

Next issue:
Jan. 26-27

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044

Development

Southtown Construction Starts

by Robert Laux-Bachand
additional reporting by Mary Camper-Titsingh

Trees have come down, and barricades and construction bulletins are going up, as one of the world’s largest engineering and construction services companies starts site work on Southtown, the 2,000-unit complex planned for a 19-acre space between the Tram station and Roosevelt Island’s existing housing block.

When work began last month, the company was still known as Morse Diesel, a proud name in U.S. construction history. Now it’s AMEC, having adopted the corporate identity of the \$8 billion British-based multinational that bought Morse Diesel in 1995.

Southtown thus can count as its distant cousins the Millennium Dome in England and the Sears Tower in Chicago, not to mention the East London Sludge Incineration Project.

The developers are the Related Companies and the Hudson Companies. AMEC is overseeing the project on behalf of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. Scott Weiss, an engineer who is listed as the contact person on the bulletins posted around the Island, is the project manager. His supervisor is Vincent Arcuri, an AMEC senior vice president, who is overseeing several other projects in the area.

Arcuri said Wednesday that as far as he’s concerned,

“it’s full speed ahead” on Southtown, despite lingering legal challenges – a view that was seconded by RIOC officials who are eager to get on with the long-awaited second phase of Roosevelt Island’s development.

The work now is preliminary. The west service drive, which runs past the subway station, will be widened to two lanes, with land being taken from both sides of the existing roadway. The purpose is to close the cross road north of the long-vacant Central Nurses Residence (CNR), which will be demolished. The walkway will remain on the west side of the road.

AMEC was mobilizing this week to start work on the demolition, which includes asbestos removal. The CNR will be sealed and some minor debris removal will be done, along with pest extermination. In about six weeks, Arcuri said, the demolition work should be visible to Island residents.

After the temporary west roadway is finished, the east service drive will be shut down, he said, adding that the debris from the CNR will be trucked off the Island. “There’s no vacant area to start dumping stuff” on the Island itself, he added.

As the work progresses, he said, the company will consider the possibility of transporting construction

See **Southtown**, page 2

Octagon Apartments Plan Will Be Presented in Thursday Night Meeting



Becker and Becker rendering of planned Octagon apartments shows north-south wing; an additional wing running west from the landmark Octagon forms an L shape. This eight-story version was produced by the Becker firm after RIOC requested more floors in order to maximize income.

In RIRA Council, Objections to Small Apartments and Transient Nature of Target Medical Population

by Dick Lutz

Latest plans for apartments at Octagon Park will be made public Thursday at 7:00 p.m. in Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The plan put forward by the Connecticut architectural firm, Becker and Becker, was moved to a front burner recently by RIOC as part of stepped-up moves to market Island properties.

Bruce Becker, President of the company planning construction of two wings approximating the footprint of the city hospital that once stood on the grounds, told the Residents Association Common Council last week that his firm has been working with the Biomedical Research Council toward providing housing for post-doctoral students and faculty at major New York hospitals.

A restored Octagon tower would

become available for community use as a library or as a possible home for the Island Historical Society.

Becker said his firm hopes to receive final RIOC Board designation as early as the Board meeting now scheduled for Thursday morning, January 25, at 9:30.

While the firm’s initial plan had called for six-story wings, Becker said RIOC pressure for higher density and a higher pay-off has led to development of an eight-story design. He said one Board member had even suggested a 25-story complex at the site.

The plan currently under consideration would consist of 114 studio apartments (458 square feet each), 225 one-bedroom units (550 square feet), and 22 two-bedroom apartments (800 square feet). The

See **Octagon**, page 3

Islanders

Fresh Eye Drives Young Photographer’s Dream

by Robert Laux-Bachand

One of the photographs in Akira A. Ruiz’s latest Main Street show offers a glimpse at the Island’s surprisingly strong link to the world of hip-hop.

The photo, of four young men in a rap group pose, was taken on the roof of DJ Honda’s recording studio in downtown Manhattan. It was part of a commercial shoot for Honda, a hip-hop producer and entrepreneur, and represents the professional direction Ruiz wants to go with his photography: celebrities, entertainment magazines, possibly even filmmaking.

Ruiz is 22 years old and has lived on Roosevelt Island for about nine years. It was his mother’s idea to move here from the East Village, where he grew up, he said. His mother, Toshiko Kitano, a painter and artist’s agent, wanted him to be closer to the High School of Art and Design on Second Avenue, only two blocks south of the tram.

The choice proved to be a good one for another reason. “This is like a photographer’s dream out here,” he said, referring to the landscape shots that dominated his previous show in the Westview window next to the bank.

