

Vote Tuesday in the RIRA Election - PS 217

All residents age 18 and over are eligible to vote, regardless of citizenship

Vol. 21, No. 5

Saturday, November 4, 2000

Next issue:
November 17-18

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

Stark Difference Separates Presidential Candidates In Tuesday's Residents Association Election



Matthew Katz, left, is challenging incumbent Patrick Stewart for the Presidency of RIRA. The text of their debate, including candidates for First Vice President, appears in a four-page insert starting on page 7.



Voters Also Choosing Common Council Members

News Analysis by Dick Lutz
Matthew Katz wants a mostly-elected RIOC Board of Directors, and professional community management.
Patrick Stewart wants Roosevelt Island returned to New York City, and time to develop a plan for that.
That was the one stark philosophical difference between the candidates for President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) that was evident in last week's debate at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

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
Nneka Pope
Patrick Stewart **i**

First Vice President

Joan Christianson **i**
Byron Gaspard
Walter Hill

2 River Road (1)

James Whalen **i**

4 River Road (1)

No nominee
10-40 River Road (8)

Sherie Helstien **i**

Sigrid Martin

Mosud Mannan **i**

Suki Murdoch

Eastwood (7)

Gwen Almo-Duvar **i**

Thomas V. Brown

Carolyn Christianson

Joan Christianson

Byron Gaspard **i**

Walter Hill **i**

James Kaufman **i**

Ruth Kolins

Mercedes (Cookie) Lugo

Joyce Mincheff **i**

Dorothy Muller

Nneka Pope

James Tendean-Luce

546 Main Street (2)

Dolores Green

Joan Matula **i**

Island House (3)

Judith Berdy **i**

Frank Farance **i**

Vicki Feinmel

Ethel Romm

Karen Stewart

Patrick Stewart

Rivercross (3)

Joseph Cristiano

Jeff Hochman (**i** alternate)

Steve Marcus

Larry Parnes

Ron Schuppert **i**

Margie Smith

Olya Turcihin Stern

Richard Wade

Westview (3)

Deirdre Breslin

Ken Diebner **i**

Rhoda Jacklin **i**

Joseph Palermo

Patricia Ricketts

Lease, a General Development Plan (GDP), a supposedly strict "zoning" that described exactly what could be done with each parcel of land on the Island. And with that 99-year Lease responsibility, a promise to subsidize Island operations and capital needs until population reached 20,000 souls (later revised to 16,000) – a goal only half met here at the turn of the century. Those heady plans, made under Governor Nelson Rockefeller by visionary Ed Logue, were

Katz goes on to push for a specific plan – legislation introduced by Assemblymember Pete Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez – that calls for an infrastructure audit to fix State responsibility for Roosevelt Island's financial needs, and places a cap on how much of the necessary fix-up funding would have to come out of the budget of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

Stewart calls Katz's approach "financial suicide," pointing out that New York State floated \$200 million in bonds to build Roosevelt Island and that tens of millions of repairs of deteriorated infrastructure are somewhere in the Island's future. Katz responds that the Island will remain a State responsibility under the plan he advocates.

[The candidates speak for themselves in the text of their debate – a four-page supplement to this issue beginning on page 7. At deadline, Nneka Pope, a former RIRA President, announced a run for the RIRA Presidency, too late to participate in the debate.]

The backdrop against which the battle for the RIRA Presidency (and First Vice Presidency) is being fought is a three-and-a-half-year history of New York State's denying funding to Roosevelt Island, a period in which the Governor-appointed RIOC Board has refused to ask the Governor for funding for Roosevelt Island. Actually, RIOC has gone further than that, turning down State money offered by Assemblymember Grannis for some specific and fairly desperate Island needs.

History

The history (is there anyone left who has not heard or read it repeatedly?) is a mid-70's takeover by New York State – leasing this Island from New York City and promising to develop it to provide affordable housing. With the

turn that widely-doubted political pronouncement into financial fact. By all accounts, that has been done by spending little on maintenance, letting Roosevelt Island's infrastructure deteriorate to the point where needed repairs are estimated, by RIRA Patrick Stewart, at \$40 million or \$50 million.

All Island residents 18 or over, regardless of country of citizenship, are eligible to vote in the RIRA election Tuesday (November 7) at PS/IS 217, 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., where polling in the General Election (restricted to U.S. citizens) will also be held. In addition to RIRA President and First Vice President, this election will choose the members of the Residents Association Common Council to serve for the next two years.

Election results will be summarized, as soon as they are available Tuesday night or Wednesday morning, on Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com.

followed by 20 years of the State's providing the necessary funding – as high as \$6.6 million a year at one point.

But the State funding was cut off by the Governor in 1996. George Pataki sent Dr. Jerome Blue to occupy the President's seat at RIOC. Together, they declared Roosevelt Island "self-sufficient," and the scramble was on to find ways to

The Referendum Question

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.

Today, no State funds flow to the Island, and its current RIOC President is charged with making do on the income generated here – mostly rent paid for the ground on which apartment buildings sit both now

See Election, page 13

Cabrini 25th Anniversary Celebration November 12

It's been 25 years. A quarter Century.
The Island's Roman Catholic parish is celebrating that longevity on Roosevelt Island on Sunday, November 12, with a Mass to be celebrated by its founding pastor, Msgr. John M. McCarthy. That will be followed by a procession, behind the NYPD's Emerald Society Pipe and Drum Band, up Main Street to Manhattan Park Theater Club, where a reception will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

And Briefly...

- The November 9 meeting of the **RIOC Board of Directors** has been rescheduled for Monday, November 20, at 10:30 a.m. (Most such meetings immediately adjourn to executive session, then pick up public session around 11:00 or after.)
- Veronica Johnson, author of *At the Crossroads: The Insider's Guide to Nursing Home Placement*, will discuss her book Tuesday, November 14 at the Island branch of the New York Public Library. The free session is scheduled for 6:00 p.m.
- As demolition of the Tram station stairway began October 23 at 59th and 2nd, Judy Berdy of the Historical Society managed to rescue the red letters that had adorned the structure, spelling out **Roosevelt Island Tramway**. They're now part of the Society's collection of Island memorabilia.
- Islander **Juanita Fleming** will present a River Music concert of standards, light Duke Ellington jazz, Christmas music, and gospel classics on the evening of December 2. Admission charges, yet to be set, will be low; the concert will be underwritten by *The Main Street WIRE* as a seasonal thank-you gift to the community.



Support *The WIRE* – Your Business Card in the Thanksgiving issue See page 3

COMING UP

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

Sat., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m., **Senior Fashion Show**, Senior Center, 546 Main Street.

Tue., Nov. 7, 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., **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.

Tue., Nov. 7, PS/IS 217 **Flea Market** and white elephant sale for voters at the school's polling place.

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.

Fri., Nov. 10, 9:00 a.m., **PS/IS 217 Open House** and school tour for parents of pre-K students.

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. (Meets second and fourth Monday of each month.)

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

Tue., Nov. 14, 6:00-7:00 p.m., **At the Crossroads**, a book-signing and discussion by author Veronica Johnson, Roosevelt Island Branch of New York Public Library. Coping strategies for families facing a need for nursing-home care of a relative with dementia. Free.

Sat., Nov. 18, next scheduled issue of **The Main Street WIRE.** **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., November 10; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., November 13; bag materials due Thur., November 16. **Future issues:** 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.

Mon., Nov. 20, 10:30 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors** meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

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

Mon., Nov. 27, 8:00 p.m., **Roosevelt Island Toastmasters.** Call **583-0842** for meeting location and other information. Guests welcome.

Sat., Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m., **Juanita Fleming in Concert**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, underwritten 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.

First and Last Call!

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You may write additional information on your card, if appropriate to indicate the nature of your work.

Deadline • This Friday, November 10 • Deadline
Send it in now while you're thinking about it,
and show your support for *The WIRE*

If you prefer not to publish a business card but would like to support *The WIRE*, contribute \$20 and have your name on a list that will accompany the business cards.

Thank you for supporting *The Main Street WIRE*, Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper.

Senior Center

Monday
10:00, **Internet Class**
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
10:30, **Beaded Jewelry Wkshp**
1:00 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**
12:30, **VNS Blood Pressure and**
Medical Information

6:30, **Dance Classes**
Friday
9:00, **English as 2nd Language**
(Beginner's session at 9:00,
Intermediate session at 10:00)
11:00, **Citizenship Class**

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

Special Events

Sat., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m.,
RISA Senior Fashion Show
Wed., Nov. 8, 12:30 p.m.,
Crime Prevention Lecture
Thur., Nov. 9, 9:30-11:30,
Free Flu Shots
Mon., Nov. 13, 11:00-12:30,
Metrocard Bus
Wed., Nov. 22 and 29, 12:30,
Oriental Calligraphy Class

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

The Main Street WIRE CARIBBEAN CRUISE

Sailing Feb.10, 2001 from Ft. Lauderdale

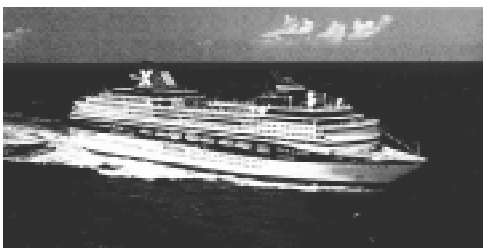
Singles – all ages! Don't be hesitant to join *The WIRE's* February cruise if you will be traveling alone. We can pair you with a compatible cabin mate. A Caribbean cruise should not be restricted to someone who has a traveling companion. We all need a midwinter break from ice, snow and cold, not just couples who travel together. Don't wait... Call now and reserve a place on our February cruise to the Eastern Caribbean and let us find you a compatible cabin mate. You will be with your friends and neighbors from Roosevelt Island as you relax on The Century, one of the most luxurious cruise ships afloat. The Century is part of the Celebrity Cruise Line's fleet and sails out of Ft. Lauderdale for seven sun-filled days and four different ports in the Caribbean. We will be stopping at San Juan, St. Thomas, St. Maarten, and Nassau in the Bahamas. There will be Calypso music on deck every day and fabulous entertainment every evening. The Main Dining Room serves exceptional cuisine in an elegant setting, with snacks, pizza, and yummies available all day long. And it's all included for an incredibly low price of \$853 for an inside cabin. Air fare to Florida is extra.

Never been on a cruise before? Not to worry. There will be an experienced Cruise Manager on board just for our group who will deal with any situations that might arise to insure your maximum pleasure on the cruise.

For full details call Jim Baehler at **752-6463**.

Our sailing date is February 10, 2001 and we are not sure how much longer the cruise line will be able to offer this exceptionally low fare. Don't wait any longer. As the ship approaches full status our special low price will no longer be available.

Holiday gift decisions? What better way to reward your parents or favorite aunt and uncle than to send them on a cruise with the gift they will always remember. There are people you love who have meant so much to you, and here is your opportunity to show your affection and gratitude. Just for once, let yourself go and be extravagant.



The WIRE

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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.

On Sunday, November 12, 2000, the St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Catholic Community is celebrating its 25th Anniversary as a Parish. Mass will be celebrated at 11:15 a.m. by Msgr. John M. McCarthy, founding pastor. Invited concelebrants are Fr. Joseph P. Gorman, Fr. Joachim von Kerssenbrock, S.J., and Fr. Luke W. McCann. Following the Mass, there will be a procession along Main Street, led by the New York Police Department Emerald Society Pipe and Drum Band, to the Manhattan Park Theater Club at 8 River Road, where a reception will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Roosevelt Island Catholic Community welcomes all our friends and neighbors to also celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Roosevelt Island Community. The Cabrini Parish salutes the Roosevelt Island Community on its Silver Anniversary. We look forward to celebrating with our friends and neighbors in fellowship on Sunday, November 12, 2000.

