

Next issue:
Mar. 9-10

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
PTA International Dinner Over 50 nationalities are represented at PS/IS 217, and they were reflected in the food and the smiles last week as the PTA sponsored a well-attended dinner celebrating the school’s and the Island’s diversity. (Additional photo coverage on Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com.)

MiniCondos Out, Says RIOC; Octagon Apartments Inch Ahead Residents Complain in Extraordinary Town Meeting

Town Hall Meeting

RIOC Board member John Mannix revealed during the Town Hall session that followed last week’s RIOC Board meeting that he “couldn’t conceive of a less congruous project for that piece of land” at Southpoint. Mannix was referring to a plan for two Marriott Hotel towers on the site.

Mannix added, “But I do think that we need to be realistic in looking at how we make that a beautiful park for the residents,” adding that the Board’s decision to employ a real-estate-marketing consultant
See **Town Hall**, page 8

Octagon

The Octagon Apartments project moved a short step forward last week. The RIOC Board voted to give six months of “site control” to Becker and Becker, the New Canaan, Connecticut, firm known for “adaptive reuse” projects in which landmarks and other existing structure are given new life and purpose.

The Octagon, located just south of Coler Hospital, was the centerpiece of the “Pauper Lunatic Asylum” designed by a prominent architect of its time, Alexander Jackson Davis. He had intended it and a duplicate structure as the cornerpieces of a symmetrical U-shaped building, but only half was ever built, leaving the single Octagon as the focal point. Today, only the Octagon remains standing – barely.

A few residents cautioned the RIOC Board that a modification of the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP) – part of the 99-year

MiniCondos

The RIOC Board scrapped the MiniCondos at last week’s meeting.

The action ends, at least for now, a long period of contention between the Board and residents. Despite overwhelming resident opposition to the plan, the RIOC Board had voted final designation status even while some members expressed doubt that the developer could finance the project.

Whether resident opposition was a factor or not, the Board last week cited the failure of developer Diane Wilson of Corporate Realty Partners to provide satisfactory evidence of financing and other documentation. Wilson has been watching the matter, however, and has had an attorney with her in all, or virtually all, of her recent appearances on Roosevelt Island.

Wilson had planned to add second floors to the minischools on the Island’s west promenade. The adverse effect on the views of existing residents, in perhaps 100 apart-
See **MiniCondos**, page 6

Prep Work on Southtown Under Way As Groups File Appeals to Change It

by Robert Laux-Bachand

Site work for Southtown is moving steadily forward even as opponents of the development plan – assisted on a pro-bono basis by a major international law firm – prepare to appeal the judge’s decision that rejected their challenge last year.

With the gates closing Thursday afternoon on several service roads and the traffic pattern changing, the contours of the long-awaited housing project, newly surrounded by chain link and plywood fencing, finally came into clear focus.

Vincent Arcuri, senior vice president of AMEC Construction Management Inc., the company that is managing the project, said the blue-painted plywood wall would shield only the first phase of the project, the three buildings being constructed immediately south of Rivercross by the Hudson and Related companies. The rest of the fencing will be mesh. The three buildings, the first of nine in a development that will eventually add about 2,000 apartments to Roosevelt Island, will mainly house personnel and their families from East Side medical institutions.

Arcuri said the work, delayed somewhat by snowstorms, is on course for the start of foundation work anywhere between April and June. In the meantime, bids are going out for the construction of a sports field north of the Tramway station to replace the soccer and baseball field located between Rivercross and Eastwood on the north, and the old Central Nurses Residence (CNR), which is being demolished, on the south. Work on the new sports field should begin in April, Arcuri said.

Scott Weiss, AMEC’s project manager, has set up shop at the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) office and is working full-time on Southtown. Approximately 20 workers, encompassing four trades, are on the site now, a number Weiss said would grow to about 40 during the demolition work.

Despite the flurry of activity, the Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD), a group that sued RIOC to block its go-ahead for the Hudson/Related plan, is not giving up its legal fight to force changes in the development plan.

RIRSD lost the first round last July, when a trial judge, Justice Harold Tompkins of the State Supreme Court, threw out its case, along with a similar challenge filed by Attorney Robert Chira, an Island resident representing a long-standing group, the Alternative Southtown Design Committee.

Steve Marcus, chair of RIRSD’s steering committee, said: “This is not a done deal, and just because there’s a wall does not mean these guys can destroy our open spaces. We have to take heart and keep on fighting.”

Marcus is guardedly optimistic about his group’s chances of stopping the current plan of development because it has in its corner a major New York-based law firm, LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae, LLP, which is undertaking the case for no fee. The company is one of the world’s largest law firms, with more than 750 lawyers practicing in 14 cities in the United States and in 10 other countries. LeBoeuf intends to file its case with the State court’s appellate division

Rent Decisions Delayed for Westview Residents’ Study

by Robert Laux-Bachand

The State has pushed back its rent decisions for Westview and Island House to allow Westview residents more time to study a survey of their building’s physical condition.

Elliot Ashrey, assistant director of the management bureau of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), said the agency gave Westview two more weeks. As a result, the DHCR rent orders will not be issued until sometime in March, he said this week.

Ashrey chaired the rent determination conferences for the two buildings on February 8. Under the Mitchell-Lama middle-income housing program, the State sets the rent every two years, matching the buildings’ income and expenses.
See **Rent**, page 6

Briefly...

- **Sister Regina Palamara** marked the 45th anniversary of taking her vows as a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.
- The Roosevelt Island Youth Program has started a monthly series of free **Friday night concerts** for adults (kids are welcome, too), with the next scheduled for Friday, March 2, at PS 217. (See ad, back page.)

Photopanorama shows the Southtown site Thursday morning, looking south from Rivercross, just before the west service road became two-way. As things stand, pending appeal of a law suit, the first building will rise just beyond the near portion of the West Service Road. The suit seeks to prevent construction on most of the playing field just north of the Central Nurses Residence. (Website NYC10044 photo)



RIOC’s Blinded Board

The RIOC Board is blind. For that matter, RIOC President Rob Ryan is blind, too. They are blinded by the fact that most are either occasional visitors to Roosevelt Island or, in Ryan’s case, they come here to work, not to live. Tunnel vision focused on the Island’s financial concerns, they are blind because they cannot see the nature of daily life here.

Yet they are in the position of regulating too many aspects of our daily lives and our long-term future.

Motorgate parking is a prime example. In last week’s RIOC Board meeting, Board member Leo Kayser, otherwise a likeable chap, lectured residents on the value of the free market in setting rates for things like Motorgate, saying, in effect, that the market would bear only such prices as residents would pay.

Kayser and most of his colleagues on the Board (Patrick Stewart a notable exception) miss the point that Motorgate Parking is a raw monopoly. A resident who chooses to have a car here, or must have one, has no other place to park. And when Board member John Mannix mentioned the high cost of heating garages as one justification for increased parking costs, it was clear he’s not a regular here. Perhaps he doesn’t know that Motorgate is unheated. Or that security arrangements elsewhere actually work.

In Queens or Manhattan, own a car and you can choose to park on the street and deal with the problems of that. Or you can choose from among various paid-parking alternatives where there is true competition among providers – both in rates and in quality of service and security.

Here, you have no choice. You own a car, you pay the rates. The Board is blind if they think Ryan did the right thing by willy-nilly approving a rate hike at Motorgate, and Ryan was unthinking when he gave the go-ahead.

It’s one more proof of the long-obvious: This Island needs professional management, executing policies set by an elected Board of resident Directors.

Looking for the Light

But *The WIRE* eagerly applauds Ryan and the Board for their wide-open evening session last week. Except for one Board member who didn’t show up and another who left early, they sat for a free-swinging round of questions and argument from residents, and responded, mostly, point by point.

Residents knew they were heard because the Board members responded, as did RIOC President Rob Ryan. But, as resident Board member David Kraut has observed, being heard doesn’t mean being heeded, and there was little evidence of a meaningful coming together.

It was apparent in resident questions, in fact, that the current Board is suffering the harvest of the suspicion and distrust sown during three years of Jerome Blue’s occupancy of the RIOC presidency. Last Thursday night, it was not easy to be a member of the RIOC Board, attacked and on the defense. Of course, it was just three hours in the month, while residents are reminded daily of the shortcomings and insensitivity of Island management. (Have you noticed the *Blue* fence?)

Even so, hearing the resident viewpoint can’t hurt, and residents gain from knowing the attitudes of Board members on specific issues. Until there’s professional management and a locally-elected governing Board here, such sessions have value and they should continue at least every other month, as scheduled.