Ruiz majored in photography in his last two years of high school, graduating in 1996. He took a year off, then entered the School of Visual Arts, on 23rd Street. Only five months away from getting his college degree, he is busy exhibiting his work, networking with magazine editors and other potential customers, and sprucing up his portfolio. And he’s always looking for pictures: “I have this special camera that I have on me 24/7, it’s at my waist, so if my friends fall on



Akira Ruiz’s self portrait, part of his exhibit in the art space next to the Chase Bank branch in Westview.

the floor, I catch ‘em: It’s like, I got that!”

Ruiz’s subjects often are his friends on the Island, who willingly take part in his photo shoots along the shoreline and at other sites. “Usually when I shoot it’s all spontaneous, so that the idea will come to me even if I have a location in

mind already,” he said. His compositions, however, can be elaborate in their mood and lighting, and he devotes a lot of work in the darkroom to adjusting the color and making his prints.

The technical challenges are most apparent in some of Ruiz’s

See **Ruiz**, page 6

Couples

A Hundred Countries Later, Roosevelt Island is Home

by Anusha Shrivastava

Hans R. and Dr. Sudershan A. Narula have lived on the Island for nearly two decades, raising a son and a daughter in Island House. They moved to Rivercross in 1997 after being on the waiting list for 14 years.

The Narulas have worked for the United Nations for the last few decades and found the Island to be the most convenient place to live. Hans Narula retired in 1996, while Sudershan, who is Deputy Director of the Medical Services Division, is the most senior Indian woman working at the U.N. Secretariat.

Sudershan Narula was born in 1941 in a village near Rawalpindi,

which became part of Pakistan in 1947. “We moved to New Delhi soon after the partition of India and Pakistan,” she recalls. “I was a good student and graduated at the top of my class in high school. I had no idea what I wanted to study afterward but someone suggested I should become a teacher or a doctor, so I decided to study medicine. This was way back in the 1960s when most girls in India were married off after their schooling, or at most, Bachelor’s level of education.”

When it was time for Sudershan to be enrolled in medical school, a clerk discovered that she was not eligible to attend as she was seven

See **Narula**, page 6



New advertising feature

WIRE
BUCK\$BACK
inside

Editorial view

We Are, First and Last, A Community

There’s nothing wrong with running a community in a businesslike fashion. But a community is first and last a community, not a business.

A community is a community not just of people, but of their values. And not all the values are related to money in any of its forms: *income, expenditures, budget, costs, capital, profit, loss, cash flow*. We are not, here on the Island, like the rest of Manhattan, where real-estate values flex and strain with the demand for office space. We are, instead, a flexing of the very human desire for quality of neighborhood and quality of life against the strain of financial reality.

Communities work their way through these competing concerns using an instrument as old as the very idea of community: politics. Policy is set through the political process, by the selection of leaders, through zoning choices, by taxing and budget decisions – all considered in the light of competing values within the community.

But not here. Because here, the State makes all the decisions through a mostly non-resident Board of appointed Directors who largely ratify the decisions made by non-resident RIOC administrators and employees, including Public Safety officials.

But there is now clear evidence that RIOC is managing Roosevelt Island as a financial enterprise, not as a community. It’s evident in the terms of the deal for Southtown land, and in pressure on Becker and Becker (story, page 1) for maximum return from a development at the Octagon.

So community values – indeed, the very values that create a community – are out the window. Decisions are driven by all those budgetary buzzwords. Human values are being considered last, if at all.

It’s evident in RIOC decisions to create homogeneous buildings – subcommunities of medical professionals, and homogeneous subcommunities of temporary Island-dwellers who will live in apartments unsuitable for raising families. That’s evident in high numbers of studio and one-bedroom apartments, and low numbers of apartments with two bedrooms or more.

This is a huge mistake. It flies in the face of good sense and good social policy. It reverses and discards Roosevelt Island’s greatest strength – its diverse mix of people who have sunk roots here to create a community. The policy disregards decades of promises relied upon by the people who moved here to make a life where they could expect to have a role in shaping the community’s collective values.

And now we learn that RIOC has steered the plans for Octagon construction toward a similar population of medical personnel – post-doctoral people who will live in buildings with an excessively high proportion of small apartments inappropriate for long-term occupancy. RIOC has even looked more attentively to the bottom line, asking for eight stories of density rather than six stories adjacent to the Octagon structure.

It may make for a good financial enterprise. It’s a terrible *community* enterprise.

The State Department of Housing and Community Renewal has walked away from its responsibility to Roosevelt Island by allowing RIOC to become a corporation steered by financial concerns.

There is only one good solution. The State should heed the resident vote taken November 7 when 80% expressed their preference for locally-elected control of the RIOC Board, and for professional *community* management here.

