

Next issue:
June 10

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



On the Air Students in class 501 and the drama class at PS/IS 217 recorded the radio program *New York Kids* Thursday morning. They told their audience about Roosevelt Island and buildings in the City, and several read their own commentaries on topics as diverse as *Winnie the Pooh* and cricket. The program will air 6:00-8:00 p.m. Sunday, June 4 on WNYC (AM 820).

Rivercross Voters Re-Elect Co-op's Board in Hot Contest

The full Rivercross Board of Directors won re-election Wednesday night, holding off for the second year the attempts of challengers to gain one or more seats.

The Board's 8-year president, John Weatherhead, was returned to the Board with 183 votes (out of 251 ballots cast). A 21-year Board veteran, treasurer Steve Kaufman, received 166. Tallies for the other victors were:

Arnold Webb	184
Mark Ewald	180
Barbara Linzer	169
Aldo Radoczy	166
Ron Schuppert	159
Ian Kross	152

The most successful challenger was Miriam Allen, with 97 votes. Residents supporting the challengers were disappointed by the 55-vote margin separating her from Kross's 152.

Near the Wednesday night deadline for submitting ballots, the election became a battle of door-drops at times. One unsigned missive

said all the challengers favored an increase in the Mitchell-Lama surcharge for over-income residents to 50 percent from the present 20 percent. That was followed by a note signed by one of the challengers, Miriam Allen, attempting to correct the record.

Interest in the building's elections has increased with emergence of several key issues, including privatization. Three years ago, two-thirds of the residents voted for a plan to investigate taking the building out of the State's Mitchell-Lama system – a move which would allow them to bequeath their apartments and to sell them free of Mitchell-Lama controls.

Another issue, raised by a committee headed by Fran Dym, has protested the building's share-allocation structure, claiming that owners of small apartments pay a disproportionately high share of maintenance because their apartments are allocated shares out of proportion to their value.

Kayser, New on RIOC Board, Signals He's Ready for Dialog

Leo Kayser, barely a month on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), met with a group of residents this week, and indicated that he is eager for further such conversations.

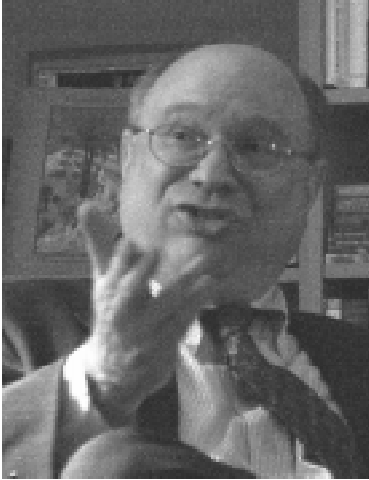
The Monday night meeting of the Maple Tree Group, moderated by RIRA Common Council member Matthew Katz, was free-wheeling and, at Kayser's request, largely off the record. The discussion ranged widely over the financial condition of RIOC; Kayser's previously-reported disdain for controlling State involvement in local affairs, including Roosevelt Island; prospects for self-governance; and current law suits against RIOC.

Kayser, an attorney, said he has read the briefs in the Article 78 actions challenging plans for Southtown.

Afterward, Kayser told *The WIRE*, "I was very pleased to attend the meeting and I enjoyed immensely the contact with the residents out there... and I appreciate the opportunity of learning about the sensibilities and perspectives

from everyone. What I did learn has helped me understand better some of the issues, and I've already had a chance to compare some of the information I gleaned with activities that are going on. I liked the people I met, and I appreciate the hospitality."

In an earlier conversation with *The WIRE*, Kayser had made clear his free-market philosophy, and his view that there is a "basic structural problem in a corporation like RIOC" in which appointed officials "make policy decisions... on very local matters." Kayser said he



hopes to find a "major structural solution" to the management of Roosevelt Island.

No Decision on Southtown Likely Before Mid-Summer

Facing a small mountain of legal papers, Justice Harold Tompkins of the State Supreme Court has indicated he doesn't expect to have a final decision in residents' cases against Southtown until sometime in July or later.



Justice Harold Tompkins after court session last Wednesday. (Additional photos and editorial, page 2.)

In a court session Wednesday, May 17, with six parties to the suits, Tompkins allowed an additional week for filing of papers in the cases, including affidavits and "sur-replies" – responses to earlier replies to briefs.

Speaking with *The WIRE* after a court session Wednesday, May 17, Tompkins left the door open to further court sessions, but indicated that he may make a decision based on the papers without hearing oral arguments in the matter.

In the suits, three groups are challenging a RIOC decision approving the Hudson/Related plan for Southtown. RIRSD, Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (headed by Steve Marcus), and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee (headed by attorney Robert Chira) say the plans violate the Island's General Development Plan by encroaching on parkland. The Residents Association seeks to intervene in the suits on the same grounds. RIRSD and Chira say RIOC acted hastily, not following prescribed procedure in approving the plan.

Key Events

New Top Cop May 31

The new chief of NYPD's 114th Precinct will meet residents in an open forum Wednesday night (May 31). **Captain James O'Brien** will appear at PS/IS 217 at 7:30 in an opportunity for Q&A.

