

Next issue
in 3 weeks:
Saturday, Oct. 11

The Main Street WIRE™

Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

News updates by e-mail (Send "Add Me" to nyc10044@rcn.com)



Islanders gathered a week ago Thursday to remember the fallen of 9/11/01. Following a ceremony, these residents and others left their candles burning around the memorial tree and plaque on the edge of Good Shepherd Plaza. Additional photos on page 7.

Maloney Legislation Would Honor 9/11 Heroes

Rep. Carolyn Maloney announced this week that the House of Representatives had passed her legislation to bestow its highest honor on the lost heroes of 9/11, including firefighters who were based at Roosevelt Island in the Special Operations Command.

If the bill is passed by the Senate and signed by the President, the Congressional Gold Medal will be awarded posthumously to those who died in the rescue effort at the World Trade Center, and to the passengers who wrested control of UAL Flight 93 from terrorist hijackers before it crashed in Pennsylvania. The legislation also calls for a medal to be delivered to each firehouse and office at which the deceased worked, and for commemorative 9/11 coins, some of the proceeds of which will be dedicated to 9/11 victims' funds.

"This is a touching gesture from Congress to the loved ones of the 343 firefighters, 37 Port Authority officers, and 23 police officers who lost their lives saving others on 9/11," said Maloney. "When I visit firehouses in the city these days, I still see letters and cards of sympathy hanging See **Maloney**, page 7

Pre-K Enrollment Up at PS 217 – Now 3 Classes

by Linda Humphrey

Bookbag-toting kids went back to school in greater numbers at PS 217, where enrollment jumped to 534 students from 455 last year. Fifty-four pre-kindergartners overflowed from two classes to three. Special-education classes gained another nine students, for a total of 27. And 22 off-Island kids transferred to the

school, taking advantage of the No Child Left Behind Act, which gives children in "failing" schools the option to switch to a better school.

"The word is getting out that we're doing good things," said Principal Sherry J. Gregory.

The good things include a new Parent Coordinator, charged with See **PS/IS 217**, page 9

Robert H. Ryan, Late of RIOC, Now Assistant Secretary of State

by Erik Kriss in Albany

Former Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation President Robert



Arbor Day, 2001

H. Ryan, who was forced out by a scandal over unauthorized payments, has landed a six-figure job with the New York Department of State.

Ryan became a \$110,000-a-year Assistant Secretary of State September 3. He is one of eight deputies and assistants to Secretary of State Randy Daniels, a former Deputy Mayor of New York City who switched parties and is now a favorite of Governor George Pataki and a potential Republican candidate for governor himself. (Daniels, a former CBS reporter, was Ryan's guest speaker at the opening of the Island's Firefighters Field last year.)

Ryan, who managed Pataki's successful 1994 campaign for Governor, is working out of the Department of State's 123 William Street See **Octagon**, page 8

Pataki Names Deborah Beck, of Rivercross Board, to RIOC Board

Retired Real Estate Executive Brings Resident Count to Four; Pending Mayoral Appointee Could Give Residents a Majority

by Dick Lutz
and Erik Kriss in Albany

Deborah Beck, a 26-year resident of Rivercross, a member of the cooperative's Board and a retired real-estate executive, is the newest member of the RIOC Board of Directors. Governor George Pataki sent her name to the State Senate on Tuesday; it received unanimous approval during a one-day special session.

Beck's appointment gives residents four seats on the RIOC Board. Its other resident members are David Kraut, Patrick Stewart, and Mark Ponton. Non-resident members include Board Chair Mary Beth Labate of the State Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), Nancy Reuss of the State Budget Office, John Mannix, and Leo Kayser. Kayser's term has expired, but he will serve until replaced, according to Mollie Fullington of the Governor's staff. Under the law Pataki signed September 6, 2002, Kayser's replacement must be an Island resident.

One Board seat, to be appointed by the Mayor, became open when Rivercross resident Susan Whitaker resigned from the Board. Whitaker and Stewart were named to the Board by Mayor Rudy Giuliani in February of 1998, but served without voting rights until confirmed by the Senate in December of 2000. Stewart's term has expired, and mayoral deputies have reportedly interviewed Stewart and potential replacements, but no nominations have yet been sent to Albany.

Deborah Beck retired in May from a 22-year term as Executive Vice President of the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY).



REBNY is an industry association serving the major owners, institutions, managers, brokers, and professionals who have an interest in Manhattan property, according to

information supplied Thursday by Beck. She marks, as major endeavors during her time with REBNY, her activity as a lead negotiator on several legislative initiatives, including passage of a law requiring a smoke detector in every City apartment, the disabled access law, and fire code changes to improve occupant safety and provide for earthquake survival. Most recently, she presented the case in the media and before Congress for a temporary terrorism insurance backup program.

Beck now runs Beck Creative Strategies, LLC, providing real estate-related consultant services to government and private industry. She serves on the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation's Transportation Advisory Committee, the Downtown Task Force of See **Beck**, page 8

Bloomberg Gives OK to GDP Change for Octagon

The Octagon Apartments project took another step toward fruition in mid-June, when Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed an agreement giving City assent to a change in the General Development Plan (GDP) for Roosevelt Island. Then-Acting President Patrick J. Siconolfi signed for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

The change isn't necessarily the final hurdle for the project, but it was a necessary step.

The agreement reads, in part, "...the parties desire to modify the Plan to provide for the rehabilitation of the existing building known as the Octagon Tower, create an ecological park within the open space area surrounding the Octagon Tower, and create approximately 500 dwelling units and associated parking spaces on or adjacent to the site of the Octagon Tower." The parking spaces in the plan, which is the design of the Connecticut architectural firm, Becker and Becker, will be built at the site of the current tennis courts in Octagon Park. The tennis courts will then be placed on top of the parking structure, slightly above the existing grade. See **Octagon**, page 8

Island Artist Tony Vita Has a Plan for Publicizing RI: *Little Island, Big Fun*

by Anusha Shrivastava

Roosevelt Island may soon lose its status as one of the city's best-kept secrets. A group of motivated residents are working towards publicizing its well-loved features – its history, its community, and its views.

Julie Palermo, President of the Roosevelt Island Chamber of Commerce, and Island resident Tony Vita are at the forefront of this effort as they seek to raise funds to create a kiosk and a signboard to advertise the Island's attractions. "There used to be a plaque near the tram on the Manhattan side but it disappeared 10 years ago," Palermo told *The WIRE* this week. "Now, we want to put up something else and give out pamphlets to tourists."

"We want to create a visual landmark on the Manhattan side," says Vita, an artist and designer who has created a beta version of a website and a disk full of ideas to concretize some of what he plans to do.

First, he'd like to install a kiosk at the foot of the Tram with an inter-

active touch-sensitive screen that would be a one-stop source of information on the Island's history, businesses, landmarks, and transport options. "The kiosk could be a traveling kiosk and be sent to Grand Central Station so we attract

tourists," says Vita. He would like to advertise the Island's stores, the picnic spots, the tennis courts, the cycling paths, the art gallery, and cultural events. "With tourists coming to the Island, the busi-

See **Vita**, page 10



Vita's design for a signboard at the Tram stations would describe its attractions and include a moving "zipper" announcing events.

© 2003 Tony Vita

The Editorial Page

Get the %!&@! Buses Where the People Are

Is it going to be the same-ol'-same-ol' at RIOC? This community's recent past – the last seven years or so – has been splattered with questions asked repeatedly about RIOC leadership. Five years ago, residents were so fed up with RIOC's failure to recognize that this is, after all, a place where *people live*, that 92% of Islanders voting on the question in the Residents Association election pulled the *Yes* lever when asked, essentially, *Should the RIOC Board consist of elected residents empowered to hire professional community management?*

That hasn't happened. In fact, Governor George Pataki is only now starting to deliver (with appointment of Deborah Beck – see page 1) on the promise of the law he signed a full year ago to appoint a resident majority to the RIOC Board of Directors – a mere baby-step in the direction of control of the administration of Roosevelt Island by (*quelle revolution!*) the people who live here.