DL

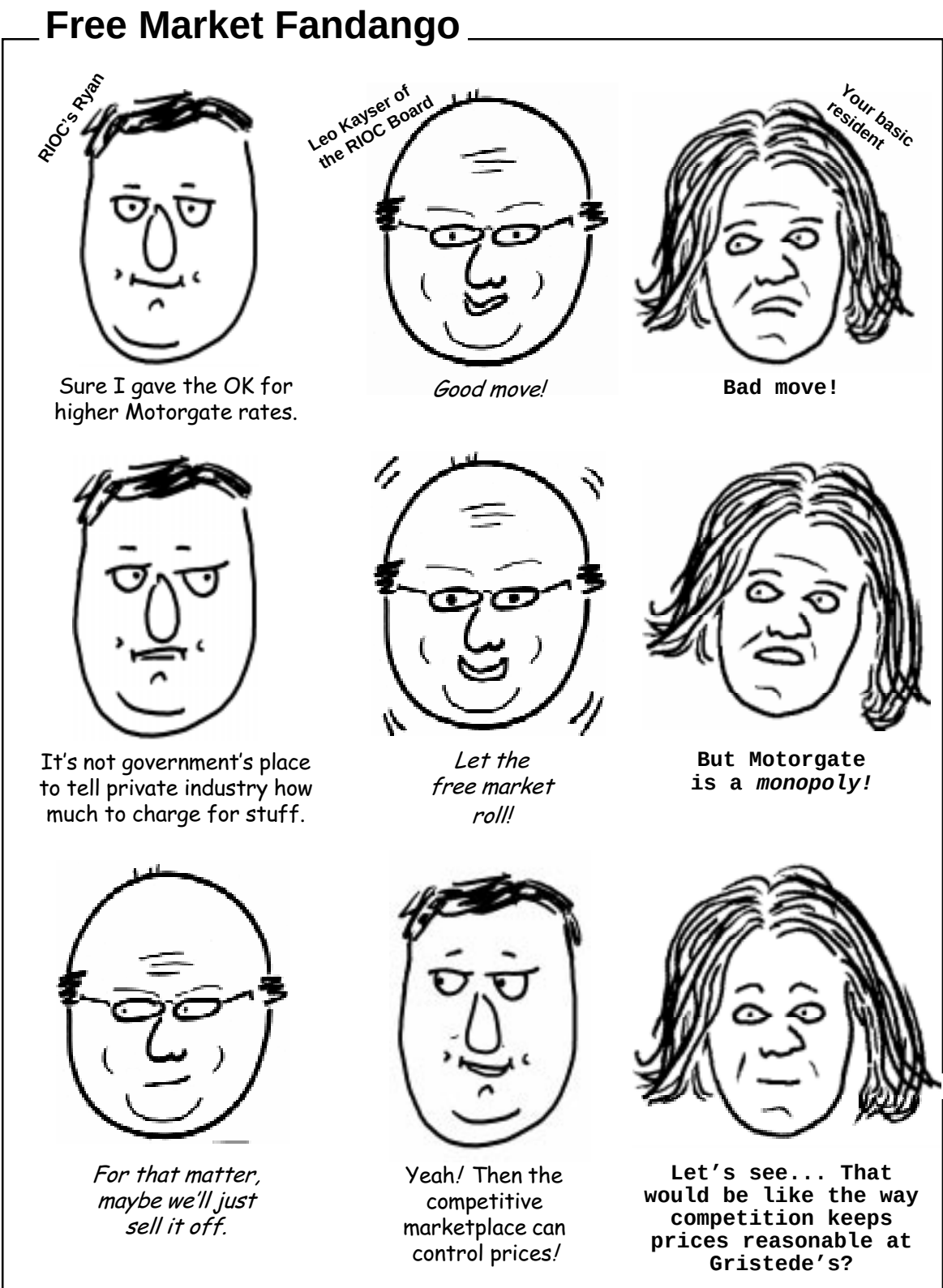


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Letters

To the Editor:

As I listened to the Q&A session between Island residents and their State-appointed guardians at the RIOC Board meeting last week, the disconnect between the governors and governed was again made painfully apparent.

Their approach to the garage rate hikes was a perfect example. Citizens complained that the increase was made with little notice, and even less explanation of what RIOC’s pricing policy is. Robert Ryan first tried to exempt himself from any responsibility for the hikes, claiming that it was an “issue that residents should take up with the garage Management Company.” When it was pointed out that Ryan himself must approve all increases before they go into effect, Leo Kayser gleefully seized the offensive by suggesting that RIOC should get out of the game entirely and leave the management of the garage to “free enterprise” and let the rates be dictated by “supply and demand.”

Now, I’m no expert in government policy or economics, but I do remember some of my basic schooling, which I think still holds true today. The Motorgate garage has a monopoly on an inelastic commodity. It has a monopoly because there is no alternative; it’s the only garage on the Island and parking is prohibited on our streets. It is inelastic because even if the price doubles, more than half the users will probably pay the fees. In fact, if RIOC raises rates to even 3,4 or 6 times as much, their total income will probably not fall.

If RIOC were a profit-maximizing concern (such as a private business), it makes perfect economic sense for them to keep raising the rates until their total revenue begins to fall. This may mean that the garage is half-full and rates are three times higher. But is it proper public policy for the government to fleece its citizens of needed services simply because they can? Why not start doubling and tripling the water and electric rates as well? Most people will still pay the increased rates, and the rest can be thirsty and cold.

See **Letters**, page 10

To RIOC President Robert Ryan:

Just wanted to express my appreciation for the consideration RIOC has shown for the community. In particular, the lovely color blue that identifies the fence surrounding Blackwell Field was well thought out. It enables us to differentiate our parks, whose fences are obviously color-coded; the green distinguishing Octagon Park and the blue distinguishing Blackwell Park.

May I suggest red for the fence surrounding Southpoint so that we can clearly identify every park where we can no longer view distinct characteristics such as grass and trees.

Many thanks.

Joyce S. Mincheff

Brian E. Baker
Director of Leasing
Manhattan Park
Dear Mr. Baker:

I recently sent you a letter about the living conditions in Manhattan Park, which was published in *The WIRE*. As you might recall, my complaints focused on a particularly noisy apartment occupied by students from Marymount Manhattan college.

Your immediate attention to my concerns has not gone unnoticed. The building installed equipment to eliminate the disruptions from my neighbor’s loud, slamming door.

I often read complaints in *The WIRE* about deteriorating living conditions here on Roosevelt Island, while the positive efforts made by building managers and Island administrators get less recognition. That is not true this time. A sincere thanks to you and those involved in making my life here more pleasant.

Marvin Bolt
cc: *The WIRE*

**Letters deadline for
Mar. 10 issue: Mar. 4**

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

COMING UP

Compiled by *WIRE* staff – Fax information to 755-2540
e-mail MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com
or click on the e-mail link at www.nyc10044.com

Continuing through April 14, 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (except Thursdays and Sundays), *Exhibition – Housing New York: Ed Logue and His Architects*, presented by the Architectural League and the Municipal Arts Society, at MAS, 457 Madison Avenue (between 50th/51st). Residential projects of the Urban Development Corporation, including Roosevelt Island. Information: **935-3960**.

Sat., Feb. 24, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Dolores Green, President, Roosevelt Island Seniors Association, 755-7285 for information.

Mon., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m., Historical Society meeting, *Memories of Blackwell House*, with Geniza Madden, resident of Blackwell House 1951-56.

Mon., Feb. 26, 7:45 p.m., Maple Tree Group meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, for residents interested in the movement toward a democratically-elected RIOC Board of Directors and professional management for the Island.

Tue., Feb. 27, 7:30 p.m., Eastwood Building Committee meeting, Senior Center.

Fri., Mar. 2, 7:00 p.m., Roberta Fabiano & Friends, free concert, presented by Roosevelt Island Youth Program, PS/IS 217 auditorium.

Sat., Mar. 3, time and place to be announced, Memorial Service for C. Mark Bethel.

Sat., Mar. 3, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, to be announced, 755-7285 for information.

Sat., Mar. 3, 8:00-midnight, RIRA’s Swingin’ Soiree Fun’Raiser, Manhattan Park Theater Club. \$10 admission (seniors, disabled, \$8).

Wed., Mar. 7, 6:00 p.m., Panel Discussion: Roosevelt Island – Revisiting the Master Plan, with architect Paul Byard, City Planning Commissioner Alexander Garvin, architectural historian and author Thomas Mellins, and David Wine, Vice Chair of The Related Companies (Southtown developer). Municipal Arts Society, 457 Madison Avenue. Reservations required; call **935-3960**.

Thur., Mar. 8, 9:30 a.m., RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Executive session normally starts at 9:30, followed by open meeting, starting 10:30 or 11:00.)

Sat., Mar. 10, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Byron Gaspard, Vice President, RIRA, 755-7285 for information.

