

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, June 15

The Main Street **WIRE**TM

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

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



Spring Concert Under the direction of Harold Solow, the PS/IS 217 School Band will present its annual event at 6:00 p.m. Thursday at the school.

Briefly...

Grannis Finds State Funds for Island

With the State budget enacted in Albany, Assemblymember Pete Grannis has released a list of funds allocated for Roosevelt Island as “member items,” totaling just over \$50,000.

They include \$5,000 each for the Disabled Association, the Senior Association, and the New York Public Library’s Island branch. The PTA will receive \$8,500 to purchase materials for classroom and library use, and the Youth Program will get \$12,000 for its work in providing recreation, education, and counseling services.

The budget provides another \$15,000 for the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, bringing the total Grannis has provided for repair and restoration work – work not yet started – to over \$300,000.

Merchants Consider Loans

Five out of the ten Island merchants who attended a special Chamber of Commerce meeting to talk about the financial crunch they face said they would consider applying for federal loans, available from the Small Business Administration, to tide them over to better times.

The meeting, put together by Chamber President Julie Palermo, was attended by State Senator Olga Mendez and representatives of the Island’s other elected representatives, Residents Association President Matthew Katz, a representative of RIOC, and New York National Bank President Serafin Mariel. Mariel estimated that, on average, a merchant might need \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Meanwhile, the owner of Prima Things has announced she’s moving out, to an off-Island location.

Good Deeds

Two Sundays ago, seven members of the Island Girls Project were part of the AIDS walk, raising over \$400.

PTA Election

The PS/IS 217 PTA has started gearing up for its activities next year supporting the school. Erin Feely-Nahem was elected to another year as president. Rose McCarthy will serve as First Vice President, Owen Johnston as Second Vice President, and Sandra Morabito as Third Vice President. Other officers include Treasurer Lydia Tang, Recording Secretary Sandy Newell, Corresponding Secretary Vivienne Codderens, Fundraisers Mary O’Brien Miranda and Ragnhild Uthiem, Grants Officer Tim Wong, and Parent Outreach Liaisons Karen Smith, Ricky

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Variations on the Death of Trotsky by David Ives is one of five short plays at the Main Street Teenage Theatre this weekend, with performances tonight (June 1) at 8:00 and tomorrow at 2:00 and 7:00. Mariama Diallo plays the missus to Gil Zamfirescu’s Leon Trotsky. Terence Trouillot is Ramon, the assassin who put that pick-axe in Trotsky’s head.

Icla da Silva Foundation Celebrating Tenth Year Finding Marrow Donors

by Dick Lutz

Roosevelt Island’s Icla da Silva Foundation will mark its ten-year anniversary on June 21 with a black-tie event at the Plaza Hotel. Some 350 celebrants are expected to gather for the occasion and honor some of the individuals and companies that have contributed to the foundation’s growth and success.

The Foundation is also raising money on Roosevelt Island by seeking contributions and with a raffle.

The Foundation is a real Roosevelt Island story. When Icla da Silva needed a bone-marrow transplant, her parents brought her and the rest of the family to the United States from Brazil, selling all their possessions. They came because there was no registry of bone-marrow donors in Brazil.

On Roosevelt Island, they found a community with a heart. Lou Carbonetti, Ron and Fay Vass, Pat and Mike Schwartzberg, Joan Brooks, Larry Itskowitch, and others mobilized the *Love Thy Neighbor* effort to raise funds to cover the expected transplant costs.

“Many organizations were involved,” remembers Fay Vass. “Every organization on the Island mobilized and had fund-raisers – cards, events... The first person to contribute was Representative Charlie Rangel.”

Over \$40,000 was raised, but Icla died of pneumonia just a week before the scheduled transplant.

But Alci da Silva and the family learned much through the experience and, in Icla’s name, they put their knowledge to work for other minority patients in need of marrow transplants.

In ten years, their work has saved 150 lives and given new hope to future patients in need of bone-marrow transplants.

The problem they discovered – and helped to solve – was that the United States registry of potential

bone-marrow donors was overwhelmingly Caucasian, and genetic ethnicity is an important consideration in donor-patient matching.