Meanwhile, RIOC under Pataki has a serious history of acting, too often, as though residents just don't matter.

And now Pataki has put Herb Berman, a veteran politician with a strong record of service, into the formula. He's a New Yorker with a distinguished City Council background, and we'd have reason to hope Berman would get it right.

Perhaps the Blackout was too early in his time here, or too difficult, but we think the RIOC administration's performance during the August Blackout deserves some serious examination. It's all *still under review*, of course, holding off any internal fault-finding within RIOC. But it's not too early to review RIOC's performance on the simple matter of sending buses to pick up residents struggling home. Worried about traffic lights? OK, give the buses a Public Safety escort, red light spinning.

The story goes – if you've missed it – that resident Board member Mark Ponton spent a fair amount of time trying to persuade two or three RIOC staffers that buses should go to the Queens end of the 59th Street Bridge to pick up residents struggling to get home. Residents, we might point out, who included people carrying heavy packages, seniors, some disabled, and pregnant women returning from work – some wearing shoes unsuitable for this kind of trek.

And Ponton is accused – apparently by some at RIOC not eager to defend their reluctance to make a decision on re-routing buses – of using language that amounted to “abuse” when he was jerked around by administrative staff on getting a bus to where residents needed help. Best we can tell from available accounts, Ponton said something like “Get the %!&@! buses where the people are!” and you can imagine “%!&@!” What word would *you* use if, *three hours* after the need arose, nobody in charge could muster the brainpower to make the *obvious* decision?

Well, maybe not so *obvious* to some. Resident Board member Patrick Stewart contributed his view that the buses should *not* be sent on a rescue mission because residents could use the exercise. Truly odd for a former President of the Residents Association. While one or two out-of-shape residents might appreciate Stewart's forced-march decision on their behalf, our guess is that most prefer to make their own exercise decisions.

So we think the decision – to put the buses where residents needed them – was a no-brainer that should have been made within minutes of the Tram and subway going down – not after three hours, and not until after the alleged “abuse” of making the point with strong language.

Berman is new. He is said by a key staffer to have been on Roosevelt Island until just before buses finally left to pick up Islanders struggling home. *We must wonder*, then, why he did not get in on this decision, and why he didn't make it in a timely manner. *We must wonder* why it supposedly took “abuse” to get RIOC, yet again, to be conscious of the idea that people live here. Yet, more than two weeks after the Blackout, before the Common Council of the Residents Association, Berman was expressing doubts about sending buses where residents need them.

The last excuse we heard at *The WIRE* came from RIOC Public Information Officer John Melia, who asserted that RIOC's insurance doesn't cover off-Island bus trips. But days later, RIOC's senior shopping bus made its usual off-Island trip. And over a week later, Melia still hasn't documented his claim.

We must wonder, then, whether it is going to be the same-ol'-same-ol' at RIOC.

We have to give Berman time to redeem himself on this one. The Blackout did occur just four days into his tenure and he does feel a need to be perceived as protective of his staff, at least at the outset. But redemption comes, in this community, when he exhibits a clear understanding that Roosevelt Island is a *residential* community. *People live here.*

Berman can start by saying, loud and clear, *Of course we send the buses where residents need them – and in the future it won't take harsh language to get it done.*

DL

Letters



To the Editor:
RIOC vs Ponton is one more case in point – we are the only community in the entire USA which never has had democracy! We even have to raise our figurative hands to ask RIOC's permission on a bathroom call. Could we govern ourselves better? Guess! Sophomoric bickering on the Blackout issue aside, Mark Ponton should be considered a hero – the only person with enough guts and compassion to help those poor souls who in the long Blackout attempted a forced march home.

In an emergency, it is usual that extraordinary chances are taken in order to help others; and in an emergency *someone* has to take leadership. Has RIOC, with its every let-'em-eat-cake policy, completely abdicated that role?

Maybe no one (and for sure RIOC) wants Island freedom badly enough; but never forget, *democracy* is a prime tenet the Supreme Court of the United States must uphold! (And, in this instance, with no “interpretation” wiggle room.) Why won't we take this inalienable-right issue to them? Our ever-present epidemic of Lily-liver-itis! Or can we transcend this disease by putting forth a simple, fairly easy win-win case, which could so effectively and so soon end this serfdom?

We want a majority of residents on the RIOC Board. When? *Now*. Not next year or the year after. *Now*. Override the Governor's long-undelivered promises and the mayor's inaction. *Now!*

Barbara Potts

To the Editor:
I was glad to hear all elderly and disabled people came through the Blackout safely. But to say that 2 River Road was unattended (*Letters*, September 6 issue) is very unfair.

I know that Linda from the Manhattan Park management office walked up 15 flights of stairs to check on all seniors and disabled to make sure everyone was OK.

There are some elderly or disabled who may not answer the banging or shouting on their doors because they are afraid.

Management is very considerate of seniors in 2 River Road.

In addition, Edgar and Thelma and the entire Manhattan Park staff were involved in the Blackout for three days and nights, yet no mention was made of them.

Sophie Maisel

Editor's note: The writer is correct on the final point. *The WIRE* was on vacation, and the post-Blackout issue was produced without adequate time for a full reporting job. That meant that many who served well went unmentioned and unacknowledged, for which we apologize. In our last issue, we solicited readers' “timeline” recollections, and hopefully their publication in this issue (page 6) will serve to acknowledge at least some who provided volunteer or paid services. Even so, we can be sure many will go unacknowledged, unfortunately.

To the Editor:
As a former RIOC Board member, I wish to congratulate and thank [current Board member] Mark Ponton. During the Blackout August 14, he did what was necessary to break mental constipation at RIOC and get the red buses rolling to where residents needed them. It appears, from *The WIRE*'s report of President Berman's comments at the RIRA Council meeting, that it may have taken some “abuse” to get the sensible result. If that's what it took, the community must appreciate Ponton's good sense and determination.

I have to ask: What conceivable reason could there be for breaking with standard past practice in which buses were automatically diverted when subway and Tramway service is interrupted? Or is everyone at RIOC so new, confused, and untested that they just don't know what should be done? More than anything, I have to wonder why “abuse” was necessary to whatever RIOC administrator was in charge to do the right thing.

For years, I have urged the publication of RIOC's disaster plan. I was assured by Chief Jim Fry of Public Safety that such a plan exists, but he has stated publicly that such plans are not shared with the public. Why not? RIOC's three-hour delay, not sending buses until Mr. Ponton insisted, suggests that RIOC either has no emergency plan, or that RIOC staff is incapable of prompt action in an emergency. Whatever the status of the disaster plan, it's not worth the paper it's supposedly printed on if the staff is unable to act decisively and with compassion.

Ronald T. Vass

To the Editor:
In response to the letter (September 6 issue) about the incident in the Garden Club, I have had many people come up to me over the past few days asking me how I could let *The WIRE* print the name of my grandson, who is under age. I realized that they had mistakenly taken the letter written about the three youths in the garden to be about my grandson, who is only six years old, but is also named Shawn Michael.

First of all, I think it was very careless to print anyone's name, because young boys have a tendency to give any name when in trouble – not always the correct name. So here is this six-going-on-7-year-old boy, my grandson, who is not even allowed out by himself, being blamed by certain residents for an incident that he had nothing to do with.

To the writer of the letter, having been a former member of the Garden Club, I can most certainly understand your concern about the safety in the garden. But I think your haste in naming a youth has caused more harm than help.

What happened in the garden was very unfortunate and these three youths could have seriously physically hurt someone. But by printing the name of a child you were unsure of, to me you have also hurt someone – an innocent child and his family.

Wendy Hersh

Editor's note: We agree. While it's fairly obvious the letter writer who described the incident in the gardens was not referring to a six-year-old, we assumed the name given by the nine-year-old perp was a lie and made up, but failed to reason that it might be the real name of another child. The original letter-writer, of course, included it as a possible clue to the real identity of the perp. But even if the perp was giving his correct name in defiance or self-accusation, as a matter of policy *The WIRE* does not publish the names of juvenile wrongdoers.

