

Next issue:
September 22-23

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

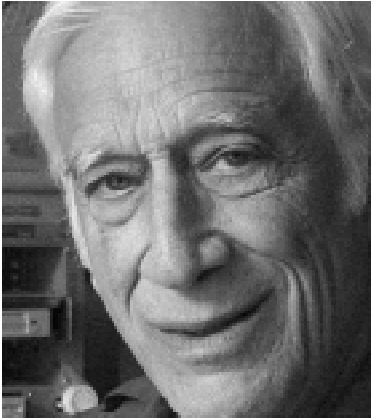
in association with Website NYC10044



The Main Street Theatre will present an Equity production of *The Lion in Winter* next Friday (September 15) through Sunday, with Nancy Howe as Eleanor of Aquitaine, Gretchen Lustig as Princess Alais, and Worth Howe as Henry II. Tickets and information: 371-4449.

WIRE Names an Ombudsman – Veteran Journalist Armand Schwab

Veteran journalist and longtime Island resident Armand Schwab is joining *The WIRE* staff in the newly-created role of Ombudsman. Schwab, who has lived on Roosevelt Island since 1977, worked at *The New York Times* as a writer and editor from 1948 to 1961, primarily on the Sunday *News of the Week in Review* section. From 1961 to 1990, he was a member of the Board of Editors of *Scientific American* magazine, serving as Managing Editor after 1986. Since 1991, he has taught as Adjunct Instructor in Journalism at New York University, teaching science writing. In announcing the appointment, *WIRE* Managing Editor Dick Lutz said, “Every public institution, especially a newspaper with a small staff, can benefit from having an experienced hand listening to consumer complaints, considering their merit impartially, and working to resolve them.” *The Encarta World English Dictionary* defines *ombudsman* as “somebody responsible for investigating and resolving complaints from consumers or other members of the public against a company, institution, or other organization.” In the context of *The WIRE*, Lutz said, Schwab’s role will include acting as a touchpoint for readers and subjects of *WIRE* reports who feel their positions or activities have been reported unfairly or inaccurately. “There’s an election season upon us,” Lutz said, “and it’s important to do everything possible to insure fairness.”



See Schwab, page 10

Election Season

Matthew Katz Announces a Run for Presidency of RIRA

Matthew Katz, a member of the RIRA Common Council, announced Tuesday night that he will run for the Presidency of the organization. “The most important thing I see for this Island is the question of who runs the Island,” Katz said, announcing his candidacy before a meeting of the Eastwood Building Committee. “RIOC [the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation] has been a thorn in the side of residents. The way it’s set up now, there is a Board of nine appointed members, and there’s a politically-appointed President of RIOC. At present, five members of the Board are not residents. None of these people has shown himself to have a stake in this community.”

Katz has been an active member of the Maple Tree Group (MTG), which for three years has worked for legislation to change RIOC so that a majority of its members would be elected by residents, and so that the RIOC President would be a hired professional manager rather than a political appointee. Katz was recently elected Convener of MTG, taking over the post David Bauer had held for three years. “We’ve seen an entire layer of government denied us,” Katz said. “We have a Federal government and we have a State government. What about local government? Most places in New York State have a local government responsible for the day-to-day running of the place. We have a bright young member of City Council, Gifford Miller, who has worked hard for us, but he has absolutely nothing to do with the budget of this Island, or with the day-to-day running of this Island. Who does? RIOC. Can we elect its Board members? No. They’re appointed by the Governor and they are beholden only to him.” Katz faulted current RIRA leadership for failing to work actively



toward local democratically-elected governance of Roosevelt Island. He said local self-governance “is something the RIRA

Common Council has voted for on at least three separate occasions. In fact, in February of 1999, they passed a resolution that said they would actively support passage of the Grannis bill. This has never happened. Why? Because the RIRA leadership has not been actively supporting self-government for Roosevelt Island. And even though the Common Council voted to do this, without the support of the leadership, it didn’t happen.” Both Katz and Vice Presidential candidate Byron Gaspard were repeatedly critical – often directly, sometimes by implication – of the administration of current RIRA President Patrick Stewart. Gaspard, who introduced Katz to the Eastwood meeting, said in a later Q&A session, “The reason See Katz, page 10

Day Nursery Enrollment Down – Alternatives Gain

by Anusha Shrivastava

There is a nip in the air as the not-so-hot summer gradually fades into winter. For preschoolers, it is the time to begin getting used to longer hours at school. Spots are available for them at the three educational institutions that cater to their needs on the Island – PS/IS 217, Island Kids and the Day Nursery. Surprisingly enough, the public school, which is a new entrant as far as teaching four-year-olds is concerned, has grabbed the largest chunk of children from the Island. A whopping 54 of them will be attending the school this Fall. A third section had to be opened to accommodate this huge population. Two sections will operate in the mornings (8:30-11:00) and one in the afternoon (12:25-2:55).

Sherry Gregory, the principal, is obviously thrilled. “It is very gratifying to know that the hard work of the past two years is paying off and that the community is appreciating our efforts towards providing a standards-based education. Our reading scores are going up and we have just gotten a State award for this. I am hoping that this translates into even more children joining us next year so that we can have four sections,” says Ms. Gregory. Island Kids, which has a Learning Group for four-year olds, has limited its class size to six this year and has filled its quota. Gina Enock, the Director of Island Kids, says that people could put their children on the wait-list. “We will not turn anyone away and will try to accommodate more kids by hav-

See Nursery, page 10

Islanders

Seniors President Dolores Green: Still Going Full Tilt, Full Time

by Anusha Shrivastava

Dolores Green, the President of the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association (RISA), has lived on the Island a mere five years – a very short span when compared to officeholders in other comparable organizations on the Island. Neither this nor the crippling arthritis in her legs has prevented her from pulling out all stops in making the Association a strong and vibrant one. Selina Ng, the Director of the Senior Center, believes that RISA is doing well mainly because of Dolores’s efforts. “Dolores is extremely personable. She can relate to people of any nationality and make them feel welcome. The cultural diversity of the Center has grown because of her openness and her quest to include everyone,” says Selina. “I love being the center of attraction. I have never been shy and have always loved being on stage. I wanted to become an actress and took part in every school play I could. In my junior-high-school yearbook, I was voted most talented student. I like to do things that keep me in the midst of all the action,” admits the 61-year old Dolores. “RISA gives me the perfect opportunity to be myself.” Born and raised in the Bronx, Dolores took a few business courses at Fordham University after graduating from high school. She got married in 1958 and then became a full-time mother as she raised four children. “I became a

typist at the State Insurance Fund when my youngest child was six years old. The plan was to work for six months, but the money was good so I stayed for thirty years,” says Dolores. “I got separated from my husband but I kept my job.” Raising four kids and working full-time kept Dolores amply busy, but she did make time to set up a modeling agency called the Voluptuous Ladies. “I have been heavy all my life but somehow I never had low self-esteem. When I met women who got depressed because they were large, I would wonder why. In 1979, I formed a group and we modeled for women’s magazines. We were doing well, but then one of my sons passed away and I lost interest.” This interest was rekindled when Dolores became part of the Senior Center and started organizing fashion shows for the seniors. “Just because we are old does not mean that we cannot look good and alluring. We still like doing the things we enjoyed doing when we were young. It is just that we do them a lot slower now,” says Dolores. The other manifestation of her interest in good grooming is that Dolores is an Avon cosmetics representative. “It helps me meet a lot of people and gives me an opportunity to talk to different types of people on the Island. I have customers in the hospitals. More than anything else, it helps me keep busy.”

That is not to say that Dolores lacks things to do. The Senior Center is where she can be found every day, noon onwards. “I co-ordinate trips, write letters and organize meetings with people of the community. The most impor-

See Green, page 10



Pages of Thought and Opinion

Jerry Blue Redux

“Unfortunately, the Board doesn’t meet to address ques- tions from the public, so if you have questions, you can ad- dress...”

