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Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

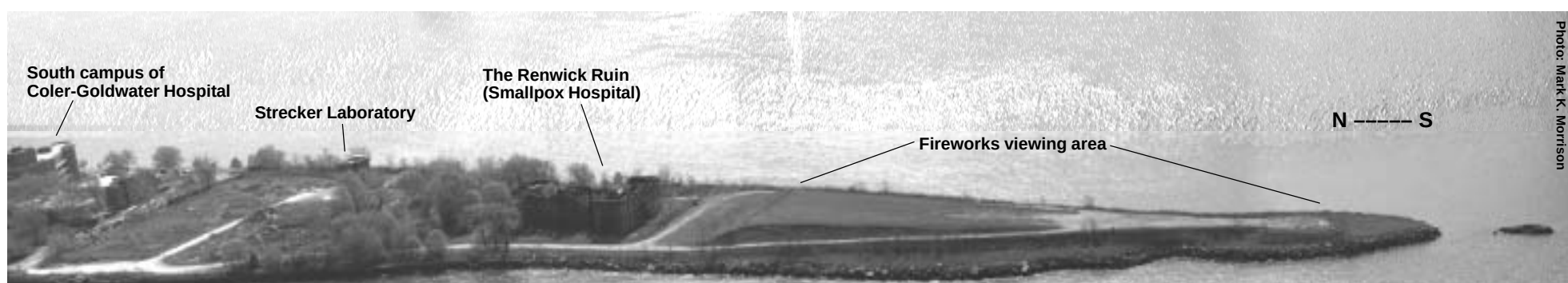
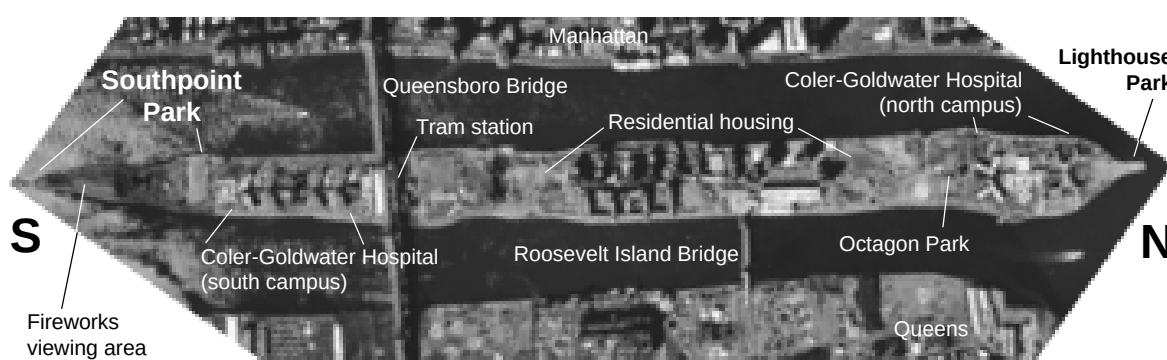


Photo: Mark K. Morrison

Today, Fireworks... By '07, a \$30 Million Park

**Trust for Public Land and Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
Developing Design & Funding Plans for an Enhanced Southpoint**



by Dick Lutz

By 2007, Roosevelt Island's Southpoint will be a \$30 million park in the making.

That's the determined intent of a plan being developed by the Trust for Public Land in cooperation with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is the largest, and the only national organization, building parks – "preserving land for people," as Susan Clark, its Director of Public Affairs puts it. Since its founding in 1972, TPL has had an involvement in helping to preserve 2,600 "special places," ranging from pocket playgrounds to large parks, in 46 states. Clark says that represents 1.9 million acres. TPL was brought into the project on the initiative of Mary Beth Labate, who chairs the RIOC Board of Directors.

(For Roosevelt Island's fireworks visitors or the uninitiated, RIOC is the New York State entity that holds the lease on New York City's Roosevelt Island. Since the '70's, it or its predecessor agencies has been responsible for developing most of this East River island as residential, commercial, and recreational property, and managing it. The corporation's president and board of directors are appointed by the Governor.)

TPL's planning is under the direction of Charles McKinney, a consultant hired for the job, and is laid out in detail on a new website dedicated to the process, at MarkKMorrison.com/roosevelt. (Mark K. Morrison Associates is the landscape architecture firm working with TPL.) The website displays the primary work done to date, a thorough analysis of the Southpoint site. It includes site diagrams with the site's constraints and park opportunities.

With site analysis complete, McKinney and TPL project these calendar goals:

- Mid-August: Completion of three conceptual plans.
- September: Public presentation of the three plans.
- November: Presentation of a preferred plan.
- 2007: First-phase construction.

Along the way, TPL will address fund-raising and operating-budget concerns and work to build public and official support for the project. "A lot of the work I do," McKinney says, "involves finding partners and funders along the way – people who will help build part of it." He says there will be a mix – government, philanthropic, and corporate patrons.

McKinney, who is 52, spent 17 years as administrator of Riverside Park, but has lately been a consultant to the City on waterfront and open-space planning. He comes with degrees in architecture and urban design, and in 1994 was a Loeb Fellow in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard.

Right now, TPL is looking for public input. McKinney and an associate have already interviewed more than three dozen people – leaders of resident organizations, officials, and others, trying to "learn what insiders know" and "develop an understanding of the site from the perspective of the people who live and work on Roosevelt Island." That process, and the current quest for input, is producing a long and varied wish list.

But in this brainstorming phase, the sky's the limit, and McKinney is eager for people to visit the website and complete a form with reactions

See **Southpoint**, page 7

Charles McKinney is heading up planning for Southpoint Park

Housing

Tenants Concerned, Wary, As Sale and Probable Privatizations Inch Forward

Depending on who was speaking late last month, the pending sale of Island House and Westview is either a "massive eviction plan" for tenants in the Mitchell-Lama buildings, or a necessary step toward a better future for those same residents, "in tenants' best interests."

Both buildings are the subject of a contract between the current ownership group, headed by Charles Lucido, Esq., and J. Christopher Daly's Sheldrake Organization. The ground under them,

owned by New York City but leased to New York State along with most of the rest of Roosevelt Island, is the subject of a June 14 resolution by the Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). It would extend the sub-lease on the ground, which would make the purchase practical for Sheldrake by smoothing the way to removal of the buildings from the Mitchell-Lama program, under which the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) sets rent rates for apart-

ments in the complexes.

