or five years from now or ten years from now. I disagree with something I read in the paper that if it doesn't happen now it won't ever happen. Guaranteed, it's going to happen and, when this happens, the people who end up running this Island, elected from the community, are going to face the same realities as RIOC did.

W: Why do you think it's guaranteed?

DK: Because I'm an American. The natural impulse in this country is to devolve the decision-making to the lowest and most local level possible. And it's a particularly apt model for this community. But if a new Board of elected citizens came to this Island in November, it would take them two or three years to see the inevitable necessity of development on the Island and to figure out how to develop and, most important, to understand that any development is going to upset and anger some number of residents. If you are going to take on an elected position of responsibility in a small-town situation, you are going to find that half your neighbors are really mad at you, about half the time. And the numbers shift.

W: You feel like you've been in that position?

DK: Yes, but I can handle it. I'm not sure that some of the people preparing for self-government really understand it and I hope that the people who have worked hardest for self-government will then have the guts to stand up and run

for those positions and find out how very difficult it is to take responsibility for the changes they have wrought, because somebody is going to have to do it.

W: Would you run?

DK: I'm not sure. There's nothing more fun than politics, and there's nothing more important than taking a role in the community, and I suppose I'd be foolish enough to stand one more time.

W: What will be the major challenges for the people who take up that responsibility?

DK: Keeping the money flowing right is the *only* challenge. We've

lost our State subsidies. In the operations area and capitalization area, they will have to move quickly. You can see in any rainstorm that Main Street is sinking. After a rainstorm you can see the pattern of puddles.

Here's another: Every inch of the sidewalk from Rivercross to Westview has buckled. Things like that have to be taken in hand. Commissioner Lynch knows this. He said to me privately at the time of Rob Ryan's accession that we have to move quickly to protect the physical plant, the capitalization of the island. So DHCR is saying quietly what I've been saying in my flamboyant and rhetorical way. The place was built twenty-five years ago. It has to be recapitalized as soon as possible and any new Board that comes in has to face that. We live on a precarious Island protected by a sea wall, very vulnerable to natural effects, and that'll be the main challenge for any elected Board.

W: On the money question, there's no capitalization money, no line item, it's a zero in the budget. Presuming self-government – or presuming the present situation – where's that ten million going to come from?

DK: You hope to God that you can hold the line until you can get some development going around here and start getting some income. Perhaps when development begins, you can borrow that money, and a new Board of Directors is going to have to borrow that money, mortgage our future to some degree and that will force them to develop, as quickly as necessary. I can't see any of these new projects developing income for this community any sooner than three or four years out, and that's if we started today.

Maybe two years for the mini-schools and that's the most hated project of all. It is just too strange a change for people to accept. The question is, do we want to screw up some people's view for a lousy quarter of a million? I don't know, but if you find that a newly-elected Board comes in and they



...Says The Roosevelt Island Dream Is Alive, But He Sees Hard Choices Ahead

need to come up with a quarter of a million a year, then they may have no choice but to build that thing.

W: What about the other development plans?

DK: It’s a strange idea. You better understand that I am very much in favor of adapting old buildings and finding uses for them and getting income out of them. To convert the mini-schools into town houses seemed a good idea until the developer said she had to add a second story to make them viable. That’s when people got crazy and you can’t blame them. In my view, most of the public arguments against the mini-schools are emotional and illogical and make no sense. But the hard-core argument is that some number of apartments are going to have their view and air and light severely impacted. The question is, how many people are going to be actually hurt for what net gain to the Corporation? Let me illustrate by an extreme analogy. If you came to the Board and said, “I have a project that is going to screw up a thousand existing apartments for a net gain to the Corporation of \$5,000 a year,” you would be laughed out of the Board meeting. If on the other hand you came with a proposal that said, “I’m going to totally trash one apartment in return for a million dollars a year,” the Board would probably go for it. The mini-schools fall somewhere in the middle. This kind of decision is one that a Board, elected or appointed, has to make all the time, and it’s the basis, I’m sure, on which the mini-school issue will be decided.

W: Negatively or positively, which group are you?

DK: I’m of two minds about it and will be forever. It is a brilliant project on paper, an ideal homesite for sixteen families. But it is going to seriously affect the quality of living of thirty or forty apartments. Am I willing to trade sixteen for forty for a quarter of a million dollars? I don’t know.

