

Next issue:
Feb. 18-19

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



After Wednesday night's RIRA Common Council meeting, three members (Linda Heimer, Joan Christianson, Joyce Mincheff) worked to resolve disagreements over a proposed statement of position on Southtown. (The statement was issued Thursday as a personal position paper by Christianson and RIRA President Patrick Stewart. It appears on page 3.) Meanwhile, Stewart and MTG Chair David Bauer debated their differences on the self-governance legislation the Council had considered.



By building, or Island-wide? RIRA Splits on Electing RIOC2 Board Members

On a mostly-elected RIOC Board of Directors that would replace the current Governor-appointed Board, how should residents be represented? That question divided the Common Council of the Residents Association (RIRA) Wednesday night, as it considered provisions of new self-governance legislation drafted by Assemblymember Pete Grannis. The Council split, 12-11, in a non-binding straw vote on whether members of a "RIOC2" Board should be elected building-by-building or Island-wide. The straw vote was taken in preparation for advising Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez on the Common Council's preferences.

The new Grannis bill departs from earlier versions of self-governance legislation considered over the last two years by calling for a larger Board of 13 members (15 with Southtown) to oversee management of the Island, with seven resident members elected building-by-building. Two more resident members would be appointed by the Mayor. Two – the President and First Vice President of RIRA – would serve on the RIOC2 Board by virtue of their election, Island-wide, to the Residents Association positions.

Earlier versions of the legislation had called for all the elected residents on the Board to be elected Island-wide.

The split on the straw vote, which took two hours of the three-hour Common Council meeting, is at the heart of a disagreement between RIRA President Patrick Stewart and members of the Maple Tree Group (MTG), which proposed the first version of the legislation introduced by Grannis in 1998. MTG wants all the residents elected to the Board to be elected Island-wide without consideration of what building each candidate is from. Stewart favors election of seven resident Board members from individual buildings, with only the two top RIRA officers serving on the RIOC2 Board by virtue of their Island-wide election to RIRA.

MTG also opposes automatic service by the RIRA President and First Vice President, arguing that conflicts of interest would be likely for officers serving on both bodies, that the dual role could be too demanding and saying RIRA's role as a watchdog over RIOC could be compromised.

The extended Common Council meeting went from orderly and polite to near-chaotic Wednesday night, adjourning at 11:00 p.m. without considering other business. A further meeting on the legislation is now scheduled for 8:30 Monday at Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

The disagreement aired Wednesday night also centers on the size of the RIOC2 Board. MTG favors the smallest Board size that will give elected residents dominance, saying it will be more efficient and more capable of reaching decisions. Stewart favors a larger body, saying it will better represent the Island's diversity.

MTG members, several of whom serve on the RIRA Common Council, cite the size of the Council and its lengthy decision-making process as cumbersome and a demonstration of why a RIOC2 Board should be as small as possible without relinquishing an elected resident majority. MTG also maintains that Island-wide elections offer the best hope for

See RIRA, page 6

RIOC May Be Diverting Octagon Park Funds For Southtown Infrastructure

by Joyce Mincheff

Funds originally earmarked for construction of Octagon Park are no longer earmarked for that purpose. The funds apparently will be used, instead, to build infrastructure for Southtown.

The overall amount involved is \$3.4 million.

Diana Chapin, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), confirmed to *The WIRE* that a Superseding Agreement signed last Fall relieves the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation of an obligation to use the DEP funds to build an "Octagonal ecological park" and do related work in the Octagon/Water Tunnel area.

RIOC President Robert Ryan was asked about the agreement with DEP at a meeting of the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association (RISA) last month. He responded, "I don't know the figure that's being used for the park. Nothing's changed. We were only going back and forth to get money out of the DEP."

To a subsequent query from *The WIRE*, Ryan responded, "The document signed September 30 established a procedure to reimburse RIOC for seawall damage. This document does not refer to Southtown."

The apparent reallocation of funds is one of the points being challenged in an Article 78 petition against RIOC and DEP by Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD). The September 22 reso-

lution approving Southtown that was passed by the RIOC Board of Directors provided that expenditures over \$725,000 for Southtown infrastructure would not be undertaken prior to receipt of the DEP reimbursement; the Board's resolution apparently anticipated completion of the agreement with DEP to remove the earmarking of the funds.

The original agreement between DEP and RIOC provided "that in lieu of the City making direct payment to RIOC... the City would fund the following construction contracts to be carried out by RIOC as DEP's contractor: the restoration of the DEP staging area site; creation of an Octagonal Ecological Park; and building a portion of a proposed access road provided that in no event shall the amount of the construction contract between RIOC and the City exceed the Project Costs for the seawall and promenade."

