

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, April 6

The Main Street **WIRE**TM

Roosevelt Island’s Community Newspaper

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



Robert Cassidy, for *The Ring* magazine

Islanders: **Eugene Hairston Recalls Life as a Contender**

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by Robert Cassidy

It has often been said that boxing is the most solitary of sports. The fighter isolates himself through roadwork or while shadowboxing with imaginary opponents. When the bell summons him to fight, he stands alone in the ring.

Eugene Hairston was perhaps more alone than most fighters.

Unable to hear or speak, he could never draw strength from words of encouragement or listen to instructions from his corner. In the trying moments that test all boxers during a fight, Hairston was alone with his thoughts, relying on his instincts and his courage to forge ahead.

He was good enough to become a world-rated middleweight in the early 1950s and was known as Eugene “Silent” Hairston, an action fighter with good power and a debilitating body attack. It was quite a journey for a man who, at the age of two, had lost his hearing and ability to speak after a bout with spinal meningitis.

Hairston pleased many crowds in his career, but never once heard them roar in appreciation. In December, the boxing crowd gathered in New York City to cheer for him again when Ring 8, New York’s Chapter of the Veteran Boxers Association, presented him with the organization’s “Uncrowned Champion” belt.

“I could see the crowd and I could feel the crowd,” he said of his fights. “I knew when it was good.”

You could see by Hairston’s smile that once again he knew it was good.

On two occasions, *The Ring* interviewed Hairston. In the first meeting he answered questions by exchanging hand-written notes, and the second time his sign language interpreter, Diane Smith, translated the answers. (His quotes throughout this article are a result of his written answers or Smith’s translations.)

Hairston was born in Harlem, New York, and attended the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on 23rd Street in Manhattan. He left school at the age of 15 to help support his family. He worked as a shoeshine boy and set up pins in a bowling alley. While still in his teens, he met Joe Louis, an idol he had seen fight on television. It was Louis who drew Hairston to boxing.

“When I was young, I was not sure about boxing, but I knew I must try. I tried hard and I succeeded,” said Hairston. “No one ever tried to discourage me. My parents were a little afraid of me boxing, but when they realized I was good, they accepted it and they supported me.”

Hairston learned general boxing techniques by watching other fighters train and was taught the intricacies of the game by the late Mike Miele, a man for whom Hairston still shows affection. Miele would slowly and deliberately demonstrate every movement and punch.

“He always explained things to me in acts,” said Hairston. “He always played to me in the gym.”

Hairston won the New York Golden Gloves in 1947, and turned pro that summer, just five days after his 17th birthday. He won his first 16

See **Hairston**, page 8

Tramway Returns Monday Morning Shutdown Equals the Longest Previous Outage

by Robert Laux-Bachand

Seventeen weeks after the Roosevelt Island Tramway shut down for a major maintenance project – supposed to be finished by Christmas – the system will return to service Monday morning with the 6:00 o’clock trip.

The State Department of Labor gave it a “go” late Thursday.

When it finally restarts, it won’t be a moment too soon for the Tram’s 20 employees, most of whom have been laid off since December 21, or for the Island’s Manhattan commuters, who have had to forsake the Tram’s dramatic and ever-changing vistas of the East River for the monotony, clatter and recurring late-night stench of the F train.

The shutdown, prolonged by mechanical mistakes and failures and by bureaucratic entanglements, came on the heels of a period in which Island residents had to demonstrate, once again, their devotion to the Tram. Threatened with a reduction in the hours of operation, residents rallied last summer to persuade the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation to back off on a proposal to reduce service and cut expenses, even though paid ridership has dropped in recent years and the Tramway’s deficit has widened to nearly \$1 million.

The current impasse moved toward a solution on Wednesday, when personnel from the engineering services unit of the State Department of Labor’s Division of Health & Safety gathered in the rain to conduct a full-load brake test of the Tram cabins. The cabins were

The Tramway in Island Lore

Editor’s Note: *The WIRE* asked David Kraut, a resident director of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, to assess several issues that have arisen in the course of the Tram shutdown. Here are his comments.

My personal introduction to Island politics was at a huge, screaming, public meeting in the Chapel in 1980, when the agency then running the Island leased the Tramway to a movie company to make the Sylvester Stallone movie, *Nighthawks*, which came out the next year. In those days, we didn’t even have the subway option, and no amount of free bus transport to the Queens Plaza station was going to make up for residents’ anger. Island management thought to use the period around the film production to do Tramway maintenance, and the maintenance dragged on and on.

It was about this time that the people then running the Tram were replacing the haul rope and dropped it across Second Avenue, York Avenue, and the FDR Drive, tying up traffic on the East Side for a day – and then somehow managed to repeat the catastrophe a second time before they finally got it right. I know that something

See **Kraut**, page 10

loaded with 10 tons of weights, the equivalent of 125 people weighing 160 pounds apiece – the cabin’s capacity. Red Blomer, the president of American Tramways Inc. of Watertown, New York, and three of his Tramway employees loaded the 50-pound weights on the Island side – a job that is typically done by about 10 workers, according to workplace sources.

The youthful-looking Blomer, wearing blue jeans and a sweatshirt, is used to hands-on work, having led various repair projects here in

the past. And the State inspectors were in their accustomed role, too, checking out a new 1,000-meter haul cable that had been delivered from Europe on March 5, replacing one mistakenly cut about eight feet too short in mid-December.

Everything looked to be clear sailing, a far cry from the situation in January, when American Tramways, a unit of the Doppelmayr Group of Austria, appeared to throw New York’s engineers into a tizzy with a proposal to modify the haul rope connection, thus preserving the shortened cable.

Weeks went by without a State decision, even though the solution was prepared by the same Swiss engineer who had designed the Tram in the mid-’70s. (Doppelmayr has absorbed the aerial transportation business of Von Roll, a Swiss company that built the Tram.) Finally, at a RIOC Board meeting last month, Blomer said he

See **Tram**, page 10

RIOC Report Claims Residents “Satisfied” With Public Safety

Residents are “generally satisfied” with the Island’s Public Safety Department (PSD), according to the summary conclusions in a report issued this week. The report, based on a survey done for a committee of the RIOC Board of Directors, was issued without underlying data or tallies.

It was also issued unilaterally, according to RIRA Common Council member Ron Schuppert, by Dr. Joan Dawson, the chair of a joint RIOC-resident committee that prepared the survey. “I object to this being put out under my name,” Schuppert said. “It doesn’t reflect the [views of] the committee. It’s skewed.”

The WIRE has requested the underlying data for direct analysis.

The survey was designed with the cooperation of the Island’s housing managers to measure Islanders’ perceptions about Public Safety, then distributed to residents. The return rate was reportedly under 20% at the highest, in Rivercross, but only half that in other buildings.

The exception to the reported rating of “general satisfaction” was Rivercross, where 75 percent of those completing the survey expressed “serious or somewhat serious concern” about the quality of Public Safety and said they felt it would “continue to get worse.”

The Dawson summary contains

additional conclusions, based on the survey, about public perception of Public Safety performance:

- A concern over loitering, drugs, loud music, and noise, identified by

See **PSD**, page 9

History Group Gets RIOC Board’s OK for Blackwell House Project

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board of Directors gave the Historical Society (RIHS) limited site control of Blackwell House in its meeting Thursday, paving the way for the organization to seek funding to halt the building’s deterioration.

The historic farmhouse, dating to Revolutionary times, has gone without serious maintenance for some years, a situation that regularly brought down the wrath of Judith Berdy, Historical Society president, on RIOC and its Board of Directors. Late last year, Board member Leo Kayser challenged Berdy to come up with a plan for the house, saying, “We need someone we can convey it to. Can we convey it to the Historical Society?” Berdy promised to come up with a plan for just that.

Thursday’s action marks both the culmination of that process and the beginning of an RIHS effort to

identify funding sources. After the meeting, Berdy told *The WIRE*, “This is the beginning, hopefully, of a successful refurbishment of the house. It will take some time to complete, but we will be able to repair and restore the House, plan for its future, and make it into a viable asset to the community. This year we will be working on the plans for it, and on fund-raising.”

She added, “The Historical Society looks forward to the participation of all Islanders in our effort to bring Blackwell House back into the community.”

Asked about possible uses, she said, “We definitely need it for community space. We’re going to be looking at the most viable way to use it.”

RIHS has about 100 members, and holds regular programs dealing with the Island’s history. Berdy said those who might wish to join can call her at **688-4836**.

Editorial

No Fanfare

Public Safety Chief Jim Fry told a great story at the RIOC Board meeting Thursday morning. It's worth repeating here, both because it tells the kind of story about Public Safety that we don't often get to tell, but would very much like to tell more often in these pages. Herewith, the words of Chief Fry:

Public Safety is not in the business of publicity and stuff. We just try to do our jobs and let the facts speak for themselves. But I wanted to give you an instance. We had a 14-year-old female resident and a 15-year-old boyfriend, a non-resident, run away [about three weeks ago]. Being 14 and 15, the plan was to go to Los Angeles, California. Both of them play guitar, and they were going to become rock stars and be successful.

We did what we're supposed to do, which is notify the Police Department runaway unit. My Youth Officer, Michelle Williams, and the officer investigating, Fernandez, spent a considerable amount of time talking to people, trying to zero in on friends.

After about five days they were finally able to reach somebody who could tell them the actual details of the plan. Fernandez was able to convince a friend of the male that, "You're going to have to do something for your friend that he is not going to appreciate now, but years later, if your friendship endures, he will eventually appreciate." And what he convinced this individual to do was to meet them at the Port Authority bus station and take the tickets from them, and notify the authorities.

This is exactly what was done – to convince [the friend] to go, to meet them, to take the tickets. They took the tickets, notified the Police Department runaway unit, and the kids, of course, never got to run away and become rock stars.

You won't see that in the paper because it won't be reported because it's not a crime. But it does speak to the kind of effort that the officers try to put in here. That could not have been accomplished by the Police Department's runaway unit because there simply is no personal contact between them and the individuals. That was the result of... being able to go out and talk to people and tell [the friends] that you're acting on their behalf and that this is for the good of the individual.

It was kind of a personal rapport thing. I'm sure that both sets of parents appreciate that. And I only bring this up because there are a number of things which are done that do not and will not receive any publicity. But a sincere effort goes into everything that we try to do. We try to do a simple, straightforward, conscientious, professional job. No fanfare, no publicity.

This week, there is some controversy over the validity of a report issued by Dr. Joan Dawson, who headed a joint committee of RIOC Board members and residents that surveyed residents about Public Safety, and while *The WIRE* wants to examine the raw data, we can all unquestionably appreciate the value of the kind of work Chief Fry described on Thursday. No fanfare, but sincere thanks for this job well done.

DL



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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
Photographers – Vicki Feinmel, Susheel Kurien
Advertising Manager – Ellen Levy
Circulation Managers – Sherie Helstien, Teri Sheridan, Joyce Speziale
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Letters

To the Editor:

Having only today finally found your website (www.nyc10044.com), I was relieved to finally learn all the reasons behind the Tramway being inoperative. My wife and I visited New York City February 14-18, and had earmarked the Tram as one of the “must-do” items on our itinerary. We had no knowledge of the outage and you can imagine our surprise when we made our way to the terminus close to Bloomingdale’s early on the morning of the 16th, only to discover no signs of activity and an air of desolation in the structure and the single cabin hanging above the street. We could find no reasons posted anywhere nor could I ascertain anything from various websites, including the Transit Authority, or even the official RIOC website. We did gather at one point from a link to an architect’s page that it was closed for some repairs, but the saga of the cable was nowhere to be found until I came across your website just now.

I must therefore thank you for the extensive information given and look forward to the day – soon – when the Tram will be soaring over the river to Roosevelt Island. We are already planning our next trip to New York and will be anxious to get across to the Second Avenue terminus once again, hopefully with a more successful outcome!

Many thanks once again. We hope your city and its people continue to recover from the desperate tragedies that have befallen it in recent months as positively as it seemed to us when we were there. It is truly the greatest city on Earth, bar none, and deserves its place in the hearts and minds of all decent citizens of the world.

Mark & Diane Grist
Reading, England

To the Editor:

As if the shooting on February 25 outside 2-4 River Road wasn’t bad enough, the Executive Director of the Youth Program, Charles De Fino, excuses it with some of the most idiotic statements I have ever read:

“It was just a quarrel gone bad. If Walker’s intention was to kill Young, would he have done it right outside his home...?” It’s only March, but the competition for the Stupidest Comment of the Year is now over, the award goes to De Fino for the following: “This is their street, Main Street, and they want to act out. I don’t think they are really bad deep down. Stuff happens.”

Their street? No, it’s our street, not theirs. And stuff does happen. Innocent people could have been killed, or hurt. What is wrong with him? Is he trying to establish a rapport between him and the teens by excusing this criminal act?

I am not familiar with the Youth Program, or who he is responsible to, but with that type of attitude, perhaps they should reexamine his performance.

Name Withheld

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.

Letters deadline for Apr. 6 issue: Apr. 2

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

Fifty-two years ago, late in 1949, *television happened* in my parents’ household, in our nation, and in my life. Before that, for the better part of a year, we had gone visiting to the home of a Cub-Scout friend to join his parents in a regular date to watch the *Friday Night Fights*.

Boxing was big on television in those days, as the radio-schooled proprietors of the new medium sought ready-made events to fill the hours of visual entertainment that American households and advertisers had started demanding, almost overnight. Before that, blow-by-blow descriptions had come via radio, and I remember my father leaning attentively toward the speaker of our big console, in the late ’40s, to hear not just the running description of a fight, but the body blows, as well. I remember him exclaiming, now and then, when he detected the landing of a punishing blow.

Boxing was big in our home. During the depression, my father had become something of a local entrepreneur in our Western New York community, staging amateur boxing matches at the county fairgrounds, attracting a weekly crowd to watch young men, local and imported, slug it out. My birth was even specially noted in the pages of the local paper: the sportswriter elicited an opinion from the delivering physician that at my birth weight, I was destined to be a middleweight.

That pleased my father. He liked middleweights. The middleweights, he was fond of saying, had the necessary bulk to hit really hard, but could still be light on their feet, using clever moves to dodge and avoid – bob and weave. Footwork was a factor.

After a taste of televised boxing as a visitor, my father spent some of his welcome post-war income to acquire one of those RCA table-model TV sets in the brown plastic case.

That was 1949. I was 11. For me, it was a seminal event. Seven years later, at 18, I would have my first job in television, at a time when a young man with a decent voice and rudimentary performing skills could do it all. It would lead me into news, the appropriate degrees, and

an extended career in broadcast journalism.

But in the early ’50s, boxing was the thing. Dad would watch the fights, leaning almost as close to the ten-inch screen as he had to the radio speaker. Round by round, he would score the combatants, later criticizing the referee and ringside judges if they failed to agree with him.

Boxing was ideal for television. Three-minute rounds, with one-minute breaks that fit the commercials of the day. (Remember the Gillette jingle?) The family and guests watched together, Dad analyzing the action during commercials after reaching out to turn down the volume. (Those were the days before remotes and mute buttons.)

That was when I first heard the name, Gene Hairston. I recall that my father took very special note, for Hairston was deaf – a talented middleweight with a handicap that

seemed to suggest and shape, rather than limit, his career options. I don’t recall how many Hairston fights we saw, but I remember my father being impressed with the young boxer who was just eight years older than I. He admired the man’s footwork, steel-hard fists, and heroic heart. Although he warned me that I must never become a boxer – he had seen too many men take permanent damage – I know he wished, somewhere deep in his heart, that I would one day show the courage of a Eugene Hairston.

I could not know, in those days, that Hairston and I would one day be living on the same New York island, that I would sometimes even sit in an adjacent booth in Trellis, unaware until now of our connection across time and careers and families.

For me, then, this issue of *The WIRE* is a link, through a neighbor, to a time when America and I discovered the war-delayed technology of television – to a time when young men rose above the disadvantages of their lives by standing toe-to-toe and exchanging blows to head and body – and to a father long gone and greatly missed.

DL

Births Weddings Deaths

The WIRE would like to publish Island birth announcements, wedding announcements, and obituaries, all preferably with photographs (which will be returned) whenever possible. Please submit by leaving information (with a name and phone number for likely follow-up) for *The WIRE* at the front desk at 531 Main Street (Rivercross), by e-mail to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com, or by fax to (212) 755-2540. (Do not fax photographs, which must be original prints, not photocopies. Photos also accepted by e-mail in TIF or JPG format.)

To the Editor:

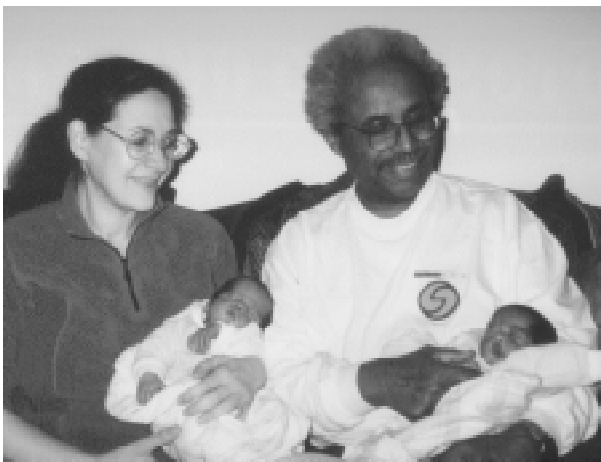
Island Kids is pleased to announce that on March 11, Dawn Helene was elected as the new Director of Island Kids. She comes to us with a Masters Degree in Music and a teaching credential in elementary and early childhood education. She has been a participant and teacher at Island Kids for the past three years. I want to wish her good luck!

I served the Island Kids community as Director of Island Kids for the past two years and as Assistant Director for two years prior. It has been a rewarding experience for me. I want to thank the staff and board members for all their hard work and dedication, and the Island Kids members for giving me the opportunity to watch their children blossom and grow throughout my four-year term. It was a great experience.

Gina M. Enock

The Public Safety Blotter

is now available on
Website NYC10044 at
www.nyc10044.com



Twins²

The Island has two new sets of twins, born just a week apart.

Above: Ravi Surya Benjamin Eaton and Ari Shiva Bernard Eaton were born one minute apart the morning of March 10, to Barbara Pittman Eaton and Roy Eaton of Rivercross. Ravi weighed in at 6 pounds, 3 ounces, and Suri at 5, 12.

Right: Emilia Farance and David Farance were born two minutes apart late on Saint Patrick's Day (March 17), to Marguerite Camaio and Frank Farance of Island House, weighing in at 5, 13 and 5, 6.

All the children and all the parents are doing fine.



Next to Roosevelt Island, my favorite topic of discussion is food, and I plan to spend the major part of this column on this happy subject.

With a small group of Islanders, I was invited to tour the facilities of a start-up company that soon will be soliciting your business. FreshDirect is located in a state-of-the-art warehouse on Borden Avenue in Long Island City. From this mammoth plant (as large as five football fields!) they intend to service New York City, starting with Roosevelt Island and extending to Queens, Manhattan, and so on.

Here's how it works: From your Internet connection you will contact a website containing a vast array of customized fresh foods that will be constantly updated. After you put together a "shopping cart" of purchases, your order (\$40 minimum) is totaled, paid for by credit card, and shipped the next day within a two-hour time frame. There will be telephone operators for the electronically-challenged.

John Boris, vice-president of marketing, claims that this service will provide meats and fish, fruits and vegetables, canned and dry goods, dairy, baked goods, and prepared meals from the most experienced purveyors in New York and fresher and less expensive than any supermarket. They will start their business with Roosevelt Island because of the proximity to their headquarters, and expect to begin advertising their new business within the month. Boris mentioned that FreshDirect will employ some 900 workers when they are up and running. We suggested that they recruit their staff, from fulfillment workers to truck drivers to webmasters, from Roosevelt Island. This idea was received with enthusiasm and we should expect job offers along with steaks cut to order!

I was impressed by the technical scope of this venture. However, the only reason I'm bringing it to your attention is that it adds to the often inadequate mix of retail services available to us here; I have no other ax to grind. In addition, FreshDirect intends to offer the first \$50 order free, with the first three delivery charges of \$3.95 waived. I can't afford to turn up my nose at \$50 worth of free food, and intend to see if this unique way of shopping meets my needs. Perhaps you might do the same.

Do you find yourself grinding your teeth as you leave Gristede's? I find the discourtesy of their cashiers grating and unnecessary. There is never even eye contact, much less a "thank you" or "nice to see you" or "how've you been." I've had more personal contact shopping with strangers in Denver or Los Angeles than with the young people at Gristede's who see me almost every day. I had one cashier in Denver offer me the use of her store discount card when she discovered that I was from out-of-town and didn't have my own! Can you imagine one of our young people putting themselves out in that fashion? I've spoken to Adrian, Gristede's manager, and asked him to do some sensitivity training with his staff. After all, courtesy costs nothing and reaps enormous dividends. He has agreed to make the effort, and I would suggest that you reinforce my request with

your own. If we demand a smile and a kind word, that sort of thing becomes habit-forming!

You may have noticed an insert in this issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. This contact sheet of Island organizations, services and merchants is an essential reference work and is long overdue. My wife, Sherie Helstien, is responsible for giving life to this project and completing it with the assistance of Roosevelt Island's two prime sources of information, *The WIRE* and Frank Farance's information hotline, among others. She had considered offering this resource for some time, but held off, pending its completion by an Island organization that had Borough President funds to pay for a similar effort. However, after waiting almost two years for the organization list to appear, she took the bit between her teeth and the result is here before you. This is typical of Sherie's approach to community activism. Several years ago, when she was a new member of the RIRA Common Council, she saw a need for a contact sheet so that members could communicate among themselves.

Rather than calling for some RIRA committee to take on the task, she just did it, disseminated it at a monthly meeting, and updated the list on a regular basis. That's the kind of proactive leadership we desperately need. Congrats to my sweetie, to Frank, and to *The WIRE*, for seeing a need and filling it!

As of this writing, RIOC anticipates the resumption of Tram service by the end of the week, that is, today. Will they be able to apply the lessons learned over the last four months to future Tram glitches? Probably not. RIOC administrations come and go along with the governors who appoint them, and they take their institutional memories with them. The repository of Roosevelt Island's history of management and administration resides in the residents. When a Board of Directors elected by the residents can hire a RIOC president with the expectation that this person will stay and grow with the community, they may have a shot at learning from their mistakes.

I've heard rumblings of discontent regarding the prevalence of drug trafficking and other crime on the Island, both in Common Council and on the street. Certainly, the shooting in front of 2-4 River Road on February 25 has exacerbated residents' fears. You can make a difference by attending the regular meetings of the 114th Precinct and bringing your concerns to their attention. The next meeting is on Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. The location is Riccardo's, a restaurant at 21-01 24th Avenue in Queens. Public Safety and the NYPD tell us that Roosevelt Island crime is not on their radar. If you know differently, then you need to let them know by showing up and making noise. For more information, call RIRA First Vice President, Byron Gaspard, at 752-6819.

Finally, as we enter the first full week of spring as well as Holy Week, I want to wish all my friends and neighbors a *guten Pesach* and a beautiful Easter. May the message of these holidays help bring peace to the Middle East and to the world.

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

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

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

Tue., Mar. 26, 7:30 p.m., 114th Precinct Community Council, Riccardo's, 21-01 24th Avenue, Long Island City. Guest speaker on predatory lending. For car-pool ride, call 752-6819.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to Editor@MainStreetWIRE.com, fax to 755-2540, or leave copy at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Provide a telephone number for possible follow-up.

April, Rivercross Window Gallery, *Let's Not Forget*, works of William West displayed in tribute to Our Fallen Heroes, presented by the Mother Earth Committee.

Tue., Apr. 2, 7:00 p.m., Municipal Art Society's *Imagine New York* session on what should be done with the World Trade Center site,

Westview Community Room, 625 Main Street. Information: Contact facilitator Ethel Romm at 980-5352 or at ethelgr@mindspring.com.

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

Sat., Apr. 6, next issue of *The Main Street WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Mar. 29; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Apr. 1, with materials due Thur., Apr. 4. **Future issues** generally every two weeks as follows: Apr. 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.

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

Thur., Apr. 11, 5:30 p.m., RIOC Board of Directors Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public session normally resumes at about 6:30, and is followed by an open forum for residents' comments and questions.

Tue., Apr. 16, 6:30 p.m., Book Discussion, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* by Rebecca Wells, Library. Advance registration required.

Tue., Apr. 16, 7:30 p.m., Restoring Strecker, program of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, with Page Ayres Crowley, conservation and restoration architect, Island House Community Room, 555 Main Street. Free.

Sun., Apr. 21, 2:00 p.m., Dedication Ceremony to unveil plaque honoring Roosevelt Island victims of the September 11 World Trade Center tragedy, Good Shepherd Plaza.

Fri., Apr. 26, 10:00 a.m., Arbor Day Tree Planting, sponsored by Roosevelt Island Tree Board.

Sat., Apr. 27, 10:00 a.m., What's Next?, Career Development for Mothers, seminar led by Dr. G. Lipton, sponsored by Island Kids, 536 Main Street community room. \$20. Information: 758-8408.

Wed., May 1, 8:00 p.m., Residents Association Common Council Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

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

Thur., May 16, 6:30 p.m., Shoji Hagiwara in Concert on the shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), Library.

Tue., May 21, 6:30 p.m., Book Discussion, *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier, Library. Advance registration required.

Tue., May 21, 7:30 p.m., Manhole and Coal-Chute Covers, presentation of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society with historian Diana Stuart, on decorative cast-iron artwork on manhole and coal-chute covers in New York City; Island House Community Room, 555 Main Street. Free.

Wed., June 5, 8:00 p.m., Residents Association Common Council Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

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. 25, 6:00 p.m.,
Passover/Seder Celebration

Tue., Mar. 26, 12:30, Eye
Screening

Wed., Mar. 27, 12:30, Crime
Prevention Presentation

Wed., Apr. 3, 10:00, Medication
Management

Mon., Apr. 22, 12:30, Volunteer
Recognition Party

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HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

at
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Sat., Mar. 23, 5:30 p.m.
Sun., Mar. 24, 8:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.

PAUL IN CORINTH

Mon., Mar. 25, 7:00 p.m.

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

Mon., Mar. 25, 8:00 p.m.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Wed., Mar. 27, 7:00 p.m.

HOLY THURSDAY

Thur., Mar. 28, 7:00 p.m.
Mass of Lord's Supper

GOOD FRIDAY

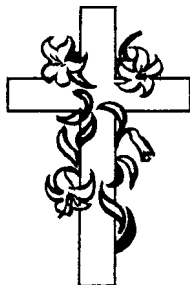
Fri., Mar. 29, 3:00 p.m. Service

EASTER VIGIL

Sat., Mar. 30, 8:00 p.m.

EASTER

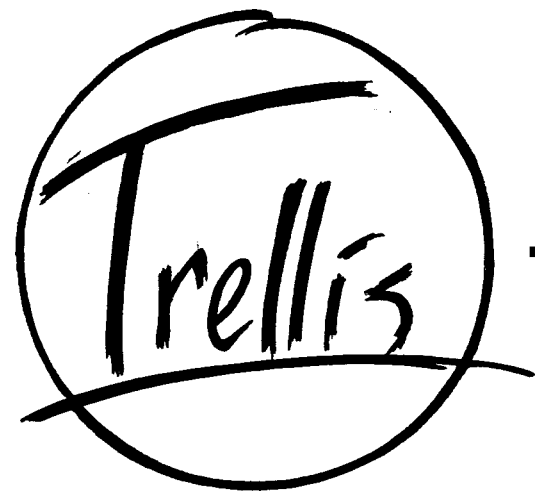
Sun., Mar. 31, 8:15 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.



PAUL

in CORINTH

one-man show starring daniel millen, AEA, SAG, AFTRA
monday, march 25, 7pm
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It's Easter...

... and the new menus, with cover illustrations by Island artist Tony Vida, fit right in, as we anticipate the Spring weather and flowers to come. There's a broader bill of fare at Trellis now, with some interesting additions... new things to try. Come on in...

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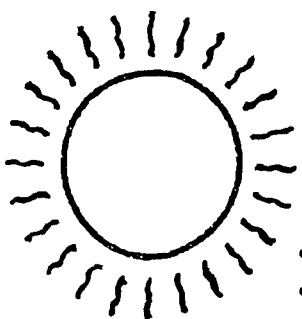


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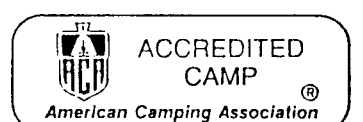
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Web site: MOUNTTOMDAYCAMP.COM
E-Mail: MTTOMCAMP@AOL.COM



Roosevelt Island Contact List

compiled by
Sherie Helstien, Frank Farance, Joyce Mincheff,
Marilyn Engstler, Kandle Fraser, and others



March 23, 2002

This contact list will be updated from time to time and maintained on two website locations:

Website NYC10044, at www.nyc10044.com/contacts.html, and the **Roosevelt Island Information Service**, at rooseveltisland.org/phones

Updates, additions, and corrections should be e-mailed to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com, faxed to (212) 755-2540 or telephoned to (212) 826-9055. Please provide a name and phone number for follow-up.

For current Island contact list, go to
<http://www.nyc10044.com/contacts.html>
or
<http://www.nyc10044.com/wire/2216/fonelist.pdf>

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The preparers of this list have made an effort to include current information on contacts of interest to residents of Roosevelt Island, and to verify the accuracy of the information provided. Please send suggested additions, corrections, and updates via e-mail to **editor@MainStreetWIRE.com**, by fax to (212) 755-2540, or by telephone to (212) **826-9055**. *In addition to the contact information to be published, be sure to give a contact name and number for possible follow-up.*

For regularly-updated information, check

Website NYC10044 – www.nyc10044.com/contacts.html

and

Roosevelt Island Information Service – rooseveltisland.org/phones



Steve Marcus
This was the scene last week at Ground Zero. Work in clearing the rubble of the disaster has outpaced planning for the site.

Session Here to Give Islanders Voice in Downtown Renewal

Want to have direct input into how the World Trade Center site will be rebuilt? You can, Tuesday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m.

Under the sponsorship of the Municipal Arts Society (MAS), The Roosevelt Island Historical Society is holding an *Imagine New York* workshop, one of hundreds being held around the city in the next few weeks. The session will be held in the Westview Community Room, at 625 Main Street.

The session is intended to gather the public’s ideas on the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan, the memorializing of the World Trade Center site, and the future of the City. On the Island, it will be led by Ethel Romm, an Island resident trained by MAS as a facilitator for this session. Ideas and materials gathered as a result of the session will become part of the MAS collection, which will be categorized, with common themes identified.

For more information, call **980-5352**, or e-mail ethelgr@mindspring.com.

Hairston from page 2

bouts before losing a decision to Tommy Parks, who is known in this era primarily as the trainer of Bobby Czyz, Charles Murray, and Ray Mercer.

In 1950, Hairston was stopped in two rounds by Johnny Bratton, but closed out the year with wins over Kid Gavilan and Lester Felton. The next year he beat Art Towne, Paddy Young, and Paul Pender. He also split two bouts with Laurent Dauthuille during that campaign and lost a rematch with Gavilan.

Upon introducing Hairston at the recent awards dinner, Tony Mazzarella, a long-time member of the New York State Athletic Commission who presented him with the belt, asked the audience to try to put themselves in Hairston’s boxing boots.

“It was hard enough fighting guys like Johnny Bratton, Kid Gavilan, and Jake LaMotta,” said Mazzarella. “Imagine fighting them and not being able to hear or speak. Imagine not being able to communicate with your trainer, the referee, anyone.”

While hearing-impaired athletes have succeeded in other sports — most recently major league baseball player Curtis Pride — Hairston is one of only a handful of deaf boxers to compete on the world-class level.

“Nobody knows how good Hairston could have been or if his hearing made a difference in how he fought,” said Joe Miceli, who shares four common opponents with Hairston and was a world-rated welterweight in the same era. “But he was a helluva fighter. I give him a lot of credit for getting as far as he could. I remember when he knocked out Paddy Young at the Garden. That was something else.”

With a shrug and a smile, Hairston deflects the notion that his accomplishments are any more heroic than those of his contemporaries. His modesty forbids him to indulge in the fuss made over him by admirers.

“I trained hard,” Hairston said. “I fought hard. I didn’t feel different. I enjoyed my entire boxing career.”

Hairston and Jake LaMotta were familiar sparring mates at Gleason’s Gym when it was still a Bronx institution. They met for real twice in 1952. The first bout, on March 5, was a 10-round draw at Olympia Stadium in Detroit. The rematch, two months later at the same venue, was won by LaMotta.

Joey Archer, another of Gleason’s Gym alumni who twice challenged for the middleweight title in the ’60s, studied Hairston’s moves when he was still a teenager.

“I learned from watching guys like Eugene Hairston in the gym,” said Archer. “I saw his draw against LaMotta and I thought he won it.”

When asked about the draw with Hall of Famer LaMotta, Hairston simply wrote, “rob, cheat.” LaMotta remembers the fight differently.

“We fought toward the end of my career,” said LaMotta. “He was lucky to get a draw. I should have beaten him. I came back and beat him in the next fight.”



Although protective of his own pride and ring record, LaMotta acknowledged that Hairston was indeed a talent.

“He rated in the top 10,” said LaMotta. “The kid fought some good fighters. I can’t say anything bad about him. He did okay considering what he was up against. Someone told me he could feel the vibrations of the bell, that’s how he knew the round ended.”

While people with hearing disabilities do rely on vibrations, Hairston relied on the referee to signify the end of a round. When he became a contender, Madison Square Garden installed red lights on each corner post. Today they blink in the final seconds of the

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round, but they were initially put in place to alert Hairston when a round had ended.

A short time after losing to LaMotta, Hairston met Bobo Olson and was stopped in the sixth round. He said a headbutt caused his right eye to swell so badly that it closed. The eye never healed properly. Hairston would fight one more time, traveling to Paris to meet contender Charley Humez. He lost a 10-round decision and sustained a cut and more swelling to his right eye. The injury led to his retirement.

“I was told that if I continued to fight I could go blind,” said Hairston.

Today, Hairston’s right eyelid droops and it seems to affect his vision.

“I can see,” he said. “I have vision. But it’s weak.”

That is as close as Hairston comes to complaining about anything. Usually a simple nod from a fan will make him smile. Although he cannot speak with them, he gladly signs autographs and poses for pictures.

Hairston, 45-13-5 (24), beat numerous contenders and two world champions in his six-year career. But a shot at the world title always remained just beyond his grasp. Today, he does not display a trace of bitterness. Even though he was forced into retirement, leaving behind an incomplete career, the 71-year-old fighter carries himself with the contentment of a man who has lived a complete life.

“He was a great fighter and he’s a beautiful person,” said Ring 8 president Bobby Bartels, a former pro welterweight. “He has the heart of an angel.”

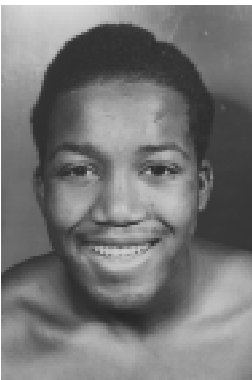
Upon his retirement from boxing, Hairston worked for UPS for many years. It was also after boxing that he met his wife, Aline, who is also deaf, at a wedding in Canada.

“She asked me for an autograph, and I asked her for her phone number,” said Hairston. “The rest is history.”

The couple danced that evening at the wedding, and still make it a point to dance whenever they can. They dance to the vibrations of the music. Aline, who worked as a gift-wrapper at the Lord & Taylor department store in Manhattan, is retired. So is Hairston, who still gives motivational lectures to children who are deaf.

The Hairstons have been married for 27 years and live in a modestly furnished apartment on Roosevelt Island, a small stretch of high rises that sits on the East River between the boroughs of Manhattan and Queens.

Although he was inducted into the American Athletic Association for the Deaf Hall of Fame in 1974, Hairston seemed to disappear from public view after his career. That is easy to do when one is unable to communicate with most of the world.



“Most deaf people are fine, they don’t feel that they are handicapped,” said Smith. “It’s not a problem for the Hairstons.

They have friends who are deaf and they socialize with them. You can’t just sit there and say, ‘Woe is me.’ The Hairstons don’t.”

Some friends, though, feel the Hairstons are more cut off from the outside world because they usually don’t have an interpreter with them. They also do not own a Text Telephone, a device used by deaf people that allows a caller to speak to an operator, who then relays a typed message to the hearing-impaired party.

“Nothing ever really bothers Eugene,” said Smith. “He’s just a very kind and sweet man.”

Smith said that Hairston was very touched and overwhelmed by the reception he received at the Ring 8 dinner. When the fighter was asked if he had any regrets, he said that he did not. But his hands moved quickly, signing a footnote to his last statement.

“I would have liked to have fought for the middleweight championship. I could have been champion.”

He paused again, perhaps envisioning the dream of fighting for the title at the Garden, and said, “Ray Robinson wouldn’t fight me because he hates it in his stomach.”

Then, to emphasize the point, Hairston smiled, made a tight fist and pounded his own stomach.

No translation was necessary.

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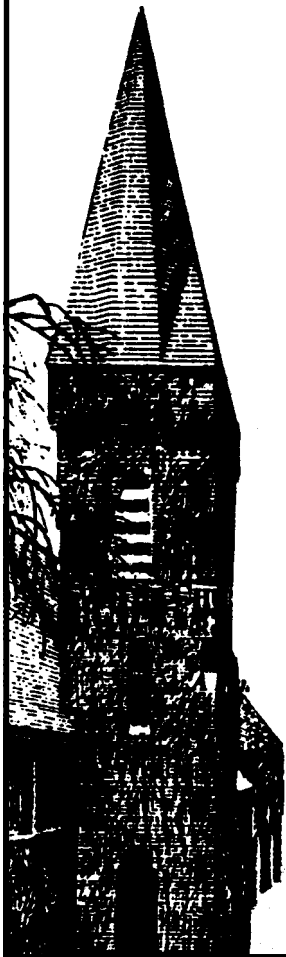
Our Schedule of Easter Services

March 28th, HOLY THURSDAY service at 7:00 pm downstairs in the Community Room.

March 29th, GOOD FRIDAY Service at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Chapel. **THE CALL FROM THE CROSS.** Music from our Choir.

EASTER SUNDAY, March 31:
10:00: THE GLORIOUS SERVICE OF CELEBRATING EASTER BEGINS. Come share in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. Music from our Choir.

Church of the Good Shepherd
543 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, New York



Actor to Play the Apostle Paul in a Performance Monday

Daniel Millen believes Paul the Apostle set out the tenets that became the philosophical basis of western civilization.

Millen, an actor, will perform *Paul in Corinth* Monday, March 25, under the sponsorship of the Cabrini Parish. Admission, at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, is free. Except for the one night on Roosevelt Island, he has performances scheduled every night at Advent Hope Church, at 111 East 87th Street.

"You can make an argument," he says, "that all of Western civilization was founded on Paul's philosophy – all based on the writings of this one Jew from modern-day Turkey. I don't think people realize how deeply Paul's writings are embedded in our culture."



RIDA Seeks Members

The new president of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association (RIDA), Bill Harris, is looking for new members.

"We are well-respected by our political representatives," Harris says, but adds, "the larger our membership, the stronger we become."

"Our association strives to make life easier, meaningful, and as interesting as possible," Harris says. "Our goal is to support the independent functioning of residents who are physically challenged and/or disabled."

"Among other goals, we will be going on various trips from time to time, such as shopping centers, shows, Atlantic City, museums, the zoo, the aquarium, and professional sports events."

RIRA Wants Crowd At Precinct Meeting

RIRA First Vice-President Byron Gaspard is looking for better Roosevelt Island turnout at meetings of the 114th Precinct Community Council. In light of recent Island events, including a shooting reported in the last issue of *The WIRE*, Gaspard says, "We need to come in numbers and with concerns that crime is increasing and that the type of crimes committed are more aggressive and dangerous to the residents of Roosevelt Island."

Gaspard is trying to establish a car-pool program for the meeting at 7:30 Tuesday evening at Riccardo's Restaurant, at 21-01 24th Avenue, Long Island City. He can be reached at 752-6819.

PSD from page 1

all buildings.

- A sense that marijuana is the major drug activity. (The report contains an observation that PSD is virtually helpless to deal with marijuana activity because the law is so lenient.)

- A general feeling that PSD needs more support "or that there is a lack of knowledge about the status and effectiveness" of PSD.

- A perception that officers will need more training as the Island is developed further.

- A desire for more patrols within buildings, known as "vertical patrols." The report observes that some buildings are more attractive as places to "hang out" than others, and that this leads to resident concern about safety.

- A concern about traffic at the ramp. The report briefly discusses a concern that Roosevelt Island might appear to be a "gated community" if an officer is stationed at the ramp, and points out that doing so would remove the officer from patrol duty elsewhere.

- A general concern about parental control of Island children.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations ranging from meeting with NYPD to seek additional police presence on the Island to one that PSD and the Youth Program find a way to deal with the marijuana problem.

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Tram from page 1

had ordered a new cable after all.

“It was and it wasn’t a so-called surprise,” said Patrick Stewart, a resident member of the RIOC Board, who characterized the Labor Department in this instance as “a bureaucracy operating in an area where they have little expertise; they were extremely cautious.”

“If I’m the commissioner of labor, I do not want to approve something and have the damn thing crash,” Stewart said. Given this scenario, he said, Blomer’s decision to give up on the State approval process, which included a request for review by a third-party engineer, was simply a prudent business decision.

“I know the direction of the Board was that we required RIOC to make absolutely sure this thing is safe, and the general sentiment of the Board was that the jury-rigged cable was probably not appropriate,” Stewart said.

His comments were similar to those of David Kraut, another resident Board member. “Our patience was running out, and if Mr. Blomer had not gone ahead and purchased new cable, I believe we would have told him to,” he said.

The Division of Safety and Health has jurisdiction over the Tram because of its responsibility to regulate workplace safety. It also governs ski lifts, carnival rides, window-cleaning scaffolds, elevators, and large tents. Betsy McCormack, the Labor Department’s director of communications, said that the department had still been trying to find another engineer when news came of American Tramways’ decision. “We were unaware that the cable had been ordered,” she said. She also said that “no written recommendations or analysis was ever completed by the Engineering Services Unit” on the company’s proposal.

Given previous instances of State delays in dealing with Tramway matters, Kraut said, “no one should have been surprised that the State Department of Labor was in no hurry to deal with this matter. But this is hindsight.”

The Tram’s employees, however, were blindsided. Although five members of the crew have been called back to help with maintenance work in the past several weeks, most have been trying to get along on \$400 a week in unemployment compensation. The employees, members of the International Union of Operating Engineers, have never had to deal with seasonal unemployment, and stop-gap medical insurance costs \$675 per month.

RIOC has offered to help the workers recoup some of their out-of-pocket losses, but negotiations with the company have not been successful, say the workers. They have filed grievances seeking back pay, medical benefits and the loss of wages.

As the haul rope installation proceeded after March 5, RIOC has said mechanical problems with a large winch further prolonged the work, possibly as much as four days, but this could not be confirmed with Blomer.

The State’s permit process was still running its course late this week. The Engineering Services Unit’s inspection was concluded by mid-day Thursday. “Thus far, all is proceeding in accordance with the code rule,” McCormack said. “Once the load test is complete, our In-

dustry Inspection folks will review the documentation.” The division’s Industry Inspection Bureau would then issue a permit to American Tramways to resume service. The ultimate decision will be up to RIOC, which has said it will follow the State’s recommendation.

The current shutdown, if it lasts until Saturday, would equal the Tram’s 120-day grounding in 1980-81, which appears to have been the longest before now. At that time, the Tram was closed for maintenance on November 7, 1980, for a haul rope replacement. Judith Berdy, the Island’s historian, said service resumed on March 7, but only after the cable had been dropped twice, on December 2 and December 19, 1980, disrupting traffic over wide portions of the Upper East Side.

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managed to put the Tram out of service a few years later...

...And a few years later and a few years later. There has been a Tram outage of some kind on the average of every two and a half or three years for the entire 23 years I’ve lived here. No Roosevelt Island administration has been able to keep the Tram running.

I don’t know why anybody should be surprised at this. These agencies, including RIOC, were established to operate, manage, and develop the community, not to be running an absolutely unique form of public transportation. To this day there has never been a transportation expert on the staff of RIOC or its predecessors. So the Tram has always lurched along from one emergency to the next and no wonder: no one knows how to run a Tramway as a regular form of mass transit, not even Red Blomer’s company, American Tramways.

Nor does any State agency know how to supervise the thing. Why the State Department of Labor should have been stuck with Tram oversight in the first place, no one now living can explain to me. I can understand they might well be sick of it. The last time the Department of Labor was directly involved in a Tramway dispute it concerned the decision as to whether a Tram console operator was strictly necessary. The appeals lasted three years and the testimony went to over 400 pages. So I think no one should have been surprised that the Department of Labor was in no hurry to deal with the current matter.

But this is hindsight. When, after the initial miscutting of the cable, Mr. Blomer first suggested the engineering fix and asked the State to approve it, none of us imagined or recalled that the State might not want to touch it with a 10-foot pole. Personally I’m glad that Mr. Blomer finally decided, on his own, to simply buy a new cable. I’m not surprised that he put it off as long as he did – \$30,000 or \$40,000 of his company expense was at stake – nor am I surprised that he finally realized his company was going to lose far more if he didn’t take it upon himself to make a decision. I was surprised that the amount of cost was actually so low, if I may use that term, because I had imagined that replacement cable would cost more on the order of several hundred thousand dollars. If we had known the price was so low, we



by Seth Kaufman

BASKETBALL The Lakers in the 12-14 Division and the Bucks in the 15-17 Division captured the 2002 championships in the Youth Program’s Winter Basketball League in very competitive, well-played games.

In the championship game of the 12-14 Division, the first-place Lakers defeated the Spurs 56-43 in a game that was much closer than the final score would indicate. The Lakers came out strong, building a six-point lead early in the first half. They maintained their lead throughout the first half and, employing a full court press and a trapping defense, extended their lead to 28-19 at the half. However, the Spurs opened the second half with their own full-court press and, six minutes into the second half, tied the score. Just when it looked as though the Spurs were about to take control of the game with all the momentum on their side, the Lakers answered with a run of their own, building a ten-point lead with ten minutes left in the game.

The Spurs made one last attempt at a comeback, cutting the deficit to five points with 1:30 left in the game, but the Lakers held on, winning by 13. Derrick Moore led a very balanced Laker attack with 16, while Joel Arroyo had 14, Remy Armenakis, Eric Miranda, Matthew Brodsky, and Emmanuel Ogbogu each added 6, and Dax Armenakis added 2 points. For the Spurs, Mirza Avdovic led the team with 17 points, while Byron Gaspard had 12, and Fabian Williams added 10. The other members of the Spurs included Omani Guy, Shirome Dixon, Eyosyas Tadesse, Kenny Pizarro, and Saul Nadel.

In the championship game in the 15-17 Division, the second-place Bucks upset the previously undefeated, first-place Magic 71-66 in overtime. The Bucks broke out on top in this game and built a 21-11 lead on the strength of their offensive rebounding. The Magic fought back led by the scoring of Prince Cherry and finally tied the score at 26-all on a basket by Jose Marte with two minutes left in the first half. However, Devin Epps with two baskets and Tymel Williams with another gave the Bucks a 32-26 lead at the half.

The Bucks maintained a lead of between three and six points for the first fifteen minutes of the second half, until Robert Voyd hit a three-point shot to tie the game at 49. The game remained close and was tied again at 56 all with two minutes left in regulation play. Blas Loor then sank a jump shot and a foul shot to give the Bucks a 59-56 edge, but Chris Rosado sank a foul shot and Dwight Wells stole an inbound pass and scored on a lay-up to tie the game at 59 with thirty seconds to go. After another steal and a foul, Dwight Wells sank two free throws to put the Magic up by two points, but Devin Epps was fouled with ten seconds left in the game and hit both free throws to tie the game at 61.

In the overtime, the superior offensive rebounding of the Bucks made the difference as they outscored the Magic 10-5. For the Bucks, Devin Epps was the game’s leading scorer with 29 points, while Tymel Williams had 18, Eugene Woody had 11, and Randy Cline added 9. The other members of the championship Bucks included Blas Loor, Darian Smith, and John Mason. For the Magic, Prince Cherry led the scoring with 25 points, while Dwight Wells had 18, and Robert Voyd added 14. The other members of the Bucks included Scott Davis, José Marte, Chris Rosado, and Isiah Doxen.



Seth Kaufman

Fabian Williams (21) of the Spurs dribbles the ball as Remy Armenakis and Eric Miranda of the Lakers defend.

would have insisted that Mr. Blomer bite that particular bullet far sooner. As it was, our patience was running out, and if Mr. Blomer had not gone ahead and purchased new cable, I believe we would have told him to.

As to finance, Governor Pataki made clear six years ago that he wasn’t going to underwrite the cost of Tramway deficits, and I don’t believe he is going to turn around on this issue at this time, even in an election year. This means that we in the Roosevelt Island community are in fact underwriting the Tram’s deficits through whatever indirect contributions we make to the RIOC budget. For the past few years, I have used a rule-of-thumb to the tune of annual receipts of about \$1.5 million and a deficit of about \$750,000. I don’t know if that’s exact, but it seems close enough to conjure with, especially in the area of adding the Tramway to the MetroCard.

Simply stated, when the Tram does go on the Metrocard system we end up sharing the revenue with the MTA. Others are more expert than I in how the sharing is calculated on a per-ride or ride-origination basis, but the upshot is the same. We would end by splitting our \$1.5 million in current receipts with the

MTA, with the effect that our current \$750,000 deficit would become a \$1.5 million dollar deficit. This would essentially be borne by residents.

In addition, there would be a huge one-time capital cost to invest in the MetroCard system itself – card-readers and computer hookups and so forth – and I have heard indications that this figure might itself run well north of half a million dollars.

So it’s a difficult thing to resolve. I’ve been fighting for this Tramway for over 20 years and have no intention of quitting. I can assure you that the Board as currently constituted is firmly in support of keeping the Tram running, even if this means cutting back on other areas. I have no doubt the administration finally understands the degree of importance the community attaches to the Tramway. Last summer’s letter-writing campaign in support of operating the third shift made that clear. At that time, as you may remember, I called for the widest-possible community response, and as I know you remember, we got it. The Board was informed in no uncertain terms that the Tramway is not a political issue but a vital public service issue.

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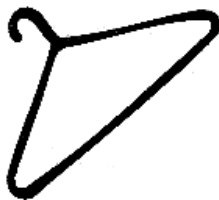
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