DL

Letters

To Housing Management:

As a 22-year resident of the Island, I have seen many improvements and many disheartening worsening conditions. I feel compelled to address one of the worsening conditions in writing to you.

What is Management’s plan on addressing the growing problem of children playing in the public hallways of the buildings? From loud radio playing to basketballs bouncing on the hallway floors (i.e., my ceilings) to scooter riding, the noises are getting louder and more frequent. There are also resulting physical damages to our buildings – torn up and stained carpets, broken windows, food crumbs that encourage both bugs and rodents. When I have attempted to ask the children to move, I have been spoken back to (sometimes even by the children’s parents, if they are also in the hall), and am now afraid to deal with those situations personally. Although Public Safety is responsive to my nearly daily complaint calls, merely telling the children to go away is not addressing the real issue – making these children’s parents aware that their children are impacting the quality of life of other tenants.

Correct me if I am wrong, but is it not management’s responsibility to guarantee each tenant a certain level of quality of life? My husband and I chose not to have children for our own personal reasons – we should certainly not have to baby-sit and discipline our neighbors’ children.

What about “No Loitering” signs, or signs that say, “This is **not** a playground!”? What about assessing fees to the children’s parents if there are more than three complaints that are tracked back to their households? What about insisting that Public Safety escort these kids back to their homes so that the parents can be aware of the trouble that the kids are causing? Just a few suggestions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Karen P. Bdera
cc: Director, Public Safety

Public Safety Blotter appears this week on Website NYC10044

with supplemental materials on many *WIRE* reports
www.nyc10044.com



The WIRE

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Southtown

from page 1



Snow covered construction equipment last week at the Southtown site where the west roadway is being widened. In the background is the long-vacant CNR, or Central Nurses Residence, due to start coming down within a few weeks.

materials by barge. But Robert Antonek, the RIOC vice president, said he didn’t think it would make economic sense for the developers to use barges under the phased-in development planned for Southtown’s nine buildings.

Hudson Vice President David Kramer discussed the project Wednesday night with the Planning and Development Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. Kramer also said that the cost of removing debris by barge was prohibitive, and that demolition of the CNR should be finished by May. The work is being done by Monadnock Construction, a Hudson affiliate.

Vincent Kopicki, RIOC’s director of engineering, said demolition has to be done before work can start on the new sports field, which creates a deadline of sorts for the initial phase of the project. New soccer and baseball fields, to be built at the southeast corner of Southtown, near the steam plant, are supposed to be done by the fall to replace the current field. Demolition will free up “laydown” space needed for the placement of equipment and materials for other elements of the overall project.

“This is going to be built the way it should be built,” Kopicki said, referring to the new soccer facility, “crowned in the middle, for proper drainage, so it’s not going to be just a field of grass. It’s going to be a regulation soccer field.” The new field will replace a sports area north of the CNR. “Right now, if you try to go regulation-size on that field, you’re run-

ning up against the fence and you’re down on the hill,” Kopicki said.

Because the project is in such an early stage, it hasn’t been decided yet where AMEC will set up shop, although Arcuri said the company will have a presence here. The full team is still being put together, and it’s possible that AMEC might move in with RIOC.

Antonek said that in addition to the posted bulletins, construction updates and photos would be posted on the RIOC web site, RIOC.com, to keep residents informed.

“As far as we’re concerned, the project moves forward,” Antonek said. “I think that’s standard operating procedure for most construction in New York City, you move forward” even though legal questions may remain. Appeals by Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee are pending in the Southtown case.

Kramer told the RIRA committee that Southtown’s first three buildings could be finished by the fall of 2002. All three will provide housing for staff and faculty members of nearby medical institutions on the Upper East Side.

The first building, to be located south of Rivercross, will be 16 stories, with 256 units. It will be owned by the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. The second, also 16 stories, will have 135 units of two- and three-bedroom apartments for junior faculty members of Cornell University Medical College. The third building, a market-rate rental, will also provide housing on the first to third floors for employees of the Animal Medical Center, Kramer told the committee.

Although the work so far has been minimal, it has already raised concerns from residents who fear that many of the large trees on the site will be lost. Four trees have been cut so far near the CNR, to make room for a new bus stop. Roosevelt Island is a Tree City USA, with an active Tree Board and a great variety of unusual specimens. One of the planning committee members asked Kramer to “put red ribbons on those trees ahead of time so the community won’t go into shock.”

Kopicki said in an interview that Southtown will have an open, park-like landscape with many trees, and that for every tree cut, three would be planted to replace it. Although nine buildings are going in, trees will be removed only from areas needed for immediate work.

Kramer also assured the committee that equipment and building materials would not be stacked over tree roots.

