

Next issue:
May 27

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
This rig drilled to bedrock last week on the soccer/baseball field just north of the Nurses Residence in preparation for Southtown construction. The 13 holes found solid rock at depths ranging from one foot to as deep as 52 feet, and, according to the men operating the equipment, discovered an area with "lots of fill," possibly where native rock was quarried in the 19th Century to build a number of Island buildings, only a few of which remain today. The workers also drilled for a core sample of the bedrock for analysis.

RIOC Staffer Charged in Credit Card Fraud

Michelle Goodwine was charged with credit card fraud last week. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) staffer was arrested by federal authorities after a joint investigation that involved the State Inspector General, the United States Attorney, and, according to one source, postal authorities. Goodwine was arrested at the RIOC offices early last week and taken away in handcuffs. She is charged with acquiring credit cards using the social security number and birthdate of another Michelle Goodwine, who lives in Robinson, Illinois, then using those cards to purchase merchandise and services valued over \$1,000. Goodwine allegedly ran up charges of \$1,060 with Omnipoint for use of two cellular phones. A preliminary hearing on the charges is scheduled for June 2, 10:00 a.m., in U.S. Magistrate Court. While the charges are limited, Goodwine's highly public arrest has led to speculation that there is more to the case, or that she may be given an opportunity to reduce her liability by providing evidence against others. Goodwine was brought to RIOC by Dr. Jerome Blue. He, like Goodwine, had worked at the State Housing Finance Agency. Blue served as President of RIOC for three years until last summer, when the Governor named him head of the State Human Rights Commission. Blue is widely believed to be a protégé of former U.S. Senator Al D'Amato. After Blue left RIOC, Goodwine continued there under its new President, Robert H. Ryan. Ryan issued a brief statement to *The WIRE*. "Last Fall, certain information came to my attention. That information was passed to the New York State Inspector General's office. An investigation then took place. A few weeks ago, the Inspector General's office contacted the U.S. Attorney's office, and on May 3, the U.S. Attorney took action." Ryan referred all further questions to federal authorities. According to sources, Goodwine's computer at RIOC was examined by authorities. In the federal complaint, she is alleged to have applied for additional credit lines; it is believed some of that activity may have been carried out on her RIOC computer while she was at work.

Southtown Challenges Being Heard Wednesday in NYS Supreme Court

A court session scheduled for Wednesday morning could be a major turning point for Roosevelt Island development. At 9:30 that morning, Justice Harold Tomkins of the New York State Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments on petitions filed by Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee (chaired by Attorney Robert Chira). The Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) also seeks to be heard by the Judge. The case could have a major impact on the nature of Southtown. In a broader view, it could set the framework for further Island development – Southpoint, the Octagon, the Eldercare project. The petitioners contend that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board mis-stepped and overstepped on September 22 when it gave the go-ahead to The Hudson Companies and the Related Companies and their plan for Southtown – the area between the Tram station and the fork where Main Street divides, just north of the soccer/baseball field. Their action is brought under Article 78 - a statute that allows a challenge to a State agency's actions. On the other side are RIOC and the developers, The Related Companies and The Hudson Companies. They claim RIOC's action was proper. Key questions are:

- Should RIOC have conducted a full environmental review, rather than relying on a finding that the review of an earlier plan, done in 1990, covers the new plan and contemporary conditions adequately?
- When the City's Board of Estimate turned down a RIOC request to reduce Blackwell Park from "approximately six acres" to something smaller, did that rejection mean RIOC would have to allocate about six acres for a Blackwell Park "separating Northtown and Southtown," as called for in the General Development Plan? Or could RIOC shrink the park anyway, on the grounds that Northtown buildings had been constructed too far south, thus covering some of the park?
- Does the General Development Plan (GDP) – part of the Lease between City and State – rule? Or can RIOC treat it as a somewhat flexible set of guidelines?

Diagrams illustrating some of the issues are reproduced on pages 6-7 of this issue of *The WIRE*. A recent history of the Southtown matter is available on Website NYC10044, at www.nyc10044.com. Judge Tomkins' courtroom is room 418, at 60 Centre Street.



Where the Buck Stops Justice Harold Tomkins of the State Supreme Court will preside when attorneys argue for and against RIOC plans for Southtown.

Mini-School Condos Pitched Again, Opposed Again, Before RIOC Board

Developer Diane Wilson brought her proposal to turn the Island's west shore mini-schools into luxury condominiums before the RIOC Board again Thursday morning. And residents – 16 of them – once again lined up to oppose her plan. Wilson's plan had not changed in the eight months since the RIOC Board's Capital Planning and Development Committee (CPDC) advised against accepting it eight months ago in a 6-1 vote. Wilson didn't stay to hear residents voice opposition (none spoke in favor), but it didn't matter – their arguments against it hadn't changed much, either. (Some history of the idea is available on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com/wire/1920/minicond.html and .../1924/minicond.html.) No vote was taken in Thursday's RIOC Board meeting, but it could come up again in a month. RIRA President Patrick Stewart, who serves on the RIOC Board and sides with residents opposing the current version of the plan, has vowed to see the matter tabled or defeated. The Wilson plan would create 16 luxury condos in the Rivercross, Island House, and Westview mini-schools, adding a second story to each. It's the second story that generates most resident opposition, because it would degrade the views from several apartments. But several Islanders spoke against the plan for fear it would eventually generate traffic on the promenade. Wilson told the RIOC Board the project would produce \$17 million in income for RIOC, and that her company would invest \$8.5 million in the development. She and her architect, with occasional interjections from her attorney, said the condos would bring disposable income, an additional pool of resources for Island organizations and businesses, and would improve See **MiniCondos**, page 3

Sherry Gregory: Leading with a Philosophy of Learning, Growing

by Anusha Shrivastava
A placard in her office reads, "Of course I can handle it – I'm a Woman," and you wonder if that is the underlying philosophy of her life. "Sort of," says Sherry J. Gregory, Principal of PS/IS 217. "I am not a feminist, I am an 'equalist.' I have never felt discriminated against, maybe because I am in education. In any case, my philosophy is that one has to spend every day learning and growing, finding answers to questions and how to go from point A to point B. This is exemplified in this school district for we are seen as instructional leaders of the school. We know that we never really know enough and there is always something we can discover. That is what we try to teach our students here in this school." Ms. Gregory took over as Principal of PS/IS 217 nearly two years ago after a stint as Director at the



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
PS/IS 217 Principal Sherry Gregory as she prepared to participate in Arbor Day ceremonies last week. More Arbor Day coverage on page 9 and on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.

