

Next scheduled issue:
Saturday, February 8

The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

News updates on *Website NYC10044*



You Oughta Be in Pictures – behind the camera. That's the message from Jeff Calenberg and Selwyn Fund, two professional Island photographers offering a Monday and Friday class covering both digital and traditional photography in a newly-renovated studio at the Youth Center. The classes are free to individuals 12 years and up, and will cover the full range of photo knowledge from camera basics through fashion photography. For information, call Annette Padilla at 1-212-935-3645.

RISA Ticks Along, Still Bursting with Activity; New Program Chief Signs On

by Mary Camper-Titsingh
“Isn’t Florie amazing!” exclaimed Rema Townsend, the new Program Director of the Roosevelt Island Senior Center, as 91-year-old Flora Verrechio bent over and touched her toes. Though Townsend has



been on the job for only a few weeks, she has obviously established an excellent friendship with at least one of the Seniors living in an apartment at 546 Main Street. Townsend comes to Roosevelt

Island’s Senior Center after five years at New York City’s Bridges Juvenile Detention Center, where she worked after receiving a Master of Social Work degree from Hunter College in 2000. Her mother, a speech therapist, actually had wanted her to be a doctor, and Rema participated in Macy’s Medical Program at A. Philip Randolph High

School. However, she chose an undergraduate double major in communication and sociology when she went to Hunter, because she felt her strengths were in organization and administration rather than clinical practice. The position offered at the Roosevelt Island Senior Center, See **RISA**, page 7

RIOC Board Is Set to Vote Thursday on Octagon Project

by Dick Lutz
The RIOC Board will vote Thursday evening on whether to go forward with the Octagon Apartments project. The agenda item is listed as “Issuance of Negative Declaration under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) for the Octagon Apartment Project; Modification of the General Development Plan.” The “Negative Declaration,” if passed by the RIOC Board, would exercise RIOC’s authority to determine that the construction and eventual existence of the project will have no significant environmental or quality-of-life impact.

The second portion of the planned action refers to a modification of the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP), on which RIOC will seek the agreement of New York City, as the landowner. The GDP, incorporated into the lease under which New York State is developing Roosevelt Island, which is City property, does not now provide for housing to be built at the Octagon Park site. Securing the City’s blessing for the GDP changes will be the next step. City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, who represents Roosevelt Island, has told RIOC that the City Council, not the Mayor, must pass on any amendment of the GDP, but just who holds the power to exercise the City’s jurisdiction is considered an open question, and is not necessarily a matter of settled law. The lease specifies that the Board of Estimate, a defunct arm of City government, must agree to any changes. No court cases have yet tested the question of which branch of City government – the legislative or the executive – inherited the Board of Estimate’s powers. Miller’s representatives have been in conversations, believed to be cordial, with RIOC representatives. Miller aide Jessica Lappin said this week, “We understand

that the RIOC Board wants to move forward on the schedule they’ve set out for themselves, but that doesn’t preclude continuing discussions about the future of the Island.” Miller may be seeking a RIOC promise that if he allows the Octagon project to go forward without legal action, RIOC will not later seek to develop Southpoint for other than park purposes. In addition, Assemblymember Pete Grannis has drawn a line in the sand. On Wednesday, he told *The WIRE*, “Usually, I am in favor of the development of affordable housing, which is greatly needed in New York City. Unfortunately, the Octagon project violates both the letter and spirit of the [new] law, of which I was the prime sponsor in the Assembly, and which was signed by the Governor last year to protect Roosevelt Island’s open spaces. Open spaces are also in very short supply in New York City.” Grannis contends the law forbids any development, other than for park purposes, on the land immediately surrounding the landmarked Octagon structure. That question also might require a court test to decide unless Grannis and RIOC representatives can agree on some mutually acceptable course of action. See **Octagon**, page 2