W: Review the SSJ-hotel development for us.

DK: That will be another tough call. My sense is that the community’s reaction to the SSJ Marriott project is not altogether as negative as has been expressed. My issues with SSJ are two. I have lived on this Island twenty years and I would like to go a park at Southpoint more than on the Fourth of July. Right now there ten or eleven acres down there which under the current master plan are dedicated to parkland. But there’s no park. I would vote against SSJ in an instant if someone gave me the five million dollars or so it would take to develop that as a park... It could be the most beautiful park in NYC, and one of the most important.

That’s a challenge for our elected officials. If Pete Grannis and Olga Mendez and Gifford Miller and maybe Congresswoman Maloney too, could put together some kind of \$5 million package I’d take it right to the Board and the Commissioner and say, we can’t build a Marriott, the money is in place for a park, how dare you vote for SSJ. But I don’t see that happening.

But SSJ is offering a trade. They’re going to take five or six acres of that acreage for their development and give me a finished four- or five-acre park. And that might be a good thing. It will provide people with access to that Southpoint area which is one of the *genus loci* of New York City – sacred ground. People should have access to it all the time. And we can have access to it by giving up some of it. I hate to leave land fallow if it is never going to be farmed and Southpoint has lain fallow for the entire twenty years I’ve lived here. Those are the reasons to do it.

Reasons not to do it? First, we’ll be giving up six acres of parkland which is dedicated as parkland in the current plan. And the traffic around here will go up. I’m not talking about construction traffic: if they build it while they are building Southtown, construction traffic won’t even be noticed. What are two more towers when they are building seven or however many are being planned for Southtown over the next

five years? The Southtown project is the real construction problem. I don’t care if they barge in every piece of concrete and brick and girder that they use to build, the traffic problems on Main Street while that project is being built are going to be horrendous. Throwing in a couple of more buildings won’t even be noticed in terms of increased construction. This construction is already going to be so rough on all of us.

But after it’s built, it is not just the question of deliveries. Every visitor who comes to that hotel requires four cab trips. People will not come here from the airport by NY Waterway vaporetto. Who is going to land at LaGuardia, take surface transport to the Marine Terminal, and take a boat that takes 30-40 minutes to get here when you can get here

Is the Roosevelt Island experiment successful in terms of a group of people living together? Absolutely. Unimaginably successful... But the City and the State and the Feds and The New York City newspapers do not get it. They don’t understand that we are living the dream. If they want to spend attention on the frictions then they are missing the point. This is the greatest social experiment that’s ever been performed. I wish the Governor understood it... I hope Rob Ryan comes to understand it.

by cab in 20-25 minutes in virtually all traffic and weather conditions? There’ll be constant traffic coming from there; there’s only one Main Street and that’s the main physical reason not to build. I don’t know if Main Street will be more crowded than East 64th Street but East 64th Street, to use a technical term, sucks!

W: Could you review the Octagon Park development?

DK: You know, I think Jerry was finally learning how to do things right. He was bringing people into the community to propose their ideas and get community feedback to the Board instead of a signed-off fait accompli for a yes-no decision. I am not opposed to building in that area. I have no reason to be as long as Octagon Park gets built properly. I remind you that there is a plan made by the Weintraub and de Domenico architectural firm going back thirteen years. We built the soccer field, we built the baseball field, we built the Community Gardens, and the rest of it is covered by the water-tunnel project. That plan exists and it should be built. We lack park space on this Island even as it exists right now. The only place you can sit out on a lawn under a tree is the Rivercross lawn. Lighthouse Park is another, maybe some of the interior parks. I want to see the park and picnic area in Octagon Park. New construction there might impinge upon it or it might support it. That was the deal with the Eldercare facility except that they put it in the wrong place. That was wrong, and it’s no wonder people were up in arms. This one might get it right or it might be pie in the sky. These developers seem to have the sensitivity but they are still going to put two very long wings on that Octagon building – which exists on the original ground plan, which I guess is some kind of justification – but that is not the way we live now. We cannot claim the right to build a building where there was a building before or someone would tear down Eastwood and build a jail.

W: What about the Eldercare facility that is now to be sited on part of the Sportspark footprint?

