

Next issue:
Nov. 19-20

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



June 1999

Oliver Chapin, the Island's Protestant Vicar and Historian for 35 Years, Is Dead at Age 72

He was a resident before there were residents – or residences, for that matter.

In 1964, the Rev. Oliver Chapin came to New York's Welfare Island to minister to the needs of patients at Coler Hospital, a calling to which he remained devoted until his death last Sunday.

In 1997, he told a *WIRE* reporter, "I think the thing I remember most, coming here, was the quiet. The Chapel was surrounded by 60 old hospital buildings, derelict, filled with all sorts of medical trash. And off in the distance, there was only a chickadee." Over the years, Chapin acquired and cherished the role of unofficial Island Historian, becoming an insatiable col-

lector of all things related to its past, and drafting chapters of a book that included the Island's role in penal and medical history.

Chapin's life and death are the subject of a reprinted article on page 9, editorial comment on page 2, an advertisement placed by his parish on page 5, and an obituary on page 3, as well as additional photographs on the Internet at *Website NYC10044*, at <http://192.104.18.139>.

A memorial service for Chapin will be conducted tomorrow (Sunday, November 7) at 4:00 p.m. at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, where Chapin conducted interdenominational services for many years.

Development Meetings Slated Southtown Southpoint

Designated Southtown Developers David Wine (The Related Companies) and David Kramer (Hudson Companies) will meet Wednesday night (November 10) with members of the Planning Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. The meeting, scheduled for 7:00 p.m., is open to the public.

Representatives of SSJ Development will meet with the community in a Town Meeting, sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, on Monday, November 22, 7:00 p.m., at the Chapel. SSJ has proposed a twin-tower hotel for 10 acres of designated parkland at Southpoint, the Island's southern tip.

RIOC's Ryan in Wide-Ranging Talk With RIRA Common Council

President Robert Ryan of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) met Wednesday night with the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) in a free-wheeling discussion of his Administration so far (he started in June), past problems between RIOC and RIRA, development, Public Safety, and other matters. Highlights:

- "I've been thrown into a position where I have to deal with a whole lot of things that were initiated before I set foot on this island," Ryan said. "The one thing I ask is a little understanding." He lamented "knee-jerk reactions" on the part of activists.
- Ryan sparred with Common Council member Byron Gaspard and RIRA President Patrick Stewart over Public Safety. Ryan said he "resented" suggestions he was promoting "vigilantism" in asking residents to curb antisocial behavior by teenagers. Stewart found fault with Ryan's use of comparative statistics suggesting Roosevelt Island has a far lower crime rate than, for example, Hastings on the Hudson, saying that Island crime figures are inaccurate. Stewart also told Ryan, "No one in this room is happy with Public Safety. They don't do their job, and we pay 100 percent of their wages." Gaspard criticized Public Safety Director James Fry, saying, "We're getting a lot of false feedback from Fry on what the law is."
- On drug dealing, Ryan repeated his earlier assurance that "stuff is being done." He said, "In an issue like this, especially drug stuff, there's got to be a little faith, a little belief... There's stuff that just can't be broadcast." He responded to a narration of events by Common Council member Ken Diebner, who said he had observed drug-dealing for more than 20 days running, and had received no discernible re-

sponse after repeated calls to Public Safety.

- Ryan repeated his commitment to stabilize Blackwell House now that court action has removed a tenant from the building. (Related material on pages 2 and 8.)
- Ryan asked for time to come up with a full understanding of the Island's financial situation, saying he has hired a new Chief Financial Officer for RIOC, replacing Anthony Bonair, who is leaving. (There are two additional staff changes: In the post of Public Information Officer, John Durso has replaced David Bailey, who is joining former RIOC President Dr. Jerome Blue at the State Human Rights Commission; a replacement for Chief Council Frank Rubino starts November 15; Rubino is moving to the District Attorney's Office in Yonkers.)
- Ryan disagreed with a contention that the RIOC Board of Directors had gone too far in approving a layout for buildings in Southtown, saying that the plan had been supported by a consensus of residents on the RIOC Board's Capital Planning and Development Committee (CPDC). He added that, in any case, the CPDC "is an advisory committee that is not set under any statute. It can give advice [but] is just an advisory committee."
- Ryan bemoaned the delay in getting an Army Corps of Engineers report on the condition of the seawall, now months overdue.
- Ryan told the Common Council that he hopes for an answer on Metrocard for the Tramway by the end of the year, or in January, 2000. He said the matter is incredibly complicated, and made more difficult by the fact that "the MTA has never run a Tram before."
- Ryan plans an expansion of the music on the pier of last summer, a juried art show on the promenade, and other "fun" events.

After 20 Years, Island Kids Thrives As a Caring Cooperative for Island Families

by Anusha Shrivastava

A stroll around the Island makes it amply clear that the number of babies in strollers and toddlers on cycles is rather high. Equally high is the number of harried mothers trying to keep them occupied, if only to maintain their own sanity. One organization that helps them do that is Island Kids.

"We do not pretend that we are a school, even though we teach, and we certainly are not a day-care center, even though some parents wish we were," declares Kathleen Heskett, the current Director of Island Kids, with a broad smile on her face. Her eyes twinkle as she continues, "People have told me that they moved to Roosevelt Island when they realized they could bring their kids to us. We may not be the only reason they came here but we are a factor and that makes me happy."

Kathleen probably does not realize how many parents and children feel sheer gratitude towards the people who have been running this non-profit co-operative for the past two decades. Tracy Thomas, the mother of a seven-month-old who attends the Mother and Baby Group, sums it up for them all when she says, "I wish we had classes every

single day." For her, the weekly one-hour session is simply not enough. "I enjoy meeting adults and Callan, my son, gets away from his routine."

As soon as Callan begins walking, Tracy's wish will come true, for then she can enroll him in art, music,



With the caring hand of an adult nearby, Ayla Stern and Alexander Enock try some tumbling.

tumbling and what are called "new discovery" classes, which the registration form describes as being designed to develop a toddler's "joy in discovering and exploring relationships such as space and volume, cause and effect and the five senses." Tracy can attend all these classes with Callan – and some without.

Almost a dozen different classes, ranging from art to aerobics and ballet to sculpture, are offered by the Island Kids teachers, all of whom are women. Most classes cater to the needs and interests of toddlers, but the group is aggressively courting teenagers and even adults with its pottery and rollerblading classes. "We would certainly like to have more classes geared towards older people but we are restricted by the space and resources that we have," says Ragnhild See **Kids**, page 8



Learning Group 2 at Island Kids is taught by Karen Conery, assisted by Elizabeth Gates. The children, left to right: Natu Makombo, Kentaro Nagata, Steffen Holter (partly hidden), Hitomi Kuji, Noelle Ike, Kathrine Hansen, Isadora Braune (behind Kathrine), Ayla Stern, Lucia Capello (back), Britten Holter, Alexander Enock (back), Sanjana Nigam, Gabriella Beola, Tor Jost, Brandon Hyun.