R.I. Day June 10

Roosevelt Island Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 10. The annual event is an opportunity for clean-up and fix-up starting at 9:00 a.m., as well as fun and games for Island children – including face-painting, sack races, and other competitions – starting at noon and running until 4:00 p.m.

Seniors Draw Roster of Star Speakers, Then Outshine Them

by Anusha Shrivastava
photo coverage by Margery Rubin



Roosevelt Island Seniors celebrated their 18th annual Senior Day last Sunday. The brainchild of Dominic Sciallo, the current vice president of the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association, RISA, the event is the highlight of the Seniors' calendar. They mark the day as a celebration of their being a part of the Roosevelt Island community. "Young people perceive senior citizens as old, senile, forgetful people who can't see or hear well. We might be all of those things but Roosevelt Island seniors are making the best of our senior status. This day is celebrated to let the Island know that we are here – vibrant and strong, not just old and feeble," said Dolores Green, president of RISA.

The program began with the singing of the national anthem, followed by speeches given by various dignitaries and religious heads. Assemblymember Pete Grannis said senior issues were on the political agenda, even in Washington, D.C., especially prescription drugs. Jessica Lappin, representing Councilmember Gifford Miller's office, and Barbara Allen, representing Borough President Virginia Fields, reminded seniors that their offices would help them in any way they could. The Deputy Director of Public Safety, Rene Bryan, asked seniors to attend precinct meetings that are held on the Island specifically so that it is convenient for them to attend.

Father Luke McCann of the Good Shepherd Chapel said the "wisest people of the Island" were gathered in the room

See **Seniors**, page 6

June Terry (right) demonstrated the Quadrille last Sunday at Roosevelt Island Seniors Day, and a couple (left) enjoyed their own turns around the floor. More photos on page 6, with additional color photo coverage on Website NYC10044 – www.nyc10044.com.



Pages of Thought and Opinion

Your Tax Dollars At Work

The tangle of Southtown issues now squarely on the desk of State Supreme Court Justice Harold Tompkins brought six contenders to his courtroom just over a week ago in a battle over whether RIOC acted properly in approving Hudson-Related’s plan for the development.

Judging by the array of attorneys in Tompkins’ courtroom (photo, bottom of this page), the meter was ticking at an alarming \$40 a minute – \$2,400 an hour or more – a big part of which is going for legal services to defend RIOC’s action. In addition to RIOC’s house counsel, there were two hired guns from Carter, Ledyard & Milburn ready to do the heavy lifting.

The combined legal costs are at least \$200,000 at this point. Having observed the development of these matters over the past several years, we place the blame for such wasteful litigation on RIOC. More specifically, it is the result of the monumental mismanagement of the public benefit corporation under Dr. Jerome Blue. Blue escaped the situation a year ago, after three years in which he stripped the corporation of its best people, then polluted it with minor-leaguers who scurried to serve – badly, as it turned out – his burning eagerness to reignite Island development at any cost.

We want Southtown built. And this developer team is right for the job. But RIOC has messed up its part in the matter. The result is a financial deal that can’t pass muster, a housing plan not likely to build a sense of community, a layout that treats existing buildings as a backwater, and a construction plan that will leave Main Street unserviceable. And at least two buildings – the first two to be built – are on parkland.

Financially, the plan makes little sense because the return is far less than the required State investment could produce on the open money market. Thousands of truckloads of construction materials will destroy Main Street – and maybe some of the crucial infrastructure under it. And the community nature of the Island will be compromised by a plan that has 91% of the first units planned as studio or one-bedroom apartments that won’t attract families. And the buildings on parkland violate the GDP and remove our community greensward.

And the layout. The first building to be built puts a kind of dead-end wall across views down Main Street, as illustrated in these photo-drawings generated by experts working on one of the residents’ cases:



RIOC was in too much of a hurry to give this project a green light without enough information. Even worse, its refusal to hold discussions with the Residents Association, looking toward a solution, was a reckless desertion of a cost-saving course in favor of a showdown using tax money to buy litigation muscle. RIOC should seek a settlement, to end this madness.



Letters

To the Editor:

I feel for Principal Sherry Gregory and her efforts at reform of PS 217. She has a huge task ahead of her, one with many different facets. She complains about losing the “best kids” after the fifth grade.

I sincerely believe that, today, parents who send their kids to schools off-Island do so motivated not necessarily by racial prejudice, but mostly by concern for their children’s security. I think that this needs to be clarified.

No parent, regardless of race, wants their child in an environment that’s basically unsafe for kids not trained in the ways of the streets. This is what’s happening here on Roosevelt Island, and not only in PS 217, but also on the street and in some of the other local youth programs as well.

In the past few years, many of these local environments have become unsafe for any but the toughest children. (And, as we know from recent headlines, toughened kids can be every bit as dangerous as their adult counterparts.) All others are forced to stay away.

“Character education” and “conflict resolution” programs are fine, but they can go only so far. Adult supervision ends when the school day or the youth program ends, and children are set free to resolve their differences out in the street.

Alas, around here, clean-cut, harmless kids tend to be targeted and victimized by tougher, more streetwise children. I believe that race is not always the issue, when it comes to this kind of bullying.