DK: This was one of those situations where the Board was presented with an idea late and had to respond in turn with the best idea they could. The fact is that Sports Park was desperately underutilized and it is not such a bad idea to pull it down if we can keep a gym area and save the pool and so forth. Granted, the new building might be roughly thirty or forty stories in height. The fact that you are going to see something new in your view is not good enough reason not to build it. This is Manhattan after all. My idea is that it is the best eventual location for an Eldercare facility – and there should be one: It fits in with our community, despite all the irrational opposition. It would be best to fit it into Southtown itself. But that calls for developers to get together, and they might never do so.

Let me just conclude, in the area of development, that the Island is going to face tremendous change. Even if we build only Southtown – which everybody claims to understand was part of the original Master Plan – Southtown itself is going to be the biggest change this Island has seen and change is always painful. And we’d better recognize that we have

to go through with it. All other projects will have minimal impact, compared to the general dislocation or difficulty of getting Southtown built.

W: You were talking about balance and dislocation, but what is the bottom line? Economics? People’s emotions? Any amount of development is going to hurt someone. At what point will you decide it is not an emotional issue – it’s going to be economics?

DK: Remember I am a Director of the Corporation and have total responsibility towards the Island and am the only resident who has this responsibility currently. I tend to see as positive any notion of development as a financial matter. As I said, on paper RIOC is supposed to develop, operate and maintain this Island, but it doesn’t say anything about people’s emotional well-being or political happiness or public points of view. I think of these things personally and I think the rest of the Board understands these issues. There are no stupid people on that Board, there are no insensitive people on that Board. They understand that their decisions have a huge impact, some of them negative.

But we’ve been living in a dream here and one of the things the Pataki administration did was to call a halt to this. They say, “We’re Republicans and Republicans don’t subsidize people’s happy lives. We don’t do that. You want a happy life, you’ve got to pay a happy price in terms of development, because we’re not going to pay for it any more.” I don’t see any change any time soon in this area. Governor Pataki has years left in this term. If he doesn’t become the next Vice President of the US, he may have a third or fourth term. Anybody, Democrat or Republican, who runs after Governor Pataki will have to accede to the general political climate of the State which is not to subsidize concepts like Roosevelt Island. So we have to get income to this Island, and as a responsible Director on the Board, that’s supposed to be my goal. As a person who lives here, I wish it were not so. I see that I am going to have to make decisions at some point that will cause discomfort to my neighbors. This is a responsibility you undertake if you are functioning at any level of town government. My neighbors have a right to be angry because I wasn’t elected to this position but I was President of the Residents Association and I took on the burden. Whoever replaces me on the Board, or an elected Board, will have to take it on themselves. That’ll take some courage. I believe there are courageous people living here: I just want to see them show up.

W: What about the changing demographics?

DK: Our basic problem in the public discourse on the Island right now is that there are two conflicting definitions of what the Island’s original purpose was in terms of demographics and economics generally. The original plan for the Island was conceived in response to the fact that the middle class was deserting Manhattan in the 50’s and 60’s at a great rate, moving to the suburbs, leaving the City to people with a lot of money and people with none. And the notion was to develop a community with a housing support program that allowed the middle class per se to live in or near Manhattan and that was part of the experiment we are involved in. At the same time the definition seems to have been developed that we are by definition a mixed-income community. And I am not sure what that means because no one has defined what the middle class means and how mixed are our incomes. We currently have people in this community who receive welfare support and we have more millionaires than are willing to speak up and be recognized.

Let me backtrack a little. A lot of people have reacted to the Eldercare facility on the grounds that it might cost \$3,000-5,000 a month to live there, which is \$60,000 a year, and that seems rather excessive for Roosevelt Island people. Except that, if you were to describe a median Roosevelt Island person, it might be fair to describe that person as a schoolteacher or a mid-level civil servant with a Master’s degree. That might be a fair description of a median person, a civil servant with some education and goals. Such a person currently makes 45 or 50 thousand a year. Such a person retires after twenty or thirty years with \$60,000 in retirement income. Seen in this light, an Eldercare which demands \$60,000 in full support is not just for rich people, it is well within the grasp of the median Roosevelt Island person.

So this question of what is middle class and what is well-off is the domain of public discussion. Are we supposed to be a community that allows a middle-class person to remain and survive in New York City by one definition or are we totally dedicated to a mixed-income concept? And if that encourages some lower-income people to live here, then it should allow some that are maybe not at the highest level of income but surely what is considered upper middle class today.