Thus spoke Steven Hicks of DHCR Thursday night as he chaired – and ended – one of the RIOC Board’s two-per-year evening sessions, scheduled to give the public access to the Board. Hicks’s last words were obscured by murmurs and cries of protest from residents attending the meeting.

The incident, in its entirety, was reminiscent of Jerry Blue’s stellar performance in September of 1997, when he responded to 44 minutes of resident questions with a cursory four min- utes and a stack of “position papers.” Blue’s performance that night ignited, in the community, a steel-hard determination to be rid of him.

This week’s episode with a still-unresponsive RIOC came when Joan Christianson, First Vice President of the Residents Association, spoke of her confusion over the Board’s June vote on the minicondos – a vote that gave the go-ahead to developer Diane Wilson amid a flurry of confusion in which one Board member thought she was voting for an amendment to a resolu- tion – not the resolution itself.

“Just what took place? And where do things stand with the minischools?” Christianson asked. “If there are things in writing such as Mr. Leitner’s annexed memorandum, would you be so kind as to make copies available? I would appreciate your addressing these issues now and to please not brush my questions and concerns off.”

Christianson was asking for solid facts on the negotiations with Wilson on deadlines for financing and other “deliverables” that may serve either to establish her competence to go for- ward with the luxury condo project that would add a second story to the Island’s west-shore minischools, or act as a barrier to keep her from continuing with her project.

In the public portion of the session, Christianson virtually pleaded for answers. When, by session’s end, she had none, she asked for attention to her questions.

That brought this response from Hicks: “Discuss them with Ken or Rob, please.” When Christianson tried to insist, he in- terrupted, “Unfortunately, the Board doesn’t meet to address questions from the public...”

His misperception that answers given one-on-one by RIOC President Rob Ryan or Attorney Ken Leitner would satisfy the community’s need is a serious error: Christianson was asking not just for herself, but for an entire community that is won- dering how the RIOC Board could so cavalierly agree to Wilson’s minicondo project when hardly a single member of the com- munity supports it.

Hicks is right on one thing: The RIOC Board is not an- swerable to this community. The RIOC Board is, for all practi- cal purposes, at the head of a feudal fiefdom in which the serfs – you and I – are, at best, an unfortunate inconvenience.

Self-governance, anyone?

DL



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Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Chief Feature Writer – Anusha Shrivastava
Ombudsman – Armand Schwab
Chief Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Proofreaders – Linda Heimer, Frances Salten
Chief Photographer – Margery Rubin
Photographers – Vicki Feinmel, Ronnie Stuart
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
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Letters

To the Editor:

In response to several letters in *The WIRE* dated August 26, 2000:

When I first visited my now husband, Frank Farance, on Roosevelt Island, I thought it was a beautiful place. As time went on, Frank introduced me to many nice people and some of the better as- pects of the community here. Ultimately he con- vinced me to live here.

What a welcome I’ve received! Wow!

My official introduction to the Island, our Au- gust 5th wedding, was apparently quite controver- sial. There were good wishes generously given by many but also complaints and anger from others. I never expected this response.

When Frank and I began to plan our wedding, I said that I always wanted a backyard party. But unfortunately, as city dwellers, neither of us has a backyard. Then Frank took me to Lighthouse Park, a truly lovely spot. He said that this could be our “backyard”. Frank said that we could rent the park through a permit from RIOC. He is familiar with the permit procedure from the years he ran the soft- ball league and rented ballfields.

We met all of RIOC’s requirements, filled out all forms, obtained the necessary insurance, paid all fees, including paying for the Public Safety offic- ers’ overtime. As an attorney, I can assure every- one that RIOC has the legal right to issue such per- mits.

I believe that the real controversy here is not the renting of a public space. That happens all over New York City and probably most of the world. Fifth Avenue closes for a parade, the courthouse closes for the filming of a movie, even the Verrazano Bridge closes for the marathon.

As a newcomer here, I see that the real issue is: the lack of resident input in the governing of the Island. People would probably feel better about RIOC decisions if they had direct, i.e. elected, rep- resentation on the Board. In fact one of the letters in the August 26th *WIRE* reflects that position.

I am very sorry that people have chosen to use our wedding reception – our happy event – as a vehicle to attack RIOC. But RIOC was not wrong. Permits to use public spaces are legal, common- place and necessary. We were required to restrict access to the park because we were serving alco- hol. We might have been liable for the results of someone drinking at our reception. Not to mention potential liability to anyone getting hurt.

For others who see our reception as an inconve- nience, an intrusion or as our lack of neighborl- ness, I am very sorry for that too. But we did what we were required to do and what was best for us, for our guests and for Roosevelt Island.

I only wish that everyone could be as generous as the people Frank and I met as we walked into the park. We saw a group of people with coolers and blankets being turned away by a Public Safety of- ficer as we approached the park entrance. Frank apologized for ruining their picnic. These people applauded us, wished us congratulations and then laid their blankets on the spot where they were standing. I don’t know who they are or even if they live here. I hope they do and I hope they had as wonderful a day as we did. I’d also like to thank them for their good wishes and exceptional behav- ior.

In summary, we felt we were being “neighborly” by following all the procedures for obtaining a per- mit (like anyone else can do). I wish there were a better forum for residents to affect policy in Island matters so that residents wouldn’t feel frustrated.

Marguerite Camaio

To the Editor:

The Roosevelt Island Greens, an independent local of the New York State Green Party, is publishing a special edition of its newsletter, *The Sunflower*. We welcome submissions from all Roosevelt Islanders. The theme is *Doing Time*, a vehicle to share views on prisons, immigrant detention centers, mental institu- tions, or a situation in which Fifth Amendment rights have been violated. Submissions should be 500 words or less – poetry, essays, artwork, quotations, opinions, or creative writing. Copyright c ontrol remains with the author. The deadline is September 28, 2000. Please send your entry via e-mail at momo@panix.com (use “Sunflower” in subject heading) or leave it at the 555 Main Street door station clearly marked for “Castine.” We expect to have the Newsletter avail- able mid-October.

Karen Ingenthron

Letters deadline for Sept. 23 issue: Sept. 17

Letters received after deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

To the Editor:

In the last edition of *The WIRE*, there were three letters that expressed concern over the use of Light- house Park for my wedding. I believe some of the concerns are based on incorrect information about permits. These concerns are also fueled by the lack of resident involvement in the planning, operation, and governance of our Island (read: frustration with RIOC). Here are some of the finer points about per- mits and our wedding:

1. We did have a permit from RIOC and RIOC is allowed to grant permits. We started our planning in February and we completed all the procedures, as re- quired by RIOC and as specified in their permit re- quest (see the procedures at www.rioc.com).

2. Parks *are* “permitted out” for a variety of rea- sons: the Little League, the Softball League, the Soc- cer League, the carnival, shooting a movie – all of these have been Island events. In all these cases, it is necessary to get a permit because there is so much advance planning for a successful event – whether it is players and umpires all planning to use the field at once, or planning all the little details of a wedding. Permits are commonplace: they are the normal method for using city and state parks, regardless of the city or state.

3. Other Roosevelt Island facilities have been closed for exclusive access, such as Main Street being closed for exclusive access for the annual Road Runners club – ask Public Safety about the complaints they hear from residents who are waiting for their car service to pick them up when cars are not allowed onto Roosevelt Island.

4. RIOC had taped waterproof posters in advance to the pillars at both entrances of the park. The post- ers were still there through rain storms and up until our wedding. This gave advance notice to those that use the park.

5. Contrary to some people’s perception, the whole park was closed only for 7 hours (11 a.m.-6 p.m.). It was necessary to close the park because we were serv- ing alcohol at a private event (thus, we needed to make the event *private*). Outside of those hours, the park was open to everyone.