Sat., Mar. 10, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Mar. 2; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Mar. 5; materials due Thur., Mar. 8. **Future issues:** Mar. 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**; to list your organization’s Island events here (no charge), fax information to **755-2540**, or e-mail MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com.

Wed., Mar. 14, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Mar. 17, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Fadhela Chentouf-Rijal and Arlene Stock, Vice Presidents, Roosevelt Island Toastmasters Club, 755-7285 for information.

Sat., Mar. 24, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Nneka Pope, Representative, Community Board 8, 755-7285 for information.

Sun., Mar. 25, 1:00 p.m., Walking Tour of Roosevelt Island – Revisiting the Master Plan, conducted by Judith Berdy, President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, for the Municipal Art Society. \$15. Reservations required; call **935-3960**. (Meet at the Manhattan-side Tramway station at 12:45 p.m.)

Sun., Mar. 25, 7:30 p.m., No Place Like Home, historical script by the late Rev. Oliver Chapin, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. An oral and slide history of the Island, presented as a benefit for the Organ Fund of Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Donation \$5.00.

Wed., Mar. 28, 9:30-12:30, Career Day at PS/IS 217. Volunteers sought to tell students about their work lives. Call **980-0294**, ext. 2422.

Sat., Mar. 31, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Nancy Howe and Worth Howe, Directors, Main Street Theatre/Dance Alliance, 755-7285 for information.

Wed., Apr. 4, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Apr. 7, 3:00 p.m., Kaffee-Klatsch Series, Charles DeFino, Director, Roosevelt Island Youth Program, 755-7285 for information.

Thur., Apr. 12, 6:00 p.m., RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Wed., May 2, 8:00 p.m., RIRA Common Council meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Mark Bethel

Roosevelt Island has lost one of its most loved personalities. C. Mark Bethel died on Thursday, February 8, of congestive heart failure, at age 72. He was known to all for his greeting, “Master.”

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, March 3, but details were not yet final at press time.

Mark Bethel lived a full and interesting life. Born in Brooklyn, he joined the Navy in 1945 and entered the submarine service. His tours of duty in Japan, China and the Persian Gulf introduced him to the history and the differences in



ethnic cultures that developed into a life-long passion. Following his discharge from the Navy, he studied at the Art Students League (art, design, fine engraving and more) at the same time he worked as a sandhog on the third tube of the Lincoln Tunnel.

After opening a jewelry store on Nostrand Avenue, he became more deeply involved in the Bed-Stuy community. His participation, with the late Senator Robert Kennedy, in the founding of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, of which he was an early board member, led to his appointment, at the request of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, as President of the Design Works, a textile design firm that incorporated the talents and creative energy of the Bed-Stuy community. Under his direction and with the support of his dear friend, Jacqueline Onassis, the firm became a highly successful enterprise supplying top-quality original and African design fabrics to the home-furnishing industry. When he left the Design Works in 1979, it had gained world-wide recognition with shows in New York, Paris and London. Mark returned to the world of the mole, joining the construction of the subway tunnel to Roosevelt Island. Here, in 1981, at the Green Kitchen (now Trellis), he met Heather Canning, who was to become his companion for the rest of his life.

Mark loved the Island. Whether holding court in the Green Kitchen/Andy’s Place/Trellis or sitting on his bench in Rivercross Park, always with book in hand, he chatted with people young, old or in-between about history and politics, the state of the world and the education of the young. His love of books and his thirst for knowledge was boundless, and his search for the designs and motifs that he used in the fine engraving on the jewelry he made took him to every continent and every civilization known to humankind.

Following a heart attack in 1996, his health took a turn for the worse and, in the last 18 months, he became more frail, but his indomitable spirit and joy of life remained in full flower. A trip to the Dominican Republic just before his death saw him searching new horizons yet again.

His pride in his son, Sioan, and his daughter, Nikki, together with his love for his three granddaughters – Paris, Ysanne and Ciara – was known to all. Their accom-

I’m concerned about energy these days. Several of my neighbors in Manhattan Park have brought to my attention absurd increases in the electricity charges we are obliged to pay. One gentleman, a diplomat with a United Nations mission, noted an increase in January from \$91.68 in 2000 to \$492.77 in 2001 and a \$167.82 fee last February compared with \$641.40 this year. These are five-fold and four-fold increases over last year’s energy costs. Even for a three-bedroom apartment these increases defy credulity. And I understand that energy costs are being used to argue for unreasonable rental increases for Island House, Westview and Eastwood in the Northtown/DHCR hearings.

Isn’t it ironic that we, surrounded by more power plants than you can shake a stick at, should be burdened by such outrageous demands? KeySpan is expanding its Ravenswood facility and the New York State Power Authority has received permission to build two new generators on one site on Vernon Boulevard. KeySpan has been courting this community for years now. RIRA representatives have attended every event we’ve been invited to on the premise that you keep your friends close and your enemies closer. We’ve been so attentive that KeySpan has listed RIRA as a “Community Partner” in a recent newsletter that many of you have received. This is simply not so, and I have sent the following letter to company President and COO Craig G. Matthews:

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I am a resident of Roosevelt Island and recently was elected to the presidency of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA). I am on your mailing list for newsletters pertaining to the Ravenswood Generating Station, and received the Upgrade Update, Volume 2, Number 1, over this past weekend. Like many of my neighbors, I have attended your meetings and site visits, and participated in your focus groups so as to keep abreast of your plans.

I was surprised to see RIRA listed as a “KeySpan partner” in 2000, and cited for “helping our company reach out to our Long Island City, Astoria and Roosevelt Island neighbors.” I have been a RIRA Council Member for three years, Mr. Matthews, and I have no recollection of the Common Council voting to become a KeySpan Community Partner nor of any discussions that might be construed as such an agreement. Just to be sure, I checked with Patrick Stewart, RIRA president for the years 1999-2000, and he concurred that no such agreement exists.

I find it irresponsible for your company to assume that we (or the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, or the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, which were also listed) are your partners without specific approval. I can’t speak for RIOC or the Youth Program, but I can assure you that we see KeySpan in quite a different light. We understand your intentions with the Ravenswood upgrade to improve efficiency while reducing toxic emissions, and applaud them. However, we are aware that the power you produce does not service Roosevelt Island. We also understand that our small section of northwestern Queens hosts five power plants at present, with siting approval just granted to the New York State Power Authority for two 47-megawatt generators on Vernon Boulevard. Our concern is for how this mass of hydrocarbon-burning industry will affect our health and quality of life next summer when any breeze from the east will blow the effluents from all your smokestacks into our windows.

The only partnership in which RIRA has participated is with the Coalition Helping Organize a Kleaner Environment (CHOKE). Last June we voted unanimously to join this organization in order to assist them in their mission. We want to control the spin your industry has disseminated regarding health hazards and to bring some sanity to the State Siting Board, which has punished this densely populated area with more than its share of the energy-producing burden. We would like to see the energy providers who impact on Roosevelt Island take cumulative responsibility for your emissions rather than acting as though you exist in a vacuum.

We are wary neighbors, Mr. Matthews, not partners. We appreciate your salutes to our community organizations, but our function is to protect the children and elderly and disabled of Roosevelt Island, also known as Asthma Alley. Your assistance in these efforts will certainly enhance your credibility with us.

The increased cost of fuel oil can be used to justify only so much of a jump in energy costs. The six o’clock news no longer reports on these increases as prices have been pushed back. And the demand for more electricity does not justify dumping all of New York’s providers on one stretch of the East River. Attend the State Public Hearings on KeySpan’s Article X Application on February 28 at PS 112 in Long Island City. They are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. and will give you some perspective on what you will be breathing in the next few years.

One last note: tickets for the RIRA Fun’Raiser on March 3 are selling briskly, so buy yours soon! Contact Vicki Feinmel (**223-1108**) or Fay Vass (**755-4089**) and join your neighbors for a helluva good time. Be there or be square.

The RIRA Column



Matthew Katz
Residents Association President

Senior Center

Monday
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)
Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
1:00, **Games** (RISA)
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well** (stretch)
10:00, **English as 2nd Lang.**
7:00, **Glee Club** Choral Group
Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
6:30, **Dance Class**
Friday
9:00, **Citizenship**
10:00, **English as 2nd Lang.**
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events
Wed., Mar. 7, 12:30
Vision Care Lecture
Fri., Mar. 9, 12:30
Reduced-Fare-by-Mail MetroCard Lecture
Mon., Mar. 12, 10:30-11:30
Wordprocessing (three sessions every Monday; call for information: **980-1888**)

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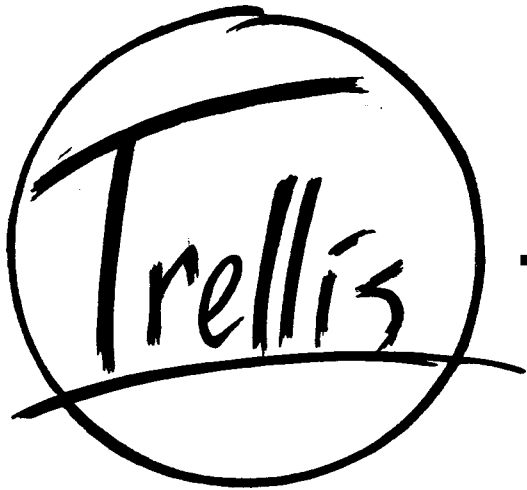
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Come to RIRA's March 3 Fun'Raiser

RIRA's Fun'Raiser...

