

Next issue:
November 3-4

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Tough Competitors It’s a toss-up, watching the Kinderkickers Saturday mornings at Capobianco Field, whether they or their parents are more entertaining.

On MiniCondos, a Disconnect Between RIOC Board and Staff

News Analysis by Dick Lutz
The RIOC staff has been working at cross-purposes with the RIOC Board of Directors on the minischools condo conversion project.
At its meeting last week, the Board told the staff to get back in line.
At its June meeting, after a parade of residents blasted the proposed addition of partial second floors to the minischool buildings, the Board of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) stopped short of giving final approval for developer Diane Wilson’s plan to turn the Island’s three west-shore minischools into luxury condominium residences. Attempting to create a hurdle that might be too difficult for Wilson – who is considered an inexperienced developer and whose plan to add a second floor to the minischools is controversial – the Board instructed the RIOC staff to set short-term deadlines for her to have full financing worked out.

Last week – some four months later – the staff reported back.
“We’ve finished our negotiations on the final designation letter,” staff attorney Kenneth Leitner told the Board. “It contains many of the terms that were in the Board resolution.” He then mentioned several provisions, but none for full financing. A Board member then asked him directly: “Does [it] provide for a financing commitment that will cover the entire project?”
“The time frame that we set was for financing for at least one,” Leitner said. That set off a series of exchanges of a kind rarely seen in the RIOC Board’s meetings.
“The financing commitment should be for completion of all the projects,” said Board member Leo Kayser, who had authored the idea of imposing tight deadlines. “You’re going to end up high and dry. You shouldn’t have us at that risk. They could end up with just one of the projects... There’s economies of scale which you’ll be

losing if they default on the rest.”
Leitner responded, “Well, the time frame that we did set was a 60-day time frame... We wanted to allow them to get the first project off the ground.”

See **MiniCondos**, page 10

Candidates

At press time, these candidates had filed or indicated intention to file to run in the RIRA election. Incumbents are indicated by the **i** symbol. Numbers next to buildings indicate the number of Common Council delegates to be elected from that district.

- President**
Matthew Katz
Patrick Stewart **i**
First Vice President
Joan Christianson **i**
Byron Gaspard
Walter Hill
2 River Road (1)
No candidates filed
4 River Road (1)
No candidates filed
10-40 River Road (8)
Sherie Helstien **i**
Sigrid Martin
Mosud Mannan **i**
Eastwood (7)
Gwen Almo-Duvar
Tom Brown
Ruth Collins
Byron Gaspard **i**
Walter Hill **i**
James Kaufman **i**
Mercedes Lugo
Joyce Mincheff **i**
Dorothy Muller
Nneka Pope
James Tendean-Luce
546 Main Street (2)
Dolores Green
Joan Matula **i**
Island House (3)
Judy Berdy **i**
Frank Farance **i**
Vicki Feinmel
Ethel Romm
Karen Stewart
Patrick Stewart
Rivercross (3)
Jeff Hochman (**i** alternate)
Steve Marcus
Larry Parnes
Ron Schuppert **i**
Margie Smith
Olya Turcihin Stern
Richard Wade
Westview (3)
Ken Diebner **i**
Rhoda Jacklin **i**
Patricia Ricketts

RIRA President & VP Contenders Will Debate Wednesday Night Candidates Night a Week Later, on November 1

Roosevelt Island’s version of Presidential and Vice Presidential debates will happen Wednesday night at 8:00 at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.
Five candidates – Patrick Stewart (incumbent) and Matthew Katz for President, and Joan Christianson (incumbent), Byron Gaspard, and Walter Hill for First Vice President are scheduled to make opening statements, then answer written questions submitted by the audience.

The whole affair is scheduled to last 90 minutes, with a moderator directing questions alternately to the candidates for President, who will get about two-thirds of the questions, while Vice Presidential hopefuls will get a third. Answers are to run a minute and a half, and rebuttal answers one minute.
A week later, on November 1, candidates for the Common Council will participate in RIRA’s traditional (and constitutionally-re-

quired) Candidates Night, making brief presentations in their quest for the 33 Common Council seats.
Rules have been worked out between the candidates: Two-minute opening statements, three-minute closing statements, no audience participation or applause. At press time, there was still a question of whether there would be one moderator (RIRA Election Chair, Seymour Williams, has been agreed upon) or two.



Matthew Katz is challenging incumbent Patrick Stewart for the RIRA Presidency



Referendum Question RIRA Puts an Elected RIOC Board on Ballot

Should Island residents elect a majority of the members of the RIOC Board of Directors?
The RIRA Common Council decided at 12:12 a.m. a week ago Wednesday night to put that question on the November 7 Residents Association ballot. The outcome of the referendum will be advisory only, without force of law; any change in the Island’s status would have to be implemented through legislation.

The present members of the RIOC Board (as well as the President of RIOC) are appointed by the Governor, or represent departments of the State Executive branch. Over the years, a number of efforts have been mounted to increase resident representation on the Board (there are resident members at present, all gubernatorial appointees) or to select several or all of the Board members by popular election on Roosevelt Island. The most recent effort has been conducted largely by the Maple Tree Group (MTG), formed in 1997 and later incorporated into RIRA’s committee structure.

The revised form of the ballot question was decided upon after a lengthy discussion largely centered

on the Island’s finances, with Maple Tree Group members arguing in favor of putting the matter on the ballot, and others, led by RIRA President Patrick Stewart, arguing against it. Stewart and Katz are running against each other in the current Residents Association election. (Key comments in the Council’s discussion are available, word-for-word, on Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com.)

The Referendum

I urge immediate passage of legislation that grants residents of Roosevelt Island the right to elect a majority of the RIOC Board of Directors, replacing the current system in which the entire Board is composed of non-elected members appointed by the Governor.

I understand that the new Board will select, hire, and direct professional management to run Roosevelt Island.

Stewart argued against putting the question on the ballot, saying that a change to a mostly-elected RIOC Board would be “fiscal irresponsibility” and “financial suicide.” Katz and Maple Tree Group members countered that the State has not provided subsidies for the Island for years and that a mostly-elected RIOC Board would, if anything, enhance the Island’s ability to procure State funds for its needs.

See **Referendum**, page 10

Briefly...

- **City Councilmember Gifford Miller** became a father Wednesday. The newcomer is Addison, a boy who takes his mother’s family name. After this year’s election, Miller will be the senior member on City Council. Oh, all three – Mom, Addison, and Dad – are doing fine.
- **Nurses Residence Demolition** may start within 30 days, according to David Kramer, who spoke to the RIOC Board meeting last week, representing Southtown developers Related and Hudson.
- The **Tramway stairs** in Manhattan will be demolished and replaced with a more compact scissor stairway. Construction is expected to start shortly and be completed in five weeks to two months.
- **Subway changes** are in the works. Not all decisions are final, but it’s likely the B train will make its final trip within a year, with Q service handling all Roosevelt Island passengers beginning as early as August, 2001. In the meantime, we can expect additional on-and-off shuttle service – for a week in November, and again in January, then more – as the MTA wraps up loose ends on track work. At some point, the eastbound Q train will become an express, making eastbound stops, after Roosevelt Island, only at 21st Street, then Roosevelt Avenue, then Forest Hills.
- **The Senior Fashion Show** is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. November 4.
- RIOC is applying for State funds to rehabilitate **Blackwell House**, which continues to deteriorate.
- **The RIOC Board** has scheduled a closed executive session for 9:30 a.m. Thursday (at The Drake, 440 Park Avenue), to hear from real estate experts. RIOC President Rob Ryan says they’ll discuss ways to set a value for Roosevelt Island properties, which have the unique characteristic that RIOC controls them through a Lease that has 68 years to run.
- Rev. Curtis Hart of the Island’s Protestant Parish has secured donation of a **pipe organ** for Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The components are in the sanctuary, and various interests will now consider how the instrument might be installed within the rules governing the Chapel’s historic landmark status.