Harbor School of International Studies in Brooklyn. She has been a teacher since 1971 and gained administrative experience at various stages of her career. She has trained teachers and administrators, developed curriculums and served as Assistant Principal in schools in Brooklyn. She laughs as she says, "I was born in Brooklyn frighteningly long ago." A product of public schools, she earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English literature and an M.S. in Secondary School Education. "I am not sure that I always thought of myself as a teacher, but I was always interested in language and communication and, when I became a student teacher, I realized that this was my vocation. I worked with struggling readers early in my career and became a reading specialist by developing strategies to unlock the secrets of language for them. For instance, I realized that hearing good language is one of the best ways for someone to appreciate and emulate it. Read-alouds were not part of conventional wisdom at the time." Breaking with convention is something that Ms. Gregory likes to do. No bells ring in her school. "They are distracting," says Ms. Gregory. "This way we can maintain a nice tone and not fragment the learning. I have stressed a balanced literacy time in the mornings when the focus is on reading, writing and socializing the intelligence, not having to sit in rows and have someone talk at you. I want the children to be actively involved. I want them to enjoy coming to school. If what is in class is exciting, the children will not get into trouble." The Principal admits that the school has been facing difficult times. "There has been a lack of See **Gregory**, page 8

Ask for Money. Ask the Governor. Ask Now.

There was no RIRA Common Council meeting Wednesday night, for lack of a quorum. The meeting had been moved to the second Wednesday (it’s usually the first), the sky had opened like a faucet, and by the time roll-call ended, not enough Councilors had arrived to carry out any business.

But that meant those who were there could engage in the kind of informal conversation that’s so often sacrificed when there’s real business to do, Robert’s Rules are being followed, and opposing views are contending for time, attention, and votes. So Residents Association President Patrick Stewart, Vice President Joan Christianson, Judy Berdy, Frank Farance, Deirdre Breslin, Ken Diebner and others, coming and going, had an hour or so to shoot the breeze about the state of the Island.

It’s a **sorry** state. As Patrick Stewart observed, it’s all about money. While wealthy Nassau County gets a spot in the State budget for a few million Sacagawea’s, Roosevelt Islanders’ money flows only the other way – to the State in taxes, but never back, at least not in recent years.

And we’re about to get some bad news about the seawall, they tell us – a great deal of work, in the millions, that cannot be funded from Island resources. But never mind the seawall... The evidence of outright decay is all around us – in Blackwell House and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, quite obviously, but also in sidewalks, roads, grounds, and in all the other items that undergird our quality of life.

Another of Patrick Stewart’s observations is also quite relevant, under the circumstances: There are now four residents on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). There are also four non-residents, and the Chair, Steven Hicks of DHCR.

So now, it’s time to assert this Island’s need for money. Stewart should put an emergency resolution before the RIOC Board. That resolution should direct RIOC President Robert H. Ryan to put an emergency request for an emergency appropriation before Governor George Pataki. Perhaps \$10 million for a starter, with the specifics of another \$5 million to \$20 million to come.

Let’s ask **now** for the funds this Island needs and fully deserves. And let’s follow through with whatever pressure it takes (a cavalcade of buses to Albany, anybody?) to make it happen.

Another Expanded WIRE

This 12-page issue of *The Main Street WIRE* is an example of what can happen when the newspaper’s finances are right. Even though we don’t have enough ads to support an eight-page issue this time, we’ve expanded to 12 in an effort to lend some clarity to the issues in the Southtown legal actions.

The funds for that come from Islanders and others who put their calling cards into last Fourth of July’s business card issue. That’s coming up again (see page 3), and we’re counting on **you**.



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Letters

To the Editor:
I read with interest Patrick Stewart’s letter in the last issue of *The WIRE* criticizing the position of Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) vis-a-vis the proposed Southtown plan. Patrick says that he likes his “facts up front.” I agree and would like to lay out some facts for everyone’s consideration.

To begin with, he is correct that the developers’ pro forma documents “clearly state the ground rental rates are a concession made by the State for ‘affordable’ housing.” So let’s look at just how affordable this housing is, and what kind of “concession” is being made.

Fact: The projected *starting* rents for the 400 units planned for phase I (which is the only part of the development the developers are firmly committed to) are:

- studios, \$1317
- one bedrooms, \$1413
- two bedrooms, \$1900

The current average rents for Island House and Westview for the same apartments are:

- studios, \$732.50
- one bedrooms, \$993
- two bedrooms \$1294

This means the projected *starting* rents for these size units are respectively 80%, 42% and 47% higher than current rents in Island House and Westview. Patrick feels this to be “pretty much the same.”

Fact: Unlike Island House, Westview and Eastwood, there is no provision for approval of rent increases by DHCR or any other State agency or commitment by the developers to maintain these rents at these starting levels. These projections are *starting* rents only. The developers will be free to raise the rents as they wish, i.e. as the market bears. In fact, the document confirms this by specifying how RIOC will share in future increases. They will share “by the same percentage that the project’s actual residential rental income increases.” So, if they choose to raise the rents another 20% (not such a stretch since that is roughly the level of Manhattan Park, which has been fully occupied since 1994), then the developers can reap additional profits of \$1.32 million. This is in addition to their original projected yearly profit of almost a half million. And how much more money would go to RIOC to help fund current and additional community needs created by the increased population? It’s a meager \$31,000 – 20% of the ground rents paid by the developers to RIOC and a mere pittance of what Manhattan Park is paying. Of course, Patrick can argue that it is not a “fact” that the developers will raise the rents. Perhaps they will be kind-hearted souls and not raise the rents so as to promote and maintain “middle income families.”

Fact: The document in question states the “developer [is] to build out Phase I as residential rental units for *middle income families* [emphasis added] on Roosevelt Island.” The same document lays out a plan for Phase I for 154 studios, 209 one bedrooms, 37 two bedrooms and nothing larger. This means 91%+ are studios and one bedrooms. Apparently RIOC and the developers see these apartments as family units. This stretches my imagination past its capabilities. Obviously Patrick has a much better imagination than mine. Perhaps, one of the readers of this letter can come to the aid of my limited abilities and help explain how these

apartments are “units for middle income families.”

Fact: The developers are free to raise rental costs even more. There is no provision or statement by the developers that utility costs, particularly electric, will be included in the rents. They may very well be passed on to the renters, and could be significant. I should know. When I first moved to the Island, I lived in Manhattan Park, and there were occasions, not infrequently, when our electric bills were above

\$300 per month. If they are allowed to do this, as Manhattan Park is, and the market will bear it, as it does, what do you think they will do?

I simply lay out the facts: rents set at the discretion of the developer, virtually no housing for families, token payments for substantially-increased community needs. A good deal for the community or massive boondoggle? You be the judge.