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Website NYC10044 photos by Vicki Feinmel
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Octagon from page 1

Lease under which the State of New York controls the Island to 2068 - should be sought, saying development of the Octagon Park area for residential housing is not provided for in the GDP. But apart from concerns about the GDP, there was no strong resident opposition to the Becker and Becker plan itself. Many residents appear to have adopted the view expressed by resident Board member David Kraut: “We were presented with a project that, at the expense of the building footprint... we would get the majority of [Octagon] park finished out, and the picnic grove, and the Octagon building dome saved, and to me it seemed like a pretty viable trade-off to give up much less than an acre to the footprint of the building to get all the rest of that in return... Sometimes you have to give up something to get something, and to me it seemed like a logical trade-off to make.”

At the same time, Kraut said he was voting for the project “because I’m confident that we’re only moving the process forward a single step and we will have a final chance to say yea or nay before the project is cast in concrete.” In fact, the resolution approved unanimously by the Board had been amended to formalize a requirement that the Board would have final say-so on the Octagon development.

The Becker and Becker plan currently calls for about 350 units, primarily studio and one-bedroom apartments, in a configuration in which two eight-story wings would radiate west and south from the Octagon structure just as the original structure did when it was visited by Charles Dickens in 1842, three years after it opened.

The Octagon, at the intersection of the wings, would be preserved in the Becker plan, restored to its former glory with a sweeping spiral staircase, with specific uses yet to be determined.

The site control granted to Becker and Becker essentially gives the architectural firm time to work out specifics of a plan, check the market for financing, continue its discussions with the community, and finally present a fully-developed plan to RIOC, and to negotiate the financial terms of a ground lease.

Community activists have received the Becker firm warmly, even while expressing reservations about its plan being outside the scope of the GDP, as well as concerns about the apartment mix being targeted at singles and couples without children, who are likely to leave the Island for larger accommodations as they marry and have children. Bruce Becker told a community gathering in January that his firm would take another look at the mix of apartments and, possibly, at the planned target market of medical researchers.

Recent history has been hard on the Octagon. Most recently, a Labor Day fire in 1999 gutted what was left of the building, which had already been damaged by a 1982 fire that took its wooden dome.

The RIOC Board’s full February 15 proceedings are available in transcript form on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.

Rent from page 1

Kenneth Miller, DHCR’s site representative for Roosevelt Island, said that Westview and Island House are “totally independent as far as rent determination,” but that the division feels it is in the best interests of all residents to handle the orders together. Thus, Island House also gets a two-week reprieve.

The State is proposing rent increases of about \$20 per room; the housing company initially asked for about \$90. Ultimately, the decision is made by the DHCR commissioner, Joseph B. Lynch.

How much bearing the added Westview review will have on the proceedings is impossible to tell, because the survey in question dates to 1994, making it “not relevant to today,” said Opher Pail, who chairs the Westview Task Force. He said he would, nevertheless, send the State his response this week.

Pail had sought the report as a way of evaluating the management company’s request for \$1.37 million in 2001-03 for its replacement reserve requirement, a projection that was not altered in the analysis done by Westview’s accountant for the rent determination hearing.

Pail, who had based much of his case for lower rent on detailed studies of the building’s energy use and roofing costs, said he was “very disappointed at the way the hearing went.” One of his key presenters, Island resident Goran Jovanovic, senior project manager for Facade Maintenance Design, was cut short by Ashrey when he tried to discuss his roof assessment report. It appeared at the time that Ashrey, who was trying to move things along, viewed Jovanovic’s statement as a sales presentation.

Miller said the State requires physical condition surveys only once every 10 years because they are very expensive to do: “You’re going through the entire building system, totally.”

Westview resident Leon Lowder, an accountant who has been helping Pail, expressed frustration at the State and management company’s lack of documentation. “We can’t seem to get a spreadsheet or cost analysis out of them,” he said. “There’s no cost projections for capital improvements.” Lowder said he had not been able to put his hands on the “hard-core details” of costs for such things as appliances, or plans for energy savings, despite considerable effort. He even spent a whole day at Belson & Associates, the management company, looking at the roof contract and other materials.

But after spending a lot of time in the search for information, Lowder said, he concluded that the tenants simply were not getting “the detailed explanation they need to make an informed judgment” on the rent. “I don’t think there would be any upset tenants if there were transparency” on the cost side.

Lowder characterized Westview’s next step as a formal letter, for the record, “to let them know we’re protesting this.”

MiniCondos from page 1

ments, led to nearly unanimous resident opposition, in part, residents said, because they felt that the planned-community nature of the Island should preclude such intrusions.

To some, the plan to convert single-story minischools into two-story miniCondos had come to symbolize unwanted RIOC departures from the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP) started under the three-year administration of RIOC President Jerome Blue, who left the job a year and a half ago.

There was no immediate indication of whether RIOC will again offer the minischools as a potential development site.

In the meeting, the matter was raised by Mary Beth Labate of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), who chairs the RIOC Board meetings. “There has been some discussion of rescinding the final designation that was given to Ms. Wilson,” she said. “She has had what many of us on the Board feel is ample time to come through with the financing package and that has not come into place at this point despite our urging and some representations that she had made.”

After a brief discussion, Board member Leo Kayser moved to give Wilson “a formal notice of termination of whatever there is that needs to be terminated.” During discussion another Board member, John Mannix, revealed that a recent letter from Wilson’s attorney had indicated her intent to “bring in another developer-partner on the project” and that Wilson planned to announce that at RIOC’s next Board meeting. Mannix said that point in the letter “troubles me most.”

Residents applauded as it became apparent the miniCondo project was about to bite the dust.

Resident Board member David Kraut, however, raised questions about “legal exposure,” leading to a 15-minute closed executive session. When the Board came back into public session, the description of its resolution had changed slightly, withdrawing the Board’s “previous authorization” for RIOC President Robert Ryan “to enter into a final designation agreement with the developer.” While the formality might reduce the possibility of a Wilson law suit to recover what she claims to have spent so far on the project, the message was clear: the Board has decided against her plan. The vote was unanimous except for an abstention by Nancy Reuss, representing the State Office of the Budget.

A full transcript of the RIOC Board’s February 15 proceedings are available in full-transcript form on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.

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Public Safety Blotter

February 1-15, 2001

Assault

2/12, front of 552 Main St. All officers responded to scene of a fight. Reporting officer came upon an underage resident youth bleeding profusely from the right side of his head. When asked, youth stated he did not remember who had cut him. Officer seized two male youths trying to enter an apartment on 4th floor at 580 Main St. with another male youth who lives there. Earlier unknown youths had jumped another underage youth. There had been other resident youths involved in this assault. PSD Youth Officer has names and will be investigating matter further. EMS transported victim to Elmhurst Hospital. NYPD prepared report.

Criminal Mischief

2/7, 625 Main St. Resident phoned PSD, said rock had hit her living room window, shattering outer pane. Officer responded, confirmed same. Victim stated she had seen three girls fleeing area, identified what one was wearing. Officer searched area with negative results. RIHM service personnel at scene.

2/7, 560 Main St. Officer responded to apt., resident stated there was sticky, waxy substance inside lock and smeared on door, which did not sustain any damage. Lock was functional, RIHM service notified. Officer searched area with negative results.

2/10, hallway, 580 Main St. Officer responded to scene for report of a two-foot hole in a wall, which he confirmed. Reporter stated three males were singing in hall and banging on the wall at 2:30 a.m., which she was reporting at 9:45 a.m.

Disorderly Conduct

2/2, sidewalk, 549 Main St. Officer responded to scene for male lying on ground and his roommate said he would escort him to apartment; officer checked area a half-hour later, both were still on ground. Officer requested they leave, roommate became belligerent (officer detected alcohol on his breath). Perp was transported to 19th Pct., charged with Disprderly Conduct and resisting arrest. Subsequently A.D.A. called, stated he would not prosecute, because disorderly conduct charges were not strong enough. Perp was released at 19th Pct.