For information, please call (212) 751-1347.

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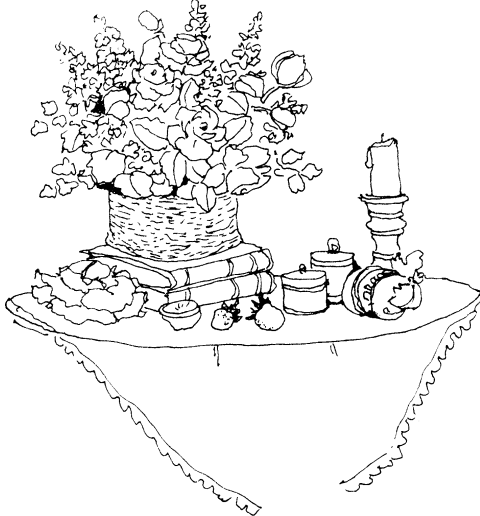
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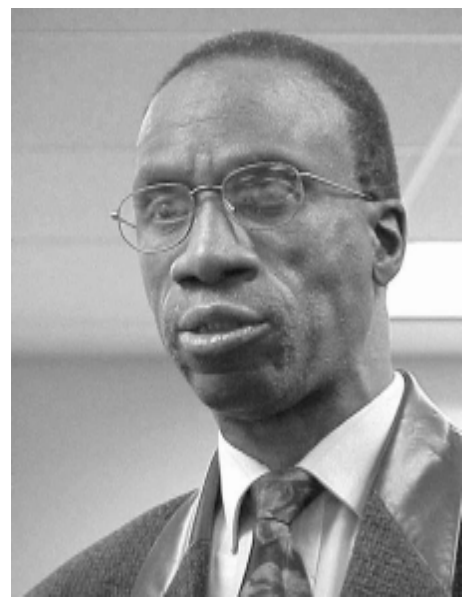
Assemblymember Pete Grannis

Campaign Headquarters, 1338 First Avenue, 988-2270

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AND



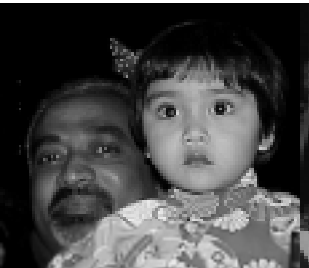
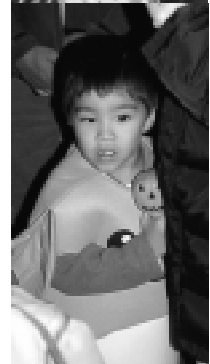
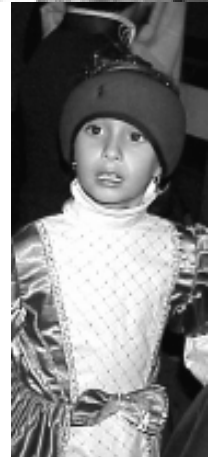
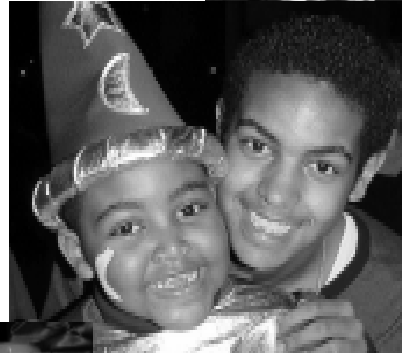
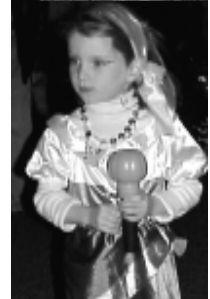
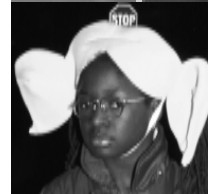
BYRON GASPARD

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- **GOVERNMENT MONEY WHICH COULD COME TO US FREE IS BEING TURNED DOWN**
- **RIOC HAS MORE CONTROL OVER RIRA THAN EVER BEFORE**
- **STREET LIGHTS HAVE BEEN OUT FOR MONTHS — SIDEWALKS DON'T GET REPAIRED, OR THE REPAIRS DON'T MATCH THE ISLAND LOOK**
- **RIRA ISN'T RESPONSIVE TO THE COMMUNITY**
- **WE STILL DON'T KNOW THE REAL FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE ISLAND AND CAN'T FIND OUT**
- **IRRESPONSIBLE ISLAND DEVELOPMENT WILL DESTROY OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IF WE LET IT**

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Transcript: Debate October 25

Strong Disagreements Evident in RIRA Debate

Opening Statements Candidates for President

Matthew Katz: Good evening, and thank you for coming out this evening. This is probably the best representation of grass roots democracy that I know of, and to come out on a night that the Mets are going to whip the Yankees is especially appreciated.

I've been a member of the Common Council for three years now – one year as an appointee, two years as an elected representative. I've seen a Common Council that has been inactive and unable of accomplishing very much, because of the way it's been run. I've seen a lack of leadership, which has not allowed the Common Council to even act upon the measures that it has supported and voted for.

I'm running because I've been told stories about the Residents Association from the old days when it participated in the daily life of this Island – when there were block association parties and dances and ways of raising money that could then be used for the community – when there was regular participation with the youth of the Island, and the Seniors, and the disabled of the Island. That doesn't happen anymore. There is no participation because there is no money. No money has been raised or spent on Common Council during my tenure.

I've worked hard on the Common Council over the last three years, on the Housing Committee... I've been on the Government Relations Committee, I've been on the Legal Action Fund Committee... I'm a charter member of that and I've been the Treasurer since its inception. I've also worked with other groups on the Island. I've worked with the Maple Tree Group; I'm currently the convener of that group, and I've been working with *The Main Street WIRE* to help distribute the paper, along with my wife. I've worked in the schools in the Learning Leader program. I've never felt the kind of sense of community anywhere that I've lived in the City, as I have here. And I think that's worth protecting.

And so I'm running to try to make this Residents Association, which is in fact the only elected organization, in an Island of organizations, that represents you. Because you're RIRA, we're not RIRA. The entire Island – every person who lives on this Island – is a member of RIRA. We are simply your Common Council. We are supposed to be your reflection. Our vote is supposed to carry your imprimatur, and that hasn't happened. Patrick Stewart has used the Common Council as a platform for his views. It's a difference in philosophy. I think that the Residents Association is an Association of residents, and so I'm running to try to get the things that I consider important.

Roosevelt Island's in a period of transition. We have a RIOC Board that is forcing over a billion dollars worth of development. It is a RIOC Board that is appointed by one man, the Governor of the State of New York. The members of that RIOC Board don't represent you. They were put there by the Governor. Their loyalty is to one man, the Governor of New York, and whether it's a Republican or a Democrat, it's fundamentally wrong. That's why I've been working with the Maple Tree Group to fabricate legislation that can give this Island an elected RIOC Board, and a Board that can then hire professional Island management, professional community management – what a concept – instead of our present RIOC President, whose claim to fame is that he ran Pataki's campaign in 1994. It would be nice to have someone who is trained for the job and who is experienced in the job.

I'm running for this position because I think it's important to face the kind of development on this Island with some position of authority. We have a legal committee on this Island. Joan is the Chair of that committee. We have been virtually ineffective because we've never raised enough money to make ourselves effective. The only way you have a legal representation is if you can hire a law firm, which the Common Council voted to do, and we did, and we have participated in an intervention, in a suit, but we've never been able to do much because the money isn't there. The money isn't there because Patrick Stewart has not supported the effort. The Common Council needs to be representative, we need to support the votes that the Common Council takes.

I hope I can convince you tonight to support my bid for the Presidency. Thank you.

Patrick Stewart: Thank you... I want to thank you all for coming out on a Series night. I'm amazed, frankly, that any of you or any of us are here, for that matter. You would not believe the back and forth that has gone on about this meeting. It almost had the proportions of the Bush-Gore thing. There's more paper going back and forth about how this thing was to be run, and ad nauseum. But here we are. It will be run by Sy Williams in a reasonable fashion. I have to also thank Sy. He was offered two tickets to the game tonight, and declined them, and I have to tell you that's way above and beyond the call of duty, and I'm grateful for his being here.

My name is Patrick Stewart. I'm the President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association and have been for almost four years. Before that I was a member of the Common Council from Island House. Along with that, I am a Board member of Community Board 8, Manhattan Community Board 8, representing this Island to that Board along with Nneka Pope and Deirdre Breslin. I'm also a member

of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board of Directors, along with David Kraut and Susan Whitaker, again, representing the Roosevelt Island citizens. This has been a, this has been a difficult time in the life of Roosevelt Island. It certainly has. We've had talk about ineffective RIRAs, we've had talk about self-governance, we've had talk about going back to the City as an option, and so on, and by the way I'm for that, going back to the City, and the Board of Directors is working on that as we speak. It's interesting to say that RIRA has done nothing. I quite frankly think RIRA has done a considerable amount. As an example, how do I spend my time as a member of RIRA, as the President of RIRA? I spend my time in meetings, 114th Precinct community meetings. I spend my time on the Borough President's Coalition for Mitchell-Lama; CHOKe, the clean-

air people from Queens; Community Board 8; a variety of Community Board committees of Community Board 8; the Mitchell-Lama Coalition. I've been to Albany lobbying, I've been to DHCR lobbying on behalf of Eastwood and their rent determinations. I even go to Maple Tree Group meetings. The Common Council has gotten \$50,000 in scholarship money for the Nursery School from Public Purpose funds. We've gotten \$25,000 for the Boy Scouts, a van which they share with anyone else who wants it. I've been actively involved with the Seniors, the Youth Center, the disabled, and so on. So to say that... and I might add, by the way, that I don't think I've ever seen Matthew Katz at any of those

meetings I just described. So I think we've got to put our money where our mouth is, and I think we've got to judge RIRA by what RIRA does as opposed to what people say RIRA does. You will be given flyers toward the end of the meeting so that you can judge for yourselves. What you will read is fact. The fact is that for the last four years RIRA has represented this community, in, I think, a fine way.

One thing that concerns me about this whole situation here, that is that the RIRA President's job is a full-time job. I wish it weren't, but it is. And if you add in the Community Board and the RIOC Board of Directors, it's more than a full-time job. It is a challenging, a worthwhile job, it pays no money, as do not the other [UNINT] pay. And I personally have gotten a great deal of self-satisfaction from this, and I continue, I hope that you all will continue to allow me to do this, because I honestly believe, in my heart of hearts, although Matthew Katz is a good man, a decent man, a well-intentioned man, I don't think he's up to the job. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Sy Williams (Moderator): I wanted to mention that, although we have a team of Patrick Stewart and Joan Christianson, and [a team of] Matthew Katz and Byron Gaspard, when it comes to election day, you don't have to vote for the team. You can split your vote. I just wanted to make sure you're aware of that.

Candidates for First Vice President

Joan Christianson: Good evening. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Joan Christianson. I've lived on the Island for roughly 23½ years. I've been the Vice President of the Residents Association for the past two years, and for the two years before that, I was a representative for Eastwood on the Common Council. Through the years I've belonged to, I've been a Little League mom, I've managed, I've umpired. I've helped out with soccer, I've been very involved with Saint Frances Cabrini Roman Catholic Church on the Island, and a few other groups, mostly a lot of stuff involving the children.