As Icla’s brother, Airam, explained in a conversation with *The WIRE* last week, finding a donor match is difficult enough within one’s own ethnic group. A Caucasian patient has a one-in-20,000 chance of finding a match within a Caucasian population. But a Hispanic patient faces one-in-a-million odds of finding a donor in that same population.

The solution was to find more Hispanic donors. When the da Silvas arrived in the United States over ten years ago, there were only 45,000 registered volunteer donors, all Caucasian, making it virtually impossible to find the one-in-a-million match for Icla (though one was found). Today, though, there are 375,000 Hispanic donors and, within that population, the chances of any individual Hispanic patient finding a match improve to one in 20,000.

So the Icla da Silva Foundation’s mission, in part, is to find Hispanic donors. Alci da Silva and his family do it by making some 140 presentations a year. In New York City, the targets are Hispanic churches.

“We build a relationship with the potential donors and their church,” says Airam. “That increases greatly the likelihood we will be able to locate the donor when his match needs a transplant. Even if he has moved – in some cases back to his home country – somebody in the church is likely to know how to make contact.”

The Foundation has made presentations in ten states and the District of Columbia, and boasts a superior track record in locating registered donors when their patient-match is found, then in following through to successful completion of the donation and transplant. That’s a significant factor in the 150 lives that have been saved.

The problem in donor-patient
See **Icla**, page 2

RITA Against Tennis Courts Atop an Octagon Garage

The Roosevelt Island Tennis Association (RITA) has come out against a plan to move the Octagon courts to the top of a new parking structure associated with apartments proposed for Octagon Park.

In a statement issued Wednesday to back up comments in its member newsletter, RITA wrote, “The officers and executive board of RITA, who represent the tennis-playing community on Roosevelt Island, are unanimous in our opposition to surrendering any current parkland in Octagon Park for development.

“In general, we strongly oppose any plan to disrupt the present ten-

nis courts, which are currently very well utilized by the community.”

The statement continues, “In particular, any plan to destroy the present courts and build some courts on the roof of a parking garage is most vigorously opposed. We seriously question the need for a parking facility at the site of the courts. Our opposition is based on serious concerns regarding environmental issues, aesthetic and safety considerations, specific tennis issues (wind exposure, auto exhaust pollution, stray ball retrieval, etc.), and a pervasive fear of Roosevelt Island’s becoming increasingly less people-friendly.”

Islanders

Matt Katz – Waist-Deep in Community

by Anusha Shrivastava

To be an effective representative of Island residents, a candidate must love the Island, understand every dimension of its problems, and be familiar with residents from all walks of life. That’s just for starters. He or she must be willing to work hard, be patient, and have some experience in political dealings. Could a former soldier and music teacher have all those qualities and more? If the person is Matthew Katz, the answer would appear to be yes.

Katz, who is 56, is the current president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. “The trees brought us here but the people made us stay,” Katz says. He has been living on the Island with his wife, Sherie Helstien, since 1989.

A native New Yorker, Katz grew up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Soon after college in Schenectady, he was drafted into the Army. He served for three years, working in laboratories at the Redstone Arsenal in Alabama and in Honolulu, Hawaii. “It was intellectually stimulating and fascinating work,” Katz says. “My function was to take modules from six missile stations and repair them.”

Once out of the Army, Katz became a music teacher, taking guitar lessons through the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music and the Grand Street Settlement as well as private classes. He also served as a standby mem-

ber of the social crew for cruises on Home Lines and Cunard, sailing on short notice. “For a young man in the 1970s, it was heaven,” Katz recalls.

Even so, he realized that he could not spend his life teaching and playing music so he joined The New York Academy of Sciences as a media-services manager. Becoming director of his department in 1977, Katz stayed at the academy until 1996.

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Briefly... from page 1

Bethune and Avalaine Bethune. The PTA is looking for additional fundraisers and parent-outreach workers. as well as representatives to the Youth Center-Beacon Program and the United Parents Association.