A timeline, with recent developments:

- Jan. 10, 2004: *The Main Street WIRE* reports that Sheldrake is the likely buyer of Island House and Westview.
- Mon., May 3: The State Attorney General sends a "no action" letter to counsel for the Westview tenants organization, authorizing certain activities aimed at tenant purchase of the building.
- Mid-May: Lucido asks DHCR

See **Privatizations**, page 6

Joseph Gorman, Cabrini Priest 1985-99, Dead at 73

Father Joseph P. Gorman, retired pastor of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini parish on Roosevelt Island, died June 16 at Mary Manning Walsh Home in Manhattan. He was 73.

Father Gorman, whose immediate and extended family had many vocations, was pastor of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini from 1985 to 1999, when he retired. He was the second pastor of Cabrini parish.

Father Francis Gorman of St. Teresa of Avila in Sleepy Hollow, spoke in his homily of his cousin's inspiration in a family in which four boys of their generation became priests and four girls became nuns. "All of us admired and looked up to Joseph as the wise leader," he said. "He was the first of four of us to go to Cathedral College right on to ordination. He was our inspiration." He described his cousin as "a happy priest" who was "always grateful to be God's instrument." He also recalled Father Joseph Gorman's "gift with expressing the English language."

"At his sister Anne's funeral three years ago, he used the 'e' at the end of her name to mean 'excellent' in such a way that the word seemed to belong to her alone. That

was God's gift to Joseph Gorman."

Born in the Bronx, Father Gorman studied for the priesthood at Cathedral College and St. Joseph's Seminary in Dunwoodie. He was ordained June 2, 1956. He earned master's degrees at Dunwoodie and at New York Theological Seminary in Manhattan.

Before coming to Roosevelt Island, he had served as pastor at St. John Vianney parish in the Bronx, and had been parochial vicar at Holy Trinity parish in Manhattan from 1956 to 1969. He was on the faculty of Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx, 1969-1976.

Father Gorman is survived by two sisters, Sister Rose Ellen Gorman, O.P., and Jeanne Hveem. He was predeceased by a sister, Anne McCauley, and two brothers, Richard Gorman and Msgr. James T. Gorman, a former pastor of St. Patrick's parish in Bedford, who died in 2002.

Cardinal Egan offered the funeral mass on June 21 at St. Brendan's Church in the Bronx, where Father Gorman's brother-in-law, Deacon Paul Hveem, is assigned. Burial was in St. Johns Cemetery in Queens. A memorial mass is planned for October on the Island.



Father Joseph Gorman, as he offered the blessing at a community event in September, 1998

Briefly...

The Residents Association Common Council voted Wednesday night to withdraw its revised constitution for more work. See pages 2 and 3.

The Tramway will be shut down July 10-11 for a *Fear Factor* shoot. See *The RIOC Column*, page 3.

The Editorial Page

No Better Place

Visiting? Indulge us, won't you, in a little bragging. You are visiting the best place to live in all New York.

We are NYC's small town – New York's Little Apple – a mere ten thousand or so among the millions, a mere 147 acres beside Manhattan's thousands. And we are the best-kept secret in a City of secret surprises.

You may know us for the Tramway. And now, if this is your first fireworks here, Southpoint Park. Even so, you know only a small bit of Roosevelt Island.

We celebrate our diversity. Not only are we the temporary home of many United Nations employees from all over the world, but we are rich in ethnic and linguistic variation. Our wealth extends to many dozens who are called disabled or, in some places, handicapped. Here, we call them friends. As a community, we are rankled when we find some aspect of our Island inaccessible to any among us.

As a community, in fact, we are probably far more actively involved than any you've ever known. There are those among us who see a wonderful place to live, and do good works to make it all the more wonderful. And there are those who tackle problems and solve them.

Because we *do* have problems. We don't get to elect the officials who run the place. That's because Roosevelt Island is a creature of the State of New York, and while we're immensely proud of our City Councilmember, Speaker Gifford Miller, his influence and that of others we help to elect to public office is limited by the politics of a place where the Governor appoints almost everybody who earns a dime in an official capacity. Some are good, some are bad, and too many languish in between.

But while we don't get to elect the officials who run the place, we're workin' on that – and have been for years – inching too slowly toward elective democracy in a place where a passel of plum positions are a patronage dream for any Governor who doesn't live here (nor do those appointees) – and sometimes a patronage nightmare for those who *do* live here. But we're workin' on it.

And we have our differences, as any close examination of these pages will show. We're a place where causes are deeply felt, and debate is sometimes clenched-fist clamorous. Yet, when it's over, we settle back and enjoy the fruits of refined results that might not have been possible otherwise.

If you have occasion to come again – and we hope you will – here you have three-dozen acres of parks to host you, miles of promenade to walk, and a friendly population of folks who will tell you that, if you are lost, you're probably wet.

You are visiting the best place to live in all New York.

At press time, the
Public Safety Blotter
for June 16-30 had not yet been received.
It is expected soon, and will be posted on
Website NYC10044 at nyc10044.com/wire/2420/blot2420.html.



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Letters

To the Editor:

There were two articles in the May 29 *WIRE* about the state of the stores on the Island.

Sadly, the merchants are to blame for most of their predicament. Look how clean, fresh, and well-stocked the stationery store is now. Alex and his staff have turned this dark, dirty, and dilapidated store into a showpiece of what can be done on the Island. I am sure the investment is well worth the return in new business.

Our other storekeepers have not gotten the message. There is no reason for me to go into the grubby hardware store, when I can get what I need at a clean, well-stocked store at Second Avenue on my way to and from the Tram. The owners of the hardware store are always reading the paper; maybe they should be looking around their store and see it from a customer's perspective. It looks like Canal Street. It is completely disabled-unfriendly and our wheelchair residents cannot get past the boxes and displays.

The fish store/deli does not have dumpster service and routinely leaves trash on Main Street. The store is dirty.

The deli is a disaster. The staff ranges from great to some surly youth who do not add to the ambience of shopping there. This store has been open over 27 years and not a cent has ever been spent in decoration.

My biggest complaint is that our stores are neglected and filthy. It is easy. Clean your stores, spend some time and money refreshing the stock and decorating the windows, and you might see new customers.

If our stores want customers, stop being cash only, accept credit cards. Our merchants seem to want to be cash only and therefore cannot look forward to higher spending in our way of shopping. This is one reason they do not want low-interest loans, the responsibility of putting all the business "on the books."

I suggested to Bonnie Sherk [of the Living Library] and RIHMC that a great project for Roosevelt Island Day would [have been] to have a giant Main Street window-cleaning and decorating project. Every store, office, organization on the street would clean up their space and show some pride in our community.

Judith Berdy

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; *letters submitted anonymously are not considered for publication.*

Preferred form of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file created using any common wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files containing macros), or on a PC-standard 3.5" disk left at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. **Alternatives:** Typed copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to 212-755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. **Letters are subject to acceptance and to possible editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

Letters deadline for July 31 issue: Tuesday, July 27

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

To the Community:

The Common Council voted Wednesday night to withdraw their amended Residents Association constitution from consideration at another Town Meeting. It is, at this point, very unclear what will happen next. What should happen is that the constitution should return to committee, especially now that there is a wider audience ready to participate in a committee. It seems that this is not going to happen, nor is the debate of these issues before a Town Meeting.

For 27 years, the Residents Association has imposed upon itself the same rigorous standards and restrictions as all other serious elected bodies.

RIRA will remain legitimate only so long as its constitution remains that way.

Individuals come and go, Common Councils come and go, RIRA officers come and go, and RIRA stays RIRA because RIRA is the RIRA constitution. The constitution defines RIRA and the rules within which we operate.

RIRA has had saints and it has had sinners. The constitution controls how much damage they can do while they're in office. Historically, when the Island has been in real trouble, the real saints have shown up. Hopefully, that will continue to happen. When things are relatively quiet, being Islanders, we create factions and squabble amongst ourselves. It's been the unofficial Roosevelt Island sport for 27 years. Reasonable people pay little attention, and that's what it usually deserves. But this time it matters.

I have no argument with the Council's operational details being moved out of the constitution into by-laws that can be changed by the members of each Common Council as they are elected. Why not? It's only fair.

But that is not what was going on here.

I have no strong feelings either about whether the resident members of Community Board 8 or School Board 2 or the RIOC Board should remain on the Council. I believe the residents should make that choice, and personally prefer an inclusionary RIRA, but either choice is legitimate.

And rather than "fighting to keep my seat," it was I who proposed removing the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations (RICO) from the Council in the committee meetings.

I do have strong feelings, passionate feelings, about Mr. and Mrs. Katz, Mr. and Mrs. Marcus, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Feinmel continuing to give speeches and write proudly about the radiant purity of an all-elected Council when they have chosen to insert in their new Constitution the right of the Council to appoint, and I quote Mr. Marcus, "whoever they choose," to the Common Council, with no restriction.

At the May Council meeting, when the original vote was taken, not one of these champions of democracy batted an eye at Mr. Marcus's response to my protest to this move. Mr. Katz said, "Next speaker, please," and they proceeded with the vote. The vote won, they broke out champagne (I'm not kidding) and chatted happily about the unlikelihood of anyone caring enough to come to the Town Meeting.

A constitution by its very nature is designed to be difficult to change. The very basic rules that define RIRA and what it can do and can't do should remain very hard to change.

The structure of building representation should remain inviolate within the Constitution.

If all that this new Constitution were doing were adding representatives for Southtown, we, the Council, would have proposed an amendment to do so, voted on it, posted notices, had a Town Meeting to which few would have come, then at the next Council meeting voted the change. That's all it has ever taken to make a reasonable, necessary change.

This constitution moves building representation itself under the control of the Council. Let's say these guys are all saints and they won't change a thing. What about the next group, or the next? Nothing would exist to stop them from deciding, for instance, that the Council should be like the U.S. Senate, with two members from each building. Well, Eastwood has as many apartments as Island House, Westview, and Rivercross combined.

Never happen? Here? The point is that it *can't* happen if building representation is left in the constitution where the residents have to approve any change. By-Laws are far too easy to change.

The most basic structure of the Common Council and its most senior officers should remain defined in the Constitution.

Let individual presidents and individual Councils decide what other committees, subcommittees and ad hoc committees they may want and let them create chairs for them all, so long as we know that the issues that are really important to the Island are covered. That can be guaranteed only if these things continue to be defined in the constitution, not Council-controlled by-laws.

The same is true if the minimal requirements for the Council members' performance are left in the constitution. Along with safeguards on how the money you donate is spent. And restrictions on elections. These new by-laws put all decisions on campaign rules in the hands of the incumbents. That's laughable.

Mr. Katz and Mr. Marcus say that the 27-year tradition of an equal playing field for everyone running for RIRA office is unenforceable. No, it's not. Before personal computers we did it with a spending cap. Today, a workable alternative is to restrict advertising to 8½ x 11 paper or smaller and prohibit election advertising in the *WIRE*. Done. With today's computers, all it would then take is individual effort, which is what it should take to get elected.

But what I think does not matter. My every effort in all of this has been to get the demonstrable facts of these matters in front of the residents for you to decide for yourselves. That is all that is important. I may sometimes be over-passionate but I have not been misleading.

Go back and check the last *WIRE*. Count all the different names I was called for the terrible, unforgivable crime of asking the community to come to a meeting and find out for yourselves what was going on. Your coming has made all the difference. It always has, and it always will.

I hope we can now all focus on some of the more important issues facing the Island for a while. I will, of course, stay involved with this one. I promise to let you know if I think it needs your attention.

Karen Stewart

I want to thank everybody for their good wishes while I was in the hospital. I am very happy to be back, but will be going back into the hospital again in a few weeks for what I hope will finally be the end of the kidney stones. Everyone's support has made this painful time much easier.

The planning continued for the Fourth of July Fireworks Festival at Southpoint while I was out. Tickets are selling

well so far this year and, kidney stones allowing, I look forward to my first one. I am confident, though, that it will be a great event. There is going to be a swing band playing before the fireworks start. There will also be face painting and a juggler for the children.

Food vendors will be selling hot dogs, hamburgers, and ice cream. It is a real, old-fashioned family Fourth of July event.

There are some rumors that this year the fireworks have been moved to the west side. While it is true that Macy's will be doing fireworks by the Statue of Liberty this year, that is in addition to the ones on the east side. I am confident that the view from Roosevelt Island will not be at all diminished.

The preparations for it do necessitate that we close Southpoint from Saturday through Monday for preparations and cleanup. It will be reopened at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday for everyone's enjoyment.

Another event is coming to the Island on July 11. We received confirmation that the people at Fear Factor want to use the Tram for a stunt in one of their upcoming episodes. The filming will take place on July 11, with set-up occurring on July 10. The people at Fear Factor will be providing bus service during that weekend that will be comparable to the Tram schedule. We invite everyone to take a moment to look at the Tram that weekend to see the filming. Please note that information about this service interruption is also available on the RIOCI hotline at 212-308-6608.

I also have some good news to report about Motorgate. As mentioned in letters posted at the garage, work is moving on improvements to the elevators. An elevator consult-

ant reviewed the situation and made recommendations about what needs to be done to prevent the breakdowns that have been occurring. The plans that he drew up were submitted as part of the Request for Proposals for contractors to make the changes and repairs. We are moving forward with this, and it looks like there is, finally, an end in sight. We appreciate everyone's patience.

We also appreciate everybody's suggestions about emergency planning for the Island. On July 9, Matthew Katz, the President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, will be joining RIOCI in a meeting with the City and State offices of Emergency Management and the Department of Transportation to discuss the needs of the Island.



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

We will have much more to report on this in the issue after the meeting. I would like to take a brief moment to describe something I saw on Main Street that I found very distressing. For the most part the flowers in the planters are doing very well and actually seem to be thriving. The other morning, however, as I was walking down by 503 Main Street, I noticed that someone had ripped the flowers out of the planter and deposited them, with the roots torn but attached, in the middle of the street. We are working to beautify Main Street, and request everyone's cooperation. If you see anybody destroying property on Main Street or elsewhere on the Island, please let Public Safety know.

I wish everyone a happy and healthy Fourth of July. While celebrating, please take all of the necessary precautions, including barbecuing only in the designated areas. This is for your safety and for the safety and health of your family and neighbors as well. Enjoy!

without the services of a Treasurer for six or eight months and it didn't make a difference; there was no movement in the Treasury to report on.

In the last four years we have reversed that trend, and monthly Treasurer's reports have been necessary and required. As a matter of fact, we have commissioned the services of an Auditor for the first time in my eight years on the Common Council (despite the constitutional requirement for one) and the first audit of the RIRA books in recent memory will be presented to the Council at the first regular fall meeting.

So where do we go from here? There was a concerted effort to have the Common Council just vote the revised constitution in tonight and be done with it. Very tempting, I can tell you, but a bad idea in the long run. The RIRA membership takes little enough notice of the Common Council and to deprive this electorate of their one opportunity to learn what we do and how we do it would be wrong. I hope we can bring back to a Town Meeting a somewhat reworked document that will meet the expectations of the residents as well as the needs of the Common Council and that can be amended to fulfill our needs without all this jumping through hoops.



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

rather than in the hands of the governed. In other words, it's your responsibility to educate yourself on what this constitution and bylaws entails and to do so before you come to a Town Meeting. If you have questions, take them to your elected representatives; that's what they're there for. Ask for answers and for documentation and keep at it until you understand how things work. This is no different than when resolutions or charter-revision questions appear on regular City and State ballots and the League of Women Voters hasn't bothered to inform you of the issues. It's still your responsibility to dig out the details and learn what you need to know before casting a vote.

We've spent a lot of time on this issue and some have questioned whether it's worth it. Well, it's worth doing once and then, getting back to the issues, projects, and programs that have made this Common Council, Class of 2002, a pleasure and a privilege to work with. Over the past two years we have managed to start our meetings on time, to debate and vote without rancor, and to finish our business in an hour or so, two hours tops. The old days of four-hour marathons in which progress was minimal and the speechifying

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Gallery RIVAA Show of Roosevelt Island Artists, now through August 29, at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street. Open Sat.-Sun., 11-5; Wed. and Fri., 6-9. (See ad, page 4.)

Fourth of July Fireworks Festival, Sun., July 4, Southpoint Park. Tickets on sale at RIOCI, 591 Main Street, or at Manhattan Tram station. Gate open at 5:00.

— The Coming Week —

Eastwood Rent Determination Hearing, Tue., July 6, 10:00 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Book Discussion — *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham, **Thur., July 15**, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Sat.-Sun., July 10-11 — **Tram unavailable** (see RIOCI Column, left).

— Future Events —

Gospel-Jazz Music Fest, featuring Roosevelt Islander Juanita Fleming, **Sat., July 17**, 5-7 p.m., at the pier near the subway station. Sponsored by Dayspring Church (see ad, page 5).

The Main Street WIRE — next issue **Sat., July 31**. (To receive e-mail bulletins in the meantime, send an "Add Me" message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., July 23; decision on inserts for *The Bag*, Mon., July 26; inserts due Thur., July 29. **Future issues:** 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.

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.

The RIRA Column

I'm writing this late on Wednesday evening, June 30. I've just come from the Residents Association Common Council meeting that I hoped would give direction to the constitutional debate that has raged for so long. Was there more light than heat? About equal, unfortunately, I would say. Those who came to express outrage did so. Those cooler heads who looked to devise a rationale that would govern the Common Council and enfranchise the RIRA membership worked hard to come up with a plan and a mechanism to make that happen.

I was glad to see about a dozen Island residents at the meeting. This just about equaled the number of RIRA members who have participated in Public Sessions for the entire last year! I said to them that I hoped they would make RIRA Common Council meetings (on the first Wednesday of the month from September through June) a habit. Also, I tried to make the point that any set of rules, constitution or bylaws, is only a skeleton upon which the flesh and blood of the organization, the volunteers, is built. Without a solid volunteer group, people attending regularly and ready to work, the constitution can just be preserved under glass for all the value it has.

First Vice President Steve Marcus tried valiantly to keep the debate on the constitutional issues that have most concerned those residents who have been paying attention, but it was an uphill fight. The existing constitution is virtually impenetrable and those who support the status quo have done so by diverting the debate into crevasses and backwaters difficult to get out of. I believe that dividing the existing constitution into a short constitution (containing the fundamental tenets of the organization and subject to amendment only by a quorum of RIRA members) and bylaws (containing the rules and regulations of the Common Council and amended by a two-thirds majority vote of that Council) is the way organizations should operate. This is not the U.S. Constitution, folks, and your fundamental rights are not at stake. We are an organization of volunteers, residents who give of their time and effort to improve the community, and the constitution merely gives us structure within which to work.

We have little money and less power. What we do have is the right to call ourselves the voice of Roosevelt Island, and it is by virtue of being elected representatives that we get to make that claim. Every Council Member who exercises a vote as an organization's appointee damages that claim.