It's been interesting being on the RIRA Common Council, to say the least. There are many different viewpoints, and we all seem to express them, sometimes with a little more enthusiasm than probably is needed. I think we've accomplished a lot in the last four years... the last two years. I've seen many things, you know, God bless Al Weinstein. When he was here he was constantly worried about our Tram,

and, you know, with the RIRA Common Council, would make sure that our Tram always operated, and when things were going badly he was always there to make sure that we had the services that we needed. And a lot of other people have worked very hard throughout the last couple of years to keep

things going well on this Island and to fight for what we need, and I believe Patrick Stewart has been one of our strongest supporters. I, for one, would not want the job of President of RIRA. From what I've witnessed, from what I've observed since being his Vice President, he goes to more meetings than anyone I've met in my life.

You know, I think that we can continue to fight together, we can continue to fight to get a better Public Safety. I mean, I have my own personal problems with Public Safety, but overall we need something different on the Island where Public Safety is concerned. And Byron, for one, has worked very hard on the issue of Public Safety. But again it's something that RIRA can work on and hopefully we can have a voice in changing things. I think that the new, the RIOC that we have right now, from what I've been... from meetings that I've gone to and things that I've observed, are listening to us better than the previous one. I'm not saying Rob Ryan is great, whether he's better than Jerry Blue was, I'm not 100% sure yet, but I think they're listening [UNINT]. I think because we have Patrick on the RIOC Board, Susan Whitaker, and actually, Leo Kayser, who is a new member and a Governor appointee, doesn't seem to be looking for any political future, and again he is working very well with Patrick and with Susan and with David [Kraut], to fight for what we want. And I personally feel that Patrick and I and the RIRA Common Council have a better chance of pushing for more representation on the RIOC Board as it stands now than in pushing through a legislation that would completely change the RIOC Board. Thank you.

Byron Gaspard: I'm glad that you came out. This is wonderful, to see people so concerned about their community. My name is Byron Gaspard and I'm running for First Vice President. In the two and a half years I've been a member of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association I worked as Vice President of Educational, Cultural, and Social Services, was the Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, was a member of the 114th Precinct Committee, was appointed by Joseph Lynch of DHCR to the Capital and Com-

munity Planning Committee that voted against the minischools, a minischool project that was voted for by RIOC in spite of the community's concerns, in spite of the community's rejection of this project. The RIOC Board eventually voted for the minischools, ignoring the community. And our President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association abstained the vote, a chance he had to really let that voice be heard, by a person who was President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, who is also a member, a voting member of the RIOC Board, he had a chance of letting his voice be heard, and his voice wasn't heard. He ab-

stained the vote. He had a chance to let the community know that he is working on behalf of our community.

And that's the problem that we have with the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. We've been divided and torn. We haven't been able to represent the Roosevelt Island community because we've been too torn fighting against each other to do the work that is needed for the residents of Roosevelt Island. This is why I decided to run. We need a RIRA that works for the community. We need to give RIRA back to the community, and the only way it's going to happen is if you elect change. Do not be afraid of change. Do not vote on familiarity. Vote on change that's going to benefit you, the residents of Roosevelt Island, because this is a wonderful community and I believe that Katz and myself can continue to contribute toward this wonderful community.

Candidates for the Presidency and First Vice Presidency of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association debated Wednesday evening, October 25. Their opening and closing statements and their responses to audience questions are reproduced in full here. Where [UNINT] appears, *The WIRE's* recording was briefly unintelligible. The unabridged transcript is available on **Website NYC10044** www.nyc10044.com, but for space reasons procedural announcements and dialogue are deleted here and some questions are condensed.



Matthew Katz



Patrick Stewart

Walter Hill: Good evening, folks. My name is Walter Hill. I’m an elected member of Roosevelt Island’s Residents Association, RIRA. As a member of RIRA, one of my duties is to represent the interests of its members. When I say “its members” I mean Roosevelt Island Associates. Now, all of you are members of RIRA but you’re not elected representatives. I represent the interests of Roosevelt Island to all governments, quasi-governments, private institutions, that develop the policy that affects Roosevelt Island and its residents, and those that manage and supervise our houses, and those that manage or supervise our Island operations, and to insure that the health and safety and welfare of the residents involved in the life of the community are maintained, and improved. And so I’m seeking to run again. Why? Because things are happening before your very eyes that are blinding to some of us. Such as self-governance. Are we ready for that? Think about it. It’s a sham. The \$40 million worth of infrastructure, at its last report RIOC has less than \$10,000 in the bank. What purpose? How are we going to self-govern? Are we going to float bonds? Who is going to buy these bonds? Not me. Not you. Why? Because we can’t afford to.

The other most important issue, crime. Crime is everywhere in the universe. Thank God we don’t have face-to-face shoot-outs on Roosevelt Island. But people, there isn’t any doping. Sure there’s crime. And we have children and young adults in the community, but we must talk to our neighbors. These are their children. And they are their parents. The hue and cry for Public Safety – change, what is the change for? Because Public Service operates like the New York City Police Department. It has the same mentality, except they are unarmed. You disliked Peter Norwood, and now you dislike Fry. You want City police to be placed on the Island. Forget it. In the Council I hear discussion about park rangers. What can park rangers do that Public Safety doesn’t do?

And so that’s why I’m running for Vice President of Roosevelt Island Association. Thank you very much.

Questions

Margie Smith: Patrick, I’m not sure what your position is on Southtown. I look back at the President’s column in the January *WIRE* and you say, “I give you my personal promise that the GDP will not be compromised...” The GDP is clearly being violated at the Southtown plan. That’s why RIRA has intervened. Can you state very clearly, are you for the present Southtown plan or are you against it?

Stewart: Very very quickly, I’m for the Southtown plan as long as it complies with the General Development Plan. That has yet to be determined in a court of law. I believe that 5,000 new people are essential to this community and I am for it. Now, let me say, beyond that, that because of the legal situation, both as a Board member of RIOC and as the President of RIRA, I have had to excuse myself from any of these discussions, so I’m speaking purely from a personal point of view. I’m very much for Southtown.

Katz: I’m certainly for development, too. We need the revenue that it encompasses, but you can’t be looking at the bottom line only. There’s such a thing as the quality of life on this Island and there needs to be a balance in any of the development that is done. That’s the reason a year and a half ago that the Roosevelt Island Residents Association put together a legal committee to try to have the opportunity of having some legal recourse in all the questions of development on the Island, and I should tell you that the Residents Association Common Council voted to create this committee, voted to define this committee so that it would encompass all the development on the Island, voted to hire DeForest & Duer as the law firm representing the interests of the Common Council and the residents of this Island, and then voted to insert itself as a part of the RIRSD suit against both RIOC and Hudson and Related companies. There have been four votes now by the Common Council to support some kind of legal action against the Southtown proposition so that we simply get ourselves a vote at the table, so that this community is heard. I can tell you from the first day until the present, or at least the first day until Patrick had to recuse himself because of his conflict of interest, that he has never supported the most fundamental thing we’ve done, which is to raise the bucks to pay the law firm.

In this very room in 1999, Gifford Miller, our Councilman, stood right here and he said, “If you are serious about having a legal voice on this Island for any development at all, you need a war chest, and you should think about seriously putting together \$100,000 if you want to be taken seriously.” The next speaker was Patrick Stewart who said, “No, no, no, this is not the time to raise money,” and from that day until this there has never been a right time to raise money. If people like Judy Berdy and the other members of committee hadn’t put together a core amount of \$10,000 there would be no legal action on this Island, at least not from the Common Council. From that day until this Patrick has subverted any opportunity to raise money. A year ago my wife put together an Island-wide effort to go into all of the buildings and do a serious fund-raising to try to give this legal action some clout. And we gave the members of the Common Council packets to give out. Two weeks after that effort Patrick Stewart returned his to Sherie, unopened. If that is support of the actions of the Common Council, then I don’t see how Patrick Stewart is supporting the efforts of this residents community.

Linda Pickett: I’d like to know what you are going to do to get money from the State for this Island. That’s the only way we are going to survive and we can’t do it on just pins

and needles.

Katz: Ma’am, you’re absolutely right. It’s all about money. The current RIOC has been told by Governor Pataki, “This Island is self-sufficient,” and so, four and a half years ago, he eliminated both the operating subsidies and the capital subsidies to this Island. We haven’t gotten a dime from the State in four and a half years. We have been told, “You’re self-sufficient, you have enough revenue from the operations of this Island to run the Island,” and for those of you who have lived here for a while, you’ve seen the infrastructure deteriorate and deteriorate.

How do we get money for this Island? Well, RIOC is putting all of its eggs into one basket – the development of the Island. They don’t much care what the quality of our life is because most of them don’t live here. Their sole responsibility is to make good on Governor Pataki’s statement that this Island is self-sufficient. We aren’t. There is a General Development Plan and it says we are self-sufficient when we reach a population of about 16,000. We ain’t there yet. We’re 8,300 people.

With the plan that I have proposed – that the bill in Albany states – is we will have no political ties. We can ask Republicans or Democrats for money. Not only that, but in the infrastructure questions of this Island there is a cap, there is a limiting of the liability of this Island. The present RIOC is responsible for 100% of the infrastructure costs of this Island. With the bill we are proposing and that is in Albany right now, there is a cap of, depending on which bill you’re talking about, Assembly or Senate, \$250,000, \$500,000, within a budget of \$9 million. The rest of the responsibility is the State’s. That’s the point.

Stewart: RIOC, right now, to give the devil their due, is in the process of obtaining money from various State departments. Not very much. It’s less than one million dollars. The only way that we are going to get money from anyone is to continue on the basis of going forward with returning this community to the City. No doubt about it. If you look at the self-governance bill of the Maple Tree Group, very simply, what that does, and this is very, very serious, is that after RIOC2, and that’s what they call the new organization, after RIOC2 takes over, within a certain period of time, three years, the State will be able to pull out of Roosevelt Island entirely. There will be no State obligation to this Island whatsoever. We will sit here with \$200,000,000 in debt to be paid to the Empire State Development Corporation; we will be sitting here with \$50,000,000 in infrastructure damage that was done through the past five years and not taken care of; we will be here without any operating money at all other than what can be generated in revenues off the Island. And we will be sitting here with no capital expenditure money at all. That, to me, is financial suicide. I cannot, in good conscience, allow anybody to do anything anywhere near that sort of thing to the people of this Island. And I will not, will not, stand for eight or nine people in the Maple Tree Group making a decision on what they believe is the best for this Island. What is best for this Island is a generally-elected Residents Association with a responsible direction purely for the simple reason that we have 8,500 people on this Island that have to be protected, and they’ll be damned if five or ten people are going to tell us how to do it.

Ed Igel: I’m a resident of 531, and at a recent RIOC meeting, the vote on the minischool came up. You failed to vote against it, Mr. Stewart. Had a golden opportunity, you blew it. Everybody in the community was against it. You abstained. An abstention is not a vote Yes. I don’t understand the rationale behind it, I would also like to know how anybody can have any confidence in your judgment after you failed to carry out the public will to that extent.

Stewart: Thank you for sharing, Mr. Igel. To repeat what I said to you the other night, and in hopes that there will be some understanding what the vote to abstain means, very simply, there was a resolution put before the Board of Directors. In addition to that resolution there was an amendment put forward by one of the other Directors. I, as a Director, did not have the complete understanding of that amendment to the resolution. Therefore, in conscience and in reality, I couldn’t vote for it, and I couldn’t vote against it, because I didn’t know what it was. Therefore, the only alternative left is to abstain, which as we all know, is not a vote “yes,” it is not a vote “no,” it is a vote of concern. Does that help?