6. We paid overtime for the additional Public Safety officers (including the 24 hours prior to the event). Neither RIOC nor the Island residents paid for their time. And we paid for additional liability insurance for the park over and above RIOC’s insurance.

In conclusion, we followed all the steps we were supposed to; we paid for our services; we took care to make sure the event was posted in advance and that alcohol was not served improperly; and, we arranged the timing to minimize the use of the park (7 hours).

After the guests left and the park was opened, my wife and I were caught staying several hours later to make sure any garbage and litter were picked up. Not particularly romantic, but certainly “neighborly.”

I’m sorry that some people were upset. However, I believe people should focus their frustration on some- thing constructive: residents should have involvement in influencing Island policies.

Frank Farance (the groom)

To the Editor:

I feel like a gadfly. I must be the only one who notices the lack of inspection of maintenance on or about Roosevelt Island. Here are three new areas of questionable repair.

1. The sidewalk in front of the Montauk Credit Union has a grate which was worked on by Con Ed. We now have a partial asphalt sidewalk. Would this be done on Park Avenue?

2. Westview seems to have a permanent dumpster at the side of 625. Is this the only building that needs a dumpster or does something need to be repaired? The front door lock was recently fixed. Now it should be used instead of being kept permanently open. Why?

3. The roadway from Vernon Boulevard over the bridge to the Island was recently repaved. Along came Bell Atlantic and now we have a big bump in a brand new roadway. Is this acceptable? Would it be done the same way on Park Avenue?

Name Withheld

To the Editor:

The August 26 first-person report of Roger Galindo on his participation in The Ironman was an excell- ent demonstration of setting a goal and working to achieve it on his own efforts.

The story is in marked contrast to the self-pitying letter of Dr. Wade, who flails about seeking others to criticize. It is easy to find things to criticize. More difficult is to do what Mr. Galindo did in setting him- self a goal to be accomplished, doing the necessary preparation, and then actually getting involved in the accomplishment.

David Bauer

COMING UP

Compiled by Alain Pinset – phone and fax 208-2907
e-mail alpinset@cs.com

Tue., September 12, Primary Election Voting at PS/IS217, 645 Main Street, 6 a.m.-9 p.m.

Wed., September 13, 8:00 p.m., Residents Association *Common Council Meeting*, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Fri., Sept. 15-Sun., Sept. 17, 8:00 p.m. (plus 2:00 p.m. Sunday), **Main Street Theatre** Equity production of *The Lion in Winter*. Tickets, \$12; seniors, \$10. For information and reservations, call **371-4449**.

Sun., Sept. 17, RIRSD Champagne Party – moved to October 22.

Sat., Sept. 23, next scheduled issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Sept. 15; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Sept. 18; bag materials due Thur., Sept. 21. **Future issues:** October 7, 21; November 4, 18 (Thanksgiving business cards issue); December 2, 16 (Holiday issue); January 13, 27; February 10, 24; March 10, 24; April 7, 21; May 5, 19; June 2, 30 (July 4 business cards issue); August 4, then every two weeks starting early in September. 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, **826-9055/755-2540**; urgent/breaking news, 917-353-1647; phone/fax for advertising inquiries, **751-8214/755-2540**; phone/fax to list Island events here (no charge), **317-8523**.

Mon., Sept. 25, 7:30 p.m., **Maple Tree Group** meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Next meeting, Oct. 30.)

Wed., October 11, 8:00 p.m., Residents Association *Common Council Meeting*, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Future meetings: November 8, December 6.)

At the Senior Center

Monday
9:15, **Stay Well** exercise
10:00, **English as 2nd Language**
(Beginner's session at 10:00;
Intermediate session at 11:00)
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
10:00, **Beaded Jewelry Wkshp**
1:30 p.m., **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well** (stretch)
10:00, **English as 2nd Language**
(Beginners' session at 10:00;
Intermediate session at 11:00.)
7:00 p.m., **Glee Club** (RISA)

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**

There is no charge for listing Island events here. E-mail information to alpinset@cs.com or fax/call 208-2907.

Friday
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
11:00, **Citizenship Class**
7:30 p.m., **Games** (RISA)

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

Special Events
Sept. 11, **Metrocard Bus** 11-12:30
Sept. 13, 7:00 p.m.,
General Meeting
Friday, Sept. 15, 12:30
Monthly Birthday Party
Sept. 20, **Atlantic City** (RISA)

Home-delivered meals are available.
Call 980-1888

The WIRE's Caribbean Cruise

Sailing February 10



Good news: We now have enough reservations to qualify for our own private champagne party aboard the Century, hosted by Celebrity Cruise Lines. We will start our cruise in fine style as we greet old and new friends from Roosevelt Island while we toast our departure with champagne!

For music lovers: If you like the music of the Caribbean there will be a calypso band playing virtually all day every day by the pool. In the evening you have a choice of two different trios playing dance music in one of the three nightclubs. For more quiet moments, you can enjoy the pianist/singer who entertains in one of the lounges before and after dinner. Each evening there is a different stage production in the show lounge with spectacular talents and a full orchestra. Need more entertainment? Why not relax in a plush seat in the theatre and watch a first-run movie? Too much entertainment? Relax and enjoy the sun in a comfortable lounge chair on deck, play cards in the game room, or try your luck in the casino.

Seven sun-filled days for as low as \$853 per person. Need more information? Call Jim Baehler at **752-6463** for a copy of the cruise brochure.

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from officials, and will consider publication on a *Name Withheld* basis, but the writer's name, address, and phone number must be provided. All letters subject to acceptance, and may be edited for length and clarity. **Preferred methods of submission:** PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main St. for The WIRE, or by e-mail to nyc10044@rcn.com (ASCII text preferred or use any wordprocessing software). Alternatives: Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main St. or faxed to (212) **755-2540**. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. We cannot take telephone dictation of letters.

RIOC Meeting

RIOC Board Plans Private Session

Public Purpose Funds

The RIOC Board looked at the subject of Public Purpose Funds at its Thursday night meeting this week. Board member David Kraut said he was "struck" several years ago when distribution of the funds was first discussed in a public forum, with the notion "that to set up an entity to spend people's money without asking people is not a good way to proceed." Kraut proposed that the leaders of the Island's social service organizations gather together in colloquy on what should be done with the remaining money in the Fund.

Speaking in the public session, several residents expressed varied views on what to do about the \$700,000 or so in remaining funds. Ron Vass, a former member of the RIOC Board, urged the Board to reconsider any plan to "get rid of," or disburse quickly, the remaining funds. "We worked hard to create that fund," he said. "Our dream was to save a million dollars of that money to use as principal, to conserve it so that one day it might grow to two million dollars. I'm going to ask you, if there are any thoughts of just getting rid of the money that's left, I'm going to ask you to reconsider." Vass suggested a freeze on the funds while the matter is considered. "It's a sin to waste it," he concluded.

Others expressed concern about a once-used system of vetting Public Purpose Grants through the RIRA (Residents Association) Common Council and the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations (RICO). Linda Warren spoke of "the old scenario of exclusion," suggesting that interlocked groups of interested parties unfairly controlled distribution of the funds. Lisa Knox, who identified herself as a facilitator for the Roosevelt Island Community Association, "a neighborhood planning group," expressed gratitude that a change in the method of awarding public purpose funds under the RIOC Presidency of Dr. Jerome Blue had made an educational program of the Young Adult League possible. She said she had "sadly witnessed the distribution of Public Purpose Funds by RIRA and RICO at the whimsy of their membership," blaming "neighborhood politics" for a lack of diversity in the use of the Public Purpose money.

DHCR Assistant Commissioner Steven Hicks, chairing the RIOC meeting, asked Kraut to come back to the Board next month with a plan for a meeting of social services leaders to work on the funds question.

Development and the Future

Patrick Stewart, President of RIRA and a member of the RIOC Board, proposed a closed executive session of the Board to consider development matters which, if discussed in public, might adversely affect the Island's interests, and the Board voted unanimously to hold such a session. Leo Kayser described such a session as an opportunity to take into account the interests of all the stakeholders in Island development.