So, what is the demographic here? It could be defined either way and you can make arguments for the future development of the Island based on either perception.



Kraut from page 9

W: Do you think it is just a dream to have this full-range community?
DK: It is not a dream, we have it right now. Is the Roosevelt Island experiment successful in terms of a group of people living together in terms of the full range of incomes? Absolutely. Unimaginably successful. We are the only community in the City and, I suspect, the world, where people across so many economic and race and ethnic and country of origin and age and abilities are living so close to each other. Are there frictions? Well, yes. Are we living in a paradise? Well, no. Are we doing something that is unimaginable in the mindset of America and the world today? Yes, we are doing it.

That’s our problem with dealing with the City and the State and with the Feds for all I know, and with the New York City newspapers. They do not see it. They do not get it. They don’t understand what we are doing here and they don’t understand that we are living the dream. If they want to spend attention on the frictions then they are missing the point. Every community has frictions. This is the greatest social experiment that’s ever been performed. I wish the Governor understood it, I wish Commissioner Lynch understood it and I’m not sure he does, I hope Rob Ryan comes to understand it.

Jerry Blue had a sense of it, except that, being Jerry Blue, he couldn’t take advantage of it, and things factionalized in one area. But you have to understand that things have long been factionalized in another area. People were surprised and they shouldn’t have been. People who I thought should know better met me in the street and commented that suddenly a large proportion of the staff at RIOC seemed to be of African- American heritage. I was shocked to hear them tell me that and I’ll tell you why. It is common and endemic in all cities, not just NY, that whoever comes into power, of whatever back-ground, tends to surround himself or herself with people they feel comfortable working with. Now, when an Italian takes over from an Irish person or a Jewish person takes over from an Italian, the staff all change but the difference doesn’t seem to be apparent. When an African-American person is in charge and the staff becomes African-American, all of a sudden people are up in arms. Ed Rademaker and I agree that there was a subtle shift of power under Dr. Blue towards or away from some community polarities and it was not a bad thing. It was not a wrong thing. Nellie Velez grabbed me years ago and said, “David, people have to understand that there is a change on Roosevelt Island. Our demographic has changed. Our population base has changed and our economics have changed.” She was absolutely right.



W: You served as President of RIRA and have watched it closely lately. What’s your feeling about it? What can be done to make it more effective or is it effective enough?

DK: I think it is the wrong question. I think the real question is: If you go to a home rule situation in November, what would be RIRA’s purpose? The answer is, we’ll always need a Common Council. We will always need a representative citizens’ group to fight the power and that is true even if the power is made up of people from the community, and that’s RIRA’s job. I think that Pat Stewart got forked by the Jerry Blue situation in that he was forced to respond and defend constantly. Not just him, but the Residents’ Association as a group, were forced to fight this guy all the time because of the decisions he made and the way he went about doing his business and I’m sure it must have left Stewart immensely frustrated.

W: Talk about self-governance in the broad sweep of RI history.
DK: Despite all the talk and the public turmoil on the major development decisions we’ve been asked to make, actually the Board has not acted upon them. We’re waiting to learn more about them, to be better able to judge their impact on the community. If I’ve been effective at all in working with Dr. Blue, it is because I had his ear in a lot of small things. I could drag him out of his office and say, “Look, this needs fixing,” and get his response. When Ron Vass was on the Board, he and I walked the Island and gave Dr. Blue a long laundry list of things that needed his attention. Ron was frustrated that Dr. Blue did not give them his immediate attention, but eventually he addressed most of them. If I’ve been effective, it’s been first by keeping him focused on some small things which got done, and second by representing the historical community view, giving other Board members a sense of what the community might feel, how the community might be best served by some of the decisions we are asked to take, so I think it’s been useful to have me there in some of the small things. Whether I have the vision or the broad point of view to get my mind off the sidewalk pavement and see where the sidewalk leads, I’m not too sure. I’m not sure where I stand in the big picture.