Sixth-Graders Get a First-Hand Look as Island Has a Role in Electric Power’s Green Revolution

by Dick Lutz
What is that thing in the east channel, anyway? It’s a “turbine evaluation vessel.” Huh? Sixth-graders got an explanation this week that even an adult could understand: The sun pours massive amounts of energy onto planet Earth daily, driving a water cycle that keeps rivers flowing. The moon contributes a gravity effect that creates tides and, specifically of interest here, a strong tidal effect in the East River. With turbines (shaped like propellers), you can capture the energy of those flows to generate electricity. And that thing in the east channel is a test and demonstration of how efficiently and economically that can be done. Trey Taylor, President of Verdant Power, flattered and charmed the

sixth-grade class at PS 217 into learning something general about power production and pollution, and something specific about what his company is doing in a pilot program based here. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen a class that looks as smart as this one,” Taylor said. “I’m glad to be able to talk to you today about a special way to produce electricity.” To a group accustomed to flipping switches or turning on computers and taking electricity for granted, Taylor pointed out that there are some two billion people in the world who live their lives without electric power. “How is electricity produced?” he asked, beginning to draw a diagram on the whiteboard in PS 217’s computer lab. “It can be very complicated and expensive. In the most



primary way, electricity is made by boiling water and producing steam, and when the steam flows through a pipe it turns a turbine – a blade. The blade turns a big generator, which produces electricity. That electricity goes into the wires, and into your homes.” Pointing at the “boiling” end of the diagram, Taylor asked, “What do we burn to boil the water?” The class produced a series of answers: “Coal.” “Wood.” Prompted, someone added, “Oil,” and someone else, “Gas.” Another named the general category: “Fossil fuels.” “Do you know what the problem is with these, when you’re burning these fossil fuels?”

Visitors are transferred to Verdant Power’s “turbine evaluation vessel” in a juxtaposition of old and newest as Keyspan’s fossil-fueled Big Allis stands in the background. “It pollutes,” one girl responded. “Right,” Taylor said. “When you burn these fuels, there are emissions. They pollute the air and contribute to a global phenomenon. Do you know what that is?” Hinting at global warming, Taylor got answers like “acid rain,” and “damages the ozone layer.” “That’s a good place to start,” he said. “The emissions create a layer of ‘greenhouse gases’ that capture the sun’s heat and won’t let enough of it go. The consequence is that the planet starts to get warmer, and glaciers start melting.” Bringing the matter home, Taylor asked, “And if the glaciers are melting, do you know what’s

Briefly...

Another proprietor has apparently given up at the Bakery. The most recent owner bought the business, we are told, knowing he would have to pay the previous owner’s back rent – but opted not to do so when RIOC insisted on collecting. RIOC President Rob Ryan says three other Island businesses, and one off-Island, have already expressed interest in the space. **With MTA tokens** headed for history, the question arises as to what RIOC will do about a system for collecting Tramway fares (unless the aerial system is integrated into the MetroCard system). RIOC’s Ryan said Wednesday, “We’re going to evaluate things and figure it out.” Stay tuned. **A telephone reminder:** Starting next Saturday (February 1), you must dial 1 plus the area code before all phone numbers (even within the 212 area); that’s 11 digits for all domestic calls. **Corrections** for the PTA/LAFC cookbook currently on sale on the Island are now available on line:



Letters

To the Editor:

As an avid reader of Jonathan Swift, *Punch*, and *Mad Magazine* I was heartened to see *The Main Street WIRE* departing from its customary style of staid writing to offer us a delicious satire in the story about Ms. Sherk and her Living Library. Her appearance before the Residents Association Common Council in which she elaborated upon her concept of a library in which no books are to be found must have been greeted with great hilarity. In an inspired spoof of intellectual inanity, she regaled the Councilmembers with such phrases as “...site and culturally-sensitive community learning environments...”, and “...transforms public places to incorporate the resources of the area: human, ecological, historic, technological and aesthetic.” All humorists know that every lampoon must contain a clue to its humorous subtext and Ms. Sherk provided it, with “... forming a global network of diversity and commonalities and helping to promote world peace and social justice.” One can envision multitudes of Miss America aspirants busily copying that last phrase and practicing its delivery with artless sincerity.

Believing there must be more sly humor to be found on Ms. Sherk’s website I accessed it today and was not disappointed. Among the selections offered was a photograph of Ms. Sherk in one of her Performance Art appearances. The accompanying caption reads, “Performance by Bonnie Sherk appearing formally dressed and seated in a stuffed chair seated in a flooded dump facing moving traffic which became the ‘audience’ for her performance. Her desire is to create an art that is based on confronting life. Sherk confronted the flow of life around her by sitting in a chair for extended periods of time in environments often bizarre in nature.”

The text does not do justice to the sight of Ms. Sherk in her formal evening gown, sleeveless but with a fur hat on her head, amidst a debris-filled swamp as

art aficionados speed past on a nearby highway. Another photograph shows Ms. Sherk seated at a table inside a cage at the San Francisco Zoo. The adjoining text reads, “In her 1971 performance, ‘Public Lunch,’ elegantly attired, she was served a catered lunch in an adjacent cage in the Lion House...at feeding time, demonstrating the parallel between human and other animal behavior. Also in the cage was a caged rat...”

In keeping with Ms. Sherk’s preference for bizarre environments, my thought is that, for her next appearance (performance?) on Roosevelt Island, she should appear at a session of the RIOC Board. She would be elegantly attired, as is her wont, in the guise of a lion tamer with a whip and a chair, fearlessly controlling a mass of snarling kittens, thereby demonstrating the parallel between human and RIOC behavior.

One would hope that suitable notice will be given prior to Ms. Sherk’s next visit to our Island so that all might enjoy her wickedly amusing gibes at intellectual pretension. One must also express appreciation to the Ford Foundation for the \$50,000 grant bestowed upon Ms. Sherk allowing her to continue to spread amusement within our “...global network of diversity and commonality.” Whimsy has not heretofore been associated with the officers of the Ford Foundation and it should not go unnoticed. In fact, with the precedent already set, I am preparing a proposal for a grant of \$100,000 that will allow me to hang a giant video screen from my balcony facing the FDR Drive. A video camera will be focused on our living-room sofa. The camera will be activated during my morning nap and again during my afternoon nap. Persons becoming agitated as their vehicles inch along in bumper-to-bumper traffic will become tranquil observing the peaceful state of my repose. It will be my small contribution in the struggle for world peace.

Jim Baehler

To the Editor,

I want to bring to your attention one problem which, I believe, applies to most of the residents of Island House and Westview. I am in receipt of my accrued interest for the year 2002 for my rent deposit money. Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC) is supposed to take care of this money for me, make some profit for me while they are keeping this money on my behalf, and return the money to me when I move out. Actually, reading the document just received (and the check attached), I am losing money, while RIHMC is making a profit using my money.

The document indicates that my interest accrued for 2002 for this money (approximately \$1,250 deposited when I moved in) is \$17.42. This is taxable interest income for me, and I will have to pay approximately a third of this, or \$6, as taxes. This will leave me with approximately \$11 actual profit (interest) for my money.

However, I am very surprised to discover that RIHMC already had taken \$12.18 as a “landlord administrative fee,” which leaves me with a check of \$5.24. Thus, I will actually have to take money out of my pocket – about a dollar – so that RIHMC can “manage” my money on my behalf.

In other words, I am losing money. Housing Management (while supposedly “managing” my money for me) is making a profit on my money. Can anybody explain to me what is the legal basis on which Housing Management “manages” my money so badly? I need to know what New York State legislation entitles RIHMC to the “landlord administrative fee,” and how much this fee should legally be.

I assume that my case is not unique, and is probably similar to all the tenants in Island House and Westview, who have their deposits with RIHMC, losing money instead of making interest profit on their rent deposit money.

Mircea Nicolescu

To the Editor:

This is a copy of an e-mail I sent today to FreshDirect. I am sure I’m not the only one who is having problems.

Jim Bates

To FreshDirect:

Today I received my order with part of my groceries missing. I called and was told I would receive a call back in 15 minutes. I waited over an hour and called again, and was told they had contacted the driver and had no idea what transpired in that contact. I am a disabled individual who has to depend on other people to do my everyday tasks. I was told that I could place another order, which has to be at least \$40, and I could possibly receive my order and, yes, be charged another delivery charge. This is not my idea of serving the community of Roosevelt Island, especially the disabled community. Why can’t I be treated properly and given the common courtesy of a returned phone call?

Jim Bates



Letters Policy

To the Editor:

In the January 22 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, there were two lengthy articles about Coler-Goldwater Hospital.

The first article described the new radio station that has been broadcasting from Goldwater.

The second focused on the difficulties in discharging patients to suitable housing. There was a quote about the Island:

The State-appointed not-for-profit Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation is marketing the Island to developers who are building residences aimed at the well-heeled. “We are a public benefit corporation whose charge is to maintain, operate, and develop the Island,” states John Melia. “Our mission is not assisting handicapped people to find housing.”

It is apparent that Mr. Melia and the people he speaks for do not know the Island’s history. This Island has always been the home of persons with disabilities (I prefer to say abilities). We are proud that our community has such a vibrant population and that every person is welcome to live here.

I am sure that Governor Pataki will be interested to know that the Island his appointees manage does not welcome the disabled.

As a volunteer at Coler-Goldwater and a member of the Coler Community Board, I see the frustration of staff and residents who are unable to leave and start new lives due to lack of appropriate housing. Our neighbors this Christmas collected over 1,000 gifts for the Coler-Goldwater residents. The next month a quote such as the one above is in *The Wall Street Journal*. How would you feel?

It is a disgrace that more long-term residents of Coler-Goldwater cannot live in our community due to lack of suitable housing. When the Island opened, there were 50 disabled-accessible apartments. There are many more now, but we don’t count how many. Counting people by their physical abilities is not done here.

There is little that I can say about Mr. Melia except *goodbye*.

Judith Berdy

...the wasting of time is an abomination to the spirit...

–*The Maxims of Ptahhotpe*

Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend.

–Theophrastus

Nothing is so dear and precious as time.

–François Rabelais, *Works*

Time is flying never to return.

–Virgil, *Georgics*

...do not squander time; for that’s the stuff life is made of.

–Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard’s Almanac*

Lost time is never found again.

–Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard’s Almanac*

Perhaps you’ve guessed that wasted time is the subject of this week’s sermon. The subject has been on my mind ever since I wrote the last paragraph of the January 11 column. In it, I complained that the law mandating a RIOC Board of Directors composed of a majority of Roosevelt Island residents has not been acted upon in the four months since its passage. In the meantime, major development projects are in the offing that will be approved by a carpetbagger Board that may soon be sent packing. A resident Board should decide Island development, and your calls to our State and City politicians could and should make a difference.

The RIRA Column

Continuing with this theme of wasted time, I direct your attention to a Housing Management News Bulleting (sic) dated January 15, 2003. In it, there is an update on the Westview swimming pool. As you know, the pool, along with the rest of the health facility, has been closed since July 2001, a total of nineteen months and counting. The update states that, “The renovations are finally completed! We are currently filling up the pool to assure the completeness of the work done. However, the pool will not be open just yet! We are currently in the bid process for a company to maintain the pool. It’s going to take a little longer then (sic) expected.”

A little longer than expected? I’ve been told that the facility will re-open by mid-February, twenty months after it closed. Why, I wonder, was the management of the pool not put out for bids while the repairs were still in progress? Westview could have been torn down to the last sub-basement brick and entirely rebuilt in twenty months. We’re talking about a box filled with water, not the Hubble Telescope, for god’s sake.

As I’ve often said in the past, the Westview pool is the only resource, of the five swimming pools on Roosevelt Island that, year ’round, offers membership to everyone willing to pay the modest fee. I’ve managed to maintain my swimming regimen only with great difficulty; many have not. This unconscionable delay in repairs has caused my neighbors to speculate that the “new” health facility has been repaired for the purpose of enhancing the sale of the building, not for the benefit of the current residents. If this is true, no one is likely to admit it. However, the longer we wait for these simple repairs to go through an interminable review and approval process, the more credence is given to these rumors. All I know is that I’m tired of waiting. What do you think?

On a happier note: Last Monday was the national holiday commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday. My wife Sherie and I were privileged to be invited to the Senior Association’s festivities. RISA President Dolores Green put on a super evening. The buffet dinner was scrumptious and the evening’s entertainment, highlighted by the singing of Juanita Fleming and Margaret Gaspard, was absolutely outstanding. It was nice to spend time with our older friends, many of whom I work with preparing this newspaper for bi-weekly distribution. As a CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) member since high school, I was glad to participate with my neighbors in a remembrance of Dr. King and those years of social ferment. WNYC asked for readings of any kind from a culture other than your own appropriate to the day, and Sherie read “Frederick Douglass” by Robert Hayden over the telephone to Brian Lehrer’s radio audience. Did you hear her?

The opportunity to acquire affordable, middle-class housing is what brought many of us to this skinny strip of land in the East River. It was the vision of a planned community, distilling New York City’s diversity into something new, special, and exciting that has kept many of us here despite a perceived deterioration in our unique quality of life. We trumpet our coming together to the world and the world has beaten a path to our door to learn from our successes. Dr. King and the other martyrs of the sixties made diverse communities like this one possible throughout America. However, sacrifices may still be needed to maintain that vision here, because...



Matthew Katz
Residents Association President

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

–Thomas Jefferson

Octagon from page 1

The RIOC meeting is scheduled for 5:30 in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. As usual with RIOC’s evening meetings, a town hall-style open forum for public questions and comments will follow formal adjournment.

[A list of materials related to the Octagon and this development plan are available on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com. The developer, Becker and Becker, maintains a website at www.beckerandbecker.com]

Power from page 1

going to happen to Roosevelt Island?” “Flooding,” someone said, and Taylor quickly reassured the class about the time scale: “Maybe a thousand years from now, water could cover the Island.”

With the case made for environmentally-benign power sources, Taylor went on to describe what his company is doing now toward a longer-range effort to harness the infinitely-renewable power in the tides of the east channel of the East River.

“The whole world is working toward ‘alternative energies’ using natural resources, to stop burning fossil fuels. We call those alternative energies ‘renewable,’ because they cycle all the time.” Drawing a radiating Sun on the whiteboard, he asked, “What’s the biggest source of energy we’ve got?”

“Solar power,” one child responded. “Right!” said Taylor.

human, animal, and fish habitat, as well as the history embodied in antiquities.

“So my company is doing a test right out here in the East River. It’s the first of its kind in the world, and so we’re making history out here.”

“It’s called tidal power,” a child interjected. “Yes! Thank you very much,” Taylor responded. “I knew this was a smart class.

“There’s a new form of energy that’s very similar to wind – to put a turbine in the moving currents of the river or ocean, and what we have out here, with the support of New York State, is a working prototype. If this works well, the next stage is to put six slightly larger ones completely under water, so, as they’re producing power for Roosevelt Island, you won’t even see them. The blades turn slowly, and fish can move around them. And so, it is truly another source of power.

With wind, it runs about 27 to 32 percent of the time, but tidal hydro goes about 40 to 42 percent of the time, allowing for slack tide [as in the East River]. But if you’re in big rivers, you have an 80 to 90 percent capacity factor, going 24 hours a day.”

The next stage of the Verdant Power project, after further evaluation of the data they’ve captured on their “turbine evaluation vessel,” will be that six-pack of turbines that could go into the water less than a year from now, potentially followed by an underwater field of 500, all invisible and quietly generating electricity. As envisioned, the turbines would be well below the surface, so that boats might pass over them. In a full installation, there might be a floating dry-dock to service the units.

The PS 217 class then took a walking field trip to the promenade behind Eastwood, where they could look out over the water at the strange structure that houses not only Verdant Power’s test turbine, but also a “dummy load” that dissipates the electricity produced, and measuring equipment that captures information on the speed of water and how much of the flow is captured by the turbines.

“What you see here is not only a first,” Taylor told the class, “but it’s a brand-new industry. With it come new sciences and new studies, so it could become a wonderful field, in the sciences, to be involved in.”

Later on Friday, Verdant Power personnel ferried a stream of VIPs, including Assemblymember Pete Grannis and RIOC Board member Patrick Stewart, out to the evalua-



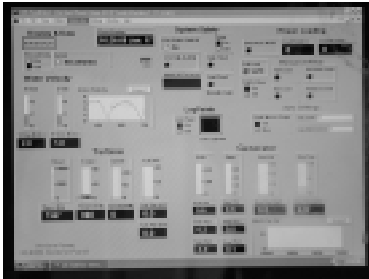
On the turbine evaluation vessel, the crew raises and lowers this ten-foot-diameter propeller with tidal cycles to check it for damage, while...

“The sun produces air currents – wind. In many places, they’re using wind power to make electricity. And how the wind power works is that they’re shortcutting the process. We’re not burning anything. There are no emissions. It’s a turbine – a big propeller turning in the wind, cranking a generator, making electricity.”

He then drew the logical connection between wind-driven turbines and those capturing the power of falling water in dams, but pointed out that there are negative environmental consequences from damming rivers – loss of farmland and trees and, in the case of the Three Gorges project in China, loss of

“Remember those two billion people I told you about? This makes it very easy for them to put this in their rivers and streams to generate electricity, and it has hardly any environmental impact.” Taylor then turned to an animation running on his computer, showing how the raft anchored in the East River – now towed away while the company prepares for the next stage of the test – can raise and lower the turbine blade during this testing phase.

“Part of what we’re doing out there is examining the velocities of the water. In energy talk, when you establish a number of generators, you have an ‘installed capacity.’



...on board, a computer logs current speed and other useful data.

tion vessel. On shore, Taylor provided more background on the project.

“The data is exceeding our expectations,” he said. “What’s being proposed out here would produce ten megawatts of power. One of these, in the ten-foot size, would produce about 25 kilowatts of power, which would take care of 25 homes. The bigger ones [a 16-foot blade] could produce as much as 40 or 50 kilowatts for 40 or 50 homes. A ten-megawatt ‘farm’ of 500 turbines could power about 10,000 average homes.

“We’ve learned about the fish, the sea turtles, the cormorants that are diving out there... The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has given us the room to be really flexible so that we can study and build very slowly, the key reason being that, if we encounter any problem along the way, we can reverse course.”

A third of the funding for Verdant Power’s project is coming from NYSERDA, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority; investors supply the rest. Verdant Power’s next step, in nine months to a year, will be to put those six slightly larger units fully under water, anchored to the bottom of the river, with an array of monitoring equipment.

There’s a related report and illustrations on *Website NYC10044* at

Verdant Power maintains a website at www.verdantpower.com, with a link to a description of the East River project at

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

No event information received.

– The Coming Week –

Picture Book Hour for children 2-5, **Wed., Jan. 29** and every Wednesday, Library, 11:00 a.m.

RIOC Board of Directors Meeting, Chapel of the Good Shepherd, **Thur., Jan. 30**, 5:30 p.m. Vote scheduled on Octagon Apartments project.

Roosevelt Island Past and Present lecture, presented by Judy Berdy, President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, Library, **Thur., Jan. 30**, 7:00 p.m.

St. Bart’s Players production of Thomas Wolfe’s **Look Homeward, Angel** with Roosevelt Island’s Veronica Shea, **Thur., Jan. 30** through February 9, 8:00 p.m., plus weekend matinees and dinner theater Feb. 6, Park Avenue at 50th Street. Tickets from \$17. For reservations, call **1-212-378-0248**.

Picture Book Hour for children 6-12, **Fri., Jan. 31** and every Friday, Library, 11:00 a.m.



Judy Berdy



Veronica Shea

– Future Events –

Memorial Service for Gloria Chapin, **Sun., Feb. 2**, 2:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Our Lives – Roosevelt Islanders Reminisce: Jim Luce, founder of Orphans International, Gallery RIVAA, **Sun., Feb. 2**, 4:00 p.m.

RIRA Common Council meeting, **Wed., Feb. 5**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

The Main Street WIRE – next scheduled issue, **Sat., Feb. 8. Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Jan.

31; decision on staffers for *The Bag*, Mon., Feb. 3; bag materials due Thur., Feb. 6. **Future issues:** February 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 (holiday issue).

Phone/fax for news, **1-212-826-9055/755-2540**; phone/fax for display and classified advertising placement and information, **1-212-751-8214/755-2540**. To list your organization’s Island events here, e-mail information to advertising@mainstreetwire.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up.

Toastmasters public speaking group. Visitors welcome. Information: **1-212-759-0396. Mon., Feb. 10**, 8:00.



Gloria Chapin



Jim Luce



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Senior Center

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

Tuesday
2:00, **Computer Class**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)
6:30, **Yoga Class**

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **English as a Second Language**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Advanced)

Friday
9:00, **Citizenship**
9:30, **Yoga Stretch** (new time)

10:00, **English as 2nd Language**
1:00, **Bridge Class**
7:00, **Games** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Wed., Jan. 29, 11:00, **Natural Remedies Lecture**
Sat., Feb. 1, 6:00, **Chinese New Year’s Party**
Sat., Feb. 8, 6:30, **Korean New Year’s Party**
Tuesdays, beginning **Feb. 11**, 9:00-1:00, **Free Tax Preparation** help
Fri., Feb. 14, 7:00, **Valentine’s Day Party**
Wed., Feb. 19, **Atlantic City trip**
Sat., Feb. 22, 9:00 (all day), **Black History Month Celebration**
Fri., Feb. 28, 12:30, **Birthday Party**

Luce Featured in Our Lives Series

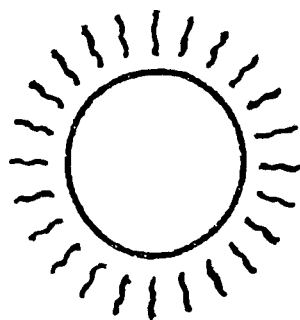
Jim Luce, founder of Orphans International, will be the speaker next Sunday (February 2) at 4:00 in the *Our Lives* series at Gallery RIVAA. His organization helps children on three continents with an interfaith, interracial, and intergenerational program.

Luce says the concept of the Roosevelt Island community has impacted his work.

He was the subject of a *WIRE* profile in November, available on *Website NYC10044* at



Doris Chernik
Luce met Felix in Haiti.