To the Editor:
Thanks to Neil Weissman (letter, September 6 issue) for calling attention to the noisy air conditioning units now atop the minischools. On Labor Day weekend, that unit ran nonstop, day and night, with the school windows open. Yes, *open*. Who pays for the electricity? How does it affect Island House operating costs?

The Island House school unit also drips, and a large puddle of standing water forms on the western side of the roof; I have reported this to wnv@health.nyc.gov. We thought that the standing rainwater problem would be corrected during the renovation but it has exacerbated the problem.

For months, I have been trying to get the rumbling AVAC under my bedroom repaired or insulated. Now I also have a roaring box outside my window and mosquitos in my apartment. (If I close the windows, the sound of the AVAC is worse.) I am not an engineer, but I am a mother of a student who attended the former Island House school and I wonder if they really need such a huge unit for a tiny one-story building.

Susan Sinisi

Letters deadline for Oct. 11 issue: Oct. 7

After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

Public Safety Blotter

The Public Safety Blotter for the first half of September will be available on-line early next week, on *Website NYC10044*, at <http://nyc10044.com/2402/wire2402/blot2402.html>

island observer



Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer's name, address, and phone number **must** be provided for verification and for our records; anonymous letters are not considered for publication.

Preferred methods of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (E-mail format preferred, or use any wordprocessing software) to put a file on a PC-standard 3.5" floppy disk left at 531 Main Street addressed to *The WIRE*.

Alternatives: Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to 1-212-755-2540 (call ahead to 1-212-826-9055). Clearly-handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we cannot take telephone dictation of letters.

All letters are subject to acceptance, and to editing for length and clarity. Recommend maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

By the time you read this, Hurricane Isabel will or will not have drenched us with fierce winds and torrential rain. When it comes to weather this summer, if it weren't for bad luck we'd have no luck at all.

In my last column, I discussed the effects of the Blackout on Roosevelt Island. I suspect we shall continue to do so for some time and I hope we can learn from our successes and shortcomings to prepare for whatever the future has in store. There has been much talk about the appropriate use of the Red Buses. We all know that the Senior Association has used them for years if not decades on Queens shopping trips. When the Tram has been down for any significant period, the buses have been routed to Second Avenue and 60th Street to provide alternative service. It often seems that, with every new RIOC administration, we residents must reinvent the wheel and remind RIOC of these obligations.



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

electricity. If generally understood emergency provisions for the buses had been in place (and if a generally understood chain of command was

We are now hearing that the Red Buses have no insurance for off-Island travel and, indeed, never did. How can this be? Has one RIOC executive after another failed to provide this essential adjunct to the responsible supervision and operation of the buses? The bottom line is: I don't care. If the insurance exists, find it. And if it doesn't, buy it. The use of the Red Buses during the Blackout was appropriate and should be part of any contingency plan. RIOC Board member Mark Ponton was criticized at the last RIRA Common Council meeting for using strong language to motivate RIOC staff to do their duty. Prior to his intervention, the Red Buses were plying their usual routes to subway and Tram stations made useless by the lack of

See **RIRA**, page 12

COMING UP

— **This Weekend** —
Mixed Media Exhibition, *What Is Taboo?*, Gallery RIVAA, Sat.-Sun., 11:00-5:00; also Wed. and Fri., 6:00-9:00, through October 26. Free.



— **The Coming Week** —
Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Sept. 22, 8:00 p.m. For information, **1-212-935-1254** or **1-212-751-9577**.
Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8 meeting, **Thur., Sept. 25**, 7:30 p.m., Island House Community Room. Agenda to be announced.

— **Future Events** —
RIRA Common Council meeting, **Wed., Oct. 1**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

Roosevelt Island Past & Present, presented by Judith Berdy, President of Roosevelt Island Historical Society, **Thur., Oct. 2**, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free.

Main Street Theatre Fall Benefit Series: *Love Letters* by A. R. Gurney, with Worth and Nancy Howe, **Fri., Oct. 3** and **Sat., Oct. 4**, 8:00 p.m., Main Street Theatre. \$16. Reservations: **1-212-371-4449**.

RIOC Board Meeting, Thur., Oct. 9, 9:30 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

The Main Street WIRE — Next issue in three weeks, on **Sat., Oct. 11**. (Get e-mail bulletins in the meantime; to subscribe, send an "Add Me" to nyc10044@rcn.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, **Fri., Oct. 3**; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, **Mon., Oct. 6**; fliers due **Thur., Oct. 9**. Future issues — October 25; November 8, 22 (Thanksgiving issue); December 13 (holiday issue), then every two weeks, starting January 10, through June 12, 2004. **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 event here**, e-mail information to SeeComingUp@rcn.com, page 8

Senior Center

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

Tuesday
10:00, **Computers**
10-11, **Latchhook Class**
10-11, **Dance & Relax**
1:00, **Bingo**
6:30, **Yoga Class**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:30, **Beading Class**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance**

Friday
9:30, **Yoga Stretch**
7:00, **Games** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Fri., Sept. 26, Birthday party
Mon., Oct. 13, closed
Tue., Oct. 14, General Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Wed., Oct. 15, Atlantic City
Fri., Oct. 16, Flu shots, 9:30-11:30
Thur., Oct. 30, Flu shots, 10-11

Home-delivered meals available:
1-212-744-5022, ext. 1203

The RIRA Column

The RIOC Column

The one charge I was given by Governor George E. Pataki when he asked me to serve as President of RIOC was to come here and "get things done."

And this is the reason I accepted his challenge. I want to make a difference as RIOC pursues its mission of maintaining, operating, and developing Roosevelt Island. From time to time I will write a column for *The Wire* to provide readers with information on RIOC projects and policies that affect Island life.

One project that has been in the works for more than six years is the development at the landmark Octagon Building, the remnant of the former Metropolitan Hospital constructed in 1839, that was devastated by fires in 1982 and 1999.

Currently, site control of the Octagon is held by the development firm of Becker and Becker Associates. Their first mission was to stabilize the historic structure preparatory to developing the property with apartments on the footprint of the hospital's two wings.

One last impediment facing RIOC before it could develop the property was to reach an agreement with New York City to amend the Island's General Development Plan (GDP), which has been the guiding document for RIOC and its predecessor agencies.

In late July, Mayor Bloomberg approved the amendment to the GDP. With this hurdle cleared we can get moving in developing the Octagon.

Sensitive development is essential to the Island's economic health because, without the revenue streams they provide RIOC, the services we provide such as the Red Buses and the Tram would be in jeopardy. The continued viability of the Island's merchants is also at stake.

In fact, that point was more than driven home to me when I arrived to find RIOC faces a considerable deficit for the balance of the current fiscal year. Because RIOC does not receive taxpayer funds from the State budget, we must plan carefully in our revenue forecasts.

The completion of the first two buildings at Southtown is a good step, and the buildings will be filled with new Island residents by October.

RIOC will be planning some events to welcome these folks to the Island and I am looking forward to helping them become part of the Island community.

I hope that soon I will be able to bring more news about development at Southtown and at the Octagon.

RIOC is also actively involved with starting the process to stabilize the landmark Smallpox Hospital — or, if you prefer, the Renwick ruin — the magnificent open space on our southern tip.

Last year's brutal winter and natural freeze-and-thaw cycles have undermined the integrity of the building. In other words, it could collapse at any time. That's why we are beginning emergency stabilization of the building. The masonry needs attention desperately and the ivy covering its façade, while beautiful to look at, is an enemy to preserving the landmark.

We all take RIOC's mission to maintain, stabilize, and preserve the Island's many landmarks very seriously. We are their stewards and we have a responsibility to do the best we can for these New York City landmarks and for the whole Island.



Herbert E. Berman
RIOC President

Victoria Hernandez



Victoria Hernandez, a 13-year resident of Roosevelt Island, died August 15 at New York Presbyterian Hospital, of cancer. She was 87.

Born in 1916 in Vera Cruz, Mexico, and widowed in 1948, she came to New York City in 1961, and worked as a seamstress. She was still active with a needle shortly before her death.

Her daughter, Consuela Gonzales, is also a Roosevelt Island resident, and the mother of Victoria Hernandez's three grandchildren, Steven Gonzales of Roosevelt Island, Elizabeth Gonzales of Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Michael Gonzales, who lives in Portland, Oregon.



Published by **The Main Street WIRE**
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531 Main St. #413, NYC10044

News **1-212-826-9055**
Urgent news **1-917-617-0449**
Advertising **1-212-751-8214**
Circulation **1-212-935-7534**
Fax **1-212-755-2540**
e-mail MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com
in association with
Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

Managing Editor — Dick Lutz
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Rose Palamar

Word has been received of the death of Rose "Rosina" Palamar, the mother of Sister Regina and the late Sister Loretta. She died July 24, the day before her 89th birthday, after a long struggle with heart ailments and cancer. In the early '90's, she had lived on Roosevelt Island, where Regina was attached to the St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Parish.

Rosina was widowed in the mid-'30's, at age 21, and became the sole supporter of four children. During World War II, she worked in an aircraft plant and, to her children, became the living embodiment of "Rosie the Riveter," the 1940's representation of the working woman doing her part for the war effort.

After graduating from Hollywood High Adult School at age 57, she enrolled in the Pasadena Playhouse and became an actress, working as an extra in many movies, with bit parts in television sitcoms and commercials. She was a character model in art schools, as well. In her 70's, she became a professional clown and spent much time visiting sick children in hospitals, and participating in parades.

Sister Regina Palamara, who left her Roosevelt Island post a year



ago, writes that she was grateful to be with her mother on a daily basis, getting to know her again after being away for 45 years. She reports that her mother passed away peacefully.

Rosina Palamar left two daughters, seven grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

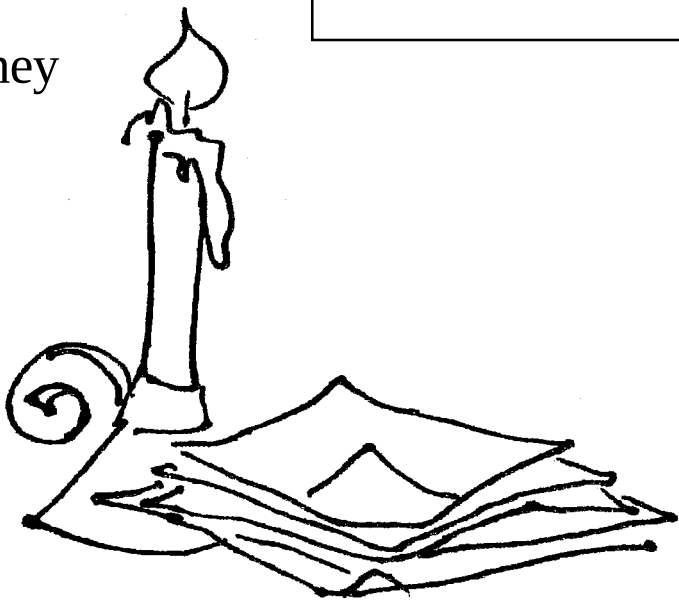


Fall Benefit Series
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Roosevelt Island's New Community Music School



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Located in the Main St. Cultural Center,
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For Information, call (212) 929 - 8343

Or, visit the Main St. Cultural Center, and ask about our program.

The Island Arts Music Center was founded by Director of RIVER MUSIC, Robin Russell, Trained at Juilliard (pre College) and Harvard (B.A. in Music). With over 20 years teaching experience with private students, he has been on the faculty of the Turtle Bay Music School, and the Diller-Quaile School of Music.

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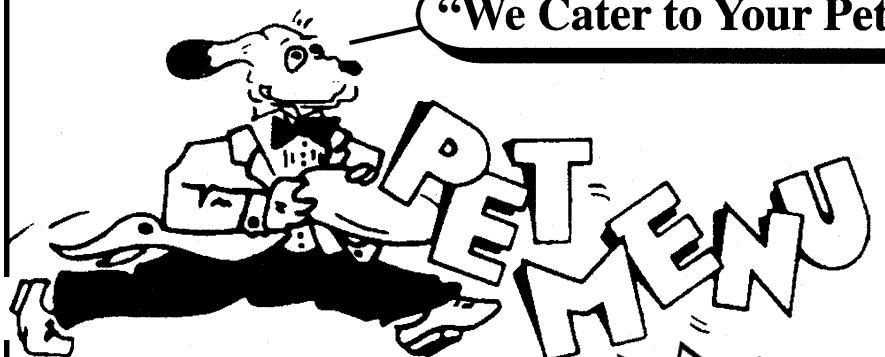


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A Second Anniversary, and Roosevelt Islanders Remember



In Manhattan, twin shafts of light rose once again in tribute to the many lost when terrorists struck on American shores.



Maloney from page 1

on the walls. Now we are a big step closer to being able to mount Congressional Gold Medals for our heroes on the firehouse walls too, including the firefighters who served in Roosevelt Island’s Special Operations Command.

“For their valiance in defending freedom on the most harrowing day in American history, the heroes of 9/11 deserve to be remembered alongside the most valiant freedom fighters in American history. The House’s action honors the emergency responders killed defending freedom on 9/11 as some of the greatest Americans who ever lived.

“New Yorkers will never forget the superhuman feats of the city’s fire, police, and emergency personnel who saved lives without any regard for their own. With this honor, Americans, so long as this nation is alive and free, will never forget them either.”

In the last session of Congress, Maloney’s bill was blocked in the Senate; the current bill requires Senate approval and President Bush’s signature.

The Congressional Gold Medal has been awarded by Congress since the Revolutionary War. It honors men and women who have dedicated themselves to advancing and protecting the nation and the world. Its recipients include George Washington, General Ulysses S. Grant, Thomas Edison, and Winston Churchill.

Octagon from page 1

A possible remaining hurdle to the development has been pointed out by Assemblymember Pete Grannis, who represents Roosevelt Island. Grannis contends that the wording of the Open Spaces law, signed by Governor George Pataki September 6, 2002, does not allow building on the land adjacent to the Octagon Tower, because the law specifies that rehabilitation development may be done on “landmarks,” and the land immediately surrounding the Tower is not part of the landmarked structure.

Grannis has not yet indicated whether he will take legal action to press his view once the RIOC Board of Directors makes its final decision on the Octagon Project. On Thursday, Grannis aide Tony Morenzi said, “We’ll have to look at it once it’s voted by the RIOC Board. Our position is still the same.” City Council Speaker Gifford Miller did not respond to *WIRE*



Artist’s conception of the restored Octagon tower at night (courtesy Becker and Becker)

inquiries through his aide, Jessica Lappin, asking if he had been consulted by Mayor Bloomberg on the change. Lappin had indicated to some Islanders during the summer that Miller favored the development of 100 affordable apartments for qualifying tenants as part of the 500-unit project.

Island residents may get preferential treatment in a lottery for some of the affordable Octagon units, but Bruce Becker, President of Becker and Becker, said on Thursday that the lottery would be held after construction has begun, and close to the time of occupancy, because those participating in the lottery would have to qualify in terms of income.

Becker said a day-care center is being considered for the lower level of the Octagon Apartments’ south wing, to serve infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. He said the idea for such a center, which would be open to the whole community, has gotten a positive reaction. Becker expresses pride in the “green” aspects of the project. Geothermal power is one part of that green mix. Becker said his firm has drilled two 1500-foot wells to test temperature, the nature of the rock, and the amount of water and, based on those findings, the engineering work on that aspect of the project will begin soon.

Ryan from page 1

office in Manhattan, helping New York City implement the new State Fire and Building Code, according to Department press representative Peter Constantakes. Ryan is also working with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Constantakes said.

The City was originally excluded from the State’s new uniform building and fire safety code, which took effect January 1. But the City has decided to adopt the code.

Constantakes said the department has no formal, written job description for Ryan’s position, and said it is actually a position that was “loaned” by the state Health Department, since it deals with health and safety issues. Health Department press representative Bill Van Slyke said his agency entered into a “memorandum of understanding” with the Department of State for Ryan’s position. He said such arrangements are not unusual. “Fire prevention and injury prevention are critical to public health,” Van Slyke said.

Pataki instituted a hiring freeze two years ago, but officials noted health and safety positions are exempt. Ryan, who declined a request for an interview through Constantakes, fills a “pre-existing line” in the Health Department, Van Slyke said. Constantakes would not comment on the events that led to Ryan’s dismissal as RIOC president.

“With his background and contacts in New York City dealing with local officials there, we think he will be an asset as we look to address a

lot of the health and safety issues in the New York City area,” Constantakes said in Albany. “He has expertise in dealing with the City.”

Ryan was suspended with pay from his \$125,000-a-year job as RIOC president in February, when the RIOC Board started an investigation into allegations that he approved 15 bonuses, without Board authorization, to himself and other RIOC staff, for volunteer work at ground zero in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. But many suspected the real reason was behavior during Board meetings and other official events that Ryan’s opponents found objectionable, including engaging in shouting matches with his rivals.

Some accused him of showing up for a board meeting drunk, a charge Ryan at the time denied.

Ryan’s long suspension ended with his being fired by the RIOC board June 17. The Inspector General’s office, run by Pataki appointee Jill Konviser, would not comment this week on the Ryan matter.

Ryan’s predecessor and his former vice president at RIOC left the State payroll earlier this year. Former RIOC president Jerome Blue left Battery Park City Authority, where he was paid \$129,820 annually, and former RIOC Vice President Robert Antonek left RIOC’s payroll, at a \$119,880 yearly salary, March 31, according to the State Comptroller’s office. Neither the Comptroller’s office nor the Governor’s office had any record that Blue or Antonek are back on the State payroll.

From the Public Safety Blotter

The Public Safety Department’s report of incidents on Roosevelt Island is published regularly on Website NYC10044, at <http://nyc10044.com>, as part of the expanded *WIRE*. This selection of several incidents in the period from September 1 to 15 is only part of the most recent reports. These descriptions are published as reported by Public Safety. *The WIRE* takes no responsibility for their completeness or accuracy.

Assault
9/1, sidewalk, 560 Main St. Male resident and his father in-house. The former stated he had been assaulted by a male, whom he knows only by one name. The victim stated that in January 2002, he had filed a criminal report with NYPD against the aforementioned male for extortion with a debit card of US\$700. He further stated that approximately at 8:00 p.m., when he was walking into Gristede’s, the perp had approached him, “re-introduced” himself by punching him in the eye, rendering him unconscious. NYPD, EMS, responded, the former prepared an Incident Report. Victim was transported by EMS to Cornell Hospital Trauma Center, because he had suffered severe injuries to his left eye.

Robbery
9/2, hallway, apt., 546 Main St. Anonymous male in-house, stated “someone is in the hardware store bleeding.” Upon arrival, the two responding officers saw a male bleeding from a laceration on his head. Victim stated he had been pistol-whipped, tied up and robbed. He also stated he wanted to buy new locks. EMS, NYPD and a supervisor were requested by officers. They responded to victim’s apt. Upon arriving, officers found it had been ransacked. Victim stated that perps had knocked on the door, upon opening it, perp #1 showed him a gun, forced him into the bathroom, tied him up, hit him with the gun, and kicked him in the face. Subsequently victim was able to free himself and to leave the apt.

EMS arrived, victim refused medical assistance. NYPD Sgt. and officer from 114th Pct. arrived, as well as an Evidence Collection detective and officer. Victim stated he had lost US\$180 in cash, and a US\$180 money order. RIHM super secured the apt.

Criminal Mischief
9/3, Motorgate, 7d, 688 Main St. Officer responded to scene, car’s passenger door’s window was shattered, there was glass in/out of the vehicle. Radio was intact, could not ascertain if any property had been removed from car. Officer left note for owner and searched area for perp/additional damage with negative results. Subsequently owner in-house, stated she would contact NYPD directly.

Grand Larceny
9/4, Motorgate, 688 Main St. Female in-house, stated she had parked her vehicle at Motorgate and, upon her return, had found the car’s door ajar. She also said the driver’s-side door lock had been broken, and one Bell-Atlantic cellular phone valued at US\$160 had been taken. Victim refused NYPD, and stated the car’s locks had already been repaired.

9/15, train en route to Manhattan, Off-Island. Female in-house, stated she had boarded the train to Manhattan, which was very crowded, to go to Lexington and 63 St. Upon de-boarding, she noticed her leather back pack had been cut open. Her wallet (contents US\$20), credit card, history text book, valued at US\$50, and other misc. items were missing. Vic-

Shooting at 580

Roosevelt Island had a shooting Sunday night, September 7, outside 580 Main Street. Several residents reporting hearing shots, but an investigation turned up nothing. But when a shooting victim turned up at a Manhattan hospital, police made a connection with the Island incident – and with a push-in robbery that had happened September 2 at 546 Main Street where, apparently, drug paraphernalia was found. All that led to a suspect, and the case is being pursued. No further information was available from NYPD at press time.

tim refused NYPD.
Hazardous Condition
9/15, street, 546 Main St. While patrolling a male informed officer that while he was waiting for the bus, the mirror of a RIOC bus had almost struck him, due to the fact that the “Z” bricks were uneven. PSD Sgt. inspected the area and confirmed the afore-mentioned. The uneven surface was the equivalent of a pothole. Sgt. also observed the same condition of the “Z” bricks in front of pizzeria, fish store. Pictures were taken, RIOC facilities supervisor notified. Reporter also said he did not remember the number of the RIOC bus.

Unsecured Premises
9/12, RIOC office, 591 Main St. While on patrol, officer observed rear office door unlocked. Other officers responded, searched the office, all appeared in order, albeit there is construction in the office. Front door was locked; magnetic device was broken off. We had no film in camera. Most doors were unlocked including President’s office. Additional information: RIOC’s Access Control Officer had inadvertently damaged front door’s magnetic lock while moving a table. However, front door was securable.

Beck from page 1

the New York City Bar Association, and is co-chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Water Quality for the City Department of Environmental Protection.

She is an honors graduate of Smith College, and attended the London School of Economics and Political Science for two years as part of her BA program. She holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from Columbia University, and began her professional career as a psychotherapist. She became interested in the world of real estate while living at the Henry Street Settlement, where her late husband, Bert, was the Executive Director. Their daughters, Melissa and Rachel, attended PS/IS 217, and she served on the PTA Board.

Beck is in her third non-consecutive term as a member of the Rivercross Board of Directors, having served earlier terms in the 1980’s and the early 1990’s. She was elected anew in May, 2003, and in her campaign statement wrote, “My family moved to Roosevelt Island so that our children could attend the public school here... We stayed because of the quality of life in Rivercross and the peacefulness of the Island.”

The next meeting of the RIOC Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday morning, October 9, but is subject to possible change before then.

Updates & Bulletins by e-mail. Send an “AddMe” to nyc10044@rcn.com

ComingUp from page 3

ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions.

Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Oct. 13, 8:00 p.m. For information, 1-212-935-1254 or 751-9577.

Book Discussion – For the Relief of Unbearable Urges by N. Englander, **Thur., Oct. 16,** 6:30 p.m. Free. Books available at Library.

Fall Tree Walk, Sat., Oct. 18, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the bell in the Plaza. **Main Street Theatre Cabaret Night, Fri., Oct. 24 and Sat., Oct. 25.**

Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Oct. 27, 8:00 p.m. For information, 1-212-935-1254 or 751-9577.

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

Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Nov. 10, 8:00 p.m. For information, 1-212-935-1254 or 1-212-751-9577.

RIOC Board Meeting, Thur., Nov. 13, 5:30 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open forum follows the formal meeting.

Main Street Theatre Comedy Night, Sat., Nov. 15.

Book Discussion – Passing by Nella Larsen, **Thur., Nov 20,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Book available at the Library.

Toastmasters Meeting, Mon., Nov. 24, 8:00 p.m. For information, 1-212-935-1254 or 1-212-751-9577.

RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed., Dec. 3, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

Book Discussion – Angela’s Ashes by Frank McCourt, **Thur., Dec. 18,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – Pale Fire by Vladimir Nabokov, **Thur., Jan. 15,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Book available at the Library.

Book Discussion – The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man by J.W. Johnson, **Thur., Feb. 19,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – The Queen of Harlem by B.K. Jackson, **Thur., Mar. 18,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – The Pick Up by Nadine Gordimer, **Thur., Apr. 15,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – Patience and Sarah by Isabel Miller, **Thur., May 20,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – City of God by E.L. Doctorow, **Thur., June 17,** 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave copy at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide telephone numbers for possible follow-up.

PS/IS 217

from page 1

fielding parent concerns and rallying parents to get more involved in the school. As part of a new City-wide program, Lorraine Rademaker, a former secretary at the school, trained for the new post over the summer. “We usually have a big turnout on Curriculum Night, but parents don’t come out in full force for general meetings,” Gregory said.

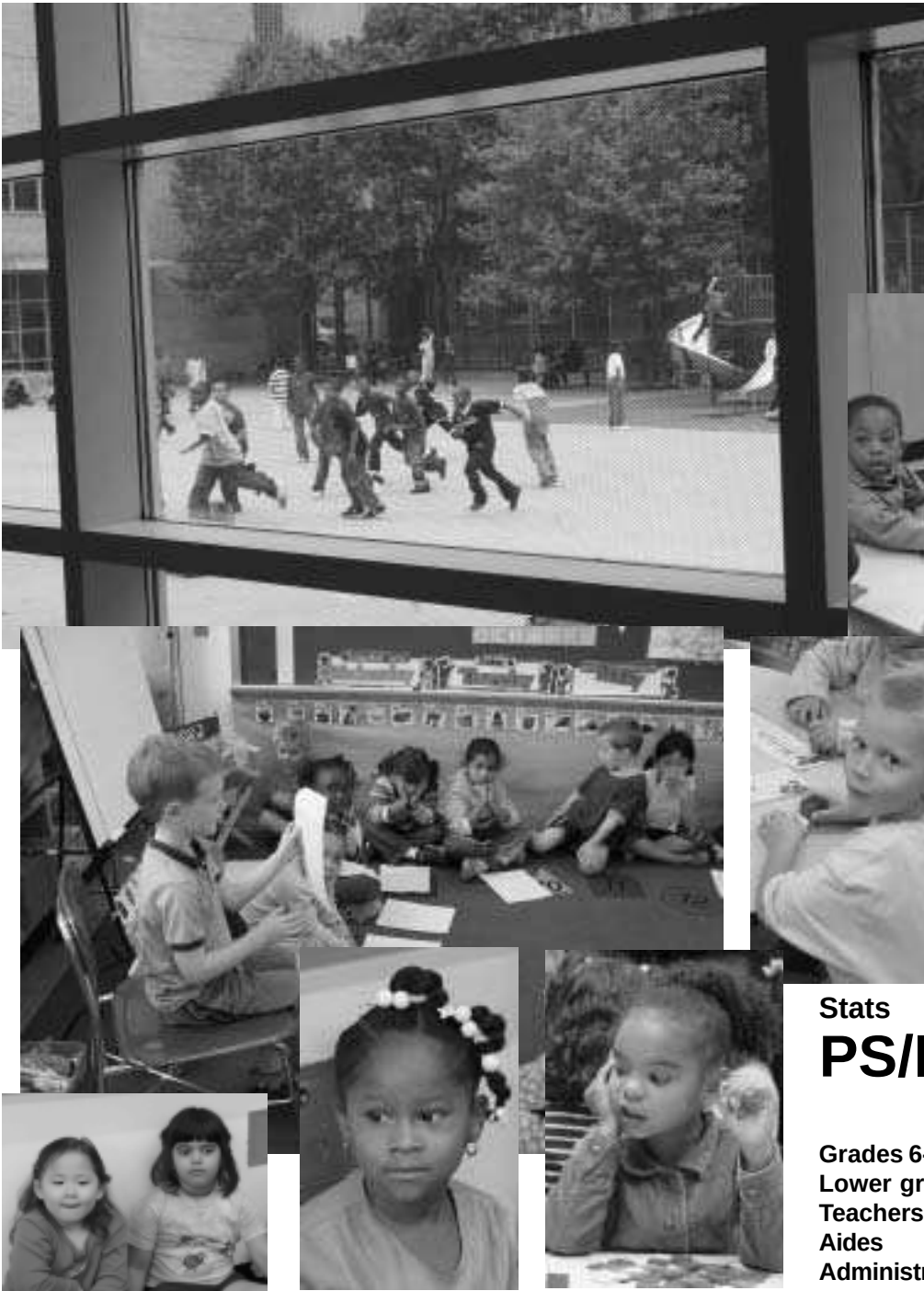
Eight new teachers will greet parents on Curriculum Night, set for September 25 at 5:30 p.m., as they tour classrooms and pore over new math and literacy programs. On board to replace retired colleagues, the new recruits teach third and fifth grades, math, literacy, science, and art. Two are assigned to special education.

The music program is scouting for new instruments – perhaps flutes and Chinese chimes – with Project Arts funding. Funds from New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller most likely will bolster inquiry-based science projects (kindergartners hatch butterflies, then release them outside in a ceremony) and class trips. Middle-school kids usually journey to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.; the science teacher hopes to jet a class to Hawaii this year.

The school is veering from the gifted program for fifth and sixth graders it had piloted last year. “We only have two classes in each grade, so the other class would become the ‘not-gifted’ class,” Gregory said. “That’s not good for the kids’ self-esteem.”

This year, Gregory’s key campaign is to lure kids to class on time. “For the school to be successful, the kids can’t miss a half-hour of instruction,” she said. “School starts at 8:20 a.m. Some families tend to be on ‘Roosevelt Island Time.’ Lorraine will start contacting parents, and will ring doorbells if she has to.”

As School Revs Up, Smiles, Fascination, Fun Pervade the Island’s Public School



Stats
PS/IS 217 Enrollment

	2002-03	2003-04	Change (%)
Grades 6-8	314	343	9.2
Lower grades	152	149	-2.0
Teachers	37	37	
Aides	3	1	-66.7
Administrators	2	2	

Celebrate Roosevelt Island!

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

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To order, complete form and mail with check or money order payable to *The WIRE*.
Send to:
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(Orders, addressed to *The WIRE*, may also be dropped off at the doorstation at Rivercross, 531 Main Street.)

Questions? Call (212) 826-9055, but sorry, no telephone or credit card orders.

No shipping charge on Roosevelt Island. For buildings with concierge or doorkeeper, your order will be delivered or ready for pick-up within three days after we receive it. For pick-up orders, **provide a phone number** with an answering machine and/or e-mail address, and we'll notify you when your order is ready for pick-up.

The Main Street **WIRE**
presents a limited edition of two Roosevelt Island postcards



Cards are
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on heavy stock,
4.25x6 inches

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\$8 for one set, \$7.50 per set for two sets or more.
For off-Island address, please add shipping charge (see below).

Check or money order enclosed: \$ _____

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Phones - Day: _____ Evening/weekend: _____

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Roosevelt Island Jewish Congregation
is pleased to welcome
All Jewish and Interfaith Families
to its 2003 High Holiday Services



The Roosevelt Island Jewish Congregation is a Reform/Conservative institution that invites inquiries from new residents and families who have not had the opportunity to attend our services.

As this important season approaches you are encouraged to call or write to us for information and to be assured of a warm welcome during these holidays...

Steve Marcus at 212-486-5733
Steve Kaufman at 212-752-8160
Ron Meltzer at 212-753-0237
email: stevemarcus@hotmail.com
website: <http://nyc10044.com/rijc/>

R.I.J.C. • P. O. Box 241 • Roosevelt Island, N.Y. 10044

ROSH HASHANAH SERVICES

Friday, September 26
Evening Service 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 27
First Day Morning Service* 9:30 a.m.
Evening Service 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 28
Second Day Morning Service 9:30 a.m.
Tashlich 1:00 p.m.
(at the Meditation Steps immediately following services)

YOM KIPPUR SERVICES

Sunday, October 5
Kol Nidre 6:15 p.m. *SHARP*

Monday, October 6
Morning Service* 9:15 a.m.
Yiskor Memorial Service 11:15 a.m.
Study Hour 4:00 p.m.
Afternoon Service & Ne'ila* 5:00 p.m.
Sounding of the Shofar 7:15 p.m.

*Child Care will be available for much of the service

All services are held in the R.I.J.C. Sanctuary at the Cultural Center, 548 Main Street. Elevator entrance is at 548 Main St. (next to old Bakery). Stairway entrance is to the rear of Video Store next to 540 Main St. breezeway.



Fall Semester

Classes Run
Monday, September 22
through Friday, December 19

Music and Rhythm – Monday 9am
Tumbling – Wednesday 9, 10, 11am
New Baby Group – Friday 10:30am
Art and Imagination – Tuesday 9, 10, 11am
Creative Movement – Friday 9:30am

Classes will be filled on a first come,
first served basis

536 Main Street Community Room
behind the Pizza Parlor
Call 212-317-0216 for more information
Brochures available at Public Safety
and the Island Kids room
12-week semester, closed Thanksgiving week.

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6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Thursday	October	23
Wednesday	November	12
Monday	November	24
Wednesday	December	10
Wednesday	January	7

Please Telephone to Register
212-877-7747 ext. 225

One West 91st Street
New York, NY 10024

www.sshsny.org

RIRA from page 3

in place) the buses would have shifted their function automatically and much sooner. We must work to get this plan up and running as soon as possible.

Due to print deadlines I was unable to report on the Public Safety meeting convened by RISK (Roosevelt Island Safety Kommittee) and RIOC on September 4. RIOC has lost much of the paperwork we gave them in prior sessions because of the sewage flood that devastated their lower offices. Among those papers was a Public Safety Mission Statement, written by former director Peter Norwood. We feel that there must be generally understood procedures and rules for Public Safety, and that this six-year-old document is a good place to start. RIOC President Herb Berman suggested a new advisory committee, and we reminded him that the last Public Safety Advisory Committee took 2½ years to produce a survey that never saw the light of day. There is deep and knowledgeable experience in this community on policing matters, and we want a group convened that can help set policy and make sure that it is carried out. Far too much time has passed while community dissatisfaction with Island patrolling has grown exponentially. We must work together to set viable and reasonable parameters.

Speaking of the Blackout, we are informed that the Westview health facility, ravaged by the same flood that wrecked the RIOC offices, will reopen on Monday, September 22. This would approximately comply with Housing Management’s earlier estimate of one month to restore service. I truly hope this target date is real; we’ve been disappointed so many times before during the two-year hiatus.

I walked through the facility with Housing representative Carol da Silva on the 12th. Many of the deficiencies from the July opening have been corrected; there are now lane markers and ropes and the plumbing problems in the locker rooms have been repaired. The exterminator has visited the premises with happy results. However, the men’s and women’s saunas, renovated for a June launching, have never opened for business because they lack the required City licensing. No one seems to know when that might be forthcoming, or when the promised gym equipment or food-vending machines might arrive. For myself, I’d be thrilled with a pool at a comfortable temperature, well-designated swimming lanes, and a shower to wash off the chlorine. As of today, the day before a scheduled meeting of the Westview Pool Committee, I don’t know when or how the grand re-opening will be announced. Keep in mind that questions about membership must be addressed to the Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (212-838-4747) and that the facility lifeguards will be available for your questions, once the pool opens, at 212-644-4165. The success of this, the only Roosevelt Island swimming pool available to all residents in all seasons, will depend on your oversight and expectations of excellence.

The Mayor, in his infinite wisdom, has approved the General Development Plan amendment that will remove the barriers to the construction of Octagon Park Apartments. There is State legislation on the books, the Open Spaces bill signed into law a year ago that presumably was to protect our dwindling park space, including Octagon Park, from residential development. Our elected reps have paid

Rumor Control

Al “Grandpa” Lewis OK After Serious Surgeries

Al Lewis wants the world to know he’s doing well – particularly well, in fact, for a man in his 90’s who had three angioplasty procedures, has spent 20 days in a coma, and undergone two amputations.

The coma was brought on by the third angioplasty at Mt. Sinai, which did not go well, back in June. An artery was punctured, there was bleeding, and blood that pooled in Lewis’s extremities brought on the amputation of his right leg below the knee, and part of his left foot.

He’s in Coler-Goldwater now (at the Coler campus), preparing for the hard work of rehabilitation. His next assignment, he says, is to learn to walk.

A rumor swept the Island earlier this week that Lewis had died. *Wrong.* On Wednesday, after reading a get-well card hand-delivered from Gristede’s personnel, he gave a wink and a thumbs-up to *The WIRE*’s camera.



Library Jammed for Summer Reading Wrap-Up



by Mary Camper-Titsingh

Despite the fact that a leak had caused part of the Library’s ceiling to fall in, leaving a gaping hole, the final celebration of NYPL’s Summer Reading Club was a huge success. Crowded into every nook and cranny of the tiny library two weeks ago were 102 people, including 73 of the children who had joined the club in June. Others in attendance at the party were proud parents, grandparents and siblings.

The total number of books read by the 142 participants was an impressive 1752. All of the children received a Certificate of Achievement upon completing the program, which required the reading, as well as the rating, of at least one book over the summer months. The readers’ names are proudly displayed on a bulletin board in the library. The children could read any library book they wished, but the library also supplied a list of suggested books for young readers in pre-Kindergarten to Grade Five levels. (Copies of that reading list are still available in the library.)

The Summer Reading Club party began with a delightful puppet show,

“The Frog Prince,” presented by Bob Nathanson. Later, question-and-answer games were played to determine the winners of prizes such as tickets to a Mets game, the Bronx Zoo, and museums, as well as books and T-shirts. There was much excitement and anticipation as the children waited to see what was in the huge blue Reading Club bags they received. They were thrilled with the goodies the bags contained: crayon erasers, animal inflatables, paint boxes, finger puppets, posters, stickers, and tattoos. Refreshments included two very large and colorfully decorated sheet cakes, drinks, chips and pretzels.

Supervising Branch Librarian Petra Kolokotronis encouraged children to sign up for the weekly craft programs held every Wednesday at 1:30 p.m., as well as the *Reading Aloud* programs by Librarian Tom LaSalle and staff members Sabrina Jesram and Latesha Lee, held every Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.

Revised library hours are Monday and Wednesday, 12-8; Thursday, 11-6; Friday, 1-6; Saturday, 10-5; closed Tuesday and Sunday.

lip service to this law, but seem disinclined to demand compliance. The Octagon project has many pros and cons, but what is clear is that we’ve entered a slippery slope in which any vacant land can be set up for development by a well-focused GDP amendment. If Octagon Park may be built on, why not Southpoint Park? We’ve spent the summer enjoying this new park as a park, but this is no guarantee that it will remain a park.

I’ve said it before, if the 35-year-old GDP has outlived its utility, change it as a cohesive plan, not piecemeal. This is a planned community, not a neighborhood in which zoning variances are handed out like candy to political cronies. The two things this City desperately needs, always has, is affordable housing and parks. Great visionaries found a way to incorporate both on Roosevelt Island and in a happy balance. That dream is

being sold for money and for influence and by people who don’t live here. It makes me sick.

Last week we commemorated the second anniversary of 9/11. Several hundred Island residents came to the memorial plaque, candles in hand, to remember. There were songs from Sherie Helstien and Eddie O’Flynn and I spoke briefly, but from the heart. We were honored by the presence of Chief Spillane of our Special Ops

firehouse and Inspector Barrere of the 114th Precinct. We thank them and their colleagues for joining us, and for so much more. Two years after, it seems likely that the Big Apple is still squarely in Al Qaeda’s sights. In this tiny Island community, and in the larger ones to our east and west, we must quietly prepare our contingency plans and then get on with the business of being the Greatest City in the World.



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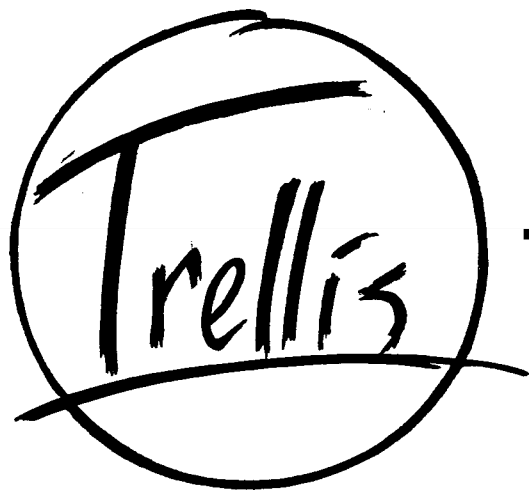
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The August 14 Blackout provided a case study of Roosevelt Island’s preparedness for an emergency, and potentially a road map for better preparedness in the future. With that in mind, shortly after August 14, *The WIRE* asked representatives of several Island entities for contributions to this chronology. In our last issue, we also called for summaries of what happened when. Housing Management provided a thorough response. Sari Dickson of RIOC responded by indicating only that RIOC “swung into action” when the Blackout hit. RIOC President Herbert E. Berman later told the Residents Association Common Council that he was proud of how RIOC and other Island entities responded to the power outage; he also said RIOC had started a process of examination of its response to discover what worked and what didn’t work. Public Safety Deputy Chief Rene Bryan initially agreed to provide information for this *timeline*, but later failed to respond to a repeated request for data. Several residents responded and, where appropriate, their contributions are included here. In general, Housing Management activities, which were extensive, appear on the right side of this page; other activities appear on the left side. *The WIRE* will update this chronology on *Website NYC10044* (<http://nyc10044.com>) as additional information is provided.

4:12 With the power failure, Public Safety radios and telephones go out of service.

4:40 Public Safety Officers begin door-to-door canvass of residents who are on electric life support systems to determine how long their battery power will last. After elevator rescues are completed, they are joined by RIHMC Maintenance staff.

Water continues gravity flow to many apartments below the 7th floor, though all water pressure is lost at Manhattan Park.

Gristede’s closes.

4:45 Eastwood Resident Joyce Mincheff and Island House resident Isabel Bartley set up a table outside Good Shepherd Chapel with water, fruit, and a radio supplied by Jamie (last name unknown). Using chairs from Good Shepherd (and later, Trellis’s outdoor seating), residents gather around. Mincheff solicits merchant donations and gets fruit from the fish store.

5:30 By now, residents are arriving on the Queens side of the 59th Street Bridge (some having hitched rides), looking for Red Bus service; there is none.

Joann Grimm and some other residents start an automobile shuttle service from the Queensboro Bridge to the Island.

5:30 Later reports disagree on what RIOC staff members remained on Roosevelt Island. Confirmed: President Herb Berman stayed until after dark; Sari Dickson remained until late in the evening. Staff attorney Kenneth Leitner and Public Information Officer John Melia were present until near 7:15 or later.

5:45 RIOC Board resident member Mark Ponton, noticing that Red Bus service is still running its Main Street route, empty of passengers, proposes to RIOC personnel (Sari Dickson and Kenneth Leitner) that a bus be sent to pick up residents coming over the Queensboro Bridge. Discussions ensue.

6:15 The pizza parlor donates a supply of ice cream, which is made available to residents on the street.

7:15 A Red Bus leaves the Island with RIOC’s bus supervisor and RIOC Board member Ponton to pick up residents at the Queens end of the 59th Street Bridge. The service continues into the night.*

8:00 Jim Luce and other residents, along with Public Safety Officers, use flashlights and lanterns to assist seniors climbing stairs in Eastwood.

8:45 Sharon Bermon provides candles to help light a dark Public Safety Office.

Friday

The Deli opens at its side door to sell batteries and other supplies

2:00 By this time, RIOC offices (which are dark and, in the basement, beginning to smell of sewage), are empty. Staffer John Hart, who is handling visitors and fielding questions, says that about five staff members are on-Island on the move or at various locations.

Water is flowing and available at the Community Gardens.

Some residents, with an unexpected day off, show up at the Manhattan Park swimming pool, only to find that it is closed.

Outside Trellis, the community gathering continues. Trellis is closed but serving drinks and sandwiches through two open windows.

Business is brisk at the pizza parlor, where gas ovens are ablaze.

4:00 Tram service resumes (approximate time).

*Later, there is a disagreement: Ponton says the initial bus trip had the approval of RIOC staff attorney Kenneth Leitner and Public Safety Deputy Chief Rene Bryan. RIOC Public Information Officer later told *The WIRE* that no permission was given, and that Red Buses are not insured for off-Island trips (possibly including trips made over the past many years). In an appearance before the Residents Association Common Council, without naming either party, RIOC President Herbert E. Berman said Ponton was “abusive” toward RIOC staffer Sari Dickson in demanding residents be picked up in Queens. Berman also expressed doubt about sending buses. (Dickson refuses comment; Ponton denies abuse; as of press time, Melia had not provided the promised proof of the insurance status.)

Blackout 8/14: *A Timeline* Were We Ready? Who Did What, and When?

Th 8/14, 4:12 p.m.
Power fails

4:15 Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC) Superintendent Charles Abdul and Public Safety Department (PSD) Deputy Director Rene Bryan begin to mobilize staff to discuss procedures and strategy.

4:19 Nine members of the RIHMC maintenance staff are sent to buildings to turn off master power. As it becomes apparent the power outage will continue, additional members of the maintenance staff report for work; they eventually total 15.

4:25 Maintenance staff checks elevators, finds that Eastwood has 6 passengers stuck in 6 cabs; 1 is stuck in Island House; none in Westview. FDNY Special Operations firefighters, RIHMC maintenance staff, and PSD officers remove the last passenger by about 6:00 p.m.

4:40 RIHMC brings gasoline-powered generators from basements, including one to power the communications repeater on the Eastwood roof.

5:00 Housing Management’s radios are gathered. Some are issued to Public Safety.

5:05 Housing Management staff completes setting up community rooms with generator-powered air conditioning and communications. Water is available in the rooms.



8/14/03
11:15

6:30 Generators are set up on Main Street at Island House, Eastwood, and Westview, to power air conditioning and lighting in lobby areas; on Main Street to re-charge radios and cell phones; and to provide lighting in the Public Safety office.

7:15 Generators are used on Main Street to power RIHMC emergency floodlights.

7:40 RIHMC Superintendents ask RIOC for gasoline for generators. Because the gas pump is electric-powered and there is no provision for manual pumping, gasoline is siphoned from the tanks of RIOC trucks.

8:30 Housing Management lends a generator to Manhattan Park.

Mike Acevedo of the Coler-Goldwater staff arranges bus transportation and accommodations at Goldwater for some disabled residents

Friday morning

3:00 RIHMC refills generator gasoline tanks to power lights on Main Street throughout the night.

6:00 RIHMC maintenance staff discovers that sewage pumps are not working. At 625 Main Street (Westview), water and sewage is backing up into the basement and swimming pool. RIHMC is later cited by the Department of Environmental Protection for pumping sewage into the Westview courtyard and, later, into a storm drain. Doryne Isley later tells *The WIRE* that electrical facilities in Westview were “within an inch” of suffering long-term damage, but were saved by the emergency pumping.

8:00 RIHMC supplies a generator to power Public Safety’s communications repeater.

9:00 An RIHMC generator is supplied to Trellis.

11:30 A RIOC generator becomes available to power PSD communications.

Friday afternoon

3:00 Sari Dickson of RIOC phones RIHMC General Manager Doryne Isley to inform her that sewage is leaking into RIOC’s basement offices.

3:26 Power returns to Manhattan Park buildings.

3:30 Power begins to return but, because of basement flooding threatening power distribution equipment, Westview power remains off until midnight



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