



The Main Street **WIRE**TM

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

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



Southtown Developers released this view of the development's first two buildings, as they will appear when looking westward across the new Main Street. A view from the Manhattan side appears on page 7, and in color on *Website NYC10044*.

Two More Buildings Announced for Southtown as First Two "Topped Out"

The developers of Southtown have announced plans to begin construction of the third and fourth buildings in the complex. The announcement came Tuesday at a "topping-out" ceremony for buildings one and two, conducted on the 15th floor of the northernmost building, which will have 256 apartments.

Employees of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center will live in the first building. The second building, with 136 units, will be occupied by staff employed at the Weill Cornell Medical College. The Presidents of both institutions

spoke at Tuesday's ceremony, along with executives of the developers, the Related Companies and the Hudson Companies, RIOC President Robert H. Ryan, and RIOC Board Chair Marybeth Labate.

The developers plan to start construction of the 250-unit third building by the end of the year. Three floors will house personnel from the Animal Medical Center. A press release issued by the developers says the rest of the building "will offer residences for a mix of institutions." The fourth building is slated to have 240 apartments

Firm Plans to Tap Tides in East Channel for Power

by Dick Lutz

The East River off Roosevelt Island may one day generate enough electricity to power office buildings the size of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

An Arlington, Virginia, company called Verdant Power has received funding from the State government to do test trials of a tidal power system in the East Channel. If all goes well, the system could be expanded to an underwater turbine field extending from the Queensboro Bridge almost to the north end of the Island. The power produced could be as high as ten megawatts.

The Island could use the power – for the Tramway, for example – and the creators of the project think it could become a demonstration of environmentally-benign electric generation for emerging economies around the world.

Trey Taylor, Verdant Power's president, says the basic idea is nothing particularly new. "The design is something worked on back in the mid-80's with the New York Power Authority. It was tested, successfully, in Pakistan, but then it got lost. People forgot about it." Now, Taylor says, "the basic technology is really applying what has been learned in the wind-power industry to water currents."

Space-age materials like recycled plastics and composites make the idea all the more practical, according to Taylor. When combined with computer modeling of designs created with three-dimensional CAD-CAM (computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing) systems, high efficiencies can be achieved, he says.

In initial testing, a turbine would be suspended from a pontoon raft,
See **Tides**, page 6

Tonight Fireworks Rainbow Set

A fireworks rainbow will arc over the Southern end of Roosevelt Island tonight in a one-minute display of pyrotechnic art intended to call attention to the temporary relocation of the Museum of Modern Art to Queens.

The *Transient Rainbow*, produced by famed fireworks specialist Phil Grucci and designed by artist Aci Guo-Qiang, will unfold from

Manhattan to Queens, signifying the direction of the move.

It's a pre-Fourth of July spectacular that is totally unrelated to the July 4 Fireworks Fest on the Island, when Southpoint is opened to spectators to see the Macy's Fireworks celebration. Tickets for that event are still on sale (\$15) at 591 Main Street and the Manhattan-side Tram station.

Appointed Residents to Get Majority Control of RIOC Board

Pataki Expected to Sign Compromise from Grannis and Mendez

by Erik Kriss
Albany Correspondent
The Post-Standard of Syracuse
Special to *The WIRE*

Albany, June 27 – Roosevelt Island residents will be guaranteed a majority on the Island's governing board under a bill that passed the State Legislature this week and is expected to win Governor George Pataki's approval.

The measure represents the compromise the Pataki administration reached with the legislators who represent the Island and are pushing to give Islanders self-governance. It requires that four, rather than the current two, of the Governor's five appointees to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board of Directors be Island residents.

One of the City Mayor's two appointees also must be an Island resident. Once appointments are complete – and it's unclear how long that will take – that will bring the total number of residents to five of the nine RIOC board members.

The bill also protects open spaces at the Blackwell, Southpoint, Octagon and Lighthouse parks, but allows for renovation of historic landmarks at those sites.

The Governor's press secretary,

Joseph Conway, told *The WIRE* on Thursday, "The Governor will be signing the bill. We're very happy we were able to reach consensus on legislation that preserves valuable open space on the Island and increases resident involvement in determining the future of Roosevelt Island." Conway could not say Thursday whether there will be a public bill-signing event.

Community leaders and the Island's State legislators offered mixed reactions to the deal.

Matthew Katz, President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, said he is both pleased that something got done but disappointed not more got done. But he added, "There is no local government worth a damn on Roosevelt Island."

Pataki, he said, "gave us an ex-
See **Albany**, page 6

Long-Time Resident Confirmed to RIOC Board as Restructuring Starts

Before adjourning last week, the State Senate confirmed Governor George Pataki's appointment of Mark Ponton to the RIOC Board. Pataki had met Ponton January 11 when he was included in a presentation to the Governor by the Maple Tree Group.

by Anusha Shrivastava

When he was nine years old, people thought he was 18. "I was always a foot taller than the people around me," says the lanky Mark Ponton, the newest appointee to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. "It was attention-getting and I liked it," says Ponton, who claims that today, despite being 6 feet, 10 inches tall, he mostly likes to keep a low profile.

A resident of Rivercross for well over 20 years, he says he doesn't know why he has been appointed to this position. "My guess is no one else wanted the job."

On a more serious note, he says he is qualified to represent Island residents on the Board because he is "reasonably intelligent" and has "a tremendous business sense." Pointing out that he is a member of Mensa, he told *The WIRE* in an interview, "I am among the top two percentile of the world's most intelligent people."

"I think my experience in business, across many lines – banking, computers, wireless and telephone communications, real estate, and office equipment – gives me insight into the soundness of any business. I know



Mark Ponton, as he spoke in a public session of the RIRA Common Council in March, 2000.

what constitutes a good and a bad deal. I am used to dealing with people at high levels and I won't be intimidated by anyone I meet [on the Board]. This is not arrogance. That's just the way I am. I am not

See **Ponton**, page 6

Youth Center Asks Summer Job Funds From RIOC as City Source Goes Dry



Youth Center Director Charlie De Fino explained the need for summer youth employment funds at last week's RIOC Board meeting.

With the City's budget belt tightened as a result of the economic impact of the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center Towers, the Roosevelt Island Youth Program will not receive youth employment funds normally provided in the past from the municipal budget.

At the RIOC Board meeting June 20, Program Director Charles De Fino and Treasurer Steve Kaufman turned to the Board to ask for \$24,000 from Public Purpose Funds to put Island teenagers to work. For many of the kids, this will be their first exposure to the world of paid work.