2/13, courtyard, 532 Main St. Officer saw confrontation in 540 courtyard between four youths and pizza shop's owner and his staff. The latter informed officer that youths had thrown empty sauce cans through shop's back door. There were no injuries or damage. Youth Officer notified youths' parents and the youths were released.

2/14, front of PS 217, 645 Main St. Female resident in-house, stated her underage son is being harassed by three underage youths after school. They take property from him and destroy it; then threaten him with physical abuse if he discloses it to anyone. Officer checked area with negative results. Matter referred to PSD Youth Officer.

Harassment

2/15, front of Chase, 615 Main St. Female resident in-house, reported that her eight-year-old son was assaulted by unknown male youth, and that the youth has been verbally harassing her son and his friends. The mother further stated that the day before, the youth had

physically assaulted her son, by slamming him into a window at location. She refused NYPD, but stated that if it continues, she will report it.

Larceny

2/2, Nursery, 4 River Rd. Nursery teachers informed officer that two cameras had been taken from location. Victim #1 said she noticed camera (valued at approx. \$150) missing on 2/1 at approximately 11 p.m. Victim #2 stated that the last time she had seen her camera (value \$110) was at 3 p.m. also on 2/1. Neither wanted NYPD.

2/15, C level, 688 Main St. Female non-resident phoned PSD and reported that her car's two hub-caps on the passenger's side were missing. They had a value of \$120. She refused NYPD.

Fire

2/4, west seawall, 595 Main St. Officer noticed smoke in courtyard, investigated and saw fire. Other officers responded with extinguishers, put out fire, searched area with negative results. There was no damage. RIHM super also at scene.

Disabled Elevator

2/12, elevator, 546 Main St. Officers responded to scene (between 7th and 8th floors), female inside disabled elevator, whom they assisted off elevator. RIHM personnel responded, put elevator out of service. Victim was not injured.

Dispute

2/4, laundry, 576 Main St. Officers responded to scene, where there was a verbal dispute in progress between two men regarding the dryers. Officers mediated, both males apologized. Resident #1 left laundry room.

2/7, Trellis, 549 Main St. Officers responded to scene for dispute among two women and one male. Female perp was removed from premises. NYPD was refused.

2/10, Hair Salon, 523 Main St. Female in-house, stated while in hair salon, a female youth entered with a dog, feeling threatened, she demanded the dog be put out. The youth returned to scene with her father who called victim names. Upon officer's asking names of the latter, she did not reply and she did not remember description as well. Owner stated youth had asked if she could enter with dog, a Yorkshire. And before she could reply, victim had interjected with her objection. Owner asked youth to return without the dog. Owner of salon further stated the confrontation described by victim did not take place, because when youth returned with father the victim was not in salon. Owner said youth's family is law-abiding and kind.

2/12, lobby, 575 Main St. (Cross Complaint.) Female resident phoned PSD, said male resident used profanity towards her. The former stated she believed he had done the aforementioned, because she did not give him access to the building. Officer spoke with male's mother, asked her to have her son come to PSD, which he ultimately did and registered a cross complaint against victim. NYPD was refused.

2/12, front of 575 Main St. Underage male informed officer that as he was leaving the Beacon Program he had been jumped by a group of youths. The victim ran to aunt's apartment. Officers responded in an endeavor to find out who had jumped on him. Youth did not know and refused to make a statement.

Foul Odor

2/1, 560 Main St. Female resident in-house, stated there was a foul odor in O stairwell's 1st-floor hallway. Officers responded, confirmed same, searched area. Odor,

which smelled like sulfur, was fading, its source was unknown and there was none above the 1st floor. When officer checked one hour later, odor was gone.

2/6, 524 Main St. Officer responded to library for foul odor which smelled like gas. RIHM service employee, with gas detecting meter, accompanied officer. It was negative. They went next door to fish store and detected the same odor. RIOC facilities superv. said fish store is supposed to have exhaust fan on 24 hours daily. Fan was not on. RIOC Mgr. will contact fish store owner.

Found Property

2/15, sidewalk, 619 Main St. Anonymous male in-house, surrendered change purse containing US\$4.15, which he found at scene. Purse was secured at PSD.

Graffiti

2/4, 560 Main St. Officer observed graffiti at N-13. 2/5, 575 Main St. Officer saw graffiti at door #811. 2/10, 595 Main St. Officer noticed graffiti at E-3.

Intoxicated Male

2/7, 400 Main St. Officer responded to scene of an intoxicated man, saw an apparently intoxicated man attempting to walk. He was a Goldwater patient, two officers escorted him to Goldwater and turned him over to the police.

Investigation

2/4, 595 Main St. Officers responded to apartment for possible abandonment of child constantly crying. Upon ringing bell, mother answered door, stated she was sorry for disturbance, but her three-year-old son was crying, refusing to take his medicine. Officer stayed at scene for a while to monitor child's crying. RIHM to be informed.

2/9, 560 Main St. Female in-house regarding illegal room victim was supposed to rent from resident, to whom she gave \$100 deposit and he returned \$50. His sister had discarded the other \$50, together with victim's personal belongings, including passport, two fur coats and numerous pairs of shoes, whose total value is unknown. Matter referred to RIHM.

2/12, hallway, 580 Main St. Officers responded to scene for unknown persons knocking at apartment door. There was no one at scene upon their arrival, search of area proved unsuccessful. Victim said there were three loud bangs on door and then door of apartment next door slammed shut.

2/15, street, 400 Main St. RIOC executive phoned PSD, stated he had received complaints from Southtown construction crew about a van's driver, who was driving recklessly and not cooperating with flag personnel. Sgt. responded, found vehicle in front of subway station, same belonged to male working in subway, who was warned and admonished and who agreed to comply with Island traffic policy.

Lost Property

2/6, 400 Main St. Male in-house, said his wife had left leather bag on RIOC bus (unknown number.) Bag contained Chase bank and credit card, B's credit card, driver's license, etc. Owner will go to 114 Pct. to report it. No property was turned in to bus driver.

Missing Property

2/14/01, west seawall, 645 Main St. Male resident in-house, stated he had left windbreaker with his keys and other items unattended at scene and had gone jogging with students. Upon returning property was gone. He searched immediate area with negative results. Of-

ficer conducted search as well. NYPD refused.

Possible Dispute

2/1, rear lobby, 560 Main St. Officer saw a slight commotion among five people in progress at scene. A witness reported that two males were arguing, one of them tried to cut the other with a knife and instead cut his aunt's hand. EMS was called by a family member. The victim and the two males stated there had been no weapon involved and she did not need medical assistance. Reporting officer did see a small cut in woman's hand.

Reckless Endangerment

2/7, 532 Main St. Pizza Parlor employee (owner?) informed officer that unknown males threw their delivery bicycle from rear atrium. While retrieving same, they threw door stopper at him, striking him on head. He further stated he could identify the five perps. He refused EMS. Officer searched area with negative results.

Runaway

2/5, Tram area, 300 Main St. While patrolling, officer received report of unattended underage child. Upon officer asking child why she was alone, she stated she lost her mother/father on train. Upon further investigation, youth stated she had run away from home. Officer phoned school which is in Brooklyn, spoke with family worker, who said no child was missing; she spoke with youth's sister who was at same school and sister said mother was home. Family worker phoned the apt., phone was disconnected. Officer contacted 73rd Pct., was informed no child had been reported missing. Agency for Children's Services told officer to contact 114th Pct., they stated a squad car would respond soon. Officers transported child to 114 Pct. Officer subsequently spoke with mother.

Smoke Alarm

2/11, 510 Main St. Officer responded to 4th-floor hallway for sounding smoke alarm, searched area for visible smoke. Tenant of apartment said food had burned on stove.

Smoke Condition

2/8, 560 Main St. Officer responded to smoke condition, RIHM personnel at scene, which they entered through open patio door; and had removed pot from stove. Resident returned to apartment when she saw RIHM enter apartment. There were no injuries nor damages.

2/12, 546 Main St. Sgt. came upon a burning odor and light smoke in hall. RIHM service employee responded, drilled top lock (tenant not in apartment). There was a burning pot on stove, it was removed. NYPD, RIHM Mgr. were at scene as well. Door secured.

Vehicle Accident

2/2, east seawall, 560 Main St. RIOC facilities superv. radioed he had an accident at scene, while driving south; driver #2 made a left and collided with RIOC's vehicle. Driver #2's car sustained damage, RIOC vehicle did not. NYPD responded, prepared report. There were no injuries to either party.

2/6, 5 C level, 688 Main St. Male informed officer he had exited parking spot when driver #2 pulled out of his spot and his car struck rear left door. Driver #2 had exchanged info with reporter and left scene. According to Driver #1, Driver #2 said he would pay the damages. NYPD, EMS refused.

This Blotter has been condensed slightly to fit available space. The full listing is available on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com.