That the last two Councils have accomplished as much as they have, despite a flawed set of rules, can only be attributed to the endurance and determination of the Council Members with whom I've served since 2000.

I served on two Common Councils prior to my election as president in November 2000. These Councils were never called upon to raise money, to spend money, or to devise programs of any sort. There was a period in which we went

Senior Center

Monday 10-11, Latchhook Class 10-11:30, English as 2nd Language 10:30, Blood Pressure Screening 12:30, "Oldies" Movies 1:00, Tai Chi 7:00, Dance Class (Beginners)	12:30, Sculpting 7:00, Pokeno (RISA)
Tuesday 10:00, Computers 10-11, Dance & Relax 1:00, Bingo 6:00, Yoga Class 7:30, Games (RISA)	Thursday 10:00, Tai Chi 10:30, Creative Arts 12:30, Movie 7:00, Dance
Wednesday 9:15, Stay Well 10:00, Spanish Class 10:30, Shoppers' Bus	Friday 6:00, Dance & Relax 1:00, Bridge 7:00, Games (RISA)
	Saturday 7:30, Bingo (RISA)

Special Events

Sun., July 4, 1:00, Fourth of July celebration
Fri., July 30, 12:30, Birthdays

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interminable are behind us. Why don't you check it out? On to other business: I've learned that the Roosevelt Island Day blood drive amassed sixty pints of blood. In a city not prone to excessive blood donation, this is the gift of life pure and simple. Produced by the Icla da Silva Foundation, the blood drive has been a RIRA Common Council project for the last three years. My thanks to you RIRA members who sat under the tent at the Farmers' Market and in Church Plaza persuading your neighbors to cough up (but not literally) a pint of the red stuff.

I'm happy to announce that the first meeting to consider contingency planning for Roosevelt Island has been set for July 9. RIOCI and the City and State Offices of Emergency Management will be represented and I've been invited to represent this community. Your Common Council presented RIOCI with a letter listing items of special concern shortly after the Blackout of last August. Roosevelt Island has unique considerations when planning for emergencies because of its special population and because this Island community has access to emergency services over a single bridge and without the water-borne backup available that a working dock would provide. We will have much to talk about.

And finally, I hope your festivities on the Glorious Fourth of July are a prelude to an equally glorious summer. See you at the fireworks! And to my bride, Sherie, on the occasion of her birthday: you are the cream in my coffee and the apple of my eye; all the best!

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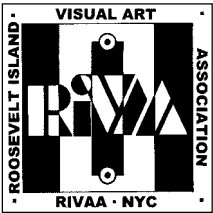
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Privatizations from page 1

to allow Sheldrake to take over management of the buildings from Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC) without competitive bids for the contract.

- Tue., May 25: Lucido notifies RIHMC that its management contract will not be renewed when it ends June 30.
- Wed., May 26: A DHCR official tells *The WIRE* that grant of the no-bid waiver is routine and expected by mid-month.
- Thur., June 10: Assemblymember Pete Grannis, Representative Carolyn Maloney, and City Council Speaker Gifford Miller write to DHCR objecting to the management change at Island House and Westview without competitive bidding. The letter cites newspaper articles about Sheldrake problems meeting payments on other privatized buildings it owns in New York State.
- Mon., June 14: Sheldrake responds, saying past problems have been solved and claiming a solid track record in improving the buildings it has acquired.
- Mon., June 14: The RIOC Board authorizes two members, John Mannix and Deborah Beck, to hold discussions with Sheldrake on extension of the ground leases. (An extension from 2028 to 2068, when the State leasehold on Roosevelt Island ends, would make mortgage borrowing possible.) The RIOC Board is told by RIOC attorneys that a valid contract exists between Lucido and Sheldrake. A Memorandum of Intent accompanying the resolution says RIOC will “endeavor to obtain” public subsidies for rent or apartment purchases for tenants falling below a recognized income standard, in the event of privatization of the buildings.
- Wed., June 16: The head of the Westview tenant group, Opher Pail, writes to Governor George Pataki alleging a “secret agreement” between RIOC and Sheldrake, asking that the ground-lease extension be denied, and suggesting that the State risks “destroy[ing]” the Roosevelt Island community “by secretly dealing with well-con-

nected outside private investors.” The letter points out that the “key” to resolution of the matter is extension of the ground lease controlled by RIOC. (The Governor appoints RIOC’s President and Board members.)

- Fri., June 18: Attorneys for Westview tenants write to DHCR objecting to Sheldrake’s management takeover.
- After a meeting with tenants, DHCR delays a waiver for Sheldrake to take over management of Westview and Island House without the competitive bidding required for Mitchell-Lama buildings.
- Thursday, June 24: Lucido, Daly, and Robert J. Klehammer, Executive Vice President of Sheldrake, meet with tenant representatives from Island House and Westview.
- Friday, June 25: A Lucido letter is distributed to tenants explaining decisions leading up to the planned Sheldrake purchase. “I can understand why tenants and employees are concerned,” he writes, but says benefits will result from Sheldrake involvement, asserting that tenants “will see that Sheldrake has the professionalism, experience, and tenant orientation to surpass the tenants’ expectations.”

Resident concern about the deal stems from the likelihood that a RIOC grant of a ground-lease extension for the properties will make privatization of the buildings practical, and that once they are out of the Mitchell-Lama system, rents may rise, or significant profits may be sought in turning the buildings into condominiums or cooperatives.

Klehammer, the Sheldrake Vice President, says that in the meetings with tenant leaders, he heard their anxieties in “a frank exchange” he characterized as “good.” He said, “It probably was something we should have done earlier.” He says Sheldrake promised stronger communication links with tenants in the future. “We may argue, we may disagree, but we are committed to talking with them to resolve issues in a professional, businesslike manner.”

Island House tenant representatives did not respond to *WIRE* requests for comments on the meeting.

But Opher Pail, head of the Westview tenant organization, is taking aim at the ground-lease extension. “Without the ground-lease extension, the building is essentially worthless, and any agreement to sell the building is equally worthless. It is very likely that the Lucido-Daly agreement will be void, by its own terms, if the ground lease is not extended.” Pail continues, in a statement to *The WIRE*, “Indeed, the ground lease, controlled by the State, is the key for the future of this great community.”

