

Announcing: The New Year's Eve Big Band Dance Party

Welcome 2002 at Manhattan Park Theater Club, with **The Ray Abrams Big Band**, presented by River Music, The PTA, and *The WIRE*. See ad, page 7

Vol. 22, No. 8

Saturday, December 1, 2001

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, December 15

The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

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



We're *Not* Doing a Show: A Musical Revue Mary McCatty, Ron Roth, and a cast of Islanders will appear over the next two weekends in the Main Street Theatre's annual fundraiser. This year's offering is a frantic romp through vaudeville routines, sketches, and musical comedy. The revue opens Friday night at 8:00 (see ComingUp listings, page 3, for other dates and times).

Islanders *Island's First Couple of the Theater – The Howes*

by Gabrielle Parnes

When the curtain went down on last spring's performance of *Pippin*, the young cast remained on stage to exchange goodbyes with the seven graduating high school seniors going off to college in the fall. The actors, who had been working together for the past decade, held one another in tight embraces, tears streaming down their cheeks.

Nancy Howe, managing director of the Main Street Theatre, remembers, "We all cried."



Worth Howe and Nancy Howe, as they appeared last year in *The Lion in Winter*

This scene repeats itself every May at the conclusion of the Teen Theatre's annual performance, as the seniors prepare to leave Roosevelt Island and venture out into the world. For many graduates, the Theatre has provided a second family and played a crucial role in their development from children into adults; for some, it has made a particularly significant impact and will serve as the basis for future artistic and professional endeavors.

Last May's *Pippin* was the second spring show of the Main Street Theatre's 19th season on Roosevelt Island. Nancy and Worth Howe, the Theatre's husband-and-wife managing-directing team, oversaw

the production of four different plays in only six weeks. The season opened with the teens' Mother's Day performance of *Museum*, followed by *Pippin*. A mixed cast of children, teens, and adults from the community closed the season with a dance showcase, which came on the heels of the youngest players' *Charlotte's Web*. It was a busy season.

Nancy laughs when thinking back on the struggles to make it happen. "I remember when we used to think one show a year with three casts was just nuts," she muses, twisting her face into one of her typical theatrical expressions. "This year was just astounding."

Since coming to the Main Street Theatre in 1982, the Howes have directed 73 shows starring children, teens and adults. Each year, the Theatre's popularity grows, and Island residents have seen an increase in the frequency and variety of performances. The children's Mother's Day weekend plays have brought Island residents out since the early '80s in support of the community's youngest thespians, and every year

See **Howes**, page 8

Farmer's Market to Relocate as Gristede's Invokes Exclusion Zone

The Farmer's Market will be moved from the Motorgate area, probably to the plaza next to Blackwell House, in the near future.

Gristede's management has invoked a provision of its lease giving it a 1900-foot no-compete zone, which covers all of Motorgate and much of Northtown.

Over the past two weeks, there have been discussions involving the PTA, which sponsors the Saturday market; the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC); and officials of Gristede's. Three new locations have been considered, according to Erin Feely-Nahem, president of the PTA. In addition to the Blackwell House area, they include Good Shepherd Plaza and the area between Westview and Island House.

Most early commercial leases for Island space contained no-compete clauses or exclusion zones as a way of protecting the Island's merchants, who signed on to the plan for a Roosevelt Island residential community at a time when the market for their offerings was limited.

Many such provisions were removed from leases as they were renewed in the 1995-2000 period.

The Gristede's lease, when it was renewed at the time the supermarket was renamed a "megastore," provided, "Tenant shall have the exclusive right to sell Fresh Foods

from self-service display counters and no other store located within a radius of 1,900 feet... shall sell milk, beer, or soda... or fresh foods..." There is an exception for pre-existing stores, but the Farmer's Market is not considered

See **Market**, page 4



Briefly New Year's Eve, Blood Drive, Holiday Lights

Big Band Dance Party

Roosevelt Island will have a Big Band New Year's Eve Dance Party this year, sponsored by three organizations. River Music, the PS/IS 217 PTA, and *The Main Street WIRE* will present the Ray Abrams Big Band from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. in the Manhattan Park Theater Club. Capacity is limited to 225.

Tickets are available at \$50 per person (\$20 admission plus \$30 dinner charge), and are being sold by members of the PTA. A cash bar will also be available. Food and drink sales will benefit the PTA, while admission charges will go to River Music and will be used to present concerts on the Island over the coming year.

The 18-member Abrams band, under the direction of Ervin Simpson, appeared on the island July 4, 2000, under *WIRE* sponsorship, in a concert in Good Shepherd Plaza. The band plays arrangements in the style of the Count Basie Band.

Tickets will be available at the Saturday Farmer's Market, or by calling **223-1975, 339-0016, or *82-588-0388**.

Blood Drive

An Island blood drive is scheduled for Saturday, January 5. The Residents Association (RIRA), the Seniors Association (RISA), and the Icla da Silva Foundation are cooperating with the New York Blood Center in the effort, which

has a goal of 100 pints.

January is a critical blood month. Islanders willing to donate blood can make an appointment at the Farmer's Market starting December 8, or on-line at www.icla.org/signup. (For additional details, see the RIRA Column on page 3.)

Holiday Lights

Chamber of Commerce President Julie Palermo reports that the campaign to decorate Main Street with holiday lights has been a success, and that residents will soon see lighted light poles and a string of lights across Main Street.

No date has been announced for the light-up. A list of contributors to the lights campaign appears on page 11.

A Season of Music: UN Singers, Daniel Rodriguez... and More



Roosevelt Island is awash in music this holiday season. The **UN Singers** (photo, above) will present a River Music concert next Friday night (December 7) at 7:30. Tenor **Daniel Rodriguez** will bring his *Broadway Magic* troupe back for a return engagement December 14 as a benefit for the Good Shepherd Organ Fund. The Main Street Theatre opens a **Musical Revue** benefit next Friday (photo, this page; ad, page 9), and the **Ray Abrams Big Band** is coming for a New Year's Eve Dance Party (story above; ad, page 7). See page 3 for ComingUp listings.

The Editorial Page

Saving Blackwell House



Historic Blackwell House, with inset photos of serious deterioration on RIOC's watch

Saugerties, New York, November 19, 2001

Judy Berdy, meet Ruth Reynolds Glunt. The historic lighthouse here, where Esopus Creek pours into the Hudson River, has lessons for Roosevelt Island.

By 1985, the United States Coast Guard had allowed this structure to fall into serious disrepair, just as to-day New York State has let Blackwell House deteriorate into a sorry shambles.

Passing this Ulster County town, navigation on the Hudson once suffered from a serious bend in the narrowed waterway. Ships ran aground in the shallows. Since 1834, there has been a warning light here, though the present lighthouse was not built until after the Civil War.

But, by the end of World War II, the military had taken over such navigational aids. Saugerties Lighthouse was automated by 1954 and rarely in need of human attention, was closed and sealed. Eventually, dampness and neglect left the lighthouse just short of qualifying as demolition waste.

The Coast Guard pronounced the structure unworthy of the cost and effort required to save it and made plans to remove the house and leave, at most, the beacon.

Ruth Reynolds Glunt, a local historian, mounted a public opinion campaign that killed the idea of demolition. But for years, the Coast Guard held onto the property, frustrating efforts to take it over. Deterioration continued.

It wasn't until 1985 that the Coast Guard finally gave up jurisdiction. The property passed to New York State and, the following year, enlightened legislators sponsored a bill that put the structure and adjacent wetlands in the hands of the newly-formed Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy.



keeper serving as a bed-and-breakfast host and operator of a small museum and gift shop. On the \$60,000 to \$70,000 income now produced by these

activities, the Lighthouse is self-sufficient.

It's a blueprint that promises success on Roosevelt Island... *If only...*

At the November meeting of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's Board of Directors, Judy Berdy – she's president of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society – voiced the simple question that Ruth Reynolds Glunt once put to the Coast Guard. Speaking of Blackwell House, Berdy asked, "Why don't you give it to somebody who will take care of it?"

Board member Leo Kayser responded, "We need somebody we can convey it to. Can we convey it to the Historical Society?" What, others asked, would you do with it? How would you take care of it? Berdy promised to come back to the Board in January with a plan.

The Saugerties Lighthouse project, from conception to completion, demonstrated clearly how determined citizens can do a job far better than a distracted State government whose concerns focus broadly on



the entirety of its political reach and are not well applied to the narrowly-focused care of an historic house.

So far, on Roosevelt Island, the only demonstration has been that RIOC – the State government – can't do it.

Now comes the challenge: Showing that citizens here, working through a project-oriented organization like the Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy (www.saugertieslighthouse.com), can do the job.

Since New York State has failed so miserably, there is nothing to lose in trying – and everything to gain.

At Saugerties, Ruth Reynolds Glunt didn't work alone. Many helped. There was Elise Berry, a young architect whose thesis project put several Hudson River lighthouses on the National Register of Historic Places. And there were those area residents who saw the Saugerties Lighthouse as too important to leave in the lost dust of history. Thus, it lives today.

Not so Ruth Reynolds Glunt. She died some years back, but not before creating this legacy of inspired effort. The heirs of her realized dream are still there, of course, their minds and memories ready to be mined as Judy Berdy's Roosevelt Island Historical Society takes on Blackwell House.

Godspeed to both.

DL

Letters

To Robert H. Ryan
President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation

Dear Mr. Ryan,

I am writing on behalf of many of my constituents on Roosevelt Island who are concerned that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's schedule for maintenance of the Tram, specifically the closure of the Tram from November 24 through December 19, will create significant problems.

While it is crucial that the Tram receive all necessary upgrades and repairs, the weeks leading up to the holiday season do not seem to be the appropriate time to conduct such work. It is my understanding that this work had been carried out during the summer months in previous years. Conducting maintenance work during that time of year creates a much smaller impact on residents because many people take vacation during those months and many others keep a less rigorous work schedule during those months.

First, I ask that any non-emergency repairs be postponed until after the holiday season or until next summer if possible. Second, I ask that RIOC make an effort to reduce the number of days the Tram will be closed during any repairs made between now and the end of the year. Third, I ask that you take steps to ensure that the Red Bus service that is designed to provide a transportation alternative for residents does in fact run on schedule and does in fact provide sufficient

To Matthew Katz, President, RIRA
To R. H. Ryan, President, RIOC
Dear Mr. Katz & Mr. Ryan:

The last thing we need on this Island is for the Sportspark to be torn down and an energy distribution substation to go up in its place.

Has anyone forgotten that some people like to play tennis and there is a perfectly good pool in that facility that could and should be used since the Westview pool is no longer in commission for us swimmers?

Please don't become useless like Robert Ryan, Mr. Katz. I would think that you, a swimmer, would push for that pool to be used by the Islanders, not torn down for Atlantic Energy Partners. We need to keep our recreation facilities and put money into them so they can actually be used by residents who want to use them. If you'd take a poll, I'm sure you'd find out that there are alot of swimmers on this Island who would use that pool in a heartbeat.

Did you hear that, Mr. Ryan? Are you reading *The WIRE*, Mr. Ryan? Are you caring? I didn't think so.

D. Larocque

service during days when the Tram is closed. Finally, I urge you to plan all future maintenance work to be carried out during summer months.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

A. Gifford Miller
Councilmember
Fifth District, Manhattan

To the Editor:

We had the pleasure of joining the Roosevelt Island Special Ops Unit of the Fire Department for Thanksgiving dinner last week. I want to thank everyone involved in preparing the dinner. Technically, this was a RIRA event, but in the end, both RIRA and non-RIRA members contributed to the dinner, including: Judy Berdy, Sharon Bermon, Joe Christiano, Joan Christianson, Carolyn Christianson, Vicki Feinmel, Sherie Helstien, Ruth Kolins, Cookie Lugo, Nurit Marcus, Steve Marcus, Kathy Niederhoffer, Raye Schwartz, Fay Vass and Michele Vidro.

A special thanks goes to Gristede's for supplying us with enough food to go around, and to PS 217, whose students made some terrific decorations for the table and sent letters and posters. Also, the Day Nursery put together an adorable poster to hang on the wall. And, to start dinner off, Sister Regina and Judy Berdy opened with prayers. [Photo, page 10.]

We did this to show our firefighters how much we appreciate what they do and we want to continue to do things that make them feel like part of the community. I look forward to many more events like this and will probably be coming to the residents in the future to get more volunteers. Thanks to everyone who helped. It was a wonderful day!

Margie Smith



Published by **The Main Street WIRE**
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531 Main St. #413, NYC10044

News (212) **826-9055**
Urgent news **1-917-353-1647**
Advertising (212) **751-8214**
Circulation (212) **935-7534**
Fax (212) **755-2540**
e-mail Editor@MainStreetWIRE.com
in association with Website.NYC10044.com
www.nyc10044.com

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COMING UP

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

Sun., Dec. 2, 2:00 p.m., **Memorial service for Ruth Limmer**, Manhattan Park Theater Club, 8 River Road.

Tue., Dec. 4, 7:00 p.m., Meeting, **Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8**, CB8 office, 505 Park Avenue, suite 620; agenda includes development, Public Safety, Southpoint, and parkland – condition and development. Information: **758-4340**.

Wed., Dec. 5, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Fri., Dec. 7 (and every Friday), 7:00-9:00 p.m., **Sketching Session** offered by the Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association (RIVAA), West Studio, 546 Main Street, 12th floor. Fee. Information: **755-1771**.

Fri., Dec. 7, 8:00 p.m., **Benefit for the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, *We're Not Doing a Show: A Musical Revue*, Main Street Theatre. \$20; seniors and disabled, \$10. Tickets: **371-4449**. Additional performances December 8, 9, and 14-17.

Sat., Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m., **River Music** presents *The United Nations Singers* in a holiday concert of seasonal music and songs of peace from around the world, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Admission charge is \$6 at the door.

Sat., Dec. 8, 8:00 p.m., **Benefit for the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, *We're Not Doing a Show: A Musical Revue*, Main Street Theatre. \$20; seniors and disabled, \$10. Tickets: **371-4449**.

Sun., Dec. 9, 2:00 & 7:30 p.m., **Benefit for the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, *We're Not Doing a Show: A Musical Revue*, Main Street Theatre. \$20; seniors and disabled, \$10. Tickets: **371-4449**.

Mon., Dec. 10, 7:00 p.m., **Roosevelt Island History Society Annual Meeting and Celebration**. Special program, *Treasures from the Chapin Collection*, plus a report on Blackwell House and election of officers; Island House Community Room, 555 Main Street.

Fri., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., **A Christmas Concert** with tenor Daniel Rodriguez and the cast of *Broadway Magic*, Chapel of the Good Shepherd; fund-raiser for Chapel organ. Tickets \$20; \$15 for seniors and disabled, available after Catholic services Saturday and Sunday. Information and tickets: **751-1347**.

Fri.-Mon., Dec. 14-17, times vary, **Benefit for the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, *We're Not Doing a Show: A Musical Revue*, Main Street Theatre. \$20; seniors and disabled, \$10. Friday, 8:00 p.m.; Sat., 6:00 and 9:00 p.m.; Sun. & Mon., 7:30 p.m. Tickets: **371-4449**.

Sat., Dec. 15, holiday issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Dec. 7; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Dec. 10, with materials due Thur., Dec. 13. **Future issues:** 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 ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com.

Sat., Dec. 15, 11:00 a.m., **Memorial Service for FDNY Deputy Chief Raymond Downey**, SS Cyril & Methodious R.C. Church, 125 Half Hollow Road, Deer Park, NY 11729. For information on visitation Thur., Dec. 13 and Fri., Dec. 14, call Boyd-Caratozzolo Funeral Home, **1-631-667-8614**; for directions to memorial service, call **1-631-667-4044**.

Tue., Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion**, *Bodega Dreams* by Ernesto Quiñonez, Library. Advance registration required.

Mon., Dec. 31, 9:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m., **Roosevelt Island's New Year's Eve Big-Band Dance Party** featuring, on-stage, the live music of **The Ray Abrams Big Band** under the baton of Ervin Simpson, presented by River Music, the PTA of PS 217, and *The Main Street WIRE*; Manhattan Park Theater Club. **Only 200 tickets available**. \$50 per person includes \$30 dinner charge, benefiting the PTA. Cash bar. Call **223-1975, 339-0016**, or ***82-588-0388**.

2002

Sat., Jan. 5, all day, **Blood Drive**, Senior Center, sponsored by RIRA, the Icla da Silva Foundation, RISA, and the New York Blood Center. Sign up at www.icla.org/signup or on Saturdays at the Farmer's Market.

Senior Center

Monday
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:45, **Arts & Crafts** (RIDA)
Tuesday
10:00, **Jazzercise**
1:30, **Games** (RISA)
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well Exercise**
10:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beginner)
11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (intermediate)
Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance Class**
Friday
9:00, **Citizenship**
10:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beginner)
10:15, **Yoga Stretch**

11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (intermediate)
11:15, **Stay Well**
7:30, **Lotto**

Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Tue., Dec. 4, Stop & Shop trip
Sat.-Sun., Dec. 8-9, Flea Market
Mon., Dec. 10, 11-12:30, Metrocard Bus
Tue., Dec. 11, 7:00 p.m., General Meeting
Fri., Dec. 14, 7:00 p.m., Tree-Trimming Party
Mon., Dec. 17, 10:00 a.m., Health Lecture, Blood Pressure Screening
Sat., Dec. 22, 6:00 p.m., Holiday Party
Mon., Dec. 31, 7:00 p.m., New Year's Eve Party

Sam Brown



Photo: Bill Harris

"If you heard somebody whistling, that was Sam," said Bill Harris, recalling his longtime friend, Sam Brown, who died Monday.

"He was a tremendous athlete," said Fay Vass.

Brown died Monday after a Roosevelt Island residency going back to the early 1970's, when he was a patient at Goldwater Hospital. In 1976, he moved to Eastwood, where he lived until his death this week at age 54. His body was found by his home attendant.

He was a well-known figure at the flea markets in Good Shepherd Plaza, selling from his table there. Born in Barnwell, South Carolina, he was the youngest of thirteen children, and leaves a large family of nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and their children. "He was Uncle Sonny to his nieces and nephews," said his sister, Adele Bell.

After high school, Brown moved to the 168th-Street neighborhood of the Bronx, but became wheelchair-bound after being shot in the early '70s. He has been a paraplegic for 29 years.

For about ten years from 1973 to 1983, Brown played basketball with the Goldwater Swipers in the Eastern Wheelchair Basketball Conference (EWBC). "We never won a game, but we had more fun than anybody," said Al "Tjader" Fogle, Brown's teammate. When Goldwater Hospital disbanded that team, Brown moved to the Brooklyn Whirlaways where, according to Fogle, "he really learned wheelchair basketball." Fogle added, "He was big, strong, and he could shoot. He wasn't the fastest guy, but he could shoot."

Despite his handicap, Brown was an entrepreneur. He was known by many Islanders as "the man with the van." He helped many with their moves, and Harris said on Wednesday that he was always good for a favor. "Most of the kids know him and like him," Harris said.

The family will receive visitors at the Paul Lane Funeral Home, 115-33 Sutphin Blvd., Jamaica, at hours not yet announced (call **1-718-659-6260** for information).

F Train Becomes Island's Regular Service in 2 Weeks

The date was pushed back by "spillover issues" from the attack on the World Trade Center, but in two weeks, Roosevelt Island's hodgepodge of F, Q, and S trains will be history, according to the MTA. The F train will be regular.

Meanwhile, with the Tramway out of service for maintenance work, Red Bus service continues, leaving from Public Safety on the hour, and from Favia Restaurant, at 60th and 2nd, on the half-hour.

It seems that there's always something to tick us residents off around here. I've learned that Gristede's is seeking to invoke its contractual rights to a 2000-foot ring of exclusivity by forcing Wengerd Farms, our Saturday greenmarket, to pull up stakes. Apparently, Gristede's is threatened by friend Israel's sale of meat eight hours once a week and wants them to move elsewhere.

The area under Motorgate has been leased by RIOC to the Farmer's Market for over twelve years now, with the proceeds going to the PS/IS 217 PTA. It seems to me that Wengerd Farms' proximity to Gristede's has *increased* the latter's business on Saturdays, and not damaged it at all. Those of us, Islanders and off-Islanders alike, who browse among the beautiful produce, free-range chicken, jams, jellies and condiments, and charming crafts brought to us from Pennsylvania's Amish Country once a week often do so after shopping at Gristede's.

The Megastore first usurped the health and beauty aids business from Bigelow Pharmacy before absorbing Bigelow. Then they branched into the cut-flower market of Island Flowers and the greeting card business of our stationery store. Now, they are taking business from the Bakery and the Island restaurants with their expanded services. When Gristede's does this, it's called competition, but when Wengerd Farms does the same, it's a lease violation. I think that competition can only enhance the quality of Island merchants' sometimes-spotty service. But, what's sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander as well.

Like any retail business, Gristede's is dependent upon customer good will to stay in business. This assault on the Farmer's Market is both mean-spirited and petty, suggesting a corporate Goliath attacking a one-truck David. There are negotiations afoot to offer Israel another Roosevelt Island site, but I wonder why they should move after so many years. If you agree, let the Gristede's manager know and call the chain's owner, John Catsimatidis (at [212] **956-5803**) as well. Enough, already.

On the good news front, RIRA's Thanksgiving dinner at the Emergency Operations Unit firehouse was a roaring success. Margie Smith, honcho of the effort, tells me that Islanders' hearts sank when they arrived at 6:00 p.m. to find only one firefighter present. But, by dinnertime, the unit's nine on-duty squad members were back from a call and were joined by over two dozen residents who prepared dinner, shared it with New York's Bravest, and didn't leave until 11 p.m. In a spirit of ecumenicity, Sister Regina Palamara offered a Jewish prayer and Judy Berdy offered a Christian one. Nice. Many thanks to everyone who pitched in – with special thanks to Gristede's Megastore for their contributions and to the kids of PS/IS 217 who provided the decorations – for a job well done!

Starting next Saturday, you will see a table set up at the Farmer's Market with volunteers recruiting donors for our January 5 Blood Drive. We intend to solicit your pledges, for at least a few hours, every Saturday until B-Day. Our goal is 100 pints, which really means signing up about 200 potential donors, an ambitious effort. The number of beds set up will depend on the number of pledges we've obtained, and we're hoping for a blood bath – excuse me, an Island awash in blood, no, that's not right – a bloody fine turnout. That's better!

We are still looking to fill out the Blood Drive committee and so, if you would like to volunteer a couple of hours, give me a call at **935-7534**. The drive is co-sponsored by RIRA, the Icla da Silva Foundation, the Seniors Association, and the New York Blood Center, with thanks to the Senior Center and Housing Management for making the space available.

Donors must be at least 110 pounds and between 17 and 75 years of age, although folks 76 and older may donate with a physician's letter. Donors may give blood every 56 days. A piece of ID including a signature and photo will be required the day of the drive. In order to keep an orderly flow of donors from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., we ask you to sign up for a specific time and to do so early. See a RIRA volunteer at the Farmer's Market, call the Icla da Silva Foundation at **593-1907** or, the simplest method, sign up on-line at <http://www.icla.org/signup>. In exchange for some simple information, you will be given your choice of time in fifteen-minute increments.

The Blood Center informs us that the post-New Year's period is an urgent one for blood donation, hence the January 5 date. If you've never given blood before, start now. It's quick, easy, and painless and it's a guilt-free excuse to eat Oreo cookies. At a time in which we're all looking to make some contribution, this is truly the gift of life. And you'll feel so good when you're done!

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 verification and for our records. **Preferred methods of submission:** By e-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (ASCII text preferred or use any wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files with macros), or PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main Street for *The WIRE*. **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.** We recommend observing a maximum length of 300 words, but will consider longer letters if their content merits the required space.

The RIRA Column



Matthew Katz
RIRA President
e-mail: matthewkatz@rcn.com

Letters deadline for Dec. 15 issue: Dec. 11
Letters received after deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

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

Become a Foster Parent



Sheltering Arms

Open Your Arms to Help A Child

Sheltering Arms Children Service

122 East 29th Street New York, N.Y. 10016

212.689.1702

CABRINI

ALIVE AND WELL

Upcoming Events

CABRINI CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

by students of
Religious Education Program

7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 12
Chapel of the Good Shepherd
Come see "the reason for the season."



DANIEL RODRIGUEZ

Broadway Magic

Community Pipe Organ Fundraiser

7:30 p.m. Friday, December 14
Chapel of the Good Shepherd

Tickets: See Sr. Regina – 644-8332

\$20; \$15 for Seniors & Physically Challenged

Market from page 1

a store, nor does it have a lease, both conditions for an exception.

Feely-Nahem told *The WIRE*, "The PTA supports the service that Israel Wengerd's greenmarket provides to the community and believes that he is an essential part of this community. It is obvious that the greenmarket is very popular with Island residents. Israel has always been a staunch supporter of any fundraising activity that we have organized, in addition to his monthly payments as a vendor in the PTA's market space."

She continued, "We are in negotiations with RIOC and a representative from Gristede's in an effort to work out an amicable solution to Gristede's request. The PTA's goal is to ensure that the greenmarket will continue as it has for over a decade."

John Catsimatidis, Chairman and CEO of Gristede's, told *The WIRE* after some discussions earlier this week, "I understand the matter is settled to the satisfaction of RIOC, the PTA, Gristede's, and the Flea Market owner." He added, "We will always do what is necessary for the best interest of the community and shareholders of Gristede's. We have spent \$3 million in the last two years to make Gristede's Roosevelt Island one of the best stores in the City. I will always take suggestions on how to make it better."

Israel Wengerd, the Amish resident of Watsonstown, Pennsylvania, who operates the Farmer's Market, said Tuesday in a telephone conversation, "I'm basically just peaceful. I don't want to fight, but just do whatever's in the best interests of the community. Their interest is my interest." Wengerd said he had surveyed spaces last Saturday. "Blackwell seemed like a nice location under the trees. I just want to work with the PTA and RIOC and whatever space they want to give me."

RIOC President Robert H. Ryan told *The WIRE* on Wednesday, "We're sort of caught in the middle here." Ryan said that Gristede's clearly "has the law on its side."

Ryan said that the bakery and the hard-

ware/video store still have exclusion zones in their leases. Such exclusions generally carry language allowing other businesses to sell competing goods if they don't specialize in those goods, or the goods are "incidental" to another business operation. Because of Gristede's size and variety of merchandise, virtually any one line of products

is "incidental."

The expansion in size and product lines at Gristede's has put pressure on the Island's smaller merchants, a story reported by *The WIRE* in April of 1998. Bigelow Pharmacy, which had survived on its sales of Health and Beauty Aids, known as "HBA" in the trade, was eventually absorbed by the megastore.

The Bigelow lease had protected the drug store only against competing "pharmaceutical services."

The President of the Residents Association, Matthew Katz, deals with the Gristede's matter in his column in this issue (page 3).



Israel Wengerd, left, has operated the Farmer's Market under license from the PS/IS 217 PTA for about a dozen years.



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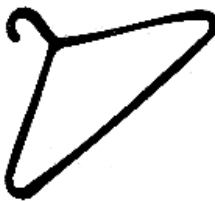
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At PS/IS 217...



The Island school is one of four City schools piloting a project intended to help students build emotional and social skills. Project EXSEL targets grades 3-5 in an effort to increase academic performance through an increased sense of community. The program attempts to leverage that sense of community into improved abilities to form relationships, manage stress, set goals, and communicate. As part of the program, the school is conducting Parent Workshops, one of which was held November 15 and is pictured here.



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Howes from page 1

budding actors anxiously await show time on opening night, when they will breathe their first taste of stardom. The May performance marks the beginning of spring. It’s a reminder of the unique sense of community that the Theatre has helped create on Roosevelt Island.

Since the Howes’ first productions, *Cinderella* and *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, the Main Street Theatre has become a Roosevelt Island institution. “Nancy and Worth have brought joy into hundreds of families by what they give,” says choreographer Diana Brill, Island resident and longtime friend and professional partner of the Howes.

The Theatre has evolved since the couple first became involved. Brill persuaded the Howes to move to Roosevelt Island to help her open what was to be a professional theater. Worth recalls Diana’s asking, “Would you like to do an off-Broadway theater?” He laughs. “See, that was the lure.” After a year of commuting from New Jersey, the Howes decided to move to the Island. “We were foolish enough to go in and out of New Jersey – for nothing!” Nancy remembers. “We were making no money.” The Theatre on Roosevelt Island was originally made up of professional Equity actors, and performances rivaled those of today’s off-Broadway shows. But, says Nancy, “We worked so hard, for so little, It was depressing. We were spinning our wheels.”

But while they worked at the Theatre, the Howes offered acting classes for children as a way to earn money. Worth, who had taught at a Texas theater, insisted that the classes be real and that children would have to learn something. “Nancy’s made it that way,” he says of his wife, who took over the classes soon after.

The Children’s Theatre became more popular each year. Exasperated with the lack of enthusiasm for the professional theater and, with the children’s program requiring more and more time, the Howes shifted their focus to the kids’ classes. While Nancy concentrated on running the classes and directing the children’s plays, Worth became more involved in the artistic end of the plays.

Today, when the couple speak about the rewards of working with the children, it is clear they have no regrets about the shift their lives took after coming to Roosevelt Island. “It was meant to be,” Nancy says with a huge grin. “I was supposed to be a teacher. I love theater. And I love kids. So there you go. It all worked out just the way it should.”

Nancy grew up as Nancy Trumbo in a small South Dakota town with fewer than a thousand people. She attended high school in Marin County, California. The performer’s blood had coursed through Nancy’s veins since she was a small child, and she always knew she wanted to become an actor. She remembers singing at nursing homes as a little girl, and performing in musicals through high school. “And it never stopped being a love,” she says. Nancy majored in theater at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and stayed an extra year to become certified as a teacher. After graduating, she went on a 9-month national tour of *Highlights of Broadway*, and then made her way to the New York area.

Worth began his journey to Roosevelt Island via the series of small Texas ranches where he grew up. “Yes, I’m a redneck cowboy,” he booms with a grin, his deep voice resonating with a twinge of Southern drawl. The young Worth was unaware of theater as a small child, although he did enjoy movies. He was interested in archaeology, but had no idea what he wanted to study in college. During his freshman year at the University of Texas at Austin, a girl invited him to a performance of *Hecuba*. He was so affected

that he went to the drama department the next day to declare his major. (He never saw the girl again.)

After college, Worth was drafted into the Army and spent some time stationed in Massachusetts before returning to his native Texas. He worked at a number of theater companies, including Casa Mañana, where he met Diana Brill. He later moved North to pursue his acting career in the New York area.

Brill convinced the director of a production of *Hello, Dolly!* to cast Worth as Cornelius. “I just thought Worth was a great character actor. Even if he had a small part, he would always make something out of it. I just always wanted to work with him, because I enjoyed his talent.”

Soon afterwards, Worth worked with Brill in another performance of *Dolly* in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Nancy was in the ensemble, replacing a cast member who had broken her hip. “If she hadn’t broken her hip, I never would have met Worth,” Nancy muses. Worth was blown away by Nancy’s red hair, falling to her waist, the moment he saw her, and recalls how fabulous it was to find true love for the first time. The couple married in October 1976, two years

Gabrielle Parnes, who wrote this profile of Worth and Nancy Howe, is living in Paris and regularly contributes her *Paris Journal* to Website NYC10044. Ten installments are currently on line at www.nyc10044.com.



Young Islanders in the finale of a Main Street Theatre production

after meeting on stage.

Brill, who had always been impressed by the couple’s work, soon persuaded them to move to Pennsylvania, where she was opening an Equity dinner theater. Kate, the Howes’ daughter, was born there in 1977. When the Pennsylvania theater closed, they moved to New Jersey. During that period, they worked in five different theaters. “We did shows at two different hotels, a couple of resorts,” recalls Worth. “At one point I did 13 shows in 12 months.”

On a personal note...

The night before my twentieth birthday, I sat in a large classroom at an asbestos-ridden University of Paris campus and repeated in my head the introduction I was going to make to the rest of the attendees. I fought the instinct to bolt from my chair and run to the Metro before my turn came. I had promised myself that this would be my “hard thing” in Paris, the weekly activity I forced myself to go through, no matter how difficult.

When my turn came, I stated my name and told the other students that I had decided to join the acting workshop because I had always loved theater, and because I thought it would be a good way to meet people and improve my French. When I was through, my face burned and I rued my accent. I was certain I looked like an idiot. But, after the class, a 19-year old from the south of France approached me and gave me his telephone number. He told me to call if I ever needed anything.

Jerome later told me that he had reached out for two reasons. He, too, was spending his first year in Paris, and understood what it meant to be in a new place. He also said that I had been bold and confident in the improv I had done. Apparently, I had masked my fears. Today, Jerome remains a close friend.

Not only did theater introduce me to one of my best friends, it has opened up doors to me since I was a small child. Nancy and Worth Howe’s theater classes were a part of my life since I was eight and played Dinkie-Winkie in the Wizard of Oz. When the curtain came down on my first performance, I was overcome by the elation of accomplishment that I would know every spring thereafter. Theater soon became an essential part of my development.

I was excruciatingly shy, but the fall classes and annual spring plays gave me the opportunity to express myself and

to push myself to the limits. I learned how to deal with disappointment and how to interact with my peers.

Above all, the years I spent at the Main Street Theatre taught me to take risks and to open myself to other worlds. Each time I took my bow to applause and laughter, I was reminded that, with commitment and discipline, I really could accomplish something.

Nancy and Worth believed in the talent of every child, pushed every student to his or her limits, to allow each to reach fullest potential. In the sixth grade, they took a leap of faith and cast me as the leading Princess Winifred in *Once Upon a Mattress*. Nobody could believe that I – an introverted little girl – could belt out a silly song and play a drunken loudmouth.

Since my graduation in 1995, theater has served as my bridge between cultures. My best friends in France were those I met in theater class, and my proudest moment in Spain came after tripping over foreign words to complete a successful scene in an acting workshop. I have used the techniques I learned in theater class to teach English to foreign students.

The lessons I learned over the many years at the Main Street Theatre have stayed with me. When I went away to college, the Theatre is what would remain with me as the symbol of growing up on Roosevelt Island. I knew that when my university friends – the ones I was so nervous about making – asked me about my home, I would always tell them about the curtain calls and the flowers and those exhilarating nights when the lights went up and the cast members emerged onto the streets, stage makeup still smeared on our faces and the glow of stardom in our smiles.

Gabrielle Parnes

They have lived on the Island since 1982.

The couple’s closeness is evident from the respect in Worth’s voice when he talks about Nancy’s work at the Theatre, and from Nancy’s pride as she enumerates Worth’s accomplishments. They often finish one another’s sentences, making jokes, teasing, and laughing. In their cozy Eastwood apartment, the piano is packed with family photos.

The couple are as devoted to the Main Street Theatre and the development of young actors as they are to one another. They remember every child who has ever played a role in a performance and have an anecdote about each one. That kind of devotion is essential, given the tremendous demands of running a theater company. “People just don’t realize how much time it is,” Nancy remarks. “Most people think it’s just magic, that we’re really at home, reading a book. But it doesn’t stop when you go home.”

But the rewards make the hard work worthwhile. “If you really love it, then you have to do it,” Nancy says. “And watching kids on stage who have made such a giant step just by speaking – because they’re so terrified or shy, or just so intimidated by the stage – is remarkable. The Theatre is an opportunity, and you don’t have to be the best. And then there are the people who said, ‘I just want to be backstage,’” Nancy continues. Worth finishes her thought, “And now they’re in the business.”

In addition to those who have gone on to become professional actors, the Main Street Theatre has affected hundreds of families. Many children have found a safe second home, off the streets, and formed a new family. Still others have benefited from the Theatre’s scholarship program. Nancy speaks with joy about the personal relationships she has with her students, who confide in her and form lasting relationships. She stresses the pleasure of working with children over the course of many years and seeing their talent and personalities develop.

Still, this intense emotional attachment is also the cause of some of the most difficult aspects of running the

Theatre. For Nancy, it’s casting. “With every child, I go through a whole thing. I picture them walking up to the window and looking at the cast list, and I see their faces falling. I feel bad for every kid who doesn’t get a lead. I know what they’re going to go through. That’s the hardest – dealing with their disappointment.” Then there is the moment in May when Nancy and Worth must say goodbye to their students as they go off into the world. “It’s like losing one of your own,” says Worth.

The Howes’ daughter, Kate, lives in Oregon now and has two children of her own – Aidan, 5, and Lilith, 3. Kate, who was involved in the Main Street Theatre when she was younger, has pursued other goals and is training to be a midwife, despite a natural talent as a dancer.

Those talents were evidently inherited from her parents, who continue to pursue their artistic endeavors. This past summer they had the opportunity to direct *Pajama Game* at Quisisana, a lakeside resort in Maine. Worth has recently intensified his pursuit of acting and has had a number of small television and movie roles, including an appearance on *Law and Order SVU*. But the Main Street Theatre remains a priority for the couple, as it has become a crucial part of life for many Islanders.

“People have moved away and say, ‘I like it here, but the only thing is, we can’t find a place like the Theatre!’” says Nancy, taking a moment to consider the work she and Worth have done for the Island. “I suppose it is unique and I wish I’d had that when I was a kid.”

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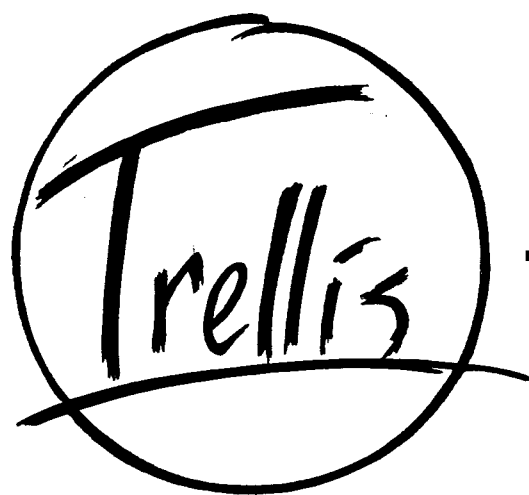
Gwen Almo-Duvar
Marilyn Atkins
Lauren Ballard
Jim Baehler
Phyllis Burdое
Joan Christianson
Irene Clark
Sasha Diamond (12/9 @ 7:30 & 12/15)
Deborah Drucker
Mitch Elinson
Susan Garone
MJ Geier (except 12/9 @ 7:30 & 12/15)
Ted Geier
Walter Geier
Emily Goodridge
Nicole Herlihy



Hanna Jamal
Nancy Howe
David Kolakoski
Marielena Logsdon
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Ten Years Later, Islanders Still Shudder Over a Grisly Murder

by Anusha Shrivastava

It is a game many people play outside 595 Main Street, at the south end of Westview. They wait until someone exits. Then, they enter the 595 Main Street door, avoiding a walk to the entrance at 625 Main Street, where a doorkeeper asks them to sign in. Those who hold the doors in a gesture of good-neighborliness forget that when it's a stranger, their courtesy may compromise the security of the building.

While Roosevelt Island is a safe place, not everyone who visits the Island is a friend. Take the case of Eric Hubert Napier, who visited Kim Nichols, an Island resident, more than ten years ago. At Nichols's Island House apartment, Napier was sipping vodka when Nichols, an attractive but lonely 36-year-old, received a phone call from her mother urging her to help put her father, suffering from Alzheimer's, into a nursing home. Kim shouted at her mother, hung up, and began throwing things in a fit of anger.

She kicked Napier's cowboy boots. Out fell a six-inch buck knife with feathers. She picked it up and jokingly remarked to Napier that maybe she should kill him. He grabbed the knife and slit the back of her legs. When she screamed, he slit her neck. "Then George commanded me to cut her. I did. Zigor told me to gut her like a pig. I did," said Napier in his videotaped confession. By the time he was done obeying the series of commands, Napier's multiple personalities had stabbed Nichols 61 times.

Four men, a woman, an infant, and a dog resided within Napier, a heavy-set, bearded drifter from Ohio. He told a psychiatrist he was ruled by two of the men the afternoon he disemboweled his hostess. One of his multiple personalities, David Applegate, had introduced himself to Kim Nichols at Houlihan's Bar in Manhattan on the 17th of December, 1990. After dinner and drinks, Applegate's companion for the evening, Deborah Garcia, a real-estate agent, accompanied him and Nichols to Roosevelt Island. Garcia left after an argument when Napier

lit up a joint.

It was Sergeant James Knapp, special patrolman for the Roosevelt Island Public Safety, who discovered the body on December 23, 1990, when he went to investigate why Constance Nichols, 62, was unable to contact her oldest daughter, Kim.

"The apartment was immaculate. Everything was spotless. Then we entered the bedroom. It was a bloody mess. The walls had graffiti, painted with Nichols's blood. There were tic-tac-toe designs on parts of her body. Her severely mutilated body had been placed in a strange posture on the bed, as if she were part of a ritual," says Knapp, who is still with Roosevelt Island's Public Safety force. "Napier made off with her fur coats and jewelry the next day, storing them at the Port Authority Bus Terminal along with all his blood-stained clothes," Knapp recalls.

Along with "command codes" he had painted on the mirror, Napier drew a large figure-eight whose top loop looked like a heart. This represented a memory from his childhood. As an eight-year-old in Ohio, he was picking blueberries with his half-brother when they were both raped by their uncle.

Napier's father had abandoned the family when he was a toddler. His mother was an alcoholic and, instead of protecting him from a grandfather who abused him, she often locked the ten-year-old Napier out of the apartment. His half-brother told psychiatrists that their grandfather had poisoned Napier's dog, dipped it in kerosene and then set it on fire in an attempt to terrify the child.

By the time Napier was in high school, he was seeing psychiatrists because "George" was threatening to kill people. By the time he reached Long Island to work as a groomer of horses in 1990, 27-year-old Napier had written bad checks in 17 states and used more than 80 stolen credit cards to support a gambling habit.

It was a stolen credit card that led to his capture. He was apprehended in January, 1991 while using one at the spa in the Holiday Inn in

Manhattan. He had run up bills of over \$1800 on Nichols's credit cards at casinos in Atlantic City and at Saks Fifth Avenue.

"We didn't let the credit card companies cancel her cards," says Detective Bob Hennings of the 114th precinct. He recalls following the paper trail. "We had no clues to work with – no forced entry into the apartment, no witnesses, nothing. Then, I saw Deborah Garcia's business card tucked into the bathroom mirror. Hennings smiles. "She was the one who could connect Napier to the scene."

Napier's lawyer argued that Napier was legally insane, but the jury was unconvinced. Judge Leslie Crocker Snyder sentenced him to 45 years to life. "This has to be one of the most vicious murders that I have ever had to deal with. Vicious, bloody, and totally without anything to say of a positive nature," said Judge Snyder. She told the parole board, "This defendant must never be returned to society." Napier will be 75 years

old before he is eligible for parole.

Last August, he was transferred to the Central New York Psychiatric Center. His therapist, Dr. Kevin Connelly, says he is unfit to talk to anyone. "His mother is on her deathbed, and he is going through a very bad time emotionally," says Connelly.

Thelma McIntosh of Housing Management faced the task of persuading people to consider living in the apartment where Nichols was killed. "The Brazilian couple that lived here before me had the house blessed," says Joan Brooks, the current resident. Brooks says there was definitely a "friendly ghost" when she moved in.

"I would leave flowers and balloons in the living room and by the morning, they would be tied in a bunch and be by my bedside. The apartment has good karma now but there is still a faint bloody hand-print in the broom closet so I never forget what horrible things happened here."

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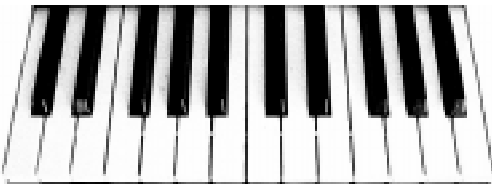
**A Firehouse
Thanksgiving**

This group of residents were among those who prepared and served Thanksgiving dinner at the Firehouse on the Island as a thank-you to members of the Special Operations Unit based here. (See letter, page 2.)

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Islanders

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Live Piano



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(Kitchen open till 1AM)



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Minimum purchase of \$12

Limit one per person

Subject to proof of valid residency



"Best Pizza in NY, as good as John & Tony's, but even better since it's light."

-NY Daily News

Brick Oven Pizza
Items Grilled & Baked
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-New York Times

SPORTSWIRE

SOCCER The championship games in the Youth Program’s Soccer League were played in all three divisions on November 17.

In the Minor Division (ages 7-8), Red defeated Blue in a shootout when the game ended in a 1-1 tie at the end of regulation time and a ten-minute overtime period. Luka Ivcevic scored for Blue on a penalty kick midway through the first half and Oussomo Boutaleb tied the score for Red late in the second half. In the shootout, Javon Perry scored for Blue, but Aidan Strein, Eric Michels, and Oussomo Boutaleb scored to give Red the victory.

Other members of the championship Red team included Jared Francis, Simona Intermite, Donte Jones, Pierluigi Menna, Angela Menna, Nicole Monroe, Daniel Ruiz, Kumi Takahashi, Natalija Trojanovic, Olivia Wuest, and Jonathan Zilberg. The team was coached by Tony Monroe.

In the Junior Division (ages 9-10), the result was identical to the Minor Division as Red also defeated Blue 3-1 in a shootout after the game ended in a 1-1 tie. In regulation time, Samuel Johns scored for Red and Bertrand Oubida scored for Blue. In the shootout, Baba Kane scored for Blue, but Beatrice Ajaero, Alberto Marzan and Ahmed Aboulezz scored to give Red the championship.

Other members of the championship Red team included Alexander Beola, Dora Bowman, Tayquan Carter, Allan Daniels, Jasmine Delaney, Diana Folla, Wendy Gallegos, Chloe Grimes, Jillian Grimes, Eric Kinyua, Ian Kleinfeld, Maya Kurien, David Mischu, Keanu Phillips, Alexander Stefanov, and Samantha Stone. The team was coached by Camile Aboulezz.

In the Senior Division (ages 11-14), Red’s luck finally ran out as Green defeated Red by a 3-2 score. Elliot Levine put Red in the lead midway through the first half, but goals by Thomas Herlihy and Chris Sullivan gave Green a 2-1 lead. Jason Fell tied the score midway through the second half, but Chris Sullivan scored again late in the second half to give Green the victory.

Other members of the victorious Green team included Dennis Perezic, Jake Russem, Abel Tadesse, Eyosyas Tadesse, Nicole Herlihy, Katie Fallone, Charles Weil, Miles Bennington, Rafik Mrabek, Isabella Cultrera, Olivia Callender, Morgan Callender, Adrian Landon, and Sanger Devine. The team was coached by Kerry Connors.

FLAG FOOTBALL In action November 17, the Raiders defeated the Broncos by a 45-26 score and the Jets defeated the Giants, 52-26. With one week left in the regular season in the RI Youth Program’s Flag Football League 12-14 Division, the Raiders lead the Giants by one game in a very tight race:

Raiders	5 – 2 – 1
Giants	4 – 3 – 1
Jets	4 – 4
Broncos	2 – 6



Right: The Senior Division Championship Green Team



Left: the Junior Division Championship Red Team



Below: The Minor Division Championship Red Team

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Holiday Lighting Donors

The list of contributors to the Holiday Lighting Campaign, as supplied by Chamber of Commerce President Julie Palermo, includes:

- Roosevelt Island Youth Program (amount unspecified)
- Roosevelt Island Seniors Association, \$250
- Roosevelt Island Racquet Club, \$250
- Roosevelt Island Residents Association, \$250
- Julie Palermo/Dr. Flannigan, \$250
- People, \$250
- Eastwood Building Committee, \$50
- Hispanic Society, \$250
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- We Are One, \$25
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Jets-Giants action



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