In the Superseding Agreement, the City and RIOC agree "that in lieu of funding the construction contracts... the City shall forthwith remit to RIOC the principal amount of \$3,400,242.84 representing the actual cost of the work performed by RIOC on behalf of the City pursuant to audited invoices."

Ryan has been quoted as telling members of the community that RIOC expects to spend about \$1.4 million on the Octagon work prescribed in the original agreement.

Tony Morenzi, an aide to Assemblymember Pete Grannis, commented, "We always suspected they were getting the Southtown infrastructure money from Octagon Park, but we couldn't prove it."

On Wednesday, *The WIRE* asked RIOC and Ryan for further comment. On Thursday, RIOC staffer Robert Antonek responded that because the funds are one subject of legal action, RIOC cannot comment on the matter at this time.

Ed Logue, Who Conceived Roosevelt Island, Is Dead

by Sharon Berman

Edward J. Logue, the urban planner whose dream of affordable housing for all catalyzed the transformation of Welfare Island to Roosevelt Island, died January 27 in West Tisbury, Massachusetts. He was 78. Logue was President of the New York State Urban Development Corporation from 1968 to 1975.

His concept for Roosevelt Island – a fully integrated community within the heart of New York City with low, moderate and higher income residents – has been widely hailed as innovative and courageous. Kenneth T. Jackson, Professor of History at Columbia University and editor of the *Encyclopedia of New York City* called Roosevelt Island "one of Logue's greatest successes – turning a decaying, barren island into a thriving residential community." Jackson went on to say that the Island has "won the endorsement of residents in the way that counts the most: families are anxious to live on Roosevelt Island."

Logue came to New York after a triumphant tenure as head of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Recruited and given unusually wide powers by Boston Mayor John F. Collins, Logue changed the face of modern Boston. He was responsible for building Government Center, completing Prudential Center and, arguably his most important project, conceiving the Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market Restoration. Edgar J. Driscoll, Jr., of the *Boston Globe* characterized the waterfront project as one of the best-known and most widely-imitated community development projects in the country.

In 1968, after running unsuccessfully for Mayor of Boston and a year at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Logue came to New York City to head the New York State Urban Development Corporation (UDC). His eight years at UDC were controversial

and he was sometimes compared to Robert Moses, the builder and planner who was often accused of creating great projects without sensitivity to community needs. But Kent Barwick, President of the Municipal Art Society said Logue's "vision of Roosevelt Island was extraordinary for his time. Of course,



1967

like anyone, Ed made mistakes, but he had enormous courage, vision and intelligence and was able to galvanize people – elected officials, the general public and professionals – on behalf of the rebuilding of New York. And he believed in cities... he believed in New York."

Barwick went on to say, "Anyone who ever worked for him counted it as a great period in their personal lives."

In 1977 the Municipal Art Society awarded a Certificate Of Merit to the architects and developers of Roosevelt Island, calling it "perhaps the most delightful place for living created in New York City in this century." The certificate thanked Edward J. Logue "for personally seizing this opportunity and using all of his powers and skills to realize the very best of what is possible in making cities."

Pages of Thought and Opinion

Our Spiritual Ancestor...

Ed Logue’s passing last week removed one of a small band of pioneers in housing, education and community planning. He probably received more citations of excellence in urban affairs from the U.S. Conference of Mayors to architectural, university and professional organizations than any of his contemporaries. He was the leading advocate of the responsibility of public policy to build affordable housing that the market had forgotten.



He was, even at his height, a giant in urban innovation. He was also a good friend as well as an unusually effective leader in confronting the nation’s response to the urban crisis. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., first introduced me to him four decades ago. He was a successful young lawyer in Boston, but had run across Lincoln Steffens’ *Shame of the Cities*, which at the time I was preparing for a new edition. That book was his epiphany and gyroscope for his long, productive career that took him to Boston, New York, New Haven, Philadelphia and dozens of cities overseas.

Roosevelt Island was always closest to his heart and he loved to bask in its international reputation as the most successful “New Town” anywhere. Present Islanders should appreciate their paternity. He kept abreast of the Island’s development over the years until his death. He considered Dr. Jerome Blue’s autocratic behavior and the attempt to privatize Rivercross as mindless contaminations of a wonderfully successful experiment in affordable community living.

Richard C. Wade

...and Common Bonds

Ed Logue’s dream for this unique community is a reminder of all we hold in common. It’s food for thought at a time of heightened activism and the natural conflicts that arise when people take something like Roosevelt Island seriously.

Through all the rhetoric, all the angst, it’s renewing to remember: *He had a vision, and we live it daily.* All we do here, in harmony overall, in conflict only on the details, celebrates that vision.