Lee Edelman, Member
RIRSD Steering Committee

Center Field
Blackwell Park baseball diamond
9:13 a.m., Thursday, May 4, 2000



Photoeditorial by Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

To The Editor:
We don’t want to argue; we never did. But, we must respond to the “facts” in Patrick Stewart’s letter in the last *WIRE* because the Southtown project is just too important to the Island. People need to know the truth.

He contends that “roughly half of Southtown is committed to be middle income housing, as the General Development Plan (GDP) requires it to be.” This directly contradicts the position of the Residents Association, of which he is President. One of the two reasons RIRA is intervening (joining) in the lawsuit filed by Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) is to challenge this project because “the plan does not require the ratio of market-rate housing to affordable housing set out in Paragraph 1, Section 3 of the GDP.”

Mr. Stewart’s assertion that Southtown “ground rent rates are in fact about twice what middle income buildings pay” completely ignores a significant element – Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT payments – paid to the State). We can simply compare Phase I of Southtown with Island House; both with 400 units. Although Southtown developers will receive over 40% more rent, they pay a paltry **\$195,000** per year in ground rents and PILOT fees combined vs. approximately **\$550,000** per year assessed to Island House. And let’s

not forget that RIOC will fund this project with \$4.5 million dollars in infrastructure costs just to get it started.

Mr. Stewart has said many times that Roosevelt Island is virtually bankrupt. If he truly believes that, how can he justify this giveaway to the developers of priceless resources for so little in return? We believe it is monumentally irresponsible and it is a fundamental basis of our objection.

Mr. Stewart also says he likes his facts up front. The facts seem clear to RIRA, RIRSD and both sets of highly accomplished attorneys who represent our individual and combined interests. The only one this appears to be unclear to is Mr. Stewart, and we think it odd that he would take a position so diametrically opposed to RIRA on such an important topic.

One last point: Some facts have been pretty hard to come by. RIOC and its Board (of which Mr. Stewart is a member) had many of the financial specifics in **1998**, yet they repeatedly told the public in **1999** that “no specifics were available.” Thanks to documents obtained through our legal efforts, we can publicize this information as it does become available. This letter addresses only a few of the many reasons why *the current Southtown plan is a bad deal for Roosevelt Island and its residents* – **that’s** a fact, Pat!

RIRSD Steering Committee

Your business card

in

The Main Street **WIRE**

Fourth of July 2000

It's your opportunity to support your community newspaper with a small contribution and to record your presence at this time and place in Roosevelt Island history.

The July 4 issue is scheduled to be distributed to the thousands attending the Fourth of July Fireworks at Southpoint, as well as the normal distribution to every residential door on the Island.

Send your card with a \$35 check, payable to *The WIRE*, to: *The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044

Don't wait for the deadline (June 17)... Get it done now while it's on your mind.

No card? We can create a simple message card for you.

COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone/fax 317-8523

Today (Sat., May 13), 10:00 a.m., Roosevelt Island Tree Board **Tree Walk** with State Forester Michael Curley, Blackwell House.

Today, 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., **Roosevelt Island Youth Program** musical, *Once on this Island*, at the Beacon Program, 645 Main Street. Free. For information or tickets, call **935-3645**.

May 18-29, Main Street Teen Theatre, *Scenes From American Life*. For information: **371-4449**.

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

Mon., May 22, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters**. Information: **687-4010**.

Sat., May 27, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., May 19; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., May 22; bag materials due May 24. **Future issues:** 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**.

June 9-11, Main Street Theatre dance project, *Surfer Dudes Excellent Dance Adventure*. For information: 371-4449.

Sat., June 10, all day, **Roosevelt Island Day**, clean-up, fix-up, and have a good time. Assembly 9-10 a.m. in Good Shepherd Plaza. Volunteers needed – **838-4747** or **935-3645**.

Mon., June 12, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters**. Information: **687-4010**.

June 16-19, Main Street Teen Theatre, *The Fantasticks*.

Thur., July 20, 7:00 p.m., **Jazzmobile**, Etta James with the Houston Person Quintet.

ComingUp Volunteer Opportunity

The WIRE is seeking a new volunteer to compile events for *ComingUp*. (Claire Friedland has decided to retire sometime soon.) The job requires a computer, fax receiving capability, and an answering machine. E-mail capability helpful. For more information, call *The WIRE* at 826-9055.

Minicondos from page 1

security on a newly reilluminated promenade.

But residents were having none of it. They paraded to the microphone, one after another, to urge the RIOC Board to reject the project once and for all. Most were applauded at least once as they called for a “no” vote.

• Suzanne Wolfe: “In 1977 Roosevelt Island had very little history. We came here in good faith. We came for the long haul. We stayed and created the stability to allow this community to be what it is today. My apartment is one that is designated as officially negatively impacted... I have yet to hear how this proposal actually benefits our community.”



Suzanne Wolfe

• Milt Marcus: “When I first came here, I was impressed with the design of the courtyard [of Rivercross] and the way in which the environment of the river was part of the whole complex. The schools were designed to be a privacy buffer for the courtyard. I asked, ‘Can anything else be built here?’ I was told, ‘Oh, no, it’s in the master plan. The way you see it is the way it must remain.’ ... [You must consider] the emotional impact [of saying] ‘you who live in the buildings don’t count. What counts is real estate and money.’”



Milt Marcus

• Arnold Webb, a member of the Rivercross Board: “The physical facilities lend themselves to something on the [educational] cutting edge – magnet schools... or charter schools. Southtown and other developments are going to bring families and kids. The United Nations, across the river, is looking for school space now.”

• Richard Donovan: “A report was done, a full environmental impact assessment. That report concluded there was no significant impact on the environment of Roosevelt Island. It involves over 90 possible impacts... Incredibly, the firm [doing the report] said there was no impact whatsoever on each of these 90... If you were a cynical person, you might conclude that the person filling this out did not do it in good faith... This is a bad idea. It was a bad idea a year ago. It is still a bad idea.”

• Toni Spottswood, who broke down while speaking from her wheelchair: “If you build these I won’t be able to see anything if I’m sitting down... It’s immoral that you’re considering these mini-school [condos].”



Toni Spottswood

• Larry Parnes, a member of the Capital Planning and Development Committee: “It has been eight months. There’s not a single change. I’m disappointed and upset about that. I’ve worked in the City Planning Agency for 30 years, and in that time even Donald Trump made significant adjustments. I think Ms.

Wilson does herself a disservice by coming back without any changes after eight months, and I urge you to vote against it.”

• Harriet Katz: “It is imperative that we stick with the mission of a

planned community, and come up with proposals that benefit not just a single person, but contribute to the development of the community over many years to come.”