With the 14- and 15-year-olds whose summer jobs were in the balance sitting at the back of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, De Fino told the RIOC Board that the emergency \$24,000 in funds would provide six weeks of 4-day-a-week employment for 30 youngsters. In an accompanying letter, he told David Kraut, the RIOC Board member who heads RIOC's Public Purpose Funds committee, "It is almost impossible for 14- to 16-year olds to get hired, even in fast-food establishments... The 16-and-under population is the best since I have been employed [here]." He

See **RIOC**, page 8

Not Quite Half the Loaf

So what was gained?
If the goal is an elected RIOC Board, almost nothing.
Last issue, *The WIRE* asked of Assemblymember Pete Grannis and State Senator Olga Mendez, *Where's the lighting?* After five years of bargaining, pleading, cajoling, and outright lobbying, Roosevelt Islanders have a right to expect something substantially better than the old feudal system under which appointees of the Governor make all the decisions that affect our quality of life here.
So now, after reaching deep into their respective legislative bags of tricks, after presentations to the Governor and negotiations with him, what happened?

- Did Roosevelt Island get the right to elect members of the RIOC Board?
- Did Roosevelt Island get genuine protection of its open spaces against cash-at-any-sacrifice development?
- Do we have democracy?

All around, the answer is No.

What we got is nearly toothless open-spaces legislation that virtually invites overcommercialization of four areas of the Island (Lighthouse Park, Octagon Park, Blackwell Park, and Southpoint Park). All developers have to do, says the revised law, is "...preserve the historic landmarks" there and "further the use of the areas surrounding the historic landmarks as open space areas." The language raises far too many questions of interpretation – interpretation which the State's highest courts have recently left to the RIOC Board, whose philosophy of late can be summed up as, *Damn the residents, develop it all!*

And what else has this extreme legislative effort given us? Elective democracy? No. The Governor will still appoint the members of the RIOC Board. The law merely says four of his appointees, rather than two, must be residents. The progress lies in the fact that now, counting a resident the Mayor recommends to the Governor, there's a potential for five residents on the Board – maybe even six if Mayor Bloomberg puts residents in both his seats. If those residents can agree, they'll have a controlling majority.

That is progress – to have people who actually live here, and are familiar with the Island, in a majority of the seats – but the operative word is *appointed*. In short, we are apparently still regarded as children incapable of choosing our own representatives by democratic election. It's progress, in short, from one degree of oligarchy to another. It's not democracy.

Sorry, Senator. Sorry, Assemblymember. Sorry, Governor. As a governmental team, you waited until the last days of the legislative session, then managed to deliver only a continuation of dictatorial colonialism – crumbs – where broad rethinking and outright democracy were the minimum acceptable solutions.

It's just not enough to tinker with the open spaces – the parks – in a way that leaves them still wide open to commercialization (and restricts what little protection is provided to just four areas – leaving everything else exposed). And it's just not enough to switch two Board seats to appointed Islanders rather than appointed outsiders.

It's not even half the loaf.

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On a recent Friday afternoon, I sat in the auditorium of Thayer Hall at the United States Military Academy at West Point as 400 young people marched in to a drum and bugle salute. They had been specially chosen from among 6,000 applicants to attend a five-day Academic Workshop there. All had just finished their junior year in high school and had expressed an interest in attending West Point upon graduation. The young men and women were selected on the basis of their academic excellence, athletic performance, and leadership potential. For the past five days they had awakened at 5:15 a.m. and engaged in strenuous calisthenics for 45 minutes before making up their rooms and having breakfast in the mess hall. The rest of each day until Lights Out at 11:00 p.m. was spent in classroom learning, intramural sports, tours of West Point, social mixers, and interacting with

island observer
James R. Baehler

the cadets who supervised their activities. They marched in formation to each activity and learned to sing in cadence. The highlight was a day spent at Camp Buckner, the Army establishment adjoining West Point, where they ate field rations and fired various weapons.

Like other family members who were present for the graduation ceremony, I was thrilled by the sight of 400 high-spirited, healthy, and enthusiastic youths, proud of themselves and their country. They cheered for the new friends they had made as various awards were presented. They cheered for the cadets who had served as their platoon leaders. They rose to their feet and cheered loudest of all when Colonel Jones asked them to show their appreciation for the support they had received from their families. There were tears in my eyes as I saw my grandson, Daniel Schiering, rise and cheer with the others. Daniel had been born on Roosevelt Island but now lives in Carmel, Indiana. At six feet, two inches tall and 193 pounds of solid muscle he seemed to personify all that a potential West Point cadet should be. I turned to his parents, John and Madelaine, and observed, "These are the best that America has to offer."

Afterwards, I thought how fortunate we are that each year thousands of our finest young people volunteer to attend one of the military service academies and then devote at least five years after graduation See **Baehler**, page 10

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 July 27 issue: July 23

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

Letters

To the Editor:

After reading the June 1 issue of *The WIRE* I felt compelled to write. In my opinion, *The WIRE* has become a forum for the editor's desire for Island self-governance. The desire to have a self-governance bill passed has become an obsession of the editor and the members of the Maple Tree Group. I do not believe this is what the majority of residents want or that it will be of benefit to them or the Island as a whole. I would like to address the past two RIRA elections.

The RIRA elections have been referred to numerous times and it is always stated that a majority of residents voted for self-governance (but-tons saying 92% have been given out). In truth, they voted for democracy. Who would vote against that? In the 1998 elections, I was encouraging people to vote for democracy because we wanted to get rid of Jerry Blue. In the 2000 election I had turned against the passage of this bill.

Here are the election facts:

1998 election:	Votes	Percentages of...	
		All votes	RIRA votes
Total public counter votes	1,696	100%	
Total RIRA votes cast	1,566	92%	100%
Total votes about democracy	1,138	67%	73%
Total yes votes for democracy	1,049	62%	67%
Total no votes for democracy	89		
Did not vote on democracy	428		
2000 election			
Total public counter votes	2,152	100%	
Total RIRA votes cast	1,534	71%	100%
Total votes about democracy	1,040	48%	68%
Total yes votes for democracy	831	39%	54%
Total no votes for democracy	209		
Did not vote on democracy	494		

In percentages in the 1998 election 62% of the voters, not 92%, voted for democracy. In 2000 the percentage goes down to 48%. These percentages are when you take the public counter voters (voters in the general election). If you only look at those who voted in the RIRA elections the numbers are different (last column).