Town Hall from page 1

was aimed, in part, at finding a way to reach museums and other institutions that might consider the Southpoint site.

Mannix's opposition to the Jamal plan was among very few pieces of new information to come out during an extraordinary three-hour Town Hall Meeting conducted last week by the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). Mostly, the exchanges once again reflected deep differences between the Board and those residents who chose to speak – differences on management, development and other matters at both a philosophical and a practical level.

But the session was extraordinary in that Board members traded argument for argument, blow for blow with residents as each side made its case. (In the past, Board members had listened, often without responding, leaving residents feeling unheard when the Board took actions contrary to their urgings.)

Issues included an increase in Motorgate parking rates, the Public Safety Department, Southtown and Southpoint Development, the extension of development beyond sites named in the General Development Plan (GDP), the Island's liability (or lack of it) for repayment of State bonds, and more.

There was one lone compliment for RIOC, from Rivercross resident Richard Donovan, on snow removal during and after recent storms.

Motorgate Increase

Former Residents Association First Vice President Joan Christianson led the charge on Motorgate parking rates, angered by what she considered cavalier treatment when she complained about the hike to RIOC President Robert Ryan, who admitted to giving the go-ahead for the increase: "I don't think it's our job to tell M&D Deli what to charge for their sandwiches," Ryan said. "I don't think it's our job to tell Gristede's what to charge for their meat... It is not government's job to regulate the private sector and what they charge for things." Ryan called upon

Patrick Siconolfi, RIOC's Chief Financial Officer, for a recitation of higher rates in Manhattan and Queens.

Christianson, who has been gathering signatures on a petition protesting the increase, was applauded by other residents when she called the comparisons unfair and pointed out that Manhattan and Queens residents have a choice: "We live on an Island... If I lived in Queens or Manhattan, I would have the option of parking on the street. If I wanted to get up at 7:00 o'clock in the morning [for] alternate-side parking, that [would be] my choice. I don't have that choice here." She said residents had been promised, when moving to Roosevelt Island in the '70's, that Motorgate parking rates would not "hurt."

Board member Patrick Stewart, former RIRA President, decried a lack of security and frequent damage to, or theft of, vehicles. Pointing out that many residents are facing rent increases, he said, "I think this is really piling insult upon injury. I don't know the figures, but I doubt seriously that this will be a substantial increase in revenues [for RIOC]. And I think the interests of the community, no matter what the revenues are, are more important."

The Free Market

The discussion of Motorgate and of RIOC's plans to engage a real-estate-marketing consultant also brought a discussion of the free market into the Town Hall session, with a number of residents unhappy over RIOC plans for "selling off parcels of Roosevelt Island to the highest bidder until there is nothing but concrete and very little open space and parkland left," as Linda Heimer put it. Heimer is a member of the RIRSD steering committee challenging RIOC's approval of the Hudson/Related plan for Southtown.

Board Chair Mary Beth Labate responded that the marketing of Island parcels "is not an end to itself. The intention of this Board in looking at parcels that have potential development opportunities is... to help this Island and its residents generate the capital that is needed to address many of the issues that

you bring before us."

Board member John Mannix explained the Board's approach this way: "RIOC is a large real-estate company... You call it a State agency, but when you boil it down to its essence, it's a large real-estate company, [but one] that barely breaks even on an operating basis, and has effectively zero liquidity. If you took the RIOC balance sheet and converted it pro forma and brought it to a banker, he'd say you're bankrupt. You can't operate a real-estate company bankrupt. The intent, in a sensible fashion, is to fix the balance sheet of RIOC so that it [has] enough liquidity to handle crises, has liquidity to handle a five-year capital plan, has cash in the bank to support its ongoing activities. So I think that, in essence, is the exercise that we are undergoing with respect to raising capital. This is an investment-banking exercise, at its core."

Leo Kayser, the Board member who authored the plan to raise capital by changing its approach to development, told Heimer, "This Island has some major benefits which can be capitalized, which other communities do not have. One is that for the next 68 years there are no real-estate taxes paid on this Island. The fact that... real-estate tax... is not in your cost structure, is a great benefit to you which, if capitalized and put to your benefit, makes it possible for this Island to do everything it needs to do with the exception of the seawall. Everything else can be done within what you have given to you right here, and that's what we're trying to do."

The residents who spoke on this point urged Board members to observe provisions of the GDP and, as Steve Marcus put it in concluding a long dialogue over Island finances, "not to screw the place up too much."

Public Safety

Performance of the Public Safety Department became an issue when Ron Vass, a co-chair of the Eastwood Building Committee (EBC), asked for copies of letters specifying the responsibilities of PSD. Repeating familiar charges, Vass and others said that a

lack of "vertical patrols" in Eastwood has led to proliferation of illegal activities ranging from intimidations to drug dealing. EBC plans to use Public Safety performance issues in challenging a proposed rent increase.

Bonds

As the session neared what turned out to be an 11:00 p.m. conclusion, RIRA Common Council alternate Joyce Mincheff tried to persuade the RIOC Board that the Island has no specific obligation tied to State bonds. "There is absolutely no reason to be selling off property to be paying off bonds," she said, "because you have absolutely no obligation to pay down that debt immediately." Mincheff said that the State has refunded the bonds in the past – as recently as 1996 – and will again.

Kayser disagreed with Mincheff on the ultimate responsibility for the bonds while agreeing that, for now, there is no obligation falling due. He said that, in any case, he hopes to arrange debt forgiveness for the Island as part of the overall plan to raise capital by marketing parcels of Island property for development.

(The issue of bond indebtedness has been an open matter, with some lack of clarity and uncertainty over whether residents and others are talking about the same specific bond arrangements.)

Mincheff also had an exchange with Ryan when she criticized an arrangement between the City Department of Environmental Protection and RIOC over monies owed to the Island to repair Octagon areas damaged during construction of Water Tunnel Number Three, which crosses under the Island just south of Coler Hospital. Mincheff has asserted, claiming some backing for her argument from a DEP official, that Ryan effectively traded away future Octagon-area rehabilitation for the right to use DEP funds for Southtown infrastructure. Ryan claims that, on the contrary, the DEP still has an obligation for rehabilitation funding associated with the Water Tunnel.

There was no agreement on that issue during the course of the Town Hall Meeting.



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Southtown from page 1

before the end of February, in an effort to secure a hearing in the May-June time frame.

Marcus said he did not want to disclose the main points of the appeal, and he acknowledged that, in general, the chances of an appeal's succeeding are less than 50 percent. But, he added, "We know in our case we have some very good reasons to believe that our appeal will be more successful than most" because of what he described as "egregious errors" in the trial-court decision, including the quickly-challenged assertion that RIRSD had failed to file its objection in a timely manner.

Marcus said there was no "inside trading" or special connections that allowed the Island group to secure pro-bono representation in the appeal. "We didn't know anybody at the firm," he said.

Linda Heimer, a member of RIRSD who was instrumental in securing the services of LeBoeuf, Lamb, said she went through the Manhattan-based New York Lawyers for the Public Interest to make a case for RIRSD's appeal. The public-interest organization litigates issues relating to health, mental health, disability rights and environmental justice, and refers large public-interest projects to member law firms through a pro-bono clearinghouse of law firms.

Heimer said the residents had to persuade the lawyers' group that the Southtown case was in the public interest. She said that in Tompkins' ruling, the Islanders "never got our day in court." But beyond that, she said, the group had to show that Roosevelt Island, because of its demographic characteristics, was deserving of pro-bono treatment. Heimer used figures from the 1990 census to establish that the case was not simply a not-in-my-backyard matter of wealthy people trying to block development. (In 1990, 43 percent of the households on Roosevelt Island had income below \$35,000, for example.)

Heimer said an "endless" amount of research has gone into the law suit – in libraries, at the RIOC office, City offices and archives – an effort that has continued with LeBoeuf's acceptance of the case.

And the work has been expensive. As Marcus said, "the loser pays," which meant that the costs of preparing documents for the appeal rested with RIRSD.

Margie Smith, a member of the steering committee, said that, in addition to legal fees, RIRSD spent a portion of the money collected in Island fund-raising to reproduce 20 sets of documents of 1,600 pages each for the appeal proceedings. She said the group also had to pay an environmentalist who did

a shadow analysis of the effect of construction on the Blackwell House, the old farmhouse north of the construction site, to show that the shadows cast by the new buildings would differ from those covered by an Environmental Impact Statement on an earlier version of the project.

Smith said "it breaks my heart" to observe the blue wall and the other work done so far on Southtown. She complained that RIOC had not taken her group seriously as litigants. RIRSD has objected to the configuration of buildings and roadways in the Southtown plan and to the manner in which it will be constructed.