Katz: I think the fundamental difference here is that there is a built-in conflict of interest for a RIRA President who is also on the RIOC Board. This RIOC Board serves at the pleasure of one person, the Governor of the State of New York, and whether it’s George Pataki or Mario Cuomo or the next fellow down the pike, you can’t serve two masters, and this is what this appointment has involved. Now the constitution of the RIRA Common Council asks that the President be appointed, be an ex officio appointment to the RIOC Board. That is not what’s happened. George Pataki has appointed Patrick, and if I win this election, George Pataki will still have Patrick Stewart on the RIOC Board. It is my considered opinion that the RIRA President should never be on the RIOC Board. There is a built-in conflict of interest that will rear its ugly head over and over and over again. You are either loyal to the Governor or you are loyal

to this community. It can’t be both.

Robert Chira: I would like you to spell out your vision, your objectives. What do you see as the long-term, medium-term Island? What should it look like? What kind of people should be attracted to this community? In other words, you want to represent the community, but where do you want to lead it, and what is your vision of its future?

Stewart: I think that, or I know that, at least for the interim period, we need to develop this Island. By that I mean that we need to build Southtown and have those 5,000 residents here, for pure economic reasons. The kinds of people, no I’m not sure I’m prepared to address what kind of people we’re looking for, I think the General Development Plan outlines that fairly well. I would say, for simplicity, we’re looking for all kinds of people, rich, poor, short, tall, black, white, whatever.

Beyond that, we have probably the most valuable piece of real estate in the State of New York called Southpoint. What do I see for that? I see the original vision, the Roosevelt Memorial. I also see a development, which could be housing. It could be a museum. It could be any number of things, but it must be appropriate to this Island. And when I say “appropriate,” what do I mean by that? To me, it has to be right economically for the Island, it has to be right socially for the Island, and it has to be right environmentally for the Island. If you ask me about Southpoint, the hotel, I’m against that 100%, and I have every reason to believe that that will not go forward. There is some space in Octagon Park, the ecological park, that is available. The Board is now looking at a developer who is interested in building five-story housing on the footprint of the lunatic asylum that will house everyone from students to seniors to artists to whatever. The Eldercare facility, I really don’t know about. As you know, we fought and won the move to get the Eldercare facility out of Octagon Park, and then it was moved to be put on top of the Sportspark, which is, again, a park. It is my understanding as I am here tonight that that will probably not go forward. Have I left anything out?

Katz: You know, I agree with Patrick. We have something called this General Development Plan, which is part of the master lease between City and State, and it answers a lot of these questions. Going back 30 years, there was this visionary in the ’60s by the name of Ed Logue, who had the idea for this planned community, and he and others like him put together this idea of affordable housing, understanding that that was not paramount in the ideas of the developers in Manhattan and New York City, and the idea of mixing groups of people of different ethnic groups and different social groups and different financial groups, and that all came together in this planned community called Roosevelt Island. And it worked. I mean, it’s wonderful. I mean, that’s why we’re all here, isn’t it? But that doesn’t mean it’s going to stay wonderful. There’s all kinds of development planned for this Island. This community has no voice in those plans. We need to get a seat at the table so we can urge them to recognize that there are people living here now – people who have a certain vision of what this Island has been, is now, and should be in the future. A combination of commercial ventures and residential ventures, and our green space – our trees and our baseball fields and our soccer fields and our public gardens. These are the things that make this such a special community, and if we can’t communicate that to developers who are looking at the bottom line, then Roosevelt Island will cease to exist, GDP – General Development Plan – or no. It is our responsibility, certainly the responsibility of the RIRA Common Council, and its President, to insure that that General Development Plan is abided by.

Williams [reading question submitted in writing by **Shirley Margolin**]: What has your role been in bringing the concerns of Roosevelt Island to Community Board 8?

Stewart: What the Community Board has done, and has most recently done, as you probably noticed trying to get down stairs at the Tram over there, is... the Community Board has recommended and in fact gotten the money and the wherewithal to redo the Tram stairs on the Manhattan side. It will be built in such a way that new elevators, ADA-compliant elevators, will be installed in that area. Community Board 8 has also asked the City for money to totally reconstruct the 36th Avenue Bridge. Community Board 8 has in more instances supported us in our efforts to keep Southpoint, the hotel out of there. Community Board 8, along with the Sutton Area Committee, the Beekman Place Committee, the Turtle Bay Committee, the 59th Street Task Force, through the Community Board, have supported the Island in any number of ways, from literally being ADA-compliant at the Tramway to Southpoint to the Eldercare facility to the minischools and so on. We are part of Community Board 8. Roosevelt Island is part of Manhattan Community Board 8. We have three members who sit on that Board, and three members who work very hard for the interests of this Island.

Katz: My only connection with Community Board 8 has been through my professional life when I made an appeal in front of them, although I expect that if I’m elected President, I will have some need to make myself known to them. But do keep in mind that I’m not running for the President



Byron Gaspard

of Community Board 8 or District Board 2 or the RIOC Board of Directors. I'm running to be the President of our RIRA Common Council.

And you know as I look at this handout that Patrick has put out on what RIRA has done, I don't remember voting for any of these things through the Common Council. I see things that the RIOC Board has done through their public purpose funds and I see things that the Community Board has done, but I don't see anything that the Common Council has done. That's the post I'm running for and I would like to make the Common Council proactive and reactive so that we could actually put something out like this and be proud of it.

Martin Atkins: To be President takes an incredible amount of time. I would like you to write down how much time you think you can spend per month, and ask you to write down how much time you've actually spent per month, so I can get a better handle of how you'll be able to fulfill your post.

Katz: It's a really good question. Because I know full well how many hours this is going to take. And I spent a good part of the summer deciding whether I was going to simply walk away from the Common Council, as so many others who have put in a term, or try to effect change on the Common Council. I'm retired. I have the time to put in. I have spent 20 years of my life running committees at a non-profit organization, trying to put 30 volunteers in a room to get something done. Sound familiar? I mean, this is essentially what the Common Council is, and does. These were monthly meetings, and I am the first one to tell you that the real work of the Common Council doesn't happen on the first Wednesday of each month. It happens between those meetings. That's where the important work of the Common Council has to happen, through the committees, through individual effort, and through the officers of the organization, the President and First Vice President. That means going to every meeting that will hear you. That means going to try to find every kind of resource to support the Island that you can possibly find. It is tremendously time-consuming and I'm fully aware of that. It is daytime programs, it is going to meet with the MTA, which I've done. It's going to meet with DHCR, which I've done; it's going to meet with our public officials, which I've done both here and up in Albany. I'm fully aware of what you're talking about and you are absolutely right.

Could Byron answer some of that, because he's been such a part of this, as well? Would that be all right? Could he take the rest of my time? May I allocate the rest of my time to Byron?

Williams: Another 30 seconds.

Byron Gaspard: That's a very interesting question. The whole idea of putting time into serving your community means that you are partial in terms of the type of work you want to do for your community. You can't put time into compartments. Of course you have to have a personal life, but your personal life is your community. If your community falls apart, that affects your personal life. The fact of the matter is, you have to be dedicated to the community, you have to love this community, and if you truly do, you will put in the time that's necessary for this committee.

My wife and I, when we first moved here two and a half years ago – a little over that – we sat up until 1:00 o'clock in the morning. We were patrolling our halls against stopping drug trafficking in Eastwood, stopping gambling and garbage being thrown down in the hallways, and I thought Public Safety failed to give us the security we needed, and we were very successful in stopping the drug trafficking, getting actual arrests to take place. We had people arrested on the fourth floor. We had people arrested. We made the Public Safety Department susceptible to the conditions on the fourth floor, and we dedicated ourselves, and every minute of time that we have to dedicate to our community, I promise you we will dedicate to our community, because this is about the residents. It is not about me.

Stewart: There's one thing I do agree with Matt about, and that is the work of RIRA is not done on Wednesday night, once a month. It is done daily, it is done by a variety of different people. But to answer your question, I spend six to eight hours a day, weekly. I spend probably between one and four hours each night, and I probably spend four hours each day Saturday and Sunday.

David Bauer: Let me just raise this question, if I could, to the Vice Presidential candidates. What obligation do you feel the officers of RIRA have to carry out the wishes of the Common Council and the citizens of the Island?

Gaspard: I think that the First Vice President has a responsibility to work with the task force, to work with the different organizations on the Island, to bring anybody to the table who has a vested interest in our community. We have to commit ourselves to that type of change. In the past the Roosevelt Island Residents Association has acted almost like a political club, a Democratic or Republican club. We need to really open it up to the community and really bring people to the table that have a vested interest in our community. We need a youth representative from the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, from the Beacon Program. They can actually sit on the Roosevelt Island Residents Association

and be a part of the political process. This is their community, too. You know, they're not taboo, they're not a disease, they're our youth, and we need to start treating them that way. We need to have representatives from Coler-Goldwater to sit on our Common Council so that we can hear some of their best interests and their concerns on the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. We need to have a more active Public Safety Committee, and to become even more active. We're paying more than \$1.5 million to the Public Safety [Department], and we're not getting the security that is needed from Public Safety. We need to really start holding back our monies and not pay good money after bad, and have a Public Safety that meets the security needs of Roosevelt Island. We need to be more about the residents and less about ourselves.

Hill: What was the question?

Williams: Would you restate the question, please?

Bauer: What obligation do you, as an officer of RIRA, have to carry out the wishes of the Common Council and the citizens of the Island?

Hill: Well, I believe the duties of the Vice President would be to be a liaison with the President from the community, and he doesn't have a format of his own. He just follows the format of the community and relays it to the President. That's it.

Christianson: I think that the Vice President is obligated to carry out the wishes of the community. And I think that RIRA has done that. I mean, I'm sitting here and I guess being a resident for as long as I have, and it took me a while to get involved in RIRA. When I first moved here I was a little involved; at that time my husband was very involved. I was more involved in raising my children. And I realize that you go through various stages in your life, and now I'm at a stage where – you don't want to know the reason I got involved in RIRA but I'm involved. A lot of people in this community out there don't care what we do. It's a terrible thing to say, but they don't. It's a handful of people that care, that meet and care what goes on in this community. The rest of them go about their daily lives and couldn't give a hoot less what we do.

RIRA is elected by the residents, but we're not some big powerful organization. I honestly feel that in the last couple of years we've gained more respect with our politicians, with RIOC that stands here now, even with the Governor, because we're loud, and we've shown that we're not going to just sit by and do nothing. And we have divisions within the RIRA Common Council itself. That's normal. We're human beings, we all have different points of view, we all see things differently and we want to go about things differently. And it's the majority of people that have to rule. If a vote comes about and I don't happen to agree with it, I'm not going to work against that because I didn't vote for it. At the same time, if I vote for something that is passed and other people have voted against it, I expect them to work just as hard to see what the majority of people want done. Thank you.

Mary Camper-Titsingh: Yes, my question is directed to Byron Gaspard. What have you done in the past and what will you specifically do to improve public safety on this Island?

Gaspard: In the past I've been chairperson of the Public Safety Committee. We worked to make this community more aware of the amount of money that's paid

into the Public Safety [Department] and the type of work that we are given for our money. We were very successful in getting Public Safety more aware that more internal patrols, especially those patrols that are least secure such as Eastwood which is the least secure development on Roosevelt Island, we made them more aware that we need internal patrols. We had meetings. We met with the 114th Precinct. Our first meeting was with the 114th Precinct, the Public Safety committee, along with the management, Doryne Isley and other members of management. We had a very successful meeting in dealing with the security needs on Roosevelt Island and we have made the community more aware of the amount of money that's being put into a system that hasn't met the security needs of Roosevelt Island. What are my future plans? My future plan is to talk to residents, let them know that their money doesn't have to be spent badly, that they can hold back their monies, that they can talk to their management. We will meet with management; we will let them know that we are tired of tolerating a sub-standard Public Safety system that doesn't meet our needs, that doesn't secure us, that doesn't make us feel safe in our own community, and that we're spending all this money, over a million dollars, into a system that needs to be spent better in terms of a security system that meets this wonderful planned community.