The Editorial Page

Sampling Democracy

Two years ago at the time of the November election, *The WIRE's* Anusha Shrivastava wrote a moving article about first-time voters – Island residents from foreign lands who had never before stepped inside a voting booth to participate in the democratic choice of representatives in a government. The piece struck a stirring C-major chord because it was a poignant reminder of something so many Americans take for granted – the right to vote in a democratic expression of collective choice. It's still the case: **Every Island resident 18 or over has the right to vote in the Residents Association election November 7.**

In fact, in legislation aimed at giving Islanders the right to elect a majority of members of the RIOC Board of Directors, that right is specifically preserved. When it becomes law, *all* residents, regardless of citizenship, will participate in an expanded democracy for Roosevelt Island. But until such legislation becomes law, there will be an oddly dissonant note in the harmony of democracy. For while all residents of age can express themselves in the RIRA election, they have no real say in the running of Roosevelt Island. While they can elect representatives to the RIRA Common Council, the RIRA Common Council has no practical influence on how Roosevelt Island is operated. That's because RIOC runs the Island, and under current law the RIOC Board and President are appointed, from Albany, by the Governor. The legislation would change that. But without it...

As Common Councilor Joyce Mincheff has eloquently put it, they've taken a whole level of government away from us, because our City Councilmember, our State Senator and Assemblymember, even our New York City Mayor – none of them has any real power over the way things are done here. That's why, on the November 7 RIRA ballot, you'll find a question (article, page 1) asking you to express your preference on this simple point of political philosophy: **Should Roosevelt Island residents have the power to elect a majority of the members of the RIOC Board of Directors?** A **Yes** vote on that question will help connect the dots of democracy here. It will signal our legislators, in an echo of 1998's 92% approval of the idea of a locally-elected RIOC Board, that we expect them to get on with lawmaking that will empower Roosevelt Islanders not just to vote for RIRA Common Councilors, but to vote for those who sit in the *real* seats of power around the RIOC Board table. It will signal, too, that it's time for professional management of this community to replace the lineage of political appointees who – as bad or as good as they may be at their jobs – do those jobs without the democratic sanction of those who are governed. The November 7 election has a special significance, then. For citizens of other lands, it is a sampling of American democracy. For them, and for the rest of us, it is an opportunity to call for the extension of the democratic idea into this local community – making it, and us, whole once again.



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Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Chief Feature Writer – Anusha Shrivastava
Ombudsman – Armand Schwab – **838-3184**
Chief Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Proofreaders – Linda Heimer, Frances Salten
Chief Photographer – Margery Rubin
Photographers – Vicki Feinmel, Ronnie Stuart
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
Circulation Managers – George Rubin, Sherie Helstien
Website NYC10044 Archivist – Dejan Zaric
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Letters

To the Editor:
I've been an Island House RIRA representative for the past four years and feel that the organization's past 18 months have been totally unproductive. *The WIRE*, and subsequent letters to *The WIRE*, reported that the September RIRA meeting turned into a brawl over the word "ex-officio" in a statement by Joyce Mincheff. Joyce was objecting that Patrick Stewart, RIRA President, had accepted an appointment by the Governor to the RIOC Board of Directors without insisting that it be an "ex officio" appointment – that is, a result of his RIRA Presidency. The "ex-officio" topic is the tip of the iceberg. It exemplifies the conflicting interests of RIRA's leadership. RIRA legal activity is thoroughly infested with apparent conflicts of interest.

Patrick Stewart is the RIRA President and also a RIOC board member. He serves on the Board at the pleasure of Governor Pataki, not in an ex-officio capacity resulting from his RIRA Presidency. In his RIOC role, he has no accountability to the residents of Roosevelt Island. His appointment to the RIOC Board will not end when his RIRA Presidency ends, unless he chooses to resign at that time.

Karen Stewart, Patrick's wife, has a particular unofficial, but very influential role in RIRA activities. Karen is helping manage RIRA legal activity on Southtown, assisting Joan Christianson, who heads RIRA's Legal Action Fund Committee (LAFC). Karen and Joan are the only people permitted to talk to RIRA's attorneys. Why does Patrick Stewart's wife have special access, unlike elected members of the RIRA Common Council and, in particular, its LAFC members? Patrick and Joan make the case that Karen has done some hard work and an exception should be made. Extra volunteers are great, even spouses, except when their role causes a conflict of interest.

Unfortunately, there are several problems with this arrangement. Karen and Joan have been working with attorney Jeff Glen from DeForest and Duer (D&D) to determine whether or not RIRA should sue RIOC over violations of the General Development Plan (GDP) in the proposed Southtown development. In other words, Karen Stewart has been doing research on whether or not to sue RIOC, which includes her husband as a Board member. Are we supposed to believe that the wife of the RIRA president would actually make the case for suing RIOC and, potentially, having her husband subpoenaed or deposed? Of course not.

Karen and Joan defend RIRA's failure to act, saying, "D&D advised RIRA not to sue RIOC" before the Article 78 filing deadline. After the deadline, RIRA eventually filed a tagalong motion to "intervene" in the actions filed by Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee, headed by Robert Chira. As a result, RIRSD and Chira may get to the negotiating table with RIOC, while RIRA will have, at best, a back seat in discussions.

How did this legal strategy help RIRA or Island residents? RIRA has spent a lot of money, but little of it went towards efforts that took action to benefit the Island. RIRA did not get good value for our legal dollar. One might ask how it is possible to consistently get bad/ineffective legal advice?

Something doesn't make sense about this until one becomes aware that Shirley Margolin (former head of SAHE, a predecessor to RIOC) recommended Jeff Glen from D&D to represent RIRA. He is the husband of Rosina Abramson, a former head of RIOC. Thus, Jeff Glen might be seen as discouraging certain litigation strategies that could affect his wife, who might be subpoenaed or deposed regarding her actions when head of RIOC. Likewise, by all appearances, Karen Stewart might attempt to steer RIRA's litigation to avoid any effect on her husband, who serves on both the RIOC Board and as RIRA President.

(For example, the City Department of Environmental Protection [DEP] apparently designated funds for RIOC to repair Octagon Park. It appears that RIOC requested the DEP to mark the funds as "discretionary." The possible use of these funds related to the Southtown development is one of the causes of action in the litigation brought by RIRSD against RIOC.)

In short, RIRA legal activity is thoroughly infested with apparent conflicts of interest.

What did Roosevelt Island residents get for these apparent conflicts of interest? We first got inaction, then a hasty intervention that confused the judge and thereby derailed RIRSD's case. All in all, a terribly poor defense of resident interests in Southtown development, and a big legal bill (about \$10,000) that exhausted RIRA's funds. Because RIRA didn't take timely action, RIRSD and Chira had to do all the "heavy lifting."

Island residents deserve a better defense of their concerns, and Island residents deserve a better, conflict-free RIRA with real leadership. Hopefully, the next RIRA will do much better.

Frank Farance

Dear Neighbors and Community Organizers:
The Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations (RICO) has retained the services of a professional market research firm to complete a survey of all active Island organizations. The funding for the survey is provided through grant monies RICO secured from the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. In order to convey accurate activities of Island organizations to current and potential residents, a survey will be conducted of all currently known Island groups. In coming weeks, each group will be contacted for a telephone interview that will last no longer than five minutes. We hope you will respond, thus providing us all with worthwhile knowledge. If you are not reached, the organization of which you are a member can contact RICO at **755-7350**. Thank you, in advance, for your time and cooperation.
Susan Whitaker, Chair
Audrey Berman
Byron Gaspard
Shirley Margolin
Ron Schuppert

To the Editor,
The attack on RIOC has become a cottage industry on this Island since Dr. Jerome Blue was its chief. No one opposed his administration more than I did. I apologize not at all for that effort. But RIOC has just completed the renewal of Good Shepherd Plaza. I have lived here for 25 years; it has never been better. At dinner time it is filled with children and their parents with its wonderful chaos, and inordinate noise.

For those of us less frisky, it is a continuing daily drama and the embodiment of the whole Island's promise. Even the pigeons retreat happily to the periphery. Some of us have used the Plaza for a little conversation, or to avoid it elsewhere. I used to begin and end my tours there with foreign planners and journalists who regarded the Island as the most successful "new town" anywhere. Under Dr. Blue the area collapsed: benches became unsafe, parents worried about accidents, and it was just not quite clean.

