

Next issue:
Apr. 20-21

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
As seen from a Manhattan perspective, this model of Southtown Phase I shows the first three buildings planned for the Island's western side. In this view, Rivercross would be at the left. The right edge of the layout shows part of a community common planned for the area over the subway tunnel.

RIOC Board Sees Model: Southtown, Phase One

Architect Alfreda Radzicki described Southtown's first three buildings to the RIOC Board of Directors last week, calling them "an ensemble in terms of the facades, in terms of the selection of color... totally seeing them as a group."

David Kramer, representing the Hudson-Related partnership that is developing Southtown, said, "We're hoping in the June-July time frame," when asked for a groundbreaking date. Kramer told the Board members that the developers see "the first three buildings as our brochure for Southtown." He said the replacement soccer field, on the Island's east side just north of the Queensboro Bridge, is intended to be ready by Labor Day.

The first three structures are to be erected on the Manhattan side of a projected extension of Main Street through the middle of the development to the Tram station. Their placement is the subject of a legal action, now on appeal, against the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).



Radzicki

Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) will house staff members in the northernmost of the three buildings comprising Phase I. Radzicki described it as "amber rose" in color with trim in ocher, a variation of yellow. "Our basic idea was that from Main Street, the northern facade" of the MSK building "would establish the urban character of this development, whereas the courtyards want to be a lighter color... so that the apartments get more light [and] to brighten the view."

Radzicki said the selection of the materials was "an incredibly lengthy process because we had to deal with two sets of developers as well as two sets of users... Everybody loves to get into the color discussion." The second "user" is Cornell Wilde Medical Center. "Cornell hates yellow, so we were forced to go for a warm gray called Roman gray" for the trim, she said, describing it as a "very interesting color." She said the third building, which will form the north side of a community commons over the subway tunnel, "will have elements of the colors in buildings one and two to give it a certain coherence, but still individual character." She described the Cornell building, between the other two buildings of Phase I, as "an object in a setting because it has a very sculptured configuration."

On the Main Street side, Radzicki said, there will be a porte-cochere area for dropoffs and ample plantings to provide a "green look." She said her firm, Gruzen Samton, is still working with the landscape architecture firm of Mathews Nielsen on that part of the plan.

Main Street in the Southtown area will have a 38-foot-wide roadbed to allow one lane for parking and loading, and two lanes for two-way traffic.



As seen from the east (Main Street is shown at the near edge of this layout), the Memorial Sloan Kettering residence building is at the right, just south of Rivercross. The Cornell building is in the center.

Grannis Re-Introduces Legislation For a Locally-Elected RIOC Board Separate Bill Would Ban Building on Open Spaces

Assemblymember Pete Grannis has reintroduced proposed legislation that would give Roosevelt Island residents the right to elect members of the RIOC Board of Directors.

The bill provides for an 11-member RIOC Board, with nine residents of Roosevelt Island. Two of the residents would be appointed by the Mayor, while seven would be elected for two-year terms – two Island-wide and one each from Eastwood, Island House, Manhattan Park, Rivercross, and Westview. The bill provides for addition of another member from Southtown once its members have met a residency requirement of 12 months.

This will be a third run at the goal of Island management dominated by elected residents. Previous efforts have fallen victim to legislative scheduling, concern over the Island's finances under local governance, and a lack of full cooperation between Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez. Mendez and Grannis have said they will work together this year. The hope of proponents of locally-elected governance is that, as a supporter of Governor George Pataki, she will be able to persuade him to support the bill and sign it into law.

Action on the bill is not likely before the last quarter of the year. The bill, numbered 4409, is available on the Internet at: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A04409&sh=t>.

Development

Grannis has also put forward a separate bill that would prohibit development of the Island's open spaces as defined in the General Development Plan (GDP), part of the Lease under which the State of New York controls Roosevelt Island, which is City property.

While the GDP already defines what parts of the Island may be developed, there is concern that the City, as landowner, might not act to enforce the terms of the GDP and Lease. That concern arises because the Lease assigns to the City Board of Estimate, now defunct, the power to assent to modifications of the GDP. That, in turn, raises the possibility of a tug-of-war between the Mayor and the City Council over who gets to say yes or no to GDP modifications. Depending on the composition of City Council and who is in the Mayor's office, hesitancy to assert City rights un-

der the Lease could, it is feared, lead an increasingly income-oriented RIOC Board to move forward on development not fully in line with the GDP's provisions.

One example of such development was the proposal, during the RIOC administration of Dr. Jerome Blue, to erect a twin-tower Marriott Hotel on Southpoint. While the idea hasn't been pressed forward of late, it's not certain that it has

breathed its last.

Currently, the RIOC Board is looking favorably on the idea of residential wings attached to a rehabilitated Octagon Building, just south of Coler Hospital. A Connecticut firm, Becker and Becker, has been given "site control" of the Octagon, a first step toward final designation as developer of the property. Some activist residents

See **Grannis**, page 5

Westview, Island House Get the Rent-Hike News

News Analysis by Robert Laux-Bachand

First, the numbers: The cost spread between the Island House and Westview apartments will narrow slightly after new rents approved by the State take effect on May 1.

Over the next two years, Island House's room rate will rise by \$29.30 per month, while Westview will go up \$27.46. Half of the increase kicks in this year, half on May 1, 2002. Based on the new schedule, a 3.5-room unit at Island House – the equivalent of a one-bedroom apartment – will rent for \$1,008.66 a month on May 1 (up about \$51); its counterpart in Westview will rent for \$1099.98 (up about \$48).

Westview's increase is seven cents a room less than the midwinter projection made by the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal after it evaluated a whopping \$93-a-room rent increase sought by the Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corp (RIHMC). Island House, which was confronted with a housing-company request for a \$90 increase, wound up paying a dollar more than the State's initial projections.

On these facts, it is probably safe to say, all the parties to the so-called Budget Rent Determination (BRD) for these Mitchell-Lama middle-income housing projects could agree. But the spin being put on the figures this week is another story, as is the potential consequence for several critical Island functions, such as police protection and child care.

Several residents said privately that they were relieved by the final outcome, or felt that it matched their expectations. They said they didn't think it was unfair, especially in light of the company's original demands, and the rising cost of electricity, which is included in the rent.

The owner, Charles Lucido, noted that rent increases in the four to five

See **Rents**, page 5

Environmentalists Win on Nearby LIC Power Plant

New York State must stop building a jet-turbine power plant just south of the Queensboro Bridge, a judge has ruled.

The New York Times reported Thursday that the State Supreme Court ruled on Wednesday that the State violated environmental law in starting construction at the Vernon Boulevard site in Long Island City without first conducting a study of environmental impact. The New York Power Authority (NYPA) was building the plant as part of a program to provide extra power

sources by June 1. The State recently admitted the plant and six others like it might ultimately be privatized and taken off the temporary status originally envisioned for them.

The State's failure to produce a new EIS, or Environmental Impact Statement, is also at the heart of two legal actions against the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation on Southtown. RIOC ruled that no EIS was required because the plan was environmentally equivalent to a ten-year-old plan for which an EIS had been done. Two Island groups, Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) and the Alternative Southtown Design Committee, claim differences in the plans require a new EIS.

In the NYPA case, the judge said the State reached a conclusion that it needed the power plants first, then lined up its facts to support that conclusion, rather than taking the "hard look" required by law. The "hard look" concept is at issue in the Southtown case, as well.

The Wednesday rulings have no effect on separate Keyspan plans to expand capacity at its power plant directly across from Eastwood.

Briefly...

The **RIOC Board meeting** scheduled for Thursday has been canceled, and its May 10 meeting rescheduled as an evening session with a follow-on Town Hall Meeting (starting about 7:30, according to RIOC) for resident interaction with members of the Board. See *ComingUp*, page 3.

Residents can now get **instant Roosevelt Island history** on the Internet. In addition to Website NYC10044's *TimeLine* feature at www.nyc10044.com, the Historical Society and the Island branch of the New York Public Library have prepared a web page listing many sources of information about the Island's past, at www.nypl.org/branch/manhattan/ri.htm.

The Island's Running Partners Team is looking for a **volunteer coach** to work with Island students and existing staff. Practices are held Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., but a coach doesn't have to be present for all practices. For more information: Frank Cherry at 486-2377 or fcherry@msn.com.

The Editorial Page

Again, Self-Governance

It's back.
But it's back with more urgency than last year or the year before.
Once again, Assemblymember Pete Grannis has started the ball rolling on legislation that would put residents in charge of RIOC. It's not such a unique idea, after all – citizens of a community electing those who guide it. It's as American as... well, America.

And while we wait...
Roosevelt Island's physical resources continue to deteriorate, as the State continues in a long-term casting about for some way to get it right. The idea of the season is full-throttle catch-as-cash-can development of whatever resources can be marketed on whatever formula will prop up RIOC's creaky financial structure. Cash in on what we have to sell, the reasoning goes, and we'll be able to take care of things.

But taking care of things means more than producing some outcome that generates funding for the repairs the Island needs. Taking care of things means paying attention, all the time, and doing it right depends on a level of skill that seems unattainable in the bulk of personnel the State sends in to do the job.

It's an item of consuming interest that the minds being applied to the problems and opportunities of Roosevelt Island have wildly different qualifications:

- There's the RIOC Board, unelected, too many non-resident, mostly paying attention once a month or less.
- There's the Residents Association Common Council, living here and living *with* the Island's problems and with its future.

And if you listen to the discussion of the Island's critical issues at RIOC Board meetings, and then at RIRA Common Council meetings, you can see and hear – even feel – the difference. The RIOC Board acts like a doctor who's decided on a cure and is trying to fit the illness to the treatment he has in mind. (Right now, it's development in overdrive.) Members of the RIRA Common Council, on the other hand, can often be seen to be working their way thoughtfully through the problems of the Island.

Oddly, the group that has the power is the unelected group that largely doesn't live here and tends to pay attention once a month. And the group that is power-starved is the elected group that does live here and has to pay attention all the time.
The Grannis legislation seeks, once again, to correct that incongruity and set things right.
Godspeed.

Diversity & Community

This issue of *The WIRE* – from the CYO Fashion Show to a PS/IS 217 field trip, from the excitement of new buildings at Southtown to the fund-raising to contest their placement, from the struggles of the Westview Task Force to the promise of a new computer lab at the school – this issue shows slices of this community that make it feel like what it is: *Home*.

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Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Chief Feature Writer – Anusha Shrivastava
Reporters – Francine Lange, Robert Laux-Bachand
Ombudsman – Armand Schwab – **838-3184**
Chief Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Proofreader – Linda Heimer
Chief Photographer – Margery Rubin
Photographers – Vicki Feinmel, Douglas P. Cleary
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
Circulation Managers – George Rubin, Sherie Helstien
Founding Publisher – Jack Resnick
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To the Editor:
Last week the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) determined that the rents at Westview would increase by 4.5% in 2001 and an additional 4.5% in 2002 (total 9%). This rent hike is a result of an unexplained urgency on the part of DHCR officials to please the Housing Company instead of looking at the facts and doing their jobs. Indeed, the present 9% rent increase is completely unnecessary, as was the prior 8.5% increase from 1999.
The Budget Rent Determination process allows Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC) to project expenses and income for the following two years and ask for a rent adjustment if their income projections do not meet their expense projections. DHCR must carefully review such projections and make sure that they are properly substantiated. DHCR accountants and engineers approve every single contract over \$5,000. The role of DHCR is extremely important as RIHMC has had a history of providing unsubstantiated and at times misleading projections.
During the 1998/9 Rent Determination Process, for example, RIHMC projected a total of \$2,324,000 needed for repairs and replacements and asked for a significant rent increase. DHCR eventually approved \$911,190, which was paid in. But RIHMC used only a total of \$546,918 in two years for actual repairs and replacements. The balance of the paid-in monies, about \$365,000 was not used to improve the condition of the building, but was rather transferred directly to the reserve fund and parked there.
When we first received the new Budget from DHCR, we immediately noticed that we were required to pay about \$1.3 million in two years for unspecified repairs and replacements. The Task Force retained two construction engineers, an energy conservation expert, and two accountants to review RIHMC expense records and to inspect the building. What we have found shocked everyone.
The original lowest bidder on the roof, BBR Contracting, suddenly became the highest bidder. The current price that RIHMC agreed to pay is about 40% higher than the original bid, and almost double the market price. In terms of dollars, Westview tenants are required to pay about \$400,000 in added cost. Worse yet. Instead of financing the roof replacement over 15-18 years as legally required, RIHMC boldly requires that Westview tenants will front all the money through a huge permanent rent increase.
There is a \$230,000 surplus in the Reserve Replacement Fund (over the mandatory level), but instead of either using this surplus to improve the condition of the building or return the money to the tenants, RIHMC plans to increase this surplus, using our rents, to over \$400,000.
Westview tenants pay on average \$220 per month for energy, precisely 231% more than the average monthly electricity bill in NYC, only because RIHMC has failed to perform the legally required Energy Audit Report and thus failed to realize significant cost savings. Just a simple retrofitting of the hallways lighting would save \$73,554 annually.
If DHCR had listened to our comments and forced RIHMC to pay the market price for the roof

If you have attempted to send an e-mail letter to *The WIRE* recently and suspect it may not have reached us, that's probably the case. There was a mail glitch at RCN that caused a substantial portion of mail addressed to nyc10044@rcn.com to disappear into a black hole. The problem has now been fixed, but if you wish to save a long-term e-mail address for *The WIRE*, the one to use is MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com.

Robert Ryan, President
RIOC
591 Main Street
Dear Mr. Ryan:
On a recent Wednesday evening as I was circling the sixth floor of Motorgate looking for a place to park, I noticed quite a few new and near-new Ford Focus cars parked on the west side of the facility. In fact, there were 26. Curious, I then counted an additional 32 on the up-ramp. About half had the same unusual license plate – the other half had no license plate. I am writing to ask if Motorgate has become a car dealership? Or were they stolen and harbored in Motorgate until they could be unloaded elsewhere? You have recently authorized an increase in parking fees for Roosevelt Island residents, from \$170 to \$180 a month, which I paid for the first time this month. Is Motorgate charging the same monthly rate for these vehicles? Regardless of the fee, is it right that a commercial car operation interfere with residents' ability to find places to park in Motorgate?
Joseph H. Cruikshank

replacement, we could have saved 6% of our rents. If DHCR had listened to our comments and forced RIHMC to finance the roof replacement over 15-18 years as legally required, we could have saved an additional 5% of our rents. If DHCR had listened to our comments and forced RIHMC to use the \$230,000 Reserve Surplus, we could have saved an additional 4% of our rents. If DHCR had listened to our comments and forced RIHM to substantiate all expenses, we could have ended up with a 15% rent reduction instead of a 9% rent increase. These are the facts and they are undisputed.
This Rent Determination process is not over. Luckily, the very same laws that provide government with power to determine our rents, provide the tenants with protection against incompetent government, waste and mismanagement.
Finally, I call upon the leaderships of Island House and Eastwood to take a hard look at the realities of your own buildings as they relate to the issues raised by Westview. You'd probably find a very similar situation: waste, overpriced contracts, fronting of major capital expenditures, overfunded cash reserve, unsubstantiated expenses, and inadequate maintenance. It's time we join forces.
Opher Pail
Chair, Westview Task Force

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 are subject to acceptance. **Preferred methods of submission:** PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*, or by e-mail to MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com (ASCII text preferred or use any word-processing software, but no MSWord files with macros). **Alternatives:** Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to (212) 755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered. We cannot take telephone dictation of letters. **All letters are subject to editing for length and clarity.**

To the Editor:
The letter from Judith Berdy in the March 10 issue of *The WIRE* complaining about the stores on the Island was uncalled-for and inappropriate. At a time when the merchants are hurting, and need more business to survive, her caustic comments were tantamount to financial ruin for them.
I have lived on the Island for only a year and a half, and in that time have shopped frequently in the stores mentioned. To me, it is more important to be greeted by a smile and a "hello" rather than clean windows and a new paint job. In addition, the twine handle on the freezer door at the M&D Deli has never been a problem for me.
The owner and the help in the Grog Shop are courteous and helpful no matter if you buy a ten-dollar bottle of wine, or a case of Canadian Club. The video store serves a purpose on the Island as both a place to rent movies and get that item you need for your kitchen. The owner of the stationery store is one of the finest people I have met on the Island, and I shall continue to shop there, "filthy windows" notwithstanding. The new owner of the vegetable store is trying very hard to provide us with fresh fruits and vegetables at competitive prices. I have yet to find limes and avocados as fine as he has.
I would have been more pleased had she complained about our "Megastore" on the Island, and the amount of outdated merchandise they have on their shelves.
Donna Bell

To the Editor:
Thank you for your outstanding coverage of the Roosevelt Island St. Patrick's Day Parade. That was a wonderful picture of me on the front page. Who's the guy with the bagpipe?
However, on the same page there was an article about a robbery at the Post Office. The suspect was identified as having an "Irish accent."
I realize you are not to blame but I have been "interviewed" by, among others, the FBI, the Secret Service, the Postal Police, the NYPD, and the St. Patrick's Day Watchdog Committee of the Archdiocese of New York.
I wish your readers to know that I had nothing to do with the Post Office matter and I have no intention of appearing on *60 Minutes* to discuss the issue.
I hope this letter will put an end to the accusations.
Jim Whalen
Founder,
RI St. Patrick's Day Parade

Letters deadline for April 21 issue: April 15
Letters received after deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

Judi Arond, Rafael Asenjo, Sonia Asenjo, David Bauer, Judy Berdy, Steve Bessenof, Virginia Boykin, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Melanie Castine, Lynn Chambers, Malcolm Cohen, Shirley Cruz, Harold Davis, Valerie Davis, Morty Dinerstein, Rebecca Dougherty, Arlise Ellis, Norm Ellis, Enrique Fernandez, Mary Fitzgerald, Sarita Fonseca, Teresa Hasing, John Hennessey, Peter Kaplan, Mickey Karpeles-Bauer, Matthew Katz, Steve Kaufman, Ruth Limmer, Toa Lin, Curtis Lowery, Hazel Lynch, Clarissa McCraley, Morgan McEvoy, Donny McIntyre, Merle McLean, Dorene McQueen, Terry Moses, Bruce Munsch, Louise Munsch, Sandra Narine, Juan Nieves, Nancy Olivera, Elizabeth Powell, Gladys Rasheed, Paul Russo, Ron Schuppert, Bernie Schwartz, Beryl Seaforth, Marilyn Sherman, Harry Small, Stuart Solway, Joyce Speziale, Pearl Thomas, David Tsireskin, Elena Vrinceanu, Rece Walford, Maggie Warner, Jim Whalen, Dolores Williams, Robin Williams, Nina Winteringham, Rose Woods – and members of the Island Girls Project

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 Sat., 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 Art Society, at MAS, 457 Madison Avenue (between 50th/51st). Residential projects of the Urban Development Corporation, including Roosevelt Island. Information: **935-3960**.

Wednesdays, April-June, 11:00 a.m., **Children’s Picture Book Hour** for ages 2 and up, Library.

Sun., Apr. 8, 4:00 p.m., **Dedication of Memorial Plaque** and Good Shepherd banner in honor of the late **Rev. Oliver T. Chapin**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., Apr. 12, cancelled, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC Board of Directors meeting**. See May 10.

Wed., Apr. 18, 8:00 p.m., **Community Board 8 Roosevelt Island Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Discussion of proposals for rehabilitation of the Roosevelt Island Bridge.

Fri.-Sun., Apr. 20-22, Main Street Teen Theatre, Museum, a play by Tina Howe. Fri. and Sat., 8:00 p.m., Sun. 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. All seats \$10. Reservations, **371-4449**.

Sat., April 21, next issue of **The Main Street WIRE**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Apr. 13; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Apr. 16; materials due Thur., Apr. 19. **Future issues:** 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.

Sun., Apr. 22, postponed, **No Place Like Home**. See May 6.

Tue., Apr. 24, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion Group, Ship Fever** by Ancrea Barrett, Library.

Fri., Apr. 27, 10:30 a.m., **Internet Workshop** on setting up a free e-mail account, Library.

Fri.-Mon., April 27-30, Main Street Teen Theatre, Pippin, a musical version with original music by Bob McDowell. Fri.-Sat., 8:00 p.m.; Sun. 2:30 p.m., Mon. 7:30 p.m. Adults \$10; children 5-12, \$8. Reservations, **371-4449**.

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

Fri., May 4, 10:30 a.m., **Library Toddler Program** for children 24-36 months, Library (first of four sessions; also May 18, 25, June 1).

Sat., May 5, 1:00 p.m., **Cat Show**, Eastwood Amphitheater (behind pizzeria at 536 Main Street). \$5 entry fee and form required; contact Fay Vass at 755-4089.

Sun., May 6, 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. Admission \$8, seniors and students, \$5.

Thur., May 10, rescheduled to 5:30 p.m., RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Meeting normally begins with an executive session. The public session, a Town Hall Meeting, is expected to begin at about 7:30.)

Fri., May 18, 10:30 a.m., **Library Toddler Program** for children 24-36 months, Library (second of four sessions; also May 25, June 1).

May 18-20, Main Street Children’s Theatre, Hollywood Musicals, a dance program; performance times to be announced.

Tue., May 22, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion Group, Corelli’s Mandolin** by Louise de Bernieres, Library.

Fri., May 25, 10:30 a.m., **Library Toddler Program** for children 24-36 months, Library (third of four sessions; also June 1).

Fri., June 1, 10:30 a.m., **Library Toddler Program** for children 24-36 months, Library (last of four sessions).

Wed., June 6, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., June 14, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC Board of Directors meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.



Chapin

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to mainstreetwire@rcn.com, fax to 755-2540, or leave copy at desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*.

R.I. Bridge a Topic for CB8 Meeting Here

The future of the Roosevelt Island Bridge will be discussed Wednesday evening, April 18, when representatives of the City Department of Transportation appear at the Community Board 8 meeting on Roosevelt Island. The CB8 meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in Good Shepherd Chapel. Some proposals for rehabilitation of the bridge include deactivation and removal of the lift system, and possible removal of the towers.

Judy Berdy, a member of the Residents Association Common Council who alerted *The WIRE* to the scheduled discussion, said, “Community input into this plan is very important. Also, the importance of keeping the bridge open during any repairs must be emphasized to the Department of Transportation staff.”

Color photos of the bridge and an excerpt from the Department of Transportation website with information on how the bridge works are available on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com/wire/2115/bridge.html.

Cookbook Being Planned as RIRA Legal Fund Boost

The Roosevelt Island Residents Association’s (RIRA) Legal Action Fund Committee (LAFC) is launching a fundraiser that will produce a *Roosevelt Island International Cookbook*. The committee hopes to take advantage of the cultural and culinary diversity of the Island.

The project is intended to collect and preserve many of the Island’s unique recipes, perhaps using some of them in future RIRA/LAFC-sponsored events. The plan includes having a short history or other story accompany each recipe. According to committee members Marguerite Camaio and Sherie Helstien (Chair), the committee hopes that this will make it more than just a book about food, but a way to help people of diverse cultures better understand and appreciate the differences and similarities we all share, and make it a more interesting book to read.

LAFC plans to start publishing by the end of Spring and is seeking the community’s help collecting recipes. Any interested cooks who are willing to share their cooking or baking secrets are asked to drop off their recipes and a history at the Island House door station addressed to LAFC members Marguerite Camaio or Frank Farance, with photographs if available, or to e-mail them to sparky@farance.com or helkatz@rcn.com.

Revenue from the sale of the cookbook will support current and possible future legal actions decided upon by the Common Council of the Residents Association. RIRA’s current attorneys, De Forest and Duer, have been on retainer for a year and a half and are currently representing RIRA in its intervention into the Article 78 proceeding brought last year against the RIOC Board’s acceptance of the current plan for Southtown.

Public Safety Blotter
appears this issue on
Website NYC10044
with supplemental materials on many *WIRE* reports
www.nyc10044.com

A nice thing happened to me a week or so ago, and I thought I would share it with you. Susan Cohen, guidance counselor at our own PS/IS 217, had invited me to participate in their seventh annual Career Day program, and I was pleased to say yes. We were a motley group of about thirty residents and friends of the Island when we met in the Library for an impromptu briefing and a bit of breakfast.

Principal Sherry Gregory and Mireille Neuprez, a school volunteer who coordinated the event, welcomed us and explained the morning’s game plan. In chatting with my fellow presenters and in reading the program, I was delighted to learn of the range of professions represented that day. We were doctors and diplomats (Jack Resnick, Lawrence

Itskowitch, James Flanagan and Mosud Mannan), consultants and court reporters (Tracey Strauss and Chloe Grimes), milliners, manicurists and musicians (Suzanne Newman, Cynthia Ahn Choi, Roy Eaton, and Marty Dinerstein). There were several UN interpreters (Gabriel and Christiane Milev, and Jean Neuprez) and our own City Councilmember, Gifford

Miller, who took the time to participate and to help dedicate the new school Computer Lab later in the morning. Doryne Isley, general manager of the Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation, was there, as were many others. We were to divide up into groups of three or four who then presented our occupations to classes of sixth- and seventh-graders.

My group included a secretary/program officer who is an expert stenographer (Linda Pickett), and a UN demographer who also has written seventeen (seventeen!) published romance novels (Gwendolyn Acsadi). Our group was rounded out with a media consultant who also happens to edit this newspaper (Dick something-or-other) and yours truly. I was there to talk about my career as a meeting planner, not as a community activist. I mentioned, as did the others, how I got into my profession, what I liked about it, and what attributes made me successful in its pursuit. But what was uniform about all our spiels, what we all had in common, was the yen for reading and writing that we carried from childhood. In presentations to two groups of children, each of us expressed a lifelong thirst for the written word that we urged upon our audiences. I expect the participants in the other classrooms had similar experiences.

The glow from this nice day had all but faded last weekend, when I ran into a group of kids from the school in front of my building. They recognized me from Career Day and from my picture in this column. And then, one boy said that his teacher had them read and discuss my column. Well! What a remarkable compliment. I think I grinned for the rest of the day. What more could a writer want than to know that he’s being read, and as part of a school curriculum?

Community activism is its own reward, but sometimes something nice happens to remind you why you bother. This was one of those times.



Matthew Katz
Residents Association President

PS217 Seeks Assistant Principal

Twelve parents of children at PS/IS 217 were selected by the PTA to participate on a committee that will recommend candidates for permanent assistant principal. In previous years, the school had an administrative assistant to perform tasks handled in most schools by an assistant principal. District 2 has now provided funds for a permanent assistant principal.

The committee will also include two teachers elected by the faculty, principal Sherry Gregory, a representative from DC37, and the district superintendent’s designee. The committee will meet over a period of several months to review resumes, interview candidates, and recommend five to the superintendent, who makes the final decision. Committee members hope this process will result in a permanent selection in time for the beginning of the next school year in September.

Sharon Jeffrey-Roebuck, who has been interim assistant principal since September, is a candidate and will continue to serve on an interim basis while the formal selection procedure takes place.

The parent members of the committee will be: Rose McCarthy,

Eastwood Building Committee Plans an Island Cat Show

Next month will bring a Cat Show to Roosevelt Island.

The Eastwood Building Committee (EBC) is putting on the show, open to all cats and their Islanders, on May 5 as a fundraiser for its legal activity related to rent increases. The event is scheduled for May 5, 1:00-4:00 p.m., in the Eastwood Amphitheater (behind the pizzeria).

Entry fees are \$5 per cat, and entry consists of submitting cat’s name and breed, resident’s name (no breed required), phone number, and building/apartment to one of the show’s organizers. They are Virginia Granato (510 Main Street, apartment 423), Fay Vass (510, 462), and Cookie Lugo (510, 432). The show flyer promises “a purrfectly wonderful afternoon” and “gifts for all contestants,” plus prizes for first, second, and third place.

Wendy Hersh, Sandy Newell, Emma Sosa, Lydia Tong, Carol Elves, Tony Monroe, Geneva Barbera, Mary O’Brien Miranda, Erin Feely-Nahem, Olya Stern and Mosud Mannan.

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.**

Special Events

Mon., Apr. 9, 11:45, Visit from Councilmember Gifford Miller

Tue., Apr. 10, 7:00, **RISA Meeting** – nominations

Wed., Apr. 11, 12:30, **Pain Management Lecture**

Mon., Apr. 16, 12:30, **Lecture: Reduced-Fare MetroCard by Mail** (postponed from 3/9)

Wed., Apr. 18, **RISA Atlantic City Trip**

Wed., Apr. 18, 12:15, **Calligraphy Class**

Fri., Apr. 20, 12:30, **Volunteer Recognition/Birthday Party**

Mon., Apr. 23, 12:30, **Lecture on Wills, Living Wills, and Power of Attorney**

Tue., Apr. 24, 12:45, **Crime Victims Week Lecture**

Wed., May 2, 12:30, **EPIC Lecture** (new guidelines)

Home-delivered meals available:
744-5022, ext. 1203

About subscriptions: *The WIRE* does not solicit off-Island subscriptions but, as a courtesy, provides first-class mailing on day of publication. The cost is \$50/year (for about 24 issues) to cover postage and materials. A check payable to *The WIRE* should be sent, with delivery address, to *The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, NYC10044.



Photo coverage
by Zachary Horvet
of Common Cents

The Trip to the Hospital

by Djordje Vuckovic
Class 301, PS/IS 217

Today my class and I went on a trip, but not just any trip. We went to the “New York Children’s Hospital” in Queens. It was a very special trip because we saved money from the “Penny Harvest.” We used it to buy books at Barnes & Noble for the children in the hospital. So today we went to bring the books for the children. It was not just any trip because what we did was very special. It brought lots of happiness to the sick children in the hospital.

When we got to the hospital, they had many things planned for us. First, they took us into the auditorium and gave each of us a folder with things in it. Each folder contained a certificate, a “Prescription for Reading,” a book, and a coloring book which had real facts about immunization. Then, they gave us a box with a few bandages and either a nurse hat with words, “Future Nurse” or something that you put around your head with words, “Future Doctor.” Next, a woman read a book to us about a bear named Corduroy. Last came my favorite part. It was when we watched the clown. She was so funny, she knew lots of tricks, and she even painted our faces or gave us a balloon.

After we left the hospital, we went to the pizzeria. There I ate two slices of pizza. Then after all of us finished, Mrs. Berman gave out the little green toys left for us by the doctors in the hospital. That was what happened on the trip.

TWIN CAR SERVICE

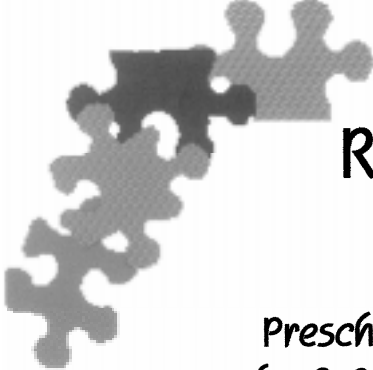
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Grannis from page 1

hold that the Octagon site may be developed only as a park. Others feel the derelict Octagon can only be rescued by such a project, and that the rescue should get under way before the building is further damaged by weather or calamity. (The building was gutted in a Labor Day fire in 1999.)

Finally, appeals have been filed in two actions against RIOC approval of construction on the sports field north of the Nurses Residence, or CNR. Two resident groups contend that RIOC violated the GDP in approving construction on a six-acre area between Northtown and Southtown. RIOC, which won in the lower court, contends that Eastwood and Rivercross were overbuilt onto the parkland a quarter-century ago, and that the roughly three acres remaining are all the land there is for Blackwell Park.

The sole provision of Grannis’s bill reads, in part, “real property which is designated as open space areas in the [GDP] shall be designated as New York State parkland and no further development or construction shall be permitted...” The bill says the designated areas “shall include but not be limited to Lighthouse Park, Octagon Park, Blackwell Park, and Southpoint Park.”

Grannis’s bill, numbered 6253, is available on the Internet at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A06253&sh=t>.

Grannis was away from his office at deadline and unavailable for comment.

Rents from page 1

percent range for New York City represented a good deal for the tenants, but would force the company to cut costs – an approach that could affect not only the residents but also community organizations that use the buildings.

Opher Pail, Chair of the Westview Task Force, said he was “very disappointed in the whole process,” despite his relative success in holding down the increase. He declared that the battle was not over. In a letter to *The WIRE* (page 2), he summarized the information gathered by the task force, with the idea of mobilizing the other Mitchell-Lama rental complexes – Island House and Eastwood – behind a further challenge. He said he was “looking at the possibility of legal action” because the law gives “special protection to tenants in our situation from incompetent government.”

Pail criticized DHCR for failing to look seriously at the technical and financial issues the Task Force had raised over the past several months. He characterizes the increase as nine percent, based on the difference between the current rent and the 2002 charge, but a more accurate comparison, based on cumulative spending over the next two years compared with the current rent, is 6.8 percent. And for Island House, the per-room cost increase over two years is 8 percent.

In any case, the BRD has run its course and a spokeswoman for the DHCR said Thursday that any further appeal by the tenants would have to be litigated.

Lucido was also critical of the agency, saying the company had unsuccessfully amended its request in an attempt to recover higher utility costs. The company also failed to persuade DHCR to include in the budget a 27 percent increase for Island Public Safety services imposed at the last minute, March 1, by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.

“They can’t operate as though this is a privately-funded market,” he said. “We abide by rent-stabilization rules and so should RIOC.”

Island House, which has 400 units, is now paying \$205,192 annually for Public Safety, an increase of more than \$43,000; Westview, with 371 units, is paying \$183,593, up \$39,000 from the year before. For a one-bedroom apartment in these buildings, RIOC’s assessment will eat away almost 20 percent of the impending rent increase.

That leaves Lucido with less money to operate, and he said he was troubled by the inconsistency displayed by the State in its rent deliberations. RIOC, after all, is part of the same department that sets the rent for middle-income hous-

See **Rents**, page 8

Computer Lab Dedicated

At the end of Career Day last week at PS/IS 217, City Councilmember Gifford Miller (at left) helped dedicate the school’s new computer lab, for which he helped find funding.

Teen Theatre Rehearses

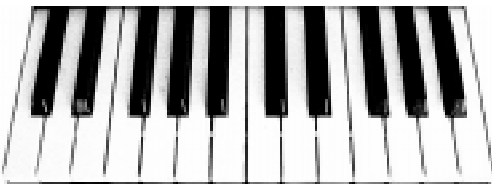
Tink (Emily Goodridge) takes refuge among the soft sculptures in an art exhibit as horrified patrons (Terence Trouillot and Hanna Jamal) and the guard (Matthew Davidowitz) look on. The Main Street Teen Theatre will stage *Museum* for 4 performances April 20-22. Call **371-4449** for reservations.



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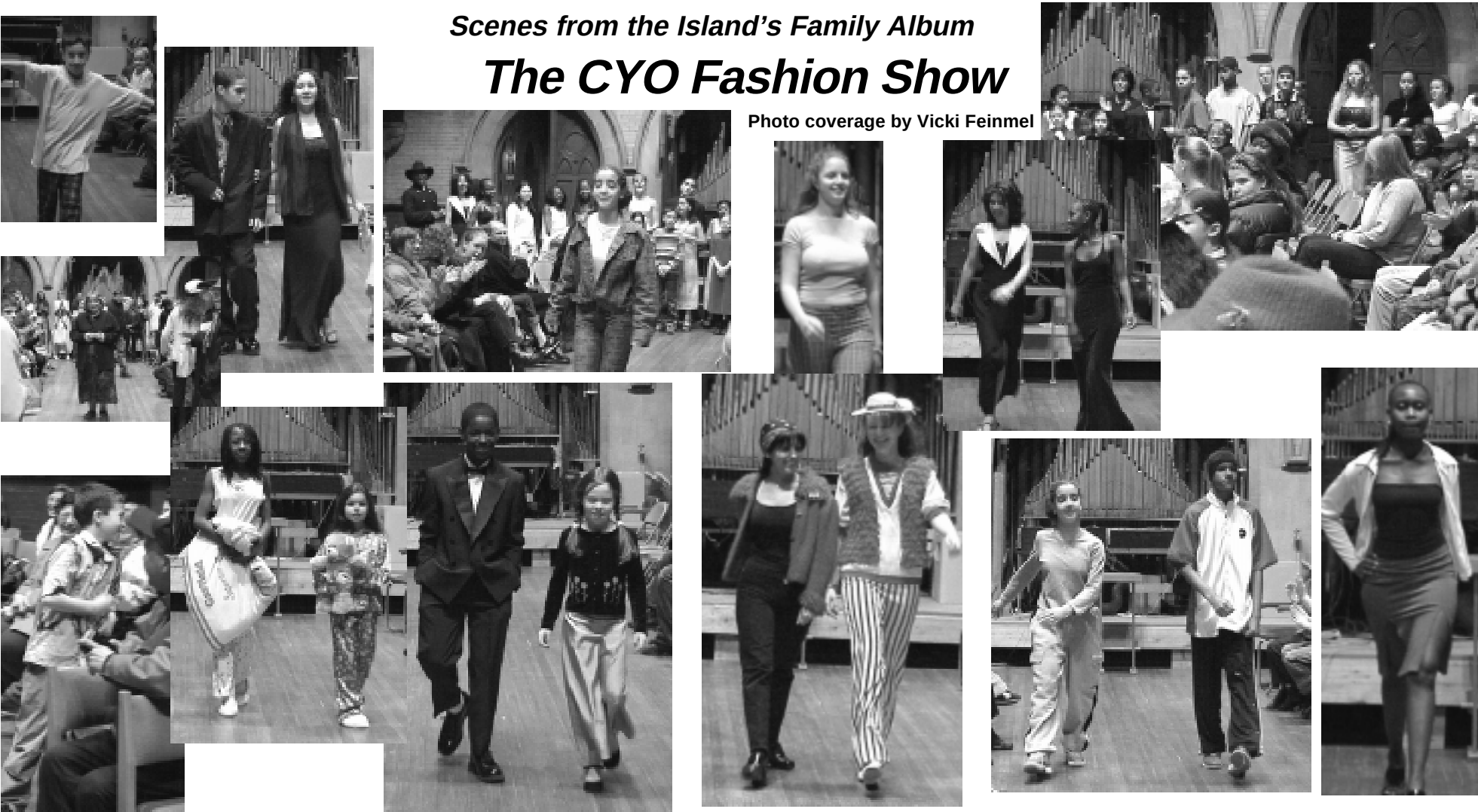
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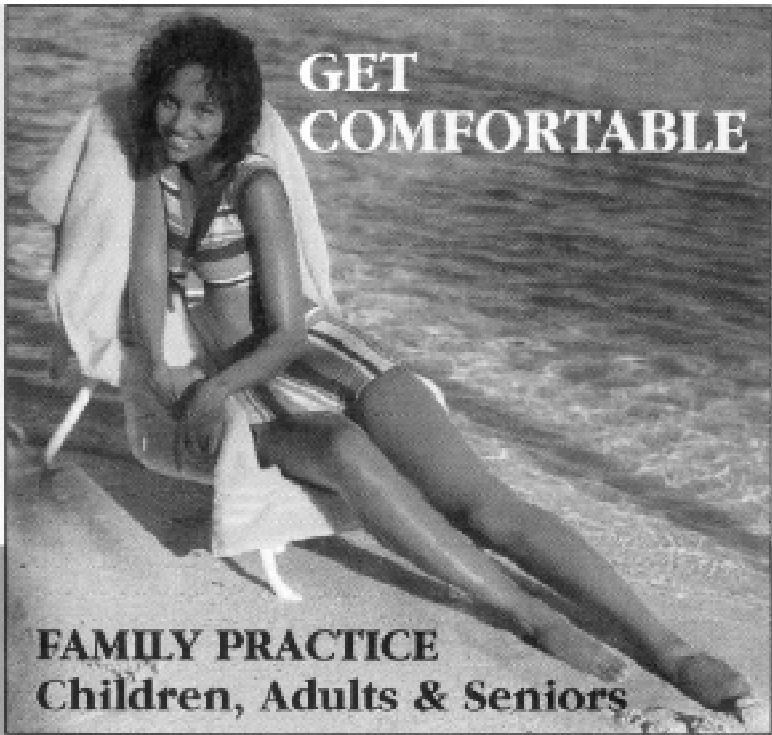
-New York Times

Scenes from the Island's Family Album
The CYO Fashion Show

Photo coverage by Vicki Feinmel



Dancin' Dancin' Dancin'! These kids all danced the meringue at one of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program's Friday night events in the auditorium at PS/IS 217. The Youth Program is running a series of concerts for adults about once a month. No future schedule was available at press time; watch for announcements on the Main Street kiosks.



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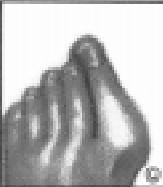
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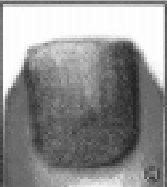
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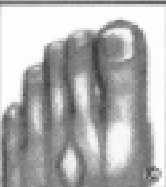
BUNIONS



WARTS



FUNGUS NAIL



NERVE PAIN



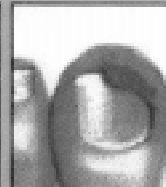
CUSTOM INSERTS



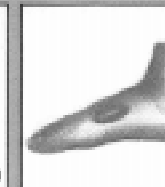
HAMMERTOES



HEEL SPURS



INGROWN TOENAILS



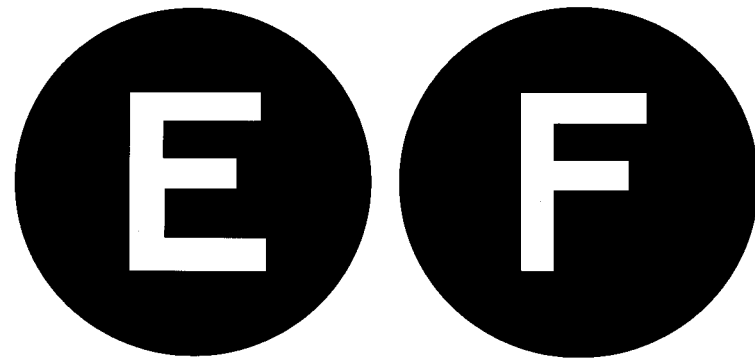
CYSTS



ULCERS



Weekends



Trains diverted.

E no trains running; take the **R** instead.
F detoured through 63rd St. Tunnel.

April 13 to May 7
10PM, Fri. to 5AM, Mon.

- There will be no E service at stations between Queens Plaza and the World Trade Center. R trains run all night and make all stops to Jamaica Center.
- F trains will detour between Roosevelt Ave. and 47th-50th Sts. stopping at the 21st St.-Queensbridge, Roosevelt Island, Lexington Ave.-63rd St., and 57th St.-6th Ave. stations.
- The 23rd St.-Ely Ave., Lexington Ave.-53rd St., and Fifth Ave. stations will be closed.
- There will be no transfers between the 6 and the E, F at Lexington Ave./51st St.
- There will be no transfers between the G and E, F at 23rd St.-Ely Ave./Court Sq.
- A shuttle bus will connect the Queens Plaza, 23rd St.-Ely Ave./Court Sq., and 21st St.-Queensbridge stations.
- For travel alternatives, pick up a take-one at your station or call (718) 330-1234.

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Rents from page 5; starts on page 1

ing; “RIOC and DHCR share the same commissioner,” he said. “The agencies are interlocked and their actions should be coordinated.” Instead, in this case, one part of the agency imposed higher fees and another part disallowed them, even though its job is to balance costs and revenue in setting rents.

Lucido said he was well aware that in many families, “even \$10 a month is tough to budget.” He said he was sympathetic to the needs of these residents, but at the same time he had to work within the State-approved budget.

Staffing in the buildings won’t be cut, he said, but other expenses will have to be curtailed. At Island House, the first casualty will again be the company’s perennial proposal to refurbish the swimming pool. Some maintenance work may have to be rescheduled. As Doryne Isley, RIHMC’s general manager, said, “Obviously, we’ll have to reshuffle the deck.”

Lucido said he had his eye on the other side of the ledger as well, and was trying to collect on utility bills from RIOC, which is housed in Westview, and from the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery, with quarters in Island House.

Businesses in the buildings were separately metered in October and now pay directly to ConEd, he said. But he asserted that RIOC owes the housing company \$100,000 for two-and-a-half years of utility services prior to its metering, and that the Day Nursery, a nonprofit organization, owes \$4,995.42 for electricity from Nov. 1, 2000, to Jan. 25, 2001.

Lucido said that these bills were “unfairly taxing” the residents and that RIOC and Day Nursery, for example, refused to recognize that “it’s in the tenants’ rents.”

Isley amplified this point, saying, “Given the current cost of electricity, it is certainly unfair for Island House to have the burden of subsidizing the Day Nursery for the benefit of the entire community.” A similar argument was made by the residents themselves, during rent hearings, when they opposed reopening the pool.

Patrick Siconolfi, who was DHCR’s director of finance before being posted to Roosevelt Island as RIOC’s chief financial officer – and who is widely credited with straightening out RIOC’s books following the contentious regime of former RIOC President Jerome Blue – has not responded to *The WIRE*’s requests for comment on the Public Safety or utility questions over a period of several weeks, despite repeated telephone calls and other requests for information. But Sara Seiden, the director of the Day Nursery, whose work with Island children dates to 1979, said she has been dueling with Lucido on the electricity matter.

Over 20 years, she said, the Island has always supported community-service organizations free of charge – both in terms of space and utilities – because of what they do to serve the whole Island. Under the housing company’s ground lease with RIOC, she said, it is mandated to provide day care. She said the day-care center, which now serves 65 children, many on a subsidized basis, deserves treatment equal to that of the senior or youth centers. She said she does not feel that the nursery should be treated “like a commercial space on Main Street.”

Seiden noted that the Roosevelt Island Residents Association at one time had considered the idea of an Island-wide community service fee, charged to everyone who lives here, which would fairly apportion the cost of all community activities, including day care.

“I would like to work with them to make sure that each building pays its fair share for day care and any other services,” she said. “What we use the money for is really subsidizing the cost of Roosevelt Island mixed-income families.”

Seiden’s comments were in line with the general tenor of remarks following the State’s rent order, which went out late last week.

The common denominator appeared to be a desire for improved communications. Thus, Isley said that in her dealings with RIOC on the public-safety issue, “We’re trying, in a gentlemanly – or a womanly – fashion, for lack of a better term, to resolve our issues and bring our points to the table and hope they listen to the arguments we’re putting forward.”

Lucido said: “We’re all in this together and to the extent that people are unhappy that we’re not spending money on some areas, and the money is not there to be spent, we’re at cross purposes.”

Leon Lowder, an accountant for the Westview Task Force, said the same principle applies to the company. There would have been a lot less suspicion, he said, if the owners had made an effort to educate the tenants about energy consumption. Where were the fliers urging people to cut energy costs by turning down the heat during the day? Why don’t the radiators in the hallways have knobs to turn them down? “People would respond,” he said, “to a rational approach.”

Comparison Shopper Rides Again and Saves!

If tax time is putting the squeeze on your budget, you may be able to gain some relief when you buy your groceries. Here’s how four stores, Gristede’s on Roosevelt Island, Trade Fair on 36th Avenue in Long Island City, Associated on Broadway in Astoria, and Food Emporium in Bridgemarket on 60th and 1st Avenue, fared in a recent price comparison. Prices were checked during a four-day period in March. Items are listed by size and brand, and the lowest price for each item is highlighted.

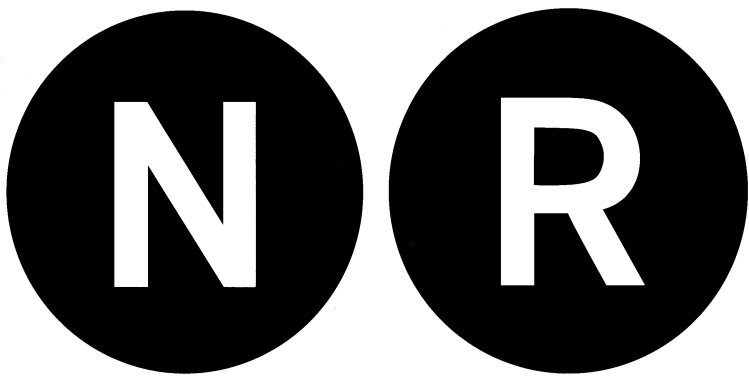
You will also find a handy **clip&save** list of phone numbers, hours, and services each store provides.



Comparison Shopper – Store Info

Information current as of April 2001

Weekends



Trains diverted.

N trains will not run between Queensboro Plaza and Times Square-42nd St.

12:01 AM, Sat. to 5 AM, Mon.

R will detour through the 63rd St. Tunnel.

5 AM to midnight, Sat. and Sun.

March 31 to April 2 and April 7 to April 9

- 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., Queens, and also between 57th St.-7th Ave., Manhattan, 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.

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Margery Rubin

Seasons

Island's Trees About to Flower

by Maurice Bleifeld

After the long winter, the Roosevelt Island landscape is finally brightening up with clusters of cheerful white flowers that burst into bloom at the beginning of April. They exploded into view on Callery Pear trees even before the leaves had a chance to unfurl.

You'll find Callery Pear trees along the length of Main Street between Manhattan Park and Blackwell House. There is a group of three of them across from the Post Office. Below the bridge ramp, there's a cluster of five attractive ones dominating the area. And continuing along Main Street, there's another opposite PS/IS 217, showing off in a line of honey locust trees.

You'll see more Callery Pear trees in front of the Youth Center at the south end of Eastwood and at the curb of Blackwell House. Across the street, there's one at the southern curb of Rivercross, and another in the Plaza behind Good Shepherd Chapel. And when you venture up to Lighthouse Park, you'll see four more, planted to replace weeping willow trees that were toppled by a storm some years ago.

You may wonder about this display of a tree you may never have heard of before now, but Callery Pears are recommended as street trees by the Department of Parks as hardy survivors capable of thriving under city conditions. Their popularity has grown rapidly over the last 25 years.

The Callery Pear (*Pyrus Calleryana*) is now one of the more commonly-planted trees in large eastern cities. The Roosevelt Island Tree Board first introduced it on the Island a few years ago as a way of diversifying the local tree population.

An additional treat is in store in front of Goldwater Memorial Hospital at Cherry Tree Walk, where massed ranks of Japanese Flowering Cherry Trees are about to bloom. More can be seen the length of Eastwood on the river, and in a few other places on the Island.



TREE CITY USA.

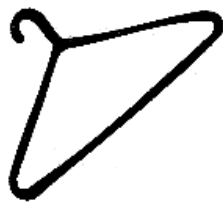


Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

Cherry tree blossoms will soon overhang Cherry Tree Walk on the Island's west shore at Goldwater Hospital and here, on the east seawall along the length of Eastwood.

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Celebrate Good Friday with Music and Prayer

Good Friday, April 13, 1:00 p.m.

Franz Joseph Haydn

Seven Last Words of Christ

(string quartet version)

The Bordeaux String Quartet

Chapel of the Good Shepherd

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Artists provided by River Music

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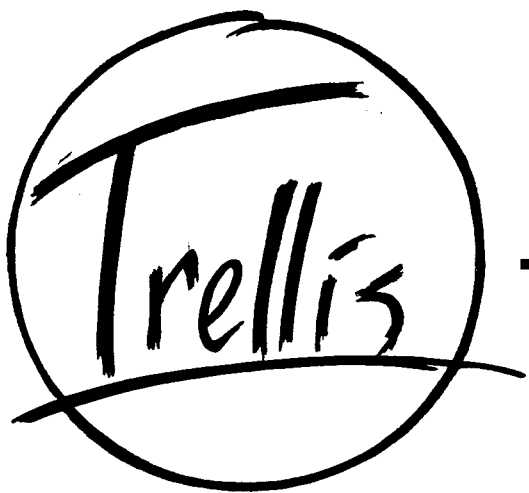
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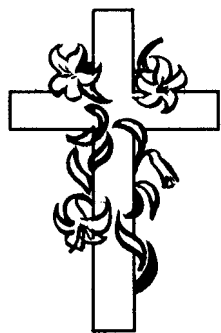
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EASTER

EASTER SCHEDULE at ST. FRANCES CABRINI PARISH

Palm Sunday

Saturday, April 7th, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 8th, 8:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

Stations

Wednesday, April 11th, 7:00 p.m.

Holy Thursday

Thursday, April 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday

Friday, April 13th, 3:00 p.m.

Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 14th, 8:00 p.m.

Easter

Sunday, April 15th, 8:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

The Catholic Parish of St. Frances X. Cabrini

welcomes the following persons:

Jessica Sade Blackman

Jae Nathanyl Parker

Kelsey Taylor Parker

who will receive all the sacraments of initiation

Irene Jeter Bryant

Adaeze Ofonagoro

who will be received into the Church

Stephanie Carrol-Descoteaux

Marcie Cole

who will be confirmed

Easter Vigil

April 14, 8:00 p.m.

in Good Shepherd Chapel

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