Pail characterizes the Sheldrake proposal in stark terms: “The current Sheldrake proposal, which includes unregulated market rents and unspecified government subsidies for only a handful of qualified tenants, is in fact a massive eviction plan.” He says a tenant-sponsored privatization plan “will preserve affordable housing without government subsidies while the State will meet its ground-lease objectives.”

Pail added, “We are very pleased that the leadership of DHCR agreed to meet with us, and that RIOC’s Board agreed to take a fresh look at the ground-lease matter, and we are looking forward to meeting with them soon.” *The WIRE* could not confirm that a “fresh look” by RIOC might consider a resident bid for the Westview ground-lease extension. But Mannix said he is unaware of any meeting scheduled with the Westview Task Force. The authority granted to Mannix and Beck seems, by its language, to limit their brief to negotiating with the current owners and Sheldrake.

Pail cites the May 3 letter from the Attorney General as authorization for Westview tenants to explore a purchase with Lucido. But Lucido told *The WIRE* last week that, “We have a firm, binding contract with Sheldrake, which was entered into a while

back and, to the extent that the tenants are able to negotiate, they may not be able to negotiate with me, but they can negotiate with Sheldrake.” He added, “One of the many reasons the deal was made with Sheldrake is that the tenants and I didn’t feel we were equipped to go through the elements of a public offering. And if we did, we’d have ordinary income from a tax standpoint,” a financial disadvantage to the sellers.

Klehammer responds to concerns about “mass eviction” by saying, “In every other Mitchell-Lama dissolution, there has been some kind of negotiated agreement with the residents... There is give-and-take and compromise, and they’ve all resulted in protections to specified groups.”

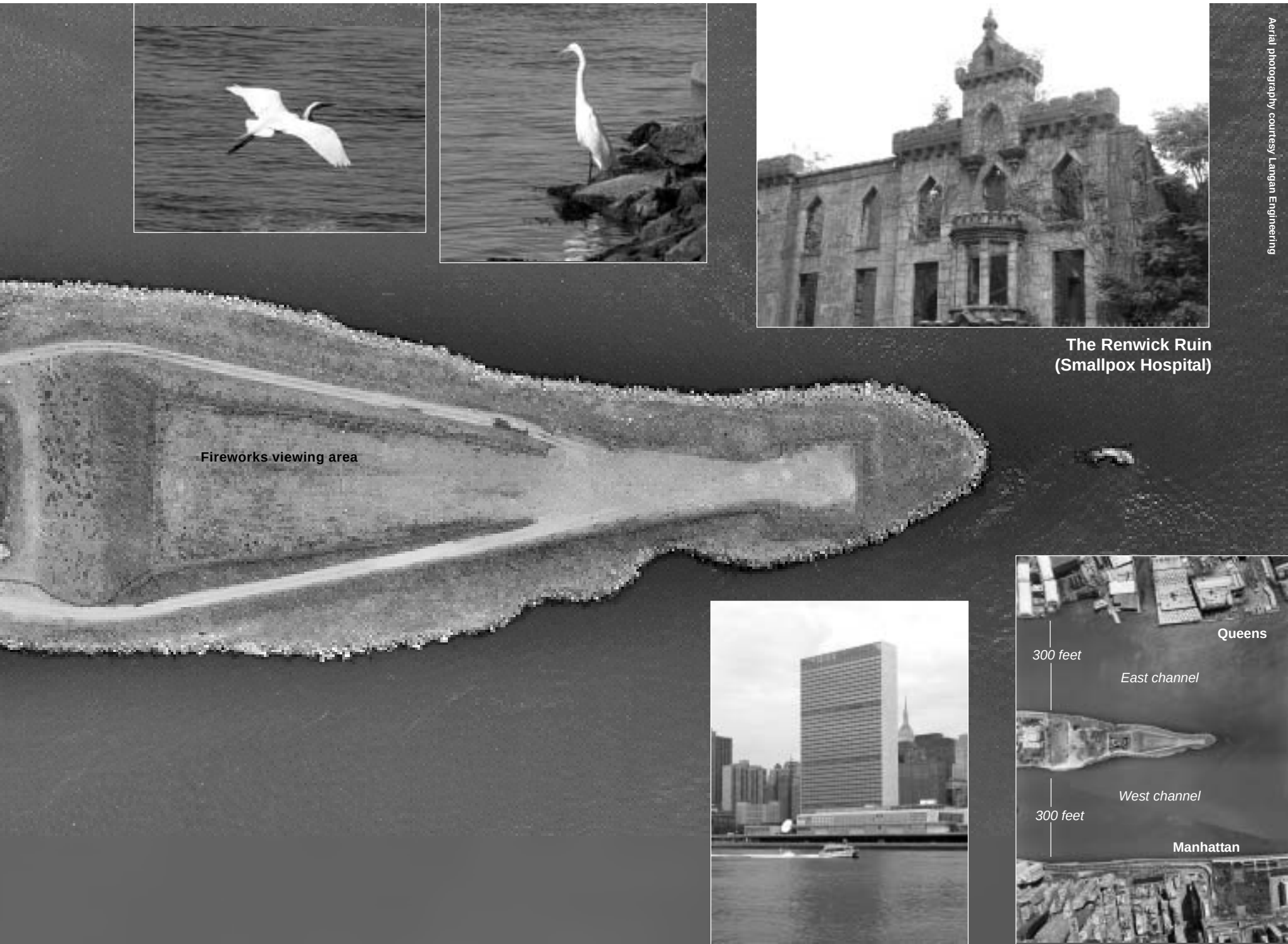
Klehammer points out that in three years, the buildings face a hike in tax-equivalency payments when the buildings’ tax abatements will end. He estimates that the tax bite could be “at least” \$200 to \$500 per month per apartment, “which can only be paid through a rent increase.” He expressed an eagerness to work with tenant groups to mitigate the effects of such an increase.

Meanwhile, the RIOC Board’s commitment to “endeavor to obtain” subsidies for residents whose income falls below a federal standard has only begun, according to Board member Beck. “We do not have definitive commitments as to the amount or how the subsidy would ultimately be provided,” but “it is only the beginning of the discussions, not the end.” She also wrote, responding by e-mail to *WIRE* questions, “John Mannix and I, negotiating [for] the RIOC Board regarding the extension of the ground lease, are committed to have a transparent process so that residents of the affected buildings will know what we are doing.”

But a Mitchell-Lama buy-out takes time, and Beck added, speaking of the ground lease and the endeavor to obtain tenant/buyer subsidies, “It is likely that it will not be before the Fall that there is anything more to report.”