It is now a pleasant place for all of us – the geezers, the visitors, and the incomparable off-Broadway performance before dinner, and all under the custody of our great elm trees. It includes the latest prize-winning orthopedically-designed benches for the variety of its users.

Rob Ryan and RIOC deserve our thanks for an important job well done. There are still lots of other things needing RIOC's immediate attention. But this has been a star performance.

Richard C. Wade

To the Editor:
When I voted for Senator Olga Mendez in the Primary, I did not know that she was anti-choice, nor that she had an excellent pro-choice, Democratic opponent, Assemblymember Felix Rosado. I learned this only the day after the Primary and the day after that, when lovely materials from Felix Rosado appeared in my mailbox.

This puzzled me so that I wrote him and learned, "these mailings were delivered to the Church Street Station Distribution Center more than a week before the election and poised for delivery on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday prior to Election Day (three mailings were planned). Somehow, mysteriously, these mailings were lost..."

Are we living in a democracy – or in Soviet Russia?

Frances Salten

Letters deadline for
Nov. 4 issue: Oct. 29
Letters received after deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

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.

Website NYC10044
carries supplemental materials on many reports appearing in
The Main Street WIRE
http://www.nyc10044.com
(Back issues and color photo features, too.)

The Main Street **WIRE**

CARIBBEAN CRUISE

Sailing Feb.10, 2001 from Ft. Lauderdale

Have you noticed that the air is a bit cooler lately? This is a preview of colder weather that is coming. It is lovely when the leaves turn red and gold, but soon after our noses will be turning red and our faces getting cold. Yes, winter will soon be here and the official forecast is for much more severe weather than the past two years. El Nino and La Nina are no longer present and able to keep the jet stream north of us. Those polar cold fronts are expected to make this winter one of the coldest in recent years. Are you going to spend the whole winter shivering and stomping through snow or will you join us on the Century for a seven-day mid-winter break sailing the cobalt blue waters of the Caribbean? Let those warm tropical breezes waft over you as you recline in your deck lounge sipping a pina colada while a calypso band plays in the background. We will have fine dining every day and exceptional entertainment every night. There will be exotic ports of call and friends from Roosevelt Island to share the experience. Call Jim Baehler at **752-6463** for full details and a copy of the cruise ship brochure.



Did you know? All Island residents over 18, regardless of citizenship, can vote in the RIRA election.

COMING UP

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

Sun., Oct. 22, 5-7 p.m., RIRSD Champagne Party Fund-Raiser, Manhattan Park Theater Club. For tickets and details, call **688-8907**.

Mon., Oct. 23, 8:00 p.m., Roosevelt Island Toastmasters. Guests welcome. For meeting location and information, call **583-0842**.

Wed., Oct. 25, 7:00 p.m., Glee Club, 546 Main Street. Open to singers of all ages and abilities.

Wed., Oct. 25, 8:00 p.m., RIRA President and Vice President Candidates Debate, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Oct. 28, 6:30 p.m., Halloween Parade of Lights, the Island's traditional Halloween Parade. Starts at Blackwell House. (For details, see advertisement on page 7.)

Mon., Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m., Maple Tree Group meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., Nov. 1, 7:00 p.m., Dirty Donations, second class in RIJC adult education series, Cultural Center, 548 Main Street. Free.

Wed., Nov. 1, 7:00 p.m., Glee Club, 546 Main Street.

Wed., Nov. 1, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Candidates Night, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., Nov. 3, 6:30 p.m., PTA of PS/IS 217 general membership meeting, at the school.

Sat., Nov. 4, next scheduled issue of **The Main Street WIRE**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., October 27; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., October 30; bag materials due Thur., November 2. **Future issues:** November 18 (Thanksgiving business cards issue); December 2, 16 (Holiday issue); January 13, 27, 2001; 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 your organization's Island events here (no charge), **208-2907**, or e-mail alpinset@cs.com.

Tue., Nov. 7, Election Day. Balloting at PS/IS 217 in both the general election and the Residents Association (RIRA) election. In the RIRA election, all Island residents 18 and over are eligible to vote, even if not citizens of the United States.

Wed., Nov. 8, 7:00 p.m., Dirty Donations, third class in RIJC adult education series, Cultural Center, 548 Main Street. Free.

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

Sun., Nov. 12, 1:00-4:00 p.m., 25th Anniversary Celebration of St. Frances X. Cabrini Parish, Manhattan Park Theater Club.

Mon., Nov. 13, 8:00 p.m., Roosevelt Island Toastmasters. Guests welcome. Call **583-0842** for location and other information.

Wed., Nov. 22, 7:00 p.m., Dirty Donations, final class in RIJC adult education series, Cultural Center, 548 Main Street. Free.

Sat., Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m., Juanita Fleming in Concert, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, sponsored by *The Main Street WIRE*.

Wed., Dec. 6, 8:00 p.m., Residents Association Common Council Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. First session of newly-elected Council.

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

School Seeking Learning Leaders

PS/IS 217 wants you as a Learning Leader.

In the program, adults work one-on-one with children to help them improve reading, writing, math, or English skills. They also help in the cafeteria, library, and office. In a typical year, some 10-20 residents each put in a few hours a week on schedules worked out with classroom teachers.

To become a Learning Leader, volunteers go through a required three-session training program – this year, on November 2, 9, and 16, from 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. To register for the training, residents are invited to call the school guidance counselor, Susan Cohen, at **980-0294**, extension 2422, or Pennie Cannon, at **753-4315**.

Additional information on New York City's Learning Leaders program is available on the Internet at www.learningleaders.org, or by phone at **213-3370**.

School Penny Harvest

PS/IS 217 students will be participating in the eighth annual Penny Harvest starting Monday (October 23) and running through Tuesday, November 28. The goal is to collect at least 25 thirty-pound sacks of pennies to earn a Roundtable, a decision-making group that will identify problems within the community and contribute \$1,000 to community organizations and service projects.

The school will also earn a Service Learning Grant as part of the program, sponsored by Common Cents New York, a non-profit organization. Since 1992, Penny Harvesters have collected over a million dollars in pennies.

At the end of the project, the sacks of pennies will be taken to the Javits Center to be sorted and counted by over a thousand volunteers at the annual Common Cents Ton-a-Thon.

For information on getting involved in the project, call PS/IS 217 Guidance Counselor Susan Cohen at **980-0294**, ext. 2422.

Senior Center

Monday

9:15, **Stay Well** exercise

10:00, **Internet Class**

limited seating; starts Oct. 30

12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesday

10:00, **Jazzercise**

10:30, **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**

Thursday

10:00, **Tai Chi**

10:00, **Creative Arts**

12:30, **Movie**

7:00, **Dance Classes**

Friday

9:00, **English as 2nd Language**

(Beginner's session at 9:00, Intermediate session at 10:00)

10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**

11:00, **Citizenship Class**

7:00 p.m., **Games** (RISA)

Saturday

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

Special Events

Tue., Oct. 31, 7:00 p.m.,

Halloween Party

Sat., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m.,

RISA Senior Fashion Show

Thur., Nov. 9, 9:30-11:30,

Free Flu Shots

Home-delivered meals available
Call **744-5022**, ext. 1203



Gigi de Manio

The internationally-known Eroica Trio will perform Sunday, October 29, at 3:00 p.m. in a River Music concert produced by Robin Russell in cooperation with the Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concerts Program, and under the auspices of the Parish of St. Frances Cabrini. Admission is free for the one-hour program. The trio includes Erika Nickrenz, piano; Adela Pena, violin; and Sara Sant'Ambrogio, cello.

New Beacon Program: Island Girls Project

Thirty-five members of the Island Girls Project (IGP) joined New York Cares last weekend in a painting project at PS/IS 217.

IGP, an arm of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program (RIYP) and the Beacon Project, is a new group "designed to address the needs of young girls growing up on Roosevelt Island," according to Island resident Maureen Santella, who manages the program for RIYP. Some 70 girls were present at a first meeting Friday, October 6. A project description provided by Santella says, "The program is an empowerment-focused, educational, and activity-directed to encourage young girls to discover all the positive, proactive choices they have."