Since there are 4400 residents living on Roosevelt Island *who are registered voters* the percentage of residents in favor of this bill becomes even less. Also, on Roosevelt Island, foreign nationals are eligible to vote in RIRA elections, and we have 1279 foreign nationals. This means 5679 residents and more could have voted. Wouldn't they have if they really wanted this bill?

Why don't we fight to have the proper resident representation on the present RIOC board? We are entitled to more seats on the board and I believe that is what we need to do. Encourage Pete Grannis and Olga Mendez to have the Governor fill the resident seats with residents recommended by other residents. I have called and written to both of these representatives urging them not to pass this bill. I encourage all of you to call and do the same. Stop allowing a small group of residents to decide your future and the future of this Island.

I have lived here for 25 years and have been involved in many organizations. I am presently a member of the RIRA Common Council. Once before (in the 1980s) residents fought for self-governance in a bill similar to the one Pete Grannis has written now. A Democratic Governor changed that bill at the last minute and that is how we got RIOC. I fear what we would get with a Republican Governor. Please let your elected representatives both on and off Roosevelt Island know how you feel and what you would like for your Island. This is how democracy works.

Joan T. Christianson

Editor's response: The writer perceives correctly that *The WIRE's* editorial-page policy favors a locally-elected RIOC Board, rather than one dominated by outsiders who visit once a month. But *The WIRE* supports democracy as a worthy end in itself, not merely as a ploy useful in shedding one particular RIOC President. For that reason, editorial policy did not turn against democracy with the departure of Dr. Blue.

We take issue with the writer's election arithmetic, which embraces the absurd notion that if a resident fails to vote, that resident's vote is an automatic "no." One could as easily argue, equally incorrectly, that anybody who doesn't vote is casting an automatic "yes" vote. In a democracy, those who show up *and vote* make the decisions. Those who opt not to vote on a given issue are choosing to leave the decision to those who inform themselves and vote their convictions. That's the only commonly-accepted standard, and by that standard, democratic local self-governance achieved an undisputed 92% win in 1998, and 80% (despite organized opposition) in 2000.

Even if one were to accept the writer's odd arithmetic, a 62% majority favoring democracy is still significant. But the standard calculation is 1,049 (yes votes) divided by 1,138 (votes on the subject), or 92.2%.

WIRE editorial policy is, therefore, precisely in line with community sentiment as strongly expressed at the ballot box, and supports residents' preference as expressed in votes cast on the issue.

The WIRE does not oppose increased *appointed* resident representation as a stopgap. But in a long-term choice between a Board of gubernatorial appointees (a small unelected group deciding the future of the Island) and a RIOC Board of *residents elected by residents*, *The WIRE* greatly prefers the latter, as do the vast majority of residents who have expressed themselves on the matter at the ballot box.

The writer is correct in observing that elective local democracy happens to be a goal shared by the Maple Tree Group.

To the Editor:

I've been an Island resident for more than 15 years and, in the past three years, I've noticed an increase in the number of dog-pets on the Island, blatantly paraded outside the buildings. These dog-pets enter the buildings, apparently with approval of the doorkeepers, who are supposed to report such infractions to management. Has the *no-dogs* rule changed? I have seen no announcement to that effect. If there has been no change, how can some have dogs and others not? Is there some discriminatory issue here that needs to be addressed by RIOC or RIRA? I would appreciate clarification on the ruling so I will not have to feel unfairly treated.

Marie Luarca

Island Photos New and Old in New Exhibition Opening Today at Art Gallery

Gallery RIVAA will display historic pictures of Roosevelt Island along with contemporary photos in an exhibition opening with a reception tonight from 5:00 to 8:00. The exhibition, a cooperative effort of the Roosevelt Island Art Association and the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, will run through September (hours in *ComingUp*, far right), with special hours 5:00-9:00 p.m. on the Fourth of July.



Roosevelt Island Historical Society Collection

One of the more important events in Roosevelt Island life invariably passes with little fanfare. I'm referring to the monthly meetings of the RIOC Board of Directors. Nine directors, only three of whom reside on the Island, regularly make decisions affecting our lives and institutions, and often do so with few residents monitoring their activities.

I suppose one reason for this is our inability to interact with them until their business is completed and the meeting adjourned, and then, only once every other month. If we cannot influence their decisions, I suspect the argument goes, why waste a morning or an evening witnessing the inevitable?

Often, our only information as to the Board's votes and discussions is found in the reporting and editorials of this newspaper. I attended the June 20 meeting, and I'll be discussing some points of interest. I think that airing a range of viewpoints would be better served if the RIOC president or Board of Directors responded to the standing invitation to present a companion column, but this they have declined to do.

Therefore, you have several choices: read the accounts in these pages and accept them at face value, attend the RIOC Board meetings and come to your own conclusions, or just ignore the whole business and accept whatever comes.

I will leave the reporting of the Board's business to the editors of this paper and will pursue, as is my wont, only my own crotchets and concerns:

I mentioned in my last (marathon) column my intention to ask Board member Dr. Joan Dawson the status of her Public Safety advisory committee and the survey of Island policing they had devised. Dr. Dawson was a no-show, unfortunately, and the Board

The RIRA officers who serve on the Public Safety advisory committee, Byron Gaspard and Ron Schuppert, inform me that they have not been contacted to participate in or complete the work they started a year ago. This sounds suspiciously like other RIOC advisory committees that have included Island residents and that were abandoned when they wouldn't perform in lock step. Will we ever see a report on residents' policing concerns? Beats me.

During the course of the Board meeting, Board member Leo Kayser, lawyer and confidant of Governor George Pataki, made constant mention of the recently-decided suits, brought by Island individuals and groups, regarding the placement of the first Southtown buildings. His oft-repeated argument was that the cost to RIOC of defending the suits through the State Supreme Court Appellate Division had robbed RIOC of the wherewithal to spend on such Island services as the Youth Center.

I find this a strange argument coming from a lawyer. As I understand it, every individual, every group and yes, every community, has the right to redress of grievances through litigation. There is no guarantee

of success, and losing the lawsuit, as the litigants did, is not, *ipso facto*, proof of a frivolous issue. You may recall that the RIRA Common Council voted to support the suits as an intervenor in the case. This occurred during my predecessor's presidency, but I supported the effort then, and still feel that it was germane, correct, and poorly decided in the Courts.