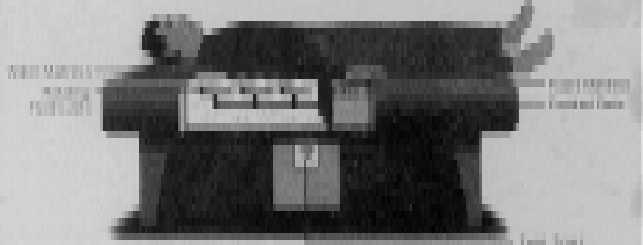
W: Twenty five years from now, where will it lead?
DK: The first shovelful of dirt turned at Southtown will begin a process of change that will make the future unreadable in terms of where we have come from. It is up to whoever is in charge, whether an elected or an appointed Board – and I hope it will be an elected Board – to see that these changes are as much as possible in line with the dreams that we hold from the past. But whether such a change can be managed by any group of people, I can’t say.
Personally, I don’t know whether my proper function as a Board member is to enunciate a vision of a future of this Island or just to work through things that need fixing on a day-to-day basis. I don’t know what’s right for a person in public life and I suspect it’s a mixture of the two.

I may be weak in terms of the larger vision. I do have the vision that when there’s jobs to do around here, I’m pretty good at doing them. When little changes can affect or ease things. Do you know that I’m responsible for putting the bus shelter in front of the chapel? They changed the bus stops to accommodate the larger buses and put a stop in front of the Chapel. Al Lewis came up to me yelling one day in the winter of seventeen snowstorms, five years ago, and said, “Why isn’t there a shelter here? When the bus comes we’ve got to run across the street from in front of the Senior Center in the snow and someone’s going to fall down, because there’s no shelter.” I said, “You’re right.” So I made a call. And we got the bus shelter there.
What’s more important: To have a great vision for this Island or see where the bus shelter should be? I don’t know. I can do the bus shelter. Maybe the bus shelter is a part of the greater vision.

Relax...

this ones on me!

- ◆ *Free* Examination
- ◆ *Free* Hydromassage on the Massage Time Pro



The Massage Time Pro is used to relax your body, reduce muscle spasms, increase circulation, reduce inflammation and relieve neuromuscular problems.

With the combined healing benefits of Acupuncture, heat and massage, the Massage Time Pro is used to help treat conditions such as:

◆ Neck or Shoulder Pain	◆ Back Pain
◆ Muscle Spasms	◆ Muscle Strains
◆ Headaches	◆ Fatigue
◆ Stress	◆ Chronic Pain
◆ Numbness	◆ Sports Injuries

If you or someone you know suffers from any of these conditions, bring this coupon into our clinic and let me help you feel better.

LEXINGTON CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATES, PC
188 EAST 80TH STREET
SUITE 808
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022
(212) 755-1515

Classified 751-8214

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**

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

P/T BABYSITTER needed for 7-year-old boy five afternoons from 3:00 to 7:00. Pick up from school in Manhattan, permanent, references. Student OK. **421-1348** leave message.

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**

WEIGHT WATCHERS extended six more weeks. Meetings Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., Senior Center (546 Main Street). Call **832-3456** for information.

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**

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

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**.



Jazzmobile

The quartet led by saxophonist Lou Donaldson played in Good Shepherd Plaza July 15 under the sponsorship of Housing Management, as part of the Jazzmobile series.

SPORTSWIRE

Sarah Johnson

The Roosevelt Island Tennis Association (RITA) has been keeping its members healthy and in touch this summer. They have been holding doubles play every Saturday morning from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The group manages to combine physical fitness with social interaction by regularly rotating pairs.

A RIOC tennis permit is required to participate in RITA events, which have already been set up for the fall, such as the Labor Day picnic and round robin play on Monday, September 6.

The annual Club Championship Tournament is scheduled for the weekend of September 26. The categories of competition include men's A and B singles, women's singles, doubles, and mixed doubles. The "Ladder" trophy playoffs, to be held the weekend of October 16, are open to players who have played the requisite number of qualifying matches.

The final event of the season is the Doubles Tournament and barbecue, to be held Saturday, October 23.

All events will be held at the Octagon Park courts, which are open throughout the season to anyone with a RIOC tennis permit. Permit holders can reserve courts in the Public Safety office.

RITA welcomes new members. For more information, call either Jan Buerner, (212) 469-3107, or Michael Kolba, (212) 980-3811.