IGP has three components, according to Santella: education, community involvement, and "exposure," meaning field trips to cultural events, museums, Broadway plays, restaurants, and other opportunities that might broaden their horizons.

The educational component serves as an adjunct to a girl's schooling. "We expect the girls to maintain a certain grade level and behavioral standard while at school. If a girl is having difficulty with a course, we want to know," says Santella. "We will provide tutorials and extra help," she adds, saying the group is "equipped to assist girls in both general and special education."

According to Santella's press release, "The community involvement aspect of the program requires that girls contribute to their community in measurable ways. This can entail peer tutoring, tutoring younger children, volunteering at local hospitals and senior centers, or working on projects that enhance the community."

The group has weekends planned at Camp Vacamas in New Jersey, and may register as a group for the Domestic Violence Walk October 29 in Central Park. There are three meetings a week, including the Open Gym for Girls Tuesday nights at PS/IS 217. The group also meets Thursdays and Fridays, 3:00-6:00 p.m., in Room 159 at the school.

"We recognize that our urban girls are growing up in an extremely fast-paced and changing environment. Our mission is to provide guidance, to help them process the myriad of external influences, and to see that they develop into strong, independent, thoughtful young women who contribute to their communities, understand and appreciate the 'finer' things in life, work hard to develop from the inside out, respect their minds, recognize the importance of their lives, and the intrinsic value they have within and beyond their own communities."

Santella provides **935-3645** as a number for more information.

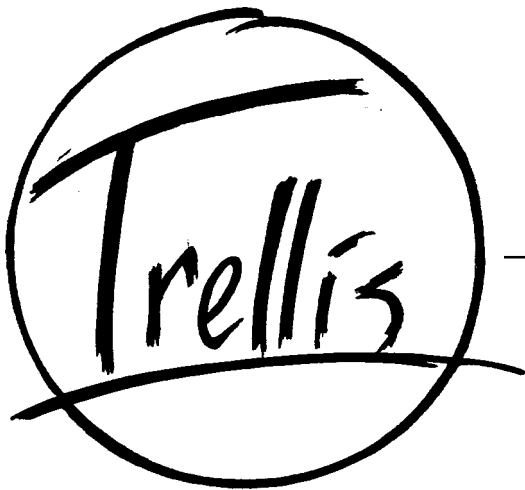


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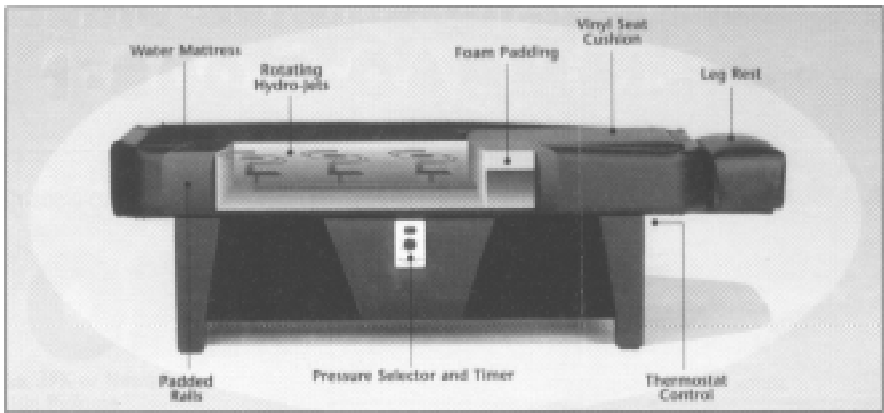
Dr. John Calabria



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Statements by Candidates for Residents Association Executive Posts

Matthew Katz

Candidate for President

Byron Gaspard

Candidate for First Vice President

Dear Neighbors,

My wife Sherie and I have lived on Roosevelt Island for eleven years now. We love the life here with its international flavor, green spaces, fascinating history, small-town ambience and good friends. We didn't intend to get involved in Island politics or activism until we attended a RIOC Board meeting about four years ago. The community showed up in force at that Sportspark meeting, and Jerome Blue made it clear, in the most arrogant and callous terms, that Roosevelt Island is a colony of New York State without power or influence.

Since then, I have served three years as a Manhattan Park rep to the RIRA Common Council. I've served on the Housing Committee, the Government Relations Committee and been a founding member and treasurer of the Legal Action Fund Committee. At about the same time, Sherie and I became convinced that the American democratic way of governance, that is, elected representation, was both missing and essential for the man-



agement of the Island through RIOC, the Operating Corporation.

As a member of the Maple Tree Group, and currently its leader, I have labored for over two years on a bill that would change the RIOC Board, currently composed of appointees from the Governor, to one with a majority of *elected* Island residents. Of course, the State would still be responsible for the Island. The City, which still owns it, would still have appointees on the board. But, the majority vote would be with us, the residents, and the responsibility for running the Island would rest with a professional,

experienced community manager, hired by the community's RIOC Board, instead of the political appointees who now run our lives and determine our futures.

I see an urgency in this endeavor as the various schemes for developing the Island come closer to fulfillment. After all, once the concrete is poured and the steel beams

Through the Residents Association Nominations and Election Committees, *The WIRE* invited candidates for RIRA's executive offices to provide statements to appear in this issue and the next issue. At deadline, the statements appearing here had been provided. (No others were received.) With the November 4 issue, *The WIRE* will also distribute flyers for candidates for Common Council. (See notice this page, bottom left.)

soar over the Island, it won't matter who calls the shots. Development is essential to providing the revenue to run this Island, to bring our population to the levels envisaged by the urban prophets who invented this planned community and to utilize some of our barren spaces that have lain fallow for decades. However those same seers wrote into the General Development Plan a solid, unequivocal requirement for the preservation of our open spaces and parkland that must be honored. Over four years ago, Governor Pataki declared the Island self-sufficient, and reduced our State operating capital budget subsidies to zero. RIOC has been scrambling ever since, unsuccessfully, to make this extraordinary proclamation so. Their desperation for revenue has made the need for preserving the Roosevelt Island quality of life secondary. I believe that a RIOC elected from the community will have other, more reasonable, priorities, and I know that the bill in Albany includes guarantees to protect Island finances.

These issues are important, but they are not the only reason I'm running for RIRA president. I've served three years now on a Common Council where the leadership has been unwilling or unable to enforce the basic rules of order and civility required by our Constitution, by Roberts Rules and common precedent, and by common sense. Time and again, the Council has passed resolutions to reform the way we do business, to support the movement for elected RIOC governance, and to influence proposed development projects by legal means, only to find that the current president was opposed to these ventures and simply refused to enforce them.

The Residents Association is neither a military unit, where a general gives orders, nor a corporation, where an owner gives absolute power to a chief executive. RIRA's authority derives from its members – the Island's residents. I believe RIRA's officers are obliged to act on the will of the majority. That hasn't been the case for the last two years, and a change is needed. I seek

The week of August 26, 2000, I decided to run for the First Vice President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. I want to unify RIRA leadership and members by recognizing the organization's goals and mandates rather than the pursuit of individual agendas. I will, if elected, do the following:

- Work hard with the community to resolve issues that threaten to destroy our community. Example: Continue to fight for a more efficient Public Safety system that meets the security demands of Roosevelt Island. I will continue to fight for more timely and efficient internal patrols by Public Safety for all our buildings, especially Eastwood, which is the least secure development of Roosevelt Island.
- I will continue my relationship with the 114th Precinct to secure more police presence on Roosevelt Island.
- I will work closely with all the committees of RIRA to develop more realistic goals that affect our Island and our everyday quality of life.
- I will fight to end the Governor's monarchy-style rule in the form of RIOC.
- I will avail myself to all legitimate organizations that have had an effective track record fighting for issues that have affected our quality of life here on Roosevelt Island.
- I will work with the Roosevelt Island Youth/Beacon Program to develop a Youth Representative on RIRA. Our youth should have a voice on this Island. It's their community too.
- I will work with Coler-Goldwater to get them to send a representative to the RIRA Common Council.
- I will work with Ms. Sherry Gregory,

Principal of PS/IS 217 to obtain a PTA Representative to the RIRA Common Council. We need to support our schools.