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 word-processing 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.

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

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Manhattan Park, December 30, 2000

Margery Rubin

COMING UP

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

Mon., Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m., *Life in the Penitentiary*, Roosevelt Island Historical Society presentation by Tom McCarthy, historian of the New York City Corrections Department; **Historical Society meeting** with Octagon update, Community Room, 555 Main Street.

Thur., Jan. 18, 6:00 p.m., **Math Workshop** and **PTA General Meeting** for all parents, PS/IS 217.

Thur., Jan. 18, 7:00 p.m., **Octagon Plan Presentation** to public, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.
Mon., Jan. 22, 12:30 p.m., **Estate Planning Workshop**, Roosevelt Island Seniors Association, 546 Main Street. Refreshments.

Thur., Jan. 25, 9:30 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Jan. 27, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Jan. 19; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Jan. 22; materials due Thur., Jan. 25. **Future issues:** Feb. 10, 24; Mar. 10, 24; Apr. 7, 21; May 5, 19; June 2, 30; Aug. 4, then every two weeks starting early in September. **Phone/fax** for news, **826-9055/755-2540**; 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., Jan. 29 7:45 p.m., **Maple Tree Group** meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Planning for Island self-governance.

Senior Center

Monday
10:00, **Internet Class** (starts Jan. 22; call **980-1888** for details)
10:00, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)

Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
1:00, **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, **Glee Club** Choral Group

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
7:00, **Dance Class**

Friday
9:00, **Citizenship**

10:00, **English as 2nd Language** (Beginners session at 10:00, Intermediate session at 11:00)

7:30, **Lotto** (RISA)

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

Special Events

Sat., Jan. 13, **Atlantic City trip**
Mon., Jan. 15, 6:30,

Martin Luther King Dinner
Mon., Jan. 22, 12:30, **Elder Law, Asset Protection Workshop**

Wed., Jan. 24, **Chinese New Year Party** (time to be announced)

Thur., Jan. 25, 10-12, **Visiting Nurse Service**

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

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

The holidays are done and your RIRA Common Council is back at work, meeting just three days into the New Year. My best wishes to everyone for 2001 (as significant a year as 1984, to my mind), especially for our Roosevelt Island *Space Odyssey*.

Much of our January meeting was spent hosting representatives from Becker & Becker Associates, a Connecticut-based firm of developers, architects, and historical preservationists who have responded to a RIOC RFP (request for proposal) to build housing on the site of the Octagon landmark. The team had presented a similar plan to the Common Council in June 1999. This plan differed in that it included two eight-floor wings of fair market housing (pre-sold through the Council of Biomedical Research to post-docs and junior faculty in training) rather than low-cost housing offered to students, artists or as a half-way house. As in the previous presentation, the site would include an ecological park and renovated picnic area. The Octagon landmark itself would be restored and used as a museum, a library or possibly as a home for our Historical Society. Bruce Becker's presentation was, again, professional and attentive to our questions, and their portfolio of past developments was impressive.

Although it received the presentation warmly and attentively, the Council had many questions and caveats. Some thought the original plan for six-story wings more aesthetically in keeping with the proportions of the Octagon building. Many asked why this development, like the Southtown development, was being offered to a medically-oriented, essentially transient population, with few apartments (just 22 of 361) larger than one-bedroom and little opportunity for present Island residents to rent or buy. The Council was united in defining this community as family- and affordable housing-oriented. Some wanted the park area to retain an element of wildness and not be as manicured as BBA's slides suggested. Others thought that any for-profit use of the area north of Octagon Park a violation of our General Development Plan. The BBA reps said that many of these ideas were still on the table, but also warned that final approval could be on the RIOC agenda as early as next month. Watch for RIOC agendas, everyone, and if you can, attend the RIOC Board meetings when Island-transforming questions are to be debated and/or voted upon!

Other business included the election of a Legal Action Fund Committee under the leadership of my very own wife, Sherie Helstien. Sherie has begun meetings to address the question of fund-raising for both a legal war chest and for general RIRA needs. PS/IS 217 PTA representatives, under the leadership of Mosud Mannan and Jim Tendean-Luce, asked for RIRA support for a grant to purchase musical instruments with Public Purpose Funds. Questions were raised that will require additional information at our next meeting. Patrick Stewart asked why it was necessary to chop down four trees just north of the subway station, apparently as part of the widening of the West Promenade service road for the Southtown development. Later, Rob Ryan told me that the loss of the trees was part of the Nurses' Quarters demolition,

and was always included in this phase of the plan.

I know that, along with many of you, I've mourned every one of the stately trees that we've lost since we moved here.