Kayser told Board members and the residents attending the meeting that the Board needs a closed session in order to consider the Island's assets and its financial situation, and to consider questions of governance, "because there are serious issues with respect to governance, and the people on this Island feel that their interests are not being adequately protected by the RIOC management." He continued, "There are potential solutions, and in order to begin to develop

these solutions it's necessary for this Board to feel free to meet among itself in consultation with real-estate brokers and others to whom we can give information concerning finances." He added, "The only way to do this effectively is in an executive session. Patrick Stewart's resolution [for such a session] is al-



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
Former RIOC Board member Ron Vass urged the Board to conserve the Island's Public Purpose Funds

together fitting and proper for our being able to get to these issues and begin to meet the criticisms we all think need to be addressed." Kayser said one criticism had to do with community participation in decisions on the Island's future.

Tramway Subsidies

Matthew Katz, Convener of the Maple Tree Group, told the Board he found the report and editorial on the Tramway in *The WIRE*'s last issue "depressing." He said, "Roosevelt Island falls between the cracks on a great number of services that the rest of the City gets as a matter of course." He suggested that the Transit Authority should be approached to "front" the funding for Metrocard equipment for the Tramway. Or, he suggested, "Perhaps the State of New York, which has been receiving our taxes and has returned no subsidies to the Island, might find a way of subsidizing the Tramway." The Tram, Katz said, should be part of "one city, one fare," as "an essential part of this Island's transportation."

Minicondo Questions

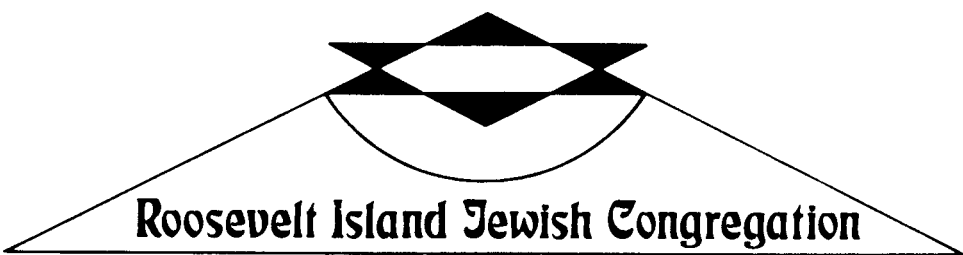
RIRA First Vice President Joan Christianson recounted her own "lack of understanding" of the RIOC Board's June vote to go ahead with conversion of the Island's abandoned west-shore minischools into luxury condominiums, asking a series of questions about the decision and the process that was used to reach the decision.

Her questions went unanswered during the Board meeting. At its end, she pointed out that she had received no answers, and was told by Hicks, "Unfortu-

See RIOC, page 8



State Senator Olga Mendez, facing a tough Primary Election contest on Tuesday, campaigned on Roosevelt Island Thursday, here talking with Joan Pape-Uhle and friend in Trellis. Her opponent, Felix Rosado, has also campaigned on the Island in recent days.



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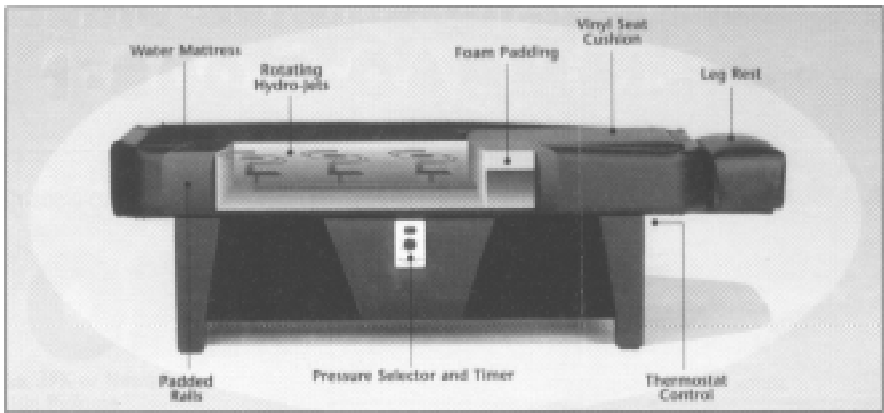
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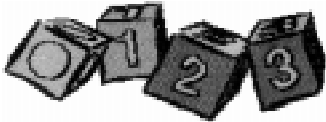
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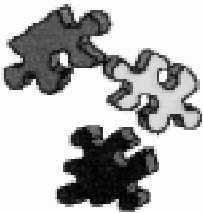
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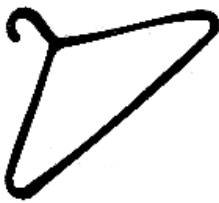
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Three Views: Why Self-Governance Didn’t Pass the Legislature

Floating in Limbo Feud Leaves Leadership of Roosevelt Island in a State of Suspended Animation

by John Dyer

(reprinted in full from the *New York Resident* with permission)
Most residents of Roosevelt Island don’t like the government of their little town, which is run like a colony of the State of New York. But the two people who hold the keys to the Island’s future, Assemblyman Pete Grannis and State Senator Olga Mendez, can’t seem to stop finger-pointing to lift the Island out of limbo.

For the last two years, both Democratic legislators have sponsored bills that would radically alter the makeup of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), the State agency that oversees the area. Bickering between the two politicians has twice sunk passage of the bills, however.

Grannis and Mendez have both accused each other of delaying the overhaul of RIOC. Mendez has accused Grannis of political posturing. She says he’s crafted “one-house bills” that the State Assembly will pass to make him look good, knowing all the while the Governor and State Senate won’t approve them.

On Grannis’s side, Mendez has been charged with carrying water for the Republican majority of the State Senate and for Governor George Pataki.

Roosevelt Island is City property, but in 1969 the State leased the land in order to develop a planned community there. Initially the Island was supposed to be a hamlet of 16,000 people. The State developed only half the land, however, leaving the community with its current population of 8,000. Also never fully ironed out was the way the Island should be managed.

A year ago, a collection of Islanders called The Maple Tree Group began a movement to change the nine-member board of RIOC, whose members are appointed by the Governor and Mayor. Currently, only four members of the board have to be Island residents. The MTG wants to make the board an elected body composed only of residents.

[Editor’s note: The Maple Tree Group was formed three years ago, in 1997. Also, MTG’s current drive is for legislation that would require election of a majority of the RIOC Board members, leaving at least two State officials serving by virtue of their positions as head of the State budget office and of DHCR, the State Department of Housing and Community Renewal.]

“If citizens want something done, they have no elected officials to turn to. The City Council doesn’t have much weight with the State,” says Dick Lutz, editor of *The WIRE*, the Roosevelt Island local paper and a member of Maple Tree. The group believes RIOC is not only undemocratic, but also economically irresponsible.

“We think the RIOC as it exists now has put all of its eggs in the basket of development,” says Matthew Katz, also a member of Maple Tree.

During the last legislative session, Grannis and Mendez heeded the call of their constituents and moved to change RIOC into an Islander-controlled agency. They both crafted bills that would make seven of the nine board members residents, all of whom would be elected.

Grannis spokesperson Tony Morenzi says that by the end of the session, Mendez, who supported the Governor’s election campaigns and who had been negotiating with Pataki and Senate leaders over the issue, changed her bill to lift the financial obligations the State has to the Island. While the State no longer subsidizes RIOC, which raises money off leased real estate, Mendez’s bill would have made RIOC, and not the State, liable for any new expenses that RIOC might incur in the future.

Given that Roosevelt Island has a deteriorating infrastructure, which will need to be improved in the future – including a sea wall that requires over \$6 million in repairs – Grannis could not support Mendez’s bill, according to Morenzi. And so it died.

“When we found out about it, there was no way,” says Morenzi. “Olga’s the one who’s friends with the Governor. She doesn’t want to say she’s all for the Governor, but she drags her heels on a bill the Governor wants to drag her heels on. If Mendez really wanted something to happen on this bill, she could have made it happen.”

This session’s failed bill falls on Grannis’s lap, claims Mendez. She argues that since she is in the Senate minority, she has to be friends with Republicans if she wants to accomplish anything. She says Grannis could have participated in her negotiations with Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and the Governor last year, but refused. As a result, she got burned.

Grannis rushed his bill though committees in the Assembly, which would have passed his one-sided version, making it look as if she wasn’t in support of the legislation.

This year, Mendez decided she would take a new bill seriously only if Speaker Sheldon Silver announced that it was one of his priorities. “I said, ‘You get the commitment, Pete, and then I’ll move and call people,’” says Mendez.

As it stands now, she says Grannis wants to work on the legislation in special session, which rarely happens unless a bill is at the top of Albany’s agenda. Nobody expects action on the bill this year.

Grannis’s View: No Attention in the Senate

Self-Governance Legislation Moves in Assembly
Self-governance has long been a priority of many Roosevelt Island residents and of mine. It is widely accepted that the current management structure of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) ill serves the Island community. Working with the support of the Island’s Maple Tree Group and others, I carried a bill this year with Senator Mendez to transform RIOC into a public benefit corporation controlled by duly-elected Island residents which in-

Editor’s note: Assemblymember Pete Grannis’s perspective on the passage of self-governance legislation for Roosevelt Island was given in his latest constituent newsletter, which arrived in Island mailboxes late last week. His comments on Roosevelt Island are reproduced here in their entirety.

corporates provisions that will protect both the Island’s long-term interests and the pocketbooks of its residents. The bill was reported favorably by three key Assembly Committees to the Assembly floor, where its final approval was never in question. Unfortunately, as the session drew to a close, the bill received no attention in the Senate. In fact, throughout the session there was never any indication from the Senate leaders or the Governor that they had any interest in transferring control of the Island’s destiny to its residents.

Complicating a move to self-governance is the fact that RIOC has no authority to raise funds for dealing with the Island’s capital needs, which are substantial. These include repairing the Island’s vital perimeter seawall, which the Army Corps of Engineers figures conservatively will cost \$6 million, and extensive work needed at the Good Shepherd Chapel, Blackwell House, and the Octagon Building. Despite assurances from some quarters that money for these and other projects could be found in RIOC’s current and future budgets without the State assistance eliminated by Governor Pataki over the past several years, I was skeptical. Budget figures released by RIOC in May showed a surplus of only \$19,243 for the past fiscal year and a project surplus of only \$35,000 for the upcoming year. The legislation sets out the State’s responsibility for identifying, repairing and maintaining these and other aspects of the Island’s physical infrastructure which has suffered under the Pataki administration as well as its responsibility for sharing in future capital expenditures.

I care deeply about the well-being of the Island community and am fully committed to the concept of self-governance. I will continue to do all I can to push for a meaningful, responsible self-governance structure to guide the Island’s future.

Strengthening the Seawall

Legislation to place Roosevelt Island’s seawall under the jurisdiction of the DEC was recently signed by the Governor. Authorizing DEC stewardship of seawall erosion prevention efforts will mean that future Island seawall projects will be eligible for the same funding consideration as are projects on the other coastlines of New York State already named in the law. While this will certainly help, RIOC will still be responsible for sharing part of the cost for any seawall projects.

Preserving Good Shepherd Chapel

The Chapel is an important Island resource, serving both the religious and community needs of residents. In this year’s budget, I am pleased to report that I secured an additional grant of \$50,000 for repairs needed to protect this historic structure. This brings the total funding I have secured for this project over the past few years to \$250,000. I am hopeful that the work needed on the roof, masonry, drainage system, leaded windows and exterior doors, which is being done under the auspices of the New York Landmarks Conservancy’s Sacred Sites Program, will finally begin this fall. Unfortunately, the commencement of this project has been delayed by the inability of RIOC and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to agree on the terms of the contract.

Editor’s note: Both Assemblymember Grannis and Senator Mendez mention seawall legislation in their views published here. The legislation, which the Governor signed into law, amends earlier legislation to include the Roosevelt Island shoreline as eligible for State and Federal matching funds. Its actual impact on rehabilitation and maintenance of the Island’s seawall is not yet clear, however, because the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation’s budget does not provide seawall funds to be matched, and it is not yet clear what the source of such funds would be.

Mendez’s View: No Feud, No Coordination

by State Senator Olga Mendez

I have been reading with great interest the rhetoric regarding the issue of self-governance for Roosevelt Island. As most who know me can attest, I have never engaged in rhetoric nor have I taken a stand for the sake of “appearing” to do so. In an article appearing in the *New York Resident* it was reported that a feud between myself and Assemblymember Grannis has left the issue of self-governance “in a state of suspended animation.” Furthermore, in his “end of session report,” not only does Assemblymember Grannis place the inaction on self-governance at my feet; he takes full credit for passage of the “seawall” bill which his own staff, through Mr. Morenzi, categorized as a bill that would do absolutely nothing nor provide any funds for Roosevelt Island.

For the record, I am not, nor do I have a reason to be, in a feud with Assemblymember Grannis. What I did make clear, as I consistently state, was that I would leave to Assemblymember Grannis the leadership for drafting a bill (which he did) that I would wholeheartedly support (which I did), but I stressed that, since he is in the majority in his house and has leadership there, the only way to get action in the Senate (or at least to have the issue taken seriously) was for him to get the Speaker of the Assembly to make self-governance a priority/must-do bill in the Assembly. Those are not fighting words. That is strategy – working together to achieve a legitimate goal.

Two years ago, when I drafted a bill on self-governance that Assemblymember Grannis did not support, the fact that he did not participate in negotiating the bill along with me was his prerogative. According to Mr. Grannis, he did not want to sit down with the Governor’s people. Contrary to what people want to interpret, I do not take that as his having a problem with me. I take it for what he said, that he does not want to sit down with the Governor’s people. Mr. Grannis, or Mr. Morenzi, as reported in the *New York Resident*, can categorize me any way they want; that I am a good friend of Mr. Pataki, good friends of the Republican majority in the Senate, or that I, as unbelievable as it was for me when I read it, “drags her heels on a bill the Governor wants to drag her heels on (sic).” The bottom line is this: my willingness to sit down and negotiate is not dictated by Mr. Grannis’s unwillingness to do so. It is dictated by my desire to advocate for the desires and needs of my constituents.

With regard to Mr. Grannis’s “end of session report,” where he writes about the “seawall” bill, I would give credit where credit is due. Mr. Grannis sponsored the bill in the Assembly and it was passed there first, but, had I not approached the Majority Leader himself and asked that he allow the bill to come out of committee and onto the floor of the Senate

(on the last day of session), that bill would never have passed both houses and gone to the Governor for signature. That bill had been pre-negotiated and drafted by the Governor’s program office, so that both houses agreed on the same version and, because it had the Governor’s input, its passage and signing were not in doubt. This is an example of what needs to be done on the issue of self-governance.

I want to take this opportunity to issue a challenge to Assemblymember Grannis. It is this: Let us stop this whole nonsense of finger-pointing. I am tired of it and more I am tired of fighting it out in the press. We both know the legislative process well enough not to attempt to insult the intelligence of our constituents and make them believe that in a divided Legislature negotiating and horse-trading are not required on any piece of legislation, and especially one as controversial and emotionally charged as self-governance. I don’t owe anything to, nor have anything against Assemblymember Grannis, except to expect (and he expect from me as well) that when our mutual constituents have an issue of great importance, we work *together* on their behalf. I serve in a Republican-controlled house and am consistently criticized as working too much with the Republicans. All that I have to say about that is that I work hard for my district, and negotiating with Republicans helps me to accomplish what I need to for my constituents. I do not compromise my district for the sake of partisanship and then blame others for my unwillingness to negotiate. My commitment to Roosevelt Island residents is to take the higher road, accept whatever responsibility may be mine for whatever reasons self-governance has not been successful, work in a bipartisan way to make it a reality, and ask my good friend Assemblymember Grannis to do the same and join me in finally getting something done.

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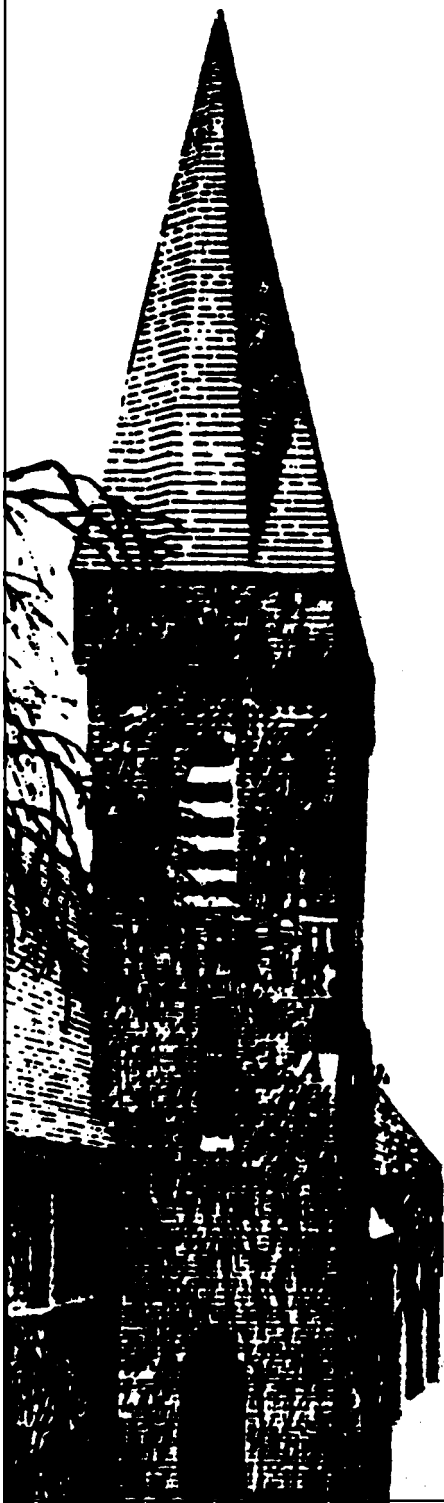
8:30 AM: Sunday School – Bring your children. Donuts and milk, the newest and best teaching materials, devoted teachers. (Lower Community Room)

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Island History Embodied in Chapel of the Good Shepherd

As told to Anusha Shrivastava
by Judith Berdy,
President, Roosevelt Island Historical Society

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd dates back to 1888, when George N. Bliss, a New York banker, paid for it through the New York Episcopal Mission Society. The Chapel cost him \$80,000 over the two years of its construction, even though the first estimate he had been given was a mere \$5000.



The Chapel was intended for the use of the inmates of the Almshouse situated on the Island, then called Blackwell’s Island after the Blackwell family, which owned the Island until the City bought it in 1828. It had a seating capacity of four hundred. It had a large reading room, a robing room for the clergy and a room for the use of the Mission Society workers in the basement.

The Chapel was designed by the architect Frederick Clarke Withers, an Englishman trained in Great Britain. He moved to New York in 1852 and, in 1888, formed a partnership with Walter Dickson. The two together designed several buildings on the Island, including the Strecker Memorial Laboratory and three brick structures for the Almshouse. The high Victorian Gothic Jefferson Market Courthouse, located in Greenwich Village, is the best known of Withers’s New York City work.

Primarily an ecclesiastical architect, Withers was a strong advocate of the Gothic style for churches and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd illustrates his conceptions of what a church should be. In his book, *Church Architecture* (1873), Withers recommends the combining of different materials for picturesque effect. The exterior of the Chapel is constructed with a number of materials and the red brick is interspersed with gray brick in a modified version of Flemish

bond. Brownstone window and door enframements contrast with the brick and rough-faced gray stone of the basement story. This gray stone, used for most of the institutional buildings on the Island, is the gray granite, or gneiss, which was quarried on the Island since the 18th Century.

Two ascending stairways lead inside. Originally, men and women from the Almshouse used separate entrances to reach the interior of the Chapel. The nave terminates in the chancel and semicircular apse. At the northeast, the bell tower, with broach spire, provides a strong and effective note of asymmetry. The bell of the tower, now displayed in the plaza, is five-toned, as Withers found single-toned bells “doleful and monotonous.”

The large Gothic rose window of the entrance facade is set within a brownstone pointed-arch enframement decorated with carved roundels. A third roundel is located near the

apex of the gable. The original stained-glass windows have geometric patterns except in the five windows of the apse, which depict the four Evangelists, surrounding Christ, the Good Shepherd. The relative austerity of the design was probably considered the most suitable for a poorhouse chapel.

An interesting anecdote about the completion of the Church involves the monogram FCW inscribed on the wrought iron finial on the stone spire, visible to the naked eye. They are the initials of the architect, Frederick Clarke Withers. The priest of the Chapel, Rev. W. G. French, thought they were his initials, WGF, and went to thank the archdeacon at the office of the City Missionary Society. It was thought best not to inform him of the error of his understanding, as the monogram could easily have stood for either of the two men’s names, being so similar looking.

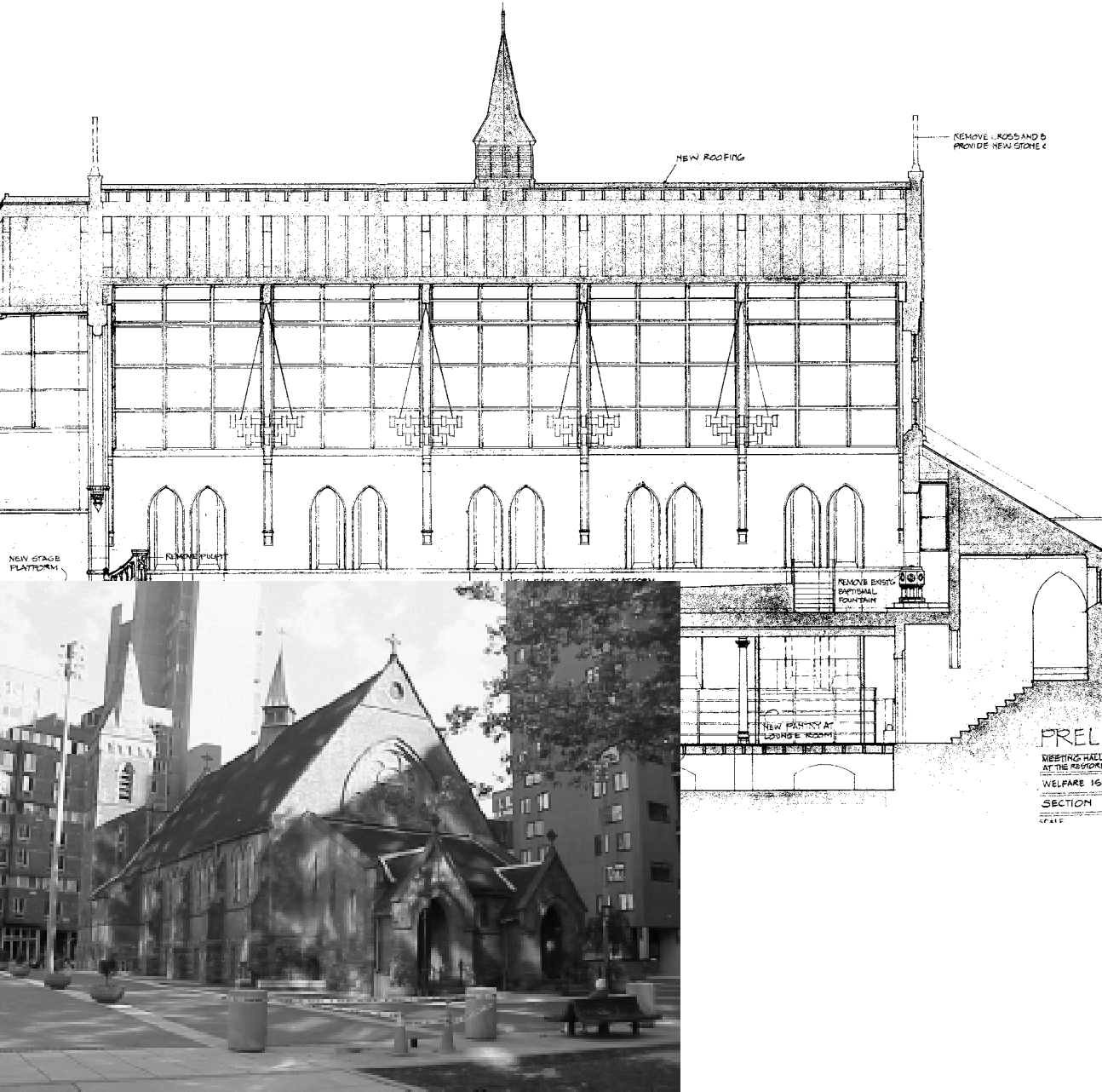
During the 20th Century, many of the institutional buildings on the Island became obsolete, and ferry service to the Island was discontinued in 1956. The Chapel closed its doors in 1958. It reopened only in October of 1975, after restoration by the New York architect Giorgio Cavaglieri, who had earlier adapted the Jefferson Market Courthouse to a library. The red-brick plaza surrounding the chapel was designed by the architectural firm Johansen and Bhavnani.