The engineers have a different viewpoint, both practically and aesthetically. Weiss, the project manager, is also a primary contact person, the one whose name is listed on the AMEC notices posted on Main Street and in other locations. "In general, the comments from the community have been limited," he said, responding to an e-mail question from *The WIRE* regarding Islanders' reaction so far. "I think the construction bulletins help the community know exactly what is occurring and when."

He added, "I do agree that this project has a positive impact on the community as a whole. Hudson has developed a well-designed plan for Southtown. Although the CNR has a lot of history, certainly the new commons area where residents can come to relax and enjoy a fantastic view of the East River and New York's East Side has great appeal to me."

Their engineers' obligation, of course, is to get the project built, and Arcuri said that AMEC – formerly known as Morse Diesel – is really functioning as the program manager for all the residents of Roosevelt Island in pushing for completion of the project.

AMEC is employed by RIOC. As Arcuri said, "We keep driving the developers to perform. We're there to ensure that they keep going and do it the right way."

At this stage, one of the main jobs is demolition of the old nurses residence. Arcuri said that crews are completing the interior cleanout, taking out doors and other movable glass or wood items. When that work is done, he said, the building would be taken down "brick by brick" from west to east.

The backhoes that were on the site of the old sports field in recent weeks were digging to confirm the information gained through test borings and to further ascertain the location of piping and other features in an area that once served as a quarry. In those days, the Island was a home mainly for the poor, the imprisoned and the insane.

Unusual Fare at We Are One

by George Rubin

Walk down Main Street at Westview and you are greeted by a small black elephant. This is the We Are One gift shop of Irving Anderson.

Irving was born and brought up in New York City but for about six years he lived in Georgia and Florida. He worked at a 711 Gas Station with his uncle, and also as a short-order cook with his father and uncle at their restaurant.

In 1983, during a holdup and robbery, Irving was shot and is now confined to a wheelchair with the ability to use only one arm and hand. This has not in any way stopped him from doing what he had always wanted, "owning and running my own store." It took him a while to get started after the accident, for he was a patient at Coler Hospital. While at the hospital, he went to school in computer training and began to sell small items to the patients. He later set up a booth at the Roosevelt Island Subway station to sell some of his wares.

After being discharged from Coler, he moved into 580 Main Street and, subsequently, was able to set up his store across the street. At first, he had only a back room, but this December the storefront became available to him.

His window display and shop are filled with African statues from Kenya, mugs, ceramic plates, toys, gloves, scarves, handbags, artwork, candles, perfumes, and statues of jazz musicians, among many other things. The store is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Irving Anderson has worked hard to get the store operating, and says he "would love to see it become busier."



Margery Rubin

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Letters from page 2

RIOC member John Mannix characterized the role he sees RIOCI playing as “essentially, a Real Estate Management organization.” I think that pretty well sums up why it’s time for these guys to go. They ain’t too good at “management” anyway, and what we need is actual government: elected officials accountable to their constituents and working for the best interests of the community.

Steve Marcus

To RIOCI President Robert Ryan:

I arrived at the Chapel at 5:47 p.m. Thursday, February 15, and heard the announcement that the public meeting would start at 7:00. I waited until 7:35 but couldn’t wait any longer.

What I wanted to bring to RIOCI’s attention is the following:

A great many years ago several seniors were moving to Florida, at least for the winter, and I was asked about it, too. “I would never move from Paradise Island,” I wrote *The WIRE*.

We spend a fortune on RIOCI for which we’re getting a Southtown development no one cares for – but Northtown has been converted into Litter Island.

For more than two months, the same papers have been spread over Main Street in front of Montauk Credit Union and Cards ‘n Gifts. In last week’s windstorm, some of the papers were moved north and new ones, plus a small cardboard container, were added there.

None of this seems to have disturbed our overpaid carpetbagger political appointees. It has not occurred to them to hire a sanitation worker for an hour or so daily to walk Main Street and River Road and remove litter, or to ask Public Safety, which has been reported not to answer its phone or do vertical inspections in Eastwood, to do that walk and order the stores in back of the litter to remove it. I see no conflict in having Public Safety enforce public decency.

Or is it to be Litter Island?

Frances Salten

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for attending my 90th birthday party. It was such a pleasure to see all my old and true friends again.

Thank you for your beautiful gifts. I hope to see you soon.

Love to all of you!

Joan Matula

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. Letters subject to acceptance. **Preferred means of submission:** PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*, or by e-mail to nyc10044@rcn.com (ASCII text preferred or use any wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files with macros). **Alternatives:** Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to (212) 755-2540. All letters subject to editing for length and clarity.

Come to RIRA's Saturday, March 3 Swingin' Soiree Fun'Raiser

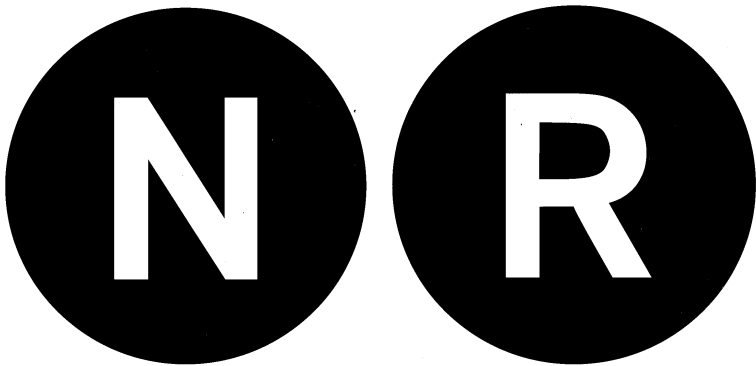
Support your Residents Association, and have a really good time doing it. Music, food, cash bar, 50-50 drawings, and much, much more.

Manhattan Park Theatre Club
8 River Road
8:00 PM to midnight

Tickets: 223-1108 or 755-4089



Weekends



Trains diverted.

N no trains will run between Queensboro Plaza and Times Sq. - 42nd St.

R will detour through the 63rd St. Tunnel.

**Feb. 9-12, Feb. 23-26, Mar. 2-5
10PM*, Fri. to 5AM, Mon.**

- N trains will run in two sections:
 1. Between Ditmars Blvd. and Queensboro Plaza *and*
 2. Between Times Sq.-42nd St. and Stillwell Ave.
- Transfer between the N and the 7 at Queensboro Plaza and Times Sq.-42nd St.
- R trains will stop at the 21st St.-Queensbridge, Roosevelt Island, and 63rd St. - Lexington Ave. stations.
- There will be no R service at Queens Plaza.
- Normal R service will run between 71st - Continental Aves. and 36th St. and also between 57th St.-7th Ave. and 95th St., Brooklyn.
- The Lexington Ave. - 60th St. and Fifth Ave. - 60th St. stations will be closed.
- For travel alternatives, pick up a take-one at your station or call (718) 330-1234.

* N trains will run normally until 12:01AM, Saturdays.

This work is part of MTA New York City Transit's ongoing effort to upgrade and maintain the subway system. We regret any inconvenience you may experience.



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Deadline for March 10 issue: March 2

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Announcements

Your note of pride, encouragement or **CONGRATULATIONS** in this space – just 50 cents a word (minimum 10 words). Call Ellen Levy at *The WIRE*, ten days in advance (issue schedule in *ComingUp* on page 2). Call 751-8214.

Don't Store It... Sell It!

It's got value, but it takes up space that's more valuable. Stop stepping over it and sell it locally. Reach all of Roosevelt Island through *WIRE* Classified advertising. 751-8214.

BASKETBALL The standings in the Roosevelt Island Youth Program's Winter Basketball League after five weeks are:

Junior Division (12-14)	
NY Heat	5 - 0
Terminators	4 - 1
Giants	1 - 4
Knicks	0 - 5

Senior Division (15-17)	
Mavericks	4 - 1
Holla	2 - 3
Da Kingz	2 - 3
Blazers	2 - 3

In the **Junior Division**, the NY Heat remained undefeated and in sole possession of first place by defeating the Giants 59-34 in Week-5 action. In that game, Sika Franco led the scoring for the victorious NY Heat with 21 points, while Paul Brown had 14 points, Fabian Williams had 12 points, and Eric Miranda and Alpha Bah scored 4 points

each. For the Giants, Jose Marte led the scoring with 13 points, while Anthony Simmons scored 9 points, and Brandon Stueber, Kristy Chavez and Ahmadu Fall added 4 points each. In the other game from week 5, the Terminators defeated the Knicks 37-26. Pedro Valerio was high scorer for the Terminators with 14 points, but he had lots of help from Keith Summers with 9 points and Tommy Corbisiero with 8 points. Anthony Santiago was the high scorer for the Knicks with 9 points, while Mohamed Camara and Dan Moraru chipped in with 5 points each.