I recently heard about one child being cornered by another, who was about to maim his quarry with a metal radiator screen, when a nearby adult intervened to prevent the carnage. Both children were African-American; both attended PS 217. Although the incident hap-

See Duarte, page 6

John Catsimatidis
President, Red Apple Companies
823 Eleventh Avenue
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Catsimatidis:

For several years I was the *Comparison Shopper* for *The Main Street WIRE*, the community newspaper of Roosevelt Island. As you will remember, I would go to several supermarkets, either in Manhattan or in western Queens and do a sample market basket showing the prices between Sloan’s/ Gristede’s and other markets such as Trade Fair, Associated, Waldbaum’s or Edwards. Prices were compared, and other “quality of life” issues such as cleanliness, expiration dates, scanner accuracy and staff helpfulness (or the lack thereof) and attitude were noted. Periodic conversations with executive staff sometimes resulted in changes, other times not.

Professionally and personally, I no longer have the time required to be the *Comparison Shopper*, and *The WIRE* has taken my name off the masthead, but I still must shop on a regular basis, and I still see the need to compare. And right now, I am pretty annoyed about several things that you and your executive staff should be paying more attention to.

My most recent visits to Gristede’s on Roosevelt Island only confirmed what I already knew – size does matter, and in this case, bigger still is not better. I still cannot find many items that I consider staples of my kitchen, and some of the staff would be considered unemployable in any settings other than yours. People on this Island pay very high rents or maintenance to live here and expect a certain level of quality, service and professionalism, and they still are not getting it from you or your staff.

I have been in your Gristede’s megastores in Manhattan, as well

See Lublin, page 7

To Senator Olga Mendez To M. of A. Pete Grannis

I am writing to voice my support of the Seawall Bill (S4623/A8111) which you introduced in the State Senate/Assembly. I know that you are a strong supporter of efforts to repair and maintain the seawall and I wanted to join you and the residents of Roosevelt Island in calling for swift passage of the bill.

As you know, the Army Corps of Engineers recently completed a study documenting the deterioration of the seawall. The swift currents of the East River, together with wave action from larger vessels, has created a serious problem in the channel. Current law does not allow the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to arrest erosion of the shoreline of Roosevelt Island. This is clearly an oversight that should be remedied. By amending present law to allow DEC to alleviate past and current erosion to the Island, we will be saving taxpayers money in the long run. It is far better to act now to prevent further damage to the Island than to wait until the damage becomes more severe. Accordingly, I support both the Senate and Assembly bills, and stand ready to endorse any further efforts to facilitate a favorable outcome.

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

To the Editor:

It seems the Roosevelt Island Glee Club can’t get started without a pianist. Will all who want to join please call me at 755-5584, especially pianists? Let’s bring something positive to the Island – songs of joy.

Frances Salten

In court May 17: Litigants in challenges of the September 22 RIOC Board’s approval of developers Hudson and Related and their Southtown plan. Attorneys are captioned above the photograph (with firm name and *client in italic type*), and clients are captioned below (*organization in italics*). Attorneys for Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development are pictured separately. Robert Chira is both attorney and client; the unidentified man seated behind Chira’s boxes of evidence was present for another case.

Lawyers

Jane Houdek
City Law Department
City Dept. of Environmental Protection

Stephen Kass
Carter, Ledyard & Milburn
RIOC

David Paget
Sive, Paget & Riesel
RIOC

Robert Chira
Alternative Southtown
Design Committee

Steven Russo
Sive, Paget & Riesel
Hudson/Related

Mark Sullivan
Carter, Ledyard & Milburn
RIOC

Kenneth Leitner
House Counsel
RIOC

Jeffrey Glen
DeForest & Duer
RIRA

Jeff Baker
Doug Ward
Young, Sommer
RIRSD



Clients

Nurit Marcus
RIRSD Steering Committee
(2nd row)

Linda Heimer
RIRSD Steering
(2nd row)

Aniela White
RIRSD (2nd row, obscured)

Patrick Stewart
President, RIRA
Member of RIOC Board
(2nd row, obscured)

Matthew Katz
Member, RIRA Common
Council (2nd row)

Joan Christianson
First Vice President,
RIRA, and Chair, RIRA
Legal Action Committee

Margie Smith
RIRSD Steering
(2nd row)

Ellior Marcus
RIRSD (2nd row)

David Kramer
The Hudson Companies (for Hudson/Related)

Sherie Helstien
Member, RIRA Common
Council (2nd row)

The purpose of this column is to highlight transportation dysfunction on Roosevelt Island, brought about by a lack of management oversight and the failure to hire qualified individuals with professional transportation experience. We run a serious risk of severely compromising the transportation infrastructure at all levels on the Island.

Transportation on this Island should be relatively simple to manage for someone with transportation experience. It is not being managed. It is being run in a laissez-faire manner.

An example: The buses are not being maintained. Two years ago, when Jerome Blue was RIOC President, two were out of service during a particularly difficult hot spell. Those running had inadequate air conditioning because they lacked adequate Freon. One had no air conditioning at all because it was “missing a part.” Another bus, sitting in the garage, had working air conditioning, but needed a generator. It did not take a rocket scientist to see that the part needed by the bus without air conditioning could be borrowed from the bus sitting in the garage, which would have resulted in four operational buses. The situation was not rectified until a month

and a half later, when the Board was alerted and the matter subsequently corrected. It was easy to conclude that there was no oversight by RIOC.