In 1976, the Landmarks Preservation Commission found that the Chapel had a special character and designated it a Landmark Building. It was found to be “a fine example of the late Victorian Gothic style, a work of superb craftsmanship designed by a prominent British-born 19th Century architect,” that for several years had “played an important role as the chapel of the City’s Almshouse,” and in its new surroundings it provided “an interesting and charming contrast to the new housing.”

The Chapel has not been restored since 1975 and seems to be in need of “a millennium George Bliss” to do the job. As Sister Regina Palamara says, “We need some rich person to pay for the cleaning of the stones of the Chapel.”



The crest at the west end of Chapel of the Good Shepherd contains a monogram of the architect's initials.



RIOC from page 3

nately, the Board is not here to answer questions from the public.” There were various expressions of consternation from residents, but the meeting ended there (related editorial, page 2).

RIOC Staff Attorney Kenneth Leitner did report that there had been two sessions with developer Diane Wilson to work out the schedule for her to meet specific conditions – such as financing – for her proceeding with the project. Patrick Stewart pointed out that the Board’s resolution giving Wilson the go-ahead subject to those conditions was passed in June, and that “she’s essentially had 90 days ‘free’ [time], it seems to me.” Like Christianson, Stewart asked for more specifics, but Hicks said that matter would be put off to the next meeting.

Ryan’s Report

RIOC President Robert Ryan reported to the Board and the community on a number of items, in part responding to questions raised by those who took the microphone during the public session:

- He thanked residents who wrote letters to the State Banking Commission about Chase Bank leaving Roosevelt Island, saying that officials, including RIOC, are working on the problem, hoping that Chase will stay “at least three days a week” until a replacement bank has been found. Ryan said that 99 letters had gone out to prospect banks, and five had expressed an interest, with two scheduled to visit next week.
- Ryan said RIOC “is as frustrated as you are” about lighting problems on Main Street. It’s a ConEd problem, he said, adding that he might ask members of the community to contact ConEd to exert pressure as in the case of Chase. It’s not RIOC’s fault, he said, “and on this we’re getting a bad rap.”
- Ryan reported that demolition of the Manhattan Tramway station stairway will begin in about two weeks. Replacement of the stairway with a revised design (intended to allow access to a planned building) will take about six weeks, he said.
- Ryan also reported a meeting with officials from State parks and Historic Preservation, and said he feels progress is being made toward getting grants for work on the Island’s parks and landmarks. His comments provided a partial answer to a question in the public session from Historical Association President Judith Berdy, who said she is “depressed, discouraged” about the Island’s park areas and landmarks.

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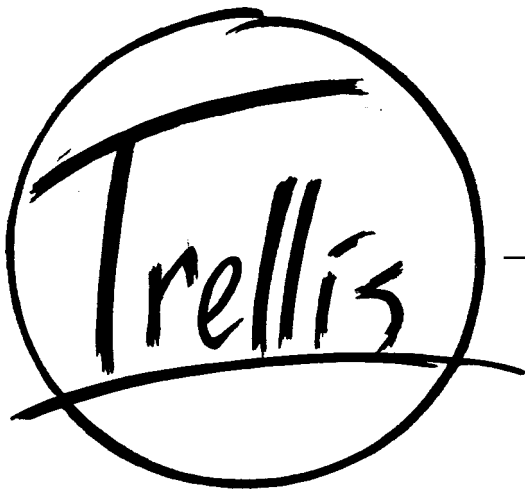
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Green from page 1

tant job of all, however, is to listen to people. I listen not only to the seniors’ demands and complaints but also to the stories of their lives. I have realized over the years that, despite being from different countries, we are not all that different. Our lives have been similar. I was just talking to an 89-year-old Italian woman, and realized that our experiences were not dissimilar at all. Had I been sitting across from her in the subway, I would have thought there would be nothing in common between us, but the more we talked, the more we found common strands,” she says.



Dolores Green is known for her enthusiasm in conducting RISA meetings and in producing the group’s fashion shows.

In order to build bridges, Dolores has embarked on what she calls her “cultural quest.” “I am making every effort to ensure that all the holidays of the different ethnic groups are celebrated and that we learn about one another’s cultures. The cultural diversity of the Island is something to be celebrated, and that will happen only if we take the time to listen to each other. When people don’t bother listening to one another, prejudices arise. People often get passionate about what is different from their point of view. I believe that you should not get upset if it does not hurt you. For the success of the projects on the Island, people should fight together for what they want, not

against one another,” says Green. Going into a pensive mood, Green admits that she hates politics of any kind. “I like to avoid unpleasantness. I watch only comedies and try not to be bothered by the news. We have all had hard lives, and it is time now to relax and enjoy ourselves. The seniors have all had tragedies in their lives but, when they come down to the Center, I want them to be happy. We need our peace of mind.”

Grace Wilson, Dolores’s friend of 30 years, says that Dolores is a good person who loves doing what she does. “Her work at the Senior Center is a labor of love. She is intelligent and respects people for what they are. She keeps you laughing so that you are never depressed when you are around her. She can take a serious situation and bring levity to it.”

“I am a dreamer of sorts,” says Green. “I look at the world through rose-tinted glasses. My personal dream is to give up smoking. For the Island, I pray that it remains a safe haven in the middle of Manhattan.”

Katz from page 1

RIRA is not functioning is that we’ve taken things personally rather than putting the community first. It is time for you to elect people who will put the community first, rather than personal ambitions.” (Last month, Stewart told *The WIRE* he has not yet made a decision on whether to run for a third two-year term as RIRA President.)

Katz, in his most critical comment about Stewart’s administration, said, “What’s wrong here? When the Common Council votes time after time to do good works for this Island and then doesn’t follow through? What’s going on here? It’s a lack of leadership. That’s what’s going on.”

Both Katz and Gaspard expressed a desire to reshape RIRA into a more active organization; both said they would attempt to make it more responsive to residents.

