

Next issue:
Sat., June 19
Revised schedule

The Main Street **WIRE**™

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Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Our Town The Main Street Teen Theatre presented the classic Thornton Wilder play last weekend. M.J. Geier and Hugo Genes played Emily and George Webb as townspeople threw rice at their wedding.

Sheldrake to Manage Westview, Island House; RIHMC Terminated

Westview Tenant Group, Meanwhile, Gets Attorney General's OK Authorizing It to Conduct Purchase Talks with the Owner

by Dick Lutz

The Sheldrake Corporation will take over management of Westview and Island House July 1, if the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) grants a waiver requested by Charles Lucido, the current owner. Grant of the waiver, which would bypass competitive bidding for the management contract, appears routine. Sheldrake is negotiating purchase of the buildings, and expects

to have a ground-lease extension from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) by July or August, according to Otis Jones, a retired DHCR executive who is working with Sheldrake on the deal. But the Westview Task Force, representing tenants, has created a non-profit corporation with the goal of buying the building. It has received "authorization" from the State Attorney General allowing it to conduct discussions with the owner, and last Wednesday asked RIOC for a meeting to discuss a ground-lease extension related to a tenant-sponsored co-oping plan.

Roosevelt Island Housing Management (RIHMC), a unit of Jerome Belson Associates, which for years has managed both buildings, is to be terminated June 30, at the end of its current management contract with owner Charles Lucido. RIHMC will continue to manage Eastwood, which is owned by Belson.

Rich McCurnin, an Assistant Commissioner of DHCR who will rule on the waiver request, said he expects to make a decision by mid-June. Asked about DHCR rules that require a competitive bidding process to select managers of Mitchell-Lama buildings, McCurnin said, "We issued a policy years ago that when there is new ownership coming in and there is going to be substantial investment, in such circumstances we can allow an entity to manage the property without competitive bidding." He said the

policy recognizes that an incoming owner has a special interest in a building, in protecting the value of a pending investment.

Lucido told *The WIRE* on Thursday afternoon that he has been pleased with RIHMC management of his buildings. "But the idea is that Sheldrake get in as soon as possible as the management company, to build a relationship with the tenants. This will provide first-hand experience for the new owner." Lucido said that as a general partner he will have a continued involvement in the partnership that owns the buildings, but Sheldrake is buying out all the limited partners entirely, and will have majority ownership.

"I'm 70 years old and, because of my health, there is a need to cut both work and stress," Lucido said. "I was looking for a younger partner with experience in management of this particular kind of building."

When asked when he thinks the new deal with Sheldrake will be complete, Lucido said, "Realistically, it will be 2005, depending on what obstacles present themselves. Of course, I wish and hope for no objection from tenants and [government] agencies." He said the Sheldrake organization was selected among possible buyers because of its track record in privatizing Mitchell-Lama housing. "My concern was to have somebody who would gain the respect and See **Sheldrake**, page 2

Island's Merchants, Still Under Pressure, Ask Government Help

By Sasha Rodriguez

Roosevelt Island's stagnant micro-economy, an all-too-familiar concern of merchants, was the impetus behind a meeting held Thursday afternoon at the request of the Island's Chamber of Commerce.

The session at the RIOC office, called by Chamber head Julie Palermo, brought together several development organizations experienced in commercial and community revitalization. The groups are offering their financial advice and other assistance in a cooperative effort to create viable, sustainable solutions to the Island's lagging economy.

Explaining that many Island merchants have come under serious financial pressure, Palermo began the meeting by emphasizing the merchants' difficulties: "Our merchants are still suffering. We need funding and, more importantly, we need to know how to make it work."

Also in attendance was Herb Berman, president of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), who repeated concerns he had voiced in earlier meetings, about "shabby" aesthetics. "We're trying to create more of a shopping center mentality – a mall-like environment," he said.

Agencies offering advice and possible assistance at the meeting included:

- The Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) – representing the State Department of Economic Development, which runs the "I♥NY" tourism campaign. ESDC Director Hector Santana said, "We're talking broader than Main

Street. We need to make Roosevelt Island a destination."

- The U.S. Small Business Administration – able to guarantee small-business loans from \$3,000 to as much as \$2 million for working capital, inventory, salaries, construction, and lines of credit for merchandise and other needs.

- The City's Department of Small Business Services – represented at the meeting by Glynnis Enriques, this agency has three branches: Neighborhood Development, which works with Business Improvement Districts, improving storefronts with canopies, awnings, and other visual enhancements; Workforce Development, which helps find employees and provides training; and Business Assistance, which helps with the details of what a small business needs, such as government permits. In the case of a fire, Enriques said, "We're your second call – right after FDNY."

In addition to the governmental units, these organizations attended to offer help:

- Accion New York – a non-profit providing loans of \$500 to \$50,000 to small businesses that cannot get traditional commercial loans. Accion works with a diverse clientele, including start-ups, home businesses, taxi-drivers, and artists. It sponsors a monthly credit seminar in both English and Spanish.

- The East Harlem and Manhattan Hispanic Chambers of Commerce – each represented by their presidents. These groups have created a Chamber Alliance, which

functions as an outreach mechanism for the small businesses in their own communities. Such alliances enable, for example, what Henry Calderon of the East Harlem Chamber called cooperative marketing – where different communities direct their traffic over to other partner communities, creating a healthy circulation of business.

- The South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation – a program which, according to its literature, "provides energy audits for small businesses and other facilities to help them make informed electrical decisions and implement energy-efficiency strategies."

See **Merchants**, page 6

RIVAA Offering Merchants Help in Enhancing Appearance of Storefronts

by Sasha Rodriguez

Can art and commerce unite on Main Street for the benefit of both?

The Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) believes they can, and has taken preliminary steps in discussing ways its member artists might cooperate with local merchants to enhance their storefronts for the good of the community.

Members of RIVAA believe that the declining quality of Main Street's facades is not only indicative of the morale of local merchants these days, as several of them apparently find it difficult to keep up with rent payments, but that it also repels business.

"We have to motivate the merchants...it is good business to keep our residents and visitors here to spend their money," said Selwyn Fund, RIVAA's Chair for the new initiative. "The merchants may think they have a captive audience," he continued, "but nevertheless senior citizens get bussed out to Astoria to do their shopping."

Arline Jacoby, president of RIVAA, is similarly concerned, see-

ing great potential in an alliance between the arts and local businesses. According to Jacoby, lighted shops and store windows full of exciting art works could convey a vibrant image that the Island needs.

"The Main Street shops aren't business-friendly – they don't seem to last long," asserted Jack Walsh,

an Island resident waiting for his bus outside Gristede's. "Maybe their storefronts would look better if they made more money."

