

Holiday issue coming
Saturday, Dec. 14

The Main Street **WIRE**™

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

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



Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com
Can't Get a Man With a Gun Nancy Howe (right) plays Annie Oakley (here, singing *Doin' What Comes Naturally*) in Irving Berlin's musical, *Annie Get Your Gun*, the biographical story of the sharpshooter's life in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Her siblings are played by (left to right) Anthony Fallone, Nicole Herlihy, Allie Michels, Lauren Ballard. Performances are scheduled December 6-9 (see *ComingUp*, page 3). The show is known for *There's No Business Like Show Business* and a host of other Berlin favorites.

Groups Seeking Gifts for Island Hospital Patients

Roosevelt Island Housing Management and other Island organizations have a Holiday Gift Drive under way, soliciting gift-wrapped presents for patients of Coler-Goldwater Hospital.

Combined, the two Island campuses have 1,800 adult patient-residents, and 55 children.

Donors are asked to provide gifts at \$20 or under, and indicate whether each is for a child or an adult, female or male. A list of suggested gifts for all categories includes electric toothbrushes, hats, socks, combs, brushes, stuffed animals, and sweaters, though donors need not consider themselves limited to those items.

The deadline is Wednesday, December 18.

Island House and Westview residents are being asked to leave their gifts, wrapped, with doorstation personnel at their buildings. Residents of Eastwood and other buildings can drop theirs off at the Housing Management office at 552 Main Street.

Co-sponsoring organizations include the Youth Program, Rivercross, RIVAA, RIRA, RIDA, the Island House Task Force, Island Kids, the Hispanic Society, Roosevelt Nails, M&D Deli, the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club, and the PTA. The Island-based Special Ops Division of FDNY is also involved, and will help collect and distribute the gifts.

For information, residents can call Carol da Silva at (212) **838-4747**.



Briefly...

New Pastor The Rev. Curtis Hart, who has served the Island's Protestant Parish since the death of the Rev. Oliver Chapin three years ago, has reached the end of the temporary assignment. The new permanent pastor, Christopher Calderhead, will visit the parish tomorrow (Sunday), when a guest is scheduled to lead services, and will begin his formal role on Sunday, December 21.

Lights! Main Street will be all the more alight this holiday season, according to Chamber of Commerce President Julie Palermo. She reports that over \$5,000 has been raised. (A list of donors will appear in the next *WIRE*.)

Power Test Sometime this weekend, a test turbine will be anchored in the east channel of the East River, under the Queensboro Bridge, as the first step in a plan to harness tidal flow to generate electricity. The full array of turbines for the east channel, once in place, could generate enough power to supply office buildings comparable to the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. The power generated might be available to the Island, according to the president of the company.

Learning Leaders The Island school is still seeking Learning Leaders – volunteers to provide one-on-one tutorial help for children, and to help in the cafeteria and library. Classes for the volunteers will be held on two Wednesdays, December 4 and 11, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Residents interested in volunteering are invited to call the guidance counselor, Susan Cohen, at (212) **980-0294**, ext. 2422.

Youth Program About to Acquire Expansion Space in Island House

Day Nursery Upset at Loss of Its Long-Time Home

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program will soon take over space in Island House formerly occupied by the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery. The operation will continue to use the separate Youth Center space at the south end of Eastwood.

The move to acquire the Island House space, a “backup plan” according to Youth Program board member Steve Kaufman, came when the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) recently failed to commit the Blackwell minischool to the Youth Program, instead reserving it for continued use by the Lilies Christian School.

Sara Seiden, director of the Day Nursery, is upset about losing the Island House space, though all of the organization's classes were consolidated at 4 River Road in 2001 after a summer flood damaged the Island House premises. (RIOC has since altered the drainage system for water coming from Good Shepherd Plaza, according to Seiden.) In a memo to Day Nursery parents intended to be shared with the community, Seiden wrote last week that “the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation is allowing this to happen.” She says she believes RIOC has an obligation, incurred originally by the Urban

Development Corporation when residential buildings were being constructed on the Island, to see that space is provided for day care. “The Day Nursery has occupied the [Island House] site ever since,” she wrote.

The status of the Island House space started to change in 1997, according to Seiden, when Housing Management informed the Day Nursery that it would be expected to pay utility costs – in particular, electricity. The Day Nursery pleaded that it was a “community service organization and not a commercial tenant,” and that its families could not afford the increased tuition that would be required if it took on the utility costs. Doryne Isley, general manager of Housing Management, took no further action at that time, according to Seiden's memo, but in 2000 the matter came up again.

Seiden told *The WIRE* that payments for electricity would consume the amount the Day Nursery fees for children of families in economic need.

(Island non-profits are being asked to pay for electricity. At Thursday night's RIOC Board meeting, See **Space** page 8



Blocks were the thing for this child Thursday morning at the Island's Day Nursery.

RIOC Planning GDP Amendments for Octagon

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) will seek to amend the Island's General Development Plan (GDP) to accommodate apartments proposed for the Octagon Park site. A hearing is planned in which the amendments are to be discussed, along with questions of environmental impact.

The GDP has been at the center of controversies over Island development in the past, and amendments to it have also been viewed as controversial. Among other

questions, since the GDP is attached to the Lease under which the State of New York is developing the Island (which is owned by the City), it is not totally clear what branch of City government is fully empowered to agree to proposed changes.

RIOC's announcement of the hearing and the proposed changes, which appears in an advertisement on page 8 of this issue of *The WIRE*, says that a draft of the proposed GDP changes is available at RIOC,

at 591 Main Street, but the document was not ready on Thursday just before *The WIRE* went to press. The advertisement also offers an Environmental Assessment Form and Supplemental Report, “available for copying” at RIOC offices. Written comments will be accepted until December 13, according to the ad. At Thursday night's RIOC Board meeting, requests were made that the documents – both the GDP amendments and the Environmen-

See **GDP** page 9

PS 217 Kindergartners Getting a First Taste – Sometimes Quite Literally – of French Words

by **Mike Schreiber**

Samira Jafour handed a pouch filled with cookies to one of her kindergartners and asked him how he is able to smell its contents. The boy, Tristan, leaned back and thought for a moment, then responded, “Je sens avec le nez” – “I smell with my nose.”

“Très bien, Tristan,” said Jafour, smiling.

The exercise is part of a new curriculum at PS/IS 217 involving three kindergarten and three first-grade classes. Each class is participating in a four-month pilot program called French Start. The program is administered by the French Institute Alliance Française, a New York-based French cultural center which provides language classes and various activities relating to all things French.

Each class of about 17 students has three 45-minute lessons a week with two instructors from the Institute, in addition to their own teachers. Art and music teachers also participate to create a diverse cur-

riculum. At the end of the four-month program, the students will put on a performance inspired by their French studies for parents, teachers, family, and friends.

Jafour, a native of France, is employed by the Institute to teach the class. She says that she's seen

great progress since the start of the program in September, and that most of the kids are really enjoying it. The kids sing songs in French, draw pictures of things they've discussed in French, and learn how to talk about everyday

See **French** page 8



The Editorial Page

Let’s Save Engine 261

Want to do something easy and quick for yourself and your safety, and for New York’s firefighters?

Mayor Bloomberg has proposed to eliminate FDNY Engine Company 261. It’s his response to the City’s budget crisis, but it’s a bad move for an area where the number of residents is on the increase, and that includes parts of Long Island City and, very importantly, Roosevelt Island.

Engine 261 is our second-response unit when there’s a fire here. The men of that company *know* Roosevelt Island. If 261 goes, whatever second-response unit must come to the Island will have to come from farther away, will have a larger area of responsibility, and won’t be as tightly familiar with the particular requirements of this community.

If 261 goes, you won’t be as safe. And firefighters who take longer to get here when there’s a fire will be at greater risk because the fires they fight will have longer to get dangerous.

Here’s a form. Fill it out. Maybe get a neighbor to sign it, too. Then call the men at Engine 261 – at **1-718-476-6267** – and ask how to get it to them. They’ll pick it up, or give you a fax number.

Time is very short. By Monday, it could be all over. Act now.

To our City and State officials:

The undersigned demand the retention of Engine 261, Long Island City. We understand the importance of fast response to all fires, and understand the importance of personnel who know our situation. The safety of Roosevelt Island’s residents, and the firefighters who protect us, requires that Engine 261 remain active.

Name _____

Signature _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Call **1-718-476-6267** for information on how to get this form to the men of Engine 261.

Want to do something more? Call any or all of the following of your elected officials:

- Borough President C. Virginia Fields, (212) **669-8300**;
 - City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, (212) **535-5554**;
 - Assemblymember Pete Grannis, (212) **860-4906**;
 - Mayor Michael Bloomberg, (212) **788-9600**.
- Again: Time is short. Do it now.**

DL

Stiffed

At Thursday night’s RIOC Board meeting, Debra Mount Cornet recalled, for the Board, RIOC President Robert H. Ryan’s comment in the meeting a month earlier: “I talk to people all the time,” Ryan had said. “I talk to *The WIRE* whenever they call. My door is open.” Cornet decided to take advantage of this open-door attitude to seek some information about bus service on the Island. She called Ryan. That was a month ago, and she’s still waiting for his response.

The WIRE tried to reach Ryan on Thursday, while on deadline, seeking his official statement on whether RIOC has – or doesn’t have – a responsibility to ensure that there is space available for day care on Roosevelt Island.

The question came up because Sara Seiden of the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery had sought Ryan’s aid in pursuing a settlement that would allow the Nursery to continue to use the Island House space that housed it for more than two decades.

Seiden asked Ryan for help because the Island House ground lease seems to call for day care space in Island House. In fact, in a letter to the Day Nursery’s lawyers, RIOC Counsel Kenneth Leitner wrote (we abridge him slightly here for clarity), “RIOC’s position... is that Island House is required to dedicate space to day nursery providers...”

But Leitner went on to say “...we do not choose to be involved in any tenant-landlord litigation which may arise between Island House and its day nursery providers.”

The WIRE felt the Leitner letter raised the following question: *If RIOC says Island House is required to dedicate space to day care, whose responsibility is it to enforce that requirement?*

Ryan had refused Seiden’s requests that RIOC get involved in discussions between the Island House owner and the Day Nursery, so we wondered just who would enforce the provision in the lease?

We called the question in through his public relations representative. Through that representative, Ryan sent back this single-sentence response:

“RIOC is a public-benefit corporation whose mission is to develop and manage Roosevelt Island.”

Apart from the arrogance of stating the obvious in response to a somewhat more complex question than the answer would fit, we told Ryan’s PR guy that there was an obvious follow-up: If RIOC isn’t responsible for enforcing provisions of the lease, *who is?* And doesn’t “manage” include administration of the provisions of leases? And, we said in asking for a call-back from Ryan himself, there would likely be follow-up questions to whatever new response he might provide.

Ryan didn’t call back. Like Debra Mount Cornet and so many other Islanders, we were simply stiffed on the promise and claim that Ryan “talks to everybody.” We can understand simple answers to simple questions being provided by a PR guy, but when there are matters of policy to which only the RIOC President can speak, he should be willing to speak to them.

So, if you’re wondering just what RIOC’s responsibility might be to enforce provisions in the Island’s ground leases, you’ll have to be satisfied with this answer: “RIOC is a public-benefit corporation whose mission *yada yada yada*.” Yes, and the flag of our country is red, white, and blue – an equally-responsive answer he might have given instead.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

I am in the process of moving to Roosevelt Island. I had to go to the Post Office, and I was served by a clerk named Donald.

To my amazement, this guy was swift, efficient, and sociable, all in one act.

I couldn’t believe it. Most of my Post Office experiences elsewhere were downright awful.

Roosevelt Island seems to me a special place.

M. Eserbalac

To the Editor:

In your coverage of the RIRA elections in the November 9 issue, you describe several ill-advised pieces of campaign literature and speculate that one such flyer, distributed in Eastwood, may account for the large vote Byron Gaspard received there. Why single out Eastwood residents? Isn’t it conceivable that they may simply have voted for the candidate they admired most?

Jennifer Dunning

To the Editor:

I would like to commend Neil Tandon for a huge contribution to the life of Roosevelt Island. The Roosevelt Island Historical Walk is a spectacular addition to our Island. In a concise, readable format, with wonderful historical photos, it gives a terrific focus to a walk around the Island. The website, www.rwalk.com, is excellent as well.

Thank you, thank you to Neil and all those who worked with you on this marvelous project – John Dougherty and the Boy Scout Troop, Judy Berdy and the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, RIOC, and others.

Martha Battles

Letters deadline for December 14 issue: **December 9**
Letters received after this deadline will be considered on a space-available basis

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; anonymous letters are not considered for publication. **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" floppy disk left at 531 Main Street addressed to *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. Questions? Call (212) **826-9055**.

Since Halloween, *The WIRE* has gained a correspondent who seems determined that we should, in his or her case, discard our *Letters Policy* and publish a letter in which we know the writer only as an anonymous *Senior Citizen from 546 Main Street*.

The WIRE doesn’t publish anonymous letters.

These particular letters deal with a recent community controversy. They suggest that, in adhering to its *Letters Policy* (see above), *The WIRE* is uninterested in doing good – as the writer sees it, of course – for the community. They propose that *The WIRE* should take up the writer’s cause with vigor, and then go on to demand that *The WIRE* refuse advertising from one of the Island’s merchants. All this on the strength of a letter from someone who refuses to be identified with the cause even to the extent of providing an identity for a letter that could be published *Name Withheld*.

The WIRE does publish some letters *Name Withheld* when the writer requests it, and a reason seems either obvious or, with an explanation, to make sense. But we do insist on being able to verify the identity of the writer. It appears to be time to make clear why that policy is observed.

It takes only a little imagination to come up with many ways the *Letters* space here could be abused through opinions published without the editor knowing the identity of the writer. A merchant could write in praise of his establishment, claiming to be a customer. Another merchant could write a derogatory letter about a competitor. The same might go for Island organizations, neighbors in a dispute, or politicians seeking pre-election publicity.

Unavoidably, *The WIRE* takes on responsibility for preventing misuse of the *Letters* column. Many newspapers refuse letters intended to be published without a name as signature. *The WIRE* takes a middle ground between that policy and publishing just anything anybody cares to write: We’ll publish a letter *Name Withheld*, but we must know the identify of the writer.

But there is a further consideration in the anonymous writer’s demand that *The WIRE* refuse advertising from the merchant whose activities s/he finds offensive. Complying would discard the traditional separations between a newspaper’s advertising and editorial departments. Editorialize against what the masked accuser sees as an offense, s/he insists, and then refuse the merchant’s ads – presumably until the anonymous writer writes once again to say that practices have become acceptable to him or her.

The traditional separations of editorial and advertising are held inviolable in modern journalism because readers must have confidence that the newspaper does not publish favorable editorial matter about advertisers in exchange for advertising dollars. Readers must also have confidence that the paper doesn’t use its news or opinion pages to punish merchants who opt not to advertise.

Similarly, access to the newspaper’s advertising columns cannot be denied to merchants who wish to advertise products and services, otherwise fully acceptable, simply because the newspaper wants some change in the merchants’ services or decor.

So, to this anonymous and alleged *Senior Citizen* [claiming to be] *living in 546 Main Street*, and to others who wonder why *The WIRE* doesn’t carry such letters without knowing the identity of the writer (or refuse a merchant’s advertising), *that’s* why. It’s policy here because it’s good policy anywhere.



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The new Common Council, Class of 2002, will convene in two weeks at the December 4 meeting. However, we've not been resting on our laurels. I held an orientation for new members this past week. We had a chance to introduce ourselves and share ideas for the coming term. We gave the new Council Members copies of key documents, such as the RIRA Constitution and the General Development Plan. The goal is to enhance their understanding of the rules by which we operate as well as to limn the fundamental agreement between New York City and New York State that resulted in Roosevelt Island. Frank Farance conducted a mini-workshop on the arcana of Robert's Rules of Order. I've conducted meetings based on this compendium of parliamentary procedure (dating to Henry Robert's first edition in 1876) for 25 years, and I'm still learning how it's supposed to work.

Some old-timers attended and shared their experience as vice presidents and committee leaders. I trust that our new members will find interesting roles for themselves within the committees when we elect our officers and committee chairs in December. The real work of the Residents Association takes place within these committees in the days and weeks between the monthly meetings of the Common Council. There is a lovely statement of purpose at the beginning of our RIRA Constitution, but really, our function is to be useful. How we attain that simple goal will vary with the issues that confront us over the next two years.

Did you read the profile of Jim Luce in the November 2 issue of *The Main Street WIRE*? A resident of Eastwood, Jim has just been elected by his neighbors to represent them on the Common Council. Jim's responsibilities also include a job, a family, and leadership in his church, the Roosevelt Island Toastmasters, and the PS/IS 217 PTA. And, oh yes, Jim is the founder and president of Orphans International, a not-for-profit corporation that has created four orphanages with "campuses" in Sulawesi, Bali, Guyana, and Haiti, with plans for future facilities in China. The organization's mission is not to warehouse needy children, but "to help orphaned children grow into solid citizens of the world."

I was privileged to attend a fund-raiser for the Bali Campus held at the Indonesian Consulate in Manhattan. The guests included ambassadors and diplomats from several of the host countries as well as supporters from Roosevelt Island and elsewhere. I accepted a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the RIRA Common Council for our support of Orphans International through a contribution in memory of Luce's mother. During the presentation, I commented, "Jim is a prime example of the adage, 'If you want something done, give it to a busy person.' His concerns and his efforts, both local and global, are breathtaking in their scope."

Jim's goal was to raise the \$51,000 necessary to operate this orphanage for one year. The evening raised \$72,000. You can support Orphans Interna-

tional America, both current and future campuses, with a check made payable to "Orphans International America" or by using an American Express card. For further information, give Jim Luce a call at (212) 755-7285.

Last weekend continued the autumn festivities for Islanders. Sherie and I attended the Senior Association Fashion Show Saturday night. We loved the entertainment but were absolutely bowled over by the gorgeous models and their hunky escorts. Great job, everybody! Sunday brought a black-tie occasion celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rivercross. It was a swellegant affair and congratulations are due to the co-chairs, Susan Cohen and Naomi Gale Silverman, as well as to the team of coordinators and performers. I've made sure to put the 50th anniversary party on my calendar.

A minor miracle is happening even as I write. Repair work has started on the Westview swimming pool. RIHMC general manager Doryne Isley estimates that the work will take about a month to complete. What form the new health facility will take and who will operate it are not yet clear, but Islanders who have been waiting a year and a half to use their memberships, including myself, can now see light at the end of a very long tunnel.

Should the pool reopen sometime in December, we will have experienced 17 months of completing paperwork and approvals leading to one month's actual repair. Does this seem bizarre to you? It does to me. For those of you who had dues outstanding when the pool closed in July 2001, keep in mind that *somebody* has had control of your money for 18 months. You are entitled to 18 months of interest on your money, and you might ask about that when the facility reopens. The Westview health club has always been available to any interested Islanders, and you should consider joining this reasonably-priced resource.

Swimming is my sole form of exercise, weight control and sanity maintenance. We moved into Westview just a month before the pool crashed, and have missed the ease of an elevator's ride to the facility. Had it not been for the gracious guest policy of the Rivercross board and management, and the patience of my Rivercross friends who "babysat" me while I swam laps, I would now be crazier (and fatter), given the interminable wait for my building's health services to return. Many thanks, Rivercross!

And finally: Many people have stopped me on Main Street to congratulate me on the elections and to offer their ideas and issues for consideration. I will do my best to bear them in mind as the Common Council takes up its tasks. However, no one advocates an issue as well as its author. You are RIRA. Bring your concerns to the Common Council, join the pertinent committee and participate in bringing your ideas to fruition. RIRA isn't me or even the two dozen Council Members. It's all of us, and we shall sink or swim depending on the quality and quantity of our efforts.

The RIRA Column



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

Surprise!



Photos by Vicki Feinmel

Isabel Bartley was surprised in church last Sunday when she received a kind of "parishioner of the year" award from Father Peter Miqueli. In a citation, Miqueli praised Bartley (pictured here with her husband, John) for working "tirelessly for our parish and other organizations in the community." Miqueli said that each year one parishioner will be chosen based on outstanding service.

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

PTA Book Fair, PS/IS 217 lobby, **Sat., Nov. 23**, all day. (Event runs Nov. 20-Nov 23; opens to the public on Sat., Nov. 23.)

– The Coming Week –

Toastmasters public speaking group, Westview community room. Visitors welcome. Information: 751-9577 or 759-0396. **Mon., Nov. 25**, 8:00 p.m.

– Future Events –

Our Lives – Islanders Reminisce: George Rubin, WorldWar II B-17 waist-gunner/armorer shot down over Germany, Gallery RIVAA. **Sun., Dec. 1**, 5:00 p.m.

Historical Society Annual Meeting, including election of officers, Island House community room. **Mon., Dec. 2**, 7:30 p.m.

Holiday Lighting Ceremony for Roosevelt Island's street decorations, **Fri., Dec. 6**, 7:00 p.m., in front of Blackwell House.

Performance by Julliard Students Naaman Sluchin, violin, and Adam Thomas Brown, guitar, Library; **Fri., Dec. 6**, 7:30 p.m.

Irving Berlin's Annie Get Your Gun, an Equity Approved Showcase production of The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance; performances at The Main Street Theatre (entrance behind the video store), 8:00 p.m. **Fri.-Sat., Dec. 6-7**; 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. **Sun., Dec. 8**; 7:30 p.m. **Mon., Dec. 9**. Tickets (\$15) and information, 371-4449.

New Exhibit, Seasons, opens at Gallery RIVAA, **Sat., Dec. 7**.

Islander **Roy Eaton** with the **New York Pops Orchestra**, Carnegie Hall, playing Ravel & Joplin, a benefit concert for the Lauri Strauss Leukemia Foundation. **Mon., Dec. 9**, 7:30 p.m.

Toastmasters public speaking group. Visitors welcome. Information: 751-9577 or 759-0396. **Mon., Dec. 9**, 8:00 p.m.

PS/IS 217 Winter Band Concert, at the school, **Thur., Dec. 12**, 5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing on Octagon Project and GDP Changes, conducted by RIOC, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, **Thur., Dec. 12**, 7:00 p.m.

The Main Street WIRE Holiday issue – Sat., Dec. 14. Deadlines: Advertising in the paper, **Fri., Dec. 6**; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, **Mon., Dec. 9**; materials due **Thur., Dec. 12**. **Future issues:** January 11, 25; February 8, 22; March 8, 22; April 12, 26; May 17, 31; June 14, 28; July 26; August 23; September 6, 20; October 11, 25; November 8, 22 (Thanksgiving issue); December 13 (Christmas issue 2003). **Phone/fax** for news, 826-9055/755-2540; phone/fax for display and classified advertising placement and information, 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.

Opening Reception at Gallery RIVAA for new exhibit, **Seasons, Dec. 14**, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Deadline for donations to the Holiday Gift Drive for Coler-Goldwater patient-residents, **Wed., Dec. 18**. For information, call Carol da Silva at 838-4747. (See story, page 1.)

Book Discussion – Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier, Library. Advance registration required; book available at the Library. **Thur., Dec. 19**, 6:30 p.m.

Islander Roy Eaton in Concert for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Bernice Eaton; benefit for an incentive scholarship awarded to a Queens African-American high-school graduate demonstrating outstanding achievement in the face of significant obstacles; **Sun., Dec. 29**, 3:00 p.m. Hollis Presbyterian Church, Hollis, New York. For directions, ticket, and donor information, call 1-718-776-4646.

New Year's Eve Dance Party, Manhattan Park Theater Club, sponsored by the PTA, *The WIRE*, and River Music. **Tue., Dec. 31**, 9:00 p.m.

Toastmasters public speaking group. Visitors welcome. Information: 751-9577 or 759-0396. **Mon., Jan. 13**, 8:00 p.m.

Toastmasters public speaking group. Visitors welcome. Information: 751-9577 or 759-0396. **Mon., Jan. 27**, 8:00 p.m.

Senior Center

Monday
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**
12:30, "Oldies" Movies
1:00, **Tai Chi**
7:00, **Dance** (Beginners)

Tuesday
10:30, **Jazzercise**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)
Wednesday
9:00, **Stay Well**
10:00, **English as Second Language**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Advanced)
Friday
10:00, **English as a Second**

Language
10:15, **Yoga Stretch**
1:00, **Bridge Class**
7:30, **Lotto**

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

Special Events
Sat., Nov. 23, 6:00, **Annual Thanksgiving Dinner** (RISA members only)

The Center will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29.

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

*CHARGED WITH A CRIME? CALL THE
CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYER
WHO WILL FIGHT FOR YOU!*



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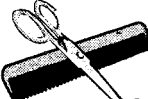
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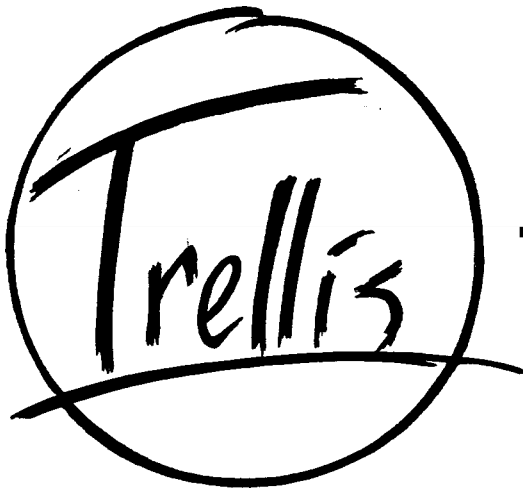
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
ON
OCTAGON APARTMENTS PROJECT

NOTICE is hereby given that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation will hold a public hearing at the Good Shepherd Center located at 543 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, on December 12th, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. to receive comments on the potential environmental impacts associated with the Octagon Apartments Project. The Octagon Apartments Project would involve the rehabilitation of the existing landmark known as the “Octagon Building,” the renovation and expansion of an existing picnic area and tot lot, and the construction of two residential buildings with a maximum of 500 residential units and associated parking. An Environmental Assessment Form and Supplemental Report have been prepared by the Project Applicant and are available for copying at the address indicated below. At this hearing, RIOC will also receive comments on proposed amendments to the General Development Plan for Roosevelt Island necessary to carry out the proposed Octagon Apartments Project. A draft of the proposed amendments to the GDP is available. Public comments in written form should be addressed to the contact person listed below and will be accepted until December 13, 2002.

Contact:

Robert Antonek
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
591 Main Street
Roosevelt Island, New York
10044

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French from page 1

things in French.

“Some kids are more tentative about speaking in French, the way many adults are when they go to a foreign country,” she said. “But after a little goading, they usually get over it.”

According to Veronique Addario, director of the French Start program at the Institute, while it is her goal to help to maintain and develop the use of the French language in the United States, her concern as an educator is broader.

“For me it’s important to work [toward] personal development. Not just French,” she said.

She has no illusions about the kids’ gaining any lasting proficiency with the language. They are, after all, only going to be learning French for four months and in all likelihood won’t have the chance to take French classes in school for at least five or six years. But Addario hopes that the exposure to the language is enough to spark an interest in both the kids and the parents.

Kindergarten teacher Lori Marin agrees. It is only her second year teaching and she was told just two days before the start of classes that her kids would be involved in the French Start program. She had to rearrange her curriculum to accommodate the program, but is delighted nonetheless with the addition. She’s not worried about the introduction of new foreign-language instruction into a group which is only beginning to develop strong English language skills. She said that many of her children already speak a second language at home.

Space from page 1

Elsie Obed of the Lilies School reported that she had received a bill, passed along through RIOC, for over \$4,000 in electricity. RIOC Board Chair Marybeth Labate promised an investigation of the large amount.)

Seiden wrote, “We asked RIOC to intervene on our behalf since we believe that it is their responsibility to resolve this matter,” but “in the last two years, RIOC has refused

“We’ve got kids here from every country you’ve ever heard of, and some that you haven’t,” said Marin.

Indeed, Roosevelt Island is home to a diverse international community drawn both by low-rent apartments that are attractive to new immigrants and residences reserved for United Nations staffers.

Each student will receive two French textbooks donated by the publishers. One of the books, “Alex et Zoé,” published by CLE International, follows two young children as they explore famous fairy tales and, in doing so, introduce the students to basic French grammar and vocabulary. The Institute uses the same volume in similar programs in Panama, Australia, and other centers across the world.

PS/IS 217 is one of five City elementary schools – three in the fall and two in the spring – taking part in the program, which has the support of the French diplomatic community. Addario hopes that in time the program will expand to encompass the entire City school system. She said that there is a great need for language education at the elementary level.

to intervene to remind the owners of their responsibility to provide and maintain this space for day care.” Her memo says that “even when we met with the Island House owner, neither Robert Ryan nor a RIOC attorney was willing to attend the meeting.”

Seiden told *The WIRE* that, after the premises were flooded in 2001, “we weren’t willing to invest any more money, to put in [replacement] carpeting and do the necessary disinfecting, if we were still being threatened by the landlord” with a requirement to pay for electricity.

After the Day Nursery acquired a pro bono attorney to assist it in the matter, a settlement was reached in which the owner of Island House would have the right to seek a paying tenant, and the Day Nursery would then have 30 days in which to match any offer received. When the Youth Center made an offer, it was not matched.

Seiden emphasizes, though, that Day Nursery operations will continue at 4 River Road. Island House owner Charles Lucido told *The WIRE*, “I would hope [the Youth Center] would be able to provide day nursery service in addition to their Youth Center activities.” Kaufman says there are no present plans to provide day care, but didn’t rule it out as a future possibility.

Youth Center Director Charles De Fino told *The WIRE* that the Youth Program would consider offering day care. “We have to consider whatever it takes to generate funds,” he said. While no party to the negotiations was willing to disclose what the Youth Program will pay for the Island House space, Lucido said that original UDC documents

showed that it was supposed to rent, in 1976, for \$37,500 per year. “I didn’t feel free to seek a commercial tenant,” he said. “It’s public benefit space, but we’re supposed to collect rent.”

The Day Nursery agrees, says Seiden, “that Island House tenants should not have to carry the full costs of the space and, over the years, we have spoken with RIRA and RICO [the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations] about looking for a way that these costs can be shared by the other [residential] buildings... However, only RIOC can develop and implement a cost-sharing plan that would spread the costs equitably across the Island.”

Seiden’s memo continues, “Unless RIOC intervenes now as it is mandated to do, the Island House site will be lost to the parents of young children on Roosevelt Island. If our governing body, RIOC, will not protect the future day care needs of our community, the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery is powerless to continue this fight on our own.” While the Day Nursery continues to use the space provided by Manhattan Park at 4 River Road, Seiden says there is a waiting list, “no room for expansion,” and the facility there will not support the increased population of small children that may come along as Southtown is developed and the Octagon Apartments are built. The present population of children is “a little over 50,” with a spring part-time program expected to bump the number up to 60 or 70.

There are plans for a franchised day-care operation in Southtown.

The Youth Program will spend over
See **Space**, page 9

Animation helps – Samira Jafour keeps her class of kindergartners interested with lots of movement and a constant patter.



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Space from page 8

\$100,000 renovating the Island House space, but will receive a rent credit for funds spent on renovation. It will pay the utility costs.

Lucido said he expects the arrangement to go to a signed formal lease before year's end. Kaufman and De Fino agreed with that estimate.

The space being acquired by the Youth Program does not include the Island House swimming pool, which has been out of service for years.

De Fino commented that maintenance of two separate buildings for Youth Center programs would not be his first choice. "It's not the most economical way to do it," he said this week, again lamenting RIOC's failure to make available the Blackwell minischool space, which the Youth Center says RIOC promised to the Youth Center a dozen years ago, contingent upon the Center raising the necessary money. When the funds became available last year, RIOC failed to make a decision on giving the space to the Youth Program, and ultimately promised it to the Lilies School.

The Youth Program's funds remain available, but are considered "threatened" by the City's budget crisis. That fiscal situation has generated an imperative for the Youth Program to commit the promised funds.

According to Isley, Island service organizations using community space are not being asked to pay for electricity for those spaces. She cites the Senior Center and Island Kids as examples. The Lilies School may be another, though information was not immediately available from RIOC on what financial obligations the Christian school has for the Blackwell minischool space.

Seiden is adamant in blaming RIOC for the Day Nursery's loss of the Island House space. "RIOC is simply abandoning a responsibility to the community," she says, adding, "More than that - RIOC has refused to help. We wanted to sit down at a table with Charles Lucido and Robert Ryan and work out an arrangement where the cost could be spread in a fair way and the Day Nursery could retain the space. RIOC has

refused to help."

Seiden cites a July 22, 2002, letter from RIOC General Council Kenneth Leitner saying, "Historically, UDC and RIOC's position... is that whereas Island House is required to dedicate space to day nursery providers, we do not choose to be involved in any tenant-landlord litigation which may arise..." Paraphrasing, Seiden's question is that if RIOC holds that Island House must provide such space, whose responsibility is it to enforce that requirement?

Housing Management's Isley commented that the Day Nursery's loss of the Island House space may be an opportunity, rather than a problem. "With all the construction," she said, "there are likely to be new spaces becoming available. With everything going on, I see an opportunity for new space."

Asked for comment on Thursday, RIOC President Robert Ryan provided only this one-sentence response through his public relations aide: "RIOC is a public-benefit corporation whose mission is to develop and manage Roosevelt Island."

GDP from page 1

tal Assessment - be made widely and easily available, perhaps on the Internet, and perhaps through the local branch of the New York Public Library. Answers to those requests should be available Monday but, RIOC officials said, the documents will be available at the RIOC offices Monday in any case.

The hearing, scheduled for 7:00 p.m. Thursday, December 12, will be held in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

The Octagon project proposed by the architectural and development firm, Becker and Becker Associates, calls for full restoration of the Octagon, which was the central building in the Island's Lunatic Asylum in the 1800's. Two residential wings attached to the Octagon will hold 500 apartments, and an underground parking structure is planned for the present location of the Octagon Park tennis courts, with the courts restored to the top of the structure once it is completed.

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by Seth Kaufman

SPORTSWIRE

Soccer A very competitive regular season in the Youth Program’s Soccer League came to a close on November 9, and the playoffs began the following week. The final regular season standings were:

Minors (7-8)			Juniors (9-10)			Seniors (11-14)		
Blue	3-0-1	(10 points)	Gold	5-2-1	(16 points)	Gold	4-1-3	(15 points)
Red	1-0-3	(6)	Silver	4-2-2	(14)	Silver	3-3-2	(11)
Silver	0-2-2	(2)	Red	4-2-2	(14)	Red	2-1-5	(11)
Gold	0-2-2	(2)	Blue	0-7-1	(1)	Blue	1-5-2	(5)

Minors: In first-round playoff action November 16, Red defeated Silver 3-0. The first half ended in a 0-0 tie; however, Red surged late, scoring three goals in the second half to advance to the championship game. Nana Osei-Danquah scored two goals to lead Red, while Serwaa Osei-Danquah added another. The second game that day, between Gold and Blue, was tied 2-2 at the end of regulation time, with Leo Folla scoring both goals for Blue and Nicole Monroe scoring both for Gold. With no goals being scored during overtime, the tension mounted as the game moved to a shootout. In a shootout, five players from each team alternate taking penalty kicks. However, as the shootout was tied 3-3 after five kicks, the shootout went to a sudden death phase. When Nicole Monroe, Gold’s sixth shooter, put one in the back of the net, and Blue’s sixth shooter failed to convert, Gold had upset the first-place Blue team. Mark Choueiri, Leo Kell and Abdel Moustahssine also scored for Gold during the shootout. The championship game between Red and Gold will be played today (Saturday, November 23) at 9:30 a.m. at the Octagon Pony Field.

Juniors: The Red and Gold teams in the Juniors also advanced to the championship game with easy victories in the first round of the playoffs. Red shut out Silver 5-0, with Ahmed Aboulez scoring 4 goals, and Luka Ivicevic adding the fifth. Gold defeated Blue by a score of 7-1. Oussama Boutaleb had 4 goals, Alexander Pinks had 2 goals, and Baba Kane added one goal to power Gold. The championship game between Red and Gold will be played today at 9:30 a.m. at the newly-dedicated Firefighters Field in Southtown.

Seniors: In the first playoff game, Silver defeated Red 3-1. David Malary, with two goals, and Sid Menon, with one goal, led Silver to victory. Gold joined Silver in the finals by defeating Blue, 6-2. Daniel Folla and Mikko McDonald led Gold with two goals apiece. The game was tied 1-1 at the half, before Gold struck for three quick goals early in the second half to put the game out of reach. Gold’s victory was set up by the outstanding play of its defense: Jenna Stueber, Nana Paturet, William Oh, Gussie Manalo, Joseph Scalabrino, and Declan Guilfoyle, with Richard DeLaCruz in goal. The championship game between Silver and Gold will be played today at 11:30, at Firefighters Field.

Flag Football With one week to go in the regular season, the standings in the Youth Program’s Flag Football League are:

Junior Division (12-14)		Senior Division (15-17)	
Saints	3-2	Chargers	4-0-1
Falcons	3-2	Broncos	3-2
Panthers	2-3	Chiefs	1-2-2
Buccaneers	2-3	Raiders	0-4-1

In the **Junior Division**, NFL-type parity has been accomplished as only one game separates all four teams. In action November 9, the Buccaneers defeated the Saints and the Panthers upset the Falcons. Neal Stueber quarterbacked the Buccaneers to their victory, as Austin Lee, Darrin Roy, Sebastian Gherardi, Alpha Bah, and Vernon Thomas each scored touchdowns. On November 16, the Falcons defeated the Buccaneers 26-6 behind the outstanding play of Steven Morabito, Joshua Hart, Jimmy Elias, Jake Russem, and Bashan Barber, while the Panthers defeated the Saints 26-6 in the rain as Shabaka White and Richard DeLa Cruz returned interceptions for touchdowns.

In **Senior Division** action November 9, the Chiefs defeated the Broncos 37-32 when, on the last play of the game, Terry Moses threw a 45-yard touchdown pass to Omani Guy. In the other game that day, the Chargers remained undefeated, beating the Raiders 51-31. Seth Kaufman threw TD passes to Karam Hider, Rahim Drame, and Rafael Noorani, and Shirome Dixon returned an interception for a score. Anthony Simmons, Paul Brown, and Brandon Stueber scored for the Raiders. In November 16 action, the Chiefs were burned in the last two minutes as the Chargers came back to tie the game 25-25, as Fode Bah turned a short pass into a 50-yard touchdown run and Karam Hider caught the pass for the extra point. Jonathan Hart and Deshawn Pearson scored for the Chiefs. The second game that day, played in a downpour, ended with the Broncos defeating the Raiders 26-6.

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