On other fronts, you may recall that I have discussed RIOC's assurances regarding our street lights in the last two RIRA columns. These are the responsibility of ConEd and their sub-contractor, Wellsbach. Over the last two months, the Eastwood Building Committee has sent two letters to RIOC (with copies to every pertinent politician with the possible exception of the president-elect). I understand from Fay Vass that 31 of the lights on the covered sidewalk in front of Eastwood (only four of which are Housing Management's responsibility) are still not functioning as of last Sunday evening. The problem seems to be replacing inappropriate step-down transformers, and I wonder why, in these first days of the twenty-first century, the responsible agencies can't provide the necessary technical expertise to keep our streets adequately lit. The mind boggles.

I've learned from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that they released the final draft of the Roosevelt Island Seawall Report to RIOC on December 21. RIOC purchased this report from this federal agency for some \$100,000, and made their final emendations last June. Mr. Smythe of the Corps of Engineers made it clear that RIOC has authorized no one to release the report to the public (read: Roosevelt Island community). I've now learned from Rob Ryan that RIOC's changes were not incorporated into the body of the report, but attached as a letter, with tape stuck on the cover to change "Draft" to "Final." The bottom line is that RIOC will not release the report until it is completed to their specifications. They have requested Smythe to complete these changes in two weeks. Given that it has taken *one year* to go from a draft to an unacceptable final version, the two-week demand seems unlikely. I spoke to Smythe last Monday, and he took responsibility for some discrepancies in costing out repair work between Phase I and Phase II of the project. He wouldn't commit himself to a time frame for a final product, but said that the report had "been put on the shelf" until pressure from RIOC to complete the report revived in the last few months. If I were a suspicious bloke, I might be tempted to think someone didn't want the Seawall Report to see the light of day. However, I'm a trusting sort, and will wait for the powers that be to



Matthew Katz
Residents Association President

enlighten us.

And finally – I had a cordial two-hour meeting with our State Senator, Olga Mendez, last week. She is foursquare behind the effort to provide Roosevelt Island with an elected RIOC Board and a professional community manager hired by that Board. She and her staff are busy arranging a meeting for advocates of this legislation, approved by the Common Council in several iterations, to meet with the Governor's representatives in Albany to negotiate a version satisfactory to our politicians and to us. This effort reflects three years of work to make Roosevelt Island responsible for its own destiny within the context of New York City ownership and continued operation by a New York State Public Benefit Corporation. Maybe we can fix our own street lights.

Three Kings Day



Last Saturday night at the Senior Center, residents held a Three Kings Day celebration, the traditional Christmas celebration of the Hispanic community. (Photos by Vicki Feinmel; additional photos, in color, on Website NYC10044.)

Octagon from page 1

studio apartments are designed so that they can be combined into one-bedroom apartments. Monthly rents would range from \$1,255 to \$2,215.

The apartment mix and the target market drew criticism from several RIRA Common Councilors at last week's meeting. Joan Christianson told the Becker team the stability of the Island rests on long-term residents. "We want housing that is going to attract families that are going to stay," she said. Alluding to the extensive pre-marketing of Southtown to medical professionals, she added, "I am tired of hearing about this hospital and that hospital and buildings that are pre-sold."

Becker responded that his firm has asked RIOC for flexibility in the marketing of the apartments, but added that "the advantage of having a clear population in mind is that it gives everyone involved some certainty about

who will live there. It also allows us to finance the project, because we can make arrangements with the hospitals and basically pre-lease the building."

Other Common Councilors voicing a concern about smaller apartments failing to contribute to the Island's stability included Nneka Pope, Vicki Feinmel, Steve Marcus, and Judy Berdy.

Berdy also criticized the eight-story design as "overwhelming the Octagon" tower. Becker explained that RIOC has expressed real interest in "maximizing the return" on the property. In line with Board member Leo Kayser's plan to maximize RIOC's up-front income from new projects, there has been discussion of a \$5 million one-time advance payment instead of annual ground rent.

The Becker team said they would break ground about a year after RIOC approval, and would anticipate an 18-month construction schedule.

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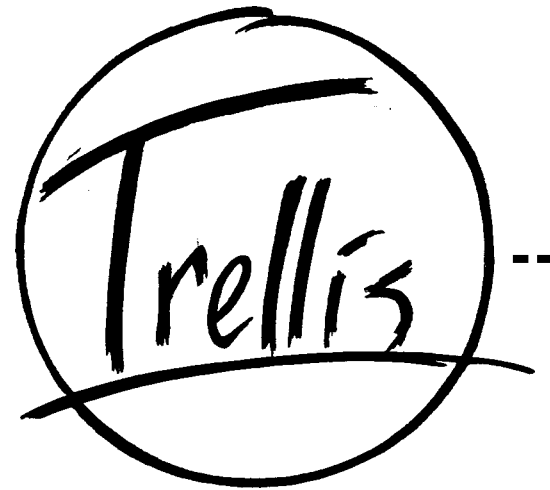
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Ruiz from page 1

landscapes, which capture moments when the Upper East Side’s combination of water, sky and towers is at its most dramatic. At twilight, looking out from his apartment, he said, “I get the view straight from here so I know exactly when it’s happening; it’s when the sun just goes down you get that little purple tint in the clouds, that’s when I start getting ready. I’m out there at that time, getting ready to shoot.”