• Eliza Kimball: “I have heard arguments, from the administrators of this Island, that in Manhattan, your view can be blocked by new construction. But we take an extra 20 to 30 minutes to get here, and we have a sense of community... [And] I object to having to come to an 11:00 a.m. meeting to protect my quality of life. We shouldn’t be put under this strain... There are all kinds of things that can be done [with the mini-schools] – maybe even ministorage.”

• Ethel Romm: “This is just all wrong for so many reasons... We have 2,000 apartments coming. That’s a lot of children. It seems obvious we could have a lab or a charter school. I [even] like the idea of storage.”

• Joan Christianson, RIRA First Vice President: “Our school is approaching a crowded condition now. RIOC should look into reusing these buildings as they were originally intended. Luxury condos with an additional floor are not appropriate for this community.”



Marc Diamond

• Marc Diamond, an architect and a CPDC member, listed a series of “design deficiencies:” A long walk from Main Street, leading to a great incentive to drive cars onto the promenade; remote AVAC rooms requiring a long outdoor walk; ground floor windows on the promenade. “It would be embarrassing for RIOC to approve a project that couldn’t then get financing... I ask you to look beyond the short-term financial problems [of RIOC]. I ask you to think ahead to 2010 and 2020...”

• Deirdre Breslin, a member of the RIRA Common Council: “I was told this morning that there was a lot of back-and-forth between the developer and the community. I was astounded. I was at one meeting, and nobody stayed today to hear what we have to say. That tells you more than anything. When I came, this Island was for us working-class stiffs. Is RIOC now telling us that views are for the rich and famous, not for you working-class stiffs?”

• Byron Gaspard, a member of CPDC and the RIRA Common Council: “CPDC voted against this project because we saw that this two-story monstrosity is wrong. It didn’t come easy... We met for months with Diane Wilson; she gave us presentation after presentation. We weren’t arbitrary. We came up with a recommendation against this development because we feel that it is wrong for this community.”



Ed Igel

• Ed Igel: “You’ve picked the wrong architect and the wrong developer. That they came here today without one line of sight, mockup, model, is an insult to this Board and this community. How dare they come with such a lack of preparation? If this is the type of business organization that we are going to entrust our future to, then we had better choose somebody substantially better.”

Summarized comments of additional residents at Thursday's meeting, with photos, appear on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.

Public Safety Blotter

April 16-30, 2000

4/16/00, Missing Property, 625 Main St. Male phoned PSD, said he’d been moved to Roosevelt Island on 4/14 by a moving company, he stated his property had been placed on sidewalk while he took some items up to apartment, and while movers parked truck. Movers returned and assisted him in moving rest of his property. On 4/16 while unpacking he noticed several bags missing that contained personal property and he did not know the value of the property (among which was a camera also of unknown value.) NYPD responded, prepared report. Victim stated he would contact moving company on 4/17 for insurance purposes.

4/20/00, Investigation, 546 Main St. RIHM adm. employee in-house, reported unknown persons had ripped NYPD yellow tape from apartment with DOA, but there was no sign of tampering with door. DOA occurred in apartment on 3/20/00.

4/21/00, Larceny/Criminal Mischief/Trespassing, 580 Main St., Arrest. RIHM super in-house, stated hidden camera on 4 floor was missing from ceiling and the wire had been cut. Officer responded to scene. There was no one at location. Super could not supply model, make nor camera’s value at time (subsequently camera’s value was put at US\$800.) NYPD responded, could not prepare report, because there was information lacking. On 4/24, PSD Director, Deputy, NYPD responded to RIHM to view tape of camera taken from 580 fourth floor, which shows perp walking towards camera as he and another unknown person are removing camera from ceiling. NY P.O. at scene. Upon investigation, perp. was arrested by PSD, charged with larceny, two counts of criminal mischief and criminal trespassing.

4/22/00, Criminal Mischief, 545 Main St. Resident phoned PSD, said he’d heard glass shattering, officer responded, saw S E window shattered but in place, searched area saw no further damage. RIHM personnel taped up window. PSD conducted hourly checks of area.

4/22/00, Harassment, 695 Main St. Resident in-house stated he was on line at Post Office engaged in a private conversation when female Manhattan Park employee yelled disparaging remark about “gays.” When victim confronted female she stated she was entitled to an opinion. NYPD was refused. Sgt. referred victim to Manhattan Park management.

4/22/00, Investigation, 900 Main St. Sgt. found apparently abandoned car with damaged areas on car, i.e., windshield, fenders, etc., but without license plates, registration, inspection stickers and driver’s side door unlocked, car’s interior did not appear to have been tampered with. Owner’s name was found, 114 Pct. contacted to ascertain whether or not it had been stolen. Subsequently Coler employee returned to car, said he was arranging for towing. He was issued summons for parking on sidewalk.

4/23/00, Verbal Dispute, 300 Main St., Officer responded to scene to report of disorderly passenger. Bus driver stated resident was being abusive and vice versa. Resident was refunded bus fare. There were no injuries.

4/24/00, Trespassing, 400 Main St. Arrests (5). Sergeants and officers responded to scene, surrounding building for report of eight youths on roof throwing rocks. They apprehended them, five were issued “C” summonses and released, three were issued Juvenile Reports and released to parents’ custody.

The WIRE publishes this information as received from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, and takes no responsibility for its accuracy or completeness.

4/25/00, Property Damage, 30 River Rd. Officer responded to scene for unknown object being thrown at car windshield, shattering same. Victim’s wife said she’d seen youths on upper balcony. Upon further investigation officers did not locate thrown object, spoke with youths and reporter, no one saw object thrown. NYPD was requested, which subsequently responded.

4/28/00, Criminal Mischief, 875 Main St. Officers responded to Octagon Park, FDNY on R.I. for report of fire. They searched the area, no fire but burned grass at scene.

4/28/00, Criminal Mischief, 400 Main St. Arrests (2). Sgt. observed two youths writing graffiti outside Roosevelt Island subway. They were arrested, brought to PSD, transported to NYPD 19 Pct. for processing.

4/28/00, Criminal Mischief, 595 Main St. Officer saw two underage youths fighting, they were brought to PSD’s Y.O. office, where they were both issued Juvenile Reports and released to the respective mothers.

4/28/00, Fire, 505 Main St. Officer observed car catch fire going southbound. Victim and passenger were not injured, fire extinguished before officer’s arrival.

4/30/00, Trespassing/Marijuana, 400 Main St. Arrest (2). RIHM service employee notified officer there were 3 persons on roof. Officers responded, found three youths on second floor of Old Nurses’ Quarters. They were brought to PSD, where two were arrested, searched and perp #1 was found to be in possession of a plastic bag of alleged marijuana, vouchered at 114 Pct. The underage youth was issued a Juvenile Report.

