

The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with **Website NYC10044** www.nyc10044.com



Surrounded by Youth Program clientele, City Council Speaker Peter Vallone (jacket over shoulder) and Councilmember Gifford Miller attended Roosevelt Island Day to announce a grant to the Youth Program.

City Council Bans Ads on Tram Cabins, Raising Pleas of Need from RIOC Board

by Robert Laux-Bachand

Here in the advertising capital of the world, where buses are shrink-wrapped, taxis tout *The Lion King* and subway posters invite riders to eat peanuts, drink spiced rum and commune with gorillas, the Roosevelt Island Tramway stands virtually alone in its mass-transit non-commercialism.

It's not that the Tram's

money-making potential has been overlooked. The nation's only commuter tramway is a destination in itself, and the station on Second Avenue is listed in the *AIA Guide to New York City* as a "spectacular exercise in transit architecture."

But attempts by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to cash in on the Tramway's visibility have run into opposition from the City Council, which controls the franchise for Tram operations. On May 23, the Council approved a resolution that tightened the Tram's advertising ban to include the "interior portions of the stations and the Tramway" and the "exterior of the Tramway cars" and any related structures. Previously, the ban covered, basically, only the exterior of the stations on both sides of the East River.

RIOC wanted to sell advertising to help make up for its large losses in running the Tram. It reported a deficit of \$662,000 for the year ending March 31, 2000, but that figure, reflecting only direct expenses, cannot serve as a guide to

the current situation, according to RIOC's chief financial officer, Patrick Siconolfi. He is projecting a loss of \$1.7 million in the 2001 fiscal year, an amount that includes depreciation and capital costs, as

See **Tramway**, page 10

Democratic Election of the RIOC Board Faces Test as Legislative Season Wanes

by Erik Kriss

Albany Correspondent, *Syracuse Herald-Journal*
Special to **The WIRE**

Albany, June 28. The State Legislature ended its official 2001 session this week with no advancement in the movement for self-governance on Roosevelt Island.

The two lawmakers who represent the Island remained at loggerheads, with no agreement on a bill but plenty of antagonistic rhetoric.

There may be a silver lining, though, as Governor George Pataki has promised a personal meeting on the issue with State Senator Olga Mendez (D-Manhattan).

Two previous Pataki-Mendez meetings had to be cancelled recently because of last-minute commitments by the governor.

But Pataki indicated he's committed to meet with Mendez to discuss Roosevelt Island and other issues at her request, according to Michael McKeon, Pataki's director of communications and one of his top aides.

And Mendez, who was unavailable for comment this week because of the death of her mother-in-law, said in a letter to Island residents she fully expects to meet with Pataki and top administration officials on Island self-governance in the near future.

Although residents generally support a bill sponsored by Assemblymember Alexander "Pete" Grannis (D-Manhattan), they're acutely aware it won't go anywhere without compromises with Mendez, Pataki and the State Senate's Republican majority, which controls legislation in the house.

"We're concerned the bill be passed this year, be-

See **Albany**, page 10

Briefly...

- **New York National Bank** is expanding its Island banking hours to a full five days a week, dropping its earlier plan for about two or three days, according to an advertisement in this issue (page 16). NYNB representatives are now at the Chase branch during Chase's reduced hours, encouraging Island depositors to move their accounts to NYNB. A chart comparing the rates and services of NYNB, Chase, and Montauk Credit Union appears on page 11.

- **Money to restore Blackwell House** was refused in a recent round of State grants. RIOC had planned on the funds to rescue the decaying landmark, and now must search for other sources.

- The **Historical Society** plans a cruise, on the historic schooner *Pioneer*, around Roosevelt Island on Sunday, July 8, led by Society President Judith Berdy. See **ComingUp**, page 3.

- **Subway** posters tell riders the current round of changes in service are too complicated to put on a poster. You'll find a Clip&Save service chart on page 10 and, while there are inaccuracies in the long-term information in the MTA's "Manhattan Bridge" service brochure available at subway stations, MTA promises a brochure specific to the 63rd Street Tunnel in the Fall.

- **Kofi Annan**, once a Roosevelt Islander, has been nominated for a second term as Secretary General of the United Nations, and was expected to be confirmed by the General Assembly. The Ghanaian's last residence, before moving to official quarters in 1997, was Island House.

Islanders

One Woman, Two Lives, Two Names, and 15 Books

by Francine Lange

On Sunday afternoons when, as a young girl, Gwendolyn Johnson-Acsádi climbed into a backyard tree at her Washington, D.C., home, she always carried a book to read. There, shaded by the tree's leaves, she'd let the stories transport her into other worlds, other lives, other histories. Only her mother's voice, calling "Gwendolyn, Gwendolyn," could carry her back to the present. Back then, she wasn't dreaming of becoming a highly-respected demographer at the United Nations or a best-selling novelist. But the printed words were already etching their power onto her young mind and, over the years, providing a foundation for what she does today.

These days, Johnson-Acsádi works in two worlds and, appropriately enough, uses two names. Her demographic clients know her as Gwendolyn Johnson-Acsádi. To the readers of her award-winning romance novels, she is Gwynne Forster. The connection between the two seemingly-unrelated professions is a story in itself. In college, she was attracted to jour-

nalism and took sociology courses to prepare. But she fell in love with demography and population studies and got a masters degree in sociology from Howard University and another in economics/demography from The American University in Washington. From school, she went to work for the United Nations and, while traveling abroad on that organization's behalf, she met her future husband, Dr. George Acsádi, another demographer.

Johnson-Acsádi's work took her to many countries – by her own count she has visited 63 – representing the UN Secretary General, lecturing, conducting workshops and delivering research at conferences worldwide. As chief of the Fertility Studies Section of the Population Division, she was responsible for research involving fertility levels and conditions around the world.

It was during one of her many trips that another passion emerged. Johnson-Acsádi always carried books she would read, then discard when she got to her destination. But on one flight she

See **Forster**, page 14



The Editorial Page



The Tramway Puzzle...
Its Obvious Solution

At the last RIOC meeting, that pesky matter of the Tramway’s operating deficit came up once again. This time, there was a bit of a twist, because at least one Board member – our good friend Leo Kayser – was miffed that the Democrats on the City Council had banned advertising on and in the Tram cabins.

Kayser made it clear that he feels RIOC needs a free hand with ads. The reasoning is that the advertising would produce revenue that might go toward covering that operating deficit – and perhaps even some of the Tramway’s capital needs anticipated in the near future.

City Councilmember Gifford Miller, on the other hand, seems to have nothing against putting ads on the cabins – perhaps “shrink-wrapping” them like buses – but he wants to link permission for such advertising to a specific benefit for his Island constituents: MetroCard transfers and discounts.

RIOC counters that allowing free transfers to the Tramway, combined with the overhead associated with the MetroCard, would only make the system’s deficit worse.

Thus, a stalemate.
The WIRE applauds Gifford Miller’s drive to integrate the Tramway into the MetroCard system. We also applaud Leo Kayser’s attention to the bottom line.

But we cannot endorse the idea of advertising plastered all over the Tram cabins. We might as well hang a sandwich-board on Lady Liberty. The Tramway is a symbol – a symbol not just of Roosevelt Island, but of New York City. To desecrate it with advertising would – and should – make us a world-wide esthetic laughingstock.

Instead, the State of New York should subsidize the Tramway as it subsidizes every other mass transit system in the State. The Tramway, in fact, already covers a higher percentage of its per-passenger operating costs than virtually any other mass transit system in the country.

Our tax dollars subsidize all the others. Tax dollars should subsidize the Tramway. It’s an obvious solution.

Beyond that, there are other creative ways to use the Tramway as a revenue-producer: Souvenirs, passage sold in combination with other tourist attractions, even discreet institutional sponsorship.

But advertising on the cabins? Never. And if you agree, let Councilmember Gifford Miller know your feelings (535-5554 or fax 535-6098). His drive for the MetroCard is good, but he shouldn’t have to trade ads on the cabins to get it.

DL

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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
- Proofreaders – Linda Heimer, Frances Salten
- Chief Photographer – Margery Rubin
- Photographers – Vicki Feinmel, Douglas P. Cleary
- Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
- Circulation Managers – George Rubin, Sherie Helstien
- Founding Publisher – Jack Resnick
- Editor Emeritus – Jim Bowser

Judi Arond, Rafael Asenjo, Sonia Asenjo, David Bauer, Judy Berdy, Steve Bessenof, Virginia Boykin, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Melanie Castine, Lynn Chambers, Viviane Coderrens, Malcolm Cohen, Shirley Cruz, Harold Davis, Valerie Davis, Morty Dinerstein, Rebecca Dougherty, 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, Mike McEvoy, Morgan McEvoy, Merle McLean, Dorene McQueen, Terry Moses, Bruce Munsch, Louise Munsch, Sandra Narine, Juan Nieves, Nancy Olivera, Gabrielle Parnes, Elizabeth Powell, Gladys Rasheed, Paul Russo, Ron Schuppert, Bernie Schwartz, Beryl Seaforth, Marilyn Sherman, Harry Small, Stuart Solway, Joyce Speziale, Pearl Thomas, David Tsireshkin, Elena Vrinceanu, Rece Walford, Maggie Warner, Jim Whalen, Dolores Williams, Robin Williams, Nina Winteringham, Rose Woods – and members of the Island Girls Project

Letters

To the Editor:

I have been a reverse commuter from Roosevelt Island for a few years now and observer of traffic management by the Public Safety Department. I believe a more proactive traffic enforcement program would be beneficial.

It seems to me that several of the policies employed by Public Safety produce results that are diametrically opposite of those intended, including the following:

Every weekday morning I walk to the garage. For the past few years a member of the Public Safety Department has been sitting in a vehicle observing whether drivers coming down the ramp from the bridge come to a full stop and ticketing some (not all) of those that do not.

During the peak arrival hours for hospital employees, between 7:30 and 8:00, the line of cars waiting to stop at times backs up to the top of the ramp and sometimes to the bridge itself.

My informal eyeball survey indicates that only ten percent of cars do, in fact, need to stop to permit pedestrians to cross the street at the bottom of the ramp. Since *all* cars have come to a stop at that sign, many have been delayed and are rushing to get to their jobs. The unintended result is that after coming to a full stop drivers then do not stop at stop signs on Main Street, creating a traffic hazard.

A solution might be for the Public Safety Officers on duty to get out of their vehicles and direct traffic at the bottom of the ramp, only stopping cars when pedestrians are present. This proactive traffic management action would save driver’s time and increase obedience to traffic signs on Main Street.

The second issue has to do with the absence of any indication for drivers heading south on Main Street as to where they can turn around. Currently, drivers dropping off passengers must travel a total distance of over one mile to turn around at the Tram station.

I have seen many drivers, mostly taxi and limo drivers, stopped by officers when making illegal U-turns to get off the Island. A sign indicating that the U-turn area was ahead would improve adherence to the “no U-turn” signs.

A reinstatement of the turnaround near Blackwell House would be even more useful.

Don Eremin

To The Editor:

I was sorry to learn of the possibility of a lawsuit against Kaie Razaghi of the Trellis restaurant. Although I am just a newcomer with only two years on the Island, from what I have seen, Trellis has tried hard to be a good neighbor and fit into the community.

The restaurant industry is one of the most difficult and complex to succeed in. Beyond what is visible to the public are a maze of fire department, health, building and safety codes that must be met. Inventory is perishable, equipment breaks down, hours of operation are long, turning a profit is achieved by only one out of four. This industry is notorious for its high failure rate.

I write this letter only to point out that having a restaurant on Roosevelt Island is an asset which is enjoyed by many and could be either lost or turned into one that changes hands twice a year as each new owner fails to make a go of it. The reality of the modest economic climate here on the Island means that a huge powerhouse operation that could quickly respond to community suggestions that cost tens of thousand of dollars to implement cannot be supported here. If Mr. Razaghi was forced out of business – a real possibility – I would not assume that the next operator would be able to rise to and maintain the standards that the prospective plaintiff desires. Economic realities will always limit what can be achieved and maintained.

I hope that an agreement that takes those realities into consideration can be reached.

Jean Mizutani

To the Editor:

It was great to have ArtFrenzy extended to our Island. Congratulations and thanks are in order to all of those who made it happen, as well as to all the artists who participated in it.

I had to work that Saturday, and then had a friend coming from the West coast for a one-day visit that Sunday, on her way back to Europe. Too many things to do, too little time, so we only got to see the exhibit in PS217.

Not only the works of art were most interesting, but also the space was perfect. That is a gorgeous building. It invites one in. All the light and the beautiful view of the river and trees make it a delightful place to be in. It occurred to us that it is a perfect space for an art gallery!

We had the opportunity to chat with Ms. Jacoby as well as with Ms. Barile-Knox. The work of Ms. Jacoby’s in the window at Westview had already started a discussion between my friend and me about sitting for meals with friends and family. Ms. Barile-Knox’s unique way of telling a story through her quilts fueled the human relations and the need for a constant contact with art theme further.

My friend and I went on to other parts of the city after that. But we both left convinced that one should try to make the space at PS217 open to art and to the public when it is not being used for classes, on a regular basis.

Would that be feasible at all? I know I am not the only one to hope so.

Rita DeCassia

To the Editor:

One recent sunny and beautiful early evening in Blackwell Park, children were playing peacefully and I was watching them with a cell phone in my hand, talking with my wife. Suddenly, I was hit in the back of my neck, near my right ear, by a stone fired from a slingshot. Turning, I saw two kids with the weapons, which can be deadly.

I started to run after them, but dropped my cell phone, and it smashed. One of the kids was on the run. The other was hiding behind a tree, saying, “I didn’t do that. I didn’t do that.”

I grabbed the boy’s arm, still holding the slingshot, and took him to a Public Safety Officer who was on the Main Street sidewalk. The officer told me, in so many words, “you can’t touch him because he’s a minor.” The Officer said, “If someone called us about a man grabbing a kid by his arm and taking him somewhere, you would be arrested, and if the father of the kid saw you grabbing his arm, you might be beaten by the father.”

What would you do when a kid who could be the one who shot you from behind with a deadly weapon is there in front of you saying, “I’m not the one who hit you”?

The officer also said a victim should not try to catch perpetrators, because they might be carrying a knife and there could be injuries. I guess he was speaking the truth. But he also mentioned how busy Public Safety is, said, “We only have about four Officers each shift, and we are working overtime without getting paid for overtime.”

We need to do something about this, as soon as possible, for the safety of our community. Please write letters to RIOC President Robert Ryan (591 Main Street).

I called 911 to file a police report while the Public Safety Officer was searching for the kid who ran away, still carrying his slingshot, but he couldn’t be found. The Officer took the other boy and me to the PSD Youth Officer. The Officer told me the Youth Officer knows the boy, said I shouldn’t worry and should let Public Safety do its job. He let the boy go because he is a minor.

The next day, I found my neck felt wrong and visited the Emergency Room at New York Hospital.

This could have been more serious. Had I been hit in the eye, I could have lost my sight. The youngsters involved are still out there, still with their slingshots. And they know they cannot be touched because they are minors.

Hisato Takahashi

To the Editor:

Several weeks ago my cousin and I were sitting on a bench in the rock garden behind 546 when my cousin had a seizure. There wasn’t a soul around so I called as loudly as I could for help. After a while a gentleman in a nearby building responded, asked where we were and what was wrong. He called 911. We couldn’t see one another through the tree branches. After that a young woman came down the 536 ramp asking if she could help. She went to Public Safety.

I want to thank that gentleman for his help. All turned out well.

Neighbors are so important. Bless them.

Name Withheld by Request

Letters deadline for
August 4 issue: July 30

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

Mon.-Fri. throughout July, 3:30 p.m., **Reading Aloud** for children 2-6, Library.

Fri., July 6, 10:30 a.m., **Computer Class** at the Library. *Introduction LEO, NYPL's electronic catalog.* Advance registration required. Call **308-6423**.

Sun., July 8, 1:00 p.m., **South Street Seaport Museum Cruise Around Roosevelt Island** aboard the 1885 schooner Pioneer, narrated by Roosevelt Island Historical Society President Judith Berdy. \$30 (\$25 for RIHS members). Call **748-8600** for *Healing Waters* reservations.

Wed., July 11, 10:30 a.m., **Summer Reading Activity** for ages 3-6, Library. Pre-registration at the Library required.

Wed., July 11, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC's Summer Sounds on the River** music series. *Morning Star* (Irish group), on the Esplanade opposite the subway. Free.

Thur., July 12, 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.)

Fri., July 13, 10:30 a.m., **Songs from the Old School**, a children's concert with original and traditional songs (all ages), presented by Ivan Ulz, Library.

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*.

Tue., July 17, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion Group**, *Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson, Library. Advance registration required (limit of 20 participants); book available at Library.

Wed., July 18, 10:30 a.m., **Summer Reading Activity** for ages 6-12, Library. Pre-registration required.

Wed., July 18, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC's Summer Sounds on the River** music series. *The Salt Brothers* (jazz), on the Esplanade opposite the subway. Free.

Fri., July 20, 10:30 a.m., **Toddler Program** for ages 2-3, Library. Pre-registration required.

Tue., July 24, 10:00 a.m., **Rivercross Maintenance Increase Hearing**, DHCR offices, Room 510, 25 Beaver Street. (Deadline for comments, July 20.)

Tue., July 24, 11:00 a.m., **Kids Project Summer Camp – Come As You Are**, a disability-awareness program for children of all ages, presented by The Kids Project, Library.

Wed., July 25, 10:30 a.m., **Summer Reading Activity** for ages 3-6, Library. Pre-registration required.

Wed., July 25, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC's Summer Sounds on the River** music series. *Cocktail Angst* (21st Century cabaret). Free.

Fri., July 27, 10:30 a.m., **Puppet Show, Hansel and Gretel** for ages 4-10, Library.

Sat., August 4, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., July 27; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., July 30; materials due Thur., August 2. **Future issues:** Aug. 25, Sept. 8, Sept. 22, Oct 6, Oct. 20, Nov. 3, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, Dec. 15, then every two weeks starting early in January, 2002. **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.

Tue., Aug. 21, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion Group**, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* by Kate Atkinson, Library. Advance registration required (limit of 20 participants); book available at Library.

Thur., Sept. 13, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC Board of Directors meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Oct. 8-14, week-long celebration of **New York History Festival and Roosevelt Island Historical Association's 25th Anniversary**. Events to be announced.

Thur., Oct. 11, 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.)

Thur., Nov. 8, 6:00 p.m., **RIOC Board of Directors meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Senior Center

Tuesday
1:00, **Games** (RISA)
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well** (stretch)
10:00, **English as 2nd Lang.**
10:30, **Oriental Calligraphy**
(7/11, 7/25, 8/1, 8/15, 8/29)
Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi** (7/5, 7/12, 7/19)
10:30, **VNS Blood Pressure**
(7/5, 7/19, 8/2, 8/16, 8/30)
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance Class**
Friday
10:00, **Yoga Stretch** (exc. 7/20)
7:30, **Lotto** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo**

Special Events
Sat., June 30, 1:00, **Fourth of July Party**
Thur., July 5, 11:30, **Shopping Trip to Queens**
Mon., July 9, 11-12:30, **MetroCard Bus**
Wed., July 18, **RISA Atlantic City trip**
Sun., July 29, matinee, **42nd Street** (Broadway show)

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

About subscriptions: *The Main Street WIRE*, which is delivered free to every residential door on Roosevelt Island, 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 20-24 issues, published fortnightly September-May, and less often June-August) 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. Most of each edition also appears, with many achived back issues, on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com.

Michele Claudio Marchand

Michele Claudio Marchand, daughter of long-time residents of Roosevelt Island, Jim and Gloria Baehler, died June 10, 2001, after a losing battle with sarcoma, a rare form of cancer.

Michele was born in New York City on July 28, 1949, to first-generation Americans, Gloria Bertoli de Claudio and Michaelangelo Claudio.

Michele worked her way through college, and graduated from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, earning a B.A. in anthropology. She later studied archeology because of her interest in her Peruvian roots and Inca ancestors.

Subsequently, Michele studied and earned certification as an Herbalist. She was always a healer, supplying members of her family with healing potions and advice on healing teas and herbs.



As a child, Michele was known for her good humor and optimism. Teachers in grade school would send any unhappy or sick child to Michele and she would uplift their spirits with her own good cheer. She cured others, and had never been sick a day in her life until last January, when she was struck, as if by lightning, with this rare, incurable cancer. There will be a "Celebration of Michele's Life" today (June 30), in Sonoma, California, where she spent many happy years of her married life.

Michele is survived by her older sister, Madelaine Claudio Schiering, her husband, Roger Marchand, and her mother, Gloria Claudio Baehler.

Gloria N. Baehler

Dear Neighbors:

As a few of you may have heard, my daughter, Michele Claudio Marchand, died on June 10, 2001, from the merciless effect of a rare form of cancer, called sarcoma. She would have been 52 on July 28.

I, together with my husband, Jim, my daughter, Madelaine Schiering, and her husband, John, whom many of you also know, want to thank you all for your prayers, your cards, flowers, and your words of comfort and support through this most trying and painful period of our lives.

Michele, the younger of my two girls, was always cheerful and happy as a child. As an adult, she embraced life with gusto and relished every day with joy and optimism. I called her my very own medicine woman and "my little healer." She counseled me about healing herbs and tinctures and, in fact, did succeed in keeping me healthy.

I would like to relate to you what someone said about her, which I think wraps up Michele's personality and love of life in a very nice

See **Baehler**, page 12

Elizabeth Hart Kennedy

Island resident Elizabeth Hart Kennedy, former hotel administrator and the mother of Rivercross resident Carole Kennedy, died May 28 at age 92. She was born in Philadelphia at a time when children waited at the windows at dusk for the lamplighters to bring on the night.

Her lifespan covered nearly the entire century that rocked the world from World War I through moon walks, the computer revolution and everything between and beyond, and yet she took it all in stride and never looked back.

Her determination, high standards, wit, generosity and grace were lessons in living for those she loved and her *joie de vivre* and sparkle light up memories of her.

A memorial service was held at Frank E. Campbell's on June 2, and Elizabeth Hart Kennedy was interred at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on June 6.

I'm back. First Vice-President Byron Gaspard wrote the last RIRA column while Sherie and I were enmeshed in the throes of our move from Manhattan Park to Westview. I asked him to fill in for me while I was up to my eyeballs in cardboard boxes, and this he ably accomplished. Thanks, and a tip of the hat to Byron. I will ask other officers of the Residents Association to write future columns so as to offer varying points of view while satisfying my natural inclination for sloth.

This is *The WIRE's* Fourth of July issue, and once again, we Roosevelt Islanders find ourselves celebrating our nation's release from tyranny while continuing to fight against tyranny at home. As you know, Roosevelt Island is owned by New York City and leased for ninety-nine years to the State. We are governed by a public benefit corporation (RIOC) that treats us like the fourteenth of the original colonies. We are dependent upon a Board of Directors and President, all political appointees, who serve at the pleasure of the Governor, not an electorate. We have been denied effective local government while our City, State and Federal representatives are powerless against the all-pervasive hegemony of RIOC.

Over three sessions of the New York State Legislature, a group of Island citizens has labored to construct legislation that would enfranchise this community. We have tried to incorporate language that would satisfy the need for representative balance among the diverse forms of housing, and allay the fears of fiscal intemperance. Most crucially, we've tried to devise a bill that both the Assembly and Senate would pass and the Governor sign. We have been thwarted by political intransigence, internecine bickering by our elected representatives, and other issues that have little to do with serving a constituency of voters. The State Senate adjourned on June 20 without considering any version of our bill. We are told that they will be back in mid-July and that our cause is not lost for another season. However, for a bill to be presented, much less passed, requires a capacity to negotiate that seems sadly lacking in our Statehouse. I'm not ready to despair or give up, but I do wish our elected reps would remember for whom they work.

What makes this year's attempt to acquire community control of our future so important is the big blue fence surrounding our Blackwell Field, and all that it implies. While the State decides whether we are to be masters of our own fate, the developers of Roosevelt Island are lining up to build – what? Apparently, anything they want that enhances RIOC's bottom line. Yet, there is a General Development Plan (GDP), part of the Master Lease that defines the relationship between City and State. The GDP calls for a clear division between residential areas and open-space/park areas with clear guidelines for the affordable housing that is supposed to be this planned community's *raison d'être*. These needs, spelled out by Philip Johnson and John Burgee in 1969, are, if anything, scarcer and more in demand by New Yorkers today than they were thirty years ago.

RIOC's assertion that they can ignore or amend the GDP with impunity has never been tested until now. Three community groups, including the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, have argued in Court against constructing the first three residential buildings of Southtown on Blackwell Field, our Common and the planned buffer between Northtown and Southtown. The appeal hearing was less than three weeks ago, and by the time you read this, there may be a ruling. I thought the Island attorneys made our case well, but I'm neither a lawyer nor one of the five Appellate judges, and your guess is as good as mine. Much rests with this verdict. May RIOC build residential housing surrounding the Octagon landmark? May two hotel towers be built on Southpoint Park if RIOC says it's appropriate? Should an eldercare facility be sited virtually under the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge? Anything is possible if the GDP becomes an amorphous pawn in the politically-charged, big-money world of Roosevelt Island development.

The only advocates for restraint, for balance and for community values are the residents of Roosevelt Island. Unless and until we, the residents, are empowered as a new RIOC to negotiate with developers, we will be barred from the table. We must be free to hire a trained, experienced, competent, responsive leader for RIOC, divorced from the colonial politics that currently complicate our lives. Without that freedom, we will continue to find ourselves, hat in hand, begging for a level of government that other communities take for granted and yearning for the stewardship of our Island infrastructure that other towns and villages of our size simply demand.

Happy summer – and Happy Independence Day.

The RIRA Column



Matthew Katz
Residents Association President

Become a Foster Parent



Sheltering Arms

Open Your Arms to Help A Child
Sheltering Arms Children Service
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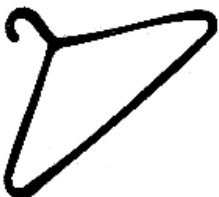
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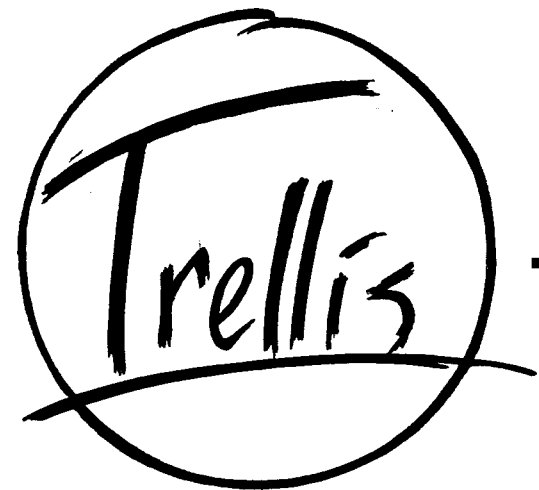
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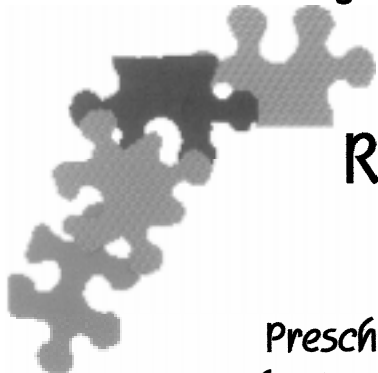
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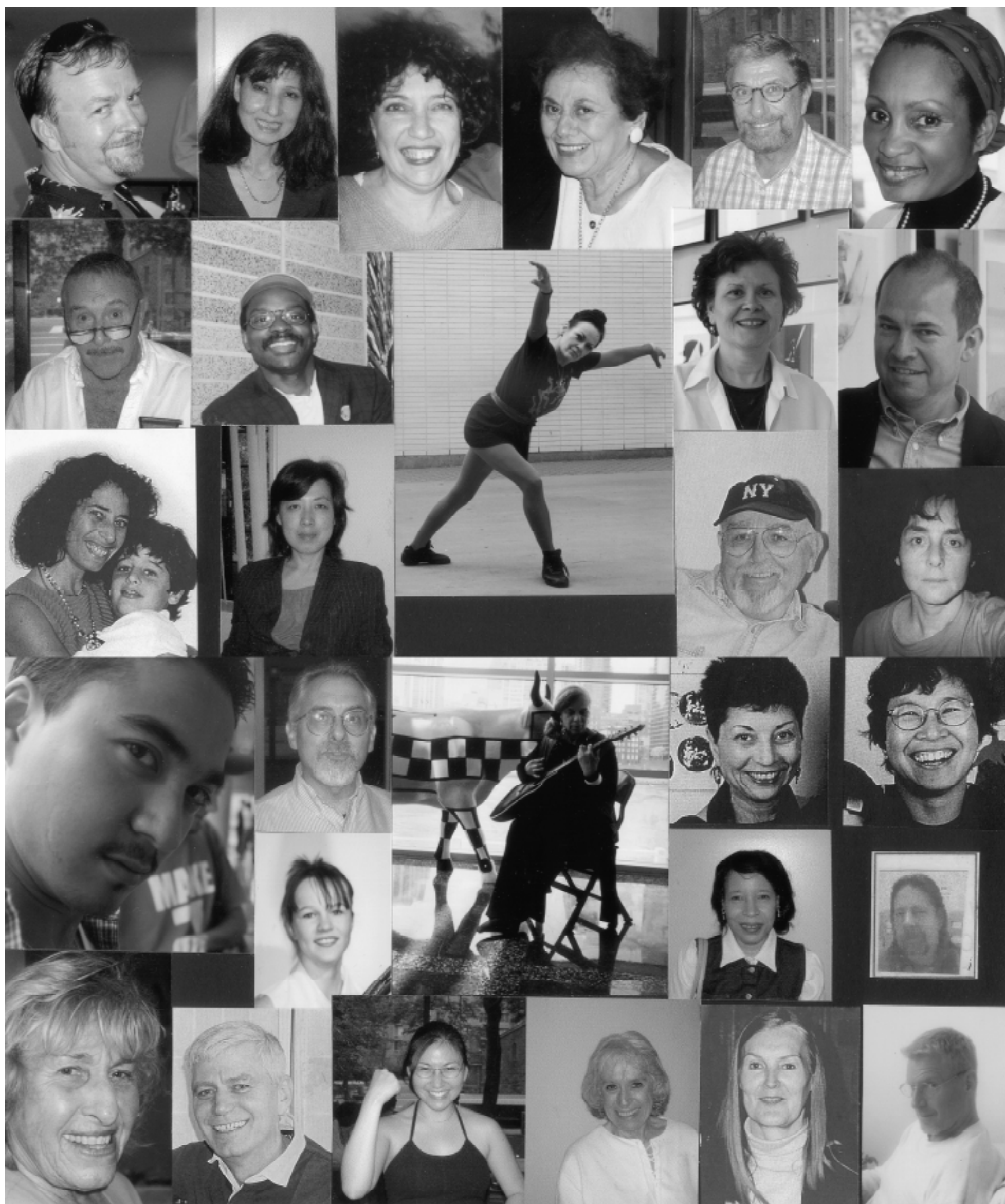


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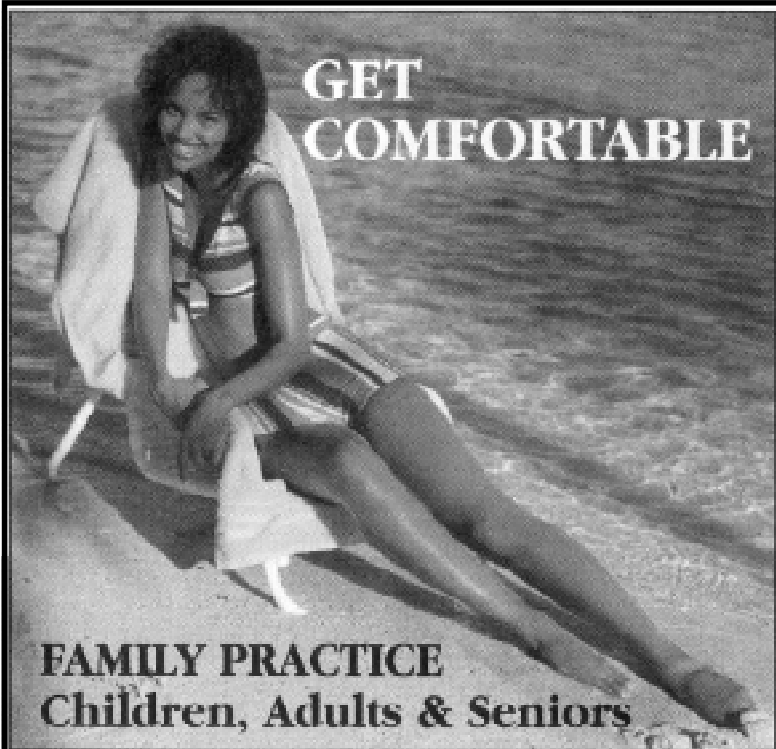
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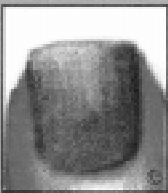
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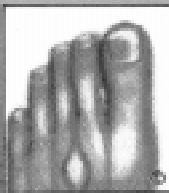
BUNIONS



WARTS



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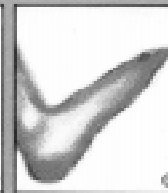
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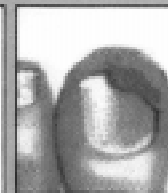
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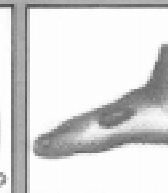
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The Island Has a Past of Political Intrigue, Human Misery, Hope...

Roosevelt Island's history has an ample measure of political corruption, star power, and civic do-gooding gone wrong. It is chronicled on *Website NYC10044* www.nyc10044.com. Materials here come largely from the collection of the late Rev. Oliver Chapin, who served as the Island's unofficial historian over a period of three decades, with additional materials from resident Tim Johns, and the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, whose president, Judith Berdy, is an avid collector of all things Roosevelt Island.

From post-Revolutionary times to today, this Island has been known as Blackwell's Island, Welfare Island (1921 on), and Roosevelt Island (1970s on).

Mae West's Own Story of Her Ten Days on Welfare Island

The Nicest Things She Saw There Were a Pair of White Cotton Stockings, but the Books She Saw Were Pretty Bad.

Special Dispatch to The Sun.

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Jan. 26.—The blonde and billowy Mae West, a Brooklyn girl who stormed the heights and the coffers of Hollywood with her easy stride and a naughty gleam in both her violet eyes, is reading, with more interest than anybody else in filmland, the sensational stories about Welfare Island, the New York prison center, where she once lingered in durance much viler than the gangsters of her home town had to suffer there.

ONCE ON THE ISLAND



Miss West, with the famous figure clad in a black velvet gown and those same bright eyes gleaming over a marten fur, has been gallivanting about lately from the court room in Los Angeles, where she looks balefully on certain men accused of stealing her jewels, and thence to the Paramount lot, where she is very busy making her new picture. She hasn't much time to read the stories in the press from the prison island, but she's perfectly sure that in her days there—ten of them back in 1927—there were no such luxuries as the mob on the island managed to furnish for themselves.

"Although everybody on the island was nice to me—very nice," Miss West said, in describing her stay on Welfare, "and from the very beginning."

When she started for the island, she said, she was led into a sort of waiting room and turned over to a colored woman. Mae didn't mind that at all.

"She was a very intelligent woman, with a gold badge," said Mae. Shortly five other women were

Photograph by Jacob A. Riis; The Jacob A. Riis Collection, Museum of the City of New York



Mae West wasn't required to quarry stone while a guest in the prison on Welfare Island. Stories have it that the warden drove her around the Island on afternoon outings during her time here. But most of the Island's early structures were built of stone quarried on the Island by prisoners. In the photo above, they're apparently being allowed a break.

The Island's prison was south of the Queensboro Bridge, the vantage point of the photo at right. Prisoners can be seen in the yard, with a younger New York City in the background. City Hospital stretches across the Island just south of the prison, but north of the site of this week's Fourth of July Fireworks viewing.



“NO LEGAL EVIDENCE HAS BEEN UNCOVERED.” – DISTRICT ATTORNEY DODGE

In an editorial cartoon by Jerry Doyle from the 1930s, Father Knickerbocker, as the symbol of New York City, lifts a dripping garbage-can lid, labeled “Tammany Politics,” off a Welfare Island Prison stinking of “racketeer control,” “moral filth,” “favoritism,” and “abuses,” while District Attorney William C. Dodge is seen as viewing all this through the wrong end of a telescope and is quoted as saying, “No legal evidence has been uncovered.”

Courtesy Underwood Photo Archives, Ltd., San Francisco



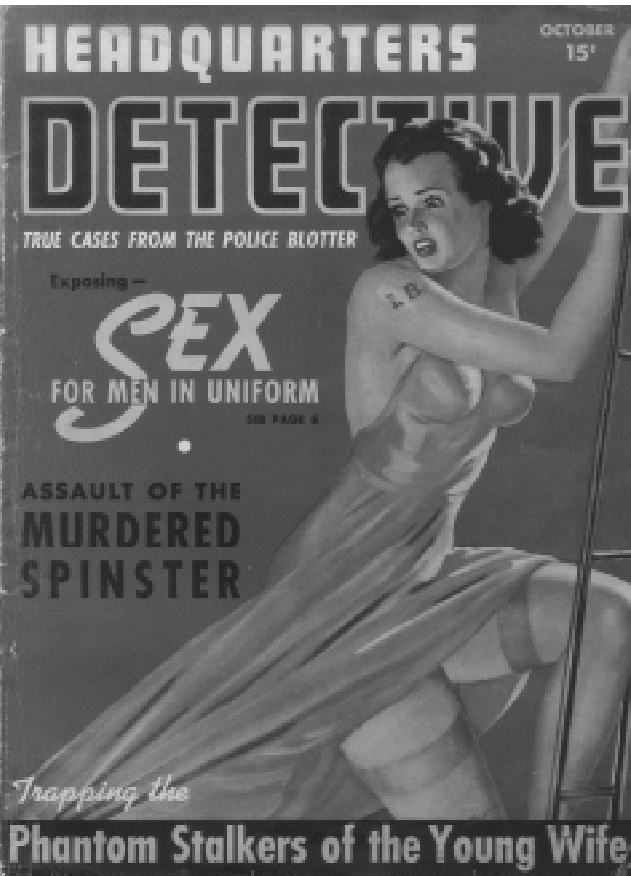
A 1934 raid on the Blackwell's Island Penitentiary produced a haul of weapons that inmates had acquired by smuggling or hand-crafting. The raid, by Commissioner of Corrections Austin H. McCormick under Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, was fodder for sensational press for some time to come (see 1943 magazine story, next page)



Courtesy Underwood Photo Archives, Ltd., San Francisco

In One Writer’s Prose, It Was “a Scavenger Shark”

The WIRE can't vouch for the accuracy of this October, 1943, account of Welfare Island prison life as published in *Headquarters Detective* magazine. The publication’s cover seems to suggest the nature of the intended audience, and the first three paragraphs – worth reading for their literary value even if you skip the rest of the piece – suggest the kind of prose that audience sought. An effort to track down the author named in the byline proved that he was one of the deans of true-crime magazine articles.



The Island's history isn't all prisons. It has been the home of hospitals, including an asylum for the insane, a home for unwed mothers-to-be, and, in their time, almshouses for men and women. The Men's Almshouse below was near the now-landmarked Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

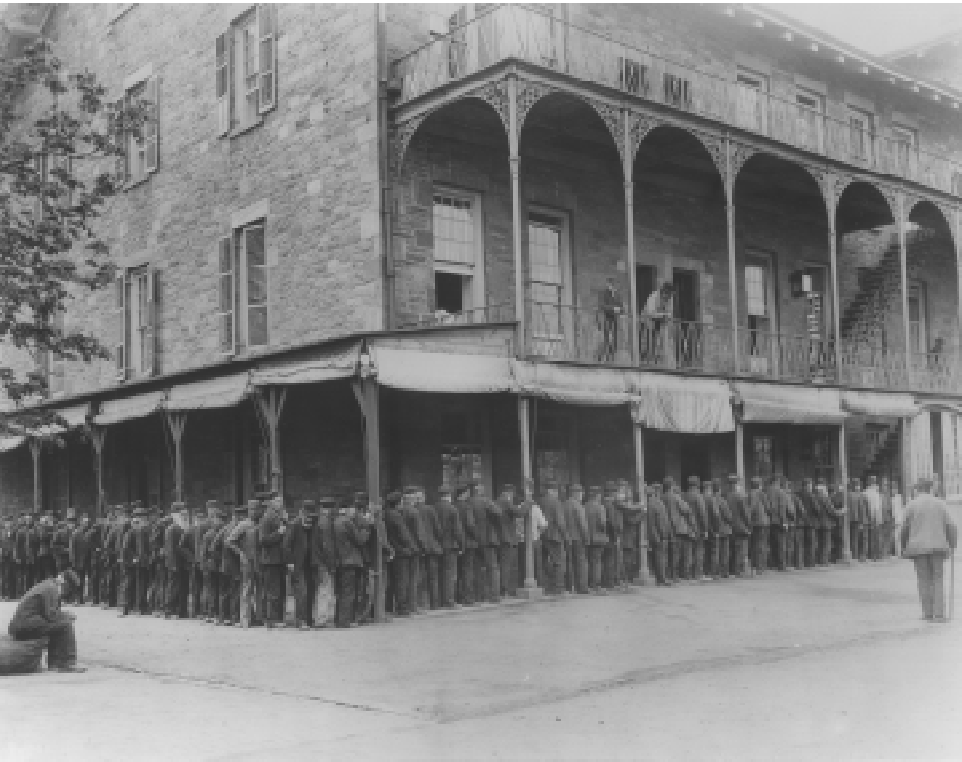


Photo by Byron; The Byron Collection, Museum of the City of New York



HELL IN MID-CHANNEL

By Seymour J. Ettman

When the moon comes up over the East River, the tide races out to the sea. The water moves fast and the current is tricky, and river-boats watch for the shoals.

The jagged skyline of New York on one side and the smaller rises of Long Island on the other, are the gaping jaws of a Metropolitan monster vomiting sewage into the bay. And in the middle, cleaving the rushing river with its fin, Welfare Island is a scavenger shark feeding on the festering stream of filth and pain and heartbreak that the city spews out of the bottomless depths of its spleen.

For a hundred and thirteen years, Welfare Island has been a strip of Hell in mid-channel. Now, with the harpoon barb of the Queensboro Bridge sunk into its back, and with a vigilant Department of Correction on its tail, the shark has tamed down. But still it feeds on dirt and sorrow and human garbage from the sidewalks of New York.

Years ago, the shark used to be known as Blackwell's Island. Squalid buildings sprawled along its length, housing the short-term Prison, City Hospital, the Reformatory, City Home, the Workhouses. It was heart-break house, the lower depth, the miserable sewer into which New York dumped its pitiful sweepings.

The years have brought some change. The Penitentiary is up on Riker's Island now. The Reformatory is down on Hart's. But Welfare Island still remains the slag-hole of the Melting Pot.

As late as 1935, the Welfare Penitentiary alone had a turnover of thirty thousand men a year. Petty thieves, vagrants, homo-sexuals, drunkards, rowdies; the *les misérables* of a metropolis, all poured in and out of the Welfare Pen at the

This 1943 article is available in its entirety on Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

rate of eighty-three a day. It was an unsanitary, vicious fire-trap where polyglot vices met and mingled and gave birth in kind.

The men who went there didn't have a chance. The prevalent penal psychology was to keep a prisoner in the lock-up until his sentence was served, and then out of the can and into the world and into some crime again.

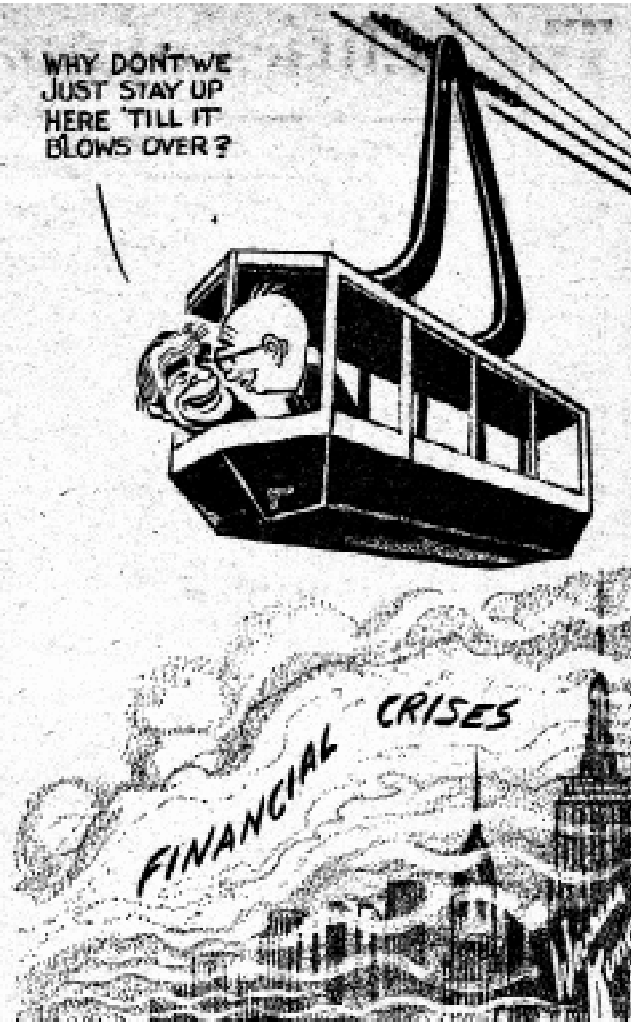
With thirty thousand prisoners coming in each year, the penal board had no time for individual cases. There were no such things as segregation, special attention, constructive rehabilitation. A prisoner was bathed and shaved and examined. His clothes were fumigated and locked up against the day when he would need them once again. And then he went into stir to mingle with all sorts and types of men, to teach and be taught, to make

some pretense at work or else get put on bread and water.

If an inmate was willing, he could learn a trade. Soap-making, machining, cobblery. But nobody really cared, and a man was a number that cost the State some twenty-cents a day for food.

It was hobo heaven in the old days. When the winter winds blew and the hand-outs were scarce, a vagrant could apply for thirty days. And he would be fed and clothed and bunked in a warm flop without even raising a hand.

The drunks used to come in to take the cure and to weep out their woes on the shoulders of friends...



Once Roosevelt Island acquired its Tramway (originally constructed as a temporary measure while waiting for subway service to begin, but now the Island's icon and a symbol of the City as the only commuter Tramway in North America), it was seen by a *Daily News* editorial cartoonist as a refuge for politicians from the City's fiscal crises of the 1970s.

Scenes from the Island’s Family Album: *The Prom*



Tramway from page 1

well as higher costs for insurance and electricity. Operating revenues, which amounted to about \$1.4 million last year, will be about the same, he said.

Rental income from the filming of *Spider-Man* and other movies will provide only a “nominal” amount of relief, said Robert Antonek, RIOC’s Vice President. He said the Tram was only one part of the “Spider-Man” deal, which used other Island property.

That leaves ad revenue as a major source of alternative revenue and, earlier this year,

RIOC President Robert Ryan told *The WIRE*: “We think there could be some great advertising made by shrink-wrapping the buckets” – the two Tramway cars. Had there been any clamor among the voters of Roosevelt Island and the Upper East Side for a total ban on advertising? Several participants in these discussions on both sides of the East River, including Councilmember Gifford Miller, who represents the Island, said no, although aesthetic considerations were certainly part of the decision.

Rather, the ban stems, in part, from Miller’s long-held insistence that any ad revenue be linked to the Tram’s integration into

the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s “one-fare” or MetroCard system. The basic Tram fare is \$1.50 and passengers can’t use their MetroCards on it, as they can for buses and subways. Miller said he would not support advertising unless he received some assurance that the revenue would benefit the community.

The total prohibition, he added, was the Council’s attempt to “force RIOC to come back to the table again to make it a part of the one-fare system.” He criticized RIOC for what he described as months of delays and indecision. The Council’s franchise authorization could be amended, he said, if RIOC came to terms.

The Council’s decision may have had some effect, because Ryan, who has repeatedly said that the MetroCard system is not feasible for the Tram, reported this week that he would meet with the MTA; the meeting is to be on July 10.

A final agreement could depend on the resolution of partisan differences. Miller, a Democrat who won election in the 5th District in January, 1996, has criticized the administration of Republican Governor George Pataki for eliminating Island subsidies. “The State of New York has walked away financially – and almost every other way – from the Island. That’s the main issue,” he told *The WIRE* earlier this year. Why is it, he asked, that a State-controlled operation is the only component of the City’s mass-transit that is not tied into the overall system?

But Pataki’s chief delegate on the RIOC board, Leo Kayser, said at the June 14 board

The Subway

Clip&Save	To about July 22	After 7/22	Except
Days	Q via 6Av to 34th/Bwy	S via 6Av to Bwy/Laf	Fourth of July S 34th/Bwy 5am-5am Thur
Nights	F via 6Av	F via 6Av	
Wkend	Usually F but sometimes R Check posters or www.mta.nyc.ny.us		
Service Plan brochure, available in most stations, is Manhattan Bridge (Long-term info in current brochure is incorrect)			

Albany from page 1

cause (further) development (on the Island) is all coming upon us now and we have no power to actually influence the process,” said Matthew Katz, president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. “Any conclusion that enfranchises this Island is one we can live with.”

But he, like others, remains skeptical. “June comes and session ends and we’re left holding the bag,” Katz said. “The last two years we were told pretty much the same thing and nothing happened, because the players don’t talk with one another.”

Even if the meeting comes off, there’s no evidence Pataki or Mendez is reaching out to Grannis. And Grannis said it isn’t up to him to reach out to either of them. “I’m not going to do Olga’s job for her,” he said. “She’s crowded about her relationship with the administration.” Mendez has endorsed Pataki, a Republican, and she traveled with him to the Puerto Rican island of Vieques this year to urge an end to U.S. Navy practice-bombing there.

Grannis is a major critic of the Governor, and his East Side Manhattan political club fielded a primary opponent against Mendez last year largely because of her decision to endorse Pataki. She won by about 2-1.

Grannis did say he tried to arrange a meeting on Island self-governance matters earlier this year and earlier this month with Pataki’s Commissioner of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Joseph Lynch.

“It never happened,” Grannis said. No representative of Lynch, who has now retired, could be reached for comment (related story, page 11).

“The bill I have is supported by the Island,” Grannis said. “Our bill includes most of the protections thinking people on the Island know need to be addressed.”

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) expects the Assembly to pass the Grannis bill sometime after members return to Albany next month, said spokesman Paul Webster.

Nonetheless, such a “one-house” bill doesn’t mean much, and even Grannis himself said the Assembly leadership is “not crazy about the precedent of turning over control of a public benefit corporation.”

In her letter, Mendez told residents she’s waiting to introduce legislation until all sides agree on a bill.

Grannis reiterated his doubts. “My guess is they truly don’t accept the concept of self-governance,” Grannis said of the Pataki administration and the Senate majority. “I haven’t gotten a clue anybody’s willing to do this.

“Olga hasn’t lifted a finger on this. I don’t think Olga can deliver this. I hope it doesn’t take” a disaster or crisis to spur movement, he said.

Last year, the Pataki administration and the Senate majority indicated they could support an alternative bill Mendez sponsored.

But Grannis said Mendez’s bill “didn’t protect employees, left residents exposed. The only way they could raise money is through fees and rents. Her bill had no protections for picking up the tab for the (Island’s) seawall.”

He noted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has estimated repairs to the seawall will cost \$6 million to \$7 million.

Grannis noted he has already helped Island residents through pork-barrel grants, known in Albany as “member items,” that are doled out to lawmakers for projects in their districts.

He got \$400,000 for rebuilding the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and \$150,000 for the Island’s Youth Center, among other things.

And the Assembly this week passed a Grannis-Mendez bill to prohibit development on open spaces in the Island’s master development plan. The Senate has not passed the bill.

Mendez’s supporters acknowledge she’s not in a rush but say she is serious about making progress on the issue of self-governance. They maintain that Secretary to the Governor Bradford Race Jr. and Senior Policy Advisor John Cahill, the two most influential members of Pataki’s inner circle, were supposed to be with him at the meeting with Mendez.

A source close to Mendez also said that when Pataki called to offer his condolences to the senator on the death of her mother-in-law this week, he – not she – requested a rescheduling of the meeting. The source also said there’s an understanding that a follow-up meeting would include Island residents.

Katz said residents consider the meetings key because they expect to have an audience with the Governor himself for the first time.

Pataki was unavailable for comment and McKeon said he was unable to confirm that the Governor was the one who pushed for a rescheduling of the meeting. McKeon also said Race and Cahill typically would not attend a meeting with Pataki requested by a lawmaker.

Mendez sympathizers say Grannis has included measures in his bill no Governor would accept, such as a requirement that the Governor request from the Legislature appropriations for any capital spending sought by an independently-elected Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation board.

McKeon would not comment on the Governor’s position about self-governance, but he said, “The bottom line is Roosevelt Island is a success story” that is now self-sufficient.

Letters from page 2

us, I wrote him a letter about it. I suggested that our highly-paid Public Safety Department could remove the papers or enter the stores behind the papers and order them to clean up.

Result? Nothing, except, seeing that Main Street is supposed to collect paper, kids now drop their gum wrappers on the street.

But don’t get me wrong. Mr. Ryan is not idle. His Dictatorship decreed that Trellis Restaurant, which has always celebrated summer Friday and Saturday dinner hours with music, is forbidden to do so. **[Editor’s note: After some delay, during which a petition was circulated by residents, the permit for weekend music at Trellis was granted.]**

I was wrong about your vote – maybe 15 blind or housebound residents might vote for you. The rest of us are planning a huge Goodbye Robert Ryan celebration.

Frances Salten

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for our records. **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 wordprocessing 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 if brief, but we cannot take telephone dictation of letters. **All letters are subject to acceptance and to editing for length and clarity.**

meeting that advertising revenue may be needed to pay for capital improvements required “to maintain the safety level of the Tram.” In subsequent comments to *The WIRE*, he took sharp exception to Miller’s remarks on the MetroCard, saying the need for increased revenue and the matter of the one-fare system were separate questions. He also maintained that RIOC’s inability to secure advertising in the past was not for lack of effort, and estimated that the possible total revenue – while untested thus far in the market – could “perhaps be a six-figure income.”

At the RIOC session, Kayser noted that the May 23 City Council vote broke along party lines, “and you can imagine which way that is in terms of the vote – there are only four Republicans on the City Council.”

He urged Island residents to contact Councilmembers to ask them to reconsider the resolution. “All that’s happening is the risk of shutting down the Tram because of safety issues and the inability to raise revenue unless we have a freer hand,” Kayser said.

He warned residents, “We’re not going to have a Tram operate that might not be safe,” suggesting a need for the ad money to insure safety. He also cautioned that “it takes two to work out any agreement with another authority, like the MTA. We don’t have that ability.”

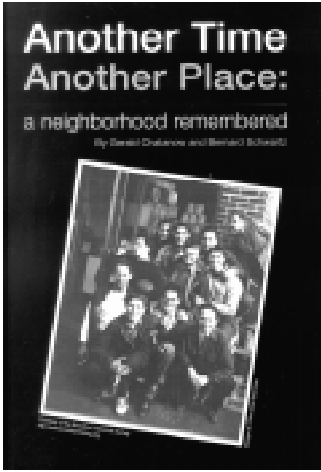
One of Kayser’s fellow Republicans, James Kaufman, a well-connected Island lawyer with interests in transportation and disability-law issues, agreed with that assessment. Kaufman, who has served as an adviser to the Metropolitan Transit Authority, said one of the problems in negotiating a MetroCard agreement is that the bulk of fare income accrues to the primary use – whether a bus or a subway – so the Tram would lose out on income when it is the second swipe on a trip. The cost of the MetroCard equipment would be another issue, he said.

At its June 14 meeting, RIOC Board members said they would review their options in terms of service in awarding a new contract for Tram operations. Mary Beth Labate, who chairs the meetings, said that “we are particularly interested in taking a look at ridership on that third leg, the third shift, both in terms of ridership and the costs of operating.” Labate is Deputy Commissioner for Administration of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). She asked Siconolfi to gather data on late-night Tram usage.

But Kaufman said RIOC has little maneuvering room on this matter because the subway system has not been judged to be an acceptable alternative access to the Island under the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992, which he described as “a federal statute with real teeth.” For someone in a wheelchair, he said, the Tram is the only access.

Furthermore, Kaufman said, the Manhattan station itself is vulnerable to a legal challenge. It would be in clear violation of the ADA, he said, if both elevators were out of service at once.

At the last RIOC meeting, David Kraut, a resident board member, said: “To eliminate the third shift appears to work a hardship on a certain portion of the population, and this has to be taken into consideration. Another consideration is that, as I think most people in the community are aware, the Tram is getting old, and we’re going to face another capitalization of the Tram in terms of ropeways and things like that, which we have to replace.”



Brooklyn Remembered

Island author Bernard Schwartz has teamed up with Gerald Chatanow to produce a memoir of the Brownsville/East New York neighborhood of the '40s and '50s. The book can be ordered at **1-888-795-4274**, ext. **195**, at \$16 (paperback) or \$25 (hard cover) plus \$4.95 shipping and handling.

Decision-Time on Banking: NYNB, Montauk, Chase... Or Under the Mattress?

by Sharon Berman

Roosevelt Island residents have some tough choices to make in the next month about what banking services to use. Chase Manhattan has sold its Island branch to New York National Bank, a Bronx-based bank with a mission of serving individuals and small businesses. Chase’s local customers will automatically become NYNB customers on July 20, unless they notify Chase to the contrary before July 13.

Another alternative is Montauk Credit Union. It’s not a full-service bank, but it offers competitive rates and services.

Here’s a chart that compares some of the features of the three institutions. Information was provided and checked by Chase, NYNB, and Montauk.

	Chase	New York National	Montauk Credit Union
Information Numbers	1-800-684-0273	1-718-401-6100, ask for Millie Lora	(212) 643-3900, press zero for customer service
Checking account fees (if minimum balance requirements below are not met)	Unlimited transactions: \$9/month, 50¢/transaction Lifeline accounts, up to 10 transactions/month, \$4/month, no transaction fee	Unlimited transactions: \$5/month, 40¢/transaction	No fees
Bounced check protection	Revolving credit line, 19.9%+ depending on balance or Debit from savings account, if linked to checking account	Revolving credit line, 12% or Debit from savings account, if linked to checking account	No revolving credit line. Debit from savings account; all accounts linked automatically.
Balance required for no-fee checking (checking only)	\$3000	\$1000	\$25 in savings account
Average monthly balance required for no-fee checking (checking + savings)	\$4500	\$3000	\$25 in savings account
Interest – checking accounts	Depends on type of account. Better Banking: 0.5 %	NOW account: 1.25%	1% with balances of \$500 & up.
Interest – savings accounts	High-yield: 0.9% Lifeline: 0.85%	Regular: 2.25% Holiday Club: 2% Children’s account: 2%	Depends on account balance. Regular savings: 1.5-4%
CD rates	2.75% (12-month)	3.1% (12-month)	5% (12-month)
Minimum CD deposit	\$2500	\$2000	\$2500
Banking by Phone	24-hr. automated ServiceLines (English/Spanish); operators 24 hours. Chinese/Korean lines M-F, 9-5. Account information, funds transfer, etc.	Can call branch and request information during business hours.	24-hr. automated Mon-Talk (English only). Operators available during business hours.
Website	www.chase.com	Planned for early 2002	www.montauk-cu.com
Online banking	Business and consumer accounts free	Business accounts only – free with minimum balance	No
Automatic online bill-pay	Yes	Not at this time	Yes, if set up with payee
Automatic online credit card payments	Yes	Not at this time	Yes, if set up with credit card company
ATM locations	Manhattan: 123; 209 in other boroughs and on Long Island	Manhattan: 3 (RI, 116th & 2nd, Port Authority); 5 in Bronx	Manhattan: 1 (on RI)
ATM fees	Free at Chase ATMs. At non-Chase ATMs, fees vary.	Free at NYNB ATMs. At non-NYNB ATMs, fees vary.	Free at Montauk ATM. At non-Montauk ATMs, fees vary.
Credit cards	Credit or Debit, linked to Continental frequent flyer program	No	No
Consumer Loans Car loans Mortgages	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes

Lynch Retiring from Top DHCR Post

DHCR Commissioner Joe Lynch is retiring today (June 30).

Lynch headed the State’s Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) through contentious times on Roosevelt Island when State subsidies for Island operations and capital development were being reduced, then eliminated entirely. Starting in April, 1995, as Deputy Commissioner of Community Development, he became First Deputy Commissioner two months later, then Acting Commissioner in November, 1996. Governor George Pataki named him Commissioner in 1999.

During Dr. Jerome Blue’s tenure as President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), Lynch started chairing DHCR’s public Board of Directors meetings in an effort to calm some of the contention over Blue’s administration of Island affairs. In one effort to give Island residents a sense that they could influence the course of Island development, Lynch named two development committees that included a large proportion of residents, but they were effectively dis-

banded after about a year.

As part of a 30-year career in housing, real estate, finance, and construction, Lynch served for a time at the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), creating public-private partnerships to revitalize communities across New York State. Then, at DHCR, he expanded such programs as part of a community-based strategy for affordable housing. The programs generated some \$2.38 billion in public-private investment.

In a DHCR press release, Lynch is quoted as saying, “It’s been a great privilege to serve the people of this State under the remarkable leadership of Governor George E. Pataki. I am honored to have been part of an administration that has paved the way for a successful housing policy by cutting taxes dramatically, pruning regulations, restoring fiscal discipline, empowering local communities, partnering with the private sector, and replacing welfare dependency with unparalleled economic opportunity. I want to thank the Governor and my

friends and colleagues at DHCR for a wonderfully productive and fruitful tenure.”

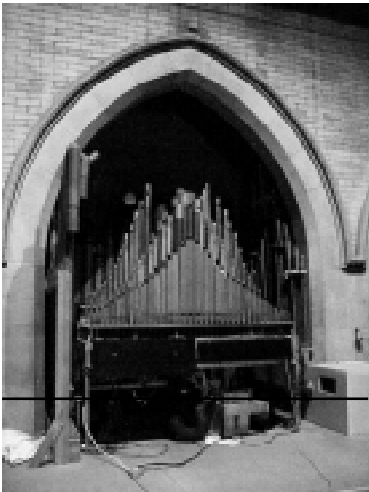
In 1998, Lynch met with and encouraged Island residents seeking to achieve local, elected control of the RIOC Board of Directors, an effort that continues today.



In the DHCR press release, the Governor praised Lynch as “a dedicated champion of affordable housing and community revitalization,” adding, “On behalf of all New Yorkers, I salute his tenure and wish him and his family the very best. Clearly, he will be missed.”

Adopted Organ Pipes Honor Friends, Family

After a half-century without the sound of a pipe organ, Roosevelt Island’s historic Good Shepherd Chapel is once again echoing with the traditional sounds of church music, thanks in part to donors who are “adopting” the pipes of a newly-acquired instrument. The Chapel is Roosevelt Island’s community center, used for Town Meetings and other official functions. On Sundays, it is multi-denominational, used by both the



Margery Rubin

Island’s Roman Catholic and Protestant parishes.

The funding goal is \$25,000. Already, some \$4,300 has been raised to pay for the organ, which was donated when a New Jersey church closed its doors. Funds will go toward additional electrical and electronic work on the recent installation, a decorative casement for the pipe works, and swell shades to lend expression to the organ’s sound.

While fund-raising events have been run and more are planned, the bulk of funding is likely to come from memorial adoptions of pipes at donations ranging from \$25 to \$100, with entire octaves going for \$500. The contributions will be acknowledged as inscriptions on a dedicatory plaque when the project is completed.

A form for making donations is available on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com/wire/2118/orgaform.html.

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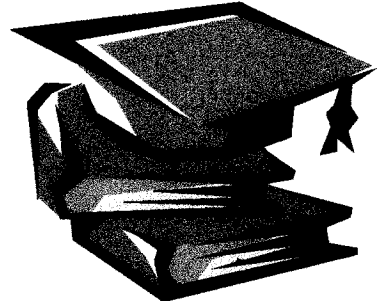
The academic program at Garden is rigorous and I always felt challenged. My teachers and college counselors prepared me for the college process —not just getting in, but succeeding once I get there.

Matt Burgess, Valedictorian 2000
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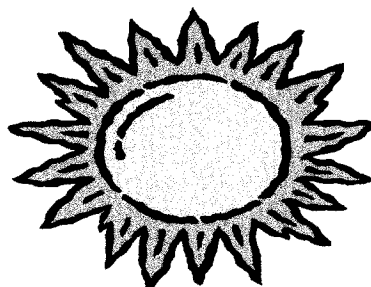
My son started at Garden at just two years old. It seemed young, but he really flourished and developed a sense of himself and his independence.

Julia Silber
parent of Jeffrey, Kindergarten



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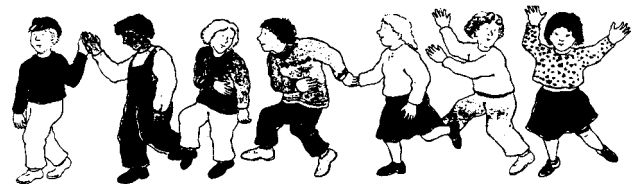
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7 Week Session: July 9-August 20, 2001

Parent & Baby Group

"O"-Walking	Monday	4-4:45p.m.	\$49.00
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Fun & Facts

Walking-2 yrs. old	Tuesday	9-9:45a.m.	\$56.00
3 yrs. - 4 yrs. old		11-11:45a.m.	

4 Week Session: July 9-August 3

Music & Rhythm

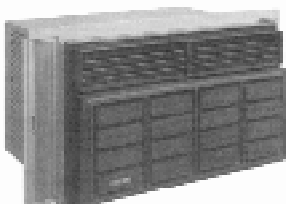
Walking-2 yrs. old	Friday	9-9:45a.m.	\$28.00
2 yrs. - 3 yrs. old		10-10:45a.m.	
3 yrs. - 4 yrs. old		11-11:45a.m.	

Registration forms available at Island Kids and Public Safety
Contact Gina at 758-8408 with any questions

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Forster from page 1

was forced to put down her book. “I was on my way to Manila,” she recalls, “and when I was reading, I realized that my eyes were killing me. I did not want to talk to my seat mates, so I closed my eyes and told myself stories.” Her imagination spun a story that entertained her through the end of the flight. “A few weeks later, I was on my way to Zimbabwe and the same thing happened,” she says. She noticed that the story she was imagining picked up where the other one had left off, so she decided to write it down.

The realization that she could write a story sparked a desire to do more. She showed it to a writer friend, who suggested she take a writing class and then attend a *Romantic Times Magazine* Booklovers Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. She took in the lessons as well as the excitement and information from the convention, went home and began writing in earnest. She wanted to get a novel published.

Johnson-Acsádi was not a stranger to publication. Both she and her husband have published numerous manuscripts, books, chapters in books and studies for the UN, the World Health Organization and The World Bank. “I knew what I was doing as a demographer, but what I was doing as a fiction writer, I hadn’t the slightest idea,” she says. “I was just telling a story.” She continued writing and, a year later, in 1994, when the convention was held in New York, Johnson-Acsádi made plans to attend. Despite feeling sick that day she called a taxi and headed to Times Square for the meeting. Her decision paid off. She made connections that opened doors for her work. “I met the editor and the agent the same day,” she says. After a compressed writing schedule to get the rest of her book to the agent, Johnson-Acsádi received the news in October of the same year that her book had been purchased and she had re-

ceived a two-book contract. *Sealed With a Kiss* hit the bookstands in 1995 and *Against All Odds* came out a year later, both by Kensington Publishing Corporation, under the Arabesque imprint.

Now, eleven novels and four novellas later (many of them best-sellers and award-winners in the romantic-fiction genre), Johnson-Acsádi says she’s still amazed at her success. “I’m blessed,” she says. “I’m the most surprised person when I realize I have done all these books. I’m really excited that I can write anything that anybody would publish

in fiction,” she says, leaning forward in her chair, her face lighting up and her slender fingers gesturing about her gift. “It’s like another present somebody gave me, another life. I’m very happy that I’m still awed.”

Perhaps her sociological background has contributed to her popularity. Johnson-Acsádi says writing a romance novel requires a certain formula, which she follows. There must be two main characters around which most of the action revolves. They have a strong attraction, there’s lots of sexual tension, conflict and plenty of love scenes.

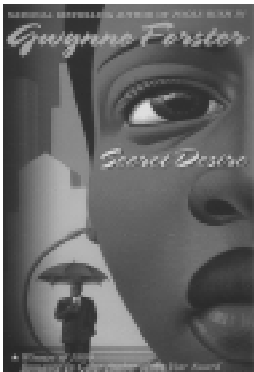
But the books must not contain violence (or very little), and each story must have a happy ending. Johnson-Acsádi follows that formula but adds layers of action and background to give her characters more depth. “The people that I write about are composites of everybody I know,” she explains. “I’m a social scientist and, even as a demographer, you use sociology all the time.” In *Naked Soul*, for example, the first chapter includes a flashback into one character’s childhood, a traumatic hospital scene in which the family is denied service because they are poor. That incident causes the heroine to plan her life to avoid poverty at all costs. The story peels back the layers of the heroine’s resolve when she meets her love interest, who she thinks is poor.

Johnson-Acsádi says that, although she has an interracial marriage (she is African-American and her husband is Hungarian), the

idea for her first interracial romance, “Against the Wind,” came because she didn’t like the way she saw men of color being portrayed in other interracial novels, as villains or unsavory people. “I thought I could write one that was not an exposition on race but in which all of the characters are dignified.” The industry agreed. *Against the Wind* was nominated by *Romantic Times* as the best ethnic romance that year. The *Romance in Color* Internet site gave it an Award of Excellence and named Johnson-Acsádi the 1999 Author of the Year.

Not only were readers of all colors attracted to her work, she was pioneering in a genre – romance fiction for the African-American market – that had received very little support from the publishing world. Up until 1994, African-American writers were told they had to create their characters as white people. “That was rather insulting,” says Johnson-Acsádi. But, she says, Walter Zacharius, the head of Kensington Publishing, who published her first six novels, told her he had decided to venture into that market because he didn’t believe the notion, then prevalent among major publishers: that many African-Americans would not buy and read romance written by and about African-Americans. Instead he recognized that they were also consumers and they wanted books that portrayed African-American characters who reflected their own accomplishments – as bankers, musicians, business people and other professionals.

Against the advice of colleagues and friends, he published two African-American romance novels a month in 1994. They sold well and that market has since exploded.

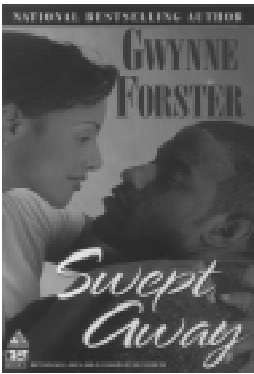


“Now,” says Johnson-Acsádi, “every publishing house is clamoring for African-American romance writers.” She continues to write for the Kensington group and is currently at work fulfilling a two-book contract for Dafina, their mainstream fiction line focused on African-Americans. The first one, *When Twilight Comes*, will be on bookstands next February.

Johnson-Acsádi’s readers continue to buy her books and even people who don’t usually read that genre respond. “I’ve had letters from people all over the world telling me that something I wrote had changed their life,” she says. One woman, identifying herself as a doctor who doesn’t normally read “those” books, wrote that her husband had given her a Johnson-Acsádi book. The story caused her to look at her own life and make some changes. Sometimes Johnson-Acsádi hears from the husbands. “I’ve gotten letters from men who’ve told me that, after their wife read a book of mine, they behaved differently towards them.”

From her perch high up in that Washington tree years ago, reading and imagining, Johnson-Acsádi did not know the adventure life had in store for her. But as she expressed that imagination, she enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands of readers. And although she also acknowledges the valuable work she does with her husband in demographic-studies consultation, Johnson-Acsádi clearly makes a distinction with the romance writing. “Where else can I have so much fun?”

Gwynne Forster’s e-mail address is GwynneF@aol.com. There’s more information at www.gwynneforster.com.



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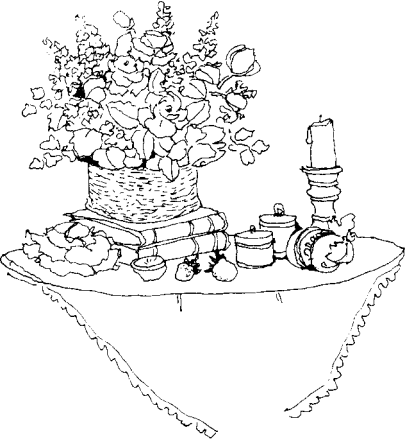
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SPORTSWIRE

A ROYAL SWEEP: The Roosevelt Island Youth Program Little League concluded another successful season on June 16 with championship games in the Minors, Majors and Seniors. The karma on Roosevelt Island that day clearly favored the color royal as the Royal team captured the Minors Championship by defeating the first-place Green team 7-0, and the Royal team captured the Majors Championship by defeating the first-place Red team 4-2. In Senior League action, the Youth Program team, playing in their white pinstripes, lost 12-5 in the championship game to the Big Apple Sports Club team, wearing royal uniforms.

In the Minors Championship game, the hitting stars for the Royal team were Anass Dorani, with a two-run home run, and Ben Duffy, who hit a grand-slam home run with Seth Vacirca, Kaitlyn Abdul and Alfredo Figueroa on base. Members of the champion Royals were Asher Russem, Katherine Fallone, Maurice Dickerson, Devin Santella, Parker Ellis, James Brackley, Alexandra Fallone, Anass Dorani, Ben Duffy, Seth Vacirca, Kaitlyn Abdul, and Alfredo Figueroa. The team was coached by Joe Vacirca, Andy Russem and Charles Abdul.

In the Majors, the championship was determined using a modified double-elimination format similar to the Little League World Series. In first-round action, the Red team came from behind to defeat the Green team by a 7-4 score, as the winning rally was triggered by a base on balls to Saul Nadel and a hit by Abel Tadesse. In the other first-round game, the Royal team pounded the Navy team by a 15-4 score. On Saturday, June 9, the Green team, behind the pitching of Schuyler Penny and the hitting of Lamar Burrows, came from five runs down to eliminate the Navy team 8-6. In the other game that day, the Royal team advanced to the championship game by defeating the Red team 7-3. On Wednesday evening, June 13, the Red and Green teams met again, with the winner advancing to the championship game against the Royal team. Green took the early lead with three runs in the second inning, and opened a 5-2 lead after four innings. However, Green could not protect the lead as Red scored four runs in the bottom of the fifth for a 6-5 lead. Jorvier Falcon closed out the game for Red, pitching two scoreless innings for the victory, as Red advanced with a 6-5 victory.

In the Majors Championship game between the Royal and Red teams, Red took a 1-0 lead in the top of the second on an RBI single by Jonathan Singh, and a 2-0 lead in the top of the third on an RBI single by Adam Silverschotz, which scored Shirome Dixon. With runners on first and third and no one out in the third, Sasha Agosta relieved Neal Stueber and shut down the Red team without any more runs scoring. This proved to be critical, as Royal rallied for three runs in the bottom of the fourth on a triple by Seif Dorani, a walk to Chris Sullivan, a single by Eyosyas Tadesse and a long triple by Sasha Agosta over the center fielder's head, which drove in the second and third runs of the inning. In the top of the fifth, Eyosyas Tadesse, playing shortstop, made two outstanding defensive plays to back up the solid pitching of Sasha Agosta. Royal added an insurance run in the bottom of the fifth, and held on for a 4-2 victory. The members of the champion Royals were Sasha Agosta, Jason Fell, Jenna Stueber, Neal Stueber, Eyosyas Tadesse, Chris Sullivan, Jake Russem, Andy Enhσαιhan, Sebastian Gherardi, Sean Suarez, Emmanuel Ynoa, Seif Dorani and Anthony Santiago. The team was coached by Patti Stueber.

The Youth Program Senior team, playing in the East River Baseball Association, finished the regular season in first place and then defeated the Yorkville Giants on June 9 by an 11-2 score to advance to the championship game. In that game, Scott Davis got the win, allowing two runs on three hits while striking out 14 batters in six innings. The offensive attack was led by Deshawn Pearson, with three hits and an RBI, and Carlos Hiraldo, with four hits and three RBIs. However, in the Championship game, the Senior team pitching, which had been their strength all season, could not get the job done, and the offense could not get untracked, as the team lost 12-5. Members of the Senior team were Aaron Cohen, Tommy Corbisiero, Scott Davis, Alex Fell, Alex Gherardi, Carlos Hiraldo, Seth Kaufman, Jose Marte, Deshawn Pearson, Jovan Ponce, Junior Ruiz, Zach Russem and Brandon Stueber.



The Champion Royal Teams – Majors above, Minors below

Photos: Vicki Feinmel



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