DL



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Letters

To the Editor:

I am writing to respond to several letters in the January 22 *WIRE*, and to clarify some issues. Many serious problems now face this Island’s activists, and they are accompanied by an unfortunately high degree of misinformation and misunderstanding.

In his opposition to a *WIRE* editorial comment, Larry Parnes cites a presentation made by one resident to the Capital Planning and Development Committee (CPDC) as evidence that the meetings were open to public comment. I was present at several of these meetings where residents were allowed only to observe - not to participate in any way. If CPDC solicited public opinion at other times, as Parnes claims, that doesn’t change the fact that CPDC was set up to provide resident input to the RIOC Board — and then the Board exceeded the scope of that advice, approving both the developers and their plan, even though CPDC had been told they were not acting on the plan itself.

Actually, *The WIRE*’s *Island Observer* column was not criticizing CPDC, whose members should rightfully be commended for the work they do. Instead, it took RIOC to task for misusing the committee’s advice and using it as an endorsement to approve the Southtown plan.

David Kraut’s letter goes into the history of the “Nurses Residence Field” and cites maps he has seen as evidence that this field was always intended to be part of Southtown. But maps prior to 1990, when the Board of Estimate turned down a change from a six-acre park to three acres, are moot. Perhaps Kraut can produce post-1990 maps that illustrate his point, but I have not seen them. In any case, a six-acre park is not possible without the inclusion of at least part of the playing field. Thanks to the efforts of RIRSD (Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development), a judge will determine whether the maps sent with Dr. Blue’s RFP are valid and consistent with, or supersede, the wording of the GDP.

In addition, “a new, larger and better-built soccer field” at the southern end of Southtown is not a satisfactory solution to the expressed wishes of many residents to preserve the current field, the reasons for which are numerous and have been cited previously in *The WIRE*. (See especially Steve Marcus’s letter to the editor, January 22.)

In her letter, Susan Waide cites conflicting legal opinions regarding the 120-day window of opportunity to bring legal action against RIOC and the need for “due consideration” as justification for the RIRA Common Council not supporting the efforts of RIRSD. Kitty Berman’s letter criticizes RIRSD for asking for RIRA support without first determining whether the RIOC Board vote on September 22 was a “final action.”

Of course, the Council has a right to support or not support any group they choose, but those writers and some other Common Council members missed the point. The fact that the RIOC Board vote *might* mark the beginning of the four-month window for an Article 78 petition means action *had* to be taken within that period to insure residents’ ability to challenge the Southtown plan. Filing a petition too late would have the suit dismissed, a chance RIRSD was not willing to take. Additional deliberation and investigation would not have led to a determination. That’s the province of the Court.

Ms. Waide goes on at length defending the need for Southtown and accusing Steve and Nurit Marcus, who started RIRSD and live in Rivercross, of self-interest. RIRSD’s goal is not to eliminate Southtown but to negotiate the best possible plan for the entire community. RIRSD supporters, who come from all building complexes on the Island, obviously recognize the community-wide validity of our complaints and goals.

It is interesting to note that when the mini-school conversion threatened views of Island House and Westview residents, no one accused those residents of self-interest when they asked for community support. I and many others lobbied on behalf of those residents, although we would not have been affected directly.

Kitty Berman’s letter demonstrates her lack of understanding and contradictory positions on several issues beyond the 120-day window. She accuses Steve Marcus and me of secrecy because we were reluctant to divulge some details relating to RIRSD’s legal action, yet she applauds that same caution when RIRA

To the Editor:

I’ve heard that the RIRA’s President (Patrick Stewart) and Vice President (Joan Christianson) have a “press release” on Southtown. As a Common Council member from Island House, I am distancing myself from this “press release”. The press release was first *mentioned* to the RIRA Common Council around 11 p.m. Wednesday night as members were packing up to leave a late RIRA session. The press release was revised again at 3:00 a.m. and sent via e-mail to Council members with a deadline: “You must let us [Patrick and Joan] know by 10:00 a.m. [today, Thursday], if you cannot support this [press release].” I am writing this Thursday mid-day and the press release has been revised one more time so that the President and Vice President are signing it themselves, rather

See **Letters**, page 7

withholds legal information. She cannot understand who the opposition is since “we all support Southtown,” failing to recognize RIOC as the entity to which we referred.

Ms. Berman has stated publicly on several occasions that she cannot think of five residents competent enough to serve on the proposed “RIOC2” Board when self-governance is achieved. But at the February 2 RIRA meeting, she actually voted to increase the number of elected representatives from seven to eleven, more than double the five she cannot think of.