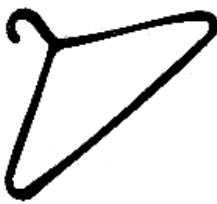
Performances Next Weekend

Main Street Teen Theatre Doing Scenes from American Life



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
Rehearsal slap: The Main Street Teen Theatre is preparing two separate casts in A.R. Gurney’s *Scenes from American Life* for performances Friday-Sunday, May 19-21 at 8:00 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 2:00 p.m. In this segment, Micheil Yohannes, playing a father, disciplines his son, played by David Kleinknecht, after an episode of foul language. Tickets: **371-4449**.

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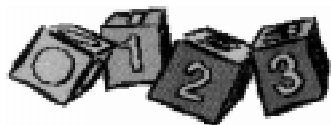
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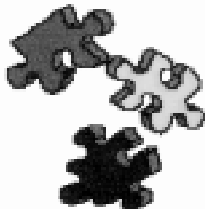
aetna 3/4
page

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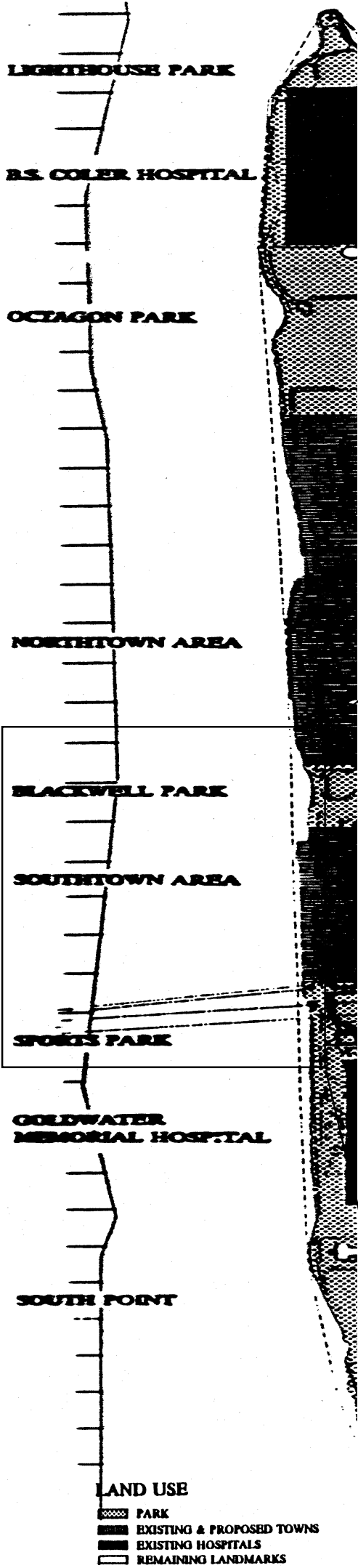
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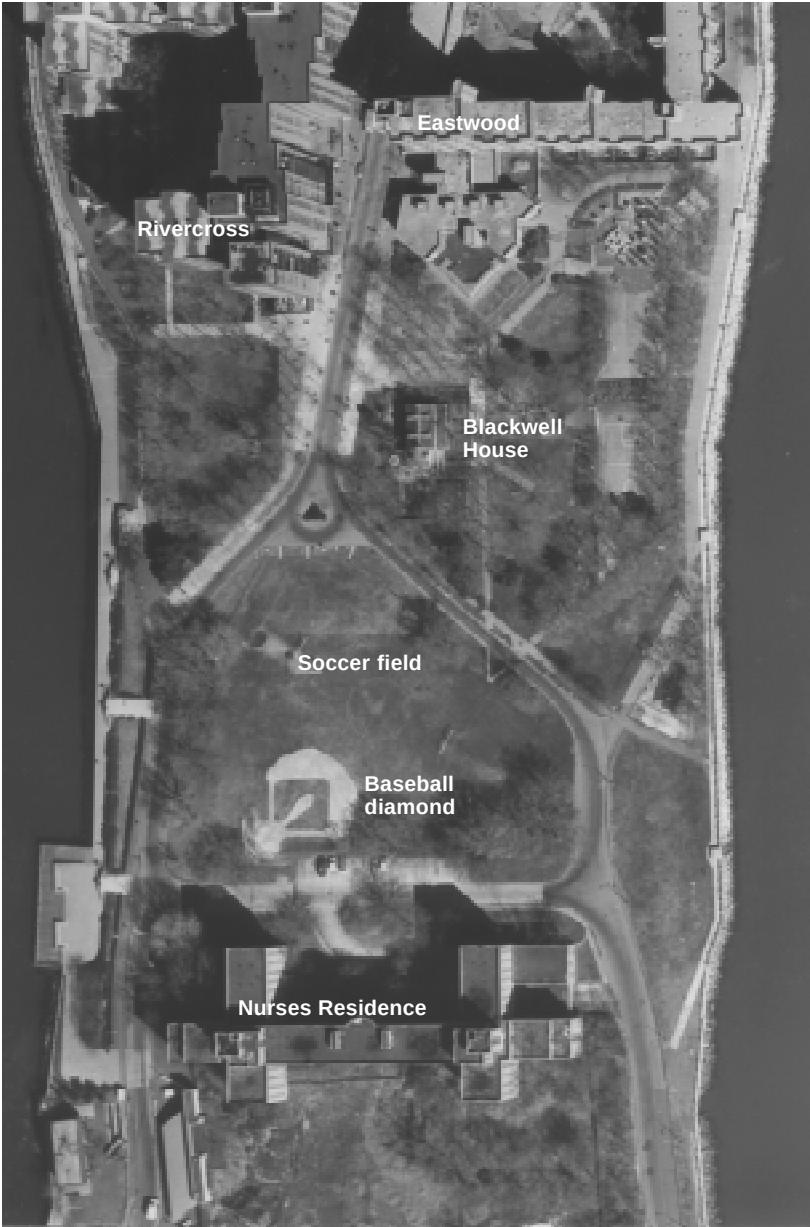


In Southtown Challenges, a Tangle of Questions of Judgment, Procedure, Environmental Impact and Contractual Obligation May Ultimately Be Reduced to Simpler Questions of What Seems Best for the Island

This map could be an important bit of documentary evidence in the petitioners’ case against RIOC’s Southtown development plans. Produced after the City Board of Estimate’s 1990 decision to retain a requirement for a park of “approximately six acres” as called for in the Island’s General Development Plan, it is either “determinative” or merely “illustrative.”

The map shows Blackwell Park at six acres, with acreage designated for Southtown reduced accordingly. In the enlarged segment shown here, outlines of the buildings proposed in the Ramati plan are visible in the shaded area. Just north of that, features of roads and Blackwell House are visible.

Aerial photo provided by AeroGraphics Corporation shows the area as it is today. The portion of the site in dispute includes the soccer and baseball fields.