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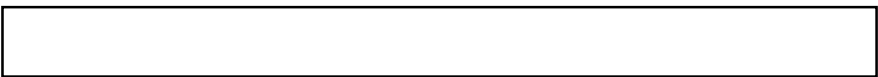
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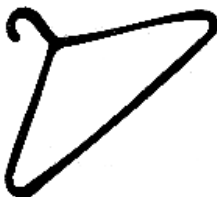
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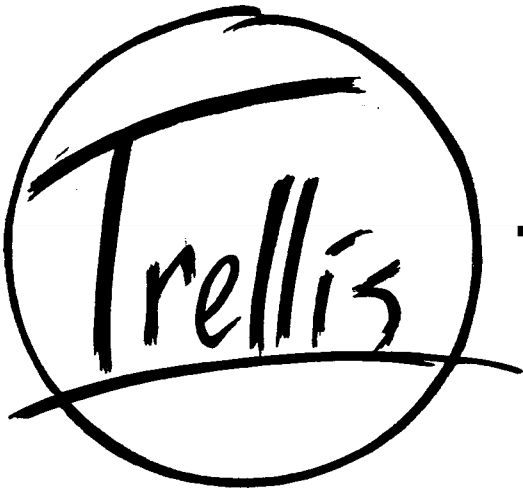
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ROOSEVELT ISLAND POSTCARDS – Color Views of Tram and Lighthouse Park; sets of 20 (10 each) for \$8, or two sets, \$15. Check payable to *The WIRE* to 531 Main Street with your address, phone, e-mail address (if available). Questions: **1-212-826-9055**. Sorry, no phone or credit card orders.

RISA from page 1

which is funded through the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and the New York City Department for the Aging, required a Certified Social Worker for the day-to-day operation of the Senior Center, which is open to all senior citizens over the age of 60. When Townsend, a tall, pretty woman, came to apply for the position, she was immediately charmed by the friendly spirit of the community. She found a Senior Center that offers a variety of free and nearly-free activities.

Besides hot lunches served in the Senior Center's cafeteria every weekday from 11:30-1:00 (suggested contribution \$1.00, \$3.25 for non-seniors), there are also Meals-on-Heels delivered to homebound Seniors, prepared by off-Island professional caterers. Many of the activities offered at the Senior Center are handled by volunteer consultants from the Island community. Nurit Marcus conducts the popular Yoga-Stretch classes. Tai-Chi is taught by experts from the Tai Chun Center. Bernard Dove offers evening dance classes. There is a bridge class with David Hechtlinger, and June Terry gives classes in creative arts and crafts.

The six computers at the Senior Center are used by Joan Wertheim for teaching basic Microsoft Word. The computers are also available by appointment to experienced senior users. There is even a class during which blood pressure is measured.

And after February 11, Geoffrey Kerr, a tax consultant, will be available free to assist Seniors with tax returns. Because immigrants from Korea, Russia, China, and Hispanic countries live on the Island, classes in English as a Second Language and Citizenship Test classes are offered by Tsui King Ng.

Said Townsend, "We also try to acknowledge all cultures in our celebrations and parties." (A calendar of events appears on page 3 of each issue of *The WIRE*.)

Because only sixty of the 300 Seniors enrolled at the Senior Center are currently actively participating in the many programs offered, Townsend is working on ideas for expanding involvement. She mentioned beautifying the rooms with new pictures, possibly a mural in which everyone contributes a brushstroke or more. There could be container-gardening on the Center's terrace and, perhaps, even a petting zoo with fish, hamsters, birds, and other animals. In addition to the current weekly trips to supermarkets and Atlantic City, there might be day trips to the Museum of Natural History and art museums in Manhattan and Queens.

Townsend is assisted by Caseworker Annie Peña, who has been working at the Center for the last eight years. She has an open-door service for Seniors who want information about State and Federal benefit programs, including Medicaid, food stamps, and the Senior Rent Increase Exemption program.

Though the Center's Chinese kitchen aide, Su Lan Lu, speaks no English, she gets frequent high praise for her kitchen organization and food service. She provides free coffee every morning at 9:00, with large muffins donated by the owner of Trellis. There are two part-time employees, Alvie Rivera, who delivers the Meals-on-Heels, and Elvin Candelario, who sets up programs and maintains the Center.

"My primary concern is to make life more interesting and better for all Seniors," said Townsend. After a few weeks, she feels she's found a home.

Juanita Fleming and Margaret Gaspard sang for Seniors and guests Monday at RISA's Martin Luther King, Jr., Day celebration.



Photos: Vicki Feinmel

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