In addition to that, I've worked with the Roosevelt Island Beacon Program. We have drug awareness groups. We have cultural enrichment groups. We have open counseling groups where we work with youth to make them more aware

of some of the behavior patterns that are destructive to the community and how they can be more of an asset to this community. And I will continue to do that type of work because our youth is part of this community, too.

Christianson: Byron has worked very hard on the Public Safety Committee as a member of the Common Council. I have very strong feelings as far as Public Safety is concerned. I can tend to get a little emotional when I discuss Public Safety because I think that probably 85 or 90 percent of the people working over there are incompetent and need to be changed. They are given a lot of power with little training, and I think that's something that this community needs to be made aware of. They're Peace Officers. They have this wonderful status called "Peace Officers," which... God only knows how we allowed that to happen. And if anything we need a Public Safety Department that is trained. If we're going to pay all this money, then we deserve people who are qualified to do the job that we want them to do, and not people who obviously, if you look at them, I don't know what kind of test they take. I think they scrape the bottom

of the barrel for the most part. And I think that's something that all of us can work on, and I think that's something the whole community has to work on. It's getting, I guess... what I guess we should deserve for our dollars. We're putting a lot of money in, nothing in return for it. Thank you.

Hill: In my introduction statement, I declared that the Public Safety has the mentality of the New York City Police Department. That's what it is. They carry on just like the City police do. And, as far as the test and the training, it doesn't have that much training that they have to endure. I was on the Police Department of the City of New York for three years. I wore the blue. And I know what transpires. And it's the same mentality. Once you get that authoritative attitude, you take on that influx. And about withholding funds, you talk to Doryne Isley about withholding funds from Public Safety? They

all work for the same people. You are not going to withhold any funds. That's just a lot of pap.

Judy Berdy: What would you do, Byron, Joan, and Walter, to help the Historical Society, to help the residents, to rally to save our landmarks?

Hill: Well, for one thing, being, Joan, that you are the head of or Vice President of the Historical Society, as Vice President of RIRA I would form a bond with you and we would go to the Historical Society and we would see what could prevail that would sort of solidify these sites on the Island that are noted for being historical monuments, and get the community involved, because most of the people don't know that they're on the bounds of losing these historical sites. So you must get out to the residents, because they're not informed, and when we have these RIRA meetings, we must get the community to attend, so you can put forward your suggestions. And that's how I would go about helping the Historical Society of Roosevelt Island.

Christianson: Well, Judy, you know I've been active where this building's concerned. Again, it comes down to: people on this Island sit back and take life easy and go about their daily business, and until you start screaming that they're needed, they don't come forward. And I guess if that's what it's going to take, putting up flyers and organizing where we have a march, you know, we go for TV coverage or whatever, we can do it. We can all do it. And that doesn't have to be as a Vice President, it can just be as a resident of Roosevelt Island, because I seriously believe that we need to save Blackwell House. You know, I have a personal love for this building, for all our landmarks, for our past, our future, for everything that's going on, you know, the Tram station, everything, so you call and we'll be there.

Gaspard: I believe our history is a very important part of the existence of our Island. If we neglect our history, then we are, in fact, neglecting our community. I think that it is very important that we support the landmarks, I think it is very important that we make ourselves known in terms of restoring it, and maintaining our landmarks, and as First Vice President, if I'm elected, I will work very closely with Judy Berdy to make sure that they are restored and maintained.

Sharon Berman: Do you think that it would be appropriate for RIRA to do something about the Boy Scouts' use of public facilities [concerning discrimination case]?

Katz: What an interesting question. To say that I've been thinking about this constantly wouldn't exactly be the truth, but I can tell you that it's certainly appropriate for RIRA to take this up in debate and to decide if the RIRA Common Council has a role to play in this. Off the top of my head, it sounds like this is the sort of question that might be more appropriate for the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations. It was my impression that it was their responsibility to deal with all the variety of organizations on the Island. I'm not really sure exactly what it is they do, but this certainly sounds like something that would fall under their purview.

Stewart: To answer your question as best I can, Sharon, I don't have the foggiest idea. I don't really know what the issues are other than that there appears to be discrimination. I would imagine that it has gone to courts of law. I don't really know. As far as, should people be discriminated against, if that is the question, absolutely not, in any way,



Joan Christianson



Walter Hill

shape or form. To be specific about the Boy Scouts of America, I just flat out don't know. But I sure as hell will go home and look. Thank you.

Joyce Mincheff: As we all know, the City of New York leased the land that we are standing on here to the State of New York [under] a very binding lease agreement. Patrick, you've come forward with a statement that you'd like to see the City take us back. In most cases in order to break a lease agreement, you can do it under circumstances where you buy out the lease, which would obligate the State to expense that they'd probably not want to undergo. And it's not really clear that the City would be willing to fight the legal battle with the State in order to get out of State control or to obliterate that lease, or whether that's something that the Mayor would consider.

So my question to you initially, Patrick, is have you had any conversations with the Mayor or anyone at a level that was considerable enough to give us any sense of commitment on the part of the City that there would be any realistic chance that they would consider taking us back?

I would also like the opinion of both of you in regard to the prospect of the City taking us back and whether you think that's an option.

Stewart: To your point, Joyce, about the Lease, in order to break the Lease in the real world, you must have the agreement of all the parties to the lease, or you must have, you must have a lawsuit. Now we all know that the City probably would not sue the State, and if they did, it would take forever, so the way to address this situation is with the agreement of the City, State, and/or developers or sources of other funds. Would the City be interested in this? Categorically, yes. Would the State be interested in it? Yes. Is it a doable thing? Yes. Is it complicated? Very. Because what will have to happen, very simply, is that the \$200 million in outstanding Empire State Development Corporation bonds would have to be either paid off or forgiven. That would make it a good deal for the State. Now, what makes it a good deal for the City? What makes it a good deal for the City would be that the flow of income from ground rents and so on, the money that goes to RIOC right now, in addition to all the future development on the Island, would flow to the City. That would therefore make it worthwhile for the City. The most important part of this question is, what's in it for the citizens. The City and State are fine. What about us? The Board of Directors of the Operating Corporation, as a matter of fact, is meeting tomorrow to discuss this. There is a very general point of view, there are no specifics that have been put down yet, there have been conversations with politicians, specifically the borough president and Gifford Miller and Pete Grannis, to date.

The idea of this to me is a very good idea, but with one proviso, and the Board is perfectly aware of this. The proviso is that the General Development Plan be followed to the letter. That the lease, and as we all know the General Development Plan is part of the lease, that that lease protect the people on this Island as we are and as we have been and as we will be. Otherwise, there can be no deal. I think that reasonable people in a reasonable fashion can come away from negotiations such as this with the State being forgiven, let's say, \$200 million in debt. The City's ability to pick up \$40 million worth of infrastructure damage repairs, the City then assuming the flow of income from taxes and new buildings and the outside financing, the little land that we have left that is available, would be sold. It would then pass to — sold for 68 years, because there's 68 years to go on the Lease — that land, and there's precious little of it, by the way, would have to be developed under the terms of the General Development Plan. That is to say, as of right now. So the community would be getting an up-front payment of x number of dollars for the land. The developer would therefore have to be quick about putting up the development because he's already got an investment here. The development that he puts up must be in accord with the General Development Plan. Now, it is very complex, and I don't pretend to understand one half of it. But it is possible, there are some very good people who are working on it. I believe that for the good of the people on this Island, that this is a viable option. I'm told that it could be done within two to three years. I'm told that. I don't know that. But I do believe it is well worth all of our while to move forward, not to do it, but to see if it can be done and if it can be done, to do it. Thank you very much.

Katz: There's no getting away from it. It's an intriguing idea. Everybody thinks that our problems may very well be solved if we go back to the City. But I think we need to consider what the reality of the situation right now is. If, in fact, we are facing \$40 million in infrastructure costs, then the City would be picking up \$40 million in infrastructure costs. If the City simply bides its time and waits 68 years, what they get is a completely developed Island which is paying out ground rents on a regular basis, Roosevelt Island is then a cash cow. I'm not sure I understand why they would want to take on that kind of debt now, when if they bide their time, they get a cash cow later.

What about our point of view? Well, there is a master lease and if you break the Master Lease everything that goes with the Master Lease is also a thing of the past. The General Development Plan is part of the Master Lease, and if we go back to the City, the General Development Plan no longer exists. Will the City give us some other kind of protection? I don't know, and neither does anyone else. My fear is, as Leo Kayser has told us — Leo Kayser's a member of the RIOC Board — that the Island would simply be turned over to the highest bidder and the market rate would rule. If

that is the case, then Roosevelt Island as a planned community ceases to exist.

Closing Statements Candidates for First Vice President

Hill: Thank you. I'm holding in my hand the Roosevelt Island Residents Association constitution, which was adopted in December, 1991, and through the four years of being a member of RIRA, 50% of these amendments have not been abided by, and as Vice President-elect, I would try to enforce these amendments when we have our daily meetings, because every one of the members on the RIRA Council now has their own agenda. They come in and they disrupt the meetings, the public meetings, everything is in a chaos. We get nothing done. We hear the complaints of the community, we hear the complaints of the structural disintegration, but we're not able to do anything about it. If we abide by this and follow Robert's Rules, we might be able to be effective in the Council meetings. That's all I have to say.

Gaspard: I think we need to ask ourselves a very important question. We need to look at our community and ask ourselves, "What has the Roosevelt Island Residents Association done for me?" And if we come up empty, then we know there's a change to make. You know, we had this paper that was passed around, and this is indicative of the type of problems we have with the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. Most of these things we haven't even voted on. So how is it accomplished? Who did it? It certainly wasn't done by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. The Roosevelt Island Residents Association was so busy backbiting and fighting and divided that they weren't able to serve the community. As First Vice President, if elected, I would work with task forces, I would work with committees, to make sure that the committees deal with the goals that meet the mandates of the community. We had a housing committee that worked on fire safety. But there were other issues. There were issues that I would term security, not having security cameras. There were issues of drug trafficking that affected almost every development here on Roosevelt Island. There were issues of security and public safety that affected every one of us here on Roosevelt Island. We need to really deal realistically with those issues that really affect us, that face us every single day: Community issues, issues that affect our pocketbook, issues that affect our lives here on Roosevelt Island. And that's what I would do. I would deal with those issues that affect you. Not the issues that affect me, not the issues that make me look politically good, but issues that make the community strong because we're dealing with community issues.

Christianson: I'm very glad you brought up about this paper. One of the things that I've learned in the past few years is that not everything can be done by a group of 30 or 35 people who meet once a month. Things are done by individuals, things are done by small groups of people, and not everything comes back to the whole Common Council. I mean, some things that were worked on on Community Board 8, they weren't brought back to the Common Council, and it's rightly so. Everything can't, or nothing will be accomplished. I mean, if things are needed, if a whole Council vote is needed on something, then it's brought to the Council, but if you're going to bring everything that concerns us back to 35 people, you're going to wind up getting nothing at all done. We added two... Patrick and Susan, by the way, are not government appointees to the RIOC Board. We fought, a group of residents and Common Council members fought, through the Mayor of New York, to get them on the RIOC Board. When we saw that we weren't going to get them on, that Patrick wasn't going to get a rightful seat just as President of the Residents Association, we went through the Mayor's office to get it done, so he wasn't appointed by the Governor. He was appointed by the Mayor of New York.

Everything that we've done that... Everything that we've done, we've done with Common Council approval, for the most part. As far as Southtown is concerned, the way we proceeded, we went back to the Council with everything and proceeded with their approval. RIRA went in as intervenors in the case because that's what the Common Council chose for them to do, and personally, as I have walked around this Island, that's what people told me they wanted. That's how we proceeded.