As viewed from 63rd Street, Manhattan:

Rivercross

Blackwell Park

Blackwell Soccer/Baseball Field



Southtown will occupy land north and south of the abandoned Nurses Residence, which is to be razed. Among other issues (procedural and environmental), the suits currently before the State

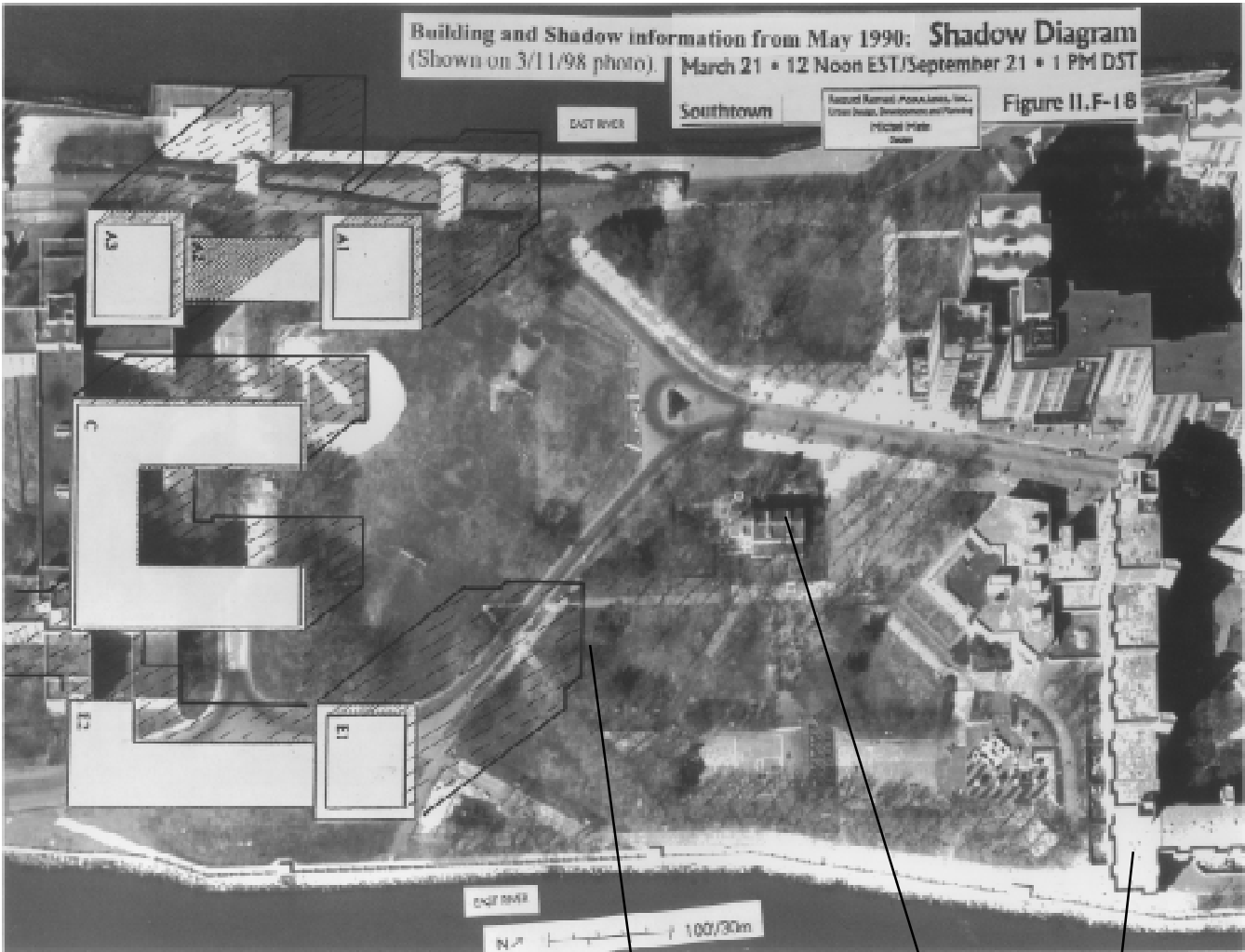
Supreme Court challenge RIOC's intention to allow construction of five buildings north of the Nurses Residence. Petitioners claim one to three of those buildings would be on parkland, while RIOC and

The Ramati Plan current as of 1990

RIOC’s September 22 approval of the Hudson-Related design for Southtown is based on its conclusion that the new design (shown below) is substantially the same as the earlier Ramati plan (right). While the Ramati plan is generally considered a dead letter, it was the subject of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). RIOC’s acceptance of the current plan therefore relies on a contention that no new environmental review is necessary – that the two designs are environmentally equivalent.

The two petitioners challenge that, saying the new plan is significantly different from the plan that passed environmental review. Both Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee (chaired by Robert Chira) contend RIOC should have conducted a fresh environmental review before accepting the new design.

One claim of significant difference is illustrated by the building outlines and shadow lines superimposed on these aerial photos of the site (used courtesy of AeroGraphics Corporation). The Ramati plan left the soccer field (just to the left of the fork in the road) largely unshadowed, while the Hudson-Related plan places buildings on the soccer field, and their shadows extend far north, at times covering Blackwell House and most of the present Blackwell Park.



Area shaded with lines indicates extent of shadows, at noon above, but throughout the day, below

Blackwell House

Eastwood

The Hudson-Related Plan current as of 2000

A key issue to be decided, perhaps at the start of Wednesday’s court session under Justice Harold Tomkins, is whether the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) will be allowed to present its case against the current plan. RIRA seeks to participate as an “intervenor” in the cases.

A key legal point being pressed by RIRA, along with the petitioners, is that RIOC may not allow construction on a park area of “approximately six acres” required by the General Development Plan (GDP). The GDP is part of the Lease under which the State is developing the Island, which is City property. In 1990, when RIOC asked the City for several amendments to the GDP, language that would have reduced the park requirement was rejected.

RIOC and the developers contend that in the ’70’s during Northtown construction, the park had already been reduced, and that the City Board of Estimate’s 1990 decision to keep the park at six acres had no practical effect.

RIRA sees the GDP issue as important as a precedent in future development.



Nurses Residence

Subway station and air shaft

Queensboro Bridge



the developers defend their intention by saying Blackwell Park was reduced from the intended six acres, *de facto*, when Eastwood and Rivercross were built farther south than originally envisioned.

Nine buildings are planned; four would be placed south of the Nurses Residence footprint, five north. Panoramic photo by Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

Gregory from page 1



Photo: Margery Rubin

confidence in the school. We have had bad press and lacked a consistent leader. I am the first permanent principal appointed in the past five years. There has been tremendous staff turnover because of this. There has also been friction between the district and the community in terms of who would run the school and what was best for it. All this caused parents to look elsewhere and scared the staff, for they never knew if they were doing their job right and what the philosophy and expectation was. The school clearly wasn't the best, and so many people left."