Elsewhere, arts-based development projects have been known to serve as a catalyst for commercial revitalization and in improving community culture. However, some See **RIVAA**, page 10

Super-Seniors Get Awards



Senior Association President Dolores Greene (left photo) and RISA Board member Ruth Kolins (right photo) received Senior Service awards May 16 during ceremonies at the Island's annual Senior Day festivities. Behind Green is Public Safety Deputy Director Rene Bryan, who emceed the event; behind Kolins is Senior Center Director Rema Townsend, who presented the awards.

Briefly...

The next issue of *The WIRE*, originally scheduled for June 12, will appear June 19 instead. After that, the last regular issue before a reduced summer schedule will appear July 3. It will be the **business cards issue**, an opportunity for Islanders to support the newspaper by publishing their business cards or business-card-size messages (details on page 6).

The **Roosevelt Island Bridge** will be raised and lowered in tests scheduled for Monday, June 7, between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The City's Department of Transportation Bridge Operations Unit promises to time the three openings to minimize traffic delays, but if you have a plane to catch, plan extra time for your cab to get on and off the Island.

Mark Your Calendar: Roosevelt Island Day in 2 weeks – June 12

Sheldrake from page 1

trust of the tenants, so they would be amenable.”

Opher Pail, who heads the Westview Task Force, commented on the situation by e-mail from Hong Kong, where he is on a business trip: “The Attorney General’s letter of authorization [to conduct pur chase talks with Lucido] is a significant accomplishment for the Westview Task Force, and a monu- mental milestone in Roosevelt Is- land history, as it puts our tenants association in a position to own the building and control our own des- tiny.

“Any other resolution that in- volves extension of the ground lease to a private investor will di- rectly and quickly result in Mitchell- Lama buyout and unregulated mar- ket rents.”

Late Thursday, he added, “West- view tenants are shocked that RIOC would proceed with this transac- tion without considering what is best for the residents of Roosevelt Island – which is *not* the present proposal. The residents of Westview have spent more than two decades building this commu- nity, and should have some input into its future.”

Lucido said he had not yet heard about the letter to Westview ten- ants from the Attorney General. He was negative about the possibility of some acquisition arrangement in- volving tenants: “A contract [with Sheldrake] is in place and money has changed hands.”

Pail said that some 40 percent of Westview residents currently pay over half their net income for rent. “They will become the first victims [of a private buy-out]. Ultimately, most Westview residents will lose their homes. The Westview Task Force is determined to make every effort to avoid this catastrophe.”

Asked Thursday morning why RIOC would be willing to negotiate a ground-lease extension with Westview tenants who don’t actu- ally own the building, Pail said, “We have [the Attorney-General’s] per- mission for a tenant-sponsored cop- op. We have legal standing now and intend to meet with them and discuss a deal directly with them. We have engaged in fundraising over the past year and a half. We have all the resources available to us, including legal, accounting, and engineering. We expect RIOC to cooperate fully with us because it is in the State’s interest to work with us.”

Pail added, “Permission from the landlord doesn’t have to be in place before we meet [with RIOC] to dis- cuss a ground-lease extension. Our position is that if they extend the ground lease to anyone else it’s going to be the end for affordable housing at Westview and the en- tire Island. That’s a fact. They have an obligation to meet with us, to discuss the ground-lease exten- sion.”

Tim Johns of the Island House Ownership Committee (IHOC), speaking of the management switch in the two buildings, told *The WIRE*, “This seems very hasty. We have to look at why there is to be no bidding process. It seems pre- mature given the fact that Sheldrake is, so far as we know, still not an owner of record, and is in- volved in negotiations with RIOC at this very moment regarding ex- tension of the ground lease.”

Johns added, “My concern is that this is like a de facto approval [of a Sheldrake purchase] by DHCR. It strengthens Sheldrake’s hand vis-a-vis RIOC [in ground- lease negotiations].”

RIOC has the power to set the terms of a ground-lease extension, and could lay down some guide-

lines regarding rent increases, fu- ture tenant ownership, and other matters, but it is believed that RIOC plans to take a laissez-faire attitude toward sale of the building and the future relationship between the owner and tenants. The RIOC Board has not yet considered the issue in a public meeting, and nei- ther press nor public is privy to the closed executive sessions it holds once a month.

On Thursday, a public relations representative speaking for Sheldrake said the company has selected a Certified Property Man- ager (CPM) to handle the proper- ties, and plans to locate an office in the old Day Nursery space fronting the west promenade. The CPM is Jennifer Jones, who most recently managed Concourse Village in the Bronx, and has experience with DHCR-supervised buildings. Rob- ert Klehammer, Executive Vice Presi- dent of Sheldrake, provided a brief statement through the public rela- tions representative, including the comment, “The Sheldrake Organi- zation looks forward to working closely with tenants to insure a smooth transition.”

Lucido, in talking with *The WIRE*, expressed a confident hope that there will eventually be some form of tenant ownership, in line with goals he embraced early in his in- volvement on the Island.

Audrey Berman Tannen of the Island House Task Force told *The WIRE*, “We were about to sched- ule our regular meeting with Doryne Isley [General Manager of RIHMC] when we were told, ‘We won’t be your management com- pany in thirty days.’” She contin- ued, “We understand that, as ten- ants, we don’t have a say in this. It’s an owner’s decision, along with DHCR.” Tannen said that the Task Force posted a copy of the Lucido letter to Belson, giving thirty days notice of contract termination, at Island House elevators on Wednesday morning.

McCurmin of DHCR, in saying he expects to have a decision ready by mid-June, told *The WIRE*, “There are obviously a number of things I need to confirm in the letter” from Lucido to DHCR requesting a waiver of competitive bidding for building management. “There is a transaction pending and I need to look into that. I’m not yet versed in it.”

The change in management would presumably end the relation- ship the buildings have with Isley, a change Johns saw as a downside of the Sheldrake involvement in his building. “She’s the best thing that’s happened to the Island since I’ve been here,” he said on Wednesday. “I would go so far as to say she would be a good presi- dent of RIOC – better than anything we’ve ever had. She knows the Is- land, does her homework, and is conscientious.”

Aaron Silberman, President of Jerome Belson Associates, told *The WIRE* on Wednesday, “Roosevelt Island is the home of RIHMC, and we’ll always be there assisting and contributing to ensure that the Is- land continues to be the best place to live in the City of New York.” He had no comment on the impending termination of RIHMC’s contract to manage Island House and Westview. Asked about Doryne Isley’s possible future on or off the Island, he commented, “She’s a special person. She is involved in other matters within the corpora- tion, and will continue to be the leader on the Island itself on behalf of the company. We think highly of her capabilities, which obviously the residents of Roosevelt Island have also recognized.”

Isley left comment on the matter to Silberman.

Letters

To Our Remarkable Community:

On behalf of the Geier family of friends, we would like to thank every- one who assisted with and joined us in a most memorable service for Hallie. From friends to strangers who felt moved to contribute to the effort, it seems people came from all corners on short notice to show how much they care: the friends at Good Shepherd Church, who helped set up and clean before and after the service; the merchants on Main Street, who provided goods and prayers; the press, who worked with utmost consideration for all of us; the children and adults, who brought food, flowers, and kind words. Through your goodness that day, we con- firmed many friendships and even made new ones.

Empathy materialized as a phenomenal force before our eyes. It brought to light that even in our separate lives we are joined through a fundamen- tal need to make our existence not for naught. Death does serve a pur- pose: it causes us to stop and picture our lives for a moment so that we can look at where we are and where we are headed.

Let the Empathetic Spirit continue and motivate us to perform more great acts through life.

Marianne Lau and Marc Diamond

To the Editor:

In response to RIOC Board Chair Labate’s comment on the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) “not jelling,” I say this: You only need to look down the table at the next RIOC board meeting to see why “it’s a complete mess.” If you want to know why a group is dysfunc- tional, look at its leader. The only things not “jelling” are PSAC chair Patrick Stewart’s agenda and the PSAC members’ agenda. In fact, the members of PSAC get along fine, and continue to work together rather well on the Roosevelt Island Safety Committee (RISK) without Stewart.

Clearly, Stewart has his own agenda. On February 23, nearly six months after RIOC President Herb Berman created PSAC (as a result of meeting with RISK), Stewart told us Berman would meet with us (which is what RISK wanted – a *dialog*) only after we either “created a Mission State- ment or an Operations Plan for PSD,” the Public Safety Department. We had already completed Island-wide surveys of residents, organizations, merchants, tenant groups, etc., regarding PSD at the behest of Stewart. Now this? I was dumbfounded. I’d followed Stewart’s direction with the surveys but this seemed to me to be *designed* to actually stall the dia- logue process! Besides, what did we know about creating a mission statement or an operations plan for a security organization? Stewart actually e-mailed Matt Katz, Byron Gaspard, and myself an internet link where we could “learn about writing a mission statement!” Are you kidding me?! Isn’t it RIOC’s or PSD’s responsibility to handle this with some degree of expertise? Surely, part of PSD Director James Fry’s sal- ary, or Mr. Berman’s six-figure-plus salary goes toward handling this type of work. This was a brilliant tactic by Stewart and/or Berman to keep PSAC members busy, and I mean *busy*, for a *long* time.

We had asked RIOC through Stewart repeatedly for a current mission statement and operations plan, but never received anything. On March 11, I sent RIOC a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request for a copy of PSD’s current operations plan, as well as all incident data for the last six months (we didn’t ask for a mission statement because Stewart had finally told us PSD didn’t have one). RIOC responded with a letter stat- ing “RIOC was considering my FOIL request,” and “would notify me of a decision in 30 business days.” Today is May 18 – 69 days later. I have yet to hear back from, or receive anything, from RIOC.

So you see, Ms. Labate, RIOC is up to its old tricks, this time with the insidious involvement of resident Patrick Stewart and his sleight of hand. I’d be more interested in attending PSAC meetings if Patrick Stewart were to “recuse” himself (as he’s prone to do) as the Chair of PSAC and let someone who is actually interested in progress replace him.

Damon LaScot

Security Director, Westview Task Force
RISK (Roosevelt Island Safety Kommittee)
PSAC (Public Safety Advisory Committee)



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Were there ever any doubt about the importance of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd to the Roosevelt Island community, a deeply moving memorial event last week re- moved it once and for all time.

By then, the Rose Window had been cleaned, refurbished, and re- turned to the peak at the landmark’s west end. Scaffolding had been re-

island observer

moved, the steeple had been repointed, and all that was lacking was a carillon, about which, more later.

Hallie Geier had died after one of those sudden and impossibly tragic encounters with a moving vehicle and, though her family left Roosevelt Island for Sunnyside some eight years ago, Roosevelt Island is still *home* – among other things, the place where Hallie and her sister M.J. found and contin- ued to exercise their acting muscle at The Main Street Theatre. It was natural, then, that Hallie’s spirit should come here to be remem- bered and celebrated, where it is best known. Her parents, Ted and Sofia, and M.J. and Josh chose the Chapel.

Just two and a half days later, by the clock, there was not a place re- maining to sit or stand within the walls of the sanctuary. For three hours, her family, extended family, classmates, mentors, and fellow thespians spoke of her lovingly. There were caring words for her family, laughter at recounting of young insights and humor... an *oc- casion* worthy of her and worthy of this Island community.

There could be reason to hope that when such occasions arise, tragic or joyful, the process of scheduling the Chapel could be eased and streamlined. But it got done, and that’s what counts when that’s what’s needed.

As for the carillon, these are the occasions when a consoling or joyful noise should ring out from the bell tower. It was almost to be, when a retired firefighter, an Is- lander, arranged for an electronic carillon to be donated. *Almost*, be- cause the deal is off; *almost*, be- cause in characteristic let’s-avoid- a-decision fashion, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation could not simply accept the gener- ous gift and resolve any problems later. Instead, the matter had to be studied and stalled to death.

Ah, for an elected democracy. And decisive management.

But this is not intended as yet another *WIRE* screed about self- governance and professional Is- land management, as important as those matters are. It is, instead, in- tended to mark and recognize the place the Chapel has in our lives. Lest that suggest, however, that there are no politics involved, we must tip a hat to Assemblymember Pete Grannis, whose efforts to se- cure the building’s future had to find ways around years of truculent RIOC management to make sure that funding would be accepted and used. It is thanks to him that the Chapel is more viable today than it had been for years.

Call it the Good Shepherd Com- munity Center (as separation of church and state sometimes seems to demand) or the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the building has a central and defining role in our lives here – and for that we are grateful.

DL

Letters deadline for June 19 issue: Tuesday, June 15

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

On Tuesday, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation debuted a new transit information hotline. The hotline will give updates on any interruptions that may occur in Tram, bridge, or Red Bus service.

The RIOC Column

We welcome everyone to call **212-308-6608** to try this new service. The message will be updated by 10:00 every weekday morning. The message on Friday will cover all weekend changes. More frequent updates will be made if they are necessary. This service came about at the request of several members of the community. We determined that it was possible to have a line dedicated to this phone and spent several days testing the system. It is now up and running and we can't wait for everyone to use it! I am getting continuous updates from the Trust for Public Land about the input that they are receiving from everyone regarding Southpoint. As they speak to more and more people, the level of excitement rises. I want to thank everyone to whom they have spoken for their contributions. The Trust for Public Land says that they have gathered a lot of great information and ideas from everyone they met. I share their enthusiasm and can't wait to see the proposed plans that they will put forth within the next (approximately) six months. As the research continues, it is fascinating to learn of all of the different plans that have been submitted over the years for that space. It has one of the most beautiful and commanding views in the entire City, and I fully understand everyone's desire to make sure that any plans "get it right." I am confident that the Trust for Public Land will be able to do that. I hope that one summer in the not too distant future we can all enjoy the results of their hard work.

For now, though, Southpoint still remains the best place to view the fireworks display on July 4. We will have more information shortly about ticket sales for this great event. It is going to be my first July 4 on Roosevelt Island and, from what everybody tells me, it is a spectacular event. I look forward to seeing you there!



Herbert E. Berman, President Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. e-mail: HBerman@rioc.com

Thanks to Doryne Isley and Charlie DeFino, another Roosevelt Island summer event is going to be here soon. Roosevelt Island Day is on June 12 and, with the assistance of the MTA, RIOC will have MetroCard holders available at the event. We encourage everybody to get a holder, buy a card, and enjoy the incredible view from the Tram. The transition to the MetroCard has made things easier for many Island residents, workers, and visitors. I am thrilled by the results, and will look

to make other improvements in the future. One small improvement that we are working on is the renovation of the Public Safety office. Within the next few weeks we hope to turn it into a much more inviting and welcoming place. Please have a bit of patience if it gets worse before it gets better. With painting and floor work being done, things may be slightly out of place for a few days. Enjoy the beautiful weather and the Memorial Day holiday!

At press time, the **Public Safety Blotter** for May 16-31 had not yet been received. It is expected soon, and will be posted on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/wire/2418/blot2418.html.

First, I want to thank all my neighbors and friends who expressed condolences on the passing of my wife's mother. Martha was 93 years old and her death was expected, peaceful and merciful. Her life was full of *nachus* (proud pleasure/gratification) but her pleasure in life was over. Death came as a friend. She and I were good friends and I will miss her.

I was in Denver for almost a week and the clean air wrecked my sinuses. Like most New Yorkers, I'm suspicious of breathing air I can't see. Now that I'm back, I've been racing to get back up to speed through several hundred e-mails and voice mails and I can report the following to you:

The RIRA Column

In the April 17 issue of *The WIRE* I reported that the Transportation Committee of Community Board 8 would consider a resolution to move the start time of a two-year renovation project on the Roosevelt Island/36th Avenue Bridge from 2012 back four years to 2008. That effort has run its course and I can report on the results. The Transportation Committee voted unanimously on May 10 to accept my resolution essentially as written. The full CB8 Board met here on Roosevelt Island on May 19 and I've learned that the vote was 32 in favor with no nays or abstentions. The resolution, which I've reproduced below, will be sent to the Department of Transportation and I hope will sway DOT to move our construction start forward.

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has been planning necessary repairs and maintenance for the Roosevelt Island Bridge since 2000, and **WHEREAS**, this work was postponed and significantly revised as a consequence of 9/11/2001, and **WHEREAS**, the DOT has completed a final plan for the Roosevelt Island Bridge but has postponed the start of this two-year project until 2012, and **WHEREAS**, this work is urgently required to maintain the bridge, **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8 urges the Department of Transportation to revise the start of rehabilitation and painting to begin no later than the year 2008 and not 2012.

In the last issue of this newspaper I mentioned the possibility of a special screening for Roosevelt Islanders of the film *Dark Water*. I've learned that location manager, Lauri Pitkus, has made good on her promise to request such a screening from the producers. I've included part of her letter here:

Dear Bill and Ashley:
Thanks very much to both of you for taking the time to drop me a note. I am writing to you now so that I can say I've truly completed all location management aspects of *Dark Water*. As you know, Roosevelt Island is unlike any other neighborhood in New York. After working there over the past few months I've met or spoken to at least one representative of every Roosevelt Island agency, whether they front the interests of the residents, businesses, or State government. Clearly, we had unprecedented cooperation from all involved with the filming of *Dark Water*, even in the face of frequent closures of Main Street and creating non-forecast rain. For this reason, I am writing to you on behalf of the many persons who requested that we try to sponsor a screening of *Dark Water* for the residents and employees who live and work on the Island. I explained to these folks that this rarely, if ever, happens in my experience of filmmaking. But I feel strongly that I would not be doing my job if I did not forward this request to you. I will include names and contact information of key persons who are pressing for this to come true. I think even if we were to sponsor a screening post-release date, it would be a boon to residents and future filmmakers alike. On behalf of myself, the residents, and other persons who work on Roosevelt Island, thanks for considering this request. I wish you the best of luck with post-production, distribution and release of *Dark Water*, and I look forward to seeing the final product.



Matthew Katz, President Roosevelt Island Residents Assn. e-mail: MatthewKatz@rcn.com

I will add my two cents with a similar letter, pointing out that, while these organizations and several merchants were compensated for their trouble, the residents themselves have received no tangible thanks from the production company. Perhaps RIOC and RIHMC will write letters along the same lines. Just a reminder: The Town Meeting in which RIRA will ask you to ratify our new constitution takes place on June 15 at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The required notifications have been met by reproducing the new constitution and bylaws in the last issue of *The WIRE* and there will be further signage on Main Street kiosks in the weeks prior to the 15th. The Common Council can effect these changes without your participation but we'd rather accomplish this task with the resounding endorsement of at least 100 RIRA members. As citizens and neighbors I hope you will heed the call.

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Voter Registration assistance near the Farmer's Market under the ramp at Motorgate, **today, Sat., May 29** (and future Saturdays).
Blood Drive Sign-Up, today, Sat., May 29, 9:00-1:00, at the Farmer's Market.
Trees of Roosevelt Island exhibit, **ending Tuesday**, Rivercross Main Street windows.
Arthur Tress Exhibition, through **today (May 29)**, 11:00-6:00, Hunter-Fox Gallery, 35 East 67th St., 4th floor. Photographs of constructions made in 1984 at Charity Hospital (since demolished) on Roosevelt Island.



TREE CITY USA.

— The Coming Week —

New York Junior Tennis League Spring After-School Program, Monday through Friday, 3:00-6:00 p.m., through end of school season, for kids 8 to 18, with Pee wee program for kids 5-7 on Wednesdays only. No pre-registration or equipment required (wear sneakers and a smile).
Residents Association Common Council meeting, Wed., June 2, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public access near beginning of session.
Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker, presented by The Main Street Teen Theatre, **Fri.-Sun, June 4-7**, 7:30 p.m., with a matinee Saturday at 2:00. (See ad, page 6, for ticket information; photo, page 11.)
Blood Drive Sign-Up, Sat., June 5, 9:00-1:00, at the Farmer's Market.

— Future Events —

Test openings of the Roosevelt Island Bridge, Mon., June 7, between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Traffic will be passed, during that time, though with delays for three test openings.
Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy (RITE) Project Review Meeting, Wed., June 9, 9:30 a.m., 4 River Road community room. Meeting to review studies planned for spring/summer. Additional information: Jim Gibson at 315-641-1624.
Blood Drive Sign-Up, Wed.-Sat., June 9-12, on the street at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, 3:00-8:00, Wed.-Fri.; 9:00-8:00, Sat. (see ad, page 5).
Roosevelt Island Day, Sat., June 12, all day, Good Shepherd Plaza and Island-wide.
General Slocum Memorial, a boat ride following the course of the day-trip steamer 100 years ago, **Sat., June 12**, departing from South Street Seaport. (The General Slocum caught fire near Blackwell's Island; 1,100 died in the City's worst loss of life prior to 9/11/01.) Sponsored by the Maritime Industry Museum; tickets \$35 c/o the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, 212-688-4836.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Town Meeting, Tue., June 15, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd, on ratification of its revised constitution and by-laws.

Political Fundraiser for groups working to defeat President George W. Bush, **Wed., June 16**, 7:00 p.m., at the home of Stu Davis and Pat Poggi, 531 Main Street #912. Information: 212-935-9705.

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

The Main Street WIRE — next issue **Sat., June 19 (schedule change)**. (To receive e-mail bulletins in the meantime, send an "Add Me" message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., June 11; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., June 14; fliers due Thur., June 17. **Future issues:** July 3 (Fourth of July issue), 31; Aug. 28; Sept. 11, 25; Oct. 16, 30 (pre-election issue); Nov. 6 (post-election issue), 20 (Thanksgiving issue); Dec. 4, 18 (two December holiday issues), then twice a month starting in January, 2005. (Schedule subject to adjustment.) **Phone/fax** for news, 212-826-9055/755-2540; urgent matters 917-617-0449. **Phone/fax** for display and classified advertising placement and information, 212-751-8214/755-2540. **To list your organization's Island event in this column**, e-mail information to 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; there is no charge for such listings.

Goodbye Rio, the Child School/Legacy High School adaptation of *The Producers*, **Tue., June 22**, 6:30 p.m., Middle School Gym, 566 Main Street. \$10 admission; no children under 18 admitted.

Toastmasters Annual Dinner, June 28.

Senior Center

Monday 10-11, Latchhook Class 10-11:30, English as 2nd Lang. 10:30, Blood Pressure Screen 12:30, "Oldies" Movies 1:00, Tai Chi 7:00, Dance Class (Beginners)	Thursday 10:00, Tai Chi 10:30, Creative Arts 12:30, Movie 7:00, Dance
Tuesday 10:00, Computers 10-11, Dance & Relax 1:00, Bingo 6:00, Yoga Class 7:30, Games (RISA)	Friday 6:00, Dance & Relax 9:30, Yoga Stretch 1:00, Bridge 7:00, Games (RISA)
Wednesday 8-9, Swimming/Water Aerobics (Westview seniors only) 9:15, Stay Well 10:00, Spanish Class 10:30, Shoppers' Bus 12:30, Sculpting 7:00, Pokeno (RISA)	Saturday 7:30, Bingo (RISA)
Special Events June 7-10 , Wildwood trip Tue., June 15 , 7:00, General Meeting Wed., June 16 , Atlantic City trip Wed., June 23 , 11:00, Belmont Racetrack trip Fri., June 25 , 12:30, Birthdays	

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

Roosevelt Island Day

Everyone is invited!

Saturday, June 12, 2004

Events will take place from 10am to 4pm.

It's a fun day for children and grown-ups as well!

Flower planting – help beautify the island

Characters – Dora, Elmo, Blues Clues, Mickey

Pop-corn, cotton candy, franks, hamburgers, sodas, etc.

Rides – bungee bull, gyro/orbitron, pirate ship, giant slide, whip ride, trackless train, water tag.

Pony rides

Puppet shows –

12noon
1:30PM
3:30PM

Dancing

MOTOWN CONCERT – 6:30PM
Carlton J. Smith & Friends pay tribute to your favorites:
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Watch for upcoming flyers for more information.

Community awareness activities:

- Child First Program
- Child Safety Program
- Blood Drive from 9AM to 4PM

Sponsored by:
Roosevelt Island Youth Program
Roosevelt Island Housing Management

Contributors: RIOC, Rivercross, Manhattan Park, Disney Productions, RI Senior Center, RI Residents Association.



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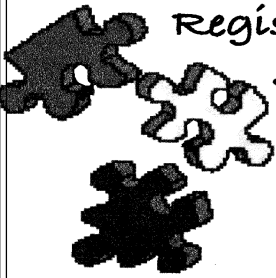
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But you can make a difference. Donating blood is definitely an act of kindness and makes a difference - it saves lives. Donate now to increase our local blood supply and close the gap.



DATE: June 12, 2004
TIME: 9:00am - 6:30pm
PLACE: RI Senior Center
546 Main Street

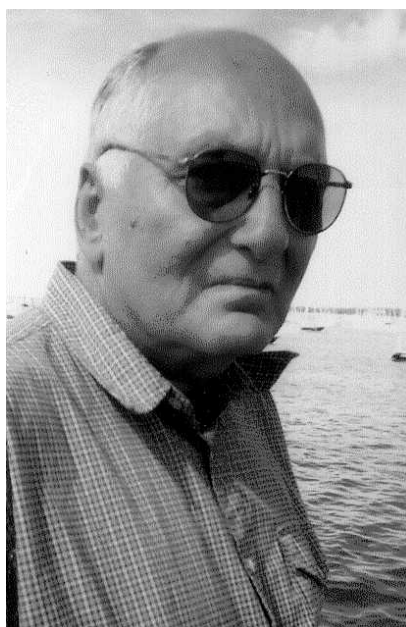


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Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corp. (RIHMC)
Roosevelt Island Youth Program (RIYP)



June 30, 1939 – May 11, 2004
Devoted dad to Joshua and Rebecca
Best friend and husband to wife, Ruthy

by Mary Cavanaugh Lutts

I first met Steckie in 1981. We met, as so many Roosevelt Island friendships begin, because our children were peers. My first and strongest impression was that he was a deeply involved and loving father to both of his children and I liked him immediately. Over the years our sons' activities overlapped, and I saw him at every soccer and Little League game. He proudly watched his son and teammates, and glowed when given the opportunity to talk about his daughter. He also supported all the Cub Scout endeavors. Steckie loved sports and watching children play them. Though he never coached, his support of the team could always be counted upon in whatever manner was necessary. This was in addition to his being their biggest fan. I can still hear him cheering, "Go Strikers!" in his very distinctive style for our traveling soccer team. Steckie was never critical. Wherever he was, he was there to enjoy.

By default, I ended up coaching a Little League Team. I knew nothing about baseball and, until then, had been rather comfortable with that. But my ignorance was obvious. Parental attendance at the games was

difficult since they were in the afternoon, but Steckie managed to get to nearly every game. He was sympathetic to my plight and when he arrived he always asked what help I needed. Actually, he told me what help I needed, and delivered it. Always wanting our team to win, he didn't particularly seem to want to see any team lose.

Steckie assisted another volunteer, the inimitable Sammy, selling hot dogs and sodas at the soccer field. This went on before his son arrived, and after he left. Watching the children and generally schmoozing seemed to make him very happy.

Long after our children had outgrown Little League, I would see him on a springtime Saturday watching other peoples' children playing baseball, happy as a mortal could be.

His sense of humor, often self-deprecating, was delightful, and he always had a smile and a quick laugh..

I, and many others, had a deep fondness for Steckie. To us, his death was totally unexpected. All we can do is hope that, if we go on to other games, we'll see him in the bleachers. Our hearts go out to Ruth, Joshua and Rebecca. We are all glad we knew him.

Thank you for supporting *The Main Street WIRE*, Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper.

On a Sad Tuesday Last Week, the Community Came Together, Sharing Happy Memories of a Child Who Left Us Too Early

The hard, rude fact is that eleven-year-old Hallie Geier died Saturday, May 15, after a traffic accident in Sunnyside, Queens. But, because Hallie lived her first three years on Roosevelt Island, and because of the nature of her family and the heart of this community, there is far more to the story.

Just sixty hours after her death, in a testimony to community networking and the reach of e-mail, the Chapel of the Good Shepherd was full to overflowing with Islanders and others embracing the Geier family, sharing their grief at her passing and their joy in her life. Her classmates spoke. Peter Yarrow came to sing *Puff, the Magic Dragon*. Odetta led mourners in *Kum By Ya*. Her fellow players in the recent Main Street Theatre production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* sang *Happiness*.

The WIRE asked Sofia and Ted Geier to share their memories of their daughter with readers.

Although our pain is great, and we want nothing more than to have her back, our daughter Hallie Geier was happy every day of her life, and we believe she is happy now.

Hallie's first home was an apartment in Westview. The hallway on our floor was her first playground, her playmates were like siblings, and her adult neighbors were like surrogate parents. Hallie had surrogate family all over the Island. Roosevelt Island is a community of families that nurture one another's children and these loving families are sustaining us now.

Our fond memories, some of them eleven years old and some with the paint still drying, include Lighthouse Park picnics, community room birthday parties, Halloween parades, the baby swings in the park, the red castle playground, walks along the river, and the joys of laundry.

Hallie loved to play by the big bell, getting muffins and ice cream from the bakery, going into the pizzeria (where her father waited tables in college) for a slice of pizza (cheese removed, of course), getting chips from the deli and the stationery store, eating soup at Trellis, and watching Saturday morning movies at the Library. And most of all, she loved her friends.

Hallie was proof of the value of quality day care, as her experiences with Carroll and Phil and Eva and Gaspar demonstrate, and her times tumbling and creating art at Island Kids were among the best of many bests in her life.

Hallie and her sister M.J. had wonderful times performing at the Main Street Theatre. Hallie and M.J. appeared together in *How to Eat Like A Child*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Alpha Girls*, and in *A Christmas Carol*. But Hallie trod the boards in productions where M.J. got to watch as well, including *Like Totally Grimm* and *Dancers on the Line*. Some of us were fortunate enough to enjoy her recent performance as attitude-queen Sally Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. In December, she performed at MST with her father's old band.

Hallie loved Roosevelt Island. We moved ten minutes away to Sunnyside Gardens when she was three. She seemed fine with that. Six months passed. Then one day she asked casually, "When are we going home?" Of course, Roosevelt Island remained a part of our home for the rest of her life, and it was here we chose to return to begin the process of saying goodbye a week ago Tuesday. Speaking of casual questions and comments, there were many worth noting in her years before kindergarten:

"Can you shave a frog?"
"If I don't see my lover boy when I get back to (nursery) school, I'm going to scream!"
"A doctor *cannot* help a blueberry."
"What does a chin *do*?"
"I know what a wonder-bra is. It's a bra that wonders. It wonders things like: Can an egg crack itself?"

Hallie planned to make the world a better place, and she was already beginning to take action beyond her performances and her writing. She asked both of us to help her find a place to volunteer. She gave money to sad people on the street. And she was saving her leftover lunch money to help children with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, she has saved hundreds of dollars, and when her sister M.J. planned to march in last week's AIDS Walk, she contributed \$200.

Hallie's kindergarten notebook left a specific message scrawled on the very first page: **People be nice to each other. Love, Hallie.** We ask everyone who sees that message to commit an additional act of kindness.

And, we ask those who wish to contribute to Hallie's vision of a better world, which includes supporting organizations that work towards better health, environmental stewardship, culture, peace, and respect, to contribute to The Hallie Fund by visiting www.causeeffective.org.

We offer a sample of her writing:

Superheroes

Superheros don't have to be big guys in red capes or cute little powerpuff girls. Superheros can be those people that you see picking up trash, on your way to school. It can even be somebody who helps replant forests. They can be people who help at animal shelters, or donate money or food to homeless shelters. Or helping an old lady across the street, or feeding a friend's pet while they're away. I know



Photo: Devon McCormick

that most kids (while growing up) want to be the kind in red capes. But I want to be the kind of superhero that I just described.

(9/13/03)

Untitled

I have always wondered why horns beep with awful noises. Beep, bonk, honnnk, Braaap, Bebeep! It is like *Noise Pollution*! The beeping horns, I know for a fact are actually usually a big part of the reason why some people really think of New York as one big honnk! I'm used to it, because I've lived in New York my whole life, but when I travel and go upstate I'm amazed at how *peaceful* and *quiet* everything is. I always wonder why horns beep with such an angry sound. I mean, why can't they beep with a Beetles song, or words, like "Excuse me, but I think you should go now" in a magnified voice. It would be *much much* more peaceful than – Beep, Bonk, Honnk, Braap, Bebeep.

(10/15/03)

Firefly Wonderings

I wonder what fireflies do
When it's light?
Cold, without shine,
Until comes the night?
When they float in people's faces,
Instead of being caught,
They are taught that in the day,
They are thought of –
As ordinary flies.
Ordinary
Nothings.
Do they feel lonely,
Like I do,
When the day ends?
Do they miss us?
The friends who catch and let them free?
I,
miss,
them.

(10/30/03)

Family Recipe – poem

Add a little sugar
Add a little spice.
Add a little sour,
Add a little nice.
Just a drop of arguments,
But overflow with love,
Family is the result,
Sent from above.
This is my family recipe,
it's all about me,
and my family,
we're all bound together,
in one tree.

(11/13/03)

One Super Power

I have been thinking about a new idea. If humans could have one super power, what would it be? I have finally decided that it would be the power to see things from another's perspective. I think that if the arsonists in California could see how frightened and upset their victims were, they wouldn't have done it. The power wouldn't be there if all you had to see was why your microwave wasn't working. It would kick in when you got an F on your science report, and are about to yell at your teacher, or you are going to kill someone because you think they killed your father, and then the power would kick in and you would see that your teacher thought that you hadn't been thorough, or that the person hadn't killed your father. You could be in a war and hear the enemy's mind praying to make it home safe. There wouldn't be as many wars.

(11/08/03)

Mangoes

I am of a mango spirit, my mother says. She tells me that I am sweet, and colorful. When I was being born, the food that she craved was mango. I guess I fed on mangoes before I was born. My mom says that's why I'm "sweet." Mangoes are delicious, but I hate them mushy. Once I thought of a great motto – *Mangoes are like people, You like them sweet, but you don't like them mushy!* (Side note – my father likes them mushy. He says then they are sweet, but I know better.)

(11/14/03)

When I was Younger...

When I was younger,
My cradle,
Was the whole world.
When I was younger,
everyone talked to me,
and I talked back,
but only in my mind.
I could see,
who I was,
And who I was going to be:
you,
because you took care of me.

When I was younger,
The moon was a giant ball,
just for us to bounce and one baby step
was a wonder
to me.
Now the moon is nothing
but a crater,
and a step, is one
of many.
but one thing is the same.
I want to be you, mother,
because *you* take care
of *me*.

(11/19/03)

Singing

(This refers to a recent concert
at The Main Street Theater)

My stomach clenches as my sister sings the last bars of her verse perfectly beautifully and soon it will be my turn. We are singing with my dad's old band for a sort of band revival reunion. We sing back-up mostly, but in this song we sing solos. Relax, I tell myself as my dad begins the drumbeat that comes before my part. The musicians start up once more. My stomach feels like it's on a roller coaster. I look at the audience through the blinding lights of the stage. I glance at my overly confident sister. She smiles and nods at me, then kicks my ankle. I try to smile back at her. I take a deep breath and open my mouth...

(12/21/03)

Photo: Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com



Two Hours in the Life of Gerard Corrar And The Roosevelt Island Tramway

Saturday, May 22

Photo coverage by Website NYC10044 <http://nyc10044.com>

On an apparent lark, possibly fueled by beer, Gerard Corrar climbed Tramway Tower #1 on the Island around 9:00 a.m. on the 22nd. Tramway employees reported that he was carrying a six-pack of beer in one hand, using only the other hand to climb the tower ladder.

When he dropped the beer part way up, it exploded on impact, briefly suggesting a white powder – nobody was sure of the nature of his misadventure at that point.

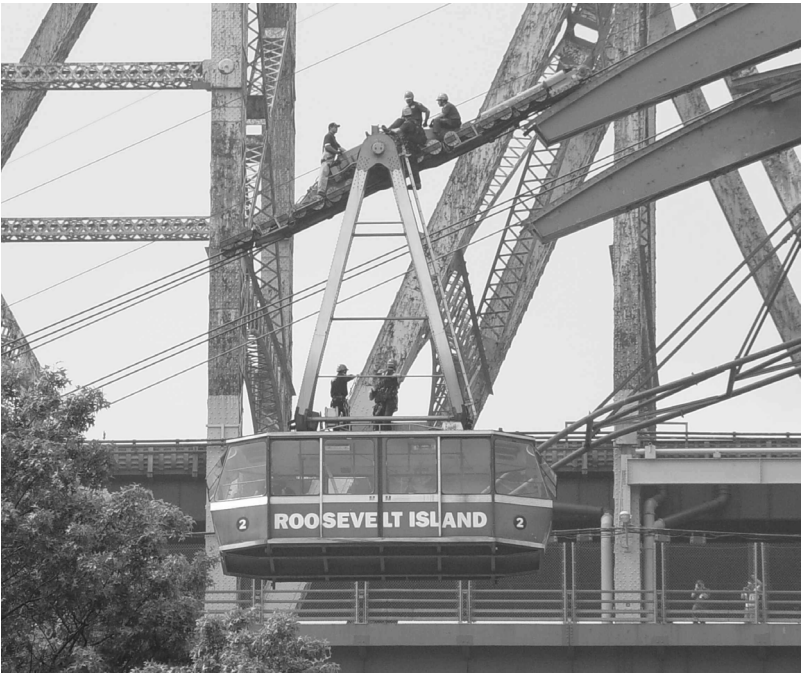
When a Public Safety Officer (PSO) demanded that Corrar come down, he refused, saying something about “just a few minutes” (right), then climbed to a higher level in the tower structure.

Meanwhile, on the ground, Tram employees and PSOs discussed the situation and awaited the arrival of NYPD and other rescue personnel (left).

Eventually, official action involved (below) a helicopter, over a dozen vehicles, and three police boats – the boats arrayed in the northward direction of tidal current, just in case Corrar jumped into the river and needed to be picked up.



While rescuers gathered and worked out their plan, Corrar orated into the wind (below) and occasionally spread his arms as though to suggest he was about to try an experiment in unassisted human flight.



At about 10:20, Tramway employees and rescue personnel took a slow Tram ride up to the tower (left), and Corrar was persuaded to join them for a trip back to terra firma. That’s him, in the photo (right), following an NYPD officer down the ladder, with another about to follow him.

Corrar was arrested and charged with trespassing.



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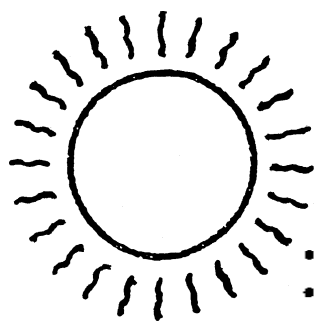
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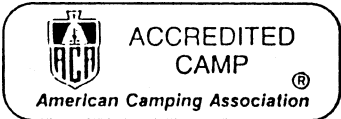
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Deadline for June 19 issue: June 15

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SPORTSWIRE

by Saul Nadel

Baseball

Majors (ages 11-13): As of last Saturday, this has been an exciting and close season filled with young, talented players. The win-loss records so far:

Green	5-3
Royal	4-3
Red	3-4
Navy	3-5

The Green team, with impressive pitching and consistent hitting, has the best record in the league, going 5-3. Royal is a deep, talented team, but has been inconsistent and is a young team. They are led by players such as Romance Barber, Adrian Gordon, and Javon Perry. Their record is 4-3.

Red started 3-0, but have dropped four in a row.