For the last two years, I have served as Vice President of Education, Cultural and Social Services and Chair of the Public Safety Committee. I also served as a member of the 114th Precinct Committee and was appointed by Joseph Lynch of DHCR to the Capital Planning and Development Commit-



tee, which voted against the minischool development.

I believe RIRA cannot represent this community under a leadership that has drastically divided the Common Council and where personal ambition has taken precedence over the community's welfare. With me – the community will always come first.

the Residents Association presidency to serve, not to command or act on my own, independent of the Common Council's will. I have over twenty years experience running committees of volunteers at the non-profit New York Academy of Sciences. I know that it's possible to work with volunteers, with busy lives of their own, and still expect and demand responsible work for the good of the group.

Your Common Council Treasury has not

raised a dime or spent a dime, has not initiated programs or participated in existing programs, has not sought the participation of our seniors, our disabled or our hospital population during my tenure. If we are to get your support, first we must earn your respect. I propose to do this if you will elect me your president and if you will send to the Common Council people who are as concerned and as passionate about Roosevelt Island as I am.

Notice to RIRA Candidates

[Memo sent to the RIRA Nominations and Election Committees]

October 8, 2000

To assist in the RIRA election, *The WIRE* offers to run Candidate Statements as follows:

President

One essay or position paper of up to about 775 words in the October 21 issue. Deadline 5:00 p.m. Sunday 10/15.

One essay or position paper of up to about 775 words in the November 4 issue. Deadline 5:00 p.m. Sunday 10/29.

One flyer, 8.5 x 11 sheet, printed one or both sides, as an Island-wide stuffer with the 11/4 issue; these must be printed by the candidates and provided by 5:00 p.m. Thursday 11/2, delivered to the Rivercross doorstation marked "for *The WIRE*."

First Vice President

One essay or position paper of up to about 350 words in the 10/21 issue. Deadline 5:00 p.m. Sunday 10/15. [This deadline was later extended to 5:00 p.m. Monday 10/16.]

One essay or position paper of up to about 350 words in the 11/4 issue. Deadline 5:00 p.m. Sunday 10/29.

One flyer, 8.5 x 11 sheet, printed one or both sides, as an Island-wide stuffer with the 11/4 issue; these must be printed by the

candidates and provided by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, 11/2, delivered to the Rivercross doorstation marked "for *The WIRE*."

The statements must be delivered in machine-readable form, meaning by e-mail or on 3.5" PC-compatible disk. For convenience of publication, President & VP statements may not be combined if pairs are running as a slate.

Common Council candidates

One flyer, 8.5 x 11 sheet, printed one or both sides, to be distributed in their "election district" buildings with 11/4 issue. Same terms as flyer described above for President/Vice President.

Again, these are to be for the candidacy of the Common Council candidate her/himself, not on behalf of other candidates. Any Common Council candidate on whom the printing of such a statement would work a financial hardship may apply for very limited subsidy support from *The WIRE*.

For these flyers, I will provide counts (that is, the number of copies needed) closer to the time. For distribution reasons, it will be necessary to print about 10% more than the actual building count, in each case.

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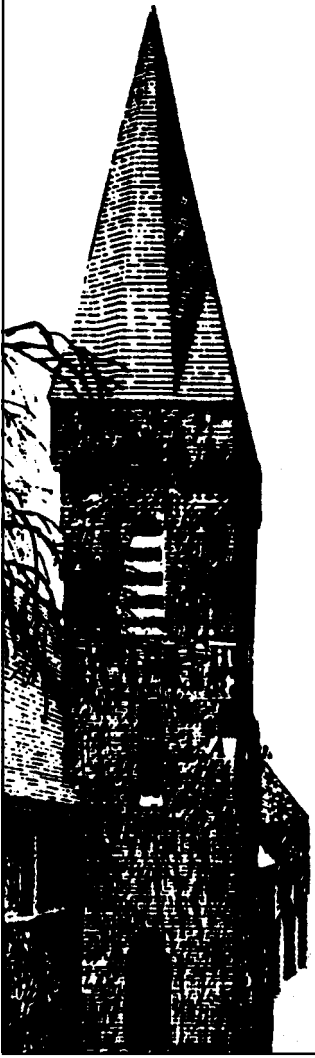
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Public Safety Blotter

There are many Public Safety activity items for which there is inadequate space in *The WIRE*. They are carried in full on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.

From September Blotter Robbery

9/15, west seawall, 531 Main St., Male resident in-house, stated two unknown youths had approached him at scene, #1 possibly with weapon, while #2 attacked him from behind. He could not identify perps. They fled scene with victim’s shoulder bag containing \$200, house and car keys, four credit cards and miscellaneous other items. Victim notified NYPD before coming to PSD; NYPD responded, prepared report. RIHM super changed locks at victim’s apartment.

9/30, west seawall, 575 Main St., arrest, male resident phoned PSD, stated that while at west seawall, an underage youth came out of bushes, wielded a gun, demanded his money, which victim gave to him. Perp instructed victim to move off and not to look back, perp fled. Victim proceeded to 625 Main, had concierge contact PSD, giving them a brief description of perp. Officers searched Roosevelt Island, saw youth fitting description running north from Northtown Park towards 2/4 River Road. Officers approached youth, victim, who was in PSD vehicle, immediately identified him. Victim informed officers he had \$60 in cash in wallet, misc. items: identification, credit cards, etc. Neither wallet nor gun were found on perp. Officer escorted perp to 19th Pct. and to central booking, where officer and perp spoke with ADA, and youth was charged with robbery first degree. Perp’s mother was notified. Victim did not sustain injuries during robbery.

October 1-12, 2000 Assault

10/7, sidewalk, 560 Main Street, Arrest, While PSD officer was patrolling, he saw male resident shouting and using foul language at female resident, who was accompanied by unknown teenager. Officer approached male and asked him to refrain from shouting and using foul language. When he did not, officer again asked him to stop using profanity in public. Male approached officer using profanity at him. Officer requested additional officers. Then female perp #1 walked between them, while officer was attempting to arrest perp #2, and the former thrust her arms forward with closed fists striking officer in sternum and stomach. Female fled, was apprehended, she resisted arrest, while officer continually informed to stop and desist. While under arrest, female perp complained her wrists hurt, 911 was called, EMS responded to PSD and perp refused medical assistance. Director and other pertinent personnel were informed of incident. Arresting officer transported perp #1 to 19 Pct. for arrest processing.

10/10 apartment, 4 River Rd., PSD officers responded to scene of possible dispute; upon arrival saw male resident bleeding from lower left back. Victim had been stabbed in the back. EMS requested, three male perps were gone upon their arrival, but victim identified them. Victim said perps had pushed their way into female’s apt, who had opened door. EMS responded, transported victim to Elmhurst Hosp. PSD, NYPD officers searched area for perps and weapon with negative results. NYPD 114 Pct. detectives prepared report. Hospital contacted reports victim in stable condition.

Criminal mischief

10/1, storage, 625 Main St., Officer responded to small storage room at scene for report of a break-in. Upon arrival, concierge stated tenant of a ground floor apartment had informed concierge he had heard someone popping lock. Officer responded to scene with RIHM personnel, who stated there was nothing of value in room and nothing had been taken. Lock was repaired.

10/6, 580 Main St., Officer phoned central of unknown person who’d burned debris at scene. He checked location and saw that “wet paint” sign on door had been burned at rear hall. Burn stain was made on door. RIHM superv. notified.

10/8, 3rd floor, 560 Main St., Officer responded to report of washers having been broken, saw #1, 2, 3 damaged by unknown perp, searched area with negative results. NYPD refused by RIHM handyman at scene.

10/9, lobby, 560 Main St., Officer responded to report of broken window, which he found cracked, notified RIHM, whose employee responded and taped it up.

Disorderly conduct

10/5, sidewalk, 549 Main St., Arrest, PSD officer observed resident male riding bicycle on sidewalk, asked him to dismount and perp used foul language at him, and continued to ride bicycle on sidewalk. Other officers responded to scene. Perp was escorted to PSD, where he was issued 3 summonses.

