

Next issue:
Apr. 14-15

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Residents Association Attorney Jeff Glen was decidedly upbeat in a Tuesday night presentation to the Common Council, saying he believes current cases lodged by RIRSD and Robert Chira can be the basis for getting rulings that all Island development must conform squarely to the General Development Plan and the Lease under which New York State controls Roosevelt Island.

RIRA Joins Southtown Cases To Seek Favorable GDP Ruling

RIRA is going to court on Southtown.

As an intervenor in a current case against RIOC's plan, the Residents Association will focus on the Island's General Development Plan (GDP). The goal is to present the strongest possible arguments for the GDP as ruling doctrine in all Island development. The legal reasoning is that decisions in the Southtown cases are likely to produce precedent for further Island development.

In a presentation to a special meeting of the RIRA Common Council Tuesday night, Attorney Jeffrey Glen, whose firm is on retainer to RIRA on development matters, said, "RIRA wants to make a broader presentation on the general issue of compliance with the General Development Plan and the Lease." He added, "My personal view is that when you have articulate and well-presented positions by the original petitioners, coupled with intervention by a broad-based organization, there is a psychological advantage that is gained by having the positions presented in both those ways."

The original petitioners are Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD), headed by Rivercross resident Steve Marcus (letter, page

2) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee, headed by and represented by Attorney Robert Chira, another Rivercross resident.

Glen told the Common Council that the existing suits have an emphasis different from what he will argue for RIRA. "One of them emphasizes... view corridors and other claims of failure to be appropriate within the general design confines of the [General] Development Plan... The other emphasizes environmental claims, but both of them raise the issue that RIRA is raising, which is that the plan, as approved, violates the General Development Plan and the Ground Lease."

Glen told the Common Council that seeking to join an existing case as an "intervenor" rather than as a co-petitioner (the equivalent of co-plaintiff) is RIRA's best available course of action, for several reasons. One is that because RIRA let a deadline pass without acting, RIOC might have grounds for keeping it out of the case. A second is that RIRA gains separate rights of appeal which it may want to exercise if a decision in the cases satisfies the existing petitioners but stops short of a definitive ruling on the absolute control of the GDP over Island development. A third is that the judge might see RIRA as a "redun-

dant" petitioner and not allow its addition to the case.

Finally, acting as an intervenor preserves RIRA's option of switching sides in effect, in an appeal, if RIOC offers settlement that satisfies RIRA, but not Chira or RIRSD.

Major portions of Glen's presentation are available on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.

Immediately after Glen's presentation, the Common Council voted funds for the legal effort.

Glen told the Common Council before it voted that a RIRA presence in the case with a focus on the GDP would increase the chances of a decision on the ruling authority of the General Development Plan.

RIOC Board Night Session

The RIOC Board of Directors has an evening meeting scheduled Thursday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m.



RIRA Council Condemns Racial Profiling

The RIRA Common Council condemned racial profiling at its March 8 meeting, calling it contrary to Roosevelt Island's founding principles.

Unanimously passing a resolution proposed by former RIRA President Nneka Pope, the Common Council responded to Pope's argument that "racial profiling is not marginalized just to the New Jersey Turnpike."

"If you did not know that before Amadou Diallo," she said, "you know it now." Diallo is the 22-year-old man who was killed in a hail of NYPD bullets by officers who said they thought he had drawn a gun.

Text of the resolution:

Whereas Roosevelt Island was founded on the premise of racial tolerance and racial co-existence; Whereas Roosevelt Island is an ethnically, socially and economically diverse community;

Whereas the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) represents all residents;

Whereas racial profiling is in direct contradiction to the tenets of Roosevelt Island;

Be It Resolved: RIRA condemns the practice of racial profiling by all federal, state, city agencies and departments that receive tax monies.

Coming On: Roosevelt Island's Third Generation

by Anusha Shrivastava

"We used to call it 'The Rock' and we couldn't wait to move away," grins Chris Enock, talking about the Island. Sitting in his Manhattan Park apartment, this 35-year-old first came to Roosevelt Island in 1975 when his parents moved into Rivercross. "I guess the grass is always greener on the other side, for we felt we were not quite from New York City. It was like being from the suburbs. We wanted to leave the nest and never come back." However, like many others who spent a substantial portion of their childhood on the Island, Chris moved away for a few years and then came right back. "We decided to live here for the same reasons that my parents thought of when moving here. The Island is affordable, it is a great place for kids to grow up and it is an alternative to living in the City," he says.

His contemporary, Olya Turcihin Stern, says she moved back after she had her first child. "I had lived here since I was thirteen years old. I moved out when I went to college in Binghamton and then lived for a few years in New Jersey. It was so lonely there, so isolating. When Ayla was born in 1996, I decided to move back because I knew that I wanted to live in a community. I joined the Mother and Baby Group and that saved my life. I came back for the community."

The same yearning for community life



Islander Nikki Leopold, age 6...

brought Justine Selekman back, too. "I came back because of my memories of the Island, the safety, the sense of security and the family atmosphere," says she. "I was still in a carriage when my parents moved here in 1976. They were among the first residents here. One of my first memories of the place is of playing in Blackwell Park, roller-skating, and the Little League. I was in a tumbling class in Island Kids. Now, my seven-month-old son, Ryan, attends the Mother and Baby Group with me and will probably join the tumbling class next year. From a child's perspective, this is a great place to be. He will get the same sense of a tight-knit community that I had."