Ruiz is a night owl, and some of the photos were taken at 2 a.m., with a full moon behind high clouds, and his subject in the foreground illuminated with a flash. Some of the photos required long exposures. Others were made with a panoramic camera he rented, a Noblex, which has a swing lens capable of duplicating a person’s field of vision. Thus, he could get a shot from the Red Bridge that sweeps along the shore all the way to the Queensboro Bridge. The tough part of that shot, he said, was bringing the Island’s buildings out of deep shadow.

The ability to create these images comes from school. Ruiz’s artistic roots run deeper, to an unusual ethnic combination. He calls himself Japorican, reflecting his mother’s Japanese ancestry and that of his father, Federico Ruiz, Puerto Rican. He said his parents separated when he was 2; his mother is remarried, to the lawyer Philip Groner. The elder Ruiz, who

lives in Newburgh, is a sculptor and formerly was the operations director at the Museo del Barrio on Fifth Avenue. Ruiz had a chance to be a jack-of-all-trades there with his father. Not only are his parents artists, but his uncle is, as well. Yasuhiro Kitano’s paintings hang in a number of collections in the United States and Japan. He preceded his nephew as a Main Street exhibitor.

DJ Honda, known as Japan’s top disc jockey, is from Hokkaido, and was runner-up in the 1992 DJ Battle for World Supremacy contest in the United States, according to the biography on his Web site. He has since gone from being a so-called underground hip-hop turntablist to a record producer and retailer, and his signature calligraphic “h” is prominent in Ruiz’s rooftop photo. Ruiz met him right here on Roosevelt Island, where DJ lived for a time, Ruiz said. Black Attack and Problemz, who posed for the studio shot, and who appeared on DJ’s first two albums, also lived on the Island, he said. On tour, they performed as Missing Linx. The culture of hip-hop, as DJ Honda has said, has expanded far from U.S. shores.

Thus the young photographer has his sights set high. Perhaps not as high as DJ Honda, who aspires to be “a household name worldwide,” according to his Web biography But, as Akira Ruiz said, “Photography paves the way for many things.”

Clip&Save

Expected Subway Service Changes

2001	January to June	Summer		September onward
Daytime	Q service as at present	As of June, Q will no longer serve RI	Island served by temporary shuttle from 21st/Queensbridge to Broadway/Lafayette	F train permanent
Night	F train service			
Weekend nights	R or F, depending on construction locations & schedule			

Narula from page 1

days short of the age requirement. Letters were dispatched to her village in Pakistan to obtain a birth certificate to prove that she was, in fact, older than what had been wrongly recorded in her primary school register. Her father asked the Mayor of Delhi to intervene and let her attend medical school until the matter was cleared. The school agreed to let her attend on condition that proof be provided within the year. “I attended Lady Hardinge Medical College in Delhi and lived in constant fear of being held back a year if the document did not arrive,” said Dr. Narula. “Finally, one fine day, a dirty brown postcard came from my village in Pakistan with a hand-written note saying that I should be allowed to attend as I was indeed the right age.”

After getting her MBBS degree in 1964, Dr. Narula got a diploma in child health in 1967 followed by an MD degree in 1969. Her parents began hinting that it was time for her to get married. One of her friends was married to a person who worked with Hans at the UNICEF office. “They thought we would make a good couple. We were introduced to each other by these friends and our families approved the match. We got married in 1970 and moved to Bombay. Since then, I have followed Hans around the globe, finding opportunities to work wherever he has been posted,” said Dr. Narula.

Their travels working for the UN have seen them on virtually every continent, though they have never traveled on any UN assignment together. “I have been to over a hundred countries working as a planning officer, field representative or Director for Emergency Programs of UNICEF, and Sudershan has always gone with me, looking for jobs she could do,” said Hans Narula. “In the mid-70s, in Indonesia, she began working for the International Medical Scheme, which provided services to international staff of all international agencies. In the early eighties, in Afghanistan, she served as the doctor to every embassy still open in that country. Once we moved to New York in 1982, she established her own links with the UN, working as a medical officer. There has been no looking back since then.”

Sudershan says, “Until my children were in school, I avoided assignments that involved traveling, but now I am free to go wherever I like. In effect, my professional growth began after 1993. Before then, I merely looked for an opportunity to use my medical background and occupy myself. I was immensely adaptable and often worked without either a salary or a fixed schedule. This helped eventually because I was exposed to different field posts of the UN in various parts of the world. Now, I am able to plan better, though I mainly operate from the headquarters. I ensure that UN personnel have access to medical equipment and facilities and can advise them how best to utilize these resources. I brought in the dimension of field travel to the headquarters and that has been invaluable to the division.”

Closer to home, the Narulas’ daughter Smita seems to have gained from this lifestyle and exposure. She earned a degree in International Relations and Development Studies from Brown University before studying law at Harvard. “I followed my parents’ footsteps and my exposure led me to do development work,” said Smita, who now works as the head of the South Asia program at Human Rights Watch. Their son, Gaurav, decided that his interest lay elsewhere and he works for KPMG as a consultant.

Ever since Hans Narula retired, he takes up occasional assignments with UNICEF. Most recently, he wrote a report on Iraq, which he has visited several times in the past two decades. “There is a huge difference in the country that I first visited in 1988 and what it is right now. An entire generation is out of touch with the rest of the world. There are no new books, no advancement has taken place in any field, and nothing new has emerged. Iraq’s human resources, especially the education and status of women, have deteriorated immensely,” he says.

Sudershan Narula sums up their lives together as an adventure. “We had never imagined it would turn out like this, and we made the best of all that was available. Now, my family and friends tell me that I should cultivate some hobbies, so I have begun reading non-medical literature and my daughter has just enrolled me in a class to learn ballroom dancing.”

SPORTSWIRE



The Vikings on offense: Mark Comrie looking to run behind the blocking of John Mason, Terry Moses and Alhussein Camara, as Jet defenders Fode Bah, Brian Morgan and Carlos Nevarez close in.

FLAG FOOTBALL

Titans and Jets Win Championships

The Titans in the Junior Division and the Jets in the Senior Division, the first-place teams during the regular season, continued their success in the post-season and captured the Roosevelt Island Youth Program’s Flag Football Championship games on December 16th.

The game between the Titans and the Cowboys opened at 10:30 a.m. under threatening skies and a light rain. After both teams traded early interceptions, Lamar Burrows of the Titans hit Christian Gautier with a TD pass for a 6-0 lead. The Cowboys responded with a drive of their own, culminating with a TD pass from Damon Wolford to Timi Mucunski. Matthew Colon then threw a short pass to Lamar Burrows, who made a long run after the catch to score the touchdown. The Titans added the extra point and led 13-6.

The Cowboys again came right back and scored on a Rahim Drame TD pass to Damon Wolford, cutting the lead to 13-12. Late in the first half, Lamar Burrows threw a second TD pass to Christian Gautier for a 19-12 Titan lead. With less than two minutes to go in the first half, the Cowboys tried to score the tying touchdown; however, Lamar Burrows intercepted a pass, the Titans took over deep in Cowboy territory, and Matthew Colon caught a TD pass to give the Titans a 25-12 lead at the half. The Cowboys got the ball to start the second half and scored on a Damon Wolford run to make the score 25-18. However, while the rain had stopped by halftime, the field had become quite muddy and the players were having difficulty running with the ball. As a result, the second half became a defensive struggle and neither team was able to score on their next 4 possessions. With three minutes left in the game, Lamar Burrows hit Austin Lee with a TD pass that gave the Titans a commanding 32-18 lead, and a final Cowboy drive came up five yards short. The players on the victorious Titans were Lamar Burrows, Mohamed Camara, Matthew Colon, Christian Gautier, Ruben Garcia, Austin Lee, Junior Rodriguez, and Jake Russem, and the team was coached by Andy Russem.

The rain, which had stopped, returned just in time for the 1:00 p.m. start of the Senior Division Championship Game. The Vikings took the opening kickoff and scored the first touchdown of the game on a John Mason to Blas Loor pass. However, the Jets came right back and tied the score on a TD pass from QB Brian Morgan to Wayne Chrebet (alias Eddie Cullen). After a Jets interception, Brian Morgan went back to work, hitting Jovan Ponce for a 50-yard gain, followed by a TD pass to Fode Bah. On the next Jets possession, Carlos Nevarez added a 75-yard run to put the Jets up by a 20-6 score. Blas Loor caught his second TD pass from John Mason to cut the lead to 20-12, but Brian Morgan answered with a second TD pass to Eddie Cullen, increasing the lead to 27-12. Right before halftime, Alhussein Camara intercepted a pass and John Mason connected with Terry Moses for a touchdown to make the score 27-19 as the first half came to a close. The Vikings struck first in the second half on a Mark Comrie run to cut the Jets lead to 27-25. However, this was the Jets day, as Brian Morgan hit Brian Reyes for a touchdown, and, on the next Jets possession, Carlos Nevarez scored on a short run following a 50-yard pass from Morgan to Brandon Stueber to give the Jets a commanding 40-25 lead. Blas Loor caught his third TD pass and Mark Comrie added another TD run late in the game as the final score was 46-38. The players on the champion Jets were Fode Bah, Eddie Cullen, Brian Morgan, Carlos Nevarez, Jovan Ponce, Brian Reyes, and Brandon Stueber, and the team was coached by Paul Sokoloff.