10/7, Blackwell House, 500 Main, Officers responded to report of possible dispute. Many youths in area but witnessed no fighting. They gave orders to disperse, underage resident youth refused, began shouting and gesturing with fists. He was escorted to PSD, issued Juv. Report. Guardian responded, youth released.

Harassment

10/4, bus, 400 Main St., Resident male boarded RIOC bus #2 but did not pay fare. RIOC supervisor did not allow it, male exited, cursing at superv. Afterwards perp went to bus garage twice looking for RIOC superv. Subsequently perp went to RIOC’s main office, spoke to Adm. member and again threatened superv. Superv. refused NYPD.

10/4, apartment, 510 Main St., Aggravated, Resident in-house, said he’s receiving phone calls from the lobby since mid-May 2000. NYPD responded, prepared report.

10/7, lobby, 625 Main St., Officer responded to scene relating resident’s niece verbally abusing concierge. The former refused to sign lobby’s log book register. Upon trying to speak to tenant the latter hung up phone. Niece returned later, used foul language at concierge and spit at her, who informed PSD that she had not suffered any harm.

Larceny

10/3, breezeway., 541 Main, Attempted, Father and underage son in-house said earlier 3 unknown youths attempted to take youth’s bicycle away from him. He managed to elude them and ride home. Officer searched area with negative results.

10/4, locker, 250 Main St., Non-resident male phoned PSD, stated unknown person had taken his bag from Sportspark locker room bench. Bag contained \$20 in cash, 4 credit cards, walkman, driver’s license, his car’s title, misc. apparel. NYPD responded, prepared report.

10/10, 5-B level, 688 Main, Female resident in-house, stated her car’s front grill had been removed. Officer checked area for grill with negative results. NYPD was called and was to respond to victim’s apartment, upon availability.

Alarm

10/8, basement, 543 Main, Officer responded to scene for report of alarm sounding. Upon arrival saw Sister Regina at location, searched basement and found sprinkler system alarm sounding, sump pump leaking. RIOC’s Access Control Administrator (ACA) contacted, who instructed officer to shut off switch, and who will check area again upon his arrival at scene. He responded, shut off valve, alarm was still ringing, turned off switch.

Dispute

10/3, 560 Main St., Domestic, Officer responded to scene for report from female of verbal/ physical dispute with her former boyfriend. While awaiting NYPD’s response, male appeared at apartment window and ran away. NYPD responded, prepared report. Victim refused medical attention.

Gas leak

10/1, 540 Main St., Resident in-house, reported strong gas smell in her apartment. Officer accompanied RIHM service personnel and responded to apartment. They turned on pilot light in oven, which had been off, opened windows to air out apartment. Per Sergeant this is an on-going situation.

Investigation

10/2, 546 Main St., Officer responded to scene for report of gas leak. Resident stated she smelled gas coming from stove. Officer and RIHM super smelled no gas in apartment or in hallway, super checked pilot lights and they were on.

Island Youth Charged in Hold-Up

A 16-year-old resident of 4 River Road is being charged in connection with an armed robbery committed early Saturday morning, September 30. It was the second such crime committed at the same location, at the seawall behind 531 Main Street, in a two-week period (see first two Blotter entries, this page).

Anthony Lopez was arraigned in State Supreme Court, and has entered a not-guilty plea. He is being held on \$10,000 bail. He is scheduled to appear November 3 before Judge Michael Corriero in New York State Supreme Court.

The victim in the September 30 incident, who asked that his name not be used, told *The WIRE* that he was on the way from the subway station to Westview, walking on the promenade, nearing the Island House swimming pool. “There was a young person, alone, and he just approached me and asked for money. He said, ‘Give me the money,’ and I took out my wallet and he said, ‘Give me the wallet and credit cards and everything.’ I tried to negotiate with him but he grabbed my wallet, showed me a pistol, and he asked me to leave, and said that if I turned around or did something strange he was going to shoot.

“I ran to 625 Main Street and asked the doorman to call the police right away. The Public Safety Department did a very good job – showed up within a few minutes. While I was talking to the security people I saw the young person running 40-50 feet away. I jumped into the police car, and the police made an arrest.”

Public Safety Chief Jim Fry, describing this incident to the RIOC Board of Directors last week, did not name Lopez, but said the underage youth involved would be charged as an adult. He said that the alleged perp had not been armed when captured, but the weapon, which had been “ditched,” was discovered after a search by Public Safety Officers. When he was asked if there might be a connection between the September 15 and September 30 incidents, Fry was cautious but seemed to suggest they might be related.

Public lewdness/EDP

10/3, street, 688 Main St., Concierge at 10 River Road phoned PSD, stated female resident had exited Gristede’s and had seen a male exposing himself. Officers responded, placed him in custody, escorted him to PSD, transported him to 19 Pct. for processing, where arrest was denied. Sergeant advised PSD officers to take him to Bellevue, because the man was EDP. He was admitted at Bellevue’s psychiatric ward.

Recovered property

10/11, sidewalk, Unknown R.I., Unidentified male in-house, turned in check found on Roosevelt Island in the amount of \$350, the payee being a Goldwater patient. PSD officer surrendered check to Hospital Police officer, who was to make arrangements to turn it over to patient.

Reckless endangerment

10/7, patio, 540 Main St., Female resident in-house stated that for 3 years unknown person has been throwing trash, food and disgusting items on to her patio. Officer observed some trash on patio, as well as a used prophylactic. Officer responded to only apartment that did not have screens or bars on window. No one answered the door. Victim refused NYPD.

Smoke condition

10/2, playground, 543 Main St., Officer noticed smoke emanating from light pole. RIHM super on scene, stated there was a burning birds nest inside fixture, removed nest and smoke dissipated. Officer taped off area.

10/8, 625 Main St., Concierge phoned PSD and they responded to scene of fire. Tenant was boiling clothing, which ignited; he put out fire, which caused smoke condition. RIHM Manager and Super at scene, no property damage or injuries reported.

10/11, new dock, 400 Main St., Anonymous person notified PSD of wooden trash can fire. Officer and ACA responded, plastic liner had melted. Officer extinguished fire. No injuries or further damage occurred. Trash can will have to be replaced.

Tenant dispute

10/6, 540 Main St., Two females in-house complained they’re having tenant/landlord dispute, stated he’d broken lock to their room and removed their belongings to living room. He insisted they move immediately. RIHM Manager at scene said victims had squatters’ rights. RIHM Super at scene, other PSD officers at scene as well. Victims and resident reached agreement, allowing victims to remain in apartment.

Truancy

10/3, 3rd floor, 546 Main St., Officer saw two underage resident youths sitting in 3rd-floor hallway during school hours. Officer escorted them to School Safety officer at PS 217.

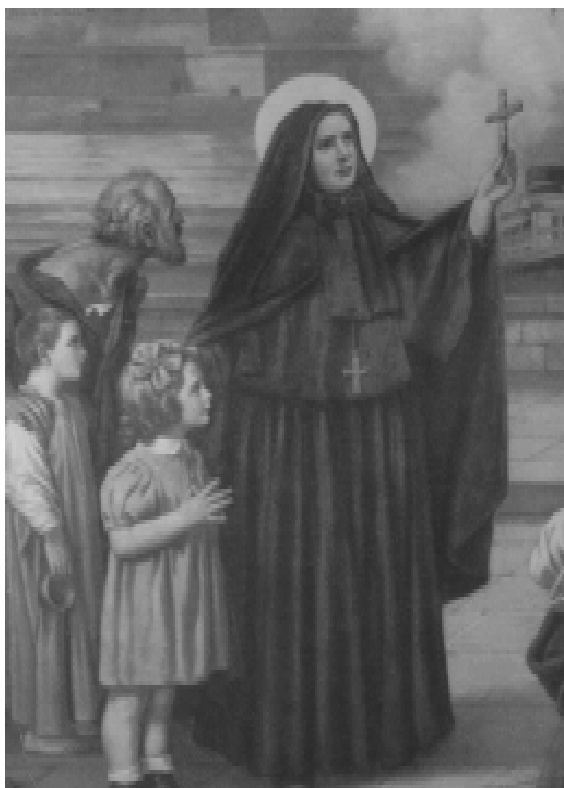
Unsecured premises

10/8, Nurses Residence, 400 Main St., Officer notified central that truck’s rear doors were open. Officer responded, doors did not appear to be damaged or tampered with. Area was searched with negative results.