The last paragraph of her letter endorsed the votes for Patrick Stewart and Joan Christianson, suggesting that these individuals carry more weight by virtue of their Island-wide election, as opposed to building representatives on the Common Council, who are elected only by their buildings. Yet, in a straw vote taken at the same RIRA meeting, she voted for continuing building-by-building representation on the RIOC2 Board, choosing that over Island-wide elections for these seats.

Ms. Berman also implies that my own membership on several committees is a conflict of interest. On the contrary, the committees I belong to and my contributions to each have been consistent with my publicly-stated goals. As Vice President for Government Relations on the RIRA Common Council, I serve as liaison to government officials and, with my fellow Council members, try to represent and protect the interests of the community. We are indeed fortunate to have such responsive elected officials. They have secured funds for Island organizations and have tried to help us in many other ways. But under the current system of governance on Roosevelt Island, they are very limited in their ability to effect change here.

That is why I became a founding member of the Maple Tree Group (MTG). MTG’s goal is to obtain true democracy for the Island through legislation. Only when we govern ourselves, like other communities throughout the country, will we have a true voice in all issues affecting our lives on this Island, including, most imperatively, development. Because the self-governance legislation was stalled in Albany, partly due to opposition from some Island factions, I helped to form the RIRA Legal Action Defense Fund in order to assure protection against unwanted Island development.

Unfortunately, there was conflict from the very beginning regarding when and how that committee should raise funds, and what the scope of its interest should be. We resolved some of these issues but I resigned from this committee when it became clear to me that there would be reluctance to take action I thought was necessary. I became a member of the RIRSD steering committee because I saw it as a way to insure our right to eliminate unwanted aspects of the Southtown plan before the 120-day window of opportunity closed.

RIRSD proceeded without RIRA support to insure preservation of residents’ right to challenge a flawed Southtown plan. RIRA now claims to have evidence that will force RIOC compliance with the GDP, making legal action unnecessary. That would be an ideal outcome because it would relieve RIRSD of a considerable fund-raising effort, as well as the uncertainties of legal action. But because RIRA did not act within the 120-day time frame, RIRSD’s action has effectively made it impractical for the developers to break ground, *and* therefore made it practical for RIRA to mount its own legal challenge, should it ultimately make a decision to do so.

Finally, conflicting *opinions* are inevitable and a healthy part of any democratic process. I realize those named in this letter are all volunteers, with limited time and energy to devote to many Island causes crying out for attention. However, to use Ms. Berman’s words, “wouldn’t the more intelligent, mature, sane, and responsible course of action” be to do your homework and fully understand the issues before making *accusations*, especially in a forum as open as a community newspaper?

Linda Heimer
Member, RIRA Common Council

Letters Policy

Letters Policy: *The WIRE* welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from officials, and will consider publication on a *Name Withheld* basis, but the writer’s name, address, and telephone number must be provided. **Preferred methods of submission:** PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk (any wordprocessing software) left at 531 Main Street addressed to *The WIRE*; by ASCII-text e-mail to **mainstreetwire@rcn.com**; or typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street, or faxed to (212) **755-2540**. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. Call (212) 826-9055 for further information, but we cannot take dictation of letters by telephone. **All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.**

RIRA President & VP Issue Position Paper on Southtown Development

Patrick Stewart, President, and Joan Christianson, First Vice President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, have issued the following joint position statement on the proposed Southtown development. Stewart and Christianson expect the RIRA Common Council to adopt the statement as the Council's formal position at a special Council meeting Monday at 8:30 p.m.

We take our responsibilities to the residents seriously. We cannot come to you with half truths and exaggerations in the hope that you will support us now, and that eventually we may be proven right. We must restrict ourselves to operating on facts that we can demonstrate to be true.

As your representatives, we must be entirely sure of our facts before we make either serious charges against others or approach you to support us, whether financially or otherwise.

The RIRA Planning Committee discovered, and then confirmed, material facts on the Southtown development regarding parkland we believe will eventually lead to a solution that the entire community can support. The discovery of the pertinent information that has led to our position took place on January 5, 2000. Much exhaustive effort has since gone into verifying and supporting the facts that we are told will eventually allow us to succeed.

Until that discovery was made, no group had made any verifiable claim that the Southtown plan in any way violated the GDP, and no one had been able to produce any evidence that the Southtown boundaries were different than they had been when they were mapped many successive times since 1969.

The Southtown maps that were given to the developers by RIOC have been followed exactly in the plans they have presented to the community.

The discussions that will now take place with RIOC will be handled by RIRA's legal representatives, de Forest & Duer, one of the most prestigious land use firms in the country, and one that your contributions to RIRA's Legal Defense Fund have allowed us to afford.

As we have said to you in the past, we may have to come to you for further support on this issue. We will make every effort to avoid any cost, but we expect your quick support when we can justify the expense to you. If and when RIOC refuses to comply with the GDP, and we must go to court, the decision to do so will lie truly in your hands through the needed contributions.

We have been advised by our lawyers not to disclose the details of our claims until they are presented in detail, lawyer to lawyer, to those who have the power to act on the information. Not only is this the responsible way to proceed, it is the courteous way to proceed. It may lack the drama of other methods, but it is also most likely to be the method that saves the day.

For the record, the following points represent RIRA's position on Southtown and Parkland. Only time will demonstrate who is correct in this matter and what will come of it, but there is every indication that we will once again succeed.

a. It is our premise that we cannot knowingly permit violation of the General Development Plan (GDP) at any time regarding the development of Roosevelt Island, particularly as regards encroachment onto land designated as Open Space Parkland in the General Development Plan.

b. Separately, it is our position that we cannot support encroachment onto land designated for development by the GDP, nor can we sue to obtain such land for additional Open Space Parkland, other than those areas so designated by the GDP.

c. It continues to be our position that the development of Southtown is imperative for the financial survival of Roosevelt Island, and we recognize that the development itself is mandated by the GDP.

d. It is our belief that the developers, Related Companies/Hudson Company, complied with every guideline that they have been given by RIOC.

e. It is our position that there is clear and compelling evidence of violation of the terms of the GDP on the part of RIOC.

f. It is further our position that there is clear and compelling evidence of our claim which has not been raised in any other suit.

g. It is our position that we would prefer not to litigate this matter, but we realize that RIRA will be compelled to do so if RIOC does not comply with the GDP.

h. It is our position that we wish to proceed with responsible discussion with the State to resolve any non-compliance in a manner designed to have minimal and acceptable cost and time impact on the community, the developers, RIOC and the State and indeed all other interested parties.

i. It is, and has always been, RIRA's position that compliance with the GDP is non-negotiable.

j. It is our position that it is in the community's interest to proceed with these discussions since compliance with the GDP will result in a greater area of Open Space Parkland than in the development as it is now planned.

Patrick Stewart, President
Joan Brady Christianson, First Vice President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association



Barbara H. Wilson

Barbara Holmes Wilson, an Island resident for over two decades, died January 7 following a heart attack. She was 65.

After getting a BA in English from Hunter College in 1962, Barbara Wilson began her career as an English teacher. She went on to get a master's degree in Education from New York University in 1968, and later became an educational administrator.

She worked at Erasmus Hall, Prospect Heights, Central Commercial and Norman Thomas High Schools and the High School of Art and Design before being selected to head the High School of Writing in 1985. As Director, she developed the program to its present position as the only four-year developmental specialized writing program in the New York City Public Schools. She won several awards for curriculum writing and arranging workshops for teachers including an award in education for being a "Visionary Woman" from the Mosaic Council. On the Island, she worked with the late Jessie Rademaker to start and run the Young Adult League.

Mamie Thompson, an Island resident and longtime friend and colleague of Barbara described her as "a very articulate individual with a commitment to fight for what she thought to be right." One of her sisters,

Sandy Fox, said, "As the oldest of eleven children, she was the best role model anyone could want to have.



She was the first one in the family to go to college and guided everyone in the right direction. She was a second mother to the entire family." Jessica Rademaker said "Barbara was always willing to lend a helping hand, and always guided me through rough spots."

Barbara is survived by her mother, Cora, her daughter, Laura, her grandchildren, Clara and Susana, her sisters, Alice Holmes, Rose Holmes, Sandy Fox, Lydia Holmes and her brothers, Mark, Paul and Michael Holmes.

AS

Post Office Gets Automatic Doors

by George Rubin

The Post Office has new doors.

New automatic entrance doors were installed Saturday, and the inside doors on the right were removed. This makes the Post Office accessible for those who are disabled.

Next to be installed will be two handicapped-accessible counters, one for postal business and another for writing.

The branch postal workers, Don Dionne, Sylvia Pagan, Mike Hriscisce, and Ann Widdoes, say they are happy with this new set-up. It took aggressive letter-writing to the U.S. Postal authorities by postal worker Don Dionne and the former Postal Manager Pete Fontana, whose sister is disabled, to accomplish this project. They were also helped by Virginia Granata, the head of RIDA, the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association.



Margery Rubin

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

Next week (through Feb. 28), **Baseball Sign-Up**, Youth Center.

Thur., Feb. 10, 11:00 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. RIOC has reinstituted its policy of asking members of the public to register in advance if they wish to address the Board. Call 832-4540 to register.

Thur., Feb. 10, 6:00 p.m., **Annual International Dinner** of PTA in school cafeteria. Information: **980-0294**.

Fri., Feb. 11 (and subsequent Fridays), 7:00 p.m., Roosevelt Island Art Association, live model sketch session, 546 Main Street. For information, call **921-5939**.

Fri., Feb. 18, 6:30 p.m., **Poetry Reading** by Kitty Madeson from her book, *Out of Love*, Library.

Sat., Feb. 19, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Feb. 11; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Feb. 14; bag materials due Feb. 16. **Future issues:** Mar. 4, 18; Apr. 1, 15, 29; May 13, 27; June 10; July 1 (for July 4); Aug. 26; Sept. 9, 23; Oct. 7, 21; Nov. 4, 18; Dec. 2, 16; Jan 13, 2001; 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 (no charge), **317-8523**.

Sat., Feb. 26, all day, **Black History Month Celebration**, sponsored by Housing Management. Marilyn Engstler of Community Relations, at **838-4747**, is seeking volunteers and ideas for this event, which is to include entertainment, educational workshops, ethnic food, and more.

Wed., Mar. 8, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., Apr. 5, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

At the Senior Center

Monday
9:15-10:15, **Stay Well** (Exercise)
9:30, **Basic Computer Skills**
10:00-11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beg)
10:00-12:00, **English as 2nd** (intermediate)
12:45 **Arts & Crafts**
6:30, **Line Dancing**
Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
1:30, **Games** (RISA)
7:00, **Korean English**
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well** (Stretch)
10:00-11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beg)
10:30-11:30, **Creative Arts**
11:00-12:00, **English as 2nd** (intermediate)
Thursday
10:00-11:00, **T'ai Chi** (Feb. 17, 24)
12:30, **Movie**
Friday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00-11:00, **Citizenship Class**
10:30-11:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
Saturday
7:30 p.m., **Bingo** (RISA) (Feb 5, 12, 19)

Special Events

Call in advance for details: 980-1888

Tue., Feb. 8, 12:30 p.m., **VNS Service**
Sun., Feb. 13, 2:00 p.m., **Valentine's Day Party** (tentative)
Mon., Feb. 14, 11-12:30, **Metrocard Bus**
Wed., Feb. 16, **Atlantic City** (RISA trip)
Mon., Feb. 21, **Closed** (Presidents' Day)
Tue., Feb. 22, 12:30 p.m., **VNS Service**
Fri., Feb. 25, 12:30, **Birthday Party**
Mon., Feb. 28, 11-12:30, **Metrocard Bus**
Sat, Feb. 26, 10-3, **African American Bazaar**

Katherine Teets Grimm, M.D.

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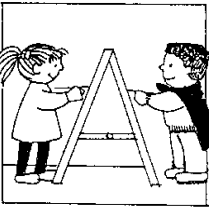
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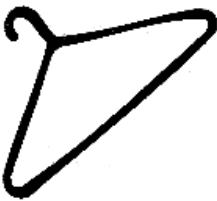
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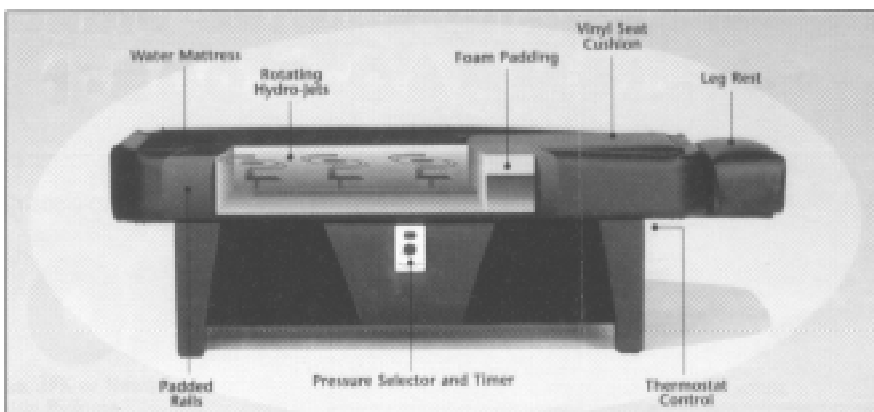
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Islanders:
Poet Madeson to Appear at Library

by Anusha Shrivastava

At the tender age of eight, she was selling newspapers on the steps of a subway stop in the Bronx. She never went to college because she was “a child of the Depression.” She once worked as a model for robes and negligees. She organized art auctions and career workshops because she wanted to “lead a pro-active life.” A chance meeting with Eleanor Roosevelt impressed her so much that she took to public speaking for causes she deemed important. She wrote her first poem at the age of 56 and has since published several anthologies and novels.

Kitty Madeson, an intriguing 72-year-old Island resident, has many tales to tell.