Parent members of the School Leadership Team are Erin Feely-Nahem, Rose McCarthy, Sandra Morabito, Lydia Tang, Mary O’Brien Miranda, Ragnhild Utheim, Vivienne Codderens, Owen Johnston, and Bridget Johnston.

Topped Off

Southtown’s first building was topped off and decorated with the Stars and Stripes just before the Memorial Day weekend. The second building has reached the 7th floor.

Where’s Gus Now?

Trellis patrons who miss Constantine “Gus” Lambros will be pleased to learn he is now the owner of Best Coffee Shop II in Ozone Park (at 98-05 101st Avenue).

Where’s Thelma Now?

Thelma McIntosh, Facilities Manager for Roosevelt Island Housing Management (Island House, Westview, Eastwood) has moved to Manhattan Park – both her digs and her job – where she started work Tuesday as resident manager.

Friendly Visitors Sought for Seniors

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is seeking Friendly Visitor volunteers to commit 1-2 hours a week to visiting seniors on Roosevelt Island. The program is intended to counter the isolation and depression that can arise from chronic loneliness. To volunteer, call 744-5022, ext. 1238.

Katz from page 1

It was at about this time that he began to take a serious interest in Island affairs. “I had attended one RIRA meeting in 1992,” Katz said. “People were screaming and shouting and I walked out, quite disgusted.”

Four years later, he decided to become part of the political activities because, he says, he thought he could make a contribution. “Community activity is like quicksand. You expect to go in ankle-deep and, before you know it, you are in waist-deep.”

Katz says he began to attend meetings of the Maple Tree Group to better understand the governance of the Island. “I wanted to educate the community about the legislation for Island autonomy. We have been denied a layer of government, and that is just wrong. In 1776, people went to war over the premise of taxation without representation and it still applies here. It is a shame.”

The prime example of what this denial leads to, Katz says, is the way Southtown is being developed. “People are just beginning to see in three dimensions what this development has done to Main Street. The ramifications from the addition to the population are yet to be seen.”

He believes that if Islanders were deciding what the development would be like, the result would be very different. “I hope to enfranchise this community so they can decide whether we should have the MetroCard or not, whether we should have advertising on the Tram, whether we should have three shifts on it, and so forth.”

His friends and supporters believe he has the right mix of qualities to be able to deal with politicians to achieve the most for the Island. “He is a very effective individual,” said Steve Marcus, who has worked with Katz on the RIRA Common Council. “He seeks to conciliate and not try to make points by asking for the impossible and then blaming his opponents. His heart is genuinely in the right place.”

Frank Farance believes Katz gets things done because he “lets a lot of stuff roll off his back.” He cites the 3,000-signature petition that saved the third shift of the Tram last summer as an example. “Matthew got that done because he focused on what needed to be done and did it. He did not waste time by arguing and, like some people who at-

tend meetings, did not simply criticize without providing an actionable alternative.”

The first vice-president of the Residents Association, Byron Gaspard, says Katz has focused mainly on the self-governance issue while Gaspard has dealt with public-safety issues. “The positive thing is that we talk and discuss matters and Matthew does attend meetings about the quality-of-life problems on the Island. We have put politics second and dealt with grassroots issues.”

Katz’s critics think he spends too much time on what they call his “agenda of self-governance.” “Matthew has not done enough to reach out to the community and find out what people other than his group think about,” said one long-time resident on condition of anonymity. “He wasted a lot of RIRA’s time on the issue of his wife’s being a representative of a building she no longer lived in.”

For his part, Katz says the fact that his wife was willing to work for the association was more important than which building she lived in. “The objections were purely personal,” added Sherie Helstien, who says she is happy supporting Katz in his endeavors. “Matthew has managed to be part of a RIRA that is proactive in the community. He has dealt with a lot of difficult situations and is savvy on negotiations.”

Praising the people who live on the Island, Katz says he has never lived in a community so cohesive despite being so diverse. “There is a breathtaking array of talent on the Island – artistic, legal, journalistic. I am utterly convinced that residents could not only maintain the Island but also enhance it.”