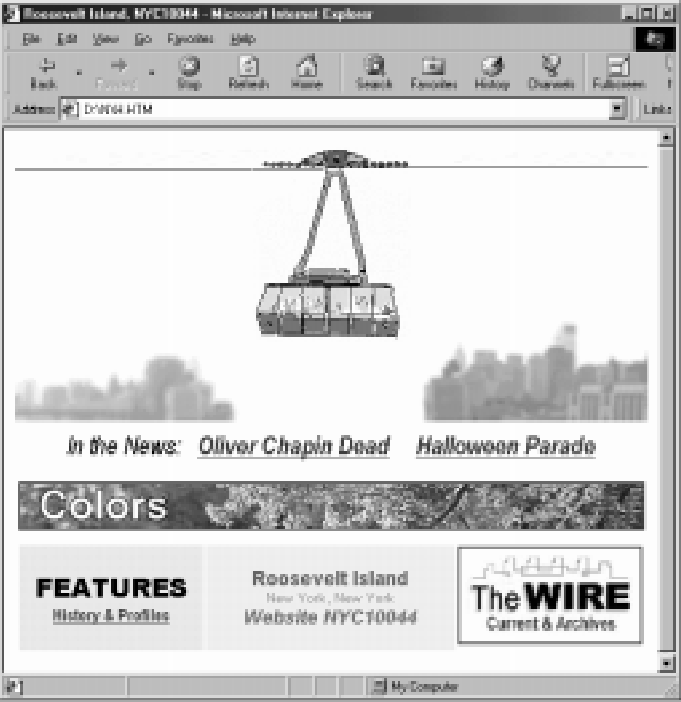
Website Rides Again

We're announcing, with some pleasure, the return of *Website NYC10044* just in time to display Roosevelt Island's kids – the kids in fact and the kids at heart – in their Halloween outfits.

During a period of transition, the site must be accessed using its raw-number address – **http://192.104.18.139** – which you enter into your browser's *Address* or *Location* window. The number isn't easy to remember, so you'll probably want to “book-mark” it or designate it as a “favorite” to make returning easy. Later, you'll be able to use the more user-friendly www.nyc10044.com.

Roosevelt Island is the subject of a number of websites, as we've reported before in these pages, and we'll soon do a new roundup of all the URLs (addresses), as well as a summary of some of the sites where you'll find Island history.

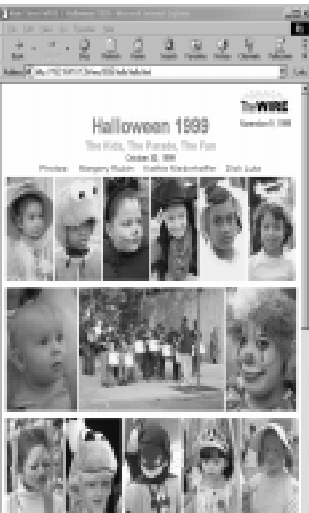
The Internet is playing an increasingly important role in world media. Just as radio and television provided a substantial increase in the velocity of information, the web is increasing both velocity and accessibility because its contents are available anytime, with optimum selectivity. Here on Roosevelt Island, the role of a frequently-updated *Website NYC10044* will be to spread information rapidly, provide materials that



supplement news coverage in *The WIRE* (transcripts of some important meetings, for example), and generally contribute to the cohesiveness and turbocharged activism of this wonderful community.

It's a connection among us.
It's also a connection with the world. We're always conscious of the international nature of this Island, and of the many comments that began coming in from around the world shortly after the original *Website NYC10044* went live in late 1996. Though not updated for a couple of years, the earlier incarnation of the site still brings in regular inquiries from the international community, and from people who once lived here, as well as people who are interested in moving to the Island.

With the technically sharp Frank Farance (who's a member of the RIRA Common Council) to help, we can expect the website to provide a series of surprises in the



future: Selected meeting audio, for example, and perhaps a live chat room, and more.
Next year, for example, we'll invite users of digital cameras to e-mail their Halloween Parade pictures to us for creation of an instant web page. Then, proud parents will be able to phone (or e-mail) relatives with an invitation to get a look at their costumed offspring as they paraded hours earlier. We'll do the same with other Island events, as well.

But *The Main Street WIRE* will not go away anytime soon. We're conscious of its value in reaching everybody through every-door distribution. The web has its own set of advantages – unlimited space, color, sound, convenient archiving (some *WIRE* back issues are on the site and there are more to come), and instant publishing – and Roosevelt Island deserves the best of all the media.

Read *The WIRE*. Then try the website:
http://192.104.18.139

on Website NYC10044 @ http://192.104.18.139

DL

Rev. Oliver Chapin passed away early on Sunday, October 31. I have known Oliver since arriving on the island in 1977. Within months of moving to the Island, I

island observer

took one of his historical walking tours to the southern end of the island and subsequently to the northern tip.

He told tales of the Island before we (the newcomers, since he had been here since 1964) arrived. We went into some of the old buildings and I clearly remember entering Strecker Laboratory and visiting the autopsy room.

He told of the life in the various hospitals that dotted the Island. He told us of living in the Central Nurses Residence, where he had an entire wing for himself and family. He also had lived in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd while the community was under construction. His home was what is now the lower community space. Finally, he moved to 510 Main Street – one of the very first tenants in the building.

Rev. Chapin collected artifacts, writings and memorabilia about the Island. He always told us he was writing his book on Island history. In the late 1970's he did a slide show for the community, “The Waiting Island.” For years he would display items of significance to the Island history at the parish fair. He was very protective of the fragile magazines, books and photos.

At a significant anniversary of Coler Hospital, he put together a three-dimensional display showing Island history. To this day, it is still in the lobby showcase there. He loved his Coler family. We would go Christmas-caroling with him at Coler, and, though I cannot sing very well and don't know the lyrics, it did not matter. He greeted every patient and staff member by name. He always decried the lack of visitors to Coler. He was a true chaplain to his Coler flock.

He, along with all the members of the Historical Society, pondered the fate of Blackwell House. We used the house for special events from 1977 to 1994, when it was rented out.

Unfortunately, the idea of renting out this fragile landmark house turned immediately into a boondoggle. The tenant and the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) were in a contentious state from day one of the rental. On the day of Rev. Chapin's death, RIOC was finally given back control of the house by the courts. Five years of neglect and mistreatment have taken their toll. On Sunday we went into the house with the RIOC staff to see the state it was in. It is in appalling condition, scarred from leaks, cracking plaster, warped floors and general neglect. The beautiful antique furniture may be jammed among the debris in the basement. The outside is crumbling. The porches are rotting. (Photos, page 9.)

Rob Ryan, President of RIOC, has promised immediate repairs and stabilization.

Now, Rev. Chapin, we will again take back the house for our community. It was such a poignant day – the day of the passing of the historian, and the re-claiming of the Blackwell ancestral home.