Apart from all these administrative issues, Ms. Gregory thinks that the changed demographics of the Island also led to the decline of the school. According to the Board of Education Annual Report for 1997-98, in percentage terms, the school composition is 50 percent black, 22 percent Hispanic, 17 percent white and 10 percent Asian. "Race has also been an underlying issue and I am not sure why," says the Principal.

Ms. Gregory thinks that the diverse nature of the students may have something to do with variance in performance, but rather than blame that, she points out what needs to change among the staff. "There is a certain mindset which needs to be changed. Teachers need to learn how to offer varied instruction and learning packages. In a score-oriented country, we have to see that parents' expectations are met. We need to show that the stick is high for everyone. Teachers have to look out for at-risk children and see what can be done for them on a daily basis. We have to check what we are doing to support them and make sure that every child is progressing every day."

Discipline has been a problem in the school. The annual report points out that there have been nearly three times the number of police department incidents in PS/IS 217 than other city public schools. By way of explanation, Ms. Gregory pointed out that this must be seen in the right context. "Even victimless crimes are reported to the police. If a child brings in a water pistol to school, it has to be reported. Also, children have arguments that are reported. We are trying to introduce conflict-resolution programs to solve that problem. We are training students to become mediators so we have positive peer pressure."

Several Island residents have objected to the groups of students hanging out on the street after school and using foul language. "We are going to introduce character education starting next year," says the Principal. "We want to reinforce good values and tell the children that this kind of bad behavior is not acceptable. Bad language is often not recognized as being bad behavior but we want to educate the children that there is a higher expectation in here. Older kids are often testing the adults. There may not be a lack of moral fiber, it is just that adolescents try to see what they can get away with and we have to control that. I have a twelve-year-old son at home and I am always trying to tell him about tone of voice."

The Principal believes that this change is going to be a team effort. "The same values have to be reinforced at home. We have to work together, especially because we are the neighborhood school. The education of all children on the Island is everyone's responsibility. I want every child who lives on Roosevelt Island to attend this school. I will do everything to ensure that we get all the children in early and retain them through Grade 8. The best kids leave after Grade 5 and that must stop. We are going to introduce an accelerated program in Grade 6 that will be enriched for the higher-achieving children. We are going to send out a needs assessment survey sheet, hold more workshops and make the place more welcoming. The parents should be able to come in, see the place and judge for themselves."

The Principal clearly has an agenda before her. She is trying to achieve a simple goal – that of making PS/IS 217 the Roosevelt Island school.

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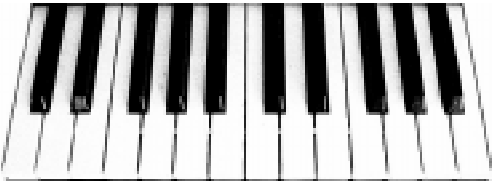
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Small Town, Big City

Spring Brings Arbor Day 2000, New Trees, and Renewal



Photos: Website NYC10044
Guest speaker, Doryne Isley of Housing Management, challenges the children of PS/IS 217 to treat trees kindly.

by Kate Whitehead Nicoll

“Which one of you, on this or any other day, has been tempted to climb a tree?” A sea of enthusiastic hands goes up in Ms. Spinello’s third-grade class, as well as a few brandishing clarinets and drumsticks in Dr. Hartung’s school band.

“Which of you has ever wanted to practice your batting stroke on the trunk of a tree?” Rather fewer hands, tentatively raised.

“Who has ever wanted to snap off a branch of a tree to use as a bat?” Just one lone hand fell into the trap. The children of PS/IS 217 were learning an important lesson from Doryne Isely, General Manager of Roosevelt Island Housing Management. Soon they were all raising their right hands to

swear an oath to protect the trees of Roosevelt Island.

In fact, vandalism of trees is mercifully rare here, according to Maurice Bleifeld, Chair of the Roosevelt Island Tree Board. His gentle, measured tone reinforced the message to respect trees as he addressed the gathering of children, parents and dignitaries sitting in the hazy sun just south of Rivercross. The day before, a young Japanese Pagoda tree had been planted by members of the Tree Board. It replaces a fallen Norway Maple, blown down by last year’s Hurricane Floyd. The sapling was donated by Dr. Katherine Teets Grimm, whose office happens to be in the adjacent building. It is the first of its kind on the Island, and if all goes well, we should all be enjoying its beautiful white blooms later on in the summer, according to Bleifeld.



“Trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.” After reading an Arbor Day proclamation, Robert Ryan of RIOC helps Maurice Bleifeld unfurl a new Tree City banner.

This wasn’t the only tree planted to celebrate Arbor Day 2000. Eight more now fill tree pits behind the tennis courts near Octagon Park. They are Callery Pear trees, which should be covered with showy white flowers in the spring, followed by rich red and orange leaves in the fall.

To discover more about the trees on the Island, residents can join a Tree Walk at 10:00 a.m. today (Saturday, May 13), starting outside Blackwell House. State Forester Mike Curley is making a special trip back from his new posting in the Adirondacks to lead the tour. As Maurice Bleifeld poignantly suggested during the Arbor Day ceremony, this might be the last chance for this annual event to commence with the stately trees around Blackwell Field, because of Southtown development in prospect.



Trees. Ms. Spinello’s class acts out the poem, after which individual students read some of their own essays on what trees mean to them.



Patting the soil around the new sapling. Some of the Island’s younger residents learn to respect this recent arrival as it grows alongside them.

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The Case of the Cow Who Thought She Was a New York City Yellow Cab

...and other mysteries of the art world

by Anusha Shrivastava

Ten years ago, Connie Tanner noticed how one of her students at the Day Nursery, Olivia Borges Veras, loved drawing and was happiest when she sat down with

Last summer, a similar exhibition in Chicago generated more than \$500 million in tourist revenue. Over ten million people saw it. Ruchira Shukla, an Island resident, was one of them. “The cows

by choice, says she heard about the contest from a friend and entered “just for fun. I am doing a design depicting New Yorkers because I think they are fun to paint. All my painting is about happy things and New York is a fun theme to paint. My style of painting is primitive, perhaps because I spend most of my day with three year olds. That is how my cow will look – bright and primitive,” said Connie.