In the **Senior Divison** in Week-5 action, the Mavericks remained in first place by defeating Da Kingz 86-71, while the Blazers defeated the Holla by a 65-64 score. For the Mavericks, Charles McCoy poured in a sea-

son-high 46 points, while Kendrick Gibson added 20 points and Marcus Harrison scored 12 points. Wayne Neal led the scoring for Da Kingz with a season-high 32 points, while Herman Kouadio added 18 points, Mark Comrie added 13 points and Carlos Nevarez and Michael Formanek scored 4 points each. In the Blazers' victory over the Holla, Vernon Jonas had a season-high 23 points to lead the scoring, while Jason Burnette and

Brian Reyes added 14 points each, Scott Davis had 10 points and Junior Ruiz scored 4 points. For the Holla, Marcus Moore was the high scorer with 18 points, while John Mason had 15 points and Devin Epps scored 12 points.

BASEBALL The Youth Program is accepting registrations for its Little League baseball program (ages 6-13) through February 24. After that date, registrations will only be accepted if space is available. Additional registration forms can be obtained at the Youth Center at 506 Main Street. The baseball season will run April 7-June 16.

NEW YORK STATE BOARD ON ELECTRIC GENERATION SITING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

January 25, 2001

PUBLIC COMMENTS INVITED ON KEYSpan ENERGY'S APPLICATION TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A COGENERATION, COMBUSTION TURBINE ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY IN LONG ISLAND CITY, BOROUGH OF QUEENS

The New York State Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment will hold hearings before Presiding Examiner Robert R. Garlin, and Associate Examiner Helene G. Goldberger for public comment on KeySpan Energy's application to construct a natural gas-fired electric generation facility, as follows:

Long Island City Wednesday, February 28, 2001
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
P.S. 112
25-05 37th Avenue
(Borough of Queens)

The hearing is being held, on a joint record, in conjunction with Legislative Public Hearings by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on permit applications associated with the proposed facility. The hearing session will remain open at least one hour and continue until all persons wishing to comment have been heard or other arrangements are made.

The public statement hearing is for the purpose of receiving unsworn statements from members of the public regarding this application. The Board ultimately may grant or deny KeySpan Energy's application, or amend the proposed conditions presented by the applicant.

It is not necessary to make an appointment in advance or to present written material in order to speak. Speakers will be called after completing a card requesting time to speak at the time of a hearing. Persons not wishing to speak may nevertheless comment in writing by mailing their statements to Secretary Janet Hand Deixler at the offices of the Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. Statements may also be submitted by electronic mail through the Consumer Comment Form at <http://www.dps.state.ny.us> (the Commission's web site); and by telephone to the Commission's toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. All statements will be included in the public record for this proceeding and will be considered in the Siting Board's review process.

In addition to this notice of the public statement hearing and the DEC Legislative Hearings, the Siting Board has published a notice of a joint Issues Conference to be convened on March 1 for the purpose of receiving statements and petitions of issues that parties want to identify and propose for adjudication in connection with this Article X proceeding and the DEC air and water permits.

Disabled persons requiring special accommodations should contact the Compliance Officer at (518) 473-8869 (or, for a sign language interpreter, call 212-290-4292 collect) at least one week in advance.

This matter is being heard in *Case 99-F-1625-Application by KeySpan Energy for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need to Construct and Operate a 250 Megawatt, Cogeneration, Combustion Turbine Electric Generating Facility to be Developed at the Existing Ravenswood Generating Station in Long Island City, Borough of Queens.*

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Secretary

Jack Resnick, M.D.

Board-Certified
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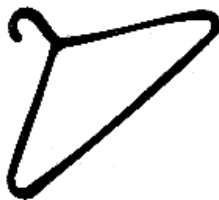
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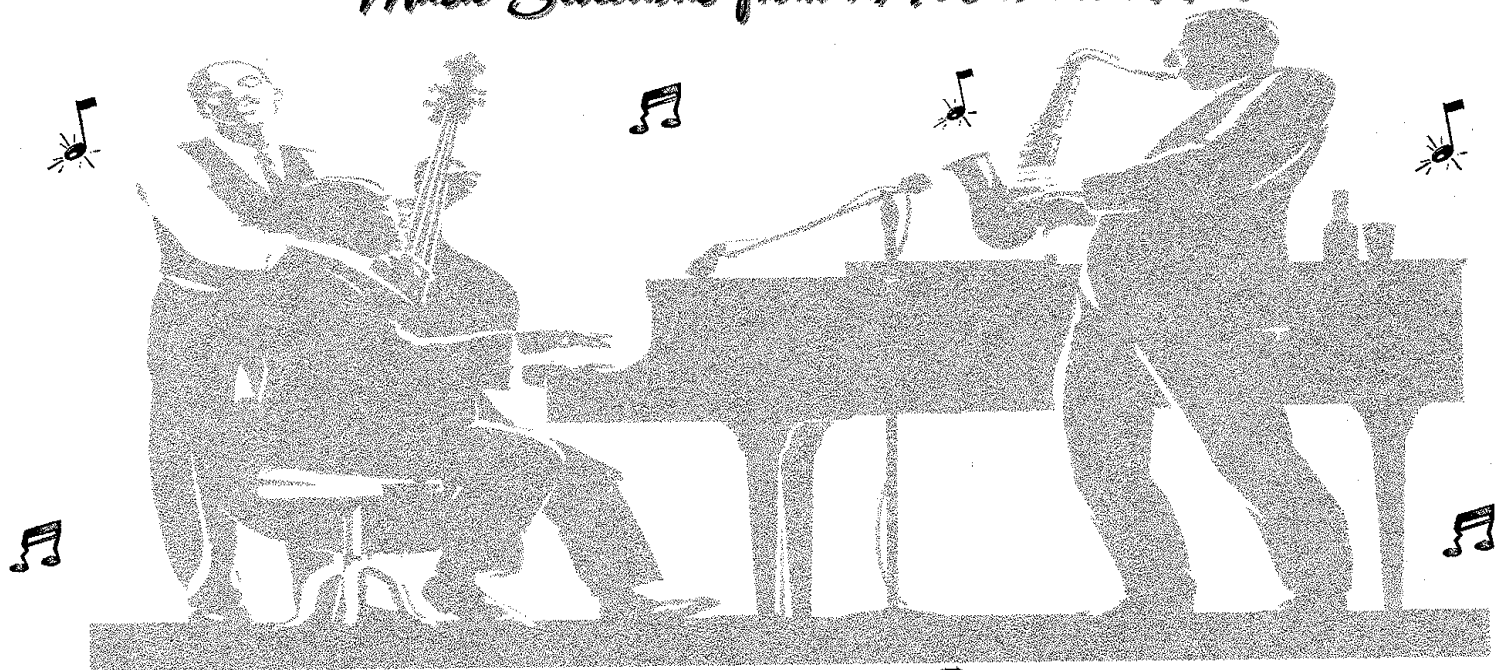
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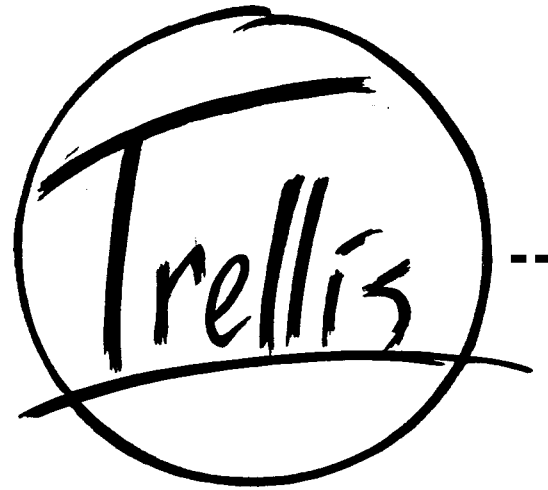
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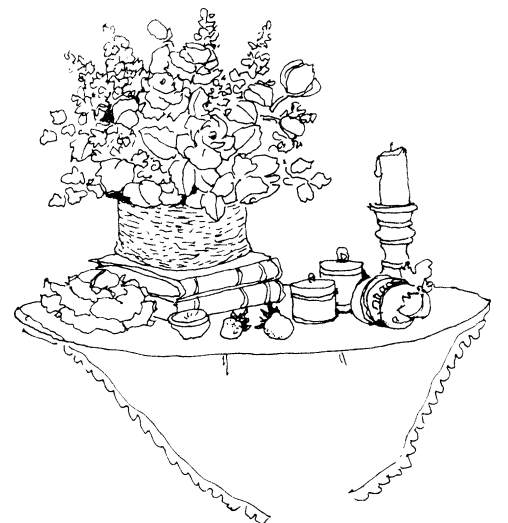
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