It also helps that her parents live across the street from her. Justine is able to work twice a week with developmentally-delayed children at the 92nd Street Y. "My mother takes care of Ryan while I am gone. It is a big help. She is an excellent support and was a deciding factor when we moved back from Brooklyn," admits Justine. Also, the housekeeper who helped raise Justine is still around to lend a hand for Ryan.

"I knew the place, my Mum had space in her apartment and this is a great environment for Desmond to grow up in," says Justin Towey, who moved off the Island when he went to college in South Caro-

lina. He now works for Salomon Smith Barney in midtown and says he has absolutely no incentive to move out. His wife Kristi agrees, saying, "This is a big family place, we are in a great apartment and it is very safe."

Not everyone is back to raise kids here, though. Phoebe Flynn lived here between the ages of four and 14. At the time, she was sent to Ireland to a Quaker boarding school

See **Generations**, page 6



...and today, with husband Rick and their third-generation Islander daughters - Emily, 3; Rachel, 8; Elana, 9

Pages of Thought and Opinion

A Link-Up on Southtown

RIRA and other community groups with an interest in Southtown are finally acting in concert. Well, *sort of* acting in concert, if not yet in perfect synch or charmed harmony.

What’s happened, as we reported on page 1 last *WIRE*, and as Attorney Jeff Glen relates in this issue’s lead story, is that RIOC has turned down RIRA’s performance as *good cop* opposite RIRSD’s *bad cop*. RIOC is refusing to budge, sticking by its approval of a plan for Southtown that appears to encroach on the six acres of park which the General Development Plan (GDP) says must lie between the existing buildings of Northtown and the new development.

If you’ve ever been involved in a zoning fight, you know how important this can be. The GDP is Roosevelt Island’s zoning, presumably the final word on what can be put where. Island pioneer Shirley Margolin has called it our “constitution,” and that’s on the money if you’re concerned with preserving the Island as a special place where City-dwellers can breathe the good air of open spaces and genuine community.

So when RIOC cuts corners, as it appears to have done in arbitrarily shrinking Blackwell Park, it’s no small matter.

While RIRA was trying on its *good cop* costume, of course, others had to do the heavy lifting. Robert Chira filed an Article 78 action challenging RIOC’s decision. So did Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD). In a fog of inaction, perhaps, or maybe deliberately, RIRA let a deadline pass, leaving RIRSD and Chira to preserve residents’ rights, so that now, RIRA can take action as an intervenor.

Paradoxically, that’s produced some good news. But there’s also bad news.

The good news is that RIRA’s attorney, Jeff Glen, has devised a strategy that could ride one of these cases to a broader long-term protection of residents’ interests, perhaps – if the judge sees it his way – producing a ruling, or negotiated solution, in which the authority of the GDP is recognized as something more than a so-called loose collection of ideas, which is how RIOC prefers to view it.

The bad news? Well, it means that while RIRSD is spending thousands of dollars fighting this case, and Robert Chira is putting in an equivalent amount of legal time (or more), RIRA is also spending thousands on Jeff Glen’s time.

A very conservative estimate puts residents’ committed or expended costs at well over \$30,000 already, and mounting fast.

RIRA has worked out a deal under which it won’t need additional legal money immediately. Chira will eventually need support, but being a lawyer who can buy his own time wholesale, he’s covered for the moment.

RIRSD isn’t. It’s found ways to pay the bills so far, primarily through the generosity and committed involvement of the hundred-plus Islanders who’ve seen the importance of this matter and have put money into the cause of an environmentally sensible Southtown, with continued existence of the community greensward, the soccer/baseball field. But more money will be needed, and needed soon. We can hope RIRSD will find ways to raise it, or we can rally to the organization’s support with contributions.

Montauk Credit Union is receiving funds for RIRSD – and if you’re not already a member of the Credit Union, dropping off your contribution is an easy way to get to know the folks there, who also have a banking deal that’s hard to resist.

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Letters

To the Editor:

How sweet it would be if we could piggyback onto these Island law suits one which would relieve us of the burden of being the step-children of New York State.

Barbara Potts

To the Editor:

Gristede’s is doing it to us again (or did it never stop?). Surprise, surprise. After recently buying there a pricey one-pound bag of coffee beans only to read later the magic words on the bottom, “Use by 07/01/99,” the Manager denied knowledge, stating in all his years with the company, he had never seen anything out of date. Sure. And when products at Gristede’s/ Sloan’s in the City hit the over-the-hill dates, to where do you suppose they’re trucked? Same applies to fruits and vegetables at the eleventh hour before turning bad. I have contacted the Board of Health concerning this entire unhealthy practice. So watch for no-good dates on what you buy and complain to the Health Department. Enough of these could reorient the thinking of Gristede’s brass.

Name Withheld

To the Editor:

At last, after 20 years, I’ve found a flaw in *The WIRE*. Even Afghanistan honored International Women’s Day on March 8, but *The WIRE* could not even devote a single line to honor it. I suppose we’re too small or unimportant a group to be remembered.

Frances Salten

To the Editor:

Sure, we’d all love to be able to use our Metrocards to take the Tram.

But if the MTA takes over operation of the Tram, it will not only lack experience. The question is, *How low in its priorities will the Tram rank?* I’m afraid things could get even worse than they were under Jerome Blue’s administration.

Consider the way the MTA maintains the *escalators* in the Roosevelt Island subway station. Chilling thought, isn’t it?

Name Withheld

To Joe Lynch, Commissioner, and Steven Hicks, Deputy Commissioner, DHCR:

As if there was not enough to work on over at Roosevelt Island. Imagine my surprise (and the surprise of most of my neighbors, Island visitors and employees of Island businesses, etc.) when we arrived home last night to see two new Coca-Cola vending machines at the Island tram station.

Let’s see now. With no visible personnel presence at the station except when the Tram is coming into or moving out of the station, and those two closed-circuit TV cameras not always being watched, and in the absence of a console operator (Al Weinstein must be turning in his grave), someone decided with all the other things that needed to be done around here, that we needed some vending machines.

Really, gentlemen, whose priority is this? Right now, RIOC can’t even get the New York City Department of Transportation or any other agency to fix the light fixture by the Tram bus stop that was knocked down several weeks ago by a vehicle that no doubt skidded on the ice and snow that was not effectively removed by either the City or RIOC. No one has been able to get the City or RIOC to get the street lights between the Tram

See **Letters**, page 7

To the Editor:

Last week, RIRA President and RIOC board member Patrick Stewart gave a set of documents to David Bauer that provides details of the preliminary agreements between RIOC and Hudson/Related – the designated builders of the planned Southtown project. Mr. Bauer, as Convenor of the Maple Tree group (a subcommittee of RIRA which meets weekly to discuss ways to realize self government on Roosevelt Island) distributed copies of these documents at the last meeting.

As members of RIRSD – Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development – we read these documents with great interest. They begin to answer some of the questions on ground rents, size, affordability, and phasing timetables that have been repeatedly asked at public meetings since the plan was approved by RIOC, last September. Robert Ryan and the developers have always claimed that specifics were “still in negotiation” although these documents are all dated prior to last fall (many were produced in 1998).

The details confirm our worst suspicions – this is a giveaway of 19 acres of extraordinarily valuable land, that will actually *cost the Island* several million dollars before the project ever begins to add to our coffers.

In a nutshell, the units in the initial buildings are not particularly affordable, nor are they at all family-oriented. It seems quite possible that the builders can wreck our open spaces with their first two buildings, *and then walk away*, if the market takes a downturn. Then we are stuck with two stranded buildings, a razed parcel of land where the Nurses Residence used to be, and the same fallow land we now see across from the Tram.

Essentially, the developers intend to build Southtown in phases. When and if completed, there will be nine buildings and 2,000 units. The first phase, scheduled to commence this summer, will decimate the soccer/ baseball field and replace it with two buildings. The larger building will occupy virtually the entire length of our current soccer field, with its back wall facing the rest of the residences on Main Street. The second building will occupy the baseball field (somewhere between the pitcher’s mound and right field). These two buildings combined will contain 400 units: 154 studios, 209 one-bedrooms and 37 two-bedrooms. The rental prices will range from \$1,317 for a studio to \$1,900 for a two-bedroom. The apartments are also quite small – one-bedroom is 670 sq. feet. Ground rents will be a paltry \$155,000 for the first year, through \$188,000 for the tenth year.

Phase 2 would contain another 400 units. We found no information at all on the additional phases, location of buildings or time frames. We saw no provisions that commit the developer to build additional phases, nor did we see anything which commits the builder to provide anything in the way of public amenities (gardens, landscaping outside of the building areas, etc.). We hope that RIOC has bound the developer to such requirements in other contracts, but given the appalling concessions they’ve already made, we are not confident.

To get a baseline on what sort of income is feasible, we can compare this boondoggle to the development of Manhattan Park about ten years ago. This project, flawed as it may have been, has paid about \$2.5 million in ground rents annually. In addition, the developers contributed \$5 million to a public purpose fund that has, among other things, enabled us to improve and expand the tot-lot (soon to be destroyed by the Southtown buildings), to build a lovely cultural center, and to help support numerous public service organizations.

Incredibly, in this much stronger real estate market, not only has RIOC failed to negotiate such public “givebacks” from Southtown builders, but has also agreed to pay \$4.56 million in infrastructure costs. RIOC plans to use funds designated for Octagon Park completion to partially pay for its largesse.

To recap, whereas the Manhattan Park project has provided about \$25 million in ground rents over the last ten years, plus another \$5 million in public purpose funds, the Southtown project, with only Phase I completed, will *total less than \$2 million* in the next ten years. When you subtract the \$4.5 million that RIOC is paying for infrastructure, *it will take over twenty years to break even!* Even if the seven additional apartment houses are ever built, we can estimate that they will bring less than \$8 million dollars over the ten year period (or a pathetic \$3 million after the RIOC payments). We are astounded that a project with twice the units and more than double the acreage of Manhattan Park, that sits on a more convenient location, and is constructed during a peak real estate market, can provide the Island with *less than one-quarter* of the income. For this opportunity we lose our tot lot, soccer field, baseball field, Octagon Park completion and the scenic views of our open spaces.

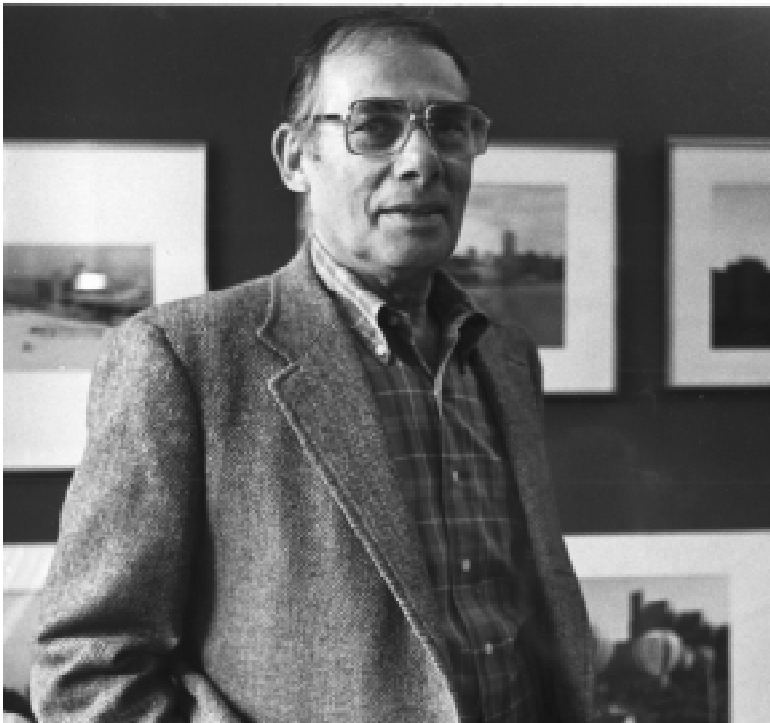
This plan is a disgrace and must be revised. We are quite aware that this Island needs further development. It needs affordable housing for singles *and* families. We need to be self-sufficient if self-government has a chance of succeeding. However, this plan reminds us a little of Esau, who sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of porridge because he was hungry. Our open spaces should be a birthright for all residents to enjoy. Are we so hungry that we need to give it up for such thin porridge?

We urge you to support RIRSD in its legal battle to provide the Island with responsible development that we can all be proud of. Our attorneys have produced some excellent legal arguments, but litigation is expensive. Contributions are needed and can be made at the Montauk Credit Union (to RIRSD) or left at the Rivercross doorstation.

RIRSD Members

Lee Edelman, Linda Heimer, Nurit Marcus, Steve Marcus, Joyce Mincheff, Margie Smith

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 left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*, or by e-mail to nyc10044@rcn.com** (any wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files with macros). Alternatives: Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to (212) 755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. We cannot take telephone dictation of letters. **All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.**



Mort Pavane

Photographed the Island

Mort Pavane died Tuesday, March 14, at age 78. With his wife Dorothy, he was a resident of Roosevelt Island from its residential beginnings.

He was a graduate of Stuyvesant High School (1935) and of the City College of New York (1942) and served in the U.S. Air Corps from late 1942 to July of 1946, as a radio and radar operator, then as an aerial gunner, and finally as a radar officer. He left the service as a First Lieutenant, then served as a civilian with the Air Force for a total of 26 years.

Before his retirement, he was Director of the Research Foundation of CCNY. Before his wife's death, they traveled extensively throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Israel. Pavane spoke Yiddish, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Mort Pavane was known on Roosevelt Island as a dedicated photographer of the Island's old structures, preserving award-winning images of many of them before their destruction. Many were published in *The WIRE* and displayed at Chase Bank and by the Roosevelt Island Photographic Society.

He captured the few – perhaps the only – photos of the Octagon as its dome burned in 1982. He made pictures from his Westview window as firefighters fought a losing battle to save the structure.

He is survived by his children, Tina Pavane, Roger Pavane, step-daughter Lissa Gershman, and his sister, Anita Lobel.



COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

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

Mon., Apr. 10, 8:00 p.m., Roosevelt Island Historical Society Lecture Series on the Island's Past, *The Women's Workhouse*, Island House Community Room. Free to members, \$5 seniors/students, \$10 to adults. Information, **688-4836**.

Thur., Apr. 13, 7:00 p.m., RIOC Board of Directors Meeting Evening Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Apr. 15, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Apr. 7; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Apr. 10; bag materials due Mar. 30. **Future issues:** Apr. 29; May 13, 27; June 10; July 1 (for July 4); Aug. 26; Sept. 9, 23; 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**.

Sun., Apr. 16, 3:00 p.m., World Voices Club, Springtime Stories, Manhattan Theater Club. For information on membership or admission charge, call 730-2030.

Fri., Apr. 21, 12 noon, River Music presents the **Bordeaux String Quartet**, playing Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ*, as part of Good Friday observance. Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Free.

Mon., Apr. 24, 8:00 p.m., Historical Society Lecture Series on Island History, *Blackwell House Update and Archives Night*, Island House Community Room. A group search through 40 volumes of Island history; update on efforts to restore Blackwell House. Free to members, \$5 seniors/students, \$10 to adults. Information, **688-4836**.

Sat., May 20, Historical Society Bus Tour to Fort Totten, Bayside, Queens; lunch in the Officer's Club. Information, **688-4836**.

Thur., July 20, Jazzmobile, Etta James with the Houston Person Quintet.

At the Senior Center

Monday

9:15-10:00, **Stay Well** (Exercise)
9:30, **Basic Computer class**
10:00-12:00, **English as 2nd Language** resumes 4/17
11:00-12:30, **Metrocard Bus** 4/10, 4/24
12:45 **Arts & Crafts**
6:30-7:30, **Line Dancing**

Tuesday

10:00, **Jazzercise**
12:30-2:30, **Visiting Nurse Service** 4/11, 4/25
1:30, **Games** (RISA)
7:00, **Korean English**

Wednesday

9:15, **Stay Well** (Stretch)
10-12, **English as 2nd Language**

Thursday

10:00-11:00, **T'ai Chi** resumes 4/13
12:30, **Movie**

Friday

9:15, **Stay Well** resumes 4/21
10:00-11:00, **English as 2nd Language**
10:30-11:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:30, **Movie**

Saturday

7:30 p.m., **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Call in advance for details: 980-1888

Friday, 4/14, 12:15, **Volunteer Recognition and Birthday Party**

Thur., Apr 20, 1:00, **Free trip to Japan Music Festival**, Carnegie Hall

Wed., Apr. 26, **Atlantic City trip** (RISA)

Thur., Apr. 27, **Hearing Screening & Lecture**

Eastwood Man Missing

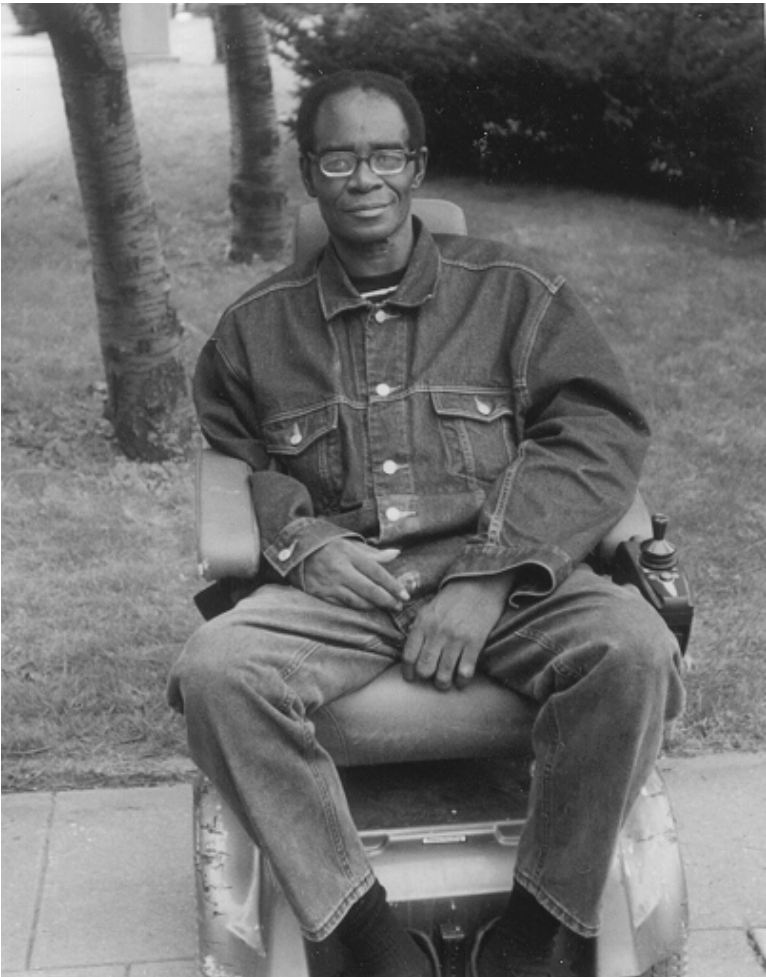
Robert Carter is missing.

The 53-year-old man left his Eastwood residence early in the morning of Friday, March 24. His roommate, Vicki Mohr, reports that he left his quarters in a condition suggesting he expected to be out only briefly. He is a three-year resident of the Island.

Carter is partially paralyzed on one side of his body, and left home in his grey motorized wheelchair, wearing a jeans jacket and jeans pants. He has a long surgical scar on the top of his head. Mohr further describes Carter as about six feet tall, very skinny, possibly wearing glasses with a black rim, missing two fingertips on his right hand. She says he is normally bent backward or to the side in his chair, has dark hair but graying or white facial hair.

Carter has cancer, but left home without his medications.

Police have been notified. Readers with information are asked to contact Detective Lockwood at 718-626-9334, or Vicki Mohr at 888-1775.



Katherine Teets Grimm, M.D.

Board Certified Pediatrician and Allergist
501 Main Street • Roosevelt Island • 753-5505

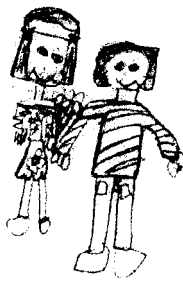
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Julie's Sports Cafe

once again is featuring

ELVIS

on Saturday, April 1 – Showtime: 8:00 PM

This is a fund-raising event. Proceeds to benefit
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We appreciate your continued patronage & support.
Thank you in advance.

Julie Palermo, Proprietor

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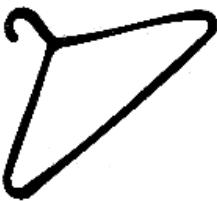


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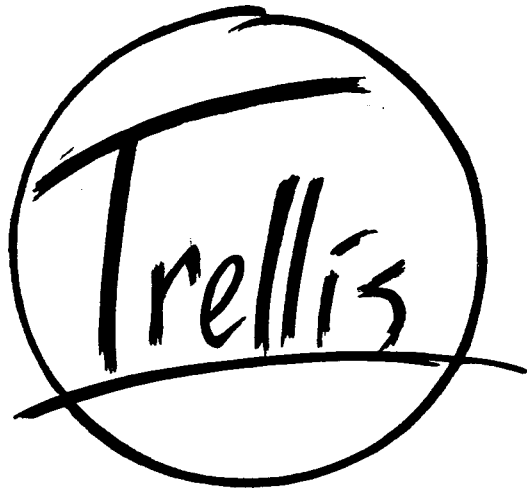
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Margery Rubin
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Generations from page 1

because her mother did not want her to study here. When she came back, she worked for a couple of years while living in her mother’s apartment in Island House, and is still here. She is currently studying Political Science at Hunter College. “I am anxious to get out and would prefer not to



Justin Towey as a sprite, and today with son Desmond

live here, but it is comfortable and convenient,” she says, laughing shyly. “I would stay on if I got a job in New York City and take advantage of the low rent.”

Another person who is happy to be back is Damon La Scot. He has been living in Westview since he was 15 years old, having left for a few years to go to Berkelee College of Music in Boston. “I love the international flavor on the Island. It is like being in Europe. It is a special place.” Damon, the lead guitarist with the band Meat Loaf, reminisces, “It used to be very secluded, very quiet, wild and untouched. My memories of the place include visions of all the kids playing the guitar. We had little bands and used to have jam sessions at Motorgate. Being a musician was cool and everyone in the community supported it. We used to camp near the Lighthouse and hang out together. I guess the increased population has taken some of the special things away. This place used to be pristine.”

Olya agrees, saying, “There are fewer pockets of nature now and it is dirtier. There is garbage on the streets, the upkeep of the playground is poor and I once found glass on the promenade. When we moved here, this place was like something from a futuristic movie. The town was structured perfectly, everything was clean and new, there were wild parts on the Island including a forest where Manhattan Park is now. It was great for teenagers because we used to have get-togethers at the Octagon Park and the Lighthouse. We could go to the tip of the Island, where there was a geyser. There was an old church near the tennis courts and a leper’s house.”

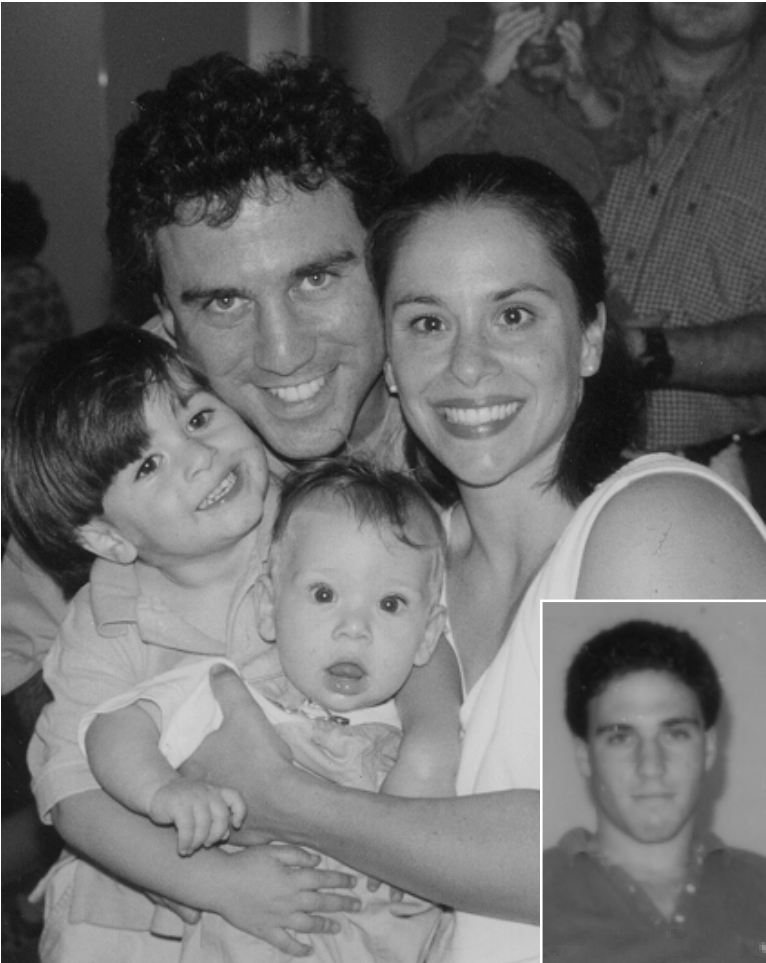
Thinking of the fun things they did as kids, Olya said that about 50 kids used to hang out together. “We used to go roller-skating, skateboarding and walking on the promenade.” Chris Enock added, “We kids spent a lot of time together, running with the pack, exploring underground tunnels, the Octagon building and the other buildings...we had

a teenager’s clubhouse, a wooden structure that lasted about six months...it was fun. We also had fights with the kids who came over from Long Island City. Some of them were these gangster types who would walk over and beat us Island kids.” Damon remembered that one time a big fight had been scheduled but someone informed the police and the entire plan fizzled out.

Damon’s special memory is of the time when it snowed and the kids played ice hockey on a basketball court in Blackwell Park. “Another cool thing was this guy on the red bridge. He would ask which apartment you were going to and give you a hand-written pass that you would have to display on your car. It had the details of whom you were visiting and for how long,” he said. “It made the Island a special place to live and you had to have a purpose if you came over the bridge.”

Phoebe Flynn remembers the time when Sylvester Stallone visited the Island, during the filming of a late seventies’ film, *Nighthawks*. “We were told to leave our autograph books for him to sign, but he never did,” she says. “He did talk to us, though, something about not doing drugs.” Chris remembers that all the kids stood near the Tram, watching the sequence being filmed.

Nikki Leopold, who lived on the Island from 1976 onward, remembers the annual carnivals and the plays produced by the Main Street Theatre. “I don’t think it was called that then but I remember acting in the plays. Everyone would get involved. It was so easy to meet people. We had a great feeling of security. It is a lot more crowded now but even so we know a lot of people.” Nikki lives here with her husband and three daughters, having moved from Brook-



Chris Enock today with wife Gina and sons Alexander and Andrew, and in the late '70s (inset)

pulled her kid out of the public school on the Island because she said her kid had begun talking like a thug.” Phoebe says that though she might consider raising a family here, she is unhappy about the way kids behave on the streets. “I think young people are being allowed to get away with a lot more these days. We used to do the exact same things as them, hang out and all, but we did not swear at the top of our voices. These kids seem to ignore older people and mothers with strollers. They never move out. We were never allowed to sit on the steps leading to buildings, we had to go

down to the river,” she says. Justine, who has lived in different buildings on the Island and is currently in Eastwood, pointed out what she thinks is a major problem and could be another “push factor” for many to leave. “The atmosphere has changed. Everyone is separate now, more segregated. Main Street is like a border, a dividing line. People are not as friendly as before and are sticking with their own kind. I think it has become a little colder. People don’t connect any more. This place used to be middle class but is now leaning towards lower class. We should have more programs for people of different ethnic groups getting together to solve this problem.” She admits that, despite this, the Island is “community-oriented.”

Most of the others agree that even though there are problems on the Island, this is a wonderful place to live. “As kids we didn’t appreciate the things on the Island that our parents did,” said Chris. “We didn’t really care about the trees and the water, but now we do – and that is why we are here.”

Know others? For a future article like this one, contact *The WIRE* if you know other multi-generation Island families: **826-9055**

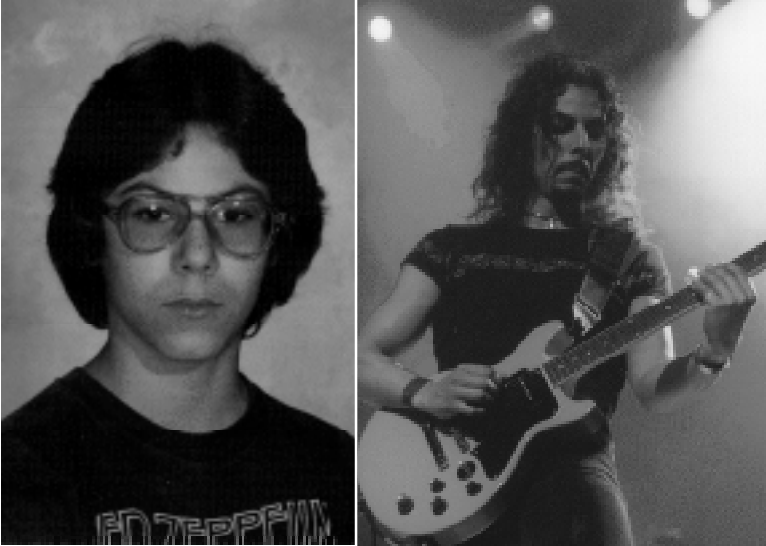


Olya Turcihin Stern, her father, Ilusha Turcihin, daughter Ayla (holding “Marie”), daughter Leyla, mother Jale, and husband Al Stern

lyn after spending some time waiting to get into Westview. “I think this was a great place to grow up and I want the same for my daughters.”

Nikki seems to have solved the only problem that some of the people said might be a “push factor” for them to leave the Island – the education issue. She sends her daughters to the Geneva School of Manhattan, where they get what she describes as “a classical Christian education... I know people who want to leave the Island so their kids can go to a good school but we are happy with the one they go to. I think the City is a very special place for them to grow up in. It is a unique experience,” said Nikki. Olya is also concerned about the school her daughters would go to. “It is a tough decision to make. I want to stay here but want to be able to feel secure and give the kids a good education.”

Damon was very emphatic when he said that he would not raise his children here. “There are loitering teenagers all over the place and it would be too intimidating for them. We were irreverent in our ways but we never hung out in the streets. People don’t seem to mind their children anymore. I met a lady who



Damon La Scot in 1978, and on-stage with Meat Loaf today



Phoebe Flynn in 1974, and today

RIRA

from page 1

day, that there be established precedent that you cannot build anything on Southpoint without changing the GDP and the Ground Lease...

“The underlying, fundamental issue, on GDP and Lease compliance, I think, is very important. And I believe that if RIRA has a separate voice in that courtroom, we are likely to get that issue dealt with in this case. And I think it’s important to do so.”

The existing actions are being brought under “Article 78,” a provision of State law that permits a challenge of governmental action that is considered arbitrary or capricious, or that exceeds the authority of a unit of government.

In response to a request to discuss the down side of the legal possibilities, Glen told the Councilors, “This case could be lost on the very ground that I know we will see [in] their [RIOC’s] papers, which is, ‘This is the Southtown that was originally contemplated. Just don’t talk to me about whether Blackwell Park has to be six acres or three acres. That’s just not the game here.’ I believe that we have, and by this ‘we’ I mean everybody – the present petitioners and RIRA – I think we have a strong case that this is not a minor modification, [and that] you can’t get away with this on some kind of ‘you-don’t-have-to-cut-square-corners’ analysis.”

He continued, “The other side doesn’t agree with me. They don’t agree with me to the extent that they have refused to talk with RIRA about any change in what they put out there. I don’t know if we’ll win this case. I mean, I don’t know if anybody will win this case, because I don’t know how they’re going to go. I can pretty much tell you that if it’s lost, it’s going to be lost on that theory, that ‘minor modification’ theory.” The “minor modification” theory relies on a precedent suggesting that government doesn’t always have to “cut square corners,” as Glen put it, in following its own regulations.

Glen expects to petition for intervenor status with Judge Stanley Parness in arguments that could be heard as early as April 7.

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Letters

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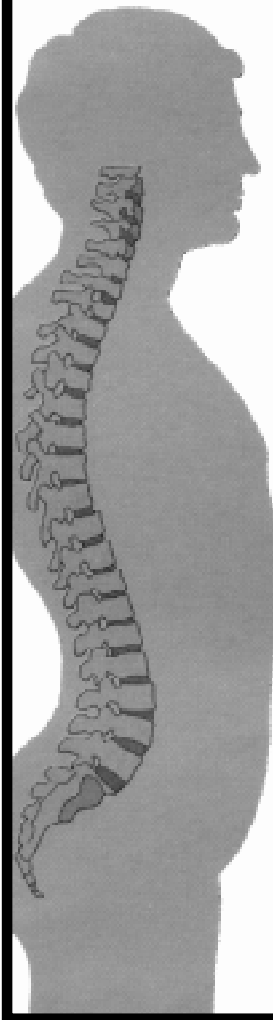
and Eastwood and Rivercross repaired so we don’t have to walk home in the dark. Recently, during and after the snow and ice storms, RIOC could not seem to mobilize its troops early enough to sand and salt the sidewalks from Eastwood/Rivercross to the subway and tram stations, resulting in several residents sustaining injuries on the ice. Even during the previous administrations which were not always popular, we could count on clear, safe sidewalks. And canceling RIOC meetings because there is “no new business pending” doesn’t get us any closer to building Southtown. There must be some existing resources to expend on these things.

I certainly do not expect a written response or a telephone call. I do expect some action by the appropriate people to remove the vending machines, get the lights repaired and operating, and if there is another snow storm, get those walkways cleared and safe in the very early morning when most of us go to work or school (not after 8:00 a.m.).

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Nina Lublin

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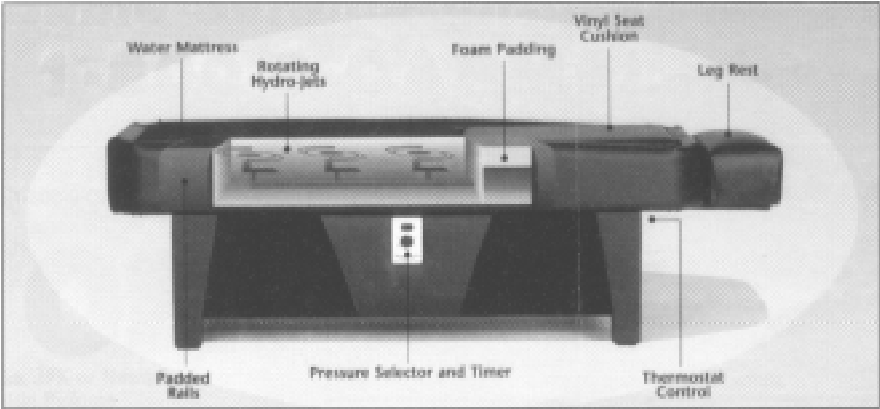


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