The fact that the Southtown developers have waited until now to share through the *WIRE* what their final product will look like (footprint maps and Styrofoam blocks on artboard models don't count, guys) is only one instance of how far out of the loop we all are. Last Tuesday was the "topping out" ceremony for the first two Southtown buildings. I wasn't invited and neither were most of you. Here's another opportunity missed to include and inform Roosevelt Islanders and, perhaps, make a fresh start now that the litigation is over. We are learning what the first two buildings will actually look like only after the brickwork has started. It would be nice if this community were informed on the remaining seven buildings while we still might have some input in the outcome.

Mr. Kayser's complaint that revenue went to lawyers that should have been spent on social services confused me. The RIOC Board controls a Public Purpose Fund, consisting of funds collected in lieu of sales taxes on materials used in building Manhattan Park. It currently totals about \$640,000. Was he saying that the cost of litigation came out of these funds, and that revenues specifically set aside for the benefit of Island organizations and institutions was spent on lawyers? No, no, this couldn't be! Could it?

More than a year ago, the RIOC Board commissioned a committee under the leadership of chair, David Kraut, to devise rules for the disbursement of Public Purpose Funds. This task has never been accomplished and I'm unsure whether it ever will be. Judging from past performance, the RIOC Board will continue to spend down the money without ever having created guidelines for doing so. Once upon a time, both RIRA and RICO, the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, had a say in making these decisions. In its wisdom, RIOC decided that, as the money was in their hands, consulting Island organizations for input was unnecessary. At that point, they promised to create the rules whereby the funds would best be spent. And we're still waiting.

Leo Kayser also asked me for Residents Association support of advertising on the Tram to help defray its deficit. You may know that the City controls the Tramway franchise, and that the current franchise prohibits Tram advertising. City Council Speaker Gifford Miller has tied any change in that franchise requirement to benefits such as inclusion of the MetroCard system on the Tram. Nevertheless, RIOC is actively pursuing advertisers for the Tram. However, they have not seen fit to limit or even define the parameters of what constitutes appropriate advertising. Are we talking about discrete signage in the cabins and stations, perhaps calling attention to local cultural attractions such as the American Museum of the Moving Image or MoMA QNS? Or are we asked to endorse the shrink-wrapping of the Tram cabins, turning them into flying beer cans? I can't, in good conscience, bring the question to the Common

See **RIRA**, page 10

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 29, 5:00-8:00 p.m., **RIVAA Gallery Reception** for opening of *A Photographic Exhibition of Roosevelt Island* in cooperation with the Roosevelt Island Historical Society. Exhibit runs through September; gallery hours Wednesday and Friday, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. **Special hours on the Fourth of July**, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Sun., June 30, 5:30 p.m., **All-African Menu Dinner** sponsored by the Good Shepherd Congregation, lower level, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Ticket sales ended June 26.

Afternoons at 3:00 Monday through Friday, starting Mon., July 1, **Summer Reading Aloud** for children, Library. Free.

Wed., July 3, 6:00-7:30 p.m., RIOC's **Summer Sounds on the River**, *Chris & Kate*, folk-pop duo, at the pier near subway station.

Thur., July 4, 9:00 p.m. (gate opens 6:00 p.m.), **Fourth of July Fireworks Fest at Southpoint**. Tickets on sale at RIOC, 591 Main Street and Manhattan Tramway station. \$15. Information, **832-4540**.

Wed., July 10, 6:00-7:30 p.m., RIOC's **Summer Sounds on the River**, *Mr. Kite*, jazz meets the Beatles, at the pier near subway station.

Thur., July 11, 9:30 a.m., **RIOC Board of Directors Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public session normally resumes at about 10:30 a.m.

Tue., July 16, 6:30 p.m., **Cartooning for Kids** (ages 5-12) with Jamie Fallon, Roosevelt Island Library. Free; pre-registration required.

Wed., July 17, 10:30 a.m., **Summer Films for Children**, Library. Free.

Sat., July 20, time to be announced, visit to Roosevelt Island by the **Fireboat Harvey**, at the oil dock east of the Tramway station, to commemorate the 98th anniversary of the sinking of the General Slocum, which caught fire and sank in the East River, near Roosevelt Island, with great loss of life.

Tue., July 23, 6:30 p.m., **Book Discussion**, *The Orchid Thief* by Susan Orlean, Library. Advance registration required.

Wed., July 24, 10:30 a.m., **The Kids Project** – disability awareness for children (all ages), Library. Free.

Sat., July 27, next scheduled issue of *The WIRE*. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., July 19; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., July 22; materials due Thur., July 24. **Future issues:** Every two weeks starting Aug. 24, including 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.

Wed., July 31, 10:30 a.m., **Summer Films for Children**, Library. Free. (Also Wed., Aug. 14, and Wed., Aug. 28.)

Wed., Sept. 4, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Tue., Sept. 10, all day, **Primary Election**, polls at PS/IS 217.

Thur., Sept. 12, 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.

Wed., Oct. 9, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

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

Tue., Nov. 5, all day, **Election Day** (both general and Residents Association elections); balloting at PS/IS 217.

Wed., Nov. 6, 8:00 p.m., **RIRA Common Council Meeting**, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Thur., Nov. 14, 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.

Senior Center

Monday
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
7:00, **Dance**

Tuesday
1:00, **Shopping-for-Good-Health Workshop** (last class July 23)
1:30, **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well Exercise**
10:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beginner)
11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (intermediate)
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**

10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance Class**

Friday
9:00, **Citizenship**
10:00, **English as 2nd Language** (beginner)
10:15, **Yoga Stretch**
11:00, **English as 2nd Language** (intermediate)
7:30, **Lotto**

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

Special Events

Sat., June 29, 1:00, **Fourth of July Celebration** (RISA)
Sun., June 30, **Mohegan Sun trip**

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*.

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 lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Provide a telephone number for possible follow-up.