For Olivia, the cow design project was part of a class assignment. Forty schools had been picked to enter the contest and her design of a checker cab cow won. “I did not really expect my design to win so when I got the news I blanked out for a minute,” admitted Olivia, a shy thirteen year old who still enjoys sketching and painting. “My mother bombarded me with questions about where it would be displayed and all that but we have not been told yet. All we know is that our names will be on a plaque displayed alongside the cow.” The artists have only been told that the cows will be on display in Central Park, at Lincoln Center and other such tourist attractions. It is not known if any will be put on Roosevelt Island.

Olivia says she chose the checker cab design after consulting with her



Ronnie Stuart

Connie Tanner at work on her cow at South Street Seaport.

art teacher at PS/IS 217, Ms. Maryann Hatfield, because most references to New York depict the design. “We talked about the Statue of Liberty and other landmarks but this one seemed like the best,” said Olivia. “It might have been tough to show the Statue’s Crown on the horns of a cow.”

For the past three weeks, Connie has been painting her cow at a storefront in South Street Seaport as she does not have enough space in her Rivercross apartment. “I am meeting several artists and swapping ideas with them. I hope I will get to do more of these projects now,” said Connie. Olivia has been painting her cow in the art room at her school. Acrylic paints are being used by both as they can hold up to changes in weather. Connie will be paid \$2,000 for her efforts but it is not

clear that Olivia will get a monetary reward. “I may not even get a certificate,” said Olivia, “but I don’t mind. I am just enjoying painting my cow.”

Each of the 500 cows has a sponsor, a corporation, an organization



Ronnie Stuart

Connie and her cow have grown close.



Margery Rubin

Olivia Borges Veras in the PS/IS 217 art room, with her cow-shaped taxicab.

her crayons and sketch pad. “Olivia was a fabulous artist. Even at that age she would produce really pretty pictures,” reminisced Connie. Neither teacher nor student had any idea that a decade later, they would both enter and win a contest to design one of the 500 fiberglass cows that are to be put up all over the five boroughs to promote tourism this summer.

looked really nice. Chicago is less crowded so there were spots that seemed well-suited for this kind of an exhibition. I am not so sure about New York but I look forward to seeing them here anyway,” said Ruchira.

Organizers of the exhibition, called *CowParade*, held a contest in which 1,200 entries were received. Connie, a nursery school teacher by profession and an artist

or an individual, who would have put up \$7,500 for “their” cow. Even so, they don’t own the cow. At the end of the summer, the cows will be auctioned off and the money given to charity.



How to Eat Like a Child Nancy Howe (director), and one of the three casts of Main Street Children’s Theatre production presented last weekend. Upper left to right – Molly Battles, Maddie Kaplan, James Barniker, Gil Zamfirescu, Grade Ahn, Chanel Dickerson; second row – Nancy Howe, Rebecca Dougherty, Andrea Vlad, Nicole Herlihy, Sara Becker, Jake Russem, Jonathan Meed, Ben Duffy, Eddie Cruz; front row – Stephanie Negron, Caroline Mortensen, Tara Prig, Anass Dorani, Maya Kurien.

RI Day Set Sat., June 10

Roosevelt Island Day is set for Saturday, June 10. The annual spruce-up spree will be like those of past years, with entertainment, food, and fix-up-the-Island activities for all ages.

It’s sponsored by Roosevelt Island Housing Management and the Roosevelt Island Youth Program. Volunteers are still being sought. Those planning the event have provided two numbers to call – Fay at 838-4747, or Charles at 935-3645.

Lisa Kim and Elizabeth Daley Chosen as Youth For Understanding

Two Roosevelt Island youngsters will participate in the Youth for Understanding program this summer.

Lisa Kim will live with a family in France on the YFU 2000 Summer program. She’s a student at Breairey School.



Lisa Kim

Elizabeth Daley will spend the summer with a family in Japan; she’s a student at LaGuardia High School of Music and Art.



In Minor League action at Blackwell Field, a Braves batter drives in a run against the Dodgers.

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In the Minor League (ages 8-10), the Brewers are in first place with a 3-0-1 record, while the Dodgers are in second place with a 3-1 record. These two teams will square off today (Saturday, May 13) at 9:00 a.m. In May 6 action, the Dodgers defeated the Braves 8-3, while the Brewers beat the Cardinals 9-2. The Brewers were sparked by the excellent hitting and fielding of Vernon Thomas and Alexander Beola, while the Dodgers attack featured home runs by Justin Gonzalez and Adam Johnson.

In the Major League (ages 11-13), the Brewers upset the first-place Dodgers 7-3, breaking open a tight 4-3 game with three runs in the top of the last inning, highlighted by Shirome Dixon singling in two runs with the bases loaded. Jason Fell and Jorvier Falcon pitched the Brewers to the victory. For the Dodgers, Adam Silverschotz and Thomas Corbisiero each had two hits. In other action on May 6, the Braves defeated the Cardinals by a 13-8 score. Lamar Burrows was the winning pitcher for the Braves, while Paul Brown led the attack with 4 RBIs. At the halfway point in the regular season, the Dodgers are in first place with a 5-2 record, while the Braves are in second place with a 4-2 record.

In the Senior League, the RIYP Mets improved its record to 4-1, defeating a Yorkville team by an 18-8 score. The Mets trailed 8-7 entering the top of the last inning, but rallied for 11 runs. Leading the attack for the Mets were Seth Kaufman (5 hits including 2 home runs), Junior Ruiz (5 RBIs on a home run and a single), and Alex Fell and Carlos Hiraldo with two hits apiece. The RIYP Islanders improved their record to 3-1-1, defeating a Yorkville team 13-2, and then coming from behind in the last inning to tie the Big Apple Sports Club team at 7-7. Blas Loor (3 RBIs), Brandon Steuber (2 RBIs), and Carlos Gautier (3 RBIs) paced the offense in the win over Yorkville, while Ozzie Vasquez (2-RBI single) and Jon Luli (2-RBI double) got the big hits in the second game.



In Major League action at Capobianco Field, a Brewers batter is about to deliver a hit against Dodger pitcher Chris Dominguez.

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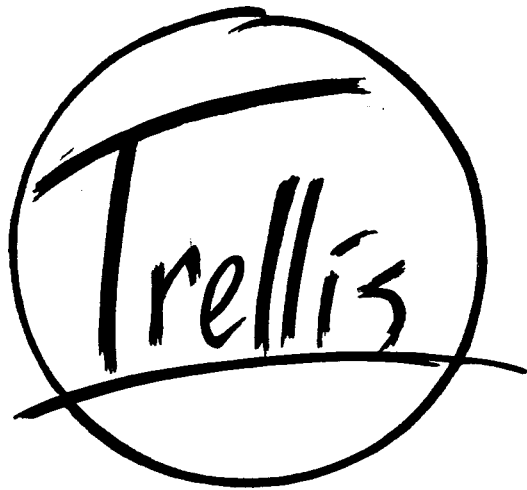
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