ROBERT MICHELS PERSONAL FITNESS TRAINER

755-7322 or (917) 284-9171

ACSM & ACE Certified, Insured

13 Years Experience • Island Resident

FREE consultation and workout

Give your apartment a lift
HOME SHOPPING SERVICE
Let me do your legwork



*Budget Oriented
Time-saving*

*Furniture
Upholstery, Slipcovers
Wallpaper & Fabric
Carpet & Area Rugs
All Window Treatments
Floor & Terrace Tiles
Lighting
Carpentry
Kitchen Renovation
Paint & Faux Finishes
All Accessories
Closet Design*

Ellen Levy
Interior Decorator
531 Main Street

751-8214

free initial consultation

Public Safety Blotter

July 1-July 15 1999

7/2/99, Aggravated Unlicensed Vehicle Operator, 563 Main St. Officer saw male make U-Turn. When officer approached vehicle, perp got in car, fled. He was apprehended, brought to Public Safety Department (PSD). Asked for driver's license and registration, he produced only registration; his license was revoked. PSD transported perp to 19th Precinct for processing.

7/2/99, Investigation, 40 River Rd. PSD officers responded to man with gun. 911 notified and responded, searched area with negative results. Victim exited bathroom, saw a man with gun screaming, ran back to bathroom, locked door, waited, then contacted concierge, who said she saw a man fitting the description running toward W S W (west seawall) 10 minutes prior to receiving report from victim.

7/3/99, Grand Larceny Auto, 688 Main St. A man reported his SUV missing to Motorgate Assistant Manager. Officer escorted victim through Motorgate with negative results. NYPD responded, report prepared. Motorgate personnel stated that at 1:02 am, vehicle was driven out of Motorgate, breaking gate. They had not notified PSD. PSD obtained tape for investigation.

7/5/99, Larceny, 625 Main St. Resident entered PSD, said she left her son's bicycle in hall on 7/1, from 12 to 4 pm, when she returned it was gone. She will report it to 114 Precinct.

7/8/99, Burglary, 250 Main St., Employee of Triple Threat Productions phoned PSD, stating TV, VCR, hamper, last seen on 7/3, were missing. He noticed doors leading to gym area damaged. NYPD prepared report. PSD officers checked exterior doors, found them locked and secured.

7/12/99, Missing Property, 250 Main St., Stage Manager of Triple Threat Productions phoned PSD, said that cellular phone valued at \$200 was missing. Reporter stated office was not secured. PSD responded, there were no signs of forced entry. NYPD responded prepared report.

7/16/99, Grand Larceny, 688 Main St., PSD Officers responded to report of vehicle missing four wheels and both mirrors, searched all stairwells, notified Motorgate attendant, contacted owner. Victim stated over \$5000 of property was missing. NYPD responded, prepared report.

7/18/99, Criminal Mischief, 595 Main St., RIHM supervisor requested follow-up response to earlier incident, two people were found inside pool, were taken into custody. One perp obtained key to pool, let other in. They were placed under arrest, taken to 19 Precinct for processing.

7/19/99, Property Damage, 750 Main St., PSD Officer noticed light pole on sidewalk, knocked down by unknown vehicle. Officer placed cones around light pole.

7/21/99, Disorderly Conduct, 694 Main St., While assisting another officer in detention of three suspects, that resulted in finding CO2 air gun, a male approached officer in violent manner which resulted in arrest. Officers transported him to PSD, issued a "C" summons, released him.

7/21/99, Possession of Air Pistol Without License, 688 Main St., Anonymous person informed PSD officer of three youths with air gun. Other officers responded, stopped/searched them, did not find air gun. They searched area, found it, one of the youths stated it was his and dropped small lock-back knife. Both items were confiscated, he was transported to 19 Precinct for processing, he was issued "C" summons.

7/25/99, Unsecured Premises, 599 Main St., PSD Officer discovered outer entrance door unsecured, inner door locked and secured. No signs of tampering to outer or inner door.

7/27/99, Criminal Mischief, 580 Main St., PSD Officer found broken window on the fourth floor hallway, searched area with negative results.

The WIRE publishes this information as received from RIOC and makes no representation as to its accuracy or completeness.

Jack Resnick, M.D.

Board-Certified
Specialist in Adult Medicine
(Internal Medicine)

Health Plans Accepted

Aetna/USHealthcare
Empire Blue Cross
CIGNA
HIP
Oxford

832-2310

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

501 Main Street
Roosevelt Island, N.Y. 10044

506 Main Street

(212) 935-3645



YOUTH PAGE

OVER 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE!