

New Year's Eve Dance Party with the Starlite Band

Welcome 2003 to Roosevelt Island at Manhattan Park Theater Club, with a variety of music for every taste, sponsored by The PTA and *The WIRE*. See ad inside.

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The Main Street **WIRE**™

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

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

Octagon Hearing Becomes Verbal Méléé

Grannis Says Plan Not Legal; RIOC's Ryan in Shouting Matches

RIRA to City: Don't Change GDP Piecemeal

by Dick Lutz

The Residents Association Common Council passed a resolution at its meeting last week opposing "piecemeal changes" to the Island's General Development Plan (GDP).

The body discussed the measure only briefly, although the focus of discussion was primarily on whether to vote immediately on it, or delay a vote until new members could become more familiar with the Octagon project. A majority felt the Council should go on record before this week's Octagon environmental hearing (held Thursday night), and a vote was taken.

"RIRA is requesting that the City Council and/or the office of the Mayor deny any requests to amend the GDP at this time," the resolution concludes, adding, "RIRA is requesting that the City Council and/or the office of the Mayor call for a review of the GDP by qualified professionals with experience in city planning before either allows any further development on Roosevelt Island."

The resolution, which was rewritten to some extent during the meeting, cites several reasons for the action in four "whereas" paragraphs. They include the GDP's role as a substitute, on the Island, for formal zoning, and cite the

See **RIRA**, page 15

Miller to RIOC: Council Must OK Any GDP Change

by Dick Lutz

Not so fast.

That's the message City Council Speaker Gifford Miller sent to RIOC President Robert Ryan when he learned of RIOC's plan to seek approval for changes in the Island's General Development Plan from Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

"As I have stated in the past," Miller wrote in a November 26 letter, "it is my belief that the City Council, and not the Mayor, approves amendments to the GDP."

The controversy arises because the Lease under which New York State holds Roosevelt Island provides that changes in the GDP, which is attached to the Lease, must be approved by the City's Board of Estimate. But the Board of Estimate went out of business with changes in the City's governmental structure, and there is disagreement on which branch of City government absorbed its functions and powers. Some, including RIOC, say the Mayor gets to decide on GDP changes; others, notably and with a threat of litigation, Council Speaker Miller, who is the Island's Councilmember.

"If RIOC and its Board decide to seek an amendment to the GDP from any body or institution other than the City Council," Miller's

See **Miller**, page 15

Developer Report: Project Has No Negative Impacts

by Robert Laux-Bachand

The environmental assessment performed for the proposed Octagon Apartments portrays what could be called, in many ways, a stealth development. Despite adding 500 housing units and 1,000 people, it will, according to this report, blend easily into the landscape of Roosevelt Island and have little effect on the lives of other residents.

To reach this conclusion, the engineers and environmental consultants who were hired to prepare the report relied on measures of "significant impact" that are spelled out in the technical manual of the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process. They also jumped through the hoops presented by historic preservation officials, and by agencies that regulate air and noise pollution, City zoning, wildlife, hazardous materials, and waterfront revitalization.

The result is a 104-page Supplemental Report, supported by dozens of pages of tables, photos, and copies of correspondence. It was written for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) by Wall & Associates, Inc., one of the leading environmental consulting firms in the City, with the assistance of STV Inc., a major engineering

See **Report**, page 6

Stewart Says Ryan Owes Apology; Officials Ask Delay, Reconsideration



A hearing on the environmental consequences of the Octagon Apartments project descended into a shouting match between Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation President Robert H. Ryan and some of the 100-plus residents who attended the meeting to express their opposition to going forward with the project.

In terms of actual substance, Assemblymember Pete Grannis dropped something of a bombshell into the hearing through his aide, Tony Morenzi, who read a statement contending that the project

violates new State law. The law in question, signed in September by Governor George Pataki, permits only very limited development in Octagon Park because only the Octagon structure itself is a landmark. The law, which was co-sponsored by Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez, says – as quoted by the Grannis statement – that there shall be "no further development or construction for other than park purposes" in Octagon Park and three other park areas on the Island, unless it "includes the restoration, rehabilitation or preservation of the historic landmarks... and furthers the use of the areas surrounding the landmarks as open space areas." (Grannis's emphasis.)

Grannis's argument is that nothing other than the Octagon ruins can be considered the landmark,

See **Hearing**, page 14

Islanders

For this Island Family, Rent Pays the Rent

by Linda Humphrey

As Owen Johnston II was about to audition for the Broadway musical *Rent*, a thief ran off with his wallet. He chased the culprit down a stairwell and pinned him against the wall. Grabbing the wallet, he threw the thug down the stairs and sprinted back to the audition. He got the part.

The Orange County, California, native has since settled into New York – a city he first found "disturbing" – with a move to Roosevelt Island. For the past five-and-a-half years, he has played various *Rent* characters – including Angel, the drag queen, and Roger, the struggling rock musician. As the show's dance captain, he also teaches the choreography to new dancers and is charged with maintaining the look of the show. "I spend a lot of time watching,"



Off to Visit Santa: That's where the Johnstons were headed Tuesday when they passed for *The WIRE*'s camera. Left to right: Owen, Noah, Jordan, and Bridget.

he explains.

Now in its seventh year, *Rent* swept all the major theater awards of 1996, including the Pulitzer Prize and the Tony Award. Based on the opera *La Bohème*, the musical transports Puccini's starving-artist characters to New York's East Village. (Mimi, a seamstress with tuberculosis in *La Bohème*, is a heroin-addicted exotic dancer with AIDS in *Rent*.)

"The show puts the big issues in your face," Johnston says. "It's an amazing thing, to be a part of it."

The actor/singer/dancer (he started out as a dancer/singer) began his career at a place the *Rent* characters would never turn up: Disneyland. "One of the few" who never pulled on a character costume, he danced in shows like *Mickey's Birthday Bash*. "I was the

See **Johnston**, page 8

Briefly...

No Hostage An hours-long Main Street traffic tie-up last Saturday night, widely rumored to be a by-product of a "hostage situation," turned out to be something else. Report and photo, page 16.

RIHS Officers The Historical Society has returned Judy Berdy to its Presidency. Additional officers are Ursula Beauseigneur, Executive Vice President; Katherine Vithlani, Treasurer; Tess Langeveld, Secretary. The position of Vice President for Public Relations is open.

Postcards *The WIRE* is offering Island postcards as a fundraiser. There's an ad on page 17.

Happy Holidays to All from *The Main Street WIRE*

and Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

The Editorial Page

Stiffed Again

It’s like a soap.
Announcer: Last issue, you’ll remember, the editor criticized RIOC President Robert H. Ryan for providing a one-sentence irrelevant answer to a complex question. In this week’s episode, you’ll hear Ryan say...

“Hey Dick, it’s... it’s Rob Ryan. And I know you have my phone number so I don’t think I have to leave it. You know something, first of all, give me a call back. Second of all, everybody... I call everybody back. As you know, I wasn’t at the meeting on Thursday [November 14]; I was tied up with other matters. OK? That’s part of the reason I didn’t call you back. I gave you a statement. The reason I don’t call Debra back, whatever her name is, is because I don’t like being screamed at on the street by somebody who calls me a liar. OK? And there was a whole scene on Main Street. [If] she treats me like a human being like I treat everybody like a human being in this place, I call her back. She was given all the information she asked for, by people on my staff. So I find your whole column there sort of ridiculous and, you know, just, you know, trying to stir up the pot. And, you know, that’s not needed. I mean, if you care about this community, you’re not going to do stuff like that. OK? So why don’t you give me a call? Then you can vent, if you want to vent, but the allegations that are made in that column are totally ridiculous. “Bye.”

That was, word-for-word, a telephone message from Ryan. The question had been, Who’s responsible for enforcing the provisions of ground leases on Roosevelt Island? It had a related component: Since RIOC had refused to sit in on talks between the Day Nursery and the owner of Island House, how would RIOC be enforcing the requirement that space be provided in Island House for a nursery service?

Ryan’s answer, provided through his public relations guy, John Melia, was a single sentence: “RIOC is a public-benefit corporation whose mission is to develop and manage Roosevelt Island.” Non-responsive, I thought, and per-

haps a bit on the arrogant side. In response to Ryan’s phone message, left in reaction to the piece in the November 23 issue, headed Stiffed, we called him back. After a bit of telephone tag, Ryan and Melia undertook to defend the one-sentence statement as an appropriate response to the questions presented, but then explained in some greater detail that RIOC felt the Day Nursery was asking for legal help from RIOC, and RIOC just didn’t want to provide that. I told Ryan, “That’s what I needed to hear [before deadline] on Thursday.” “Oh,” he said.

Some other matters were discussed, but I wasn’t in a position to take down Ryan’s words at the time, so I said I’d call back in the coming week. Meanwhile...

Chapter Two

Meanwhile, WIRE reporter Mary Camper-Titsingh tried much of last week to reach Melia with some questions about the extended outage of the elevator on the Manhattan side of the Tramway. When he didn’t return her call after repeated messages, she left another indicating that if she didn’t hear from him, she would have to write the story without a statement from RIOC.

Melia finally called her back. She reported the conversation this way: Someone actually did call me back this morning. He told me that he had no information about when the elevator would be repaired and then said he resented my “threat” about reporting on the elevator breakdown in The WIRE. Without giving me a chance to talk he slammed the phone down and hung up on me. So much for the “public servants” at RIOC.

So much? Not quite. To follow up, I sent an e-mail to Melia late Friday, December 6. It read, in relevant part:

When did the elevator at the tram station go down? What is the repair schedule? The e-mail went on to recount Mary’s report of the conversation, and to list a series of questions on which The WIRE would like answers. Residents would, too, judging by their comments on Main Street and in Trelis. There are questions about why

Z-bricks are to be replaced, in the future, with asphalt, and whether that includes sidewalks as well as the street. And whether the Z-brick mess in front of 40 River Road will ever be fixed. And about layoffs (yes, RIOC has laid off some folks this week). And again, those questions about who, if not RIOC, is responsible for enforcing provisions of ground leases on the Island. The e-mail ended by repeating the standing invitation to Ryan to provide a RIOC President’s Column to The WIRE as a way to inform the community and get his viewpoint across.

Melia responded with a phone call. He said he hadn’t called Mary Camper-Titsingh back because her deadline was “still a week away” (which, at that point, would have put it about 24 hours after this issue went to press) and admitted that he, in fact, was the one who had hung up on her. When I responded with the information that her deadline had, in fact, passed, he responded, “You’re so full of sh*t!” and, in the middle of my response (attempting to explain to a supposed veteran newsman that not all deadlines are at the moment the paper goes to press), hung up on me, as well.

That’s the third recent confirmed hang-up by Melia when talking with Islanders.

It was, therefore, the occasion for an immediate call to Ryan. The person who answered the phone said Ryan was in a meeting, and took a message asking that Ryan return the call.

That was last Friday.

Melia’s attitude, reflective of RIOC in general, is no surprise to residents who have attempted to get information from RIOC. Last Saturday night, Public Safety hung up on at least two residents calling to ask about the heavy police presence at 2/4 River Road. They wanted to know if they and their families were in danger – a reasonable request for information. “It doesn’t concern you!” was the response, followed by the phone being slammed down.

The WIRE works at being a conduit of information pertinent to residents’ lives and the operation of this community. When RIOC fails to return calls, and fails to provide basic information about administrative decisions like layoffs Z-brick paving being replaced with blacktop, and elevator outages, the public employees at RIOC are thumbing a big red reindeer nose at the entire community. Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

Oh – and that message left last Friday asking that Ryan return my call? Do you need to ask?

Stiffed again.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

We want to register our family’s support for the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery. We strongly protest the unfortunate lack of support from RIOC in reference to the school’s forced removal from its Island House home. The Day Nursery is a community service organization and not a profit-making enterprise. It remains one of the community’s best assets, with high standing within the Independent Schools Association of Greater New York.

The excellence of the Day Nursery was one of the reasons for our decision to move to Roosevelt Island. Both of our daughters, and thousands of other children in the school’s almost twenty-five years of continued excellence, have received nurturing and developmentally appropriate introductions to their educational journeys in the embrace of its director Sara Seiden and her capable staff. It is a profound mistake to treat one of our most important institutions in this way.

This school has nourished the hearts and minds of our youngest children. It is an asset that should itself be cherished, nourished, and celebrated. Like most preschool institutions, the Day Nursery operates on a small budget, yet it has remained responsive to the Island’s population. The Nursery’s Parent Board has worked over the years to accommodate families through negotiations with government agencies and by devoting funds to scholarships.

The Day Nursery, like all community services on Roosevelt Island, should not be treated as a

To the MTA:

I live on Roosevelt Island. For years we have put up with changing train schedules, shuttle trains, construction that never seems to end, non-working elevators and escalators. Since we have been put on the F train line, we now have the fun of having to let 2 to 3 trains pass us in the morning because the trains are too packed to let even one more person on.

We live on an island with a high population of senior and disabled citizens. I can’t imagine how we will ever get on a train in the morning once the new buildings on the Island are populated. For months we have seen transit workers in their little orange vests armed with clipboards taking notes during the morning rush hours, but everything still remains the same.

And now, a fare hike. Give me a break, please!

Linda Jones Easton

common tenant. As Southtown and the Octagon housing projects surge forward, families eager for quality educational preschool experiences on Roosevelt Island should be offered this choice. The Island House landlords should not be permitted to evict a tenant because its own mismanagement has neglected its facilities. We would add that RIOC should be ashamed of its failure of leadership but this seems a futile reprimand. We urge that the day-care space at 545 Main St. remain with its current designation for Roosevelt Island’s young children.

Vicki Garavuso, Ed. D. Jim Pignetti

An additional letter appears on page 17

Editor’s note: The following letter was sent to RIOC, several public officials, and copied to The WIRE.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am wheelchair-bound and have been a resident of Roosevelt Island for the last eleven years. I love to live on the Island because everybody is helpful, nice and pleasant. I use the Tramway every day because I go to school and I have never had problems with anyone.

However, there is Christian, the Tram operator, at night. He is always in a nasty mood. I don’t have anything against him but he doesn’t like to help disabled people use the Tramway. When I need help to get in the cabin, he always pretends he is reading the newspaper, and the few times that I asked him to help me, he ignored me and either a passenger or the token-booth attendant helped me, because he completely ignores me. Now that the regular elevator is not working, when I buzz for help with the mechanical elevator he sends the elevator down and when I tell him that I need help to get into it (since it is impossible for me to open two heavy doors, hold them and go up the ramp at the same time), he says, “I am not going downstairs.” I have to get someone who passes by to help me to get in. A few times, he sent the mechanical elevator down, waited until time for the Tram to leave, and left me downstairs. The token-booth attendant has had to come out of the booth and help me.

I didn’t say anything but Wednesday night, December 4, I got someone to help me to open the doors and help me to get in the elevator, because he said, “It is not my job to get you inside the elevator.” Once I was upstairs, I needed help to get out and he just opened the door and left. As he was leaving, I asked for help and he said, “That is not my job and I’m not supposed to touch your wheelchair at all.” I asked, “How am I supposed to get out?” He said, “That is not my problem,” and left. I was stuck in the elevator, so I started saying, “Help! Help!” and the token-booth person came and helped me to get out. When I went to insert my token, I saw Christian standing there and I asked him why does he have to be so miserable and why he wanted to make my life miserable and he said, “Shut up, don’t talk to me.” I said, “You never want to help me, you are always rude and nasty.” He said, “Shut up, and don’t you ever ask me for help, because I won’t help you.” So I told him to “Shut up.” There were people who saw the incident and one of them suggested that I write you a letter telling you about the incident. Another one gave me the phone number for the Tramway supervisor and gave me her name if I needed her as a witness. I called the supervisor today.

Please, I need to use the Tramway everyday and I don’t need him to make my life more difficult. The weather is getting bad and I really don’t want to have to worry about getting to the Tramway and have to deal with him leaving me downstairs until the other Tramway operator comes. Can you do something about fixing the regular elevator? And if that is not going to happen soon, can you do something about his attitude with disabled people?

Thank you for your help.

Graciela Ramirez

Letters deadline for January 11 issue: January 6

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



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This is the third year in which I’ve had the privilege of addressing you from these pages at holiday time. The Christmas lights adorn Main Street, thanks in part to a contribution from RIRA. The Chamber of Commerce and the Youth Center, under the leadership of Julie Palermo and Charlie DeFino, again made the tree lighting ceremony at Blackwell House possible. Chanukah came extra early this year, and the Jewish congregation saw the holiday out with a traditional *latke* (potato pancake) feast. I do believe I’m getting into the spirit!

One damper on the good cheer: You may recall reading in the November 9 issue of *The WIRE* about the History Walk conceived and executed by Island resident and Eagle Scout, Neil Tandon. With the help of RIOC personnel, this project was completed in late October. Perhaps you’ve seen the colorful, heavy plastic signs around the Island and stopped to read them. The plaque in front of PS/IS 217 was vandalized just before Thanksgiving, ripped from its mooring and broken in half. There’s no question of “why” here; it’s just mindless destruction. Our only recourse is to report this kind of viciousness when we see it, not to walk on by. It’s our Island, and we can’t let the creeps steal the quality of our lives from us.

Your newly-elected Common Council met for the first time on December 4. We have reconstituted the vice presidencies and committee chairs, with many of the new members volunteering for positions of responsibility. Joining First Vice President Steve Marcus and me as officers are Secretary Sherie Helstien, taking a second term in this demanding position, and a Manhattan Park newcomer, Lynn Chambers, as newly-elected Treasurer. Our new vice presidents include Franz Aliquo (Island Services), Vicki Feinmel (Social, Cultural, and Educational Programs), Eddie O’Flynn (Housing), George Reither (Planning), and Margie Smith (Government Relations). As required by the constitution, a non-member of the Common Council, Scoutmaster Geoff Kerr, was elected Auditor, a long-ignored area of accountability. Other reconstituted areas of responsibility include the chairs for public safety (Byron Gaspard), Transportation (Abe Hassan), Communications (Frank Farance), Legal Action (Dori Speer), and Membership Participation (Joe Cristiano). Did you know that any RIRA member (that’s you!) may join a Council committee and participate in the work of the Common Council? You can and you should!



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

The new Council made its voice heard by passing a Resolution requesting that Roosevelt Island’s General Development Plan not be amended piecemeal, as the developers of the Octagon Apartments and RIOC have proposed, but considered as the defining document for the future of this planned community. The consensus clearly was that there is no plan for the Island if it can be changed every time a new developer decides to build on designated parkland. Whether the Mayor or the City Council has the ultimate responsibility for land-use questions here, RIRA called for “a review of the GDP by qualified professionals with experience in city planning, before it allows any further development on Roosevelt Island.”

Regardless of your opinion of the Octagon plan, I hope you have read the material that has been made available on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the proposed amendment to the GDP. They are available on-line at www.rioc.com and at the Library and the RIOC offices. And I hope you attended the RIOC Town Meeting last Thursday. Too many decisions have been made regarding the development of Roosevelt Island with too little input from the community. It’s time to reverse the trend.

(This column was written before the Thursday meeting, and so, I’m guessing the outcome of these events.) You may have noticed some signage on Main Street kiosks and in building lobbies announcing the Town Meeting. Some of the posters were put up by RIRA (and were identified as such) and some by other Island citizens. However, none were hung by RIOC. In fact, the only publicity they attempted was a quarter-page ad, probably required by law, in the last *WIRE*. I’ve asked myself why RIOC would not publicize its own meeting, and have come up with two alternatives: RIOC has improved its communication with this community, but still misses many opportunities to interact with us. Therefore, they may simply not have thought to put up posters. Alternately, they may be trying to put up posters without the approval of the Common Council. See **Katz**, page 8



Danny Jones

Daniel Nicholas “Danny” Jones died October 22, 2002. He had been suffering with complications from diabetes.

He is survived by his parents, Nikki and Jeffrey Jones, longtime residents of Roosevelt Island who now live in Bellerose, Queens, as well as brothers Ben and Clark, sister Jessica McMahon, and his sons, Taylor and Trevor.

In his memory, contributions may be sent to the American Diabetes Association of New York, 149 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

Leslie Goldman

Leslie Rose Goldman, a 27-year resident of Roosevelt Island, passed away Monday (December 9) after a long, courageous battle with cancer.

She was an active participant in all aspects of life on Roosevelt Island, serving at one point as Chair of the Westview-Island House Task Force. She truly loved Roosevelt Island and the people in the community.

Her career included working for the Peace Corps in Chile and Washington, DC, and for CARE.



Her work in the legal area began at the Practicing Law Institute, and she served as Director of Placement at the Fordham University School of Law, and Director of Recruiting at the law firm Dewey, Valentine.

In 1984, she began a long career at Reuters, the international news and financial information agency, where she worked in sales and management training. She was a long-time supporter of the arts and a collector of American craft art. She was very active in SHARE, a self-help organization for women with breast cancer, among many other charitable works. She is survived by her parents, Bill and Sylvia Goldman; her niece, Wendy Jacobs; her nephew, Rick Jacobs; her sister, Janet Jacobs; and Janet’s partner, Shelly Earl.

The family invites Roosevelt Islanders to join in a celebration of her life at 10:00 a.m. today (Saturday, December 14) in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

In lieu of flowers, the family has established a fund to benefit cancer research, and requests that donations (checks payable to Memorial Sloan-Kettering/Goldman Fund) be sent to:

The Leslie Goldman Fund, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, 1275 York Avenue, Box E, New York, NY 10021.

Panczyk-Nichols



Justine M. Panczyk and William J. Nichols were married in October in Maryland. The bride is the daughter of Audrey Maurer of Roosevelt Island and Raymond Panczyk of Bethesda, Maryland. She is a graduate of Loyola High School, New York City, and of Georgetown University, and is employed as a language analyst for the Department of Defense in Washington. The bridegroom is an engineer with the Boeing Company.

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Memorial Service for Leslie Goldman, today (**Sat., Dec. 14**), 10:00 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd (obituary, this page).

Boy Scout Christmas Tree Sale under the ramp at Motorgate, **Sat., Dec. 14**, 10:00-6:00; **Sun., Dec. 15**, 3:00-7:00; additional times through the week (see below).

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

Christmas Candlelight Service and Carol Singing, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, **Sun., Dec. 15**, 8:00 p.m.

Art Exhibit by two Roosevelt Island artists, Alex Gamburg and Harry Small, through January 16, Starbucks, Lexington Avenue between 53rd and 54th Streets.

– The Coming Week –

Boy Scout Christmas Tree Sale under the ramp at Motorgate, **Mon., Dec. 16**; **Thur., Dec. 19**; **Fri., Dec. 20**, 6:00-8:00 p.m.; **Sat., Dec. 21**, 10:00-6:00.

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 ad, page 11.)

Community Board 8 meeting, **Wed., Dec. 18**, 7:00 p.m., New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street (between 1st & 2nd Avenues).

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur., Dec. 19**, 9:30 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Actions scheduled include declarations of negative environmental impact on Child School reconstruction of the minischools, and on the Octagon Apartments project.

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.

– Future Events –

Boy Scout Christmas Tree Sale, under the ramp at Motorgate, **Sun., Dec. 22**, 1:00-6:00; and, if enough trees remain, **Mon., Dec. 23**, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Children’s Magic Show, presented by Maritess Zurbano, **Thur., Dec. 26**, Library. Free. Recommended for all ages; no pre-registration.

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, featuring Harmony Music’s Starlite Band, Manhattan Park Theater Club, sponsored by the PTA and *The WIRE*. **Tue., Dec. 31**, 9:00 p.m. Tickets \$30 per person. For tickets or information, call (212) 588-0388, (212) 223-1975, or (212) 339-0016.

Island Kids Registration, 536 Main Street Community Room, **Wed., Jan. 8**, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Call 317-0216 for additional information.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Jan 8**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd (lower room).

The Main Street WIRE – next issue, **Sat., Jan. 11**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Jan. 3; decision on stuffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Jan. 6; bag materials due Thur., Jan. 9. **Future issues:** January 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.

Our Lives – Roosevelt Islanders Reminisce: Katherine Teets Grimm, pediatrician, Gallery RIVAA, **Sun., Jan. 12**, 5:00 p.m.

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

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.



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7:00, Dance (Beginners)

Tuesday
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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
9:30, Yoga Stretch (new time)

10:00, English as a Second Language
1:00, Bridge Class
7:30, Lotto

Saturday
7:30, Bingo (RISA)

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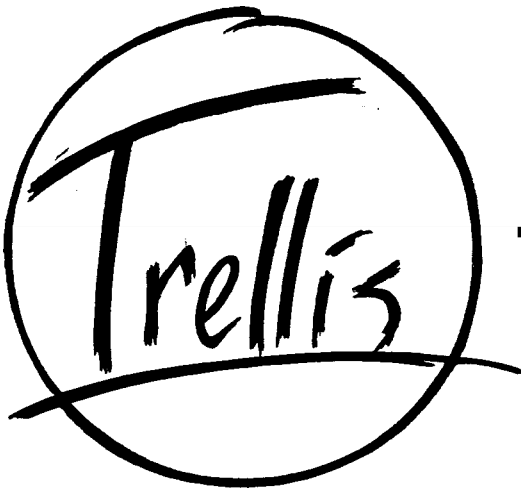
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Report from page 1

and construction company. Their message is that virtually none of the many effects of the \$90 million project – on traffic, schools, the character of the Island, or existing uses of the site – will present significant adverse impacts.

The work will, however, restore one of the City’s great landmarks, the 1839 Octagon that was built as part of the New York City Lunatic Asylum. It will increase, not decrease, the amount of “open space” available to Island residents, because it will open up land that is now inaccessible, the report says. And it will provide badly-needed housing, a “recognized public goal within the city,” the report says, at a time when Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg is pursuing an ambitious housing agenda.

“The main land use change would be the transformation of a fenced, overgrown, unproductive tract of land into a housing development,” the report says. “This would be a positive change, eliminating the last remaining piece of totally unused land on the northern part of the Island. The transformation of a burned-out ruin into a safe, enclosed, functioning building would also be a positive change.”

The assessment will be used by the RIOC Board of Directors as it evaluates the proposal, which RIOC initiated in 1997. RIOC conditionally chose Becker and Becker Associates, Inc. (BBA), of New Canaan, Conn., as the developer last year. Three levels of approval remain to be carried out before construction can start in 2003, according to the report. RIOC must approve a development agreement and sublease with Becker and Becker, and revise the Island’s General Development Plan. Changes to the GDP must be approved by Mayor Michael Bloomberg (though his authority to do so is disputed by City Council Speaker Gifford Miller), and the State Housing Finance Agency must approve the financing.

Fulfillment of a “heretofore unrealized objective” of the GDP – the restoration of the Octagon – is offered as a major rationale for the project. The proposed amendment to the GDP, which is part of RIOC’s lease with the City, adds new language allowing housing and parking spaces to be attached to “a landmark, the Octagon.” Another clause would amend the GDP to allow the new units to be added to the “approximately 5,000” apartments specified in the lease.

Thus, the residential portion of the Island would go from just over 3,200 apartments now to a total of 5,704, adding the Octagon’s 500 units to the 2,000 being built or planned at Southtown.

The start of construction of Southtown increased the complexity of the environmental assessment, because there are no hard numbers yet on population and traffic from that project. But estimates for Southtown had to be included, nonetheless, as Wall & Associates generated statistics for “build” and “no build” options related to Octagon for 2004 and 2007. The company then compared the projections for those years with existing conditions to determine whether Octagon would have a significant impact on the environment.

For the planners, the word “significance” is tightly defined in specific quantities – of cars, decibels, public transit capacity, schoolchildren, or gallons of sewage, just to cite a few examples – that demand more extensive analysis or mitigation as they increase to certain levels at designated locations. Many of these thresholds, however, are quite generous, and it is a reflection of Roosevelt Island’s comparatively underdeveloped state in 2002 that the authors of the Octagon study retained an initial evaluation of Southtown that used a figure of 667 housing units, even after the first stage of that project had been scaled back to 415. There was enough latitude in the standards to allow calculations to be based on worse-case scenarios without affecting the out-



come of the study.

All this may seem a bit abstract, but the new report actually contains a wealth of useful information about the history of Roosevelt Island and about the state of the community here, at least as it was in mid-2001, when much of the data was collected. There is a detailed section on existing rents, for example, and a projection of what the apartments at Octagon would cost. Eighty percent would be leased at so-called market rates ranging from \$1,723 for studios to \$4,225 for three-bedroom apartments, the report says.

“Within the set-aside for lower income households [100 apartments], rents and maximum incomes would be approximately \$517 and \$20,680 for studios, \$554 and \$22,160 for one-bedrooms, \$665 and \$26,600 for two-bedrooms, and \$768 and \$30,720 for three-bedrooms,” the report says.

Bruce Becker, the president of BBA, said the apartments were sized to conform with the market. He described them as “fairly generous”: 511 square feet for a studio; 628 for a one-bedroom; 957 for a two bedroom, and 1,242 square feet

for a three-bedroom.

The report mentions that a “possible modification” may occur that would eliminate 18 apartments. “A cancer research facility may occupy the ground floor of the east-west residential building,” using the space for laboratories and office space and employing 70 people, the report says. Becker told *The WIRE* this week that a group in Manhattan had expressed interest in the site, but he now describes the cancer center as a “remote possibility.”

The authors’ income projections, made in the pre-9/11 era, appear to be unrealistic. The report says BBA expected that its tenants would have a median household income of \$87,000. Although the report is dated November, 2002, it was compiled before the 2000 census figures on income and poverty were available, and it has not been updated. Wall & Associates estimated that the Island’s median household income in 2001 would be \$62,000. In fact, the census puts the figure at \$49,976, in 1999 dollars.

See **Report**, next page

Engineer Humor?

Drollery isn’t something you’d expect in a book put together by a pod of earnest technicians from West 42nd Street, but here it is, on page 36 of the *Environmental Assessment Form and Supplemental Report* for the Octagon project:

“There is a quiet, serene character to the Island,” the writers from Wall & Associates observe. “This is largely due to the lack of vehicular traffic and the lack of major commercial activity.”

Bada.

“It is also due to the lack of an active night life.”

Bing!

All right, boys. But let’s back up to page 35, and take a look at your insight into our vehicular pattern: “There is no through traffic. There is no way to travel through Roosevelt Island to reach some other destination.”

You betcha. But one wonders: Could that be because this place is surrounded by water?

Such are the revelations sprinkled throughout this dogged, complex document. Inane observations and simple mistakes take their place alongside nuggets of urban planning trivia.

1. How many gallons of water per day does a New Yorker consume in a residential development?

A. 10 B. 25 C. 64 D. 112.

2. On a scale of 1 to 50, how much noisier is a bus than a car or a light truck?

A. 2 B. 10 C. 18 D. 47.

(Answers below.)

How much garbage does a City household produce per week? According to the CEQR Technical Manual, the answer is 41 pounds. But if you are a restaurant employee, your output at work each week is 251 pounds.

Where is the nearest rare species? Last year, the report says, there was a nest of peregrine falcons on the 24th floor of the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, across the river on East 68th Street.

The report is an object lesson in the origin and potential spread of factual mistakes. Someday, somebody will mention in some routine research item that the 1888-89 Chapel of the Good Shepherd “fronts” on Main Street. And you’ll know where the error came from: page 32 of Wall’s assessment. One is tempted to use, but will not give in to, a barn analogy.

(Note to engineers: Next time, hire an Islander to do some proofreading.)

Other errors are rather innocent and reflect the time lag between the firm’s information-gathering and the report’s release this month. The big crane pictured in Figure 13 and mentioned in the text as looming, icon-like, over the water-tunnel site is no longer there.

But some mistakes could be construed by longtime residents as insulting. The most glaring example is a critique of Octagon Park – comparing it, unfavorably, to Central Park – coupled with the assertion, in the “Executive Summary,” which serves as a preface to the report, that “The area called Octagon Park is not a mapped or otherwise designated public park.”

“The project site occupies the northern part of the Octagon Park area, which, despite its name, is not really a cohesive park,” the report says. “That would imply either an overall design concept or a sequence of interconnected spaces.”

Uff-da! In fact, the park, which was dedicated in 1992, was meticulously designed by professional landscape architects who are still doing business in the New York metropolitan area. Many Islanders served on advisory committees to help plan the park, and some, including the well-known TV stagehand John Richards, who died this year, put

in countless hours actually constructing it.

(Second note to engineers: Next time, check your stuff with Judy Berdy, the Island historian.)

It’s not as if Roosevelt Island is on the dark side of the moon. Facts of this type are in the public realm and can simply be looked up. The “AIA Guide to New York City” by Norval White and Elliot Willensky (Three Rivers Press, 2000), has an entry on the Octagon. It says, in part, making reference to the old Urban Development Corp.: “UDC’s fiscal problems prevented its intended total restoration as a folly in the Octagon Park (1991. Weintraub & di Domenico). A ruin in Westchester marble protected for, hopefully, a future reconstruction.”

And what, you might ask, is a “folly?”

The answer is in the Collegiate Dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 1997): “5. an often extravagant picturesque building erected to suit a fanciful taste.”

And here are the answers to the quiz:

1. **D** (112 gallons). Does this mean we’re supposed to wash our sheets every day? 2. **C** (18 PCEs). The scale is based on Passenger Car Equivalents (PCEs), in which a car is a 1, a heavy truck is a 47, etc.

Robert Laux-Bachand

Report from previous page

“A significant socioeconomic impact would not occur” from an influx of several hundred wealthier tenants, the report says, because much of the Island is assured of relatively inexpensive rents from “mandatory set-asides.” In other words, income-qualification tests that restrict entry to the State-regulated Eastwood, Island House and Westview apartment buildings are a barrier to gentrification.

Traffic and parking are another matter, however, and the authors devote considerable attention to the possible impacts from 300 vehicles parked on the Octagon site. A survey established that the Motorgate Garage, which has a “practical capacity” of 1,875 vehicles, had about 350 vacant spaces in overnight hours. Many of these spaces are expected to be claimed by Southtown residents in the years ahead, so BBA is planning a one-level underground garage, plus 22 surface parking spaces, to accommodate its residents and visitors.

The study estimated that Octagon will add 240 patrons to the Red Bus shuttle during the 7:15 to 8:15 a.m. morning peak hour. The authors figured that the existing schedule of 12 buses per hour at that time of day could “adequately accommodate” 20 extra passengers per trip. (There is no mention of the possibility that all 240 might want to leave at once!)

The Tram, subway, and Q102 buses, likewise, were deemed to have plenty of excess capacity to handle the Octagon crowd. However, the extra car traffic generated by Octagon, combined with Southtown and new housing being built in Queens, will put pressure on the intersection of the Roosevelt Island Bridge and Vernon Boulevard.

The crucial time appears to be the morning rush, and the chief measurement, according to the “Highway Capacity Manual” cited by the authors, is known as level-of-service (LOS). This is “a function of the amount of delay a driver typically experiences at an intersection.” New York has an elaborate grading system for the length of such delays, which are felt to be the best indicator of “how drivers perceive favorable or unfavorable conditions.”

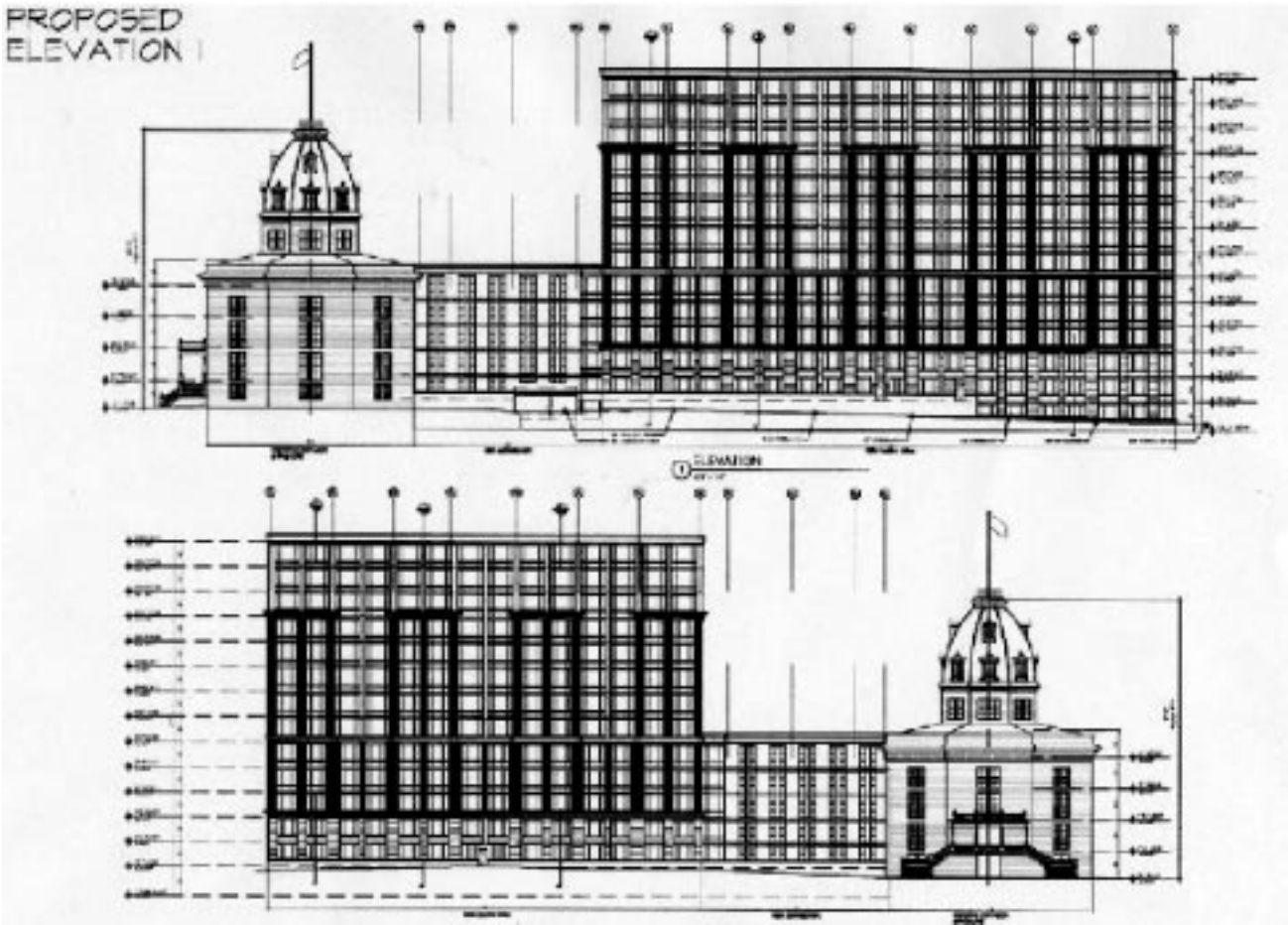
Basically, the City’s traffic authorities do not get particularly agitated about LOS until an intersection grades out at about a D-minus, or about a 30-second delay, which can cause “queuing at one or more approaches.” The grade last year for the eastbound left turn at the Vernon-Bridge intersection was a C (26.2 seconds), for the 200 cars heading north during the a.m. peak.

Twenty-eight pages of diagrams, traffic counts and analysis are devoted to traffic and transportation issues in the main part of the report, with much of it concerning the 4,200 vehicles that cross back and forth over the bridge each day. More than 40 percent of Island households own cars, and the percentage is expected to rise in the years to come.

In 2004, even if the Octagon Apartments are not built, the Vernon-Bridge eastbound left turn will sink to a grade of D, with 225 vehicles experiencing a delay of 35.9 seconds at the morning peak, according to the report. By 2007, a once-distant year (Weren’t we supposed to be flying around in jetmobiles by then?), the LOS grade drops to an F, and the delay would be 83.1 seconds, even with no Octagon. It’s at that point that the morning rush hour grades for the T-intersection of Main Street and the ramp to the bridge, which does not have a signal, would start to slip, too. There’s a whiff of gridlock in these forecasts, which include projected traffic counts from Southtown.

But not to worry: According to the report, if Octagon is built, the grade for that problematic eastbound left onto Vernon Boulevard will actually improve, to an E (a 64.9-second delay), even though Octagon will contribute 22 extra cars to the traffic network.

What will have happened? The report tells us that a simple fix – adjusting the Vernon traffic signal “to include a leading eastbound phase” – will ease the backup. Why this so-



lution is not factored into the “no build” LOS grade of F for 2007 is not explained. But in any case, the report says, “none of the declines would be considered significant” at key check-points, according to environmental quality review guidelines.

The projected traffic flows from Octagon also fall below the cutoff points at which “mobile source analysis” of air pollution would have to be studied at intersections in Queens and on the Island. Other impacts are minimal, too. There is plenty of water, sewer, and garbage disposal capacity. Scenic views won’t be disturbed because, well, at this point there is no view. It is a sort of urban jungle. There is no archaeology to be done because the old asylum and Metropolitan Hospital at the site did not have wells or privies where artifacts would typically be tossed in the 19th century.

There is no open-space issue because, as the report says, the project will increase open space by a quarter of an acre. (Of course, this assumes that “open space advocates” want more open space, not less.) The temporary displacement of six tennis courts during the winter construction season, and their reconstruction slightly eastward, “would not be considered a significant impact,” the report says.

That leaves two areas in which the project’s impact would be noticeable, if not, technically speaking, “significant”: police protection and education.

The report says that “one or more additional officers” may be needed in the Island’s Public Safety Department if the project is built.

It says that PS/IS 217, the Island school, is operating below its capacity of 789 students, and that the project “would be expected to add approximately 63 public elementary and intermediate students to the Island.” The number is derived from Department of City Planning multipliers based, counterintuitively, not on apartment size but on family income (0.17 students per low-income household in Manhattan, for example).

The school now has an enrollment of 472. While the Oc-

tagon project itself would not crowd the school, the full build-out of Southtown by 2007, combined with Octagon, could increase enrollment to 823, according to the report. That is 34 more than the school can comfortably handle. But here again, the math appears to work out for the developer, if just barely.

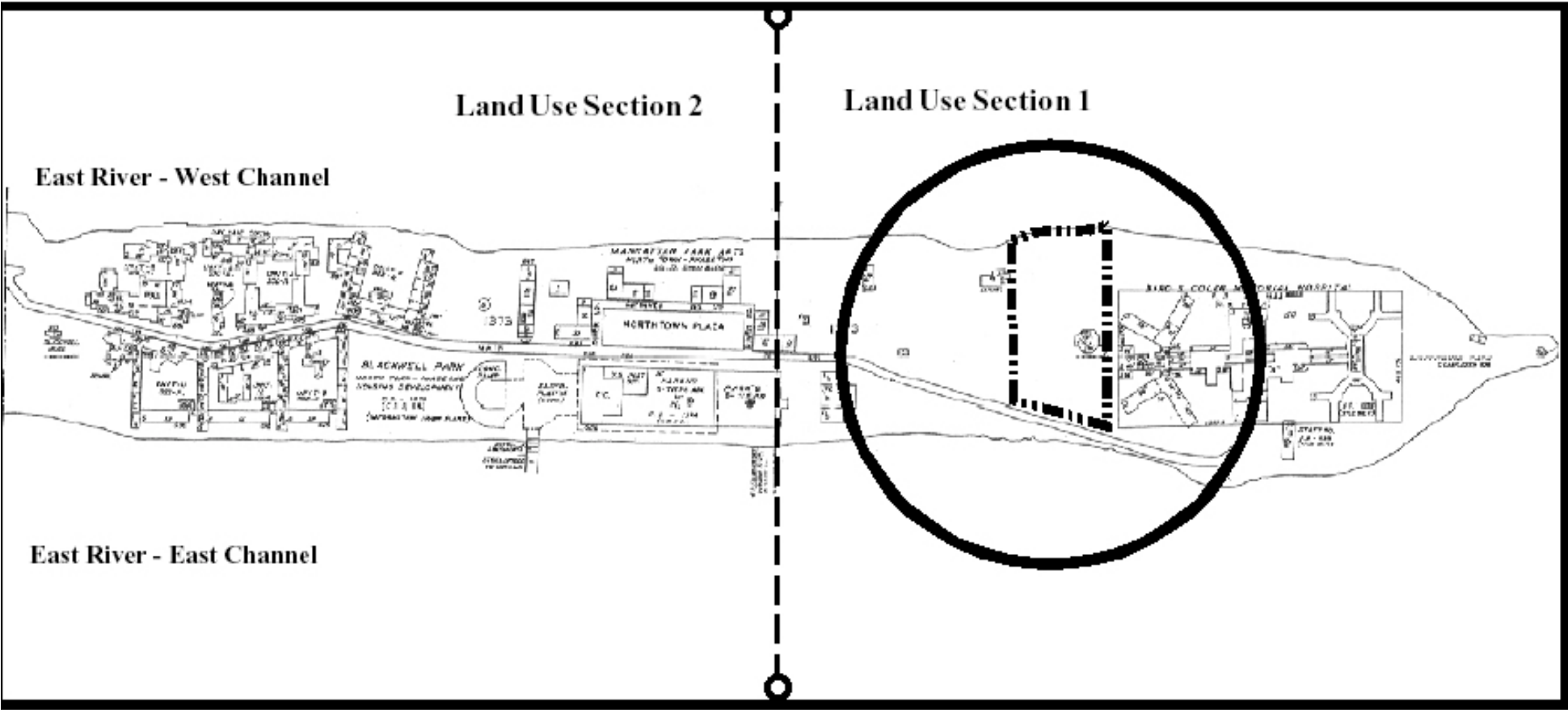
With 823 students, the report says: “The school would be 4 percent over capacity, as opposed to below capacity in the future without the proposed action” (building Octagon). But that’s not the threshold of a “significant adverse impact” as set by the CEQR Technical Manual. The threshold for a deficiency of available seats is 5 percent, or 36 students.

Wall’s report points out, however, that the income multipliers used to estimate student population almost certainly exaggerate Southtown’s total, “since they do not consider the small unit sizes and specialized nature of the first phase” of that development. Family-sized apartments predominate in Northtown, but they will be a minority of the Southtown units.

The design of the overall project and the Octagon restoration plans have been thoroughly vetted by officials of the National Park Service, the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the City’s Landmarks Preservation Commission.

BBA modified the dimensions of the project to comply with these agencies’ design and rehabilitation standards, and received strong support this summer from the State Historic Preservation Office. In a letter to the federal Park Service, Greg Donofrio, the state historic sites restoration coordinator, said, “Our past failed efforts to preserve the structure convince us that adaptive reuse is the only practical, long-term solution to ensure its survival.”

The report says that construction is supposed to start next year. Becker said that his firm was anticipating “substantial completion” of the project by the end of 2004 or the beginning of 2005, subject, of course, to all the final approvals.



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Johnston

host of the *Bash*. There were about a hundred kids dancing around me!”

As a child, he never aspired to be an actor, singer or dancer, though he did take tap lessons for two years. Even as he enrolled at Orange Coast College, he “had no idea, not a clue, what I wanted to be.” He happened to park his truck near the dance department, heard the clack of tap shoes and thought, “That would be an easy credit!” The tap class led to a degree in dance and a spell at Disneyland. Then his high-school drama coach called, coaxing him to audition for a show.

“It was a cheesy little song and dance show at a Japanese amusement park,” he recalls. The job paid \$250 a week.

At rehearsals near Los Angeles, he met actress/singer/dancer Bridget Bernell. The two car-pooled to rehearsals, an hour-long drive each way. “I was shy, so the commute gave us an excuse to talk.” Today, in the *Rent* Playbill, Johnston thanks “his wife, Bridget, who is truly a gift from God.” Bridget, in fact, found Johnston his next job. In the theatrical publication *Drama-Logue*, she saw a notice for auditions for the national tour of *42nd Street*. Johnston pursued it. After a nervous first tryout, he was stuck with a group of dancers who would shortly be sent home – though he didn’t know it at that point. On edge, he started to tap-dance. “I caught the attention of the producer, and he moved me to the other side of the room!” He landed an ensemble role in the show.

Back in California, Johnston gave her an engagement ring at Crescent Bay Beach. “We were at the tide pools. Bridget was out at the edge and I was hanging back, looking for a really pretty sea anemone. I found a big purple one and put her ring inside it. I called her over and just as I told her to look at this really cool sea anemone it opened up and she found her ring.” Shortly after their 1990 wedding, Johnston landed his first Broadway role, playing “a samurai ninja

guy” in *Shogun: the Musical*.

When the production closed nine months later, the Johnstons fled their Hell's Kitchen apartment for shows on a Caribbean cruise and in Atlantic City. Cast in the national tour of *Miss Saigon*, the couple then hopscoched across North America for four years. Johnston played 23 different parts – called “swing” – filling in for up to three sick, injured or vacationing performers each night. He also was an understudy for Thuy, the jealous Vietnamese fiancé.

The actor had packed for *The King and I* tour when the Rent casting office called, offering a spot on Broadway. Bridget was expecting their first child, so he switched to the show's national tour, which would play in California at the time the baby was due.

The family of three traveled with *Rent* until eighteen-month-old Jordan got fed up with life on the road. “We were living in hotels, on a plane every Monday. We would bring out the suitcases, and Jordan would get upset.” They unpacked in July 1999, when Johnston joined the cast at Broadway’s Nederlander Theater. He had heard about the Island from one of the show’s musicians, who lived in Island House. “I had no idea you could live in the middle of the East River!”

In New York, five-year-old Jordan launched his own acting career. His credits include commercials for Nickelodeon and MCI. His baby brother, six-month-old Noah, has booked Babies R Us and Kmart photo shoots. "We were shopping for fish at a pet store in Queens when Jordan heard his voice over the radio in an MCI commercial, saying, 'I have a loose tooth!'" He loves it! And he didn't have to start out at Disneyland!"

Rent, meanwhile, has climbed to number 14 on Broadway's list of longest-running hits. "There is truth in it," Johnston said. "The likelihood of being in another show this powerful is not great. I could do this another fifteen or twenty years."

With that, he knocked on a wood table.

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Katz from page 3

tively, they may have felt it was in their best interests to keep the attendance low so as to make the case that we residents don't care, don't have an opinion, don't participate. I put up several dozen posters myself to circumvent this option, and do hope the community showed up in force to protect its future.

I've been asked my opinion of the Octagon Apartments project many times. I think the Becker & Becker plan is attractive, especially in its earlier, smaller versions. I appreciate their openness with the community over the last two years. Like many of you, I'm torn between losing even more of our precious open space to 500 units of housing and the suspicion that the Octagon will crumble into dust before anyone finds the wherewithal to restore it within the Urban Ecological Center called for in the General Development Plan. Also, I'm disappointed that only 20% of the units will be subsidized when most of the other housing here is specifically designed to be affordable. And, make no mistake, this is not a restoration of the 1839 Alexander Jackson Davis Lunatic Asylum. It is closer to a Disneyesque recreation of various versions of the building over the years, and using stones from the original. Whether this building is worth the loss of five acres of Octagon Park is an aesthetic decision each of us must make and should express before one shovelful of earth is turned. My bottom line: I don't think the present RIOG Board of Directors should be making this decision. The Governor signed a law requiring that the Board be composed of a majority of Roosevelt Island residents, and when *that* Board is appointed and convened, *that* Board should make the development decisions for the Island as stakeholders and as our representatives.

The November 23 issue of *The Main Street WIRE* discussed a threat to Engine 261, the firehouse that is our second-response unit when fire breaks out here. The Mayor planned to shut their doors as a reaction to the City's fiscal crisis. At the November 21 RIOC Board of Directors' meeting, a representative of Engine 261 asked us to support them with a petition drive, and in the next three days, we collected 400 signatures. At that point, the City relented with a compro-

mise decision to raise the property taxes by 18% and save the fire companies on the chopping block. Now, I understand, the same fire companies, including Engine 261, are again in jeopardy. We will again offer the firefighters our signatures on petitions and hope for the best. Stay tuned.

And finally: Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, or some combination of these, I wish you the peace of the season and a safe, happy New Year. But mostly, in this year of terror and threats of war, I wish you, me, all of us, peace.

New Director Signs on at the Senior Center



Rema Townsend is the new director at the Senior Center, effective this week. A Bronx resident, she's single, and comes from the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, where she was a program specialist. She completed her MSW degree at Hunter College two years ago, and holds an undergraduate degree in sociology from Hunter, as well. She reports an abiding interest in the elderly. She replaces Selina Ng, who left the Senior Center post a few weeks ago.

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD CHRISTMAS SERVICES

- Our Traditional Candlelight Christmas Service with Choir will take place this Sunday, December 15th, at 8:00 pm in the Main Chapel.

Please bring soaps and other toiletry items for our Coler Hospital neighbors, upholding a long Good Shepherd tradition.

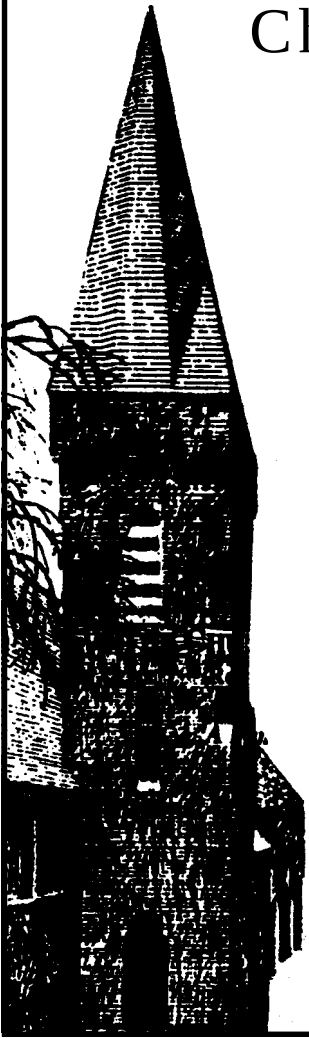
- Support and encourage our Island's young people!

Sunday School Christmas Program, December 22nd, at 4:00 pm, Main Chapel. Nothing will put you in the Christmas spirit like this wonderful program by our terrific young people.

- Christmas Eve service at 8:00 pm; Holy Eucharist

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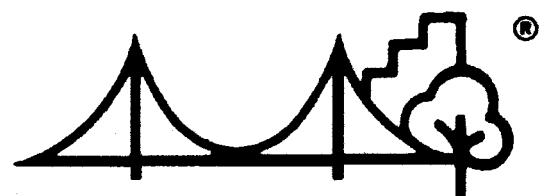
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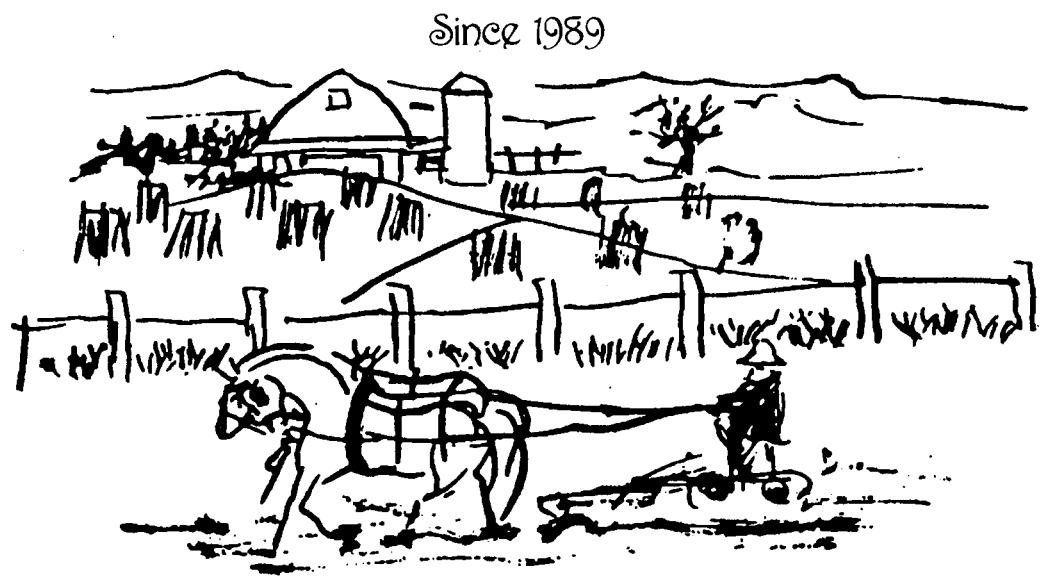
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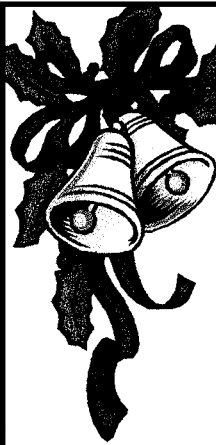


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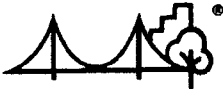
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Hearing from page 1

and that activities involving the Octagon Tower can only treat its surroundings as “open space.” That would preclude the addition of residential wings, as contemplated by the Becker and Becker plan.

Grannis also argues that, because the new law provides that a majority of the RIOC Board members must be residents, any rush to approval of this project by the current RIOC Board also violates the spirit and intent of the statute.

Other public officials were heard at the hearing, through their aides. Representing City Council speaker Gifford Miller, Jessica Lappin read a statement saying that any amendments to the Island General Development Plan should be voted on by a resident-controlled Board. It criticized any extended loss of the tennis courts at Octagon Park, said parking for the new development should be limited to Motorgate, and declared, “Consistent efforts at amending the GDP to enable RIOC to auction off open spaces to the highest bidder are unacceptable.” Amendments to the GDP, the statement said, “should be rare” and “should protect open space.”

Member of Congress Carolyn Maloney also sent a statement through her aide, Jessica Fox: “I am deeply disturbed by the proposal... to appropriate open space for the development. I am even more troubled by RIOC’s apparent efforts to ram this proposal through before the RIOC Board is reconstituted in accordance with Chapter 493 [the new State law].” Maloney’s comments added, “Local residents should participate in decisions regarding the geographic and financial future of the Island. The aggressive timetable, scant public notice [for the Thursday night hearing], minimal opportunity for the community to prepare, and the scramble to vote next [week] clearly reveals the Board’s determination to move forward before representatives of Island residents have the opportunity to take their seats on the Board.”

Maloney, Miller, and Grannis all asked that the vote scheduled for next Thursday’s RIOC Board meeting, to issue a “negative declaration” as to environmental effect to clear the way for the project, be delayed or not take place at all.

But the substance of the meeting, for the 100 or so residents present, was overshadowed by the angry exchanges between residents and Ryan.

One resident in particular became the object of Ryan’s ire. Erik Stocker suggested that continuing with the project might be an “ego” matter for RIOC administrators and members of its Board of Directors. “I was here when this project was first discussed,” Stocker said. “After a lifetime of involvement both professionally and personally with historic preservation, I thought this project was just going to die.” After saying that he was speaking on behalf of “the building, the Octagon,” Stocker called the plan put forward by Becker and Becker Associates “an abomination.” He went on, “What is happening here is little short of criminal... I am speaking for the Octagon, and for posterity.”



Erik Stocker

But then, in a comment that aroused Ryan’s hackles, Stocker said, “There’s this ego involvement and that’s a hard thing to turn loose of.” When he left the podium, Ryan called him back and asked, “Whose ego were you speaking of?” In response to Stocker’s explanation that he had in mind both the administration and Board of RIOC (“It’s an unpaid, ego Board,” he said), Ryan said, “I find it a huge headache.”

Stocker then asked, “Why do you stay?” Ryan responded that he wished to serve the State and the community. “I like it,” he said. But then he continued, “You make a charge against me and members of this Board. Your comments were [instead] supposed to be about environmental issues and the GDP (the General Development Plan for the Island, which RIOC proposes to amend to permit the project to go forward). I have people come into my office all the time. They have complaints. I never accuse the Board, or them, of carrying out things on their own agenda. I take offense when people say things are being done on a lapse of ethics or on ego. Speaking as a private citizen, I personally find it outrageous...”

A resident in the audience, Steve Marcus, then suggested, “If you’re a private citizen, fill out a card [as a citizen speaker] and stand in line like the rest of us.” But Ryan continued.

As Ryan’s voice rose in anger, Stocker voiced two words into the microphone at the podium: “Shut up.”

Ryan doubled his volume. “Don’t tell me to shut up or you’ll be escorted out of this room, sir... If this is how you’re going to behave, we’re closing this thing right now. You apologize!” Several members of the audience stood. Some shouted back at him. He



RIOC President Ryan

threatened to end the hearing.

Later, as he took the microphone to voice his own comments favoring the project, RIOC Board member H. Patrick Stewart told Ryan, “I’m embarrassed to be standing up here. I think your conduct is inappropriate, Rob, not to say that some of my neighbors’ comments are not inappropriate.”

Virtually all of the speakers spoke in opposition to the project on one ground or another. Only Stewart and Residents Association Council member James Whalen were for it. Whalen quoted a letter he had sent to developer Bruce Becker, saying, “What I fear is that you will pull out... And I would not blame you.”

Judith Berdy, President of the Historical Society, told the hearing panel she felt ambivalent, but in the end, she turned against a project she had supported in earlier versions. “I don’t think the plan as it now stands is comfortable for me,” she said. “It’s gotten too big, too high... There is no reason to build a parking garage under the tennis courts... I sympathize with Becker and Becker because RIOC does not give the developers a fair shake; they do not clearly state what is going on. We’ve seen it time and time again that the developers find that the game has changed once it is under way.”

Berdy was referring obliquely to the widespread belief that RIOC changed the financial terms of the deal, pressuring the Becker firm to build a larger structure with more apartments – and provide more ground rent to RIOC.

Stewart was not the only RIOC Board member who disapproved of Ryan’s behavior. Earlier in the meeting, as Ryan was extolling the amount of open space available on the Island, someone in the audience grew impatient with its length and made an interrupting comment, and Ryan answered:

“Excuse me. Excuse me. You know something? Wait. Wait! You know something? I am courteous and gracious to everybody. I don’t interrupt you... I don’t interrupt you... I don’t interrupt you. I would ask you to have the grace and courtesy not to interrupt me and let me finish my statement, OK? In communist countries they shout people down... In a democracy or a republic, they do not, OK?”

At that point, David Kraut stood, walked to the table where Ryan sat at the front of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, and asked Ryan to stop, telling him that the purpose of the hearing was to get public comments. “You can make speeches at the RIOC Board meetings,” Kraut said. “Well, there were misrepresentations made, David,” said Ryan. “I don’t care,” Kraut said.

At that, Ryan truncated his comments, and Kraut sat down. But there appeared to be an uneasy truce between them from that point on. Ryan began several comments by saying, “At the risk of annoying a Board member...”

When the later outburst occurred, Kraut left the meeting.

Frequently throughout the rest of the meeting, members of the audience applauded statements critical of RIOC’s procedures, or of the RIOC Board, or of the project plan, though they had been asked not to applaud. There were frequent interruptions from the audience whenever Ryan attempted to make a statement in response to the views of one resident or another. Ryan’s aides at the table, lawyers Ken Leitner of RIOC and Mark Sullivan of Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn, worked to keep the meeting moving, asking residents to wrap up their comments when a cooking timer dinged, but the meeting had a raspy edge almost throughout.

Comments by residents were overwhelmingly against the project, or against amendment of the GDP to accommodate the project.

• The Residents Association’s Vice President for Government Relations, Margie Smith, read a resolution passed last week by the RIRA Common Council decrying a “piecemeal” approach to Island development. (Separate story, page 1.)

• Representing the New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL), Joyce Mincheff put a statement into the record opposing any shrinkage of the area around the courts, and pointing out that stadium lighting of the courts could be unpleasant for the occupants of the proposed apartments. “This land unqualifiedly is parkland,” she said. “The area was to be used as hills to surround the picnic area. You’ve claimed it won’t have a negative impact, [so] where are the hills? The picnic area?” She added, “The Octagon has been dwarfed” by the residential wings attached to it in the Becker design. On another environmental point, Mincheff said, “You’re probably going to destroy the root system of the London plane trees next to the courts. The claim is ridiculous that there will be no impact on the environment.” Like other speakers opposing the development, Mincheff was applauded.

• Representing RITA, the Roosevelt Island Tennis Association, Jan Buenner expressed a fear that the developer, in moving the tennis courts and putting them atop an underground garage, might attempt to take control of the court scheduling. (“That won’t happen,” Ryan responded.) Like some others who spoke, Buenner expressed unhappiness

about the plan to move the courts “slightly east” to provide for above-ground parking adjacent to the planned apartments.

• RIRA Common Council member Byron Gaspard said, “RIOC seems to have forgotten the importance of open space to our young people. We continue to have RIOC invade our space that makes Roosevelt Island unique. I think you should seriously consider not going forward with this plan.” To Ryan, Gaspard said, “It is ironic that you work for a Governor that signed the open spaces law, and yet you yourselves are breaking the law on this.”

• Sherie Helstien, Secretary of the RIRA Common Council, characterized the Octagon plan as “an act of betrayal.” She cited three overall objections to the plan. She pointed out that the 80%/20% ratio of market rate to “affordable” housing represents a continuing deviation from the original plan for Roosevelt Island, which called for most housing to be in the “affordable” category. She advocated “a cohesive, Island-wide development plan... for any and all future development” instead of “piecemeal” changes in the GDP. And she blasted the RIOC Board for acting as a “real estate company, nothing more.” Like others, she called for the Board to wait for the seating of a Board with a resident majority, as provided for in the recently-passed law. She asked, “Is it ethical for this Board, currently composed of a majority of off-Islanders, to make development decisions that will impact this community for generations – decisions they will never have to live with as they travel home to Manhattan, Westchester, and Albany?”



Sherie Helstien

[In response, Ryan called it “unconscionable” to question the ethics of any member of the RIOC Board. “I would have resigned long ago if I thought anything unethical was going on. I would walk out the door.” From the audience came half-shouts, “Go right ahead.”]

• A RIRA Council alternate, Ethel Romm, told those conducting the hearing that when the Becker firm made a presentation to the community, she had “never seen people more disturbed.” She added, “This is not at all what we were after,” but added, “What has changed now is the law, not my sentiments or even your commitment to Becker and Becker. The law now says open spaces, and I think that changes everything.” She then read a portion of Grannis’s statement suggesting the development would violate the new statute.

• Nurit Marcus, another RIRA Common Council member, told Ryan and Board members who will read a summary of the hearing, “I would like to hear you say next week that you are dropping this project, to say, ‘We are listening to you folks,’ that you are going to help us find the matching dollars to rehabilitate the landmark.” She said that people are already “fighting” over picnic areas and barbecue pits. “How could you cover it over with more cement?”

• RIRA First Vice President Steve Marcus offered a financial analysis of the project, saying that over the course of the lease, the developers would realize some \$850 million from apartment rentals. He questioned the amount the



Steve Marcus

developers will pay RIOC for the land, and suggested that they could pay a good deal more. In particular, he raised questions about why the project will not contribute to Island Public Purpose Funds as Manhattan Park did, and asked what amenities the developer will provide, if any, for the general resident population.

• Marc Diamond, an architect and resident, cited some contradictions within the Environmental Assessment Form created for the project. He focused on the plan to move the tennis courts for parking, and criticized the possible loss of mature trees that seemed inevitable in one version of the plan as presented in the report. Attorneys Leitner and Sullivan disagreed, and said the plan as published on the RIOC website (www.rioc.com) might not be the most current version. Shown another version of the report, Diamond then pointed out that the text of the report disagreed with new diagrams he was being shown.

• RIRA Common Council member Debra Mount Cornet took up the matter of a special underground garage for residents of the new development. She presented figures indicating that expansion of Motorgate into its undeveloped quadrant would provide more than enough parking, even

after Southtown is fully developed. But she said other benefits – possible swimming pool and health club membership, and a public gallery among them, would win her support for the project if the garage were eliminated.

• David Bauer, a retired municipal manager, criticized the notion of piecemeal development. He said, “I came here [to Roosevelt Island] for the planned community.” He pointed out that people moved here even when the rest of New York City was losing residents. “I came for the varied community, the mix of residents, the aesthetic envelope that pleased the eye, a combination of open and active and passive spaces. Now we are confronted by projects that have stepped aside from the environment created. Instead of seamless combinations, we have a patchwork community – a dab of this here, a dab of that there.”



David Bauer

Bauer called for a “comprehensive updating” of the General Development Plan by “first-rate community planners” – a look at what the future of the Island should be in terms of the mix of people, vehicle traffic, open space, and the kind of construction. “Let those planners work with residents – parents, seniors, the disabled – who know what has worked out well. What could be wrong with that?” He added, “This Island should not be for sale to the highest bidder.”

• RIRA alternate Joe Cristiano said, “There are big holes in this plan.” He called for the RIOCI Board to delay any vote until there is a better or more comprehensive plan.”

• Shirley Margolin, an Island pioneer who was one of the Island’s first administrators and is now retired, recalled visits in the 1980’s by officials from China, who praised the Island and its plan. “The parks are what we leave to our children,” she said, adding, “I urge you to take this project off the table. This is not welcomed by this community.”



Shirley Margolin

• Attorney Robert Chira criticized the three-week notice of the hearing and some difficulty in obtaining the relevant documents, urging that another hearing be scheduled no sooner than thirty days into the future. In particular, he said the Environmental Assessment does not properly disclose the transit impact. He pointed out that residents already have trouble getting on the F train in the morning at rush hour, and voiced a concern that added residents in Southtown plus those in the proposed Octagon Apartments would overwhelm the available transit facilities.

• Former RIRA President and current RIOCI Board member Patrick Stewart, after commenting unfavorably on Ryan’s conduct of the meeting, spoke in favor of the project. He asked, “Could it be better?” then answered his own question, “Hell, yes.” He also asked, “Will we be better off with 1,000 more people here?” and answered, “Yes, we will.” Stewart also expressed concern about backing away from a project so far along in the planning stages: “We’ve been through this once before. To start this all bloody over again makes no sense at all, because we the people of this Island will be going down the tubes before it happens. I believe

that we should move forward.” But he called for accommodation, saying, “I personally do not want to pay legal fees for another Southtown,” referring to recent litigation to alter the design of the Southtown development. “In the interest of the community and economic pragmatism, trying to reach an equitable agreement is the way to go.”

• Margie Smith, speaking a second time (as an individual resident this time), commented that claims that the project would increase the Island’s open space struck her as odd, saying that if the project area was simply cleaned up, the available open space would increase even more. She pointed out a number of discrepancies in the environmental assessment, and contested a claim that the project is generally in line with City zoning regulations.

• Joyce Mincheff, speaking a second time for herself rather than for the Junior Tennis League, told Ryan, “You should not be encroaching on the Island’s parkland to meet RIOCI’s fiscal needs.” She added, “The fact that you are here to dictate policy is a slap in the face of everyone living here in this community.”

As the two-hour hearing ended, Ryan left without engaging residents or members of his staff in conversation.



H. Patrick Stewart

Full Text of Grannis Statement: Plan Makes a “Mockery” of New Law

As the author of the original bill to protect the Island’s precious open spaces (A.6253) and the prime sponsor in the Assembly of the amended version of the Roosevelt Island Open Spaces Protection bill that became law this fall, (Chapter 493 of the Laws of 2002), it is my conclusion that the handling of the Octagon Apartments Project by the current RIOCI board, as well as significant aspects of the project itself makes a mockery of the letter as well as the intent and spirit of this new law. As such, absent a change in the underlying statute, I believe this project cannot proceed.

After carefully reviewing the proposal before you to renovate the Octagon Tower and build 500 units of housing on adjacent open land long cleared of any structures associated with the Tower, as well as an underground parking garage on the open space adjacent to the Octagon Tower ruins in the area designated as Octagon Park in the General Development Plan, I strongly believe that the only aspects of this plan that can proceed under Chapter 493 are the rehabilitation of the landmarked Octagon Tower and the open space improvements. Accordingly, I call on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOCI) to vote not to move the Octagon Apartments Project forward at this time.

Chapter 493 provides explicitly that there shall be “no further development or construction for other than park purposes” of the four open space areas designated therein (Lighthouse Park, Octagon Park, Blackwell Park and Southpoint Park) unless such activity “includes the reconstruction, restoration, rehabilitation or preservation of the historic landmarks located in such open space areas and *further*s the use of the areas surrounding landmarks as open space areas (emphasis added).”

The historic landmark at the center of this proposal - Octagon Tower - was officially landmarked by the City on March 23, 1976, and the record is clear that this designation is limited to that structure alone. Many years earlier, prior even to the Tower’s listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, the two radiating wings, long abandoned and deteriorated beyond repair, were demolished and the site cleared of rubble. (See attached commentary and c.1970 picture, page 2, Becker and Becker Project Description.)

Since the wing buildings did not exist at the time of the Tower’s landmarking, they were not and cannot now be considered as part of the historic landmarks contemplated in Chapter 493. With the razing of the two radiating wings, their footprints reverted to open space and, pursuant to the protections in Chapter 493, these areas must remain as open space areas. Erecting buildings on these now open sites flatly contradicts the mandate in Chapter 493 that activities involving the Octagon Tower historic landmark must “further the use of the areas surrounding the historic landmarks as open space areas.”

As a prime sponsor of this legislation, it is also my belief that with Section 2 of the bill, which reconstitutes the Board of Directors by adding two additional Island residents, it was clearly intended and understood that these additional appointments would be made before the board decided on future development that would alter the Island’s landscape. By its terms, the act took effect immediately upon its approval by the governor in September 2002, and while the timing of his appointments is his prerogative, it was my understanding and I believe that of the Senate sponsor, Sena-

tor Olga Mendez, that the governor would move expeditiously on these appointments to ensure that Island residents would constitute a majority of the board’s public members as provided for in Chapter 493 before decisions after that effective date were made affecting the Island community.

In support of these conclusions, I draw your attention to the attached press release issued by Governor Pataki on September 12 announcing his approval of the bill.

“By increasing the residency requirement on the Roosevelt Island Board of Directors, we are recognizing the importance of having local residents determine the geographic and financial future of the Island...The legislation ensures that these park areas will be preserved and developed for park purposes, forever guaranteeing public access and appreciation of their priceless views of the Manhattan skyline.”

And from Senator Mendez: “I am delighted that through this legislation we are able to pass two very important measures which will improve the quality of life on the Island. The first one will preserve and protect the valuable parkland on Roosevelt Island. The other important provision of this bill gives the residents of the Island a majority voice on the Board. Knowing the residents as I do, there is no doubt that they will provide the most thoughtful and insightful leadership necessary to make Roosevelt Island an even better place to live.”

For these sweeping statements to have any validity and meaning, they must be taken at face value. While historic sites within the four designated open spaces can be reconstructed, restored, rehabilitated or preserved, such activities can be undertaken if, and only if, it “further the use of the area surrounding the historic landmarks as open space areas.”

Just as important, the statements confirm my belief that decisions on projects now under consideration should be made by the reconstituted board called for in Chapter 493. I take exception to the unseemly speed by which RIOCI’s current board of directors appears to be rushing the Octagon Apartments Project through the approval process before the new Island resident dominated board is in place and provided an opportunity to review and vote on its merits. As I noted above, this, in my judgement, flies in the face of both the spirit and intent of this new law.

While not providing Island residents with the elected board of directors they have long sought, the compromise Senator Mendez and I agreed on which put Island residents as a majority of the RIOCI board’s public members was intended to address the widely held belief that the current board was far too focused on maximizing the development potential of the Island, an “Island For Sale” mindset, with far too little attention being given to issues affecting the overall quality of life of the Island’s residents. Without even a pretext of rational planning for the needs of current Island residents, much less addressing the impact of the substantial increase in residents as Southtown is developed, RIOCI and its Board continue to entertain deals which hold out the prospect of short-term financial gains but carry the risk of adverse long-term impacts on the quality of life for the Island’s residents and the stability of the Island’s vital supporting infrastructure.

In closing, I urge the Board to vote to delay, if not reject outright, this project and the proposed amendment to the GDP.

Updates:
Website NYC10044
www.nyc10044.com

RIRA from page 1

document’s nature, saying it “should be viewed as a cohesive document that... should be impervious to piecemeal changes to accommodate developers’ plans and short-term financial concerns.”

The Council was meeting for the first time with changed membership as a result of the November election.

The GDP is attached to the Lease between the City and State under which the State is developing Roosevelt Island.

Miller from page 1

letter threatened, “the Council as an institution will be forced to pursue this issue in the appropriate legal fashion.” The letter says that the City Council’s lawyer is reviewing the matter and “is in the process of informing the Mayor’s office of our position.”

How the matter might be resolved remains to be seen, but the controversy seems to raise the possibility of a power struggle between the Mayor and City Council in which the best development plan for Roosevelt Island could become a minor point.

On Wednesday, Miller aide Jessica Lappin told *The WIRE*, “Gifford’s goal is to do whatever he can to protect the Island’s open spaces over the long run. And whatever he can do to help make that possible is the course of action he is going to pursue.” By this week, Lappin seemed to be backing off any firm commitment to do legal battle with the Mayor’s office over the right to approve GDP changes.

The GDP, a five-page addendum to the 1969 Lease, specifies where development can occur on the Island. Because the Octagon Park area is not one of the designated areas, but is instead set aside as an “ecological park,” the GDP must be amended before the project can go forward. The developers contend that the actual usable park area will be increased by the project, since a good part of the area is now inaccessible, but some residents have objected to taking a portion of the potential park area for apartments or having the apartments directly adjacent to the park. Another point of contention is constructing a parking garage under the Octagon Park tennis courts.

“Hostage Situation,” But No Hostage

Main Street traffic and the bridge to Queens were tied up for well over an hour last Saturday night in an action characterized at the time as a “hostage situation.” A dozen police and emergency vehicles littered Main Street, while helicopters flew overhead. The hostage rumor has persisted through the week, but from police sources, *The WIRE* has information that there was no hostage – that a drug bust went bad in 4 River Road (probably on the 15th floor), and that a male escaped down a stairwell, but was arrested the next day at 540 Main Street.



Newly-Elected RIRA Common Council Selects Its Officers

The Residents Association Common Council, newly reconstituted after November’s election, met last week and chose additional officers and vice presidents from among Council ranks.

Serving under President Matthew Katz and First Vice President Steve Marcus are:

- Sherie Helstien, Secretary
- Treasurer, Lynn Chambers
- Auditor, Geoffrey Kerr.

Vice Presidents include:

- Franz Aliquo, Island Services
- Vicki Feinmel, Social, Cultural, and Educational Programs
- Edward O’Flynn, Housing
- George Reither, Planning
- Margie Smith, Government Relations

Chairs of standing committees include:

- Byron Gaspard, Public Safety
- Abraham Hassan, Transportation
- Frank Farance, Communications
- Dori Speer, Legal Action Fund
- Joe Cristiano, Membership Participation

Committees of the Common Council are open to participation by all residents of the Island.

The Common Council meets the first Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. in the lower room of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, but January’s meeting has been moved to the 8th to avoid the New Year’s holiday. Sessions begin with an opportunity for the public to comment on Island affairs.

Updates:
Website NYC10044
www.nyc10044.com

Spirit of the Season The Island’s Chamber of Commerce and many other organizations have joined together this holiday season, for the second year, to decorate Main Street with holiday lighting. A list of contributors to the project appears on page 17.



This limited edition set of color postcards is currently available only through *The Main Street WIRE*. (Proceeds benefit *The WIRE*.)

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on heavy stock,
4.25x6 inches



This may be the ideal way to respond to those unexpected Christmas cards...

Holiday Lights Contributors Get Chamber’s Thanks

Chamber of Commerce President Julie Palermo has issued a list of Island merchants and organizations making contributions to this year’s holiday lighting on Main Street. Palermo said this year’s drive to fund the lighting was an overwhelming success. “I am thankful to live in a community that rises to all occasions with generosity,” she said in offering particular thanks to RIOC, Housing Management, Charlie De Fino, and New York Presbyterian Hospital, the largest contributor. For next year, Palermo said, the plan is to purchase and own lights, a measure likely to cut costs in the long run and provide even more lighting in future years. She said that this year, the drive for funds started late in October – too late to start the purchase program. According to Palermo, Vicki Feinmel and Charlie DeFino have already started work on next year’s funding. Palermo provided this list of contributors, with her thanks to all:

NY Presbyterian/Cornell University ..	\$1,200
RIHMC	750
RI Youth Center	500
RI Racquet Club	500
Mother Cabrini	250
New York National Bank	250
Roosevelt Island Senior Citizens	250
RIRA	250
Rivercross Tenants Association	250
Trellis.....	150
Dr. Flannigan	125
Julies Sports Bar	125
Main Street Theatre	100
Redeemer Pentecostal Church	100
China 1	50
Capri	50
Dr. Itskowitch	50
Dr. Resnick	50
Grog Shop.....	50
RI Nails	50
We Are One	50
Beauty Salon	25
Stationery	25

Letters

To The Editor:
Very often letters in this column are written by people who are irate about something and use this as an outlet (myself included). I’d like to use it to let everyone know about some very generous people and groups who helped make Thanksgiving a little nicer this year for the Special Ops Unit of the Fire Department located on the Island. Several of us put together dinner at the Firehouse with support from various places. Gristede’s literally gave us carte blanche to fill up our shopping carts with food; Ken Diebner made a very large donation in the name of James Gregorio, a NYC firefighter who was a relative of Ken’s; the children of PS 217 made beautiful decorations for the table and the surrounding dining area; Joan Christianson and her daughter cooked and served the turkeys which were donated by Joe Cristiano. In addition, there were people who came down to help serve and also brought food with them, like Ron and Fay Vass and Gwen Almo-Duvar, and those who couldn’t be there, but sent food, like Cookie Lugo, Steve and Nurit Marcus, Sherie Helstein and Matt Katz, and Ray and Bernie Schwartz. The warmth and generosity of the Roosevelt Island community was felt very strongly that day, and hopefully we conveyed to our firefighters how much we appreciate the amazing job they do for us and the high level of respect and admiration we have for them.

Margie Smith

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The WIRE



Holiday Gift Drive

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DEADLINE FOR GIFTS: Wednesday, December 18, 2002

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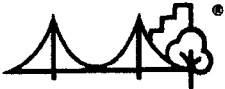
1. Wrapped
2. Up to \$20 only!

Please indicate if gifts are for
CHILD / ADULT
Please indicate if gifts are for
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Please keep in mind that the hospital has 55 children and 1800 adults

Suggested Gifts For Both Children And Adults:
Hats Socks Combs Brushes Stuffed Animals
Sweaters Electric Toothbrushes

ISLAND HOUSE: Leave Gifts with Door Personnel	WESTVIEW: Leave Gifts with Door Personnel	EASTWOOD RESIDENTS: Drop Gifts at the Management Office (552 Main Street)
RIVERCROSS: Leave Gifts with Door Personnel	MANHATTAN PARK: Leave Gifts with Door Personnel	OR: Drop Gifts at Public Safety Office



SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS: Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corp. (RIHMC), Roosevelt Island Youth Program, FDNY Special Operations Command, Rivercross, Roosevelt Island Seniors Association (RISA), Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA), Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA), Roosevelt Island Disabled Association (RIDA), Island House Task Force, Island Kids, M&D Deli, Hispanic Society, Roosevelt Nails, Roosevelt Island Racquet Club, PS/IS 217 PTA, Manhattan Park. **For information, call our RIHMC Community Relations Director, Carol da Silva, at (212) 838-4747.**

by Seth Kaufman

SPORTSWIRE

Soccer The Red teams were the most successful in the playoffs of the Youth Program’s Fall Soccer League as the Red team defeated the Gold team in the championships of both the Minors (ages 7-8) and the Juniors (ages 9-10), before the Gold team defeated the Silver team in the Seniors (ages 11-14) championship game.

Minors: In the Minors championship game, Red defeated Gold 2-1. Red jumped out to a two-goal lead in the first half with Nana Osei-Danquah and Jonathan Geisinger scoring. Graham McMillian in goal looked as though he would record a shutout until Gold scored with a minute left to make the last minute nerve-racking for Red. Congratulations to all of the members of the championship Red team – Lauren Abdul, Liban Ahmed, Anthony Barrett-Sacco, Marko Cibic, Alexander Dow, Daniel Egner, Anthony Fallone, Justin Figueroa, Jared Francis, Jonathan Geisinger, Derek Hughes, Vinicius Maluly, Graham McMillian, Fabiola Oubida, Nana Osei-Danquah, and Serwaa Osei-Danquah; and their coach, Kip Dow.

Juniors: The championship game in the Junior division went to a six-person shootout, as Red came from behind twice to defeat Gold. Gold took the lead early in the first half on a goal by Oussama Boutaleb, but Red tied the score late in the first half on a goal by Elias Choueiri. Luka Ivcevic for Red and Ian Kleinfeld for Gold kept their teams in the game in the first half with outstanding goaltending. Their replacements in the second half, Adam Glenn for Red and Thibault Coderrens for Gold, did not allow any goals and the game remained tied at 1-1 at the end of regulation time and overtime. In the shootout, Daniel Ruiz led off with a goal for Gold, but no one else scored for either side until Elias Choueiri, the tenth and final shooter, came up with a clutch kick for Red to tie the shootout and send it to sudden death shooters. In the 6th round, after Gold missed, Luka Ivcevic of Red put one home to make Red the champions. Congratulations to all of the members of the championship Red team – Ahmed Aboulez, Elias Choueiri, Bryan Dia, Parker Ellis, Diana Folla, Adam Glenn, Nathaniel Henderson, Michelle Holland, Luka Ivcevic, Maya Kurien, Labiq Moinduddin, Marko Oydanich, Savas Ozdenak, and Kumi Takahashi; and their coach, Kamel Aboulez.

Seniors: Gold and Silver played a close, highly entertaining, exciting championship game. While the first half ended in a scoreless tie, there was plenty of action. Gold controlled the play as Daniel Folla, Anatole Oubida, and Kwaime Phillips all had good scoring opportunities, including one shot by Daniel that hit the post but would not go in. The goalies, Richard DeLaCruz for Gold and Nachiketa Goyal for Silver, were outstanding. Silver came out strong at the beginning of the second half with two good scoring chances, but could not convert on either one. However, Gold struck first midway through the half on a goal by Kwaime Phillips. Silver, though, quickly answered back on a beautiful free kick by David Malary. The game remained 1-1 until Kwaime Philips scored the game winner, his second goal of the game, giving Gold the championship by a score of 2-1. Congratulations to all of the members of the championship Gold team – Richard DeLaCruz, Daniel Folla, Declan Guilfoyle, Gussie Manalo, Mikko McDonald, Shaun McIntosh, William Oh, Anatole Oubida, Nana Paturet, Arta Perezic, Kwaime Phillips, Dylan Ramirez, Joseph Scalabrino, Jenna Stueber, and George Ujlaki; and their coaches, Renato Folla and Michael Guilfoyle.

Flag Football The playoffs in the Youth Program’s Flag Football League were postponed to today (December 14) because of the snowstorm on Thursday of last week. The final regular season standings were:

Junior Division (12-14)		Senior Division (15-17)	
Saints	4-2	Chargers	5-0-1
Falcons	3-3	Broncos	4-2
Panthers	3-3	Chiefs	1-3-2
Buccaneers	2-4	Raiders	1-4-1

In the Junior Division, in November 23 action, the Saints captured first place by defeating the Falcons 49-34 in the most exciting game of the season, while the Panthers defeated the Buccaneers to capture third place. In the Saints-Falcons match-up, the Falcons drew first blood as Joshua Hart scored a TD to put the Falcons up 6-0; however, the Saints dominated the rest of the first half and led 25-6 at the half. The Falcons came out roaring in the second half and cut the Saints’ lead to 37-34 late in the game, before the Saints closed out the scoring with two touchdowns in the last five minutes. For the Saints, Noel Polanco scored one touchdown, and Enoki Yauvoli and Dax Armenakis had spectacular games, with Enoki scoring four TDs and Dax three TDs. For the Falcons, Steven Morabito scored four TDs.

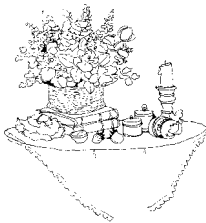
In Senior Division action November 23, the Chargers completed an undefeated regular season by beating the second-place Broncos 26-21 in a close, highly competitive game, while the Raiders defeated the Chiefs by one touchdown in a well-played, very entertaining game. For the Chargers, Fode Bah had the game of his dreams as he caught a pass for a TD, ran for a TD, and blocked a pass at the line and caught the deflection for an interception, which he returned for another TD. Jason Fell had two interceptions and scored the final touchdown for the Chargers on a 75-yard pass and run play, as Shirome Dixon and Karam Hider scored the extra points on passes from Seth Kaufman. For the Broncos, Lamar Burrows had two interceptions and two TD passes, Anthony Pompey caught one TD pass, and Erin Carmelli and Chris Dominguez scored the extra points on passes from Matthew Brodsky.

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