The RIRA Column



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

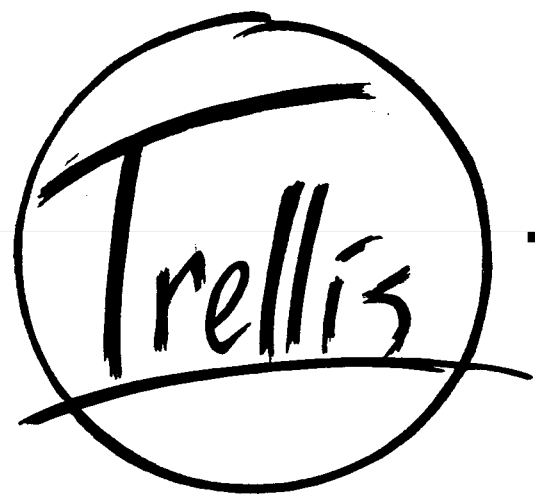
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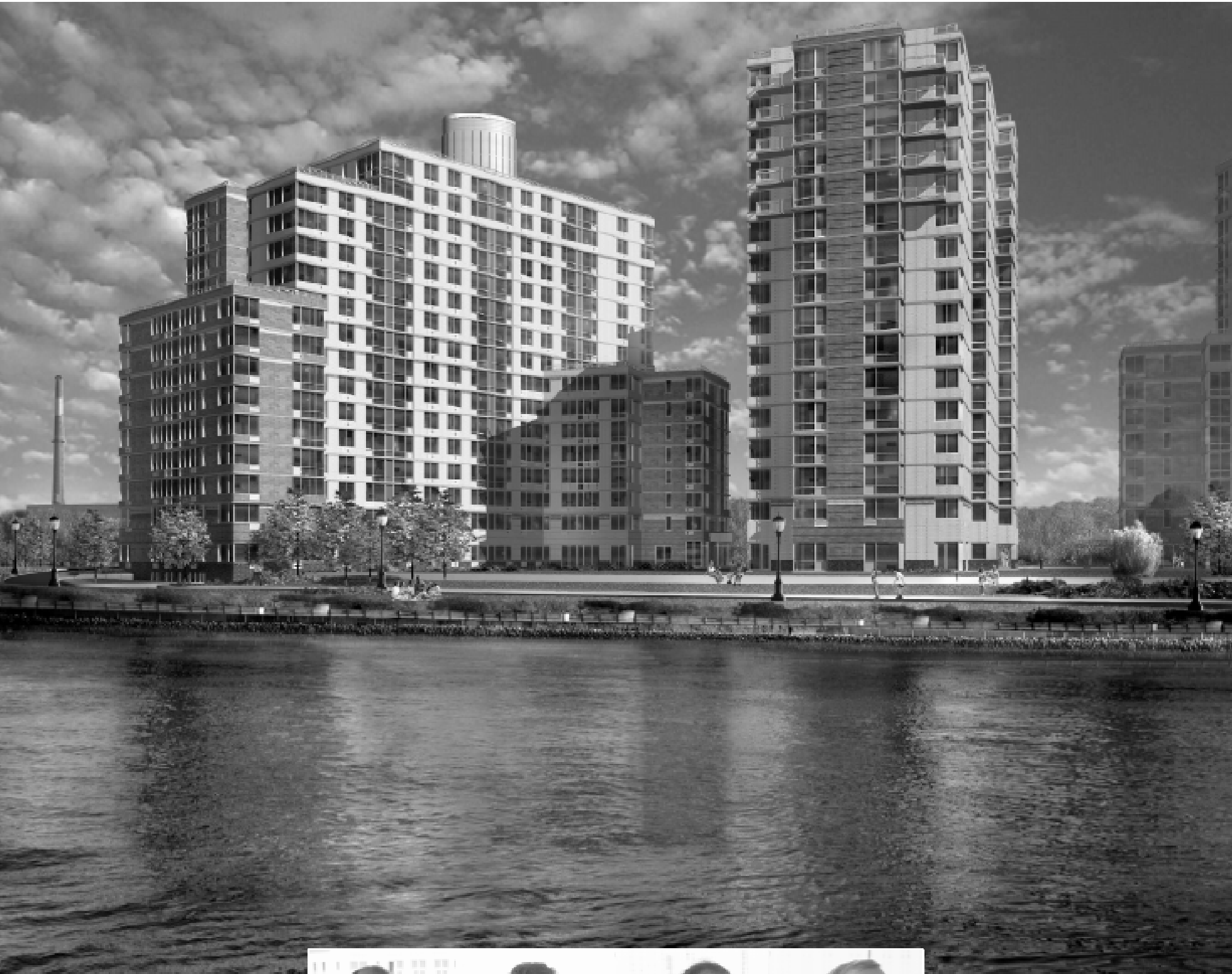
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FULL PAGE
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Developers Release Renderings of Southtown Buildings 1 and 2



Developers Hudson and Related released this view, looking at Southtown from Manhattan, at Tuesday's topping-out ceremony. The building on the left, #1, goes to Sloan-Kettering; Weill-Cornell has building #2, on the right. This rendering, as well as the one on page 1, are available in color on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com.



Speakers at the topping-out ceremony included, left to right, David Kramer of the Hudson Companies, Bruce Beal of The Related Companies, Dr. Harold Varmus, President of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and Dr. Antonio Gotto, dean and provost of Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

Southtown from page 1

uted a light moment to the ceremony when he told the 100 or so present, “In our office, we have a poster showing the six stages of a project. They are *Enthusiasm*, quickly followed by *Disillusionment*, which leads to phase three, *Panic*. That leads to phase four, *A Search for the Guilty*, which inevitably leads to phase five, *Punishment of the Innocent*. And finally, there’s phase 6, *Praise and Honors for the Non-Participants*.”

Kramer also said, in a slightly more serious consideration of the project’s timeline to date, “We also had to overcome some minor litigation.” Two resident groups had sued RIOC in an attempt to force revisions in the layout of the buildings.

Dr. Harold Varmus, President of Memorial Sloan-Kettering, an avid bicyclist, noted that he had ridden from his office to the ceremony in just 20 minutes, and expressed enthusiasm for his institutions’s new residence for staffers. Asked by *The WIRE* on Thursday if that 20-minute trip had included the Tramway, he said, “No, that would be for weenies.” He had come by way of the Queensboro Bridge, Vernon Boulevard, the Roosevelt Island Bridge, and Main Street in just 20 minutes. He then explained that Sloan-Kettering has considerable turnover because many of its staff members are trainees, but current employees will probably become the first residents of the new building on Roosevelt Island. Sloan-Kettering is in the midst of a “mass expansion” over the next several years, he said.



As a ceremonial last bucket of concrete was raised behind them, a line-up of RIOC Board members and employees posed for a photo. Left to right, RIOC engineer Vincent Kopicki, Board member H. Patrick Stewart, Attorney Kenneth Leitner, Board member Joan Dawson, RIOC President Robert H. Ryan, Board member Marybeth Labate, who chairs Board meetings, Board member David Kraut, and RIOC Vice President Robert Antonek.

Point, Counterpoint:

Should Ads Be Sold on Tram Cabins to Increase RIOC Income?