Roosevelt Island postcards are available at nyc10044.com, or see *Classified*, page 10.

Mailed *WIRE* subscriptions are available. Call 212 826-9055.



Southpoint from page 1

and suggestions, or get in touch with him through his e-mail address, estuaryone@aol.com. “We’ll need a project that the residents are enthusiastic about and RIOC is enthusiastic about, so that elected officials will fund it. We want everybody to know what’s going on and to feel that their issues are being addressed.”

In conversations with Island leaders and others, McKinney has compiled a long wish list ranging from the whimsical to the downright practical. Ferry service has been mentioned frequently. There happens to be a disused ferry slip on the east channel just south of the fence marking the start of Southpoint. At one time it was just a short walk from City Hospital, which was torn down in the ’80’s, though blocks of stone remain on the site. McKinney says that Tom Fox, the entrepreneur who operates those yellow water taxis that zoom up and down the river, estimates a slip would cost \$350,000. But once it’s in place, Fox’s organization sees serving the Island, perhaps including special events like an “art cruise” that might also visit Socrates Sculpture Park and the Noguchi Museum, both nearby in Queens.

Another wish-list item is a marina, but McKinney says currents, at up to eight feet per second (5.5 mph), are probably too swift and the tides too extreme, even in the east channel. He says every plan involving water typically shows a marina, as early plans for a residential Roosevelt Island did, but thinks it’s not likely to work here. On the other hand, some supervised boating might be possible, and a provision for fishing is likely.

Ultimately, it will be McKinney’s job to pare the wish lists down to something fundable. “The potential solutions we will present in August and September will be kind of nuanced. It’s not just what we want. It’s what we think we can afford and get funders for, and what we think we can maintain.”

Maintainability is, in fact, a key issue. McKinney, recalling his days as the administrator of Manhattan’s Riverside Park, says, “I’ve built things in the past that I couldn’t maintain. I know better now. We have to come to terms with a balance between what we want and what we can afford to maintain.” He says Southpoint Park will be designed to an operating budget. “From the very first day a project is completed, you must have in place someone who is knowledgeable, especially to care for plant materials. They have to be watered-weeded-mulched-and-pruned.” He runs those last words together like someone who’s been there, done that.

Operating funds are likely to come from a mix of sources – government, philanthropic, corporate, and “revenues generated on site” – a lease for a restaurant would be an ex-

ample.

At the September meetings on the Island, those attending will get scorecards on which they can react to aspects of the three possible plans, which McKinney describes as “graphic outlines with postcard-like views and narratives.”

Those meetings will trigger a two-month process aimed at settling on “a preferred plan that will give the community and public officials feasible and highly desirable options for the park, as well as budgets for construction and operation,” according to TPL’s press release on the project. At its end, in November, the “preferred plan” will be presented, with a first-phase schedule of construction likely to cost “something like \$5 million.”

A lot is involved, McKinney points out. The site will need extension of electrical power, telephone service, sewers, and water lines. Decisions have to be made on shoreline stabilization – whether to rely on rip-rap like that now absorbing the wakes of passing boats, or to add a seawall, like that around the rest of Roosevelt Island, in some areas of the new project.

Just how fast construction can go will depend on the pace of fund-raising. That means the 2007 target, as well as the budget of \$30 million, are approximations. According to TPL Director of Public Affairs Clark, TPL will be there through the entire process – “through planning, implementation, and construction.” She says fund-raising for the design stage has already begun.

McKinney is clearly enthusiastic about this assignment. “It’s an extraordinary site. You can sit alone next to the water, then go to the top of a rubble pile, stabilized as a promontory, and have panoramic views. At Southpoint, you can watch the sun come up and go down. Then you can watch the lights of the City as they come on with nightfall. There’s no better way to see the fireworks. People like to watch from private yachts but, in Southpoint, we have the biggest boat of all – a veritable cruise ship.” He says that even though the Independence Day event is only once a year, any park design will accommodate it. He says that while the sloping land south of the Renwick Ruin lends itself to performance events, a fixed band shell would probably be a mistake. For flexibility, he says, “You want one that rises up when you need it – a temporary structure that goes away.”

Clark describes the RIOC-TPL partnership as one “whose time has come. It’s the right moment for it to take hold and move forward.” McKinney says, “TPL is about the best partner you could have. They’ve been able to make deals happen.”

TPL has a website that describes its work at www.tpl.org.

Site Facts (see MarkKMorrison.com/roosevelt)

- Roosevelt Island has about 4 miles of shoreline. It is 2 miles long, 147 acres. It is 800 feet wide at its widest point.
- The Island is opposite Manhattan’s 46th to 86th Streets.
- Roosevelt Island has 37.4 acres of parks, but one 15-acre site, the location of a 19th-Century lunatic asylum, has been approved by the RIOC Board of Directors as a location for a 500-apartment building, which may be challenged legally.
- There are six registered landmarks on the Island. Two, Strecker Laboratory (1892) and the Smallpox Hospital (1856) are in Southpoint Park. The others are a lighthouse at the north end of the Island (1872); the Octagon Tower remains from the lunatic asylum (1841); the Blackwell Farmhouse (1796); and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (1889), in active use as a church, performance hall, and community meetings center.
- Southpoint is 14 acres, 4 of which are landfill added since 1945. It’s 9.5% of Roosevelt Island.
- Tides vary 9 feet from highest to lowest.
- The 2000 census put Roosevelt Island’s population at 9,520; since then, two new buildings have gone up, and more are on the way.
- Canada geese breed at Southpoint every spring.

History (see the *TimeLine* at nyc10044.com)

- In pre-colonial times, ownership passes from a Dutch governor to the English, to a British officer, to his son-in-law, Robert Blackwell, then to his son, Jacob, and then to Jacob’s son (also named Jacob). During the Revolutionary War, the Island is seized by the British, but it reverts to the Blackwell family at war’s end.
- 1828 – New York City acquires the Island for charitable and corrective institutions.
- 1872 – There are eleven institutions on the Island.
- 1921 – Island is renamed Welfare Island.
- 1969 – Master plan for residential redevelopment.
- 1973 – Island is renamed Roosevelt Island.
- 1975 – A Mitchell-Lama residential building opens, the first of four below-market-rate buildings.
- 1987 – Island’s first market-rate housing opens at Manhattan Park.
- 1989 – Subway service starts.
- 1995 – First Southpoint Fireworks viewing.
- 2001 – New residential construction begins in the long-delayed Southtown.
- 2003 – Southpoint Park open daily, dawn to dusk.