The Jets on offense: Quarterback Brian Morgan set to throw a pass as the Jet receivers spread through the field.

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Public Hearing

Proposed Subway Service Plan for the 63rd Street Connection

The MTA will hold a public hearing on a plan to begin new subway service when the 63rd Street Connection opens for full operation in late August 2001.

The 63rd Street Connection to the Queens Boulevard Line is being built to reduce overcrowding on the "E" and "F" trains. The recommended service plan will use the new track connection to increase the amount of rush-hour service from the Queens Boulevard Line into Manhattan by more than 20%. Over 400,000 customers will benefit from a faster, less crowded ride into and out of Manhattan each day.

Recommended Service Plan

- "F" train service would shift from the 53rd Street Line to the 63rd Street Line, using the new 63rd Street Connection. "F" service would continue to operate along the Queens Boulevard Express Line between Jamaica-179th Street and Coney Island.
- The plan would also include a new local "V" train subway service, which would operate to and from Forest Hills-71st Avenue along the Queens Boulevard Local, 53rd Street and 6th Avenue Lines to and from the Lower East Side-2nd Avenue Station.
- "E" and "R" train service would remain unchanged.
- The plan would shift the northern terminus of the "G" Line from Forest Hills-71st Avenue to the Court Square Station in Long Island City at all times. Under this plan, "G" riders to and from Manhattan or Queens would now transfer at Court Square to and from the "E" and "V" trains via a connecting passageway to the 23rd Street-Ely Avenue Station, or they can use a new MetroCard walking transfer between the "G" at Court Square and Court House Square Station on the #7 Line.

Date and Place of Hearing:

Tuesday, January 23, 2001
Starting at 6 p.m.
Long Island City High School
14-30 Broadway
Long Island City, Queens

You may register to speak until 7 p.m. on the day of the hearing.

For more information, or to register to speak, contact:

Douglas Sussman, Deputy Director,
MTA Government and Community Relations
347 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017,
Telephone: (212) 878-7483. www.mta.nyc.ny.us

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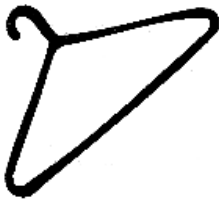
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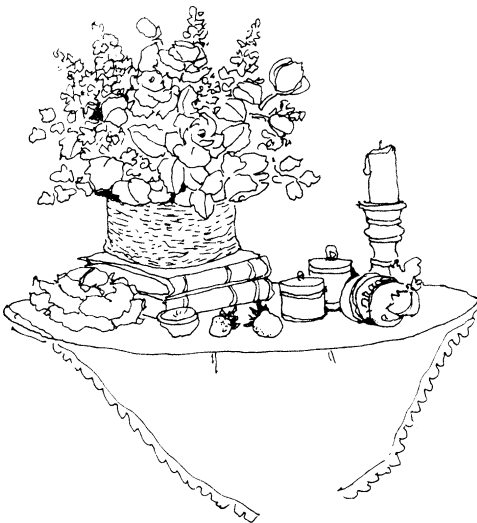
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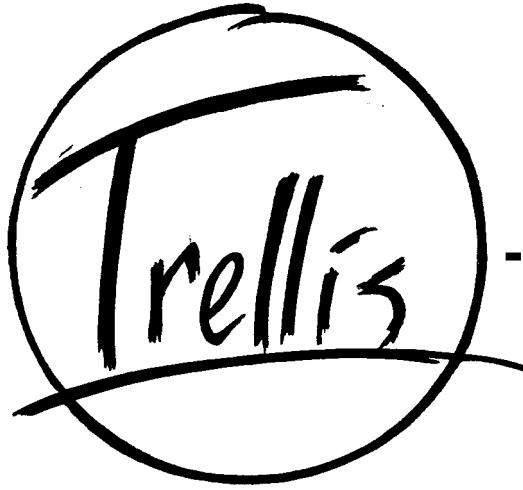


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