Editor’s note: During the RIOC Board of Directors meeting last week, Board member Leo Kayser suggested *The WIRE* should reconsider its editorial stand against shrink-wrap advertising on Tram cabins. That led to the following e-mail exchange:

From: Dick Lutz <editor@MainStreetWIRE.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 20, 2002 11:19 PM
To: Leo Kayser <LKAYSER@515law.com>
Subject: Tram Ads / *WIRE*
Leo,

In tonight’s RIOC meeting, I picked up hints that you’d like to make your case for shrink-wrapping the Tram cabins with advertising. For next week’s *WIRE*, why don’t you write a piece making your case? Figure about 500 words max, but less if you can make the case in less. Just e-mail it to me... deadline can be Tuesday, but I’d need to know by Monday (preferably earlier) that you plan to do it.

Dick

From: Leo Kayser <LKAYSER@515law.com>
To: Dick Lutz <editor@MainStreetWIRE.com>
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2002 4:33 PM
Subject: RE: Tram Ads / *WIRE*
Dear Dick,

While I, myself, do not know how the advertising would actually be accomplished (I have no expertise in that area), I hope I have been making the case in our public board meetings for the reasons for why we need the revenue. Aesthetics are subjective, but RIOC’s need for revenue is not nor are the losses being incurred on the tram, whose operation we are trying to preserve.

So I don’t believe I ever used the term “shrink-wrapping.” I do not even know what that term means, though it has a nasty sound to it. I was urging *The WIRE* to get behind the effort to gain revenue from advertising for all the good purposes for which we could put that revenue.

Leo

Sent: Saturday, June 22, 2002 12:03 AM
Leo,

Shrink-wrapping, a term which Rob Ryan has used (“shrink-wrap the buckets” are the words he used in speaking with me shortly after this idea came up), means fully wrapping the Tram cabins in advertising that covers even the windows (though passengers can sorta see out through the stuff), as in the case of the all-ads-all-the-time buses you see on the streets of the City. That is apparently his vision of how this would work, and as far as anybody knows, it is what is being offered to those who respond to the RFP.

The WIRE’s view is that this would be ugly beyond any shadow of a question of taste or subjective aesthetics, and that view is not likely to change.

However, as a matter of fairness, I’m making space available to you to make the case to a wider audience. If you believe you can make the case that the income that will be produced overrides any considerations of taste or aesthetics, then please see what you can do to gain adherents for that point of view.

As you know, I believe that the Tram, like every other mass transit system in the State, should receive standard transportation subsidies (and not a “subsidy” from the RIOC budget, which merely comes from failure to clean the sidewalks and conduct other routine maintenance).

So I’m sorry, I can’t sell your case for you, but I can make space available for you to make your best effort.

But... Leo, if you are not fully aware of exactly what kind of deal is being offered to the advertisers or advertising agencies involved, you really should make yourself familiar with

it. If you don’t care what the Tram looks like when the advertising is on it, then you need not act any further as a responsible Board member, I suppose. But if Ryan is selling “shrink-wrap” and you have never heard the term and don’t know what it means, gosh, you oughta get the details, don’t you think? (Take a look at one of those buses, for example.)

My own suspicion is that the Tram would suffer a substantial and compensating drop in ridership were residents to find themselves traveling inside a Budweiser can.

There’s another consideration, somewhat more subtle. America is admired around the world for the dynamism of its economy, and scorned for the overcommercialization of virtually any flat space that can show an ad. We have lots of UN people here. Why confirm their worst opinions about the worst of our crassness by plastering advertising all over our one wonderfully quaint icon – one of the special qualities that makes Roosevelt Island unique? Keeping the exterior of the Tram cabins ad-free for only the reason that it’s not the face of the USA we want to show our foreign visitors is a good reason to find other ways to cover the Tram deficit.

But please, make the case in which you so strongly believe; I’ll print it and give you a clean shot, and let’s see if you can garner support for this idea.

Dick

Date: Saturday, June 22, 2002 6:53 PM
Dear Dick,

I am confident that you are premature and in that sense entirely prejudging the issue of aesthetics with respect to how the advertising is to be accomplished. No decisions have been brought to the Board specifically in that regard and will not until we have a chance to balance the issue of revenue and other benefits to the Roosevelt Island community from advertising against any perceived aesthetic downside that might be argued in advance of actual implementation.

I note, however, that advertising in New York City has been raised in some instances to the level of historical preservation as with the Pepsi sign, which sits across from Manhattan on the East River. Therefore, why not wait to see what actually transpires before raising objections to something which is not yet formulated, but which may bring significant economic benefits.

There is an element in the country, who in my opinion are utterly irrational, who invoke the most trivial objections and attempt to scare populations with fictitious imagery of dire consequences to block even essential commercial activity in the private sector, which activity is only contemplated because it confers a direct and ascertainable benefit for society.

Right now I would request again, that you save your objections on aesthetic grounds until you have an accurate idea of what is being proposed, since right now it is too early for anyone to know that, and instead support the general idea of raising revenue to save the Tram. That way, at least you will have preserved your credibility for some objective analysis, grounded in real facts, when the more refined issue of aesthetics becomes ripe for consideration. Of course, if you are just opposed to advertising, regardless of the benefits conferred on society by such activity, I can just disregard



Leo Kayser, as he listened last week to representatives of the Youth Center making the case for funds for youth summer jobs

appears on this page.)

“The public-purpose money is there,” De Fino said. “We have an opportunity in this community that no other community has. There are communities in this city that are going to suffer because they don’t have the opportunity to go to a RIOC Board and ask for grants from a public-purpose fund that was established specifically for this kind of need.”

Kayser responded, “There are a number of us on the Board who have been trying... to put this corporation on a sounder footing, to put us in a position so that when unforeseen eventualities occur, we will be in a position to support everything... I urge again that we have the support to generate the revenues... We’re capable of doing it if we’re allowed to, or not held up. The editorial support of the newspaper would be helpful, the political support of members of the City Council who add riders to our efforts to...” Kayser broke off that comment, relating to City Council Speaker Gifford Miller’s resistance to Tramway advertising without some tangible benefit for residents, such as MetroCard transfers. “Help us out here,” he concluded, “because we are all in this together.”

“I know this [request] is last-minute,” De Fino told the RIOC Board. “I could not have foreseen this a month ago. We thought we’d get something [from the City].” De Fino also pointed out that there is now an unusually “large chunk” of kids between 12 and 17 on the Island.