The Navy team's first two wins of the season were comebacks in the last inning. They started the season 0-3, but then won three in a row. Now their record stands at 3-5. They have been led by Anas Dorani and Samuel Johns. Johns was recently injured and is out for the season.

In Saturday's game between Red and Green, Coach Abe Tordjman's strategy paid off as Green players got on base, whether by hits or on walks. Leadoff hitter Baba Kane did exactly what the coach wanted by getting on base each time he stepped up to the plate. The Green team had its big inning in the 2nd, when they scored five runs. Marquis Cromartie drew a walk and then, two batters later, the bases were loaded. Mikko McDonald hit a triple to clear the bases. He also pitched 2 strong innings allowing no runs, to close out the game, as the Green beat the Red 8-5. Daniel Vithlani injured his knee when he tried to steal second base. He was unsuccessful and had to leave the game with a twisted knee. For Red, Alfredo Figueroa drilled a triple into centerfield and Zachary Strein hit a two-run triple. There were many defensive plays as well.

As the season progresses and creeps closer to the playoffs, we should see a lot more fantastic games.

Junior Tennis League

The New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL) is holding free after-school tennis lessons and sessions for kids 8 to 18, Monday through Friday from 3:00 to 6:00 at the Octagon Courts. Pee wee sessions are held from 3:00 to 4:30 on Wednesdays. There's no equipment requirement. The motto: "Show up with sneakers and a smile."

RIVAA from page 1

such examples, East Harlem and Long Island City, to name a few, were able to get the wheels turning only after getting the cooperation of their communities' social, economic and political players.

The head of Roosevelt Island's Chamber of Commerce, Julie Palermo, agrees that action has to be taken. "It's not good at all," she said in a phone interview. "We need investors, loans, renovations. We need a lot of help – from architects, retail experts, you name it."

Palermo and other Chamber officials held a meeting Thursday afternoon at the offices of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), to bring together a variety of government organizations specializing in development issues. (See story, page 1.)

Palermo expressed a need for Island organizations to move forward together in this effort, affirming the Chamber's affinity on this issue with RIVAA.

In the past, the local arts and RIOC have been known to work together for this kind of goal. According to Selwyn Fund, former head of Roosevelt Island's now disbanded Photographic Society, he and RIOC were able to negotiate a project years ago in which the Society's photographs were displayed inside the windows of the vacant shops on Main Street.

Fund is interested in reinstating that method, popularly known as "phantom gallery" – the idea being that the empty spaces provide the opportunity for local artists to

exhibit their work while fostering economic development by focusing attention on available retail space. Theoretically, the "galleries" move from place to place as the facilities are leased.

"We're trying to do a community service," said Fund, who wants to see vacant storefronts, where windows are currently draped with a black covering, brought to life. A first-time Island visitor from Queens, who gave her name only as Silvia, noted that while walking down the street she was often unable to distinguish the closed storefronts from the open ones. "Nothing stuck out," she said.

"When we first got the space for RIVAA from RIOC we made a promise to the community," said Jacoby. This promise of community enrichment, she went on to say, was, in fact, written into the gallery's by-laws.

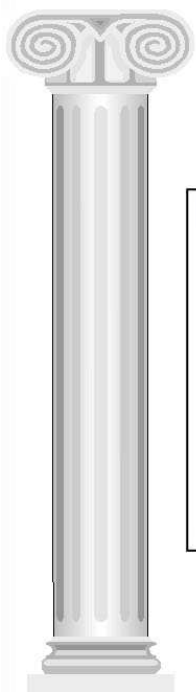
RIVAA's by-laws include this language under "Purposes:" *It is anticipated that the growth, expansion and recognition of Roosevelt Island as an art center will help to economically vitalize our community and enhance the beauty of an already stunning natural environment...we are a community organized and dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in our community through art, by initiating and sponsoring community events, art shows, participation workshops and beautification projects on the Island.*

RIVAA is welcoming help from non-members. Fund asks that those wanting to attend a future meeting on the subject call him at **212-980-8377**.



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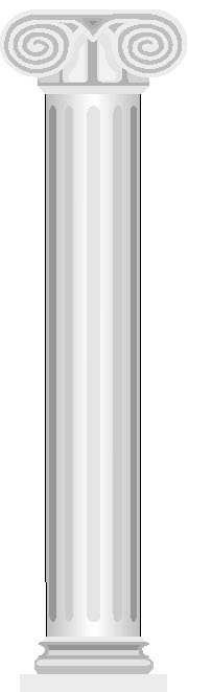


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Matchmaker at MST



In rehearsal for *The Matchmaker*, coming up next weekend at the Main Street Teen Theatre: Disguised as women, Barnaby and Cornelius try to avoid discovery by their boss, Horace Vandergelder. Dolly Levi, Irene & Minnie Fay are conspirators in the escapade. From left to right: Gil Valdes, Jennifer Ahn, Hanna Jamal, David Kimball-Stanley, Aaron Cohen, Emily Goodridge

A Gift Subscription For a Former Islander?

About subscriptions: *The Main Street WIRE*, which is delivered free to every residential door on Roosevelt Island, does not normally solicit off-Island subscriptions but, as a courtesy, provides first-class mailing on day of publication. The cost is \$50/year (for about 20-24 issues, published fortnightly September-May, and less often June-August) to cover postage and materials. A check payable to *The WIRE* should be sent, with delivery address, to *The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, NYC10044. Note that much of each issue appears, with many archived back issues, on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com.

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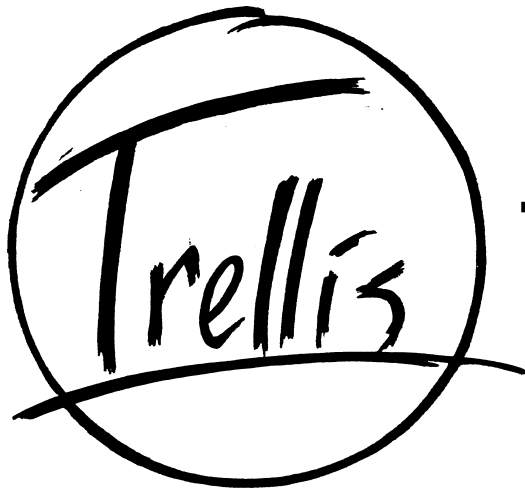
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The Day

Roosevelt Island Day, that is... It's coming June 12. It's a chance for all of us to turn out and demonstrate our involvement in our community. Trellis urges you to get involved – enjoy the day while putting some muscle where your heart is – in the Roosevelt Island community. Meanwhile, meet your neighbors where the coffee's great, and the smiles are constant.

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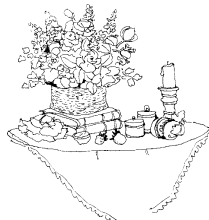
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