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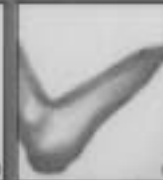
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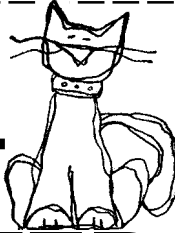
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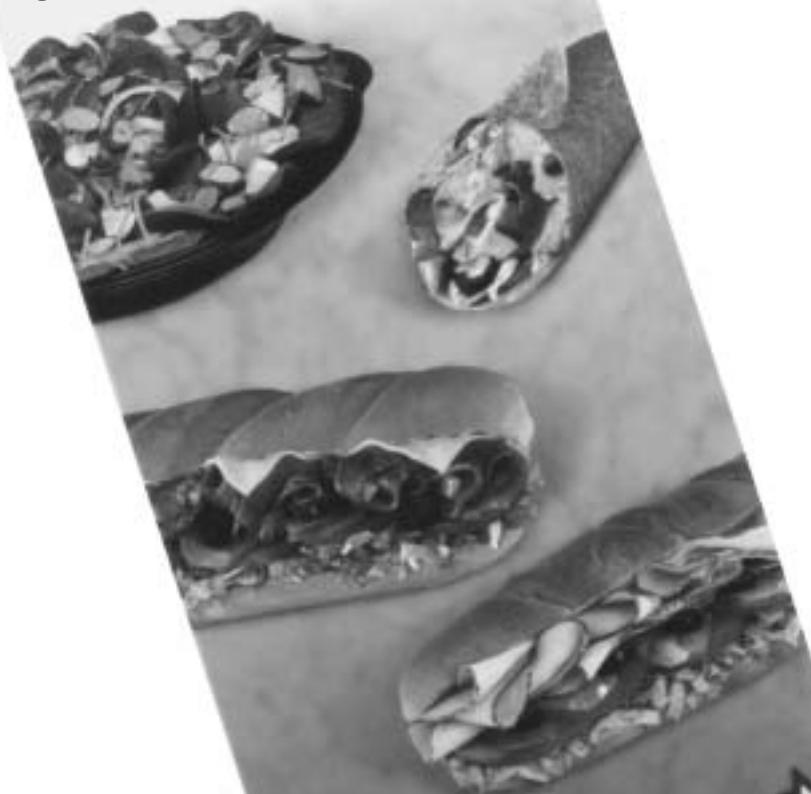
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Classified

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by Saul Nadel
SPORTSWIRE

Baseball
Majors (11-13)

The Playoffs started on Wednesday, June 16. Green defeated Red by the score of 11-5. There were two big surprises in the game. First, Green’s Ryan-Chono De Abreu had three hits. Secondly, Manuel Agramonte smoked a two-run shot. These were both keys to the game. Mikko McDonald pitched four innings, picking up a dazzling eight strikeouts, to get the win. He also hit very well, going 2 for 3. Baba Kane and Alex Beola were both 2 for 4. For Red, Peter Camilleri pitched another good game, striking out seven batters. Alberto Marzan went 2 for 4, including a leadoff double. Alfredo Figueroa almost hit a home run, but was thrown out at home trying to stretch a triple.

The second game was played between Royal and Navy on Friday, June 18. In this game, the fans were pumped up and very involved in the game. The score kept changing and, entering the last inning, the game was tied at 8-8. Navy was up to the plate. Anas Dorani had a run-scoring triple, followed by a single by Matthew Stachnik, scoring Dorani. Max McMillan then walked. Justus Burgos grounded out, but got an RBI. Angelo Rivas also got an RBI single. Royal could manage only one run, so Navy won, 12-9, advancing to the championship game. Despite the loss, Royal had many highlights. Alex Schrum’s amazing speed helped him get a home run. Romance Barber had a two-run homer and a double to pick up five RBI’s. Adrian Gordon had three hits and two RBI’s. Matthew Stachnik was the main run producer for Navy, going 4 for 4 with five RBI’s.

The following day, June 19, the Championship Game was fought between Navy and Green. Green Team MVP, Alex Beola, pitched five strong innings with seven strikeouts, giving up only four hits, to win the game. The final score was 7-4. Beola and Shawn Lee got on base every time. Mikko McDonald almost hit for the cycle, going 3 for 3 with a single, double, and triple. He hit singles every time he was up at bat and stole every base to score three runs. Max McMillan was 1 for 2 and scored the other run. Angelo Rivas also got a hit.

In the Consolation Game, Red beat Royal, also by a score of 7-4.

The Green champions are coached by Abe Tordjman, with the assistance of Gene Beola and Eddie Cruz-Flores. The members of the team are Manuel Agramonte, Alex Beola, Marquis Cromartie, Ryan-Chono De Abreu, Parker Ellis, Alex Guyton, Baba Kane, Shawn Lee, Mikko McDonald, Brian Obando, and Daniel Vithlani. Thanks go to Navy Coach Paul Sokoloff, Red Coach Lloyd Waltz, Green Coach Abe Tordjman, and Royal Coach Glen Pinks, for their time and effort to make this season one to remember. Another thanks to the players, families, and everyone else who was involved.



Green



Alex Beola

Photo: Adrian Mukasa

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Junior Tennis League Starts Tuesday



Photo: Maria Cosotti

The New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL) spring program distributed end-of-season awards at the Octagon Park Tennis Courts last Friday. Tennis rackets were presented to Bilal Hussain, who finished first in Manhattan in the 12-and-under category, as well as Jonathan Intenzo and Kiaheem Foxworth, for their dedication to improving their game.

Jessica Lappin, aide to Council Member Gifford Miller, who provides funding for the program, was on hand to support the children's efforts.

The Summer NYJTL Free Tennis Program at Octagon Park will begin July 6 and continue throughout the summer from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. each weekday. Children must wear tennis shoes or sneakers and bring water to drink. All children 8 to 18 may attend. Pee wee hours will be held on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 2:30 for children 5-7. Equipment is supplied by the League.

Pictured here are recipients of Spring Season Honors and NYJTL staff: Front row, left to right: Phillip Jordache, Bilal Hussain, Omar Hamzic, Umai Akhtar, Jonathan Intenzo. Back row: Daniel Shariff (intern), Jessica Lappin, Shantel Stewart, Site Director Joyce