“At present,” Katz told the Eastwood meeting, “the power seems to emanate from the top down, and there doesn’t seem to be much interest in using the organization other than for these monthly meetings on Wednesday nights. It seems to me that the real purpose of this organization is to get the work done between the meetings – that the work is supposed to be done by the committees set up to do it. And yet, everything seems to be put on these single meetings once a month. Three hours, four hours, we yell and we scream. We never get to new business, we never get to old business. Nothing ever happens because there’s no discipline in running the meeting. The business just doesn’t get done. That’s part of the job of RIRA President. He has to know how to run a meeting. I know how to run a meeting.”

But Katz reserved his most critical moments for a discussion of RIOC and the present management structure of Roosevelt Island. “Last February we found out that the report by the Corps of Engineers on the seawall had been completed. Pete Grannis got a copy, RIOC got a copy, the President of RIRA got a copy. Who didn’t get a copy of it? The community. It’s now eight months later and we still don’t have a copy of it. What’s going on? We keep hearing these rumors that there is \$6 million in work necessary for that seawall out there. OK – is that all this year? Or is that over five years or ten years? And does that include the repairs, or is that the repairs and the maintenance? Or is that the repairs and the maintenance and a new seawall down at Southpoint? We don’t know. Nobody tells us.”

Katz was critical of the RIOC decision to

stay out of the Metrocard system. “We’re told that the cost of getting the equipment for Metrocard on the Tram is about \$700,000. That’s enough to run the Transit Authority for about 15 minutes. Why on earth can’t the TA front us the money, install the Metrocard system, return some of the money to us, and take out of that money the cost of the machinery that needs to be installed – amortize it over ten years? There are ways to do this if people have the will to do it. I don’t see the RIOC Board doing that. Not now, not ever. They need to be replaced.”

Katz also criticized RIOC for its handling of development. “RIOC supervised all these meetings that we had on Southtown, in which they told us everything they knew about it, and wanted to know why we were bugging them for more information.” He listed a series of questions about Southtown, saying the answer was consistently, “We don’t know.”



After introducing Matthew Katz, Byron Gaspard listened as Katz announced he is a candidate for the RIRA Presidency.

He added, “RIRA represents the community and the community has to have a seat at the table for development. If they build the Marriott Hotel on Southpoint, the amount of traffic that will increase on our little Main Street will be humongous. There will be food trucks, and sanitation trucks, and three shifts of employees coming and going, and linen deliveries, and everything else that is involved with a major Marriott Hotel 24 hours a day. That’s what we can expect on Main Street.

“RIOC just took a vote on the minicondos. Every single person who voted at the Town Meetings was against it. The Capital Planning and Development Committee was against it. Nine members of the RIOC Board voted for the project... OK, eight voted for it, and one of them, the RIRA President, declined to vote. He abstained. Here was an opportunity for the RIRA President to make

At the Open



Julia Chang

Look again... It’s not Venus or Serena Williams at the U.S. Open... It’s Roosevelt Island’s Claude Cruz, a Westview resident, who invariably shows up at the Williams sisters’ New York tourneys dressed as they dress. Reportedly, Venus enjoys seeing him in look-alike dress. Cruz is a member of RITA, the Roosevelt Island Tennis Association.

Nursery from page 1

ing more sections if needed.”

There are places available in the music and art classes at Island Kids, though. “We have filled our music, art and tumbling classes for the walking to three-year-old kids but we do have room for more four-year-old children in the classes. We have an experienced new music teacher whom we are simply waiting to introduce to the kids. Irene Clark is an Islander and has over two decades of experience in music and dance,” says Gina.

Classes at Island Kids cost less than \$100 per semester per class. The cost of attending the Learning Group is also substantially lower than comparative programs elsewhere, at approximately \$1000 per semester.

The Day Nursery, which is seen to be the “expensive” school, is the one that has the most spots available, with only six four-year-olds enrolled for the full-day program. This is despite the fact that the school has funds from the Board of Education to subsidize some families. Sara Seiden, the Director, says, “The Board wants to encourage families to enroll four-year-olds, because it is good for their socialization. The exposure to varied stimuli means that they will be more successful at school later on. This is why they have offered us, a community-based organization which has been in the field for over twenty-five years, more money to make the program affordable.”

The tuition for a full-day program (8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) for the whole semester could be reduced from \$7,700 to \$5,500 with the subsidy. Families who require more support could apply for a scholarship and fur-

a statement: ‘This is what the community wants; we are united on this matter.’ It was an opportunity lost.”

On Southtown, Katz was critical of RIRA’s lack of preparedness to challenge construction on land many believe to be designated, in the Island’s General Development Plan, for open space or parkland. He said that when City Councilmember Gifford Miller suggested May 8, 1999, that residents put together a \$100,000 litigation war chest to demand a voice in Southtown decisions, RIRA President Stewart opposed fund-raising, saying it wasn’t yet time to ask the community to give funds for a legal effort.

Katz also put forward a plan for revision of the RIRA constitution. Among other things, his proposed changes would remove non-elected Common Council members, such as those appointed by organizations like RICO (the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations) from the body. Katz pointed out that RICO has been inactive for some time, but still sends representatives to Common Council meetings.

SPORTSWIRE

FOOTBALL The calendar says September and that means football is in season. The Roosevelt Island Youth Program is registering youth ages 11-16 for a Flag Football program to be played primarily on Saturday afternoons beginning October 7 and continuing through the middle of December. Registration forms are available at the Youth Center (505 Main Street). Registration will close September 16.

Schwab from page 1

Schwab can be reached at his home phone, **838-3184**.

Schwab was active in the early days of New York City’s Reform Democratic movement, was elected three times to the Village Board in Mamaroneck, New York, and participated in appointment of the village’s first trained, professional Village Manager. “That’s something I’d like to see happen here, too, as the first act under self-governance,” he says.

On Roosevelt Island, Schwab has served on the Westview/Island House Task Force, the RIRA Common Council, and the Library Board. His late wife, Lois, served for 15 years at the Library as volunteer cataloguer and children’s reference librarian.

ther bring that cost down to about \$3,000. “I urge parents to come to talk to me,” says Sara. “They should try to meet me as soon as possible so I can help them access the money to attend this school. All four-year-olds with birth dates in 1996 qualify for aid. If I cannot help get them into my school, I could help connect them to a school where they could go for even less.”

Sara believes that the main reason why people are not bringing their kids to her school is that rents in Manhattan Park have gone up so much this year. “People are choosing to spend their money differently. They figure that their child can wait another year before going to a private school or for a full-day program.”

The public school program being free is certainly a great pull factor for it. Even so, Sara thinks the programs differ enough that there is a need for both on the Island. “What the public school offers is not what the Day Nursery does. There is most certainly a variegated segment that we serve. We are offering a full-day program, which the public school is not. We are definitely not competing against them. The Board of Education has funded both schools knowing this. In fact, the Board is willing to let us expand further, but we do not have the physical space for the expansion. Our costs are going up and, even though the space given is free, we now have to pay for electricity. Maintenance and insurance are expensive. Don’t forget that we are cheaper than a lot of schools in the City,” says Sara.

Sherry Gregory of PS/IS 217 can be reached at **980-0294**, Gina Enock at **758-8408**, and Sara Seiden at **593-0750**.

“What we need here is a revolution of democracy,” Katz said, “and that’s why I’ve been working with MTG for so long toward local democratically-elected government of Roosevelt Island.”

In campaign literature passed out at the Eastwood meeting, Katz made pledges on a series of points, including:

- To act on the community’s views expressed through the majority votes of its elected Council members rather than on his own views. “The president’s power must not override the consensus of the Resident’s Association, but must come from the community that elects him.”
- To increase the diversity of the Common Council through the use of the currently moribund Membership Participation Committee.
- To keep the community informed by re-instituting a regular RIRA President’s Column in *The Main Street WIRE*.

The RIRA election will be held Tuesday, November 7, at the same time as the national election. All residents 18 or over are eligible to vote, whether citizens or not.



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