I'm not going to give you illusions. I'm not living in a world of illusions. I mean, it's nice to want everything to be perfect, and it's nice to want everything to run in what sounds like a great storybook tale. But this is Roosevelt Island. We're part of New York City. You know, people here, as I've said several times tonight, have other things to do. I mean, look at the number of people, for 8,500 people, this room isn't even filled tonight. That's how much they care. A small group of people will care; as you move on to something else, another group of people will come in to care. That's just the way life is.

You know, if you want to vote for me, vote for me. If you don't want to vote for me, I'll still do what I do. It's, you know, that's up to you. Thank you.

Candidates for President

Katz: I'm the challenger. First, I'd like to make two corrections. Number one, Patrick and Susan, if I understand correctly, were nominated by the Mayor but in fact they were appointed by the Governor, who is the only one who has that right. Number two, the Maple Tree Group is not the progenitor, is not... This bill is not the creature of

the Maple Tree Group. Yes, we've had a great deal to do in writing it, in formulating it, in debating for it. This is in fact the creature of the Senate and the Assembly, of our co-sponsors for this bill, of Olga Mendez who is our State Senator, of Pete Grannis, who is our State Assemblyman. They are the co-sponsors of the bill. If it's anybody's, it's theirs at this point.

Number two, on this Island, if this bill belongs to anybody, it belongs to the RIRA Common Council. The Common Council has voted on three separate occasions to support this bill. First, in principle, secondly, February 1999, the language was to actively support the passage of the Grannis bill. The Common Council has never actually done that, but they agreed to do it. And finally, just this past February, this bill was taken apart, section by section, and a form of this bill was given to Olga and to Pete with the approval of the Common Council. So, really, this is a bill that has been through the mill, this is a bill that has been approved by the RIRA Common Council. So let's keep this straight.

I had some ideas about a closing statement but what I would like you to do as you leave here tonight, I would like you to go outside and I'd like you to look at some of the literature around the Island that Patrick and I have put up. I'd like you to make some comparisons. This is a piece of their literature, and it talks about the Maple Tree Group and Matt Katz — I think his stuff talks about me more than mine does — what this thing says, it talks about a conversation of Jorge Vidro responding to Matt Katz in a meeting, this February 10 meeting with Olga and Pete Grannis. In fact the conversation that they're talking about never took place. There is a transcript of that meeting. I have it here. The conversation that took place was between Jorge Vidro and a fellow named Lee Edelman, and he doesn't look anything like me, and he can speak for himself. I have the entire transcript; you could look it up on the website.

Also, it says that it was about lack of democracy in Maple Tree Group. No, it wasn't. What that conversation was about was the size of the RIOC Board and whether a larger RIOC Board would be more democratic than a smaller RIOC Board. You can look it up. It's on the record.

At best, this is irresponsible campaigning. At worst, it's scandalous. And I think this should stop. Look at our campaign literature around the Island. You will not see any reference to Patrick and Joan whatsoever. You will not see any reference to the past two years whatsoever. What you will see is our hopes for the future — what we're hoping to do over the next two years, how we are hoping to change RIOC to make it a more active organization, a more responsive organization, an organization that can sit in a room and work for a common cause. That is our function, that is our responsibility to you. We ask you to support me, Matthew Katz, Byron Gaspard, on November 7, and please, come out and vote for that referendum question. I'm wearing a 92% button. Some of you may remember, two years ago, we had 92% of those people voting, voting for the Grannis bill. We're asking you again to show that you are in favor of elective government for the RIOC Board, because that's the American way. Thank you.

Stewart: Thank you all. I'm not going to talk about the 92% because that's a spurious statistic, anyway. What we are talking about here is democracy. What we are talking about here is Roosevelt Island and our way of life here on Roosevelt Island, and keeping that way of life. The bill that Matthew Katz has been working on — the iterations of that bill that they've been working on for two and a half years or more has never got past the Corporations Committee of the Assembly. Why? Because it doesn't make any sense. Why doesn't it make any sense? Let me read you the last line of a paragraph regarding who's responsible for what on this Island. It reads, "Nor shall the corporation be liable for any obligations of the State, that the State is free of all obligations after the third year that the Master Plan is completed." What does that say? That says that each one of us becomes responsible in a way that does not exercise that responsibility. We are free of the State. We will be unable to float bonds, borrow money, or tax ourselves, simply because we are not an entity. That, to me, is financial irresponsibility. That, to me, is not watching over the welfare of your neighbors. That, to me, is gross negligence in terms of what it is we are trying to do, not for RIRA, not for RIOC, not for the State of New York, not for the City of New York, but for the people of Roosevelt Island. It seems very clear to me that if push comes to shove and we are literally put out into the middle of the river by the State of New York, with no recourse, and that's what this says, no recourse, the State of New York will no longer be liable for any of the obligations of Roosevelt Island. I, for one, am very uncomfortable with that. I know that many of us, if we don't like what's going on here, can move. But what about those of us who can't move? Those are the important people on this Island, not those of us who can move. I can go back to Salem, Massachusetts, or wherever. But the people who are in serious jeopardy on this Island through financial irresponsibility are the elderly, the disabled, the poor of our community. What can they do? What recourse do they have? They can't move away.

I took a pledge to myself that I would protect everyone on this Island as best I could. I've done that for the last four years. I hope you'll let me do it for the next two years, and we will continue, as a matter of fact, whether or not you do elect me, we will protect this Island, and the people on it, most importantly. Thank you all very much.

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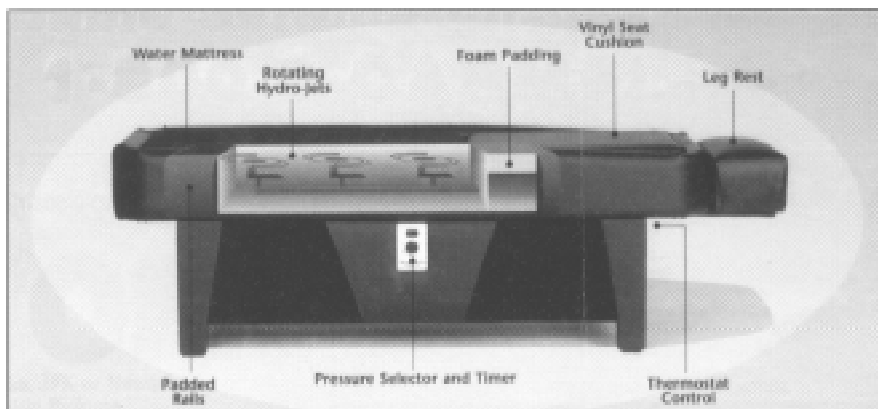
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Statements by Candidates for Residents Association Executive Posts

Matthew Katz

Candidate for President

My name is Matthew Katz and I am running for President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association.

The campaign is down to its last few days. The debate between Presidential and First Vice-Presidential candidates is behind us and the contestants have given their final statements at Candidates' Night. I've spoken to many of you in community rooms all over the Island, on the street and at get-togethers in your homes. Our campaign literature, flyers and posters have sought your attention in a variety of colorful ways. Some of us will take advantage of *The Main Street WIRE's* offer to speak once again to the entire community in this issue. Some will not. I intend to avail myself of the chance to correct some misconceptions and erroneous information put forth by my opponent and to tell you why Byron Gaspard and I have joined forces to take on the task of leading RIRA.

Stewart and Christianson have told you at the debate and in their posted material why change is impossible, unwise, risky. They have focused on opposing us rather than listing their hopes and goals for the next two-year Common Council term. Byron and I would rather light a candle than curse the darkness. Read our posters and you will see plans for a more productive, more responsive RIRA without any mention of our opponents.

We want your Common Council to reflect the diversity of the Island's population, to take on an unresponsive Public Safety Department, and to participate in the lives of our seniors, our disabled and our youth. We want Common Coun-



cil to participate in Roosevelt Island Day and in other Island events. We want Council votes to mean something and Member resolutions to be carried out. When a Council Committee responded to the Eastwood fire with the idea of holding an insurance fair, to inform residents of the benefits and costs of apartment insurance and to talk about fire prevention, your RIRA president should have made it happen. He didn't. But Byron and I know that to get your support, first we must earn your respect and your trust.

Patrick Stewart tells you that the legislation to give this Island an elected, rather than a politically appointed RIOC Board, is fiscally unsound, but he doesn't mention the financial safeguards, endorsed by both Assemblymember Grannis and Senator Mendez, that protect the Island until such time as we are truly self-sufficient. His flyers discuss conversations disparaging to the Maple Tree Group between myself and Senator Mendez' legislative aide that never took place. He offers lists of RIRA accomplishments that RIRA has never seen or voted on and that were the actions of other groups and other people. The Stewarts, Patrick and Karen, have both sat on the Legal Action Fund Committee and yet, neither has ever seen fit to help pay for the law firm the Common Council voted to hire. Is this leading by example? Bizarrely, Patrick even takes credit for the money provided by Assemblymember John Ravitz to tear down the Manhattan-side tram station stairway, benefiting only the developer whose apartment house now has an empty Tram Plaza leading into his front lobby.

I've heard so many of you say that you are tired of business as usual, of the *status quo*, and of a Common Council that is never challenged to be better. So many residents are unaware that there even is a Residents Association because it has never impacted on their lives. After three years of effort and advocacy I'm frustrated and ashamed. I know

The Common Council voted not to support RIRSD. The developers had agreed to build a new field. As a matter of fact, I was the one who initially insisted that this be a priority in the development.

On the evening of January 5, Karen Stewart brought to me, in my role as LAFC chair, a discovery that demanded immediate attention. With the full voted approval of the Common Council we proceeded to bring the matter to D&D. Each step in this matter from this point forward, no matter how small, was put before the LAFC and the Common Council to be voted upon. In no case did the Council fail to approve, by a wide majority, any step. By the way, *The WIRE* was present for, and taped, each one of these votes. From the 12th of January, every member of the Common Council was fully aware that Karen Stewart along with me was working with our lawyers, as were RIOC, DHCR and the Southtown developers. These parties' own lawyers were aware of her involvement. By all reports, those same counsels have so far been paid more than half a million dollars for their advice. Not one of these individuals raised a single objection. Presumably, they would have been eager to do so, had there been any possible basis on which they could object. The Common Council formally appointed Karen Stewart to the LAFC by an 18 to 3 margin. (Farance was joined by Linda Heimer and Joyce Mincheff in voting against the appointment.)

Each conversation Karen has had with our lawyers were three-way calls initiated by me. Luckily, I did not have to supervise her work on the Southtown matter, because De Forest and Duer have since estimated that her individual research saved RIRA in excess of \$25,000 in legal fees in this suit, keeping RIRA's total legal costs to less than \$10,000.

To suggest that somehow Karen is "protecting" Patrick in all this defies any and all logic. She had only to keep her discovery to herself to protect Patrick, had she wished to do so. Instead, she chose to give RIRA the means to sue RIOC within a month of Patrick's appointment to the Board. If this is helping her husband's career advancement, I must be missing something. As President of RIRA, who is doing the suing, and an officer of RIOC, who is being sued, Patrick himself is prohibited from any involvement in this matter on either side, as Farance well knows. With over 20 lawyers involved, and among the 28 Common Councilors, no one has ever suggested there is a problem in how the Stewarts have proceeded for the past 10 months except Farance, Joyce Mincheff and Linda Heimer.

In the Southtown matter, our lawyers advised RIRA not to file our own Article 78 action because of the prohibitive cost and unlikely chance of success. The Common Council voted to follow this advice. Our lawyers also explained that, although GDP compliance was not solely a procedural matter, and therefore not subject to the 120-day filing restriction as was an Article 78, the cheapest way to bring the mat-

Through the Nominations and Election Committees, *The WIRE* invited candidates for RIRA executive offices to provide statements for the October 21 issue and this issue. At deadline, statements appearing here had been provided. At her request, the statement of Joan Christianson, incumbent First Vice President, is in the form of a letter to the editor, responding to a letter published October 21.