The Island’s Public Purpose Fund was created when the builders of Manhattan Park were allowed to buy construction materials without paying sales tax. The equivalent amount of money was put into a fund to be used to jump-start Island projects of social value. Some \$640,000 of the fund remains, but the funds are not supposed to be co-mingled with other RIOC monies.

our efforts to stay engaged intelligently, since I do not have the energy to try to reason with those who classify advertising, per se, a matter of principle against which they stand.

Nor does it help to assist dialogue to mischaracterize anyone’s position by putting words in someone’s mouth which were not uttered. I do not know anyone at RIOC, on the Board or in the administration, who would disregard the issue of aesthetics entirely in commercial matters. On the contrary, the problem we have been facing, since I have been on the Board, is the unfair and irrational technique by some to raise aesthetic and by its nature, subjective objections, to oppose projects of every kind, regardless of weighing the benefits that come out of such projects.

Please be balanced in reporting the issue of advertising on the Tram.

If you would like, please feel free to print our exchange of e-mails on this matter.

Leo Kayser, III

Sent: Sunday, June 23, 2002 4:55 PM
Leo,

Thank you for the suggestion that *The WIRE* publish our exchange. I’ll do that in this week’s issue.

You’ll find no irrational blanket opposition to advertising here. And of course *The WIRE* will continue to strive for responsible objectivity in news reporting. On its editorial page, however, *The WIRE* has an affirmative responsibility to share an informed opinion with its readers.

When you suggest that before commenting on the idea of ads on Tram cabins, *The WIRE* should “wait to see what actually transpires before raising objections to something which is not yet formulated,” you have put your finger on the problem: *It isn’t formulated.*

RIOC and the RIOC Board have a history of stumbling into bad decisions based on inadequate formulations that have become known to the community only *after* the decisions are made. Two current examples are the unfavorable financial arrangements vis-a-vis Southtown, and the Southtown “wall” across Main Street that effectively separates and walls off the Mitchell-Lama buildings from the new community. The RIOC Board was lied to – it’s a matter of record – in being told that its own Community Planning and Development Committee had approved the planned layout of Southtown, and it thereby blundered into approval of a layout that puts the existing community at a substantial disadvantage. Similarly, RIOC stumbled into a disadvantageous financial arrangement regarding Southtown and the completion of the full project.

Need other examples? There’s the new sports field that will have children breathing hard within yards of pollution hot-spots – the steam plant and the Queensboro Bridge. There was the blunder into a second-story for minischool condos – a blunder which probably wouldn’t have been corrected had you not joined the Board.

In short, this community has ample reason to be very concerned over RIOC projects not yet fully formulated. The RIOC staff has a history of negotiating the Island into ugly formulations which the RIOC Board then feels bound to accept. On Tram-cabin ads, the only formulation we have so far is “shrink-wrap.” You rightly apply the word “nasty” to that idea. We have good reason to believe that we will learn how bad the blunder is only after it happens. It will be too late for commentary, and we may very well find that the RIOC Board will have traded the graceful elegance of the Tramway for a pittance.

I would challenge you, therefore, to ask the questions necessary to understand what Rob Ryan means when he speaks of “shrink-wrapping the buckets,” to insist upon an aesthetically-acceptable formulation *before* negotiations with advertisers, and that you give genuine and careful consideration to matters of taste along with the raw economics.

And while you are at it, please – *please* note again that Roosevelt Island’s Tramway is unique in New York State in that it is virtually the only mass transit system that receives no tax subsidy. I would challenge the RIOC Board to tackle *that* oversight, as a priority, before discounting considerations of good taste and aesthetics in favor of advertising income.

Dick

PS: Please take the last word.

Date: Monday, June 24, 2002 3:12 PM
Dear Dick,

Thank you for giving me the last word and with that I do not choose to respond to rhetorical tangents which might as well tar the current administration and Board with original sin arising out of Adam’s having taken a bite out of the forbidden fruit. None of the litany you mention occurred since I have been on the Board or during the current RIOC administration.

I am confident the Board will get a report on various bids and proposals relating to the advertising issue and other efforts to save the Tram, those proposals will be discussed publicly and comments solicited in our Board meetings before any final vote of the Board is taken.

As to your looking for the general taxpayers of the State to bail out Roosevelt Island on the Tram operating losses, I note first that all public transportation has advertising and, second, Roosevelt Island already is exempted from real estate taxes, which exemption is intended to afford RIOC with the ability to finance necessary services. However, such financing can only come through development of the Island in a manner that makes it possible to realize the potential benefits permitted by the tax exemption.

Leo Kayser, III

RIOC from page 1

continued by adding that failure to provide employment for this group “would be a major blow to our efforts to provide the leadership and mentoring these youths need at this crucial time in their lives.

“Good kids need to be rewarded,” De Fino wrote. He described the work to be done as “mentoring, maintenance work in park areas, assisting in the pool area, and similar tasks.” He added, “These kids will work for their money. I’ll guarantee that.”

Members of the RIOC Board present for the meeting expressed sympathy, but took no action pending submission of paperwork. Kraut pledged that he would seek Board approval once an application is in hand. De Fino said that existing funds can be used for the program temporarily.

Leo Kayser took the opportunity to suggest that *The Main Street WIRE*’s editorial opposition to shrink-wrapping Tramway cabins with advertising could limit RIOC’s flexibility in such emergency funding situations. “I’m not suggesting we’re not going to try to find the funds,” he said, but added, “There ought to be some understanding on the part of the press and people who have agitated against the efforts of generating revenues for the corporation, which could then be used in various ways. If we had greater support, we would have a lot more flexibility. The thing that defers our getting these funds is the litigation threat and opposition for basically very narrow reasons [by] certain people who have to go out of their way to find rationales for opposing the generation of substantial revenues.” (*The WIRE* later invited Kayser to make his case for advertising on Tram cabins in a *Guest Shot* in these pages. The resulting e-mail exchange

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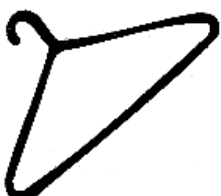
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by Seth Kaufman

SPORTSWIRE

BASEBALL The Championship Games in the Youth Program’s Little League Baseball season were played on June 15, bringing another exciting and enjoyable baseball season to a close.