10/10, pool, 551 Main St., Officers responded to report of alarm at pool, saw that exterior and interior doors were unlocked, searched area with negative results. RIHM employee secured doors.

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Stewart Hit on MiniCondo Abstention

A Rivercross resident criticized RIRA President Patrick Stewart for his June 8 abstention when the RIOCI Board of Directors voted to move forward on the minichools condo conversion project.

Ed Igel, speaking with obvious anger, told Stewart during the public comment portion of last week’s RIRA Common Council meeting, “You were present at the March, 1999, meeting when dozens of people spoke against the project, when it was originally proposed by Dr. Blue. An informal vote was taken. There was not one – not one person in favor of the project. You were here when a Rivercross [Board] member presented a resolution, specifically speaking against the project. There was not one Island resident that I’ve ever heard at any meeting speak in favor of the minischool project. Yet, you failed – failed to vote against it. You abstained. I think that this speaks very poorly about your responsibility, about your fiduciary responsibility, and about executing the will of the people on this Island. I therefore propose you resign immediately because you represent nobody but yourself or the RIOCI Board, which is not the purpose of this organization, and further, if you don’t resign... I believe strongly that this Board should remove you. I feel on a personal level a tremendous affront in your presence and representation at this Board and at RIOCI. And I feel that the people on the Island should be aware of your behavior and lack of judgment in this area.”

Stewart responded, “I suggest you consult Roberts Rules of Order to find out what an abstention means, and if you don’t understand what Roberts Rules of Order says, the Borough President of the Borough of Manhattan has a parliamentarian that you would be free to call. Thank you.”

Igel shot back, still angry, “Where would I find that in the dictionary? Under cowardice?”

Stewart, chairing the Common Council session, went on to other public comments.

MiniCondos from page 1

[The transcript of this portion of the meeting is on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.]

RIOCI President Robert H. Ryan then told the Board that “certain title problems are slowing down any loan agreements on the other building sites.” (The one conversion near ready to go is apparently Westview.) Asked if he meant property-line problems described in a letter from architect Marc Diamond, Ryan responded, “Uh... no.” Part of the project might extend beyond the footprint of the school buildings, Leitner then explained.

Kayser told Leitner, “The Board has instructed you to make sure that you have financing commitments in place... You’re going to make sure that the whole project is financeable, and not just part of it.”

RIOCI’s consulting counsel, Barbara Gordon Espejo, then volunteered her view that Wilson’s attorney “made a very plausible case for the fact that these were going to be condominiums built on spec, so that we would try one building at a time... Let’s prove we got one of them done...”

When resident Board member David Kraut voiced a concern that one building might be converted, only to find that the others cannot be done because of title or other problems, Espejo explained the reasoning: “Each of the minischools will be a separate condominium. They will not be under one leasehold. Each will have its own lease... We have never done a condominium lease on Roosevelt Island. The Condominium Act provides that there can only be two leasehold condominiums in this State... in Battery Park and Roosevelt Island... This is a test case. We want to do the first one, and make the client subject to the first one.”

Kayser responded, “They need their financing in place for all three projects, in order to get their rights vested. They’re not economical if you just do one at a time. That’s why the developer wants a commitment for all three, but... the idea was that the marketplace should function so that they can go out and get their financing and come back in a certain period of time and we would accept the [decision of the] marketplace. But they can’t use RIOCI to tie this up on some special basis... just squeezing people out because we’re going to be paties on this thing...”

“May I suggest that that is the

way we always do business here?” Espejo responded. When residents laughed, she quickly added, “Since 1975 we’ve financed one building at a time.”

“From what I can see,” Kayser said, “we’ve been entering into a number of agreements where the risk has been on this public authority and you sacrifice things with respect to the people who are out here on the Island when you shift that risk to the public authority from the private. You’ve got to negotiate at arm’s length... We’re going to have to approach this on a businesslike basis... The project itself is controversial enough, but the Board’s saying we’re going to let the marketplace operate here, [and if] these people don’t have their financing in place, they’re getting special subsidy, in effect. They get a free option without having financial wherewithal, and that’s not right.”

Board member John Mannix joined in the discussion at that point. “I hate to be the one to say, ‘I told you so,’ but we’re talking about a 15-unit development that now needs to be phased. I mean, compared to [Southtown], this is not right. That’s a 2,000-unit project. If what we’re hearing now is that the developer is unwilling or unable to put enough credit behind this deal [or] that the market can’t absorb 15 units, I’m not surprised... I interviewed the developer well into the process, and my feeling was she did not have the wherewithal to get this project financed. I’m surprised to hear today at this meeting that it’s now a phased, five-unit-per-phase project, and perhaps what I’m saying is that RIOCI is doing its best to accommodate the developer and either her reticence about going forward into the market with 15 units, or her financial inability to put up enough credit to do so. So the major concern I have... is that the developer is a weak developer, and if she can only finance five units of this project – then I think it proves the point.”

In the end, the RIOCI staff people were instructed to provide a report on the advantages and disadvantages of doing the project in phases. No action was taken. This week, RIOCI’s Ryan told *The WIRE* that Wilson has been told of the Board’s concerns.

There was a further exchange regarding the MiniCondo project after resident Board member (and

Referendum, from page 1

The key threads of Stewart’s and Katz’s arguments, condensed from their comments in the RIRA meeting, are summarized in a separately below.

Stewart argued that the Island faces \$40 million to \$50 million in needed infrastructure repairs, and for holding the State responsible for the funding needed. MTG members argued that an elected Board, unlike the present appointed Board, would be more aggressive in seeking the needed funds from the State.

Joan Christianson, running for RIRA’s First Vice Presidency with Stewart, expressed a concern about whether the final form of legislation that might pass both houses of the State Legislature and be signed by the Governor would be what the Island needs. “Is that a chance we’re willing to take?” she asked. Referring to an early-1980s effort to secure election of RIOCI Board members, she added, “I fear getting screwed as they did before.”

Ron Vass, an MTG member but not a Common Councilor, said, “In 1982 I was very involved. The way we got screwed, Joan, was the way we’re going to get screwed now. We had the opportunity to have [an elected] Board but we surrendered the privilege of voting for those people... by giving it to the Governor to do just what he’s doing now. We have to take control. We were there and we lost it.”

Audrey Berman expressed concern about whether State indemnification – protection against catastrophic losses in legal actions – would survive a change in the composition of the RIOCI Board of Directors. She expressed an interest in pursuing a course which would ultimately remove the State from Island affairs by terminating the Lease between the City and the State

A Locally-Elected RIOCI Board – Pro & Con

Whether or not Roosevelt Island residents should seek the right to elect a majority of the members of the RIOCI Board of Directors has emerged as the defining issue of the year 2000 campaign to lead the Residents Association. Here is a condensation (a fuller transcript is available on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com) of what the two candidates for the RIRA Presidency said about the referendum in the RIRA Common Council meeting that agreed, 13 to 8, to put it on the November 7 ballot:

Patrick Stewart

“I’m against any kind of a referendum, to tell you the truth, because it’s too complex. We are asking people to understand what we understand over many years here in conference...”

“It is very important that we understand what’s going on here... Why would the new RIOCI Board be able to do any more than the old RIOCI Board would? The new RIOCI board would not have any more money than the old Board would. Understand that the 8.5 million dollars gross revenue that comes to RIOCI is used to run the Island, to maintain the Island, not to fix the infrastructure, not to pay for legal bills, not to pay for anything other than hopefully keeping the street the way it is.

“The projected new Board is assuming all the obligations on behalf of the Island that the present Board has. The present Board has well in excess of 300 million dollars in obligations. Where is this new Board going to get the money the old Board can’t get? Is Pete Grannis gonna get us \$500,000? That’s not \$300 million. Is Gifford Miller gonna get us some trees? That is not going to do it.