With this issue, pursuant to the October 5 offer through the RIRA Nominations and Election Committees, *The WIRE* is also distributing flyers for both President and Vice Presidential candidates, as well as flyers for Common Council candidates. Not all candidates provided flyers.

Council Members have given of themselves to make the Common Council a more significant organ of Roosevelt Island life. Patrick Stewart, on the other hand, has used the Common Council as a platform for his own views. I believe that leadership dedicated to making a difference and effecting change can significantly improve RIRA's net value to Roosevelt Island.

The issues are clear. We *must* vote "Yes" on the referendum question to give us an elected RIOC empowered to hire professional, experienced management. We deserve better than the amateurs sent to us by a Governor who sees Roosevelt Island as a repository for the recipients of political favor. And it's time a new broom swept the Island clean of the fear of change that has characterized Patrick Stewart's reign over a Common Council he has largely ignored. We must use the only organization on Roosevelt Island elected from the community to demand a say in the massive development that will change the quality of our lives forever.

On November 7 please make it your business to vote at our Island school for the national candidates of your choice. And help restore local government to Roosevelt Island by voting for me, Matthew Katz, as your Residents Association President. Remember, there are crucial decisions on the future of our Island that will be made in the next few years. And decisions are made by those who show up.

ter before a court was to intervene on whatever Article 78 was filed by others. Again, the Council sensibly voted to do so. We did not "tag along" or "join" as Farance and others, including *The WIRE*, suggest. To intervene means to "come between" and intervention would not have been permitted by the Court unless both our evidence and interests were separate and different from those who filed the original cases. The Court in this case did not rule against our intervention, and the Common Council has since voted to file to appeal Judge Tompkins' clearly erroneous procedural decisions (he did not rule on the merits of the GDP case). RIRA's arguments will be heard along with the others, if any are heard. We will not be excluded from any negotiations if and when negotiations happen.

It was RIRSD's initial filing of their own Article 78 that gave RIOC the excuse they needed not to negotiate with RIRA directly. We have received value for our money, and acted on RIRA's obligation to protect the GDP. And as for the "heavy lifting", it is our argument, RIRA's argument, that is the only argument being brought to appeal by RIRSD, of the more than 25 they filed originally. [Editor's note: According to members of the RIRSD steering committee, its appeal has not yet been "perfected," and therefore the points of appeal are not yet known.]

Farance has accused three respected citizens of underhanded behavior, which is both slanderous and insulting. Shirley Margolin has worked harder and longer and more successfully than most activists for this Island for more than 20 years. Patrick and Karen both work tirelessly in community affairs. The residents have received top quality legal advice and representation for their money. The vast majority of the residents' elected Common Council members agree. It is certainly an indisputable fact that not one penny of Mr.

Farance's money was spent on this effort.

By the way, in his first paragraph Farance refers to the "brawl" at the September RIRA meeting. There was no "brawl." I, Joan Christianson, objected to being persistently and rudely interrupted by Joyce Mincheff, and chose to leave the meeting in protest. The topic of the interruptions was entirely irrelevant to me. There was no "brawl" either before or after I left. That the Council once again found itself discussing Ms. Mincheff's behavior is hardly news, no matter what *The WIRE* thinks.

Hopefully, the next Common Council will be free of this kind of childishness, as was the Council for the first three years of Patrick's administration. It is healthy to ask questions, and to probe and talk things through. It is not healthy to have a Common Council with members who insist that their personal priorities must come before Council business. It is not productive to attempt to browbeat members into changing their point of view. That is the kind of Council conflict we too often now have, almost exclusively because of a minority of people. I hope and pray that this will change this coming Election Day.

Joan Christianson

Candidate for First Vice President

[Editor's note: The following letter is Joan Christianson's response both to a letter in the October 21 issue of *The WIRE*, and to *The WIRE's* invitation to candidates for Residents Association executive posts to present their platforms to voters.]

To the Editor:

I am responding to Frank Farance's letter in the last edition of *The WIRE*. Farance's letter is a perfect example of misinformation and deliberate distortion. It does not surprise me that *The WIRE* chose to publish his letter while knowing full well that the facts are otherwise.

[Editor's note: *WIRE* publication of a letter does not constitute an endorsement of its content. Nor does *The WIRE* know "full well" that "the facts are otherwise." Farance's letter was published because it contained some interesting and thoughtful observations about matters of concern to the community. Different views of the matter, including this letter, are not only welcome here, but are sought.]

The "infestation" of conflicts that Farance lists is ridiculous and have no basis in fact. Firstly, Patrick Stewart sits on the RIOC Board because RIRA Council members implored the Mayor to appoint him when it became apparent that the Governor was not going to do so. Patrick sits on that Board as RIRA President and acts solely on behalf of the residents, as he does in all his activist roles. Farance chooses to believe otherwise, although he has never offered the least shred of evidence to support this "intuitive" belief.

As First Vice President of RIRA, I am the chair of the Legal Action Fund Committee (LAFC) of the Common Council, a committee that Patrick created, by the way, specifically to deal with any parkland development issues that the community might need to fight legally. The committee interviewed several law firms, one of which was DeForest and Duer (D&D).

Yes, Shirley Margolin initially brought this internationally known land-use firm to our attention, because she was aware through other activities that they were already involved in off-Island plans to stop commercial development on Southpoint. D&D showed a willingness to represent the Island residents through RIRA, including an 80% reduction of their normal fees.

Following a thorough evaluation process, the RIRA LAFC recommended unanimously to the Common Council that we hire D&D to represent us. The Common Council then also voted unanimously to do so. The Council was aware that Jeff Glen was married to Rosina Abramson, a former head of RIOC. This was seen by most Council members, as by most sensible people, as an asset, since Mr. Glen was already knowledgeable about Island matters. When RIRSD first came to the Common Council last December with concerns for preserving the soccer/baseball field in the Southtown development everyone believed (including RIRSD) that Blackwell Field was part of the Southtown land as defined by the GDP.



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Election from page 1

and with future development. Development, in fact, is seen by RIOC as the key to the Island's financial future – more ground rent, more people, and perhaps something close to the 16,000 residents that would go a long way toward completing the promises made to the City in the Lease and development plan.

Here and Now

The competition for the Presidency of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association is essentially a philosophical and practical fight over what residents should do, if they should do anything, about all this – and about other dissatisfactions with the way the Island is run.

Stewart, as four-year incumbent, says RIRA under his leadership has accomplished a lot, including getting rid of Blue (who has since held two other high-paying State jobs) and eventually getting Stewart himself, and Susan Whitaker, appointed to voting seats on the RIOC Board. (Others dispute the claim about Blue, and other accomplishments Stewart says, in campaign materials, are RIRA's to boast of under his leadership.) He wants time to work out a plan under which the State would give up its lease 60-some years early and put the Island back in the hands of New York City.

Katz, who now leads the three-year Maple Tree Group (MTG) effort to revise State law to require a majority of elected residents on the RIOC Board – and replace politically-appointed RIOC management with professional management – backs the Grannis-Mendez plan to accomplish exactly that. He says the five resident members of the RIOC Board, including Stewart, have failed to cast votes in line with resident wishes.

Part of the Katz program, if enacted into law as the legislation is currently written, would specify State responsibility for the Island's capital financial needs, limiting capital funding taken from Island cash flow to something under \$500,000 a year. Stewart points to a current RIOC budget with only \$19,000 to spare and says Island management, no matter how professional, won't be able to come up with its share.

Stewart, in characterizing the Katz/MTG/Grannis/Mendez plan as "financially irresponsible," worries that the State will abandon the Island altogether. Katz points out that the State's responsibility is a continuing one under the Lease. Stewart claims no, that under the proposed legislation the RIOC Board and City and State could declare the GDP fulfilled, and the State could walk away. Katz says a resident-controlled Board would demand, or at least lobby for, rather than refuse, State funding.

Katz points to a three-year MTG effort to gain more resident control over RIOC. Stewart points to his four years of experience as RIRA President and says the self-governance bills haven't gotten out of committee in the State Legislature. Katz points out that Pete Grannis says his version of the bill could have passed the Assembly last session, and cites a promise Olga Mendez says she has, from Pataki, to go along with an infrastructure audit that would place all but a fraction of responsibility for infrastructure repair squarely on the State.

Katz urges residents to vote Yes on the "democracy referendum" the RIRA Common Council placed on the ballot which, if passed, would urge "immediate passage" – a relative term, to be sure, given the pace of the Legislature – of the legislation putting a majority of elected residents on the RIOC Board of Directors. Stewart, who voted against putting the referendum question on the ballot (the vote was 13-8 in favor) wants more time to investigate possible formulas under which the City might take Roosevelt Island back from the State. Responding to that idea, Katz sees a City take-back as complicated (as does Stewart) and unlikely to happen in time for residents to have any meaningful input on further development of

the Island.

On other matters, both Stewart and his running mate, Joan Christianson, and Katz and his running mate, Byron Gaspard, say something needs to be done about Public Safety. Stewart talks about NYPD being able to do a better job with the millions that flow from ground rent (and thus from residents' pockets) into Public Safety services; Katz talks about getting more control over RIOC so that Public Safety can be shaped up. Both agree with some of Stewart's past speculation that the Island and its crime statistics would not warrant much NYPD attention if the Public Safety Department were disbanded.

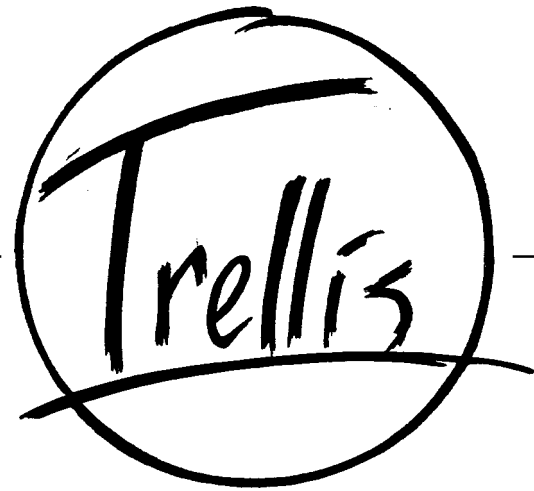
But in this campaign, all other matters have faded into near-incidental status, and the one stark difference between the candidates is whether or not residents should demand more power in, and assume more responsibility for, operation of Roosevelt Island.

Stewart's most pronounced vulnerabilities in this campaign are probably his advocacy of what, in the end, sounds very much like the status quo, and of an incompletely developed notion of somehow putting Roosevelt Island

back in the hands of New York City. He could also suffer a backlash from his abstention, as a RIOC Board member, on the Board's minicondo vote. Stewart's strength is name recognition, a well-known running mate in Joan Christianson, and his four years of experience in the RIRA presidency.

Katz's vulnerability is that he's not the incumbent and is new, despite some years on the Common Council and his current leadership of the Maple Tree Group. One strength (and, for many, a possible weakness) is in a well-developed call for change that Stewart has portrayed as risky. In Byron Gaspard, Katz also has an energetic and outspoken running mate. And having tied himself closely to the referendum calling for a mostly-elected RIOC Board, Katz may ride to the RIRA Presidency on the coattails of democracy.

[Editor's note: In response to a *WIRE* offer, many Common Council candidates have provided flyers being distributed with this issue in their election districts. Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates were also offered platform space in this issue (see page 12), as well as free distribution of a flyer.]