Kitty Madeson will be reading her poems at the Library Friday, February 18, at 6:30 p.m.

Born in New York City, Kitty describes her childhood as “delightful.” “It was a glorious time. I later wrote a set of 23 short stories based on it. I’m hoping to publish them soon. After I married, my husband and I moved to Washington, D.C., where we raised three children. I was involved in politics on a small scale and believed we could change the world. My husband and I had the conviction that it was possible to build a better

world but gradually my idealism faded away. I realized that governments are strong and politics restricts us more than we can ever fathom. With this burnt-out idealism came a divorce. My marriage of 21 years ended and I decided to do things for myself. I worked as a consultant on many projects and supported myself.”

Kitty recounts that at the age of 50, she bumped into an Australian sculptor at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. “We discussed art and sundry other things. Over time, he convinced me to move to Australia and I did. Our extraordinary relationship went on and off over a period of three years. Life in Tasmania was very different from what I had ever known. I was meeting artists and craftsmen and breathing the right air,” she chuckles. “On the 11th of November, 1983, a day after my fifty-sixth birthday, I got news of the death of a very dear friend. I wrote my first poem soon after, and then felt poetry oozing out of me. By Christmas that year, I had penned nearly ninety poems.”

Since then, she has written more than 500 poems, some of

which have been published in anthologies titled *Out of Love* and *Waiting in the Wings*. In *Waiting in the Wings*, she writes:

*Poems are strange creatures
they have such awkward features
they rhyme in metres
as in space
rather than in time.*

*Poems are like hoboos
who come to the back door
to ask for a piece of bread
but sit down to Sunday dinner instead.*

The *Out of Love* collection came soon after her relationship with the sculptor ended. She now plans a novel about it. “I am calling it *An Exchange of Gifts* because that is what the relationship really was. It could not last because we had unrealizable expectations and other commitments

but we did show each other a different way of life and brought out the best in each other,” she says with a smile.

The romantic in her is gradually being overshadowed by the pragmatist. Holed up in a paper-filled apartment in Eastwood, she types into her computer every day. The book closest to publication is a how-to manual on using one’s home to gain Medicaid eligibility. Another is a 44-page reminder on how to take care of exposed body parts such that one can age gracefully.

“My next project will be a book on parenting. I think the focus of that will be time-management. Parents try to do too much and do not enjoy their children anymore.”

“I have a long lifetime full of memories that can be converted into stories. I’m aiming for a lifestyle that consists of writing a poem every day and working on all the projects filed in the bottom drawer – film scripts, unedited poems and short stories. The trick in life is to make dreams into reality and that is what I am trying to do. I try to live every day so that it has some meaning for myself – and hopefully for others.”

Thus this silver-haired poet and writer walks around the Island turning over ideas in her head and putting them to paper in the hope that one day, the world will see them in print. She sums herself up best in one of her many poems - “I have no other choice but to be the woman I am.”

RIRA from page 1

getting the Island’s best talent on a Board overseeing professionally-qualified management of the Island. Stewart and those who support his position see that approach as bordering, at least, on “elitist.”

The indecisive straw vote Wednesday night leaves the matter open. Stewart and MTG members are scheduled to meet with Mendez and Grannis within the next two weeks to work toward a form of the legislation both officials feel can be passed by the Democrat-controlled State Assembly and the Republican-controlled State Senate, then signed into law by Republican Governor George Pataki. The RIRA Council meeting adjourned with a number of matters remaining to be hammered out as a unified RIRA position prior to the session with Grannis and Mendez.

Under the Grannis proposal now on the table, the RIO2 Board would consist of 13 members. Two would be appointed by the Mayor; The State Director of the Budget and the Commissioner of DHCR would serve by virtue of their State positions; the President and First Vice President of RIRA would serve by virtue of their positions; seven would be elected from buildings – two from Eastwood, two from Manhattan Park, and one each from Island House, Westview, and Rivercross. Two would be added for Southtown buildings.

Stewart has proposed a multi-step process for consideration of the provisions in the new bill, possibly culminating in an Island-wide referendum as late as November, 2000. Maple Tree Group members contend that a November, 1998, vote in which 92% of those casting ballots on the issue favored self-governance, is an unequivocal mandate, and wants earlier action on the legislation.

Other issues divide Stewart and MTG, but most are minor compared to the question of how elected resident representatives should be chosen.

In another vote, members of the Common Council unanimously favored changing the proposed legislation to put elections of the RIO2 Board members in even-numbered years rather than odd-numbered years, when a lower turn-out would be likely.

The Council’s preference as to length of Board member terms remained undecided. Some favor two-year terms, seeing four-year service as possibly too long a commitment for some residents; others favor continuity on the Board by staggering elections so that only half the elected members would be chosen every two years.