“This is fiscal irresponsibility. It is financial suicide to do these things. No matter how you look at it, the numbers don’t add up to a fiscally responsible policy for the Island. Please understand that you’ve got \$40 or \$50 million of infrastructure debt, you’ve got \$200 million in bonds to be paid off, you’ve got capital spending that hasn’t been done for lo these many years, and you have \$20,000 in the bank to do it with. The money is not there. You can hire all the management in the world, you can have every one of the people in RIOCI being an expert in whatever it is, the money isn’t there. You can’t operate without money. There is no program to get money. That’s it, pure and simple.

“So, do we want to take on that obligation on behalf of our neighbors to say, ‘We’re going to go out and get some neighbors here, and they will take care of it’? They will not take care of it because they can’t borrow money without the State, they can’t float bonds without the State, they can’t tax because it’s illegal to do that. So where is this money going to come from? It isn’t. It isn’t there and it will not be there. That’s simple.”

RIRA President) Patrick Stewart asked about the developer’s discussions with residents whose views would be degraded by the project’s second-floor additions.

Kayser said residents had failed to show up for discussions in response to letters from the devel-

oper. Letters to a half-dozen Rivercross residents offered the equivalent of four months maintenance payments (typically something less than \$5,000) as compensation, which one resident, Suzanne Wolfe, characterized as not just “a low offer,” but “insulting and of-

under which this City property is under State control. Others countered that the “City option” had not been developed adequately to put it on the November ballot.

Judy Berdy said she favored leaving the question off the ballot, and letting Katz and Stewart slug it out in the election campaign, pointing out that, “There’s an officer [Katz] who wants this, a person [Stewart] who has other opinions. You vote for the person... who supports what you want.”

Joyce Mincheff, an MTG member, argued that residents are effectively taxed twice for services on the Island – through City and State taxes, and through rents, a portion of which pays for the services residents get. “You have a right to elect the people that make the decisions in this local community about what they do with your money. The State of New York treats this community like it’s their own private little fiefdom. We are not a colony. They’re using our money to operate Roosevelt Island. We are entitled for these [Board members] to ask the Governor for some tax dollars. The Governor’s appointees are not going to ask for it.” Mincheff also argued that the City would be unlikely to “go to war” with the State to take back a community with “humongous fiscal problems.”

Putting the question to the Councilors, Linda Heimer told them, “Democracy is not perfect. There will be mistakes. But we will have the power to control it by our votes... We need local control.”

A test vote on whether there should be a referendum question at all was affirmative, 13 to 7, with two members abstaining. After some further discussion, the final vote was then taken, with a 13 to 8 outcome. (Two Councilors left the meeting between the votes; another returned.)

Matthew Katz

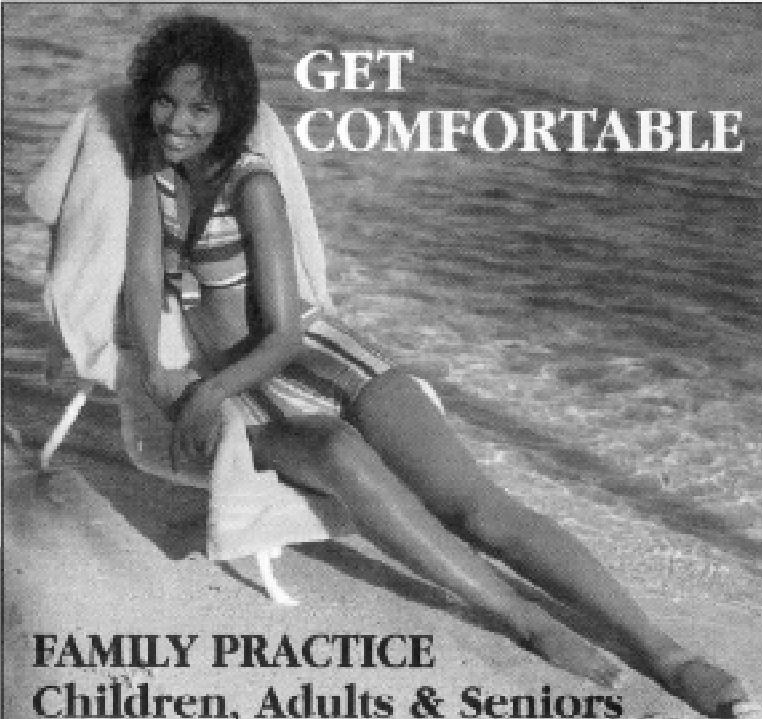
“We want to elect RIOCI, and we want RIOCI to hire professional management. [As for] financial responsibility – whether it is this RIOCI or a [new] RIOCI, it is still a public benefit corporation and the responsibility of the State. That doesn’t change. If the State wants to allocate subsidies to this Island, it can do so under a RIOCI1 or a RIOCI2 Board. There’s nothing to prevent it. What does change is that the political status of the Island is no longer there. This is no longer a Board appointed by a Republican Governor. It’s just a Board. And so the strictures against giving money to someone of a different party no longer are there. If Pete Grannis wants to get us \$600,000 there is a RIOCI Board that is prepared to accept it. That’s not the case now. So what we are doing is not changing anything about whether we can accept money from the State.

“Also, I would bring to your attention this whole question of the deductible. The deductible as it exists now in the Assembly bill is \$250,000; in the Senate bill, \$500,000. The current responsibility of this RIOCI is \$6 million for the seawall repairs, \$40 million or \$50 million, depending on when you ask, for the infrastructure of the entire Island, \$4.5 million to connect the existing infrastructure to phase one of Southtown. The current RIOCI is responsible for the whole kit and caboodle, because there’s no one else to pick up those costs. What this legislation will offer us is an opportunity to limit liability, because one way or another, somebody’s got to fix this Island.

“[As for the City] If they bide their time and wait 66 years, they get a completely developed Island back as a cash cow. So I’m not sure why the City would consider taking us back under our present situation. Also, I wonder why we would want this to happen. [If] we go back to the City, the first thing that goes is the Master Lease [and] the General Development Plan... We should have an idea of what kind of protections we can expect from the City.

“This is a country in which there are three levels of government, federal, state, local. Each of those levels of government is elected by the people they serve. And I think that is essential to any kind of government here on Roosevelt Island.”

fensive.” (The exchange between Wolfe and Kayser is part of the transcript on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.) There was no information on how renters in Westview and Island House might be compensated, if at all, for loss of views.



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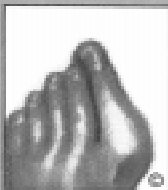
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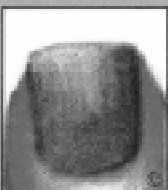
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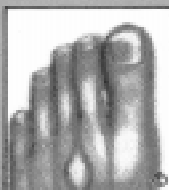
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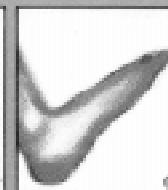
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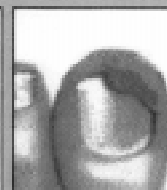
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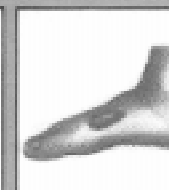
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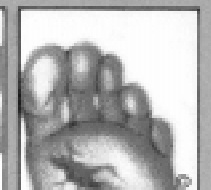
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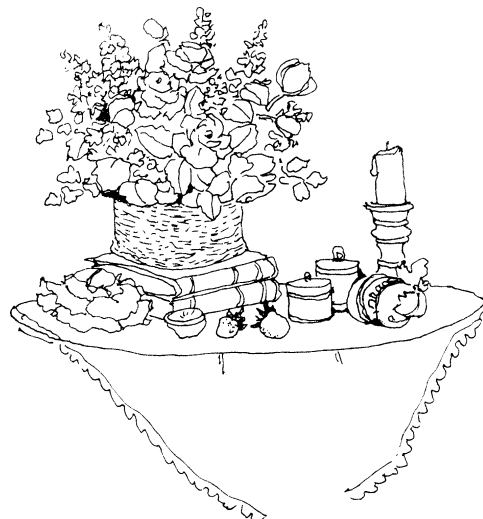
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