

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, February 9

The Main Street WIRE

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

in association with Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com



What's Behind the Fence View from Eastwood shows the Southtown site, which came abuzz with activity shortly after the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court ruled in favor of RIOC in a legal action that could have derailed development under the current Hudson/Related plan (the case is being appealed further). Outlines show the pits dug for the first and second buildings with rock outcroppings that must be removed. A red bus is passing the gate to the site. At the site of building 2, test piles are being driven. Several other pieces of construction equipment were active on the site Tuesday morning when this photo was taken.

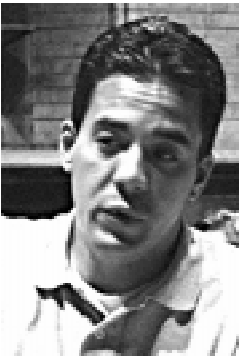
Southtown Construction Gets Serious

by Robert Laux-Bachand

The outlines of Southtown's first two buildings are rapidly taking shape as Monadnock Construction, Inc., completes a relatively shallow excavation.

The digging is a little more than 75 percent complete and should be done in about two weeks, said Scott Weiss, project manager for AMEC, the company that is overseeing the work for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.

Weiss, who has been on duty here since December, 2000, said part of his job is to be a liaison for all Island residents. He told *The WIRE* this week that he would be willing to participate in a town meeting to answer any questions



Scott Weiss

residents may have about the project. Some of the infrastructure work, for example, will alter pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns.

As the work goes on, residents who walk past the construction site may be able to pick out several distinct sounds on the other side of the tall plywood fence: chipping, like a jackhammer, and drilling, as excavators clear out several rocky outcroppings, and the thud of a pile rig, which is pounding test piles to gauge soil resistance. The excavation itself is no more than about 6 feet below grade, enough to create a basement, although footings will be deeper.

The foundations of the 16-story buildings will rest in part on the Island's bedrock, or gneiss, and in part on piles driven into the earth on a site that was once a quarry supplying stones for Island buildings. (They later became part of the seawall when buildings were demolished.) The crane, or pile rig, is working within the 9,000-square-foot space of Building 2, which will be occupied by staff members of the Cornell Weill Medical College and their families.

Building 1, the northernmost of Southtown's projected nine buildings, will be occupied by employees of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. It has a footprint of 14,700 square feet. The two buildings will have a total of 395 apartments and are being developed by The Hudson Companies, Inc., and The Related Companies.

Monadnock Construction, a \$50 million company headquartered in Brooklyn, is associated with Hudson and has been the contrac-

tor for all of Hudson's housing and commercial sites. Monadnock is serving as the general contractor for all the work on Roosevelt Island, and the company's project manager here is Greg Bauso. Twenty-five to 30 workers are on the site now.

Weiss said that residents should be able to see the superstructures of the buildings rising up by mid-May, with the masonry and windows going in by mid-August.

See **Construction**, page 4

Island's CB8 Reps Want an Audit and a City Council Hearing on Island Matters

by Dick Lutz

The Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8 wants the City Council to conduct a hearing to clarify its powers to hold the State accountable for management – or mismanagement – of the Island.

That's the subject of a resolution passed unanimously last month by the Community Board at the request of its Roosevelt Island Committee, composed of co-chairs Patrick Stewart and Deirdre Breslin; and Nneka Pope.

At a meeting Tuesday night, Stewart outlined Roosevelt Island's options for the future: "There are three avenues of approach available to the citizens of the Island," Stewart said. "We can stay as we are with RIOC running the Island; we can [support] a RIOC controlled by elected residents as put forth by the Maple Tree Group; or we can investigate the possibilities of returning the Island to the City of New York."

As to the last possibility, Stewart described two parallel tracks that he feels could lead to the City's tak-

Challenges to Southtown Continue Despite Rulings

by Robert Laux-Bachand

Opponents of the Southtown development plan have not given up the fight despite court rulings in 2000 and 2001 upholding the project.

Roosevelt Islanders for Responsible Southtown Development (RIRSD) has submitted a motion asking New York's highest court, the Court of Appeals in Albany, to accept its challenge to the decision handed down last month by a five-judge appellate panel.

Another opponent, Robert Chira, an Island lawyer representing the Alternative Southtown Design Committee, has prepared a motion asking the Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court, in Manhattan, to allow a re-argument of the appeal. Chira further asks the court for permission to appeal to the high court should his request for re-argument be denied.

The latest motions represent a distillation and refinement of the cases that the Southtown opponents lost before the Appellate Division, which rejected challenges to Justice Harold Tompkins' July 2000 ruling in favor of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and its developers, The Related Companies and The Hudson Companies.

Chira, who sued only RIOC, says the appellate judges erred in not finding that the repositioning of Southtown's northernmost buildings 100

See **Challenges**, page 6

Schedule for Tramway's Return Still a Question

by Robert Laux-Bachand and Dick Lutz

As the Tramway shutdown entered its third month, there were some signs of progress this week in efforts to get the system running again after a maintenance mistake left the haul rope more than eight feet short.

A spokeswoman for the State Labor Department in Albany told *The WIRE* that a stamped, or certified submittal of the engineering plans for a proposed solution was turned in Wednesday by American Tramways, Inc., which operates the Tram.

A New York State-licensed engineer must stamp, or sign off, on the plans before they can be reviewed by the department's Division of Health and Safety. The

division's engineers are reviewing the submittal, prepared in Switzerland, which calls for wrapping the 41-millimeter-thick haul rope 1.5 times around the cable car's bollard, and securing it with extra clamps. The spokeswoman said the division's engineers would be able to handle the review in-house and that such a review typically takes about a week.

Normally, the haul cable, which runs off a motor on Roosevelt Island, is wrapped three times around the Tram car's bollard, or drum. The 1,000-meter rope pulls the cabins and is balanced by a counter-rope that runs through the massive counterweights on the Manhattan side of the Tramway. The shorter wraps will save about 11 feet of the cable, which is actually a steel-wound polypropylene rope.

Red Blomer, the president of American Tramways, told *The WIRE* earlier this month that the company had informal contacts with the State engineers in the days following the accident in December. Blomer and Armando Cordova, lead supervisor of the Tram's 21-person work force, were reported to have met this week with the State engineers at the capital and received assurances that a decision

See **Tram**, page 6

Briefly...

Members of a Maple Tree Group (MTG) delegation who met with Governor George Pataki two weeks ago describe the State's chief executive as being "very receptive" to the idea of more resident control of Roosevelt Island. MTG wants most RIOC Board members to be residents elected by residents, and wants the Board empowered to hire professional community management.

"The Governor said he'll take a very hard look at what he can do for us," MTG said in a brief report to the Residents Association Common Council. The report went on to say that Pataki asked "his top aide" to "stay on it" and work with the Island's legislators in an effort to structure a bill that will get approval all around. A further report is expected at the February 6 Council meeting.



New at Cabrini Fr. Peter A. Miqueli is the new priest of Roosevelt Island's Catholic parish. He'll be the subject of a future *WIRE* profile.

Letters

More Letters, page 3

To The Editor:

The Town Meeting RIOC held on Thursday night [January 17] to talk about the Tram was a disgrace. One thing you have to give RIOC – they’re masters at avoiding the real issue.

The problem is very simple: There is a transportation requirement on this Island for Tram service every 7½ minutes during peak hours and every 15 minutes off peak. If there weren’t, the Tram wouldn’t run that often. That requirement does not go away just because the Tram is down, nor does RIOC’s obligation to meet that requirement go away. (Remember, the subway platform is not ADA compliant, so the train is not an option for many residents.)

The answer is also very simple: Intelligent compromise – more buses. Until the Tram returns to its normal schedule, during peak hours the residents give up the 7½-minute interval and all buses run at 15-minute intervals for the rest of the usual Tram timetable. Anything less is inadequate. Certainly since, as Rob Ryan stated, American Tramways accepted complete responsibility for the problem, we should expect them to reimburse RIOC, but that’s not our problem, it’s Rob Ryan’s. One would think that the President of RIOC would be able to negotiate that reimbursement deal.

Let’s not miss RIOC’s approach to managing this Island. When residents asked why the buses didn’t show up on time, why the elevators at the Tram were out of service so often, why some physically challenged people were left waiting in the street because there wasn’t enough room on the bus, Ryan’s answer was, “It shouldn’t have happened, but you need to tell us these things.” Interesting management style: “I just give the orders. If they don’t get carried out, that’s *your* fault. It’s *your job* to tell me, because I don’t check.”

Good thing the airlines don’t work that way: “That plane shouldn’t have crashed. I told my mechanics to tighten those screws, but I depend on the passengers to tell me if they hear things banging around in the engine.” I can’t believe I actually have to point this out, but RIOC ought to look into a concept called “Quality Control,” where management actually checks to see if the assigned work is being done.

Certainly the residents should complain more, but realistically, if RIOC wanted to hear from us, they’d have a system in place so we could be heard, instead of the current procedure where we get to speak at RIOC Board meetings three times a year and the Board members don’t even have to stay and listen. They’d have a two-way communication structure in place that continually seeks input from the residents and tells us what’s going on.

Residents have just two requests:

RIOC: Do your job or get out of the way and let the residents take over.

RIOC Board members: Become part of the solution instead of the problem. Do your job by making RIOC do theirs.

Margie Smith

To the Editor:

I don’t know if I’m the only one to make a complaint about the crowding on the F train.

On Wednesday, January 16, I stood, along with countless others, letting 3 or 4 trains go by without room to get on. The next morning I had to ask people to move in, in order to get on. Again, people on the platform were saying, “Let’s wait for the next train.”

Why do the residents of Roosevelt Island have to suffer? If more people are using trains coming from Queens, the MTA should put more trains on. I’m quite sure if a survey was done it would show how much ridership has gone up since the Q was eliminated, but residents here are now suffering the additional burden of increased riders.

Rosemary Dringus

To the Editor:

The Catholic Diocese of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini has lost its saintly priest, Father Luke McCann.

Why he was transferred from this community where he is so well loved and needed is a mystery. His kindness and gentleness to little children, the elderly and handicapped, was very touching. His services weekday mornings in the little chapel were beautiful and enlightening and filled an empty space in my heart and soul.

My prayer for Father Luke is that his new congregation appreciates him and accepts all the love he has to give.

He will be sorely missed here and I, for one, will never forget him.

Marian Valentine

To the Community:

If you have gotten this far in *The WIRE* then you must care about the quality of life on Roosevelt Island. I therefore suggest that you call the following numbers and register your complaints and concerns. Pass these numbers along to your neighbors and urge them to call. Identify yourself as a resident and say whatever it is that is on your mind regarding the Island. We can no longer afford to be apathetic. This will be a start.

Marybeth Labate, Chair, RIOC: **518-473-9462** or **518-486-3370**
Robert Ryan, President, RIOC: **212-832-4540**
A. Gifford Miller, Speaker, City Council: **212-535-5554**
Pete Grannis, Assemblymember: **212-860-4926**
Olga Mendez, State Senator: **212-860-0893**

Karen Puritz

To the Editor:

The last issue of *The WIRE* carried a notice that the Roosevelt Island committee of CB8 had raised a proposal that NYC be asked to review the Lease between the City and the State of New York.

Such a proposal implies an inference that the State agency (RIOC) has been doing something improper in the terms of the Lease.

One interesting aspect to this CB8 proposal is that Patrick Stewart serves on both the CB and on the RIOC Board. Being an insider, Mr. Stewart is in a unique position to know if reasonable grounds exist to suggest that RIOC may be operating in contradiction to the Lease. Has he raised any such questions in public? Is he aware of impropriety on the part of RIOC and remained mute on the topic? Does he suspect such impropriety and, even though a member of RIOC Board, is unable to make the public aware of the details of the impropriety?

It is strange that anyone should seek an investigation of his/her own affairs and conduct.

David Bauer

To the Editor:

I write to clarify the recent appeals court Southtown decision:

- It did *not* rule that residents could not challenge RIOC decisions that may conflict with the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP). Indeed, it adjudicated most of the two petitioners’ various challenges. Moreover, the lower court had ruled the petitioners had legal standing to bring such suits and this ruling was not even contested by RIOC on appeal.

- The appeals court did *not* rule that the GDP is only “illustrative,” but rather the proposed site plan on a map attached to it. The court simply quoted from the GDP, which states the final location of all “improvements” (buildings, parks, etc.) is not necessarily as indicated on that map.

- The other petitioner [RIRSD] asked the court to interpret the lease itself rather than defer to RIOC’s interpretation. This was an attempt to circumvent the difficult standard applicable in Article 78 challenges, which require that you show RIOC’s interpretation was unreasonable (“arbitrary or capricious”). The appeals court did not address the issue raised. Instead it ruled the residents had no standing to challenge the lease as “third party beneficiaries.” (I promise your friend a bicycle if you pay me \$100; you pay me; your friend can sue me if I do not deliver the bicycle. He is the third party beneficiary of our contract.) The court then ruled under the Article 78 standard that RIOC did not act arbitrarily or capriciously in interpreting the lease. The third party beneficiary ruling does not affect the rights of residents to challenge RIOC’s future interpretations of the lease or GDP requirements, but they will have to do so under the difficult Article 78 standard.

- The appeals court did not bar RIRA’s intervention only because it sought entry three months after the deadline. It ruled the lower court properly exercised its discretion to bar its entry because RIRA advanced no argument not already raised by the other two petitioners.

- There is no “right” to a further appeal to the State’s highest court. It accepts few appeals, only about 5% of those requested.

Robert Chira

Attorney for Alternative Southtown Design Committee

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Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Chief Feature Writer – Anusha Shrivastava
Reporters – Robert Laux-Bachand, Francine Lange
Ombudsman – Armand Schwab – **838-3184**
Chief Proofreader – Kay Thompson
Proofreader – Linda Heimer
Chief Photographer – Margery Rubin
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“So, Russell, what do you **love** about music?”
“To begin with... everything.”
So goes a conversation toward the end of Cameron Crowe’s film, *Almost Famous*. It makes me think of a conversation with myself that I have often:
“So, Dick, what do you **love** about Roosevelt Island?”
“To begin with... everything.”
I love the people who dwell within a spectrum of intensity that ranges from limp to fanatic, and the way the fanatics put all they have into every cause, each charging his life and mine with an energy of conviction that knows no compromise.
And the bricks. I love the zee-bricks that make this place something special and different. I love even the ones that have broken and that RIOC has allowed to break more.
The grass, wherever it may be found, whether it is in the small cherry grove that lies riverside to Westview or the larger one south of Rivercross. Even the weeds that get hold of the soil when RIOC cannot get organized to do the mowing.
And the Tram. Especially the Tram. The Tram, even when RIOC is trying to cut its hours. Indeed, I love even the attempts to take it away because they are so desperately dumb that they are lovable in their total ineptness.
I love the memory of Al Weinstein, fighting for the Tram. Plunking a chair down at the front of Good Shepherd Chapel and pointing out the absence of Dr. Jerry Blue, coming out for a moment from his genteel suit of diplomacy and showing us the fire that made Roosevelt Island and the Tram *his* Island and *his* Tram.
And there is the image of Sister Regina Palamara, telling us that, on the way to yet another Town Meeting about the Tram, she prayed to a Saint named Al Weinstein, and then laying it on the line like no nun I have ever heard or seen.
I love Archie Seale and Patrick Stewart and so many who, because of the roles they play in this game of life, do not and cannot love me; I

love them because there is texture and richness in the complexity of the practical and philosophical matters on which we disagree.
I find that I can love even Jim Whalen or Debra Mount Cornet as one or the other blasts away at me in yet another screed that I think passes only for an angry and ill-reasoned first draft, because the richness and texture that passion adds to this Island are felt at their hearts and dig at their souls, as silly and misplaced as the passion may be.
I even love the way philosophical allies can take their cause and its prosecution so seriously that they can disagree passionately and angrily about the finer points of what must be done for The Cause, and then lose that anger and keep the passion over coffee at Trellis.
There is *so much* to love about Roosevelt Island.
At another point in *Almost Famous*, the mother of child-journalist William Miller, played by Frances McDormand, quotes Goethe: *Be bold, and mighty forces will come to your aid*. If there is any single editorial message this newspaper seeks to bring to its audience, it is that message. While timidity and fear will beget only more reason for timidity, bravery and guts and determination are their own rewards and they are the only path to what this Island community deserves.
To me, being bold means going all-out for a locally elected RIOC Board of Directors. It means making the leap of faith that in this community we have the intellectual wherewithal and commitment to make this community greater by far than it could ever be while under remote rule from Albany. Being bold means shedding the fear that is bred when we have lived for so long under the sheltering safety of a State government that has shown repeatedly that it produces little safety and robs us of the responsibility we owe ourselves.
Being bold means making the leap with confidence that at the end of our trajectory there will be *mighty forces* coming to our aid.

DL

Sign up for e-mail bulletins...

Website NYC10044 will e-mail you when there is important Roosevelt Island news, between issues of *The WIRE*, posted on the website. To add your e-mail address to the list, send it in e-mail to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com, with the subject line **Add**. Or check www.nyc10044.com regularly for the latest developments.

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

Tue., Jan. 29, 9:30 a.m., **Closed RIOC Board Executive Session Meeting**, New York State Housing Finance Agency, 641 Lexington Avenue, Conference Room A (4th floor), for discussion of projects proposed by RIOC's real-estate marketing consultants.

Mon., Jan. 28, 7:45 p.m., **Maple Tree Group Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd; issues in a resident-elected RIOC Board.

Tue., Jan. 29, 6:30 p.m., **Magician Matess**, Library. Free. Children of all ages are welcome.

Fridays, 7-9 p.m., **Sketching Sessions**, sponsored by Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association, 546 Main Street, 12th floor. Small fee. For information, call (212) 755-1771.

Sat., Feb. 2, 7:00 p.m., **Concert – Georgie Bonds and the Blueskeepers**, PS/IS 217 Auditorium, presented by the PS/IS 217 Beacon Program of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program. Free.

Wed., Feb. 6, 8:00 p.m., **Residents Association Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Sat., Feb. 9, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Feb. 1; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Feb. 4, with materials due Thur., Feb. 7. **Future issues** generally every two weeks as follows: Feb. 23, Mar 9, Mar 23, Apr. 6, Apr. 20, May 4, May 18, June 1, June 15, June 29 (Fourth of July issue), July 27 (reduced summer schedule), Aug 24, Sept. 7, Sept. 21, Oct. 5, Oct. 19, Nov. 2 (pre-election issue), Nov. 9 (post-election), Nov. 23, Dec. 14 (holiday issue). **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.

Thur., Feb. 14, 6:00 p.m., ***The Slocum Burns!***, U.S. premiere of 1999 documentary film by Christian Baudissin about the loss in 1904, in the East River, of 1100 passengers aboard the steam paddleboat *General Slocum*, followed by a discussion with historian Ed O'Donnell; Segal Theater, CUNY, Fifth Avenue at 34th Street. Free.

Sat., Feb. 16, 6:00 p.m., **PTA International Dinner** at PS/IS 217; parents invited to bring foods representing their home countries. Information: **980-0294**, ext. 2108.

Tue., Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion**, *Surfacing* by Margaret Atwood, Library. Advance registration required.

Sat., Mar. 2, 7:00 p.m., **Concert – Los Soneros de Oriente**, Son style Afro-Cuban song, PS/IS 217 Auditorium, presented by the PS/IS 217 Beacon Program of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program. Free.

Wed., Mar. 6, 8:00 p.m., **Residents Association Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Tue., Mar. 19, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion**, *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink, Library. Advance registration required.

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, Resumes Feb. 1: **Yoga Stretch**
11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (intermediate)
11:15, **Stay Well**
7:30, **Lotto**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)
Special Events
Mon., Jan. 28, 10:00, Health Lecture, *How to Speak with Your Doctor*, and Blood Pressure Screening
Mon., Feb. 11, 11-12:30, MetroCard Bus

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

New York's first (only?) snowstorm of the winter came and went last weekend, briefly blanketing the Island in white. Like all City snow, it was beautiful as it descended, and then it was slush. My wife has yearned for snow all winter. My thoughts are on spring training, pitchers and catchers, and the Mets' prospects this year.

By the time you read this, the latest in a long line of Tram contretemps will be behind us and contingency plans will be in place for the duration of the predicament. Many of you attended the town meeting called by RIOC on January 17 to discuss the loss of Tram service. Islanders expressed their frustration over the extended Tram outage and RIOC's provisions for alternative transportation.

Some of you were outraged by American Tramways' error in measuring and cutting the haul rope. I can't help thinking of NASA's multi-million dollar screw-ups in space, caused by confusion over whether metric or English system measurements were used. I remember airline accidents caused by experienced pilots who neglected to lower the flaps on landing just once, having done it correctly thousands of times. Inexplicable human error happens. The test of a system is its anticipation of snafus. Snafu is a military term meaning situation normal, all fouled up. I have heard the word "fouled" replaced with a synonym, however.

My chief concern is that eight weeks have passed since Thanksgiving and the start of Tram repairs and maintenance. Eight weeks in which a Tram, carrying 500 passengers per hour (1,000 passengers during rush hours) was replaced by one red bus carrying approximately 50 riders every hour. At the town meeting, Rob Ryan, RIOC president, said that no one called the RIOC office to complain, so how would they know there was a problem?

The Tram has been in operation for a quarter of a century, and Island old-timers tell me that the Tram has been out of service for extended periods on many occasions. The problem is that there are no standing contingency plans on file at RIOC that survive changes in administration. RIOC's institutional memory seems to last as long as its presidents' tenures and then, like the wheel, must be reinvented. This is inefficient and no way to run anything.

I'm glad the frequency of bus service to Manhattan has been doubled during rush hours. Clearly, it's the right thing to do. However, this plan should have been in place *from the git-go*. And American Tramways, which has accepted responsibility for the human error that precipitated this latest event, should have been

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prevailed upon to pay for even greater frequency of service *from the git-go*. I would urge RIOC to anticipate our needs, just as they do the need for rock salt for the streets in winter. You don't know when the streets and sidewalks will be icy, you just know that, sooner or later, they will.

I was privileged to be one of the members of the Maple Tree Group who met with Governor George Pataki and his staff on January 11. Our group had worked for months to prepare a presentation that would, briefly, outline our concerns with the present administration of the Island, detail the criteria for future development, and discuss a proposal to modify the legislation that created RIOC in 1984. This bill would provide for the elected representation of Island residents on the RIOC Board of Directors and would incorporate the hiring of trained, experienced management of RIOC.

We met for an hour with the Governor's chiefs of policy and legislation, John Cahill and James Capiello; with our State Senator, Olga Mendez; RIOC President Robert Ryan; and Governor Pataki. I was impressed by the level of knowledge evinced by Mr. Cahill and the Governor, and by the quality of their questions.

Explaining why our proposal was the best solution for residents was the easy part of our pitch. Clearly, a governing body answering directly to the community and elected by the community will be more sensitive to the needs of that community. Convincing the Governor of why this plan was in *his* best interests was harder. Certainly, he would be foregoing the opportunity for a number of patronage jobs. Also, Island developers have supported his political aspirations. Why then, give this up?

We think, because it's the right thing to do, and the Governor is on record as saying so. He is a long-time advocate of enhanced parkland and for local control of small communities. In his recent State of the State address, he mentioned the critical need for affordable housing so that people can remain in their communities. He has said, "Too often, faceless bureaucrats tell local government what it must do and when it must do it. This Governor believes in the power of the people to make decisions for themselves." And also, "Improve the ability of local governments to develop and implement local open-space plans to protect locally significant open space."

Just before Governor Pataki left us, he asked his long-time friend and our long-time advocate, Senator Mendez, what she thought of our plan. Olga said, "This is an idea whose time has come." 'Nuff said.



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

Letters from page 2

To the Community:

We wish sincerely to thank all of you who have given us your support, showed concern, and bestowed good wishes on us after hearing of the assault Lee sustained before Christmas. This has touched us and continues to touch us deeply and, to know that we have such a community that makes this possible, adds a dimension that is really beyond compare anywhere else in New York. Thank you.

Lee, Kasia and Julian Edelman

To the Editor:

Perhaps Mr. Edelman should think first of his safety and not walk along the promenade on a cold winter night. I feel very safe here after 24 years. However, I do not tempt the fates by walking on empty promenades on a winter night.

Luckily the gun was plastic, or we might have been writing an obituary for you, Mr. Edelman.

Forget the macho stuff and give them your money; beats your life.

Judith Berdy

News Updates:
Website NYC10044
www.nyc10044.com
including Tram developments

To the Editor:

Lee Edelman's recounting of his mugging was chilling. He is very brave and very fortunate. His experience mandates that, in addition to the usual patrols, the length of the promenades encircling the Island along the West and East Channels should be patrolled by Public Safety, and more frequently than ever. In light of the train-service extension into Queens and easy access to our Island, not doing so will render these areas off-limits to law-abiding persons and allow the criminal element to control the entire Island.

Let's not merely cringe and hide. It's important that we become more involved in our own security and try to give assistance in any way that we can. Mr. Edelman said that he called out for help and no one came to his assistance. This is appalling. With practically everyone owning and carrying a cell phone these days, the very least a person can do in a situation like this is to dial 911. Also, the MTA employees should have done more to help him. If the Island becomes dangerous for residents, it also becomes dangerous for those who work here.

A happy and safe 2002 to all,
Connie Gironda

To the Editor:

Thanks for the very compelling first-person story that Lee Edelman wrote about his recent mugging on the river promenade at night. I have two short comments about it.

First, it would've been interesting to learn whether those teen muggers were local or "imported," if only to help pinpoint the sources of our problems and what we can do about them. (I know that legally, you can't publish minors' identities, but does the prohibition extend to mentioning where they're from, if you don't give exact addresses?).

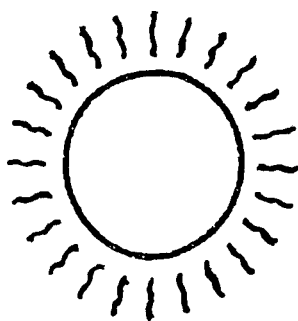
Second – and this is not to justify the deterioration of the Island over the past few years – I feel that Mr. Edelman was really tempting fate by using that promenade at night. When I moved here in '94, it was safe to walk on both promenades at all times of the day and night. Now I only use them on weekends and in broad daylight, when there are lots of other people around. Otherwise, I just don't feel secure, and what happened to Mr. Edelman proves me right.

It's too bad (but it's a fact) that here, as in the rest of New York City, if you snooze, you lose – your wallet, and maybe much more.

Patricia Duarte

Letters deadline for Feb. 9 issue: Feb. 4.

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



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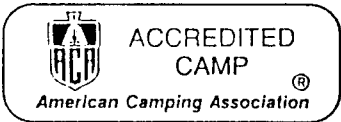
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CB8 from page 1

whether that power now resides with the Mayor or with the City Council.

While hearings to explore the Council's authority might not lead directly to a City takeover because there are many related problems that would have to be solved, such hearings might represent a potential embarrassment to the State administration at a time when Governor George Pataki is preparing to run for re-election.

Similarly, an investigative audit by the City Controller might have more potential for embarrassment than for actually spurring a move back to City control.

Representing Assemblymember Pete Grannis, Tony Morenzi told some 25 residents at the meeting that "under the lease, the City Controller is the only official with the authority to audit the lease and say whether the State has violated its terms." Morenzi said that City Controller Bill Thompson's staff "has not said no to it yet. We believe they are looking at this issue very seriously and we're waiting for a determination of whether they will go forward with an audit to see if New York State has

lived up to the terms of the Lease."

Morenzi and others in the meeting cited deterioration of Blackwell House, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, and other landmarks, as evidence that the State is not keeping up its end of the lessor-lessee bargain.

Morenzi added, "If a determination was ever made that there are violations to the lease, I don't know what that would trigger, if anything. It's never been done before. All of this is new ground that we're trying to open up." Rhetorically, he added the question, "Why would the City want to take [Roosevelt Island] back? They would have to see a benefit to taking it back. So all this is [a] big unknown at the moment."

Breslin suggested that with Councilmember Gifford Miller, who represents the Island, now leader of the City Council in his capacity as Speaker, the Council might be more willing than in the past to attempt clarification of its authority over Island land use, and then perhaps move to hold the State responsible for execution of the terms of the lease.

Construction from page 1

Much of the other work in the meantime will not be visible, as Monadnock and its subcontractors complete the infrastructure of the 19-acre site.

Water and sewer lines and the AVAC garbage disposal pipe must be extended to Southtown, and Weiss said that he wanted to complete some of the more disruptive work associated with these projects before summer.

Two 19-inch AVAC pipes, buried five feet deep, run on either side of the Island. Southtown will be connected to the east line, which terminates near the kiddie lot south of Eastwood. Weiss suggested that the work of cutting the AVAC trench could curtail use of the playground for a brief period.

More disruptive, perhaps, will be a connection to the Island's storm-drainage system, which will be done in about six weeks. Weiss said a trench will have to be cut across the West Service Road, the only connection between Northtown and structures to the south – the Tram, the Steam Plant, and Goldwater Hospital.

The details of this job, which will take about three weeks, have yet to

be worked out, Weiss said. But it appears that the sidewalk leading to the subway station will have to be torn up, and that pedestrian traffic will be rerouted to the esplanade along the East River. Much of this work could be done at night, he added, with the roadway plated for rush hours, or even rerouted.

As for the traffic turnaround near the Tramway station, Weiss held out little hope for Island motorists that a more convenient location will be available in the near future. The northern tip of Southtown is densely packed with utility lines and can't accommodate a traffic circle at this point, he said. A new turnaround will have to wait 18 to 24 months, when Main Street is extended straight through to the Tram station.

The extension of Main Street, and indeed the whole configuration of the Southtown site, will be a major landscaping project. Weiss said that 30 percent of the materials excavated as the sites are constructed – those big piles of dirt that can be seen over the fence – would be used as backfill for the buildings themselves, while the remaining 70 percent would be recycled

on-site to raise the general grade.

And one part of the project is 95 percent complete. That is the new sports field, north of the Tramway Plaza, which was sodded last fall. Weiss said it should be ready for use this summer. The blocky white building east of the Tram and power plant is a combination pumphouse and locker room for soccer and baseball players. Monadnock, as the general contractor, is responsible for a full year of maintenance before RIOC takes over, Weiss said.

Weiss describes his role, in part, as that of a "safety net." From his trailer near the Tram, he works closely with the contractors who are transforming the geography of Roosevelt Island. But he tries to keep the residents' interests in mind: "I don't want the pile rig driving piles at 6:30 in the morning, I don't want 14 concrete trucks running a convoy down Main Street, I don't want the kids in the tot lot to play in the playground next to a machine."

Updates: [Website NYC10044](http://WebsiteNYC10044.com)
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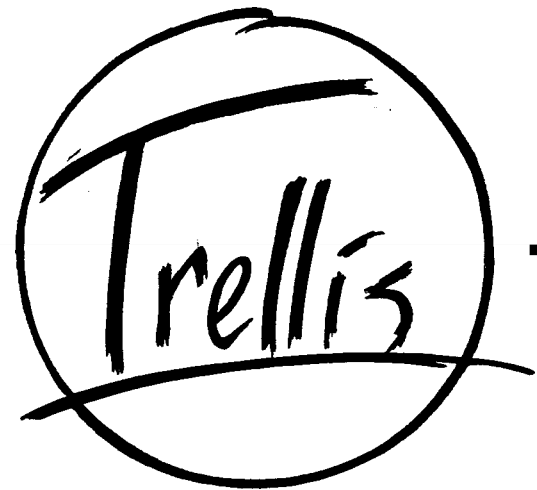
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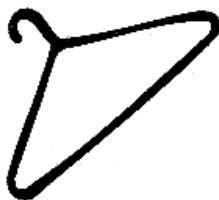
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