

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, March 23

The Main Street **WIRE**TM

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

News updates on **Website NYC10044** www.nyc10044.com



Proud Parents These members of the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association paused Wednesday night while preparing for Friday’s grand opening. Clockwise from left, Rebecca Musgrave, Nina Tandon, Tad Sudol, Esther Piakowski Cohen, Jeremy Sudol, Arline Jacoby, Rita De Cassia, and Harry Small.

Island Art Gallery Opens

Gallery RIVAA is open. The new art gallery of the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) was scheduled to open at 529 Main Street Friday evening after *The WIRE*’s press deadline. The space was once occupied by Bigelow Pharmacy, but has been vacant since late 1999. According to RIVAA President Arline Jacoby, the gallery will be open Fridays, 5-9 p.m., and 11-5 Saturdays and Sundays. She says future gallery offerings will include performance, poetry, lectures, and a changing array of visual art. The opening show has works by more than a dozen Island artists. In a press release about the gal-

lery, RIOC quotes President Robert H. Ryan as saying, “Just as Governor Pataki revitalized the arts when he was Mayor of Peekskill, he has brought that commitment to New York State. It has been a pleasure for RIOC to work with Arline Jacoby and Tad Sudol of RIVAA to help realize the dream of having a gallery space here on Roosevelt Island. Certainly this is as important an amenity as any other, as the arts provide a genuine improvement in quality of life to any neighborhood.” The same press release quotes Jacoby: “I think that we are going to find that Roosevelt Island will become a destination in itself for people from around the City to view this unique space and place where we live.” In addition to Jacoby and Sudol, RIVAA lists members of its Board as being actively involved in arranging for the space and preparing it for exhibitions. They include Esther Piakowski, Harry Small, Philip Groner, and Rita DeCassia. A RIVAA press release lists several Island artists as being involved in the arrangements, including Ionel Teodorescu, Edel Stuehmke-Levy, Annette Hochberg, Toshiko Groner, Georgette Sinclair, Anthony Moran, Marika Bordes, Maureen Leong, Rebecca Musgrave, Trudy Spielberger, Dan Nistor, and Adina Grun.



Movin’ On RIRA’s Common Council said goodbye Wednesday night to Mosud Mannan, who moves to Beijing to represent Bangladesh as Deputy Head of Mission. He also leaves gaps at the PTA, the Historical Society, and the Boy Scouts. At the UN for two years, Mannan was most recently a Minister at the Bangladesh Mission.

State Stymies Rivercross Privatization

Rivercross privatization has stalled – again. At a shareholders meeting last week, members of the co-op’s Board of Directors working on a plan to take the building out of the State Mitchell-Lama system reported that the Urban Development Corporation (UDC, now known as the Empire State Development Corporation) has refused to make the kind of tax concession that would allow the building to go private without risk to low-income shareholders. In the plan a privatization committee was proposing to UDC, a continuing tax abatement plus “flip taxes” – charges levied on first market-rate sales of apartments originally acquired at controlled prices – would have mitigated the impact on maintenance charges in the building. This would have kept maintenance charges in an “affordable” range.

According to members of the building’s board, UDC says it has the sole right to receive tax-abated payments, and in 2007 will expect taxes as high as \$3 million, more than triple the less than \$1 million presently paid in ground rent and PILOTs (payments in lieu of taxes). That figure would rule out a plan under which maintenance increases would be held within privatization guidelines approved by Rivercross shareholders in 1996. Members of the Board said negotiations with UDC have ended for now, and that those working on privatization “must regroup.” The project has run into barriers before. One member of the Rivercross board said, in response to a shareholder’s question, “There must be a political will to do this, and we haven’t found it yet.”

Shooting at Manhattan Park Raises Fresh Concerns on Public Safety

RIRA to Ask Role in Dispute Leads to Shots, Choice of New PSD Chief Attempted Murder Charge

by Dick Lutz

Members of the Residents Association Common Council expressed alarm Wednesday night about bullets flying on Roosevelt Island, and once again discussed steps toward greater resident input on the operation of the Island’s Public Safety Department. RIRA Vice President Byron Gaspard told the meeting of the Common Council, “We need a greater [City] police presence here.” Others said they felt the NYPD would never spend what’s required to put a substation on the Island, as Gaspard has called for, particularly given the City’s current budget. Gaspard agreed that, without additional pressure, the 114th Precinct would be unlikely to create a regular presence on the Island. “If we had a regular cop with a gun,” suggested Joe Cristiano, “there could have been intervention before there was shooting. A cop would have approached

by Anusha Shrivastava

Shots were fired outside 2-4 River Road last week. A resident of the building, Jamon Walker, 20, has been charged with wounding Jahi Young, 21, on Monday, February 25, just before 6:00 p.m. Young, a resident of 510 Main Street, was hit in the leg at least once, according to information released by the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Public Information of the New York Police Department. The charge against Walker is attempted murder. The last such shooting, also outside 2-4 River Road, occurred four years ago. According to the Public Safety Department blotter, a Public Safety Officer on motor patrol observed the shooting and recognized both Walker and Young. Young hailed a taxi immediately after the shooting and was taken to Elmhurst General Hospital. He was released the same day.

See **RIRA**, page 3

See **Shooting**, page 3



Tram Fix Under Way

Workers appeared to be on schedule for a Monday start of testing for the Tramway’s return, now predicted for March 17. A haul cable to replace one cut short in error arrived Tuesday, as expected. On Thursday, Tramway employees were told, through their union representative, that their health insurance costs during their extended layoff will not be covered by American Tramways. At left, four workers braved bitter cold on Tuesday to prepare for the cable replacement process.

RIOC Audit: An \$11 Million Budget

by Robert Laux-Bachand

Tax season for Island residents is also the time that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation puts its financial house in order. RIOC is preparing a new budget, closing the books on the fiscal year that ends this month, and reviewing what amounts to its annual report card – the audit performed by an independent accounting firm. From an accountant’s perspective, the most important grade may

be the one for complying with generally-accepted accounting principles and, in this respect, the report presented to the RIOC board gave the State-run corporation “a clean bill of health,” according to Patrick Siconolfi, RIOC’s chief financial officer. In the Age of Enron, such assurances are of more than passing interest, especially for an organization that is responsible for vital services such as transportation, public safety, and garbage removal. But the accountants’ report serves another purpose, too, and that is to give residents a look – if only through a rearview mirror – at some of the inner workings of Roosevelt Island. Highlights of the report, dated August 27 for the year ending last March 31, 2001, were delivered by John Alfonso, a partner of McGladrey & Pullen LLP, at the RIOC meeting last week. Total revenue in 2000-01 was \$11,115,360 and expenditures were \$11,066,960. Most of RIOC’s spending is accounted for in its \$10 million general fund, and of that, almost \$5.1 million went for wages and other compensation costs – an

increase of 3.3 percent over the year before. RIOC employs 99 people. As in previous years, tenants at Manhattan Park supplied the largest portion of RIOC’s revenue, creating what amounts today to an additional subsidy for residents of Rivercross, Eastwood, Island House and Westview – Northtown’s original housing complexes, which are already cost-protected by the State Division of Housing, and in some instances exempt from ground rent. Of RIOC’s total commercial revenue of \$5,656,788 in 2000-01, Manhattan Park supplied more than \$4.1 million, or 72.9 percent. “Basic rent,” collected mostly from Main Street businesses, was \$783,388, down about 9 percent from the year before, but nearly the same as the amounts budgeted for the current year and projected for 2002-03. RIOC also earned \$98,397 from film companies in the year ended last March, and picked up about \$651,000 in a miscellaneous category that includes ground rent paid by Island House, as provided

See **Audit**, page 6

Report Drug Activity: 1-718-468-4868

**Field Operations Desk
Queens Narcotics**

Editorial

RIOC: Take Better Care Of Our Tramway

Barring another snafu, the Tramway should be back in operation by the time *The Main Street WIRE* next appears on your doorstep. By then, it will have been out of operation for about four months that included the Christmas shopping season, the coldest days of winter, and a period of sometimes chaotic transition in the Island’s subway service.

The timing is explained by RIOC as the consequence of a summertime decision to change Tram contractors and the subsequent discovery by American Tramways, the new operator, that the haul cable was overdue for replacement. Fair enough.

And it may be that the decision to go with American Tramways was a wise one, despite the company’s subsequent error in cutting the new haul cable short. It may be that in switching to American Tramways, RIOC has taken one step toward taking better care of our Tramway.

One step. But not enough.

Better Maintenance Planning

The WIRE found, in investigating the alleged problem of replacing the haul cable, that such cables can safely be stored as spare parts – contrary to claims made in a public session on the Tramway outage. So another step RIOC could take is to have adequate spare parts on hand. That could include cables, with a policy of ordering a new spare shortly before making use of one that’s been in storage. The expense of being prepared for an emergency would be a relatively small one-time blip in the budget that would provide long-term benefits.

No to Ads, Yes to Proper Subsidy

But there are other considerations, among them the moves by the RIOC Board toward putting advertising on the Tram. *Ugh*. The plaint is that ads would help cover a deficit which now is financed out of RIOC funds that otherwise could go toward badly-needed repairs of Main Street and the kind of general maintenance that would make Roosevelt Island a better place to live. That approach to the deficit fails to recognize that, all over the State and all over the country, mass transit is subsidized with tax funds. The Tramway should not be subsidized through failure to maintain the Island in general. It should, instead, be subsidized by the same tax dollars that subsidize all *other* mass transit in New York State.

Taking better care of the Tramway would mean going after the subsidy it rightly deserves, rather than desecrating its quaintness with the pollution of yet more advertising in an ad-filled environment. Ads on the Tramway, *The WIRE* thinks, are an idea which would deteriorate to a bad memory shortly after the novelty wore off – perhaps with the lingering consequence of having cheapened an icon.

And the MetroCard

Another step would be MetroCard. RIRA President Matthew Katz may have kicked up some new interest at the MTA recently, and we’ll see how the meeting he’s arranging between Lawrence Reuter of the MTA and RIOC President Robert Ryan works out. But the failure to come up with a formula to give Tram riders the free transfer included for MetroCard users is a serious RIOC lapse in its responsibility to take care of our Tram.

With or without some major concession from the MTA, RIOC should make the MetroCard happen for the Tram. The gain in ridership among those who would come aboard with availability of a free transfer to a second ride on subway or bus just might make up the loss on second-ride users. Even if it didn’t, the MetroCard and *One City, One Fare* is an idea that should extend to the Tram.

And as a good friend points out, right now many seniors ride the Tram to Manhattan, free, then come back at half-price on the subway, in a maneuver that’s a total loss for RIOC. With Metrocard, the departing fare, at least, would be recovered as a half-price senior ride.

So now that the Tramway is about to start up again, we call upon RIOC to take better care of it, not just by giving up ludicrous ideas like cutting the third shift (an idea never formally taken off the table), but by positive moves to minimize downtime, and to improve its service to Roosevelt Islanders, tourists, and all who would embrace it more readily as part of a MetroCard package.

A How-To Seminar

Making Activities Pay Off for Kids

“When do you push? When do you not?”

The subject is children’s activities and the sensitive role parents must play in helping their children have satisfying experiences. According to Dr. Gina Lipton, who will present an Island Kids seminar on the subject March 23, it’s not just a question of how many activities, but the nature of the parental role in optimizing the benefits of a child’s activities.

Lipton poses the question, “What’s motivational?,” suggesting parents have to match up their



Dr. Gina Lipton and daughter Sara

expectations with their understanding of what their offspring seek in an activity. “What can parents do to help kids become constructively involved and get the most out of their activities?” Equally important, “What should they avoid that might squelch a child’s enthusiasm for an activity?”

A licensed psychologist and former competitive figure skater and coach, Lipton says kids – not their parents – need to “own” their activities. “All sorts of research shows that when somebody else gets too involved, kids become less involved.”

She points out that even up to age 7 or 8, children seek fun in their activities. At the same time, “I have seen kids as young as two and three who love the experience of working at something and then mastering it. You have to be careful what kind of challenge you put in front of them but, when it’s done right, that kind of experience of mastery is almost addictive. It’s how kids develop the ability to delay gratification and work toward a goal. It feels so good when you have mastered something – that’s what parents should be hoping for.”

Lipton, an Island resident who holds a doctorate in education from Boston University, will present the seminar, “How Many Activities Are Enough?” at 10:00 a.m., March 23, in the Island Kids room at 536 Main Street. The admission charge is \$20. The number for information is **758-8408**.

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 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.

We’ve survived another February, my least favorite month despite the balmy weather. Roosevelt Island organizations made this last full month of winter tolerable by scheduling some terrific events. Were you there?

The Senior Center was again the venue for African-American Heritage Month Celebration 2002. I was unable to stay for much of the entertainment (two pussycats waiting to come home from the vet kept me from the fun). However, as is my wont, I was there in plenty of time for the food! The Caribbean delicacies and fabulous desserts (especially the German chocolate cake) as well as the warm welcome I received from my friends at the Senior Association, made this annual observance a real treat. There was a poster series called Women of Hope on the walls commemorating famous African-American women, of which more anon.

Last Saturday, the Beacon program presented a concert at PS/IS 217 that rocked. Regrettably, I had business off-Island, but my wife, Sherie, reported back to me on what I had missed. Los Soneros de Oriente presented an evening of Afro-Cuban music that had everyone on their feet. Sherie tells me her dance partners ranged from eight to eighty. What a great way to shake off the winter doldrums!

This week, we say goodbye to Mosud Mannan, his wife Nuzhat and his son, Morshed. A diplomat in the Bangladeshi Mission to the United Nations, Mosud and his family are off to a posting in Beijing, where he will be Minister/Deputy Head of Mission. Thirty-five percent of our neighbors are foreign nationals, many with diplomatic functions at New York Missions and Consulates. Mosud has distinguished himself by his adoption of Roosevelt Island and its civic organizations. He has supported Morshed, who has been enrolled at PS/IS 217, with his work on the PTA, culminating in the wonderful International Dinner last month. In addition, Minister Mannan has been Vice President of Social, Cultural, and Educational Services for the RIRA Common Council. In that capacity, he brought an international poetry-reading evening, sponsored by the UNESCO Mother Language Project, to the Island. As his swan song, Mosud has initiated a series of welcome receptions for new Roosevelt Island residents that will be sponsored by Housing Management.

Few foreign diplomats have attended Island meetings and events, much less participated so fully in Island life. At last Wednesday’s Common Council meeting, I presented Mosud with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of his unstinting work on behalf of this community. It included a quote I found on a poster at the African-American celebration (remember, I said that I would get back to it):

Service is the purpose of life. It is the rent we pay for living on the planet.

–Marion Wright Edelman

Bon voyage, friends, we will miss you.

The RIRA Common Council discussed two major items of importance to the Island at Wednesday evening’s meeting. The air quality on Roosevelt Island has long been of concern in light of the emissions from the Keyspan and other energy plants along the East River. RIRA is a participant in CHOKe (Coalition Helping Organize a Kleaner Environment), a tenants’ group from Western Queens that has used community protest and the courts to control the proliferation of generating plants using fossil fuels. The pollution from Ground Zero wafting over our Island has exacerbated the problem and raised alarms, especially among the elderly and small children, of statistically significant increases in asthma, emphysema, and other pulmonary diseases including lung cancer.

Others expressed fears of a rising tide of drug-dealing on the streets and within some buildings. Many building representatives are distressed that Public Safety has no presence within our residential buildings and are not required to make vertical patrols despite our maintenance of the department through our rents. Council Members responsible for these issues promised to take steps through community and governmental resources.

On to Tram business. The new haul cable has been delivered and is being installed. By the time you read this, we may have a specific re-opening date. On the MetroCard front, the Transit Authority has set a date in early April for the meeting with RIOC’s president, Robert Ryan, which I described in my last column. I will, of course, fill you in when there is something to report. I attended Borough President C. Virginia Fields’ State of the Borough address at City Hall last week, and spoke to her senior community aide, Barbara Allen. I urged her to use the influence of the office to expedite this meeting and the negotiations that will, God willing, follow.

President Fields’ address was modestly optimistic despite the \$4 billion shortfall in the City budget. She mentioned that her office was complying with Mayor Bloomberg’s request for across-the-board 20% reductions in expenses in all City departments. She also reiterated her support for education, more affordable housing, and the Second Avenue subway. Our own Gifford Miller was the senior City official present in his capacity as City Council Speaker.

And finally, this issue of *The WIRE* is appearing on the same day as the grand opening and dedication of Gallery RIVAA, the new home of the Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association located in the old Bigelow Pharmacy. Isn’t it remarkable that this tiny community of 9,500 people can support so many high-quality offerings in the visual and performance arts? Music, dance, theater, painting, and sculpture have their practitioners and enthusiasts here. I do hope you will visit the Gallery soon and support all the Island’s cultural endeavors. This community is blessed with more than its share of talent and energy. Aren’t we lucky to live here!

The RIRA Column



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

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., Mar. 10, 5:00 p.m., **Irish Night**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, presented by River Music and St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Parish. \$5 contribution appreciated (admission free).

Mon., Mar. 11, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters** meeting; public speaking without fear. For information, call (212) 759-0396.

Tue., Mar. 12, time undetermined but probably between 10:00 a.m. and noon, **Roosevelt Island Bridge Test Openings** for maintenance purposes.

Sat., Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m., **Main Street Theatre Presents Tap-Dancer Rod Ferrone** in a benefit performance (one performance only), with

Marietta Clark. \$10 general admission, \$25 reserved seating in front rows. (Dancers: Bring tap shoes for post-show jam session.) Information and reservations: **371-4449.**

Sun., Mar. 17, 4:00 p.m., **CYO Fashion Show**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Tue., Mar. 19, 7:30 a.m., Meeting of **PS/IS 217 School Leadership Team.** Parents invited to attend.

Tue., Mar. 19, 7:00 p.m., Meeting of **Roosevelt Island Committee** of Community Board 8, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. City Council's role in Island affairs, Tramway, Southpoint Development, Blackwell House.

Tue., Mar. 19, 7:30 p.m., **MTA Bridges and Tunnels**, program of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, presented by Lauren Rosen, featuring photos and drawings from the MTA Bridges and Tunnels Division, Island House Community Room, 555 Main Street. Free.

Wed., Mar. 20-Fri., Mar. 22, school hours, **PS/IS 217 Book Fair.**

Wed., Mar. 20, 6:00 p.m., **PTA General Membership Meeting;** Executive Board meeting, 7:00 p.m.; PS/IS 217.

Wed., Mar. 20, 7:00 p.m., Meeting of **Community Board 8**, Lenox Hill Hospital, 100 East 77th Street.

Thur., Mar. 21, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion**, *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink, Library. Advance registration required.

Thur., Mar. 21, 9:30 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public session normally resumes at about 10:30 a.m.

Fri., Mar. 22, morning, **PS/IS 217 Career Day.** Adults describe their occupations to the school's 8th-graders. Participation invited – call **980-0294.**

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

Sat., Mar. 23, 10:00 a.m., **How Many Activities Are Enough?**, seminar led by Dr. Gina Lipton, sponsored by Island Kids, 536 Main Street community room. \$20. Information: **758-8408.**

Mon., Mar. 25, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters** meeting; public speaking without fear. For information, call (212) 759-0396.

Wed., Mar. 17, 7:00 p.m., **Paul in Corinth**, one-man show starring Daniel Millen, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Free.

Tue., Apr. 2, 7:00 p.m., tentative date for the Municipal Art Society's *Imagine New York* session on Roosevelt Island. If interested in participating, contact facilitator Ethel Romm at **980-5352** or at ethelgr@mindspring.com. Location to be announced.

Wed., Apr. 3, 8:00 p.m., **Residents Association Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Mon., Apr. 8, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters** meeting; public speaking without fear. For information, call (212) 759-0396.

Shooting from page 1

"I'm happy to be alive," said Young this week. According to sources, Young, a medium-built man with a thin mustache who wears the signature baggy jeans and bandanna of many young men on the Island, has served time as a juvenile and was released recently.

Patrick Mortoo, the Summit Security Service officer on duty at the doorstation of 4 River Road on the day of the shooting, said he was startled by the sound of gunfire but is not certain how many shots were fired. "I was not expecting it so it did not register," said Mortoo.

In his incident report, Mortoo said that at about 5:50 p.m., he heard a sound like a gunshot from outside 2-4 River Road. A woman came running into the building and said there was a shooting outside. He rushed outside to find the east-facing window of the laundry in the building shattered. He saw a crowd but says he did not recognize anyone. "I have been here only a month and I don't know everyone who lives in the building."

Mortoo radioed his duty partner, Michael Graham, who was on patrol on the ninth floor of the building. Graham called Public Safety on the Island and dialed 911 right afterwards. Officers Seabrook and Divaris of Public Safety responded at 6:20 p.m. Officers of the NYPD 114th Precinct arrived at the scene soon after and took over the investigation.

Passersby say they heard three shots being fired. "I heard the shots and thought it was firecrackers," said Kim Travagliato, a resident of 20 River Road, who was about to enter her building when she was stopped in her tracks upon hearing the gunshots. "I was pushing my baby's stroller and my first concern was stray bullets." Travagliato says she saw a huge crowd of adolescents gather in the area in front of the Manhattan Park playroom but, fearing for her safety, did not go any closer.

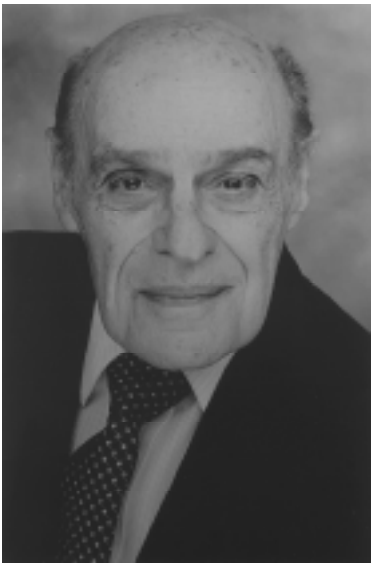
In his report, Mortoo has stated that the Manhattan Park Management took over the site of the shooting after the police left, clearing the shattered window at the laundry of 4 River Road. Two soda-vending machines and a public pay-phone were removed from the lobby of the building. "Anybody from outside could come into the building on the pretext of using these amenities," said Mortoo.

"Worse things go on in this building than I see on the streets of Jamaica where I live," said Jovanny Jimenez, a colleague of Mortoo's who is on duty at 4 River Road from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. "There are guns and drugs on the Island. We call this the 'slum building.' There are problems here that Public Safety officers cannot solve. They carry only sticks. They are not equipped to fight these guys. They work like cops but they are not real cops."

His comments were seconded by Byron Gaspard, co-chair of the Eastwood Building Committee. "Public Safety is handicapped. This incident is gun-related and Public Safety officers are simply not equipped to deal with these situations." Gaspard believes that increasing the NYPD presence on the Island is one way to solve the problem. "We need a substation of the NYPD here. We are isolated on the Island so these incidents have a much larger impact on us."

Public Safety officers refused to comment.

Charles De Fino, Executive Director of the Youth Program, who is acquainted with both Walker and Young, said he thought the situation was just a quarrel gone bad and



Robert Weil

Robert Weil, the 87-year-old veteran of a long acting career, has died.

A resident of Roosevelt Island for 12 years, he had over six decades in show business, appearing in many Broadway productions with actors such as Lawrence Olivier, Anthony Quinn, Meryl Streep, and Christopher Lloyd. He appeared in 20 or more films, including *Moonstruck* (as the waiter Bobo), and most recently in a Showtime movie, *Clubland*, with Alan Alda. Other films included appearances with Frank Sinatra, James Garner, and roles in Woody Allen's *Broadway Danny Rose*, the Coen Brothers' *Hudsucker Proxy*, and *The French Connection*.

Weil was known for his collection of silent films, on which he was an expert, and for his sense of humor. He was still actively working at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 41 years, Elizabeth, and his daughter, Elissa Weil, and her husband, Brian Thawley.

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RIRA from page 1

with his hand on his gun."

Among those who spoke during the meeting, there seemed to be agreement that the Island's Public Safety Department, as presently constituted, is not adequate for the challenges presented by Roosevelt Island, particularly in a post-9/11 environment.

Judy Berdy, after saying that Public Safety Chief James Fry is due to retire soon, said, "This is no longer a rest home for NYPD retirees. That isn't what this job is. We need young, motivated people who see this as a career. We have to be involved in interviewing and finding a decent candidate. We never interviewed Fry or Bryan. They have no leadership." On the matter of a substation, she told the Common Council, "We can talk until we're blue in the face and nothing will happen. I suggest we go to [City Police Commissioner Raymond] Kelly."

Gaspard called for building task forces to meet together and join in a push for better security. He charged that, although Public Safety logs may show vertical patrols in Eastwood, they are actually not being done. In response, some members of the Council recalled "key stations" in stairwells where security personnel had to punch as proof of scheduled patrols. As a substitute for the removed stations, one member suggested officers might be required to slip notes under a series of doors to document patrols.

"This situation could have been more disastrous," Gaspard said. "We need more police presence. The 114th will never spend the money for a substation, and I say we need to escalate. This is not the first time we had an armed situation on Roosevelt Island. We re-

should not be blown out of proportion. "Think about it," he said. "If Walker's intention was to kill Young, would he have done it right outside his home in the late afternoon with 30 people who know him by his first name standing around the place?"

De Fino says these young adults are merely trying to prove they are men. "This is their street, Main Street, and they want to act out. I don't think they are really bad deep down. Stuff happens."

John Melia, speaking for RIOC, said, "It was obviously unfortunate. We understand that it was a personal dispute. NYPD and Public Safety responded immediately. In the wake of the shooting, Public Safety officers will be posted near the schools whenever children are coming out of the schools. You can never take too many precautions. Let me emphasize, though, that this is one of the safest communities in the City and we do not expect this to be a recurring incident."

Senior Center

Monday
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
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** (new program)
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)
1:00, **Computer Class** (full)

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

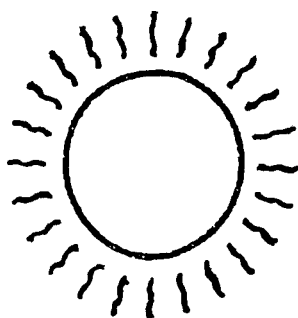
Special Events
Mon., Mar. 11, 11:00-12:30, MetroCard Bus
Tue., Mar. 12, RISA General Meeting
Sun., Mar. 17, 6:00, St. Patrick's Day Dinner
Mon., Mar. 18, 10:30, Health Lecture (*Popular Herbal Medicines*) and Blood Pressure Screening
Wed., Mar. 20, Atlantic City Trip
Wed., Mar. 20, 12:30, Crime Lecture – Identity Theft
Fri., Mar. 22, 12:30, Short-Story Swap with 7th Graders
Mon., Mar. 25, 6:00 p.m., Passover/Seder Celebration

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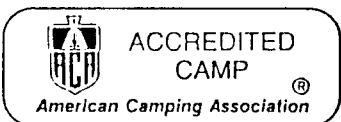
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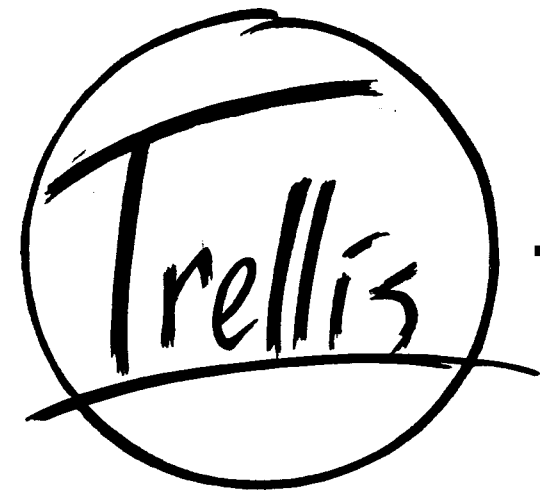
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Audit from page 1

in its lease. RIOC maintains that Rivercross, a co-op building, owes ground rent, too. But because Rivercross has refused to pay, its ground rent – a comparatively token amount in any case – is included in the audit report under a different category: “bad debts.” (The Eastwood and Westview leases do not provide for ground rent.)

The four original buildings did contribute to a fund that is supposed to pay for at least half the cost of operating the Public Safety Department. These payments, \$173,997 from Manhattan Park and \$867,726 from the other companies, fell more than \$112,000 short of the halfway mark in 2000-01, and RIOC attempted to recoup the difference with a major fee increase last March. But Rivercross and Roosevelt Island Housing Management, which runs Westview, Island House, and Eastwood, balked at paying, arguing that the added charge was excessive (their fees, not counting Manhattan Park’s, appeared to be rising by more than \$230,000).

As a result of this dispute, the cost of Public Safety was already expected to substantially exceed its revenue again this year, even before added security patrols in the wake of September 11 greatly increased its payroll costs. Total spending for Public Safety in 2000-01 was \$2.3 million. As with all of RIOC’s department accounts, however, the Public Safety fund in the current audit report reflects a new way of portraying the bottom line. While the report last year put Public Safety spending at \$1.7 million, mostly for the officers’ payroll, the new audit restates the 1999-2000 total as \$2.2 million.

The difference is in RIOC’s handling of administrative expenses – all those costs of staffing and conducting business that cannot be assigned to specific services or material. These include executive salaries, the pay of office workers, and the costs of insurance, consulting, and legal work, for example. Last year, these expenses, \$2.4 million, sat in an “administraton” fund. This year, they have been allocated to the other accounts in the general fund in proportion to the various departments’ expenditures.

Restated in this manner, Public Safety picked up \$513,279 of administrative costs in the current audit; almost \$160,000 has been assigned to Motorgate, another \$242,911 to the bus garage, etc. If this technique had been used last year, \$1.9 million would have been as-

signed; this year the figure is \$2.16 million, an increase of almost 12 percent.

Islanders perhaps would not consider these items to be the sexy part of the budget. The Tramway may be of more interest, and it’s possible to compute, from the income figures, a drop-off of 46,170 fares from 2000 to 2001. RIOC’s management agreement with American Tramways, Inc. is also mentioned in the report. RIOC is paying the company, which took over operations on July 29, 2001, \$158,333.33 per month to operate, maintain and manage the system. (The previous operator, Inte-Fac Corp., was reimbursed on a cost-plus basis.)

Some Islanders have seen a windfall for RIOC in the Tram’s long shutdown, but that does not appear to be the case. RIOC was billed \$118,000 for staffing and \$348,000 for maintenance and renovation costs as part of the Tram’s planned shutdown in December. These costs, plus overtime pay for bus drivers going to and from Manhattan, and fixed costs such as insurance, could add up to losses for RIOC, which is also forgoing the Tram’s steady cash flow during the shutdown. When service resumes, RIOC will prorate its first month’s payment to American Tramways.

Motorgate also raised some hackles last year with a \$10-a-month increase in its parking rates. It is difficult not to look at this enterprise as something of a cash cow. It is 39-percent owned by Manhattan Park and is managed by a private company, Central Parking System. RIOC receives 61 percent of the net income and reported coming out ahead by \$808,743 in 2001, after deducting for expenses. In the current fiscal year, operating revenue is projected to rise to \$1.7 million, compared to about \$1.5 million in the year covered by the audit.

As for the red buses, the report indicates that 2000-01 was also a down year in terms of fares. Operating revenue was \$296,371, or the equivalent of 1.2 million 25-cent fares. Based on the figures in the report, the fare count fell by more than 44,000 from the year before. The bus garage payroll was a little short of \$656,000.

Last year was a milestone for the bus system: All the buses were paid for. A “debt service” item of \$252,204 in the capital project fund actually represents RIOC’s final installment payment to the State procurement office that bought the buses about eight years ago.

Incidentally, as a State agency, RIOC isn’t allowed to borrow money, so the common



by Seth Kaufman

BASKETBALL The playoffs in the Youth Program’s Winter Basketball League began the first weekend of March.

In the 15-17 Division, the second-place Bucks defeated the third-place Raptors by a score of 70-66 to advance to the championship game against the first-place and undefeated Magic. The Bucks opened a 10-2 lead and maintained the lead throughout the first half, which ended with the Bucks in front 32-23. The Raptors cut the lead to five points a number of times in the second half but could not get closer until the last minute of play. For the game, Devin Epps led the Bucks with 29 points, while Tymel Williams had 12, and Randy Cline and Darian Smith each added 10. For the Raptors, Victor Lopez led the team with 27 points, while Omar Moore had 10, Pablo Delgado had 8, Paul Brown had 7, and Anthony Simmons added 6.

In the 12-14 Division, the first-place Lakers and the third-place Spurs will meet for the championship at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, March 9 at the PS/IS 217 gym. The Lakers barely squeezed by the Mavericks 57-54 to advance to the championship game. The Lakers were led by Eric Miranda’s 19 points, while Derrick Moore and Remy Armenakis each had 13, and Matthew Brodsky added 8. For the Spurs, Jonathan Singh led the team with 20 points, while Tyrell Anderson had 18, and Alpha Bah and Rahim Drame each added 6. In the other semifinal game, the Spurs beat the Kings 72-36. For the Spurs, Mirza Avdovic led the team with a season-high 22 points, while Fabian Williams had 17, Shirome Dixon had 14, Byron Gaspard had 9, and Omani Guy added 6. Dan Moraru led the Kings with a game-high 27 points.

BASEBALL Baseball evaluations for players who have signed up for the Youth Program’s Little League program will be held at PS/IS 217 on Saturday, March 16, 1:00-3:00 p.m. for the Majors (ages 11-13) and 3:30-5:00 p.m. for the Minors (ages 8-10).

RIRA from page 3

ally need to concentrate on getting the police protection we need.”

But Deirdre Breslin said she was the only Roosevelt Islander at the last public meeting held by commanders of the 114th Precinct. “That tells the precinct commander that he need not worry about Roosevelt Island. We can’t sit here and talk about it. You have got to get motivated and get over there and let them know we want police protection.”

In response, Gaspard suggested, “Let’s all, in numbers, go to the [precinct] meetings. The most we’ve had from Roosevelt Island at one time are three people. We need to come in numbers, angry. Let’s all go down to the next precinct meeting, in numbers.” (Gaspard later said that the next precinct meeting has not yet been scheduled.)

Breslin added her view, shared by several others in some degree, that, “Main Street is

heavy with drug traffic.” She said that the second highest priority of her building’s resident task force is public safety (after environmental quality).

The telephone number for reporting drug activity is **1-718-468-4868**.

Air Quality

Other Common Council discussion Wednesday night centered on Island air quality and ways that the Residents Association might develop some leverage against the cause of health problems here in “asthma alley.” Breslin proposed that RIRA get more involved with CHOKe, a Queens group fighting for better air quality. RIRA President Matthew Katz suggested that Breslin make plans for a community-wide town meeting on air quality. Cristiano suggested hiring an independent consultant to test air quality on the Island; Joan Christianson, saying “lung problems have become very prevalent on this Island,” suggested a survey to gather evidence that might support a demand for pollution abatement measures.

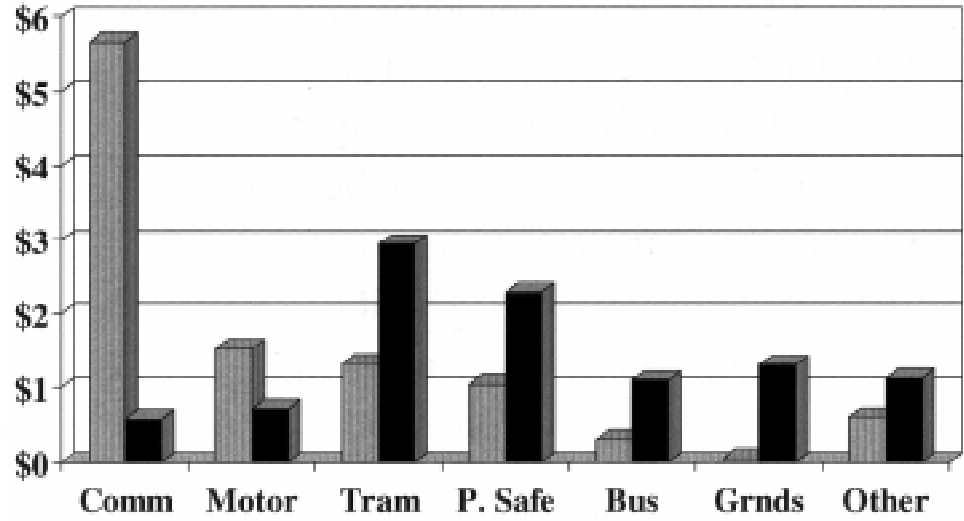
idea of debt isn’t part of its financial vocabulary, even though there is no law that says it has to balance its books. And nowhere in the report is there any mention of the bonds that were issued to finance construction of RIOC’s basic “fixed assets,” which are carried on the books at a value of \$52 million. When new governmental accounting standards kick in next year, requiring these assets to be depreciated, the value of this property will quickly fall toward zero. Will this have any operational effect on Island services? In a word: No.

As some expenses disappear, others are rising. Insurance costs, already rising for the past several years, are accelerating because of the terrorist attacks on New York. The audit put this spending at \$493,000, up

\$80,000 from the year before. The 2001-02 fiscal year is expected to close 20 percent higher – approaching \$600,000 – and brokers who handle State insurance coverage are telling officials that premiums in the year beginning this April could go up another 30 percent.

Finally, the report lists the beginning of RIOC’s expenses as construction begins on Southtown. In the year ending March 31, 2001, RIOC spent \$425,000 for landscaping, engineering, and design work associated with the housing project. It also paid its development consultant, Amec, \$127,000, but received a \$100,000 project-management fee from the developers. RIOC has agreed to pay up to \$4.56 million as its share of building the first phase of Southtown’s infrastructure.

General Fund Revenues and Expenditures



A chart from RIOC’s audit shows its view of General Fund revenues and expenditures (in millions of dollars) in each operational area as a pair of bars. The left bar of each pair represents income, the right expense. Only Commercial and Motorgate rents produce a net income, while all other areas – Tram, Public Safety, the red bus service, grounds, and “other” produce a net expense. Figures are for the 12-month fiscal period that ended March 31, 2001 (about a year ago).

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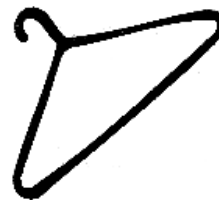
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