Minors: In an extremely close and exciting game, the second-place Royal team captured the Minor League championship by upsetting the first-place Navy team by a 3-2 score, holding off a last-inning rally that left the tying and winning runs on base. Royal took the lead in the top of the third inning after two well-fielded and scoreless innings. Jacob Kelman led off with a single and, with

in a game that was closer than the final score would indicate. Navy broke on top in the game, scoring two runs in the bottom of the first inning as Green’s starting pitcher, Eddie Flores, struggled with his control early and walked four batters. However, Green came right back and scored five runs in the top of the second as Navy’s starting pitcher walked five batters in that inning. In the top of the third, Green added two more runs on hits by Jonathan Jackson, Sean Suarez, Sid Menon, and Adrian Gordon and opened a 7-2 lead. However, the key play of the game occurred in the bottom of the third inning, when Navy



The Green team celebrated after becoming 2002 Major League champions.

two outs, Romance Barber came through with a clutch triple that scored Jacob. In the top of the fourth, Rahul Dhodapkar put Royal up by two with a solo home run. In the bottom of the fourth, Romance Barber, playing shortstop, kept the shutout going for Royal by robbing Javon Perry of a base hit with a diving grab of a hard hit ground ball. Royal extended its lead to three in the top of the fifth when, with two outs, Ian Kleinfeld doubled home Seth Vacirca with what would eventually become the game-winning run.

Navy chipped away at the lead in the bottom of the fifth on a single by Alberto Marzan and an RBI double by Travis Conley that scored Alberto. Royal avoided further damage by playing excellent defense, with Seth Vacirca recording an unassisted double play. In the top of the sixth, Navy prevented Royal from scoring any insurance runs when Evan Santana made a great catch with two outs to strand Asher Russem and Kevin Breslin at second and third. With three outs left in its season, Navy came up just short of producing an amazing comeback. Javon Perry led off the inning with a double, and, with one out, Analeigha Ewing singled to put runners on first and third. Evan Santana then singled home Javon to make it a one-run game at 3-2. However, the two runners were stranded as the next two batters struck out, and the Royal team became the 2002 Minor League champions. Congratulations to all of the members of the Royal team – Romance Barber, Kevin Breslin, Rahul Dhodapkar, Alexandra Fallone, Anthony Fallone, Diana Folla, Elizabeth Kelman, Jacob Kelman, Ian Kleinfeld, Jonathan Meed, Asher Russem, and Seth Vacirca – and their coaches, Joseph Vacirca and Zach Russem.

Majors: Green defeated Navy for the Major League championship by a 9-2 score

loaded the bases with two outs on hits by Kenny Pizzaro and Eyosyas Tadesse and a walk to Jimmy Elias. Tulga Enhσαιhan followed with a line drive to the gap in left center which looked like a bases-clearing double or triple that would have put Navy right back in the game. However, Adrian Gordon, Green’s left fielder, got to the ball and made a terrific catch to end the inning.

After that, Green’s relief tandem of Anass Dorani (2 innings, 5 strikeouts) and Thomas Herlihy (1 inning, 3 strikeouts) shut the door and closed out the victory for Green. Congratulations to all of the members of the Green team – Alex Beola, Anass Dorani, Ben Duffy, Eddie Flores, Adrian Gordan, Thomas Herlihy, Jonathan Jackson, Mikko McDonald, Sid Menon, Saul Nadel, Jake Russem and Sean Suarez – and their coaches, Abe Tordjman and Lloyd Woltz.

Seniors: The Senior A team captured the championship of the East River Baseball Association, capping a season in which they finished in first place with a 10-1 record, as well as defeating teams from the Stuyvesant and Busak Little Leagues in inter-league games. Congratulations to all of the members of the Senior team – Paul Brown, Lamar Burrows, Scott Davis, Seif Dorani, Alex Fell, Alex Gherardi, Kei Kurobe, José Marte, Deshawn Pearson, Schuyler Penny, Junior Ruiz, Jason Santana, and Brandon Stueber – and their coaches, Carl (KJ) Crews and Charlie DeFino.

SOCCER Registration for the Youth Program’s 2002 Fall Soccer Season will begin next week. Registration forms have been mailed to all children who played in the program last year. Registration forms also will be available at the Youth Center building at 506 Main Street and at the Beacon Program at PS/IS 217 beginning on July 8. Registration will close on July 31.



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RIRA from page 1

Council until we understand what it is that we are debating. I won’t ask my neighbors to approve a pig in a poke.

This past week has been filled with meetings affecting life on Roosevelt Island. In conjunction with CHOKe (Coalition Helping to Organize a Kleaner Environment) we’ve met with Keyspan representatives to discuss the impact of the enhanced Ravenswood plant on our air quality and health. Also, I’ve arranged with RIOc to bring my contact at NYC & Company, the City’s tourist and convention bureau, to meet with Island business leaders to discuss making Roosevelt Island more of a destination for off-Island visitors. And the talks between Transit Authority and RIOc reps to bring the MetroCard to the Tram have continued this week. Neither deadlines nor space allow me to comment on these meetings in this issue, so stay tuned.

And finally: Once again, the State has failed to draft the legislation that would give Roosevelt Island elected representation on the RIOc Board. Instead, we’ve been offered a bill that increases resident participation on an appointed Board and offers some minimal protection of our remaining open space. I’m grateful for the hard work from our elected representatives that produced these interim efforts. But if the powers that be think that the Roosevelt Island squeaky wheel has now been well oiled, think again. Language that prohibits development of open space for anything other than park purposes, unless also affecting historical landmarks, simply begs the question. Fix the Octagon roof and you can build anything you like there, for example. And the name of the game is **elected** representation, and we who have labored so long shall demand no less. Neither should you.

Baehler from page 1

to the defense of our country. While the rest of us go about our daily lives, they stand guard against those who would destroy our nation and the hopes of the world for freedom that the United States represents. In a time of peril unique in our history, we now look to the military to shield us, forgetting the not-too-distant past when there were those who despised our armed forces and so scorned them that ROTC programs were canceled at many of our most prestigious universities. The attacks upon our nation and our people that we have suffered recently have silenced those who would denigrate our military and its people. One can only hope that such silence is permanent and, regardless of the mistakes the military might make in the future, we will not lose sight of the sacrifices they make to ensure the liberties we all enjoy. Should the day ever come when our young people no longer respond to our nation’s call, then our freedoms will not long survive.

Abraham Lincoln might have been speaking to us today when he said, “Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We...will be remembered in spite of ourselves. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us, in honor or dishonor, down to the last generation. We know how to save the Union. We...hold the power and the responsibility.”

Our young people accept that responsibility; can we do any less?

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