Going back at least four years, it has been understood that during rush hour, the buses are on a seven-and-a-half-minute schedule, and a 15-minute schedule the rest of the time. This has not been operative for two years because many of the drivers believe that, once they reach the Tram, no matter how many buses are already there (and quite frequently there are two or three), they are entitled to “down time.” The result is that the buses don’t rotate around the Island because they are all sitting at the Tram. Instead of seven-and-a-half minutes, it is common for buses going South to be on a 25-minute schedule. In fact, there is *no* schedule. The schedule is at the whim of the individual drivers.

In addition, on several occasions during evening rush hours, some drivers were not at work. There is no contingency plan, and the result is a shortage of buses – two in rush hour, one after – a totally inadequate situation that continues because of a lack of management expertise.

Rudy Lalji, the bus supervisor, makes uninformed, unilateral decisions without the acquiescence of anyone at RIOC, although he has been told to check before making decisions. In the last year he has had the buses go around the Sportspark rather than using the turnaround, adding three minutes to the trip and wasting fuel.

Early in April, I called Lalji to tell him he should get the buses up to speed on air conditioning, so he would be prepared on the first hot day. Nothing was done, and the buses were not ready for the heat. Without air conditioning, the buses are 10 to 15 degrees hotter than the outside.

Running this system should be elementary. If the buses were supervised by someone with a background in transportation management, these situations would not occur.

Further, the elevators at the Tram are in violation of ADA Title III, which deals with access for the disabled. When both are out, it is a clear violation. This occurs because the responsible person, Shawn Kirby, is a virtual no-show over the last two years. While the Tramway itself is generally well-maintained, it is not unusual for the elderly or disabled to find that they are trapped on the Manhattan side because there is no way to access the Tramway platform.

Again, since this situation is covered by Federal law, stringent penalties might well ensue if this situation isn’t corrected by replacement or daily maintenance.

These are areas that RIRA President Patrick Stewart and I have attempted to respond to, and I have tried to give RIOC the benefit of my experience in transportation. Unfortunately, other concerns monopolize their time, resulting in a general deterioration of Island infrastructure.

These issues need to be addressed by Island management, hopefully soon. If handled in a timely manner, the transportation problems could easily be resolved. Instead, they often reach crisis level – resulting in inconvenience for residents and a liability for management. If an elderly person or a person with heart disease collapses on a bus with inadequate air conditioning, the State incurs an unnecessary liability – because of a lack of preventive work, and in the case of the elevators, violation of a Federal law. Because of a lack of prophylactic maintenance, the Island will have to pay for repairs and these could be considerably more than the cost of regular preventive maintenance.



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Rebecca Dykes

Rebecca Dykes died April 22 at age 90. She moved to Roosevelt Island from Astoria 25 years ago, and was a resident of 510 Main Street. She was a retired case-worker, and, for over 40 years, a member of the First Reformed Church of Astoria. She is survived by three children.

Free Amphitheatre Series Offering Its Second Season

Roosevelt Island’s Lila Gilbert and company will stage a second summer of free performances starting Monday evening, June 5.

The rehearsed readings will be presented Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Eastwood Amphitheatre (behind 540 Main Street), with Good Shepherd Chapel on stand-by in case of rain. Lighting has been arranged for the Amphitheatre, allowing a later “curtain.”

The inaugural performance will be George Bernard Shaw’s *Dear Liar*, featuring Equity member Mel Haughwout. The play is a series of letters, described as a “rollicking epistolary romance,” between Shaw and the actress Lady Patrick Campbell. A.R. Gurney’s *Love Letters* will be read Wednesday, June 7. The Monday and Wednesday presentations will continue through August 30. Actors, in addition to Haughwout and Gilbert, will include Eve Marlowe, Louise Poster, Henry Stanley, and Alfred Bennett. The initial schedule is included in *ComingUp* on page 3 of this issue of *The WIRE*.

Works by Lila Gilbert will be presented as part of the series. Her *Crazy Street* and *Going Places* will be a double bill on June 12. Her one-act play for family audiences (with an 11-year-old hero), *It Never Snows in Texas*, is scheduled for July 5, along with a repeat of *Crazy Street*. A gothic mystery by Gilbert, *The Last Victim of the Redoubt Dauphine*, will be presented June 26 and repeated later in the season.



COMING UP

Compiled by Claire Friedland – phone 317-8523 / fax 755-2540

Wed., May 31, 7:30 p.m., Captain James O’Brien of the 114th Precinct, community session with Q&A, at PS/IS 217 auditorium.

Thur., June 1, 7:30 p.m., Roosevelt Island Greens meeting, Island House Community Room. Call **308-2210** for information.

Mon., June 5, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, George Bernard Shaw’s *Dear Liar*, amphitheater behind 540 Main Street, with Mel Haughwout and cast. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

Wed., June 7, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, A.R. Gurney’s *Love Letters*, with Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe, amphitheatre behind 540 Main Street. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

June 9-11, Main Street Theatre dance project, *Surfer Dudes Excellent Dance Adventure*. Performances Friday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. For information & tickets: **371-4449**.

Sat., June 10, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., June 2; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., June 5; bag materials due June 8. **Future issues:** 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**.

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, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, *Crazy Street* and *Going Places*, by Roosevelt Island’s Lila Gilbert, amphitheater behind 540 Main Street. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

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

Wed., June 14, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, *A Dorothy Parker Evening*, amphitheatre behind 536-540 Main Street, with Louise Poster, followed by Parker’s *Here We Are* with Richard Egan and Rosemarie de Witt.

Mon., June 19, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, Noel Coward’s *Private Lives*, amphitheater behind 540 Main Street, with Mel Haughwout and Eve Marlowe. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

June 16-19, Main Street Teen Theatre, *The Fantasticks*. Performances Friday-Sunday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Wed., June 21, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, *Classical Variety Show* with excerpts of Shakespeare, Poe, Twain, and Roosevelt Island’s Lila Gilbert, with Gilbert, Mel Haughwout, Eve Marlowe, Henry Stanley, Alfred Bennett, amphitheatre behind 536-540. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

Mon., June 26, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, *The Last Victim of the Redoubt Dauphine* (Act One), gothic mystery by Roosevelt Island’s Lila Gilbert, amphitheater behind 540 Main Street, with Mel Haughwout and cast. (If rain, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.)

Wed., June 28, 7:30 p.m., Free Performance, *The Last Victim of the Redoubt Dauphine* (Act Two). See June 23 listing.

Thur., July 20, 7:00 p.m., Jazzmobile, Etta Jones 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 Second Language**
11:00-12:30, **Metrocard Bus** 6/12
6:30-7:30, **Line Dancing**

Tuesday

10:00, **Jazzercise**
12:30-2:30, **Visiting Nurse Service** 6/6, 6/20
1:30, **Games** (RISA)
7:00, **Korean English**

Wednesday

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

Thursday

10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**

Friday

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

Sat.-Sun., June 3-4, 10:00-5:00, **Flea Market**

Mon., June 5, 10:00, **Children Poem Reading**

Sat., June 8, 11:00, **Free Eye Examination**

ComingUp Volunteer Opportunity

The WIRE seeks a new volunteer to compile events for *ComingUp*. 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.

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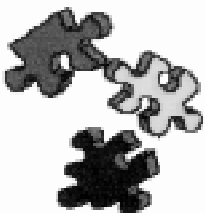
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It's time to register for September 2000



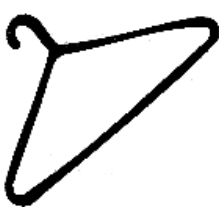
Roosevelt Island
Day Nursery

Preschool Programs for 2, 3, & 4 year olds
New this year: 2 and 3 day programs



4 RIVER ROAD 593-0750
Financial aid is available

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Islanders on Million Mom March

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

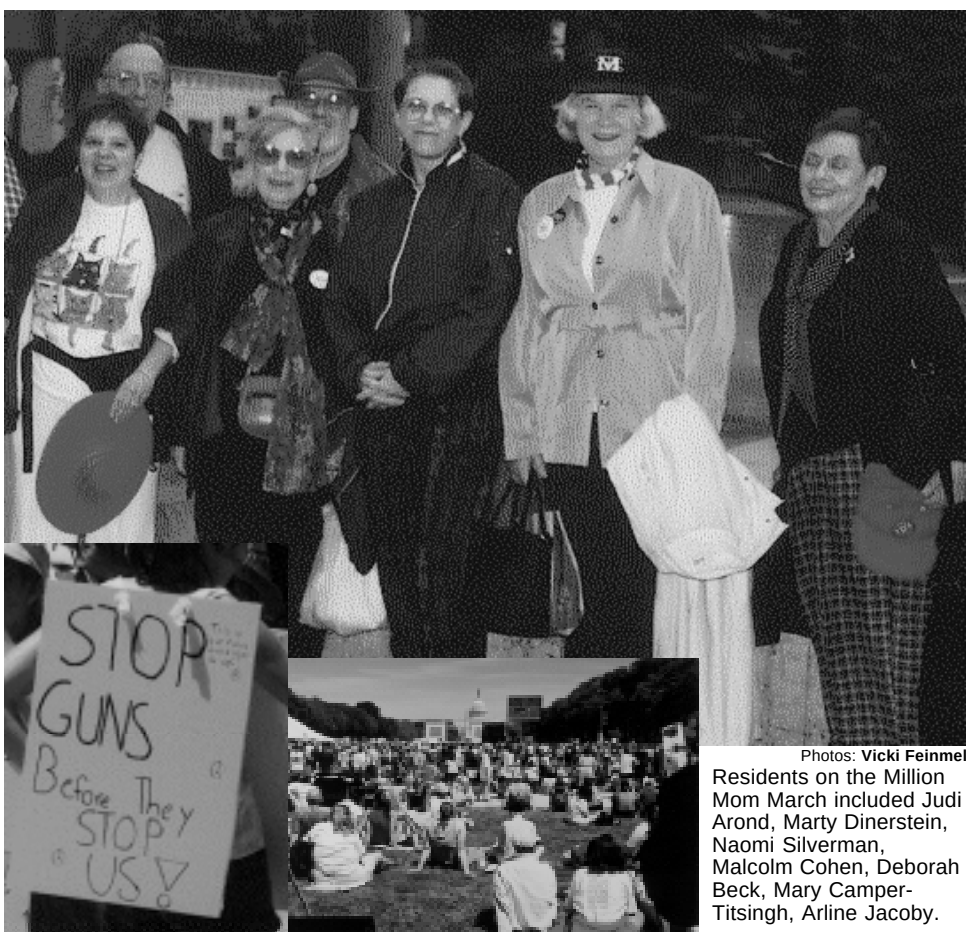
"This groundswell of opposition to guns is like the groundswell of opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s," a gray-haired mom remarked at the Million Mom March in Washington on Mother's Day, May 14. A small group of Roosevelt Island women and men attended the March, as did a large delegation from the organization, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence. They joined others on the grassy Mall between the needle of the Washington monument and the rounded dome of the Capitol building, listening to and watching the speakers introduced by master of ceremonies Rosie O'Donnell.

The mood of the huge crowd of 750,000 was a gentler mood than that of the war's opponents decades earlier, perhaps because this march was made up mostly of women and children. However, their determination that Congress must enact stricter gun controls, such as the licensing and registration of guns, was nonetheless demonstrated with a strong voice.

Judith Arond arranged for the Roosevelt Island group's transportation on a bus chartered by the New York office of the Workmen's Circle, a Jewish organization "fighting to achieve social and economic justice for all people." Indeed, the organization's Multicare Center Senior members provided brown bags with delicious lunches for those on the bus.

Arline Jacoby agreed when Naomi Silverman said that her reason for attending the Million Mom March was to show support for tougher gun-control laws that could protect her grandchildren of school age. "We don't want any more shootings in schools. Our children are entitled to feel safe at school and in their neighborhoods." Malcolm Cohen, whose wife Susan is a teacher in PS 217, Roosevelt Island's school, and Marty Dinerstein nodded in agreement. "No one should have to lose a loved one to gunfire," added Vicki Feinmel.

The artist Deborah Beck emphasized that this Million Mom March is the start of a movement that will continue with a national day of action to end gun violence on Monday, October 2, 2000. Members of the Roosevelt Island community who wish to get involved in this effort should contact First Monday 2000 at (202) 822-6070, by e-mail at firstmonday2000@afj.org, or via www.firstmonday2000.com on the web. New Yorkers Against Gun Violence can be reached at (212) 674-3710, nyagv@nyagv.org, or www.nyagv.org.



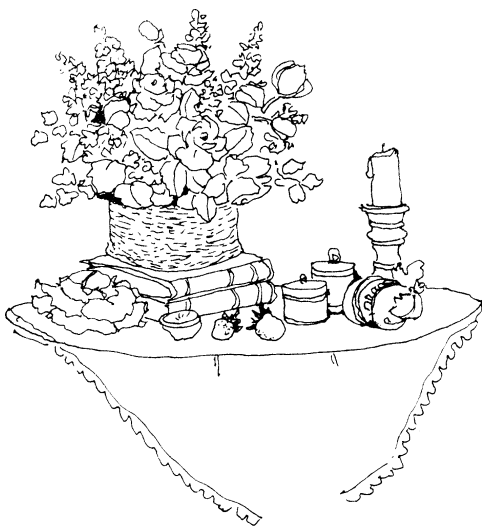
Photos: Vicki Feinmel
Residents on the Million Mom March included Judi Arond, Marty Dinerstein, Naomi Silverman, Malcolm Cohen, Deborah Beck, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Arline Jacoby.

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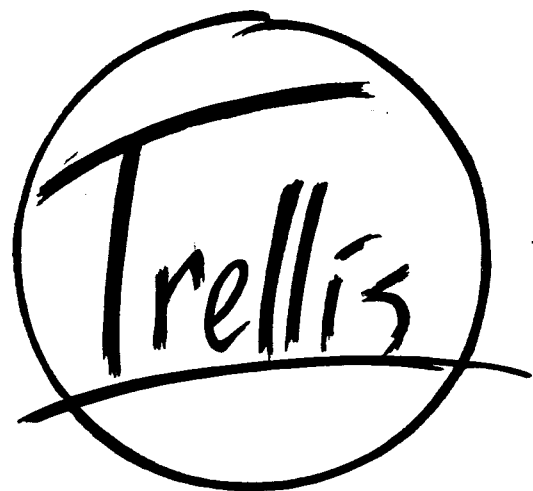
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Seniors, from page 1



Some of the Senior Day speakers: Barbara Allen, representing Borough President C. Virginia Fields; Assemblymember Pete Grannis; former RISA President Dominic Sciallo; Historical Society Vice President Judith Berdy; Residents Association President Patrick Stewart; Senior Center Director Selena Ng; Deputy Director of Public Safety Rene Bryan; actor-comedian Ron Roth; Rev. Lloyd Waldron.

and had the advantage of “perspective” in life that they could share with others. Pastor Lloyd Waldron of the Redeemed Christian Church told his audience that New York is the spiritual head of the world as well as the center of political importance, thanks to the United Nations being here. He said he believed the seniors had an important role to play in spreading the message of God.

Patrick Stewart, President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, said the most important groups of people on the Island



Dolores Green heads RISA, the Island Senior Association

were the nursery school children and the seniors because the first group reminded him of what he used to be and the second, of what he could become. Selina Ng, the director of the Senior Center, said the seniors should count their blessings that the Center existed or else they would not be able to indulge in their favorite leisure activity – the monthly trip to Atlantic City. She listed all the services provided by the Center, like the highly subsidized meals, blood-pressure screening, stay-well classes and the bi-weekly shopping bus that goes off-Island so seniors can shop at cheaper places.

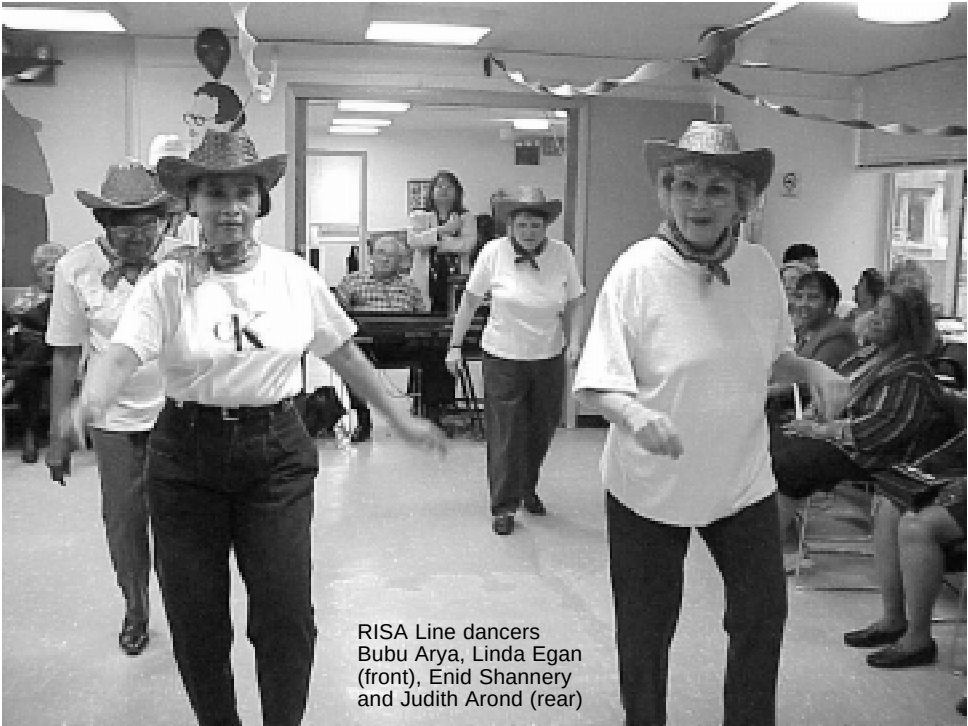
Dolores Green presented a plaque to Dominic Sciallo in recognition of his selfless service to the Center. Dominic invited all Islanders to come and visit the Center so they would have “no misconceptions” about it. Debbie Drucker led the group in singing various patriotic songs.

Once the formal part of the occasion was over, entertainment began, with June Terry demonstrating the Quadrille. RISA line dancers Judi Arond, Linda Egan, Enid Shannery and Bubu Arya danced some Mexican dances with Chris Scaglione. A buffet followed and the seniors queued up for a feast that marked the end of their celebration.

In an interview, Joan Matula, an 89-year-young senior, pointed out that things today are very different from 1976, when the Cen-

ter was started. “Everyone used to help, but today’s new breed is different and it seems as if no one wants to do anything. We need help from everyone,” she said. Dolores Green also said that it would be wonderful

if younger people came forth and helped the seniors move furniture and do things they cannot manage on their own. “They should bring their fresh ideas to us, if nothing else,” said Dolores.



RISA Line dancers Bubu Arya, Linda Egan (front), Enid Shannery and Judith Arond (rear)

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Duarte, from page 2

pened off school grounds, the attacked child was eventually pulled out of PS 217 and now attends a private school off-Island. This was done for safety reasons.

Obviously, this is no mere “kids-will-be-kids” nonsense. Fights around here are seldom even-handed. Groups of children gang up on one single child; children threaten other children with sharp metal objects, or with criminal acts of different sorts. What’s worse, while some kids are busy getting into trouble, their parents are nowhere to be found.

I know of instances of all of this. It’s all very serious, and we should resist anyone in charge trying to gloss over it by painting any of it as harmless.

It’s no wonder that so many parents on Roosevelt Island are sending their kids elsewhere for schooling and extracurricular activities. Some families move away altogether.

But, as I said, race is not always the issue. I’ve noticed that Roosevelt Islanders of all races are sending their kids away whenever they can. I’ve also noticed that the street “toughies” are becoming increasingly multi-racial. I find no comfort in any of this. In fact, I think it’s a tragedy that our streets and our local school are largely unsafe for many

of our children – and that few people appear to be doing anything about it.

Fortunately, there are some beacons of light. I notice, for example, that Father Luke, of St. Frances Cabrini Church, is conducting a dogged campaign to orient the Island’s Catholic youth in a constructive manner. Father Luke wields a benevolent but firm grip on his small, teenaged flock, and he is not, praise Jesus, about to let any of ’em get away.

Well, good for him. Would we had a battalion of Father Lukes patrolling our streets and our school, dispensing Fear of God to wrongdoers.

Perhaps what we need is a more concerted effort by all of the Island’s churches to launch religious youth programs, or to solidify existing ones and recruit for them more aggressively. Target the absentee parents of the problem kids and pressure them. Knock on doors, evangelize, round up those young, stray sheep by any means.

It just might work, because so many of our residents come from deeply religious traditions. Who knows? Maybe the Armies of the Light will succeed where our school, our Public Safety Department, and even some of our youth programs have come up short. Let us hope so, anyway.

Patricia Duarte

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After a weekend of beautiful baseball weather May 13, the Roosevelt Island Youth Program's baseball schedule was disrupted by rain, which forced cancellation of games in all divisions on May 20.

In the Minor League (ages 8-10), the Dodgers took over first place on May 13, defeating the previously undefeated Brewers, 8-7. Joshua Hart hit a home run in the last inning to break a 7-7 tie. Tulga Enhσαιhan and Justin Gonzalez also homered for the Dodgers. The Dodgers are now 4-1, while the Brewers are 3-1-1. In other action May 13, the Braves defeated the Cardinals and moved into third place.

In the Major League (ages 11-13), the second-place Braves defeated the first-place Dodgers on Wednesday evening, May 17, 13-5. With two weeks left in the regular season, the Dodgers lead the League with a 7-3 record, while the Braves trail by a half game with a 6-3 record. The Brewers are hanging tough with a 4-4 record, while the Cardinals are in fourth place with a 3-6 tally.

In the Senior League, the RIYP Mets improved their record to 5-1 and clinched first place in the regular season, defeating the Big Apple Sports Club team 4-0. Alex Gherardi was the pitching star, holding the previously undefeated Big Apple team to three singles while striking out eight in six innings of work. Kenny Hovi preserved the shutout and recorded his second save of the season by pitching a scoreless seventh inning. The Mets defense, sparked by excellent plays by Mike Kirkman and Fabian Medina, was sharp throughout.

In other Senior League action, the RIYP Islanders improved their record to 4-1-1 and finished tied for second place in the regular season, defeating a CYO team 9-0. Blas Loor pitched brilliantly, recording his second complete game victory of the season while giving up one hit and striking out 19 (yes, 19) CYO batters. The game was scoreless until the bottom of the fourth inning, when the Roosevelt Island team scored nine runs, with Blas Loor, Jovan Ponce and Carlos Gautier knocking in two runs apiece.

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Lublin, from page 2

as the new Food Emporium under the 59th Street Bridge and the one near the Tram on 3rd Avenue. Are their prices comparable to yours? Yes, on many items. Are the produce, meat, fish and poultry too expensive? Yes, a little, but they are fresh and plentiful and always displayed in an attractive manner. Is the staff knowledgeable and courteous? You bet, due to the fact that Food Emporium seems to take staff hiring and training very seriously.

Many of the things that were wrong before and after the renovation and expansion of your store are still wrong.

- There has been no effort to re-label the shelves to show the correct price by weight or volume for most canned, bottled or boxed groceries, nor any effort to match the label with what is on the shelf.

- Many perishables continue to remain on shelves for sale long after their expiration dates.

- At Passover this year, some of the items on the shelves were from Passovers past.

- And again, the prices were shameful and higher than the local competition.

- The store is not clean and maintained consistently. Last night when I went in, the entire floor area by the entrance and check-out areas was filthy and appeared to have been mopped using dirty water. It was most disgusting and smelled bad. A young man, who was standing in the manager's area but was clearly no manager, was rude and lazy in his response to an inquiry whether that area could be cleaned. A suggestion that those entrance doors be closed briefly, letting customers enter temporarily through the exit doors, was met with scorn and a nasty response. Even on several earlier occasions, the floors were not always swept or mopped, and on one occasion recently trash and a broom were left in the middle of an aisle for nearly an hour even though they presented an obvious safety hazard as well as an un-

clean area.

- The staff, such as they are, could use a little work here. No smocks, no manners, not even a thank-you from check-out staff, certainly doesn't help. Bagging the purchases in some cases seems like an imposition to some of them. More concerned with eating at the register, with their nails and hair, and with attitude to match, these young people send your customers away in more ways than one. There are several exceptions to this condition and those young women should be getting mentoring or other positive strokes and modeling their behavior for some of the other staff. It only shows that you and your executives still do not take us seriously as customers that this problem continues.

- Finally, your recent relationship with Priceline.com aside, it is time to consider repricing certain staples and high volume items so you can get more people into the store and the items out of the store. Paper towels and toilet paper in bulk, two-liter bottles of soda, laundry products and cleaner, and other specials are the bread and butter of the other markets, and should be here too.

I know from a recent *New York Times* article that you entertained the President of the United States at your home on Fifth Avenue. I wondered at the time whether you, Mrs. Catsimatidis, or your household help shopped at one of your own stores. I know that on the three most recent occasions that I entertained, I ended up having to shop at other stores at great inconvenience to myself because I could not count on my neighborhood supermarket to have everything that I needed and could afford.

I have lived on Roosevelt Island for 17 years. I think my neighbors and I are entitled to a supermarket that is affordable, well staffed and well stocked, that is convenient. How much longer do we have to wait?

Nina Lublin



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