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October 15-31
This is a selection of more important items from the Public Safety Department's incident report; the full listing, too long for publication here, is available on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com. This information is published as received from RIOC; *The WIRE* makes no effort to verify the substance of reports or their accuracy.

Trespass
10/30, stairwell, 546 Main St., Arrests (3), Female resident contacted PSD and reported persons in stairwell possibly smoking marijuana. Officers responded, found one male, 2 female residents sitting on stairs, who were not smoking, although there was a strong marijuana odor at scene. Officers took them into custody for trespassing, escorted them to PSD. While searching male perp., they found small bag of alleged marijuana. All three were issued "C" summonses for trespass and male for possession of marijuana.

Criminal mischief
10/13, 591 Main St., Youth Officer responded to sidewalk in front of Trellis, where officer informed her youth was scratching a tree. Another underage youth was being disrespectful. Both youths were brought to PSD, were warned and admonished.

10/15, west seawall, 585 Main St., Officer observed a hole in glass window, which appeared to have been caused by pellet gun, searched area with negative results.

10/20, hall, 625/595 Main St., Officer saw three cracked windows at scene. Officer searched area with negative results. RIHM concierge notified.

10/23, hall, 7th floor, 560 Main St., Officer responded to report of several youths breaking light fixtures at scene. Officer saw glass from light fixtures on floor. RIHM employee responded, cleaned up area. Youths were gone on arrival.

10/23, walkway, 576 Main St., Officer saw broken light bulbs at scene. Searched area with negative results. RIHM employee notified.

10/24, front of bldg., 595 Main St., Petit Larceny, Female in-house, said she'd left bicycle in front of bldg. front of apt. on 10/18, upon returning on 10/19, its tires were flat. She also stated she'd left a scooter in front of her apt. unattended and unchained for approx. ½ hour, and upon her return it was gone. Victim refused NYPD.

10/28, 510 Main St., Officers responded to possible break in, there were no persons present on 4th floor on their arrival. Female stated when she arrived on Friday evening all was in order, on Sat. morning she was informed upper dummy lock had been tampered with; RIHM to repair dummy lock.

10/29, front of 609 Main St., Officer noticed shattered window at scene, and searched area with negative results. RIHM notified.

Larceny
10/13, card shop, 563 Main St., Arrest, Officers responded to scene for emergency. Owner observed perp insert misc. merchandise into shopping bag. Upon being challenged, perp pushed owner, ran north and was picked up by PSD officers at arrival deck, taken into custody and identified by owner. Perp was arrested, transported by PSD to 19 Pct. and to central booking.

10/15, playground, 20 River Rd., Father and underage daughter in-house, former stated that unknown male had taken child's scooter and fled southbound. Officers searched area with negative results.

Dispute
10/13, 546 Main St., Officer responded to scene, upon arriving, victim stated that female resident threatened to shoot him. And he was afraid of her threats. Female states he's exposed himself to her and she was afraid he'd steal her jewelry.

10/16, playground, 645 Main St., Physical, Officer saw 2 underage youths fighting, requested back up, to separate youths and disperse crowd that had gathered. Upon speaking with youths, officer learned scuffle started because of a thrown ball. Youths were escorted to PS 217 and turned over to school security.

10/26, street, 524 Main St., Officer arrived to find 2 other officers at scene and two resident women engaged in verbal dispute, 1st woman claimed second woman (library employee) harasses her underage daughter when latter enters library. Witness (librarian) stated that woman #1 entered scene in a hostile manner. NYPD refused.

10/29, sidewalk, 609 Main St., Arrest, Officers responded to scene, upon arrival male youth was being separated by his/her friends because they were fighting. He was acting in a tumultuous manner, was taken into custody, issued a "C" summons. Female youth's mother contacted, responded. Both parties said they left a party, male tried to engage female in conversation, then physical dispute erupted. Female's mother refused NYPD and EMS. No one suffered any injuries.

Hazardous condition
10/24, courtyard, 575 Main St., While officer was assisting a salvage truck, officer observed truck run over and crack a manhole cover in his endeavor to deliver a container. RIOC grounds department was notified and temporarily placed a flat piece of steel over the hole.

10/27, street, 400 Main St., Officer received complaint of gas spill in street, he found large amount of oil/gas mixture or diesel fuel from bus stop - east and then north to Blackwell house. RIOC grounds employees responded, spread sand on road. Source could not be located.

Missing property
10/23, 543 Main St., Underage youth in-house, said she'd left her scooter unattended for approx. 10 minutes in chapel area and it was gone upon her return. Officer searched area with negative results.

Property damage
10/26, patio, 576 Main St., Four underage male youths brought to PSD's Youth Officer's office. They had been playing in patio and east seawall, where they broke 2 tree branches and lifted two patches of grass. RIOC's engineer was informed, to ascertain the monetary value of damage for restitution purposes.

10/27, 3A level, 688 Main St., Resident phoned PSD, reported damage to her vehicle. Officer responded to scene verified front license plate was broken off and small scratches on car. Victim will go to NYPD to report incident.

10/28, 400 Main St., Resident informed PSD of trash can fire at scene, plastic casing damaged. PSD officer responded, extinguishing fire. FDNY responded. Recovered property

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

Reckless endangerment
10/16, patio, 580 Main St., Officers responded to scene, saw patio table damaged by a dropped (from 10th floor) steel braided cable and a potted plant at stairwell A. Conducted search of area with negative results. At 10th floor Roof there were three pots left. Steel braided cable surrendered to RIHM maintenance personnel.

10/26, 576 Main St., Female resident in-house, said she was in her patio, when unknown person had thrown fluorescent light bulb from above, striking her on her head. She further stated she cleaned up area and went out. Victim had not seen anyone in area and refused medical attention and NYPD.

Vehicle accident
10/15, ramp, 688 Main St., Anon. male informed officers there had been vehicle accident at scene, they responded, that vehicle #1 was going up ramp in out-bound lane, car #2 was proceeding down ramp in same lane. Victim #1 sustained injuries, victim #2 (at back of taxi), complained of lower pain, but refused medical attention. NYPD responded, prepared report, victim #1 taken to Mt. Sinai by EMS. Both vehicles sustained damage.

10/25, 500 Main St., Anonymous male in-house, reported a white bus struck a pole at scene. Officers responded, bus driver said he had inadvertently struck pole while backing up, after missing the turn. Non-resident female passenger complained of pain in neck and back. NYPD prepared report. EMS responded transported victim to Elmhurst Hospital. Bus company supervisor at scene, who stated driver would be transported to a Yonkers hospital.

10/28, 10 River Rd., Officer responded to scene. Driver #1 said driver #2 had pulled out of pkg. space fast and hit her car. He in turn said she attempted to pass his car, when faced with on-coming traffic her car hit his. Officer found that both cars had damage. Both drivers refused medical attention and NYPD, stated they'd go to 114 Pct. They had exchanged information. Road was in good order.



FLAG FOOTBALL Opening day of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program's Flag Football League season (October 21) featured close, high-scoring games. In the Junior Division (ages 11-13), the Raiders, quarterbacked by Eric Miranda, defeated the Titans, quarterbacked by Lamar Burrows, by a 57-43 score, while the Rams, behind the play of Fabian Williams, Quincy Leon, and Byron Gaspard, Jr., defeated the Cowboys by a 36-12 score. In the Senior Division (ages 14-16), the Chiefs came from two touchdowns back to defeat the Titans by a 33-26 score, as Zach Russem of the Chiefs threw four touchdown passes to Seth Kaufman and one to Rakeem Cummings, while Junior Ruiz of the Titans threw TD passes to Sika Franco, Carlos Hidalgo and Richard Akowich. In the other Senior Division game, the Jets, led by the outstanding play of Carlos Nevarez, Brian Reyes, Brandon Stueber and Eddie Cullen, defeated the Vikings by a 51-47 score, but not before the Vikings closed a 26-point halftime deficit to one touchdown.

In week two action in the Junior Division, the Titans, quarterbacked by Matthew Colon and Junior Rodriguez, defeated the Rams 36-13, and the Cowboys, led by Rahim Drame, Damon Wolford, and Alpha Bah, prevailed over the Raiders by a 24-19 score. In Senior Division action, the Titans, behind the play of Anthony Simmons and Scott Davis, outscored the Jets 57-32, and the Vikings defeated the Chiefs by a 45-18 score. John Mason quarterbacked the Vikings to victory, while Terry Moses, Mark Comrie, Blas Loor, and Alex Gherardi scored touchdowns. For the Chiefs, Abdel Reid, Rakeem Cummings, and Adam Ballard scored TDs. After two weeks, all of the teams in both the Junior and Senior Divisions are tied with identical 1-1 records.

KIDS' TENNIS Kids 8 to 18 can play tennis free at the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club Saturday and Sunday mornings, 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. Joyce Mincheff, Director of the program, says no advance registration is required, and "Kids don't need rackets – just sneakers and a smile." Mincheff can be reached for information at **718-930-5804**. The program runs through March. Those attending the first two weeks of the program will get free admission to the Chase matches at Madison Square Garden featuring the ten top women players in the world, including Venus Williams, Serena Williams and Martina Hingus.

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Mincheff from page 2

The DEP was obligated, under the contract, to cover the costs of an ecological area of the park, to repair their staging area, and to build an access road to their site. When I asked Diana Chapin, the Assistant Commissioner of the DEP, what they are obligated to do regarding landscaping now, she told me, "We'll give you a couple of bags of grass seed and rake the place, but I wouldn't call that a park." She also remarked, "Your problem is with RIOC, not with us."

5. A litigation point in the RIRSD (Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development) law suit is that once RIOC uses City money in the building project, they are required to secure a CEQRA (City Environmental Quality Review) for the project. RIOC and the City have failed to do so. As city taxpayers, we are entitled to City protections when City money is used in a building project. As taxingpaying City residents in this local area, we are absolutely entitled to demand that a CEQRA be conducted for Southtown development.

One of the failures of RIOC's development process has been that only SEQRA (State investigation into the project) has been conducted. Having the State investigate the merits of a State project is like having the fox guard the henhouse and a clear *conflict of interest*.

6. Prior to RIRSD's filing, I discussed this matter with Jeff Glen at DeForest & Duer, RIRA's counsel. He indicated to me that because the DEP issue was a "stopper" of Southtown development, and because RIRA's leadership had specifically told him that their interest was not to "stop" the

project, he could not use the DEP information. He repeated that position when RIRA discussed the decision on joining RIRSD's law suit or attaching themselves as intervenor.

It seems to me that the best negotiating position one could have in any lawsuit is the position of greatest strength. There is something fundamentally wrong with the defendant in the case influencing the plaintiff's attorney to pursue the weakest argument possible. Once I saw that Patrick was directly influencing RIRA's attorney on this matter, I called for Patrick to recuse himself from all discussions regarding the Southtown Development. I've repeatedly requested that he remove himself from LAFC meetings, where he regularly sits in. In fact, I resigned from LAFC because of the non-credible fashion with which it ran.

Patrick is also present at RIRA meetings where discussions on the lawsuit take place. On any discussions he misses, now that he is making a meager show of recusing himself, his wife Karen, who has become an active member of LAFC, can fill him in. I've been repeatedly ostracized by Patrick's supporters because of my views concerning Patrick's conflict of interest.

I take a great deal of solace from the axiom heard recently on *West Wing*, "If they're shooting at you, you must be doing something right." And when I'm attacked for the manner with which I speak, rather than the substance of what I'm saying, I'm even more convinced that I'm on the right track.

Joyce S. Mincheff

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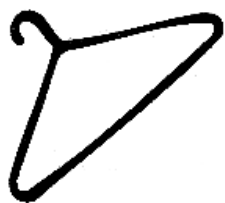
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