Icla from page 1

matching lies in matching “HLA” types. Each type is classified, through a blood test, by a system using a series of six numbers and letters derived from a blood test. The abbreviation stands for Human Leukocyte Antigen. An HLA number might look like this, for example: A15A20B12B40DR1DR3. All the factors, in permutations that can reach into the millions, must match.

But the Icla da Silva Foundation’s activities on behalf of bone-marrow-transplant patients go beyond lining up donors, says

To Pete Grannis– Dear Assemblymember Grannis:

I know that you have worked long and hard in the interests of Roosevelt Island and its residents. Over many years I’ve seen you at virtually every event we’ve had here. I know you’ve been able to obtain valuable funding for our Youth Center, and that you are a wonderful friend to our Seniors as well. You have shown great concern for our open spaces and our historical landmarks. I think you are a fine public servant and an honor to your profession.

In the remaining legislative session, you will be able to make what I believe can be your crowning achievement of service to the residents of this Island by securing passage of your bill for Island democracy.

As you well know, the concept of self-government embodied in your bill has been overwhelmingly endorsed by this community in two referenda as well as the last RIRA election, where Matt Katz’s tireless advocacy of this bill met with strong approval by our voters.

I can’t tell you how depressing it is to see the systematic destruction of the extraordinary gifts that Island has by disinterested and inept State appointees. I am humiliated to be governed by Robert Ryan and Leo Kayser. I am immeasurably saddened to see this boondoggle of construction on what were our wonderful open fields only two years ago. On the horizon, these carpetbaggers have planned for us the destruction of our picnic and tennis open areas at Octagon park, the shrinkwrapping of our Tram, the squandering of the funds promised by you and Councilmember Miller for the expansion of Youth program and the construction of a

Airam da Silva. There’s often a language barrier for patients from Latin America, so the Foundation provides language help, plus logistical and emotional support, transportation, and orientation. Because patients have to stay in the United States for extended periods, the idea is to make them feel at home. Sometimes, Broadway tickets are donated, and other ways are found to structure meaningful lives for marrow recipients while they are in New York.

At the June 21 event, patrons will see a first-time meeting between a donor and patient – a life-saver and survivor, an emotional moment that has been part of previous celebrations of this kind for the Foundation. The event, which will be emceed by Jim Watkins of Channel 11’s Ten O’Clock News, will also feature awards of recognition to former Islander Lou Carbonetti, Representative Charles Rangel, Coler-Goldwater Director Sam Lehrfeld, and three commercial organizations – Japan Airlines, the Hispanic network Univision 41, and Organizações Globo, Brazil’s local equivalent of CNN.

Tickets for the fund-raising raffle will be available at Trellis at \$10 a dozen (\$1 for singles). The grand prize is a pair of round-trip tickets to Brazil. Other prizes are a DVD player, TV set, and gift certificates for meals. To donate or order tickets, Islanders can call the foundation at (212) 593-1807.

Contributions are being received at PO Box 90, NYC 10044.

In addition to efforts to find and sign up donors, Foundation income goes toward testing to type donor marrow. While the U.S. Navy provides testing for up to 2,700 minority donors a year, the da Silva Foun-

Letters

To Olga Mendez– Dear Senator Mendez:

You can make a huge positive impact on the lives of thousands of Roosevelt Islanders by gaining passage of a bill forming an elected RIOC Board.

Nothing is more frustrating than helplessly watching RIOC make unchecked bad decisions that affect our lives every single day and for years to come.

Please end this absurd, undemocratic “government” now, before another year of irreversible damage is done.

Marc Diamond

six-story power transformer on what should be FDR Park.

Another year of this government will, quite literally, destroy the best parts of this Island. I know that you have crafted your bills for self-government with several financial safeguards for our protection. Senator Mendez has finally, in this year, decided to get the Governor and his staff involved in the passage of your bill. In this time of fiscal austerity, I would expect that the Governor’s folks may want to modify some of these provisions.

Mr. Grannis, I know you will negotiate the best bill possible on our behalf, but I urge you to compromise if and when necessary to secure passage of this bill in this session. At this point, almost any bill is better than no bill. I am certain that we can do a far better job of governing ourselves than can Mr. Pataki’s appointees and that this is our last chance to get control of our own neighborhood and to restore the vision and promise of this very special community.

Steve Marcus

To James Fry, Director of Public Safety:

There has never been a so-called public meeting such as the one you called on Friday, May 24, at 7:00 p.m. to introduce the new chief of the 114th Precinct.

No one calls Friday night meetings, let alone on the eve of the Memorial Day weekend. This is a formula for failure.

It is very strange that you would want to waste your time knowing there would be a very poor turnout. What possible motive could be behind this formula for failure?

I am still concerned that neither RIOC nor Public Safety has come forward with a real meeting to discuss a disaster plan, which I asked you about on October 2, 2001.

Ronald T. Vass

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the Editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a Name Withheld basis will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records. Preferred methods of submission: By e-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (ASCII text preferred or use any wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files with macros), or PC-standard 3.5-inch floppy disk left at 531 Main Street for The WIRE. Alternatives: Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to (212) 755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we cannot take telephone dictation of letters. All letters are subject to acceptance and to editing for length and clarity. We recommend observing a maximum length of 300 words, but will consider longer letters if their content merits the required space.

Letters deadline for June 15 issue: June 11

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

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History Group Seeks Volunteers for Blackwell

The Roosevelt Island Historical Society (RIHS) is seeking broad resident involvement in its Blackwell House project. RIHS took site control on an agreement with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) recently.

RIHS President Judy Berdy plans a meeting on the porch of the historic farmhouse, an Island landmark, Tuesday, June 11, at 7:00 p.m. The idea is to show potential volunteers the state of the building, then to organize. In an e-mail, Berdy describes the needs as organizing committees and volunteers, formulating plans for the building, getting estimates for repairs, finding funding sources, fund-raising, writing grant proposals, and getting others interested in the house and its potential.

“The future of Blackwell House is in our hands,” Berdy writes. “RIOC has agreed to give us a year to make plans and find funding for the future of the house.” She adds, “Once we have identified the house’s needs and our plans, we will be able to negotiate a long-term lease.”

Berdy can be contacted at (212) 688-4836 or by e-mail at RooseveltIslandHistory@usa.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., June 1 and every Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-12 noon, **Informal Doubles Play** at the tennis courts, sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Tennis Association. (Tennis permit required; forms at Public Safety.)

Sat., June 1, 8:00 p.m., Main Street Teen Theatre presents **Playing Around**, five short plays (see ad, page 5). Seats \$10. Reservations, 371-4449.

Sun., June 2, 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., **Playing Around**. (See item above and ad, page 5.)

Wed., June 5, 8:00 a.m., **School Leadership Team Meeting**, PS 217.

Wed., June 5, 6:00 p.m., **PTA Executive Board Meeting**, PS 217.

Wed., June 5, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. (Last meeting until September.)

Thur., June 6, 6:00 p.m., **PS 217 School Band Spring Concert**, PS/IS 217 Auditorium.

Thur., June 6, 7:00 p.m., **Naming New York – Manhattan Places and How They Got Their Names**, with author Sanna Feirstein, Library.

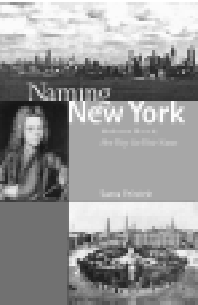
Mon., June 10, 8:00 p.m., **Toastmasters**. Information: 759-0396.

Tue., June 11, 7:00 p.m., **Historical Society Meeting at Blackwell House** for potential volunteers in rehabilitation project.

Thur., June 13, 5:30 p.m., **RIOC Board 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.

Sat., June 15, all day, **Roosevelt Island Day**. Volunteer to help with clean-up and flower planting – call Kandle Fraser at 838-4747. Arts and crafts, puppet show, clowns, rides, musical entertainment, teen pool party.