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SPORTSWIRE

BASKETBALL The Youth Program's Basketball League has completed its fourth week of games and the Celtics in the 14-16 Division and the Bulls in the 11-13 Division remain undefeated.

14-16 Division

Celtics (Yellow) 4 - 0
Lakers (Purple) 3 - 1
Knicks (White) 1 - 3
Timberwolves (Black) 0 - 4

11-13 Division

Bulls (White) 4 - 0
Kings (Black) 2 - 2
Lakers (Yellow) 2 - 2
Knicks (Purple) 0 - 4

In the 14 -16 Division, the leading scorers are Charles McCoy and Marcus Moore for the Celtics, Alex Sheppard and Vernon Jonas for the Lakers, Steven Parades and Chris Coleman for the Knicks, and Jason Burnette and Devon Epps for the Timberwolves.

In the 11-13 Division, the leading scorers are Moniz Sampaio, Eric Hagan and Priscilla Twum for the Bulls, Deshawn Pearson, Keith Summers and Fabian Medina for the Kings, Joel Arroyo and Fode Bah for the Lakers, and Anthony Simmons and Jose Marte for the Knicks.

BASEBALL Sign-ups for baseball will begin next week at the Youth Center and only will be open only until February 28th.

Letters from page 2

than representing it as RIRA policy. Honestly, the RIRA Common Council hasn't given much thought to the release in the past 13 hours, nor could it have.

The RIRA President and Vice President could better serve Common Council members and residents, as well, if they didn't "railroad" proposals like this one. For example, this proposal misleads readers (and RIRA Common Council members) to believe that RIRA might actually negotiate "GDP [General Development Plan] non-compliance issues" — a shorthand for "changes to the GDP" that will be negotiated by a small few in a closed forum. And the RIRA Vice President has already asked the Council for permission to negotiate "secret" agreements that can't even be shared with us Council members! Likewise, if RIRA is supportive of enforcing the GDP and potential litigation, then why didn't it support the highly motivated and well-funded RIRSD activities rather than forcing them to go off on their own?

I have been a Common Council member for almost four years and I am very supportive of RIRA activities. I just wish we could spend more time building real consensus in an open forum (rather than midnight railroading with limited discussion) and make RIRA a forum where residents can bring their concerns (rather than creating new organizations with overlapping membership, such as the Maple Tree Group and RIRSD). The "press release" you will be reading *could* have been corrected, refined, and polished to the liking of a majority of Common Council members, but it has been rushed, it skips over the process, and it has many flaws... all to make a publishing deadline for *The WIRE*?

Frank Farance
Member, RIRA Common Council

Coler Patient Found Dead Wednesday in Octagon Washroom

Police at the 114th Precinct received an anonymous call late Wednesday evening that an unconscious male was lying in a public lavatory near the Octagon Soccer Field. Police reached the scene at 9:25 and pronounced the man dead.

The 30-year-old Hispanic male was a patient at Coler Hospital. No weapons were discovered at the scene and no arrests have been made. The cause of death is yet to be determined.

The Hospital has refused to comment on the case.

AS

Heritage from page 1

Workshop" to promote literacy and appreciation of diverse African-American literature, will symbolize the legacy of the early African-Americans who secretly taught themselves to read by candlelight.

The workshop will conclude with an interactive discussion of Lewis Latimer, an African-American whose contributions led to the approval of Alexander Graham Bell's patent application for the telephone. Latimer's interest in electricity resulted in the invention of a process for making a carbon filament for the Thomas Edison light bulb. The process doubled the life of the bulb.

The event is sponsored jointly by Roosevelt Island Housing Management, Rivercross Tenants Corporation, Manhattan Park management, and is presented in coordination with the Collective Artists' Expo. RISA, the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association, will host.

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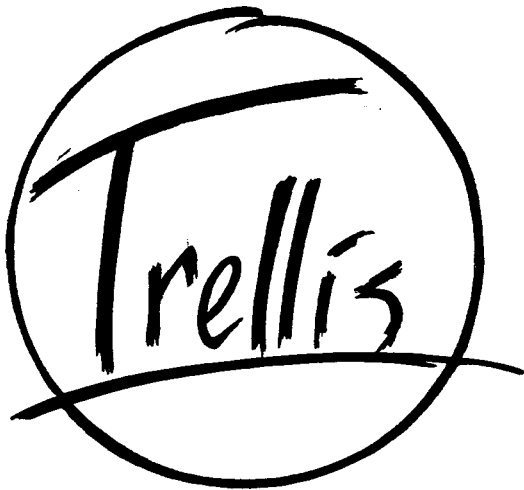
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