Judith Berdy



I've been to three meetings I want to tell you about, a Fire Safety meeting run by the Housing Management Company, a 114th Precinct Meeting, and a meeting about the future of Big Allis, given by Keyspan, the people who have bought the power plant from Con Edison.

The Fire Safety meeting was the first in a series of presentations that are being put together by Doryne Isley of the Roosevelt Island Housing Management Company. The presentation was, of course, by the New York City Fire Department. The first meeting was superb, covering much useful information of which I was unaware. It is likely that you might have learned something new, too.

However, there was only a handful of you there.
The meeting was well publicized with flyers under every door and on the kiosks and merchant windows. Doryne has made the series of meetings mandatory for the people who work for the Housing Company, and rightly so. I wish I had some way to make them mandatory for you.

We have had two serious apartment fires on the Island in the recent past, one in Eastwood and another in Westview. We're not immune. No one is.

I know you're always busy, and that at this time of year we are all even busier.

Doryne is going to try to hold each of the upcoming meetings in the evening, and will publicize them thoroughly again. Please do everything in your power to make the time for at least one person in your household to go. It might cost someone's life to miss it.

The 114th Precinct community meeting was well worth attending, and it's clear that a presence at that meeting by a neighborhood is noticed by the precinct. I'll be getting advance notice of the meeting schedules and will make sure they are mentioned in *The WIRE*. One needs a car, but we'll do our best to provide as much transportation as we can.



Patrick Stewart

buildings). They do not do vertical patrols on Roosevelt Island because they believe they are done by Public Safety.

The third meeting I want to tell you about was held by Keyspan, the new owners of the Ravenswood electric generation plant that we know as Big Allis. Actually, Big Allis is the name of one of the generators, the largest in NYC. The plant generates about 25% of NYC's electricity.

Keyspan is working towards a twelve percent increase in their electricity generation capacity through the addition of an expanded facility. They are seeking approval for the expansion from the New York State Sitting Board of the Public Service Commission. Peter Vallone, President of the New York City Council, has deeply involved himself in this area as regards consumer protection on health and environmental impact. RIRA will align itself with Mr. Vallone on this issue, and seek his help on this particular development.

Although I'm an asthma sufferer myself, I had been unaware that this part of Queens is known as Asthma Alley due to the high incidence of respiratory problems until I read of Vallone's activity in *The New York Times*. Come to think of it, my childhood asthma didn't come back until I moved here.

The current facility burns oil to generate electricity. The new facility will burn the much cleaner natural gas. Vallone feels that permission should not be granted to new facilities unless the permission is dependent upon stricter controls on the older ones like Ravenswood.

The meeting was pretty much your standard Public Relations presentation, and yet another occasion where the audience was weightier than the presenters. There were a number of very cogent questions whose answers left a lot to be desired.

One fascinating point arose in that 17% of every dollar spent on electric power in New York goes to local and state taxes, although the utility is prohibited by law from disclosing who gets what. This is obviously an important revenue stream to the City and State, and yet these are the very people who are responsible for utilities' regulatory control.

We'll keep you advised.

RIRA President's Column

Oliver T. Chapin

The Reverend Oliver Timothy Chapin, missionary, Episcopalian minister, hospital chaplain, and leading historian on the history and development of Roosevelt Island, died in his home, October 31, 1999. (Photo, page 1.)

A memorial service will be conducted at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd Sunday at 4:00 p.m.

Born in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1927, he held degrees from Wheaton College in Illinois, the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, and General Theological Seminary in New York City.

In January, 1954, he married Gloria Buis, his wife of 45 years. Chapin's clinical pastoral training followed at Bellevue Hospital and Rikers Island Penitentiary.

A noted humanitarian, Reverend Chapin spent 1961-1964 in Suacoco, Liberia, West Africa, as the first chaplain of Cuttington College, the only Protestant Christian College in sub-Saharan Africa. He returned there in 1971 for a two-month sabbatical.

In subsequent years he facilitated a clinical training program whereby young African seminary students could continue their training with him in the United States. This program expanded to include American students through the General Seminary.



Vincent. She will be missed by her family and friends.

Margaret Harley

Margaret (Peggy) Harley, an Island resident for over ten years, died Tuesday, October 26 at New York Hospital. She is survived by her daughter, Margaret Ann, and son, Neil, Jr., six grandchildren, and by two sisters, Stella and Edith, as well as a brother, Nels.

Margaret traveled extensively, was an avid reader and enjoyed *Jeopardy* on television. On many Fridays in the past two years, she was one of *The WIRE's* stuffing crew. She did the *New York Times* crossword puzzle daily. In 1993, Margaret was graduated from the College of Mount Saint Vincent. She will be missed by her family and friends.

In 1964 his work continued in ministering to the chronically ill patients of Bird S. Coler Hospital, one of two remaining operational hospitals on the then derelict Welfare Island, now Roosevelt Island. During the next 35 years he became a prominent Roosevelt Island historian, amassing the largest collection known of photos, books, and documents pertaining to Island history and authoring a narrative slide show, *A History of the Underside of America*, for educational purposes. Eight chapters of a book on this topic were completed at the time of his death.

Over those years, as Welfare Island underwent the transformation to Roosevelt Island, Chapin and his family occupied unconventional residences including the basement of the then abandoned Gothic-style Chapel of the Good Shepherd and

one entire wing of the Central Nurses Residence, now deserted.

Although he retired from Coler in 1997, he continued as a volunteer and counselor as well as remaining the full-time Protestant Episcopal Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd, conducting Bible study classes and Sunday morning ecumenical Protestant services.

Chapin vacationed in the north woods of Wisconsin until health concerns made travel difficult.

Reverend Chapin is survived by his wife Gloria, son Oliver Paul of Maryland, daughter Fay Faith of Wisconsin, daughter Margaret Hope of New York City, and six grandchildren.

Donations toward a memorial fund may be sent to Mrs. Gloria Chapin, 510 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044.



Website NYC10044 <http://192.104.18.139>

Teenage girls scream with delight when their rock star idol, Conrad Birdie, comes to town. From left: Christina Kirkman, Amanda Kross, Kevin Gates, Marielena Logsdon, Caitlin Donovan. The Main Street Theatre will present *Bye Bye Birdie* December 3-13. Tickets: 371-4449.

Public Safety Blotter

10/1/99, Domestic Dispute, 4 River Rd., Officer responded to dispute, resident & underage daughter were having dispute, mother claimed daughter was destroying furniture. Attempted to physically assault mother. Daughter has psychiatric history. NYPD prepared domestic incident report, mother referred to 114 pct. Domestic violence officer. Daughter remained with mother.

10/1/99, Vehicle Accident, 688 Main St., Officer responded to scene of vehicle accident, driver #1 claimed he'd driven out of parking spot when his car was hit by driver of car #2, who had not stopped, who claimed the opposite. Damage to both vehicles was minor and no bodily harm to either driver.

10/2/99, Armed Robbery, 548 Main St., Arrest. Officer responded to 548 Main Street to report of possible robbery. Officer stopped males, one being chased by the other. Victim informed officer he was robbed by the other male. Officer conducted frisk, found knife under perp's belt. Perp was arrested by PSD, charged with attempted robbery, possession of a weapon, transported to 19 pct for processing.

10/3/99, Gas Leak, FDNY responded to odor of gas at Trellis Restaurant, discovered over-boiling pot, which had caused flame to be extinguished. Condition corrected, stove shut off.

10/3/99, Investigation, 543 Main St., Mother & underage boy entered PSD, stated two classmates attempted to take his bicycle & choked him. They were seen on Main St., foster mothers responded to PSD, all parents informed matter would be referred to youth officer. Boys released to parents.

10/5/99, Harassment, 4 River Rd. Resident youth entered PSD, stated a resident youth, whom she recognized, followed her onto elevator, touched the lower part of her slacks, followed her out of elevator when she exited. Declined NYPD, only wanted PSD report.

10/6/99, Criminal Mischief, 688 Main St., PSD officers observed unknown male running from a vehicle towards Manhattan Park. They investigated, saw pry marks on driver's side of car. Sgt conducted search of Manhattan Park area with negative results. Victim's son responded, stated that marks had not been there previously.

10/8/99, Investigation, 580 Main St., Officer found victim who suffers from Alzheimers in hallway in distraught & disoriented state of mind. Officer convinced her to go into her apartment.

10/9/99, Found Property, 300 Main St., RIOCC bus driver turned in to PSD envelope containing US currency (\$687.00) which has been left on the bus by resident who had boarded the tram. Money counted i/f witness. Husband of victim retrieved the property.

10/10/99, Unsecured Vehicle, 688 Main St., Officer noticed car w/drivers side window unsecured, victim responded to PSD, stating he'd left it unsecured 3 days ago & had also left keys in ignition.

10/10/99, Possible Gun Shots, 580 Main St., Woman phoned PSD, stated she heard possible gun shots & then people screaming. NYPD arrived at scene, conducted search w/ PSD, with negative results, no witnesses and no signs of property damage.

10/11/99 Noise Complaint, 580 Main St., Officer responded to scene, resident would not open door, on second attempt he opened door & lowered music.

10/11/99, Hazardous Condition, 540 Main St., When officer exited J stairwell, he noticed feces. RIHM employee disposed of it.

10/12/99, Vehicle Accident, 2/4 River Rd., Resident driving a truck struck pedestrian at crosswalk at bottom of ramp. Victim was transported to Mt. Sinai Queens. NYPD on scene.

10/12/99, Vehicle Accident, 546 Main St., RIOCC employee reported he felt dizzy while driving RIOCC vehicle southbound, he lost consciousness & upon coming to, he checked himself for injuries (none) & observed damage vehicle had sustained to driver's side door & windshield. He drove to shop, punched out & went home. He went to hospital w/ family member.

10/12/99, Vehicle Accident, 900 Main St., Officer responded to vehicle accident b/t RIOCC mini dump truck, driven by employee (Driver #1) and car driven by non-resident. Both

See Blotter, page 10

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

Sun., Nov. 4, 4:00 p.m., **Memorial Service** for Oliver T. Chapin, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Nov. 6, 6:00-8:00 a.m., **Junior Tennis League** starts at Roosevelt Island Racquet Club; for information, call NYJTL at **718-786-7110**; free to kids 8-18; rackets not necessary; show up in tennis shoes. Sessions every Saturday and Sunday, 6:00-8:00 a.m.

Mon., Nov. 8, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters.** Meets second and fourth Mondays; guests welcome. For information, call **687-4010**.

Wed., Nov. 10, 11:00 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors** meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., Nov. 10, 7:00 p.m., **Southtown Developers** meet with the RIRA Planning Committee, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public.

Wed., Nov. 10, 8:00 p.m., **Island History Lecture, Archives Night – Island History from the 17th Century to Today's Community**, sponsored by Roosevelt Island Historical Society, Island House Community Room. \$10, but free to RIHS members. Reservations required; call **688-4836**.

Nov. 14, 11:00 a.m., **Island History** H i s t o r y

Tour and Lecture, St. George's Episcopal Church and Cemetery and Hallett's Cove, sponsored by Roosevelt Island Historical Society, Island House Community Room. \$10, but free to RIHS members. Reservations required; call **688-4836**.

Nov. 16-19, Scholastic Book Fair at PS/IS 217; call **980-0294** for times and other information.

Tue., Nov. 16, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion Group, The Sun Also Rises** by Ernest Hemingway, Library. Meets third Tuesday of each month; admission free but pre-registration suggested.

Wed., Nov. 17, 7:45 p.m., **Roosevelt Island Photographic Society** meeting, Eastwood Community Room, 536 Main Street. Night photography. Information: **752-5034**.

Sat., Nov. 20, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE. Deadlines:* Advertising in the paper, Fri., Nov. 12; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Nov. 15; bag materials due Nov. 18. **Future issues:** 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., Nov. 21, 10:00-4:00, **Annual Bazaar** of Roosevelt Island Jewish Congregation, Thrift Shop.

Mon., Nov. 22, 7:00 p.m., proposed **Southpoint Hotel Developer SSJ** in a RIOCC-sponsored Town Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

At the Senior Center

Closed Thursday & Friday, Nov. 25-26

Monday

9:00-10:00, **Stay Well** (Exercise)
10:00-12:00, **Computer Class**
10:00-11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beg)
11:00-12:00, **English as 2nd** (intermediate)
12:45, **Arts & Crafts**
6:30-7:30, **Line Dancing** (new)

Tuesday

9:45-10:45, **Jazzercise with Barbara Parker**
1:30, **Bingo**
5:30, **Korean Dance**

Wednesday

9:00-10:00, **Stay Well** (Stretch)
10:00, **Friendship Doll-Making Workshop**
10:00-11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beg)
11:00-12:00, **English as 2nd** (intermediate)
1:30, **Games**
8:00, **Bridge** (new)

Thursday

10:00-11:00, **Tai Chi**
12:30, **Movie**
5:30, **Korean Dance**

Friday

10:00, **Doll-Making Project**
10:00-11:00, **Citizenship Class**
10:00-11:00, **English as a Second Language**
10:00-12:00, **Creative Arts Workshop**
10:30-11:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:30, **Friendship Doll-Making Workshop**
7:00-9:00 p.m., **Korean/English Class**
Saturday
7:00 p.m., **Bingo**

Special Events

Call in advance for details: 980-1888

Mon., Nov. 8, 11:00-12:30, **Metrocard Bus**
Tue., Nov. 9, 12:30 p.m., **Visiting Nurse Service**
Fri., Nov. 12, 12:30 p.m., **AccessARide Discussion**
Sat., Nov. 13, 11:30 a.m., **Jazzercise**
Fri., Nov. 19, 12:30 p.m., **Birthday Party**
Sun., Nov. 21, 6:00 p.m., **Annual Dinner**
Mon., Nov. 22, 11:00-12:30, **Metrocard Bus**
Tue., Nov. 23, 12:30 p.m., **Visiting Nurse Service**

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.

The **WIRE**

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A Friendly Place for Children to open their first account and start learning how to manage their finances

FEATURES:

LOW \$25 Minimum Balance lets you start saving right away
NO Monthly Service Charges
NO Maintenance Fees

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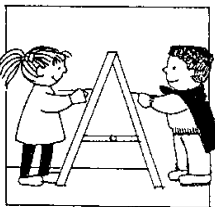
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On Sunday morning, October 31st,
The Rev. Oliver T. Chapin

Vicar of Roosevelt Island's Church of the Good Shepherd,
went to be with his beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Vicar Chapin served the Roosevelt Island community with intense selflessness for 35 years. He began his work here as a hospital chaplain in 1964 after returning from three years of missionary work in Africa.

For more than 20 years Oliver Chapin was also the Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd, which conducts a full program of services and activities in Roosevelt Island's landmark Chapel of the Good Shepherd at 543 Main Street. He built the Church of the Good Shepherd from eight congregants to its present, nearly Chapel-filling size.

Vicar Chapin also devoted himself to Roosevelt Island in a secular cause, acting as the Island's unofficial historian.

Oliver Chapin was deeply loved by his family, friends and congregations, as well as by Good Shepherd people who are now living all over the world.

The work of the Church of the Good Shepherd, in accordance with Vicar Chapin's most fervent wishes, goes on.

The Advisory Board of The Church of the Good Shepherd

Saturday, October 30



on Website NYC10044 @ <http://192.104.18.139>

Most of the photos here, and many more,
are available in color on *Website NYC10044*.
Point your browser to <http://192.104.18.139>

RIOC Regains Control of Blackwell House, Which Is a Mess

Last Sunday, by long-awaited court order, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation regained control of the landmark Blackwell House, the Island’s oldest standing structure. It had been tied up in a lease. RIOC President Rob Ryan has promised immediate efforts to stabilize the structure, then restore it. An architect has been put on the case.

These pictures show the state of the building last Sunday – and show the work that will be required to bring it into sustainable repair.



Kids from page 1

Utheim, the Secretary. “Even right now some of our classes for the young ones impinge upon their nap time but we have only two rooms, so this is the best we can do.” It is because of this shortage of square-footage that, during most sessions, children are divided into small groups and put in various “activity centers” where they may be supervised by volunteer mothers in arts and crafts work. That may not be a bad thing in itself for, going by tradition, many of these mothers could then begin teaching classes themselves and join the board of directors. All the women on the current Board, as well as most teachers, are also Moms who have attended various classes with their offspring. Karen Conery, one such mother, joined the Mother and Baby Group when her son was a newborn. Nine years later, she is still here, playing an important part in Island Kids, teaching four different classes and changing them a bit every session. “This is the beauty of Island Kids,” she says. “Everyone has her own ideas for the classes and we gear them accordingly. Kids are like a sponge so, if I feel they can take it, I give it to them – music, art, dance, exercise – whatever the moment demands. A third of my class does not even speak English but it really doesn’t matter because social interaction and having fun is the goal here.” However, fun and games is not all that Island Kids provides. The toddlers learn that they can lead an independent life, too. “The main issue is separating from parents. Island Kids helps children gradually ease into situations where they get away from their guardians,” says Karen. Socialization is seen as one of the most important goals in bringing the younger children to these classes. Ana Papp-Nistor says she attends the tumbling and music class with

her two-year-old daughter, Anoukia, so that they both meet people. “I like to be with Anoukia and enjoy her even as she interacts with others.” Clearly, that is not easy for many of the children. Three year old Jeremy Sosa cries each time his mother, Emma, moves away from his line of vision. “It is nice that one can be with one’s child here. I am hoping that over the next few weeks he will be comfortable without me and will prefer to be with the kids he gets to meet three times a week now,” says Emma. For older kids, there is a chance to let their creativity blossom. Cathy Kross, an artist by profession, has been teaching classes for the past seven years, helping youngsters as well as adults mold clay sculptures and paint. Hugo Genes, an eleven-year-old, began at-

tending Cathy’s art class only because his younger sister Laura used to praise it. “She was enjoying it very much and making all these things. I simply had to join,” explained Hugo as he put the final strokes of paint on his silk-screen panel. “It is very inspiring for me to be here because there is a creative atmosphere with children. It is a gratifying experience to be with Island Kids, which does what people need. It responds to demand and changes with the needs of the community. My personal belief fits in well with it – the best way to learn is to teach,” philosophizes Cathy. “Children are magic people and they help me recreate my own childhood. They show me how to enjoy the simple things in life,” says Sherill Lewis, who teaches a music class

and leads the Mother and Baby Group. “We are always in a rush to develop our children and get them to compete in life, but Island Kids gives them a chance to enjoy themselves in a stimulating atmosphere.” Ghila Krajzman, a former Director, points out that Island Kids performs a great community service for it “helps people make friends. I met all my best friends on the Island in the Mother and Baby Group when I joined the Group five years ago,” she says. Her companion, Susan Beola, nods her head in agreement, saying, “The classes are close to where we live and they are really so affordable.” Most weekly classes cost less than \$100 per semester. The two semesters last twelve weeks each, beginning in January and September of each year. Classes held twice a week cost about \$600 while those held thrice a week cost about \$900. Olya Turcihin Stern, the Treasurer of Island Kids, says the group is not making any money. “We are cheaper than similar groups in Manhattan. We have a very tight budget. We have to pay the teachers and cleaners. We have to buy and replace toys and equipment. This summer we got broken into twice and someone stole our stereo and telephone. Part of the emergency fund had to be used to replace those.” To make some money for the group, Olya is thinking of organizing a fund-raiser. Like most other office-bearers, she is a volunteer and has a stake in improving the co-operative. “Both my girls, Ayla and Leyla, attend classes here and I find there is something new for both of them each time. It expands their mind and they are comfortable here. It is like another home,” says Olya. “We want to be an umbrella for the children who come to us. Children respond to different people in different situations and we want to bring out the best in them,” says Kathleen. “We are preparing children for school and, ultimately, life.”



The Island Kids Mother and Baby Group. Moms, left to right: Dawn Helene, Tracy Thomas, Sherill Lewis, Olya Turcihin Stern, Meg Van Dijk. Babies, left to right: Andrew Zhu, Callan Kirkcaldy, Dhruv Varma, Ayla & Leyla Turcihin Stern, Emma Van Dijk.

After 33 Years, a Kind of Retirement

Oliver Chapin, Chaplain, Historian, Remains an Island Icon

by Barbara Lowenthal

The floor is laid in sheets of red linoleum. Red sprinkler pipes stripe the ceiling. Wooden pews line the walls like wainscoting, leaving most of the room open for wheelchairs. In one corner an organ lies under wraps until Sunday services. The Protestant Chapel at Bird Coler Hospital is spartan except for the south wall. There, a gleaming brass cross, resting on the carved wood altar, announces the purpose of the place.

This chapel is much more than a workplace for Oliver T. Chapin, the recently retired Chaplain of Coler Hospital. Almost every object within this simple room is touched by memories of his 33 years on Roosevelt Island.

The pews, for example, come from the landmark Chapel of the Good Shepherd (where he has been the full-time Protestant pastor since 1985). An ornate Bishop's chair, with a mitre carved on the back, is a reminder of the historical commitment of the Episcopal church, Chaplain Chapin's denomination, to the Protestant poor of the island. The organ was donated by St. James' Church, in Manhattan, which has sent volunteers to Coler for many years. Flags adjacent to the altar were the gift of a Coler parishioner, Carrie J., an auto accident victim, who collected the money for them by washing and ironing the clothes of other patients at a dime or a quarter apiece. Beside the altar stands the pulpit, given by family and friends in memory of Chaplain Chapin's mother, who spent the winters of her retirement on the island and was a devoted Coler volunteer until her death in 1984.

Chaplain Chapin is an unpretentious man of gentle warmth and humor. Pleasant-looking and white haired, he usually wears a clerical collar and shirt (the "uniform," he calls it), sometimes livened up with a soft blue or purple blazer. A chronic ailment of recent years has forced him to use a cane, but at the hospital he makes his rounds on a motorized cart.

Oliver Chapin was born in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1927, the first son of a minister's family. He went to Wheaton College in Illinois intending to teach but, he recalls, "God said follow your heart." He did, first to the Philadelphia Reformed Seminary and then to the General Theological Seminary in New York. He was a seminary student in 1953 when he proposed to his future wife, Gloria, on a beautiful night in Central Park. They married in 1954. Clinical pastoral training followed at Bellevue Hospital (where his duties included saying prayers for bodies being sent to Potter's Field) and Rikers Island jail ("Prisoners are great teachers, very keen, but mistrusting, students of human behavior"). He spent 1961 to 1964 in Suacoco, Liberia, as the first chaplain of Cuttington College, the only Protestant Christian college in sub-Saharan Africa. "It was a wonderful experience to work in young Africa at that time, filled with hope and aspirations."

He returned to the States in December 1964, anxious to go back to work at Bellevue, "an exciting place" where there

was "always something miraculous happening." But the only chaplaincy available was at Coler Hospital, at the north end of Welfare Island.

The Welfare Island he first visited on a cold December day in 1964 was worlds away from the Roosevelt Island of today. "I think the thing I remember most, coming here, was the quiet. The chapel was surrounded by 60 old hospital buildings, derelict, filled with all sorts of medical trash. And off in the distance there was only a chickadee." The chaplaincy living quarters, in the lower level of Good Shepherd Chapel, were a wreck, filled with "old furniture, dead cats, dead birds." The chapel upstairs was equally dusty and dirty; a television play had recently been filmed there and the chancel was draped with barbed wire.

The first thing he did was take the furniture out and burn it. Then he called his wife. "I told her that the one room that's good is the oval room but it's pink. She said, 'I don't care how dirty the place is but I will not live in a shocking-pink room.' That night I got some friends and we painted it forest green. She was here in a week with our three kids."

In 1971, redevelopment came, a bit suddenly for the Chapin family. Chaplain Chapin returned from a two-month sabbatical in Liberia to discover that construction of "Northtown" was to begin the next day. His lovely gardens, planted to either side of the chapel, were torn up. His family was on the threshold of eviction. Finally, after Coler raised a fuss, the Roosevelt Island Urban Development Corporation, then in charge of Island development, agreed to move the family to the Central Nurses Residence (the now-derelict building just north of the subway station). They occupied 11 spacious rooms there until 1975 when UDC went bankrupt and the city couldn't afford to maintain the building. The Chapins then moved to 555 Main Street for one cold, often unheated year and then to Eastwood, where they have remained.

When Chaplain Chapin began his chaplaincy, Coler had 1900 patients (the current population is 1000). His basic duties were to conduct Sunday services and to minister to the patients on the wards. Most chaplaincies, at a university or in the armed forces for example, involve parishioners who are transitory. But the patients at Coler stay. The Chaplain describes the basic Coler patient as "in need of care where there can't be cure."

A large majority are without family or friends. They range from small children to people in their 90s who may be brain-damaged, or suffer from Alzheimer's, stroke, spinal cord injuries, MS, or MD, or be victims of crime or auto accidents.

In conversation, Chaplain Chapin repeatedly uses the metaphor of the family to describe his work at the hospital: "The building of a family of God through Christ" and "to use the Gospel and the power of Christ to create a family where no family exists." Early in his tenure, the patients asked for classes and group discussions. A Friday-night discussion group on sometimes controversial topics like abortion or euthanasia was started. Classes in Bible study, history, and psychology were held. The most popular course has been Wednesday-night Bible Stories illustrated with pictures the Chaplain has collected over many years.

When he talks about Coler patients, the Chaplain's emphasis is always on abilities and never on suffering. He

notes that the Christian faith concentrates on "putting pieces together again through faith." Cindy T., for example, had Lou Gehrig's disease and eventually lost all physical functions except the blinking of an eye. At one of the last discussion groups she attended before her death, she blinked her suggestion for the next week's topic, "What do you think of birth control?" Another patient,

Hank C., had been paralyzed as a teenager from the neck down, yet "he remained bright, curious, seeking; he painted, wrote with a stick in his mouth." He was "one of the most challenging and rewarding patients ever."

Carrie P., a mature woman who had had a stroke, became a mother and sister to other patients, ensuring that those around her received the best medical care possible.

A big problem his parishioners now face is the lack of volunteers. Most patients cannot attend chapel without someone to push their wheelchairs. (The number for the Hospital's Volunteer Office is **848-6010**.) Chaplain Chapin says that, generally, "the Roosevelt Island community chooses to ignore the hospitals — with one glorious exception." In December 1975 Coler was threatened with closing; patients would be dispersed to other city hospitals. Chaplain Chapin spoke at a RIRA General Meeting with the chapel filled. "We want a safe, progressive community, but we also want a caring community," he said. Most of the Island residents, largely from Island House at that time, mobilized for the hospital, contacting politicians and writing letters. "John Holliman, then head of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, thanked us. He never expected a middle-and-upper-class community would come to the aid of the hospitals." Chaplain Chapin wonders "if the Island community would come to the aid of our disabled neighbors if it happened today."

Whether or not Chaplain Chapin has actually retired is debatable. He says he made the decision because "I felt that retirement would give me more freedom to pastor, preach, and teach in the coming years of my new old age." He remains the full-time Protestant pastor (Episcopal vicar) of the Church of the Good Shepherd, where he leads Bible study classes and conducts Sunday morning Ecumenical Protestant services. "Believers, seekers, and members of every Protestant, Episcopalian, and Orthodox denomination" are welcome to worship, and "at least 20 denominations are represented in the congregation, the ecumenical mission of the Episcopal Diocese of New York to all the people of Roosevelt Island."

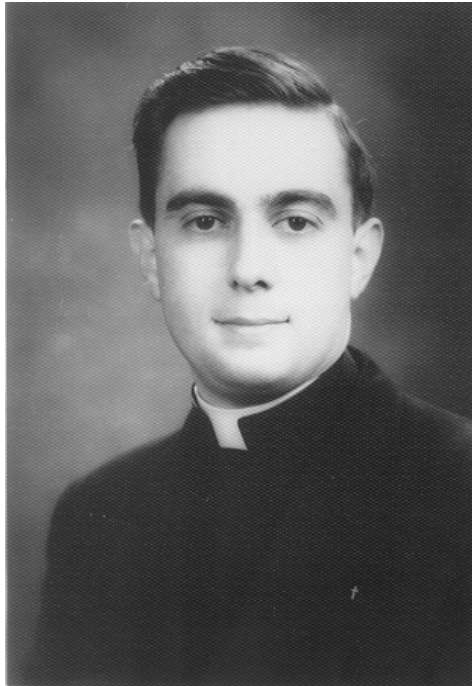
He'll also continue to pursue his longtime avocation, the study of Island history. He has amassed a large collection of photos, books, and documents and written eight chapters of a book on Island history which he will continue to work on. This fall he will share some of his research, which he describes as "a history of the underside of urban America," by presenting a slide show at the chapel.

Certainly he's not finished with Coler. "Lord," he says, "I'll retire, but I'm coming back." He remains an extremely active volunteer on the wards and will continue to lead worship services at the chapel every fourth Sunday. Patients at Coler, suffering from long-term illnesses, "need a purpose for living beyond their own physical deterioration." Years ago he suffered a serious illness which gave him some insight into the lives of his Coler parishioners. "I could see what it was to face the pain and the despair and all that, and know there was a way through — if not a way out." One of his favorite Bible stories is the parting of the Red Sea. "They couldn't go around it, they couldn't go above it, they had to go through it. Israel hasn't always been delivered, but it's gone through. And that's the heart of our Christian faith, too; when we can't escape, if God doesn't see us out of situations, he sees us through them."

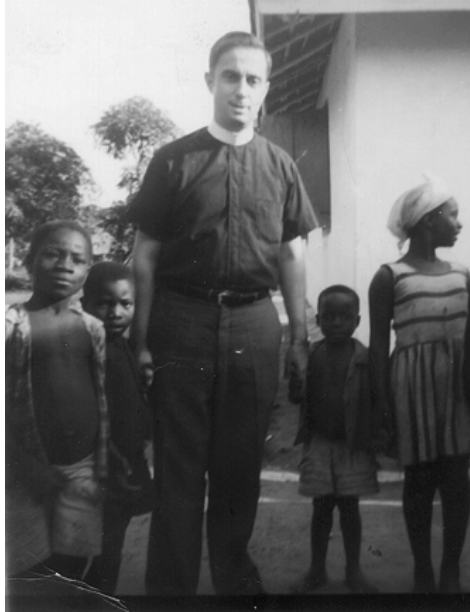
This article is
reprinted from
The WIRE issue of
May 2, 1997



Seminary graduate



In Liberia, 1961



With history exhibit at Coler Hospital, 1970's



At leisure in Wisconsin's north woods, 1980's



In Memory of The Rev. Oliver T. Chapin

We extend
our deepest sympathy
to his family

The Roosevelt Island Historical Society

Blotter from page 3

vehicles were facing northbound, RIOC employee complained of back pain, EMS transported him to Mt. Sinai Queens. Both vehicles sustained minor damage.

10/13/99, Verbal Dispute, 580 Main St., Resident entered PSD, stated her daughter was throwing objects against wall, destroying complainant's personal property. Daughter is of legal age, does not reside with mother. PSD officers at scene, both daughter & complainant reached an agreement, that daughter would leave. NYS domestic report was prepared.

10/14/99, Investigation, 10 River Rd., Resident & underage son entered PSD, the former stated that a youth who goes to school with his son snatched a loose-leaf book from son with US\$400.00 worth of Pok-E-Mon cards & fled. YO will accompany father to school in the morning. Parent refused NYPD report.

10/15/99, Harassment, 544 Main St., Female entered PSD, stated another female had verbally harassed her. It emanates from lawsuit; former woman has lawsuit against latter female because latter's dog had attacked former's son.

10/16/99, Trespass, 645 Main St., PS 217 entered PSD, stated that there were 5 underage youths @ school yard. Officers responded, contacted youths' parents, who picked up their offspring. Janitor checked area, there was no damage to premises.

10/16/99, Hazardous Condition, 555 Main St., Officer observed a female wearing T shirt and possible undergarments jumping up & down on window ledge while washing windows. RIHM's McIntosh advised, super responded, tenant refused to answer door or phone.

10/17/99 Resisting Arrest/Petit Larceny, 688 Main St., Officer noticed perp. Walking away from vicinity of vehicle, on which the alarm was sounding. Perp. fled from officer, shouting, "You're not going to lock me up again," while throwing a cellular phone and radar detector at officer. When perp ran past RMP #3, damaging right side view mirror. He further resisted arrest, leaving behind a jacket, which officer grabbed while perp. Fled down stairwell. Officer searched area for perp. with negative results. Owner of vehicle identified several items later, which had been inside vehicle. Recovered items were vouchered at 114 Precinct.

10/17/99, Vehicle Accident, 688 Main St., Officers responded to vehicle accident, driver lost control of car, right wheel was deflated & on top of bridge section. Car was towed to M/G. Driver did not sustain injuries.

10/17/99, Found Property, 555 Main St., Doorman informed PSD he found 50 cents in elevator, said coins were brought to PSD, placed in Sgts locked cabinet.

10/18/99 Harassment, 501 Main St., Arrest. Mother & underage youth approached officer, complained of her son being harassed by 2 other youths, and mother had approached them at Meditation Steps. Words were exchanged. PSD warned and admonished youths. Perp #2 stated, "Let's kill him." Both youths were brought to PSD, where perp #2 refused to give his pedigree and was issued a "C" summons.

10/18/99, Fire, 200 Main St., FDNY responded to construction site at Southgate for a small fire in a container, the cause of which is unknown. FDNY extinguished fire with no injuries.

10/19, Robbery, 684 Main St., Mother & underage son entered PSD, the latter stated that he'd been robbed of his bicycle (valued at \$170) at knife point by five youths. Could not provide description of perps, including that of their clothing. NYPD responded. Island wide search made with negative results.

10/20, Trespass/Fraud, 625 Main St., Arrest. PSD responded to scene regarding two female youths who were possibly soliciting. Upon their arrival, they observed them speaking with resident, approached them, asking the nature of their business, to which they replied that nothing was happening. Officers escorted them to PSD and found folder showing they were soliciting funds. They also found checks. Both youths were arrested and transported to the 19th Precinct for processing.

10/20, Domestic Dispute, 10 River Rd., Resident phoned PSD, stating her and husband having dispute. PSD and NYPD responded. Husband admitted to throwing objects. Woman had no visible injuries. Husband advised to seek help. Due to diplomatic immunity, no action was taken.

10/21, Missing Property, 40 River Rd., Doorman informed officer tenant who was moving was robbed of laptop computer valued at \$1,195. Victim left apt door unlocked; refused NYPD.

10/22, Hazardous Condition, 688 Main St., RIOC Bus Driver informed officer that there was a large oil spill at 40 River Road. NYC Dept. of Sanitation responded and poured sand at the scene.

10/23, Stolen Property, 686 Main St., Gristede's employee phoned PSD, stated that the wallet had been taken from inside her bag at the Deli area. Another employee found the bag in toilet room, which had an insecure door. NYPD prepared report.

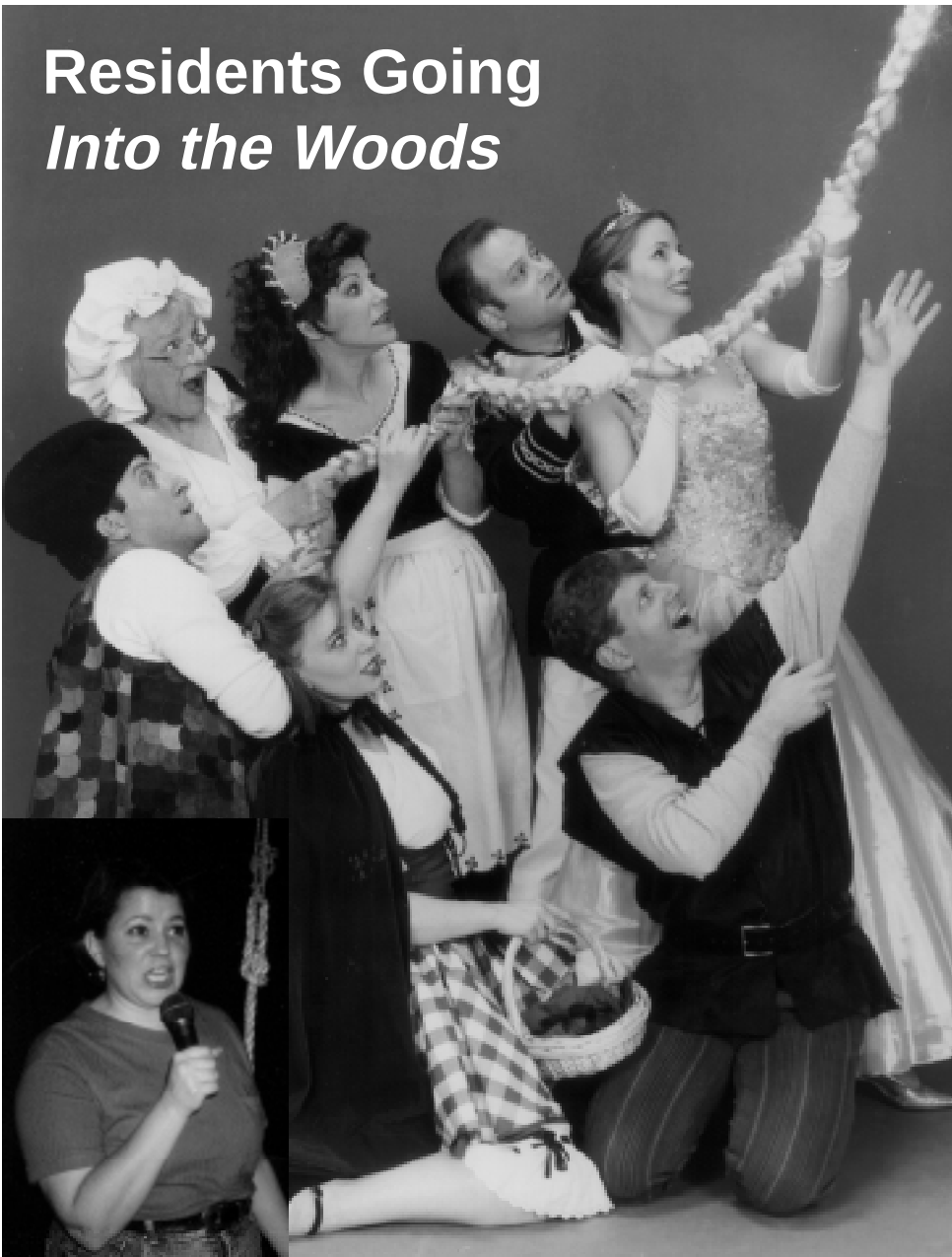
10/24, Petit Larceny, 543 Main St., Mother entered PSD with underage son, said two underage youths had stolen cookies from him. Officers searched area, brought the 2 youths to PSD, notified parents. Sergeant mediated among youth's parents. Victim's mother refused to press charges. Victim reimbursed in currency for the cookies.

10/27, Order Protection Viol., 580 Main St., Female phoned PSD, stated that her husband, whom she is separated from and has an order against, had called via building's intercom. Officer responded, found victim distraught. NYPD called and prepared report.

10/28, Fire, 516 Main St, Sgt. Responded to scene. Tenant stated that he left food on stove and fallen asleep, food began to burn. RIHM supervisor on scene. No injuries.

10/30, Assault, 510 Main St., Woman entered PSD w/ underage son, stated two underage youths had slapped and punched him. EMS refused. No injuries sustained.

10/31, DOA, 510 Main St., Female phoned PSD, stated her husband fell to the floor & she thought he had expired. EMS, NYPD responded; victim pronounced dead by EMT.



Carol Rosegg

Island residents Scott Kerstetter (standing, second from right) and Veronica Shea (inset) are in the St. Bart's Players production of the Stephen Sondheim/James Lapine musical, *Into the Woods*, November 11-21. Shea is the voice of "The Giant," and Kerstetter plays Cinderella's Prince. Both have appeared in Main Street Theatre productions on the Island, including *Fiddler on the Roof* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Tickets for the performances at St. Bart's (Park Avenue at 50th Street) are \$16 (\$14 for seniors and students); reservations are available at (212) **378-0219**.

Sarah Johnson SPORTSWIRE

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Maroon	1	4	1
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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.

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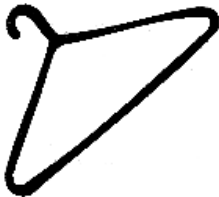
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