Sat., June 15, next issue of **The Main Street WIRE**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., June 7; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., June 10; materials due Thur., June 13. **Future issues** every two weeks except summer: June 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 Thanksgiving issue), Dec. 14 (holiday issue), then every two weeks starting in January, 2003. **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 send it by e-mail to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com.



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.

Senior Center

Monday 10:30, Blood Pressure Screen 12:30, “Oldies” Movies 1:00, Tai Chi (new day) 7:00, Dance	Friday 9:00, Citizenship 10:00, English as 2nd Language (beginner) 10:15, Yoga Stretch 11:00, English as 2nd Language (intermediate) 7:30, Lotto
Tuesday 10:00, Jazzercise 12:30, Shopping-for-Good-Health Workshop 1:30, Games (RISA)	Saturday 7:30, Bingo (RISA)
Wednesday 9:15, Stay Well Exercise 10:00, English as 2nd Language (beginner) 11:00, English as 2nd Language (intermediate) 3:00, Computer Class (full) 7:00, Pokeno (RISA)	Special Events Wed., June 5 , 12:30, Elder Abuse Lecture Fri., June 7 , 11:15, Shop&Stop trip Mon., June 10 , 11-12:30, MetroCard Bus Mon., June 10 , 12:30, Breast Cancer Awareness Lecture Tue., June 11 , 11:15, Aqueduct Flea Market trip
Thursday 10:00, Tai Chi 10:30, Creative Arts 12:30, Movie 7:00, Dance Class	

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

Atanu Nandy (1988-2002)

by Sid Menon, age 11

Atanu was a very popular kid around the neighborhood and he had many friends on Roosevelt Island who referred to him as Shuvo, or Chipmunk. He was loved by many. He was a very humorous and witty kid who loved to play jokes. He used to stand on his tenth-floor balcony and yell down our names when we were downstairs and hide so that we could not see him. He also used to enjoy passing time just sitting on the seats on his balcony.

Shuvo and us had a whale of a time each summer and fall. Since the Island is very safe, we were allowed to play freely all over the place from afternoon to night. We played a whole bunch of things like soccer and manhunt all summer long. We also played baseball. We enjoyed several snow fights in the winter together.

But on a quite chilly night in April, everything changed. Shuvo had been having dysentery and apparently decided to go out to the balcony and get some fresh air. Meanwhile Shuvo’s parents were having a party. For some reason, Shuvo decided to go and sit on the railing of his balcony. His family was busy at that time preparing for dinner. Therefore nobody knew where Shuvo was and what he was doing until they all heard a loud yell, *Ahhhhh!!!*

I heard the sound too and looked out of my window (I live on the third floor) and saw a body lying right below our window. I was frightened and shouted for my parents, hoping fervently that it was not someone I knew.

Shuvo’s older brother ran to the balcony and looked over and saw a body lying on the concrete floor downstairs. He immediately ran down the stairs, hoping to save Shuvo’s life. He quickly applied CPR before running into the lobby and calling the cops and an ambulance. Many neighbors stared out of their windows in stunned silence.

They never did actually know who it was because the cops and ambulance arrived in a matter of ten minutes and extricated and conveyed the child away to the nearest hospital’s ICU room. Meanwhile, Shuvo’s mother was crying and wailing for her son. Throughout that night and for the early part of Sunday his parents and friends waited for news from the hospital and prayed to God that he would be fine. He never recovered.

I still cannot believe that it was my good friend Shuvo. Only a few hours before that, while I was playing my baseball-league game, he had yelled and mocked me from the sidelines. “You cannot play baseball, Sid!” I was angry then, but now, when I play my baseball game, I always wish he would come by and mock me again – I will not be angry this time.

Shuvo is severely missed by me, my sister, and many of my friends: Dhiven, Rohit, Mikko, and many, many more because of his humor, kindness and outgoing wit. Now, without him, the whole Island seems very dull and dreary. Everyone wishes that he had just not sat on his railing and slipped off.

Everyone felt so bad that they made a poster and hung it up on a pillar near the spot where he fell. It read: *We’ll Miss You Shuvo*, in a heart. It was signed by everyone in the neighborhood and then it was given to his parents on the day of his funeral.

His parents wanted to get away from this tragedy and decided to move out. Now it is totally different without my friend Shuvo. R.I.P.

The WIRE’s Chief Feature Editor has seen fit to write an Islanders profile of me, and I thought both a profile and a column would be over-kill (or overKatz?). Margie Smith, a RIRA Common Council Alternate from Rivercross and co-chair of the Maple Tree Group (MTG), graciously agreed to write a guest column. Margie is president of an Island-based consulting firm. She has been instrumental in pursuing the goal of elected representation of Roosevelt Island residents on the RIOC Board of Directors.

-Matt Katz

Beware! At the end of this column I’m going to ask you to make a call or write a letter, so read carefully.

If you’re like I once was, you may not know RIRA* from RIOC. You probably don’t know what the GDP is, and you’re probably not aware of the specifics of the Roosevelt Island deal between the City and the State.

If you’re like I once was, you probably see no reason to care. You live here, you go to work every day, and you’re not involved because, on the whole, you think Roosevelt Island is probably at least as good as, if not better than, any other New York City community.

Unfortunately, times have changed. With every day that passes your quality of life is being subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, eroded. Witness the Southtown development, the proposal to shrink-wrap the Tram with advertising, the plan to build more housing in lieu of the Octagon ecological park that we were promised, and the effort to sell our remaining open space to the highest bidder.

The RIRA Column

*RIRA stands for **Roosevelt Island Residents Association**. Its Common Council members represent the residents of the Island. The group is a mixture of people, some of whom are elected by the residents of their building, and others who are given seats by virtue of their involvement in other organizations. But RIRA has *absolutely no authority* to get anything done on the Island.

That’s all happening because the people running the Island don’t have to answer to the residents as other politicians do. To really understand this, you need to know a little history about the Island. Here goes:

New York City owns Roosevelt Island. New York State has a 99-year lease with 60-some years left on it. This deal was made in 1969 when city planner Ed Logue and re-

nowned architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee were hired to design the ideal community – ideal from an economic, social, and architectural point of view. That brilliant design is in a document called the General Development Plan (GDP), which takes the place of zoning here. It should therefore protect us against piecemeal development projects and ensure that anything that’s built is in line with the intended plan for the community.

The group that’s charged with fulfilling the GDP and managing the Island is RIOC – the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. The people who work there are State employees. The decision-making body for RIOC is their Board of Directors. Board members are currently appointed by the Governor and serve at his pleasure. Unlike elected representatives, they have absolutely no allegiance to, nor do they answer to, the residents of this community.

RIOC is not looking out for our best interests but, *even if they were*, the basic structure here is wrong for a democratic society. **The people who make decisions for this community should be elected by the people who live in this community**, just as they are in every other community in the United States.

Mayor Bloomberg runs New York City because he was elected by the citizens of New York City. Local Councilmembers, Assemblymembers, Senators, etc., are elected by their districts. They can get things done for their constituents. (If they don’t, they’re booted out of office.) But because of this City/State lease arrangement on Roosevelt Island, our elected local representatives have no say in what goes on here. Our real local officials are the RIOC Board of Directors. We should be able to elect the Board. It’s so clear – this is how America works.

In 1997, some residents of the Island joined together to form The Maple Tree Group (MTG) and began working with our State Senator and Assemblymember toward legislation that would enable residents to elect most of the members of the RIOC Board. In two Island-wide elections, residents voted overwhelmingly to support this legislation.

That’s the background. Now, we’re in the final round. It’s time to remind our elected representatives that we want democracy here. It’s time, in short, for your voice to be heard – time for you to call or write Senator Olga Mendez and Assemblymember Pete Grannis to urge them to make it happen now!

Please, if you care about the future of the Island, take the time to send a note or call urging them to do everything possible to get this legislation through in this session. The addresses and phone numbers are below.

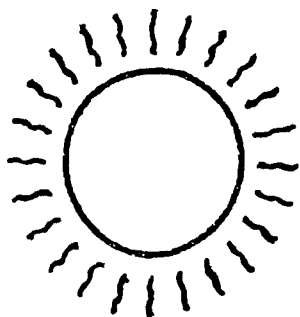
Senator Olga Mendez, 87 East 116th Street, NYC 10029
Telephone: 860-0893 Fax (212) 831-0530
or New York State Senate, Room 420, Capitol Building, Albany 12247

Assemblymember Pete Grannis, 1672 First Avenue, NYC 10128
Telephone: 312-1550 Fax (212) 996-3046
or Legislative Office Building, Room 712, Albany 12248



Margie Smith
Co-Chair, Maple Tree Group
e-mail: msmith@quintennium.com

Editor’s note: The President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation has a standing invitation to provide a companion *RIOC President’s Column* for publication in *The WIRE*.



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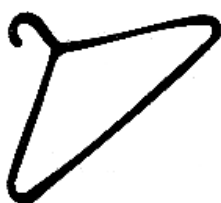
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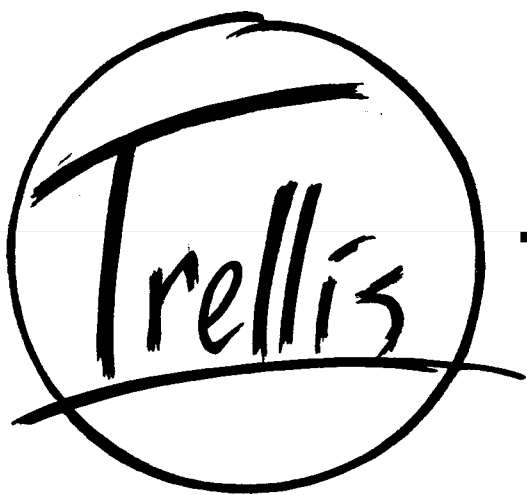
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SPORTSWIRE

by Seth Kaufman

BASEBALL The standings after seven weeks of the Youth Program’s Little League season are:

Minors	Majors
Navy 5-1-1	Green 6-2-1
Royal 2-2-3	Royal 6-3
Green 2-3-2	Navy 5-4
Red 1-4-2	Red 0-8-1

Minors: In games May 21 and 22, the Royal team tied the Green team 7-7 and the league-leading Navy team tied the Red team 4-4. For Royal, Anthony Fallone kept the game tied with an amazing catch near the end of the game, and Romance Barber and Jacob Kelman made outstanding defensive plays as well. For Red, Alex Schrum went three for three with 2 runs scored and Jonathan Feliciano led the offense with two doubles and 3 RBIs. Thomas Diamond and Kiah Lawrence scored the other runs for Red, and Zachary Strein collected the fourth RBI. For Navy, Alexander Pinks with two triples, Javon Perry with three hits, and Jamie Brackley with a key double, sparked the offense.

Majors: Green held first place by tying Red 6-6. Red jumped out to an early 3-2 lead, but Green came back to take a three-run lead, 6-3, going into the top of the sixth inning. In that inning, Red scored three runs to tie the score, keyed by an RBI double by Daniel Vithlani, who then came around to score the tying run on a wild pitch. Adrian Gordon led the Green offense with 3 hits, while Alex Beola made his first Major League start for Green. Remy Armenakis pitched the complete game for Red.

On May 21 and 23, Royal defeated Navy, 6-3 and 7-1, in two games postponed by rain, to take over second place. In the first game, Jenna Stueber dominated Navy, pitching a complete game with 12 strikeouts, while Joshua Hart sparked the offense with 4 hits in 4 at-bats. In the second game, Royal received another strong pitching performance, as Neal Stueber went all six innings, striking out 10 batters. Steven Morabito had the offensive highlight for Navy, as he collected a triple and scored their only run.

Seniors: On Sunday, May 19, the Senior A team improved its record to 9-1 by defeating a team from the Peter Stuyvesant Little League, 8-6. José Marte pitched a complete game for the victory and Deshawn Pearson homered to lead the offense.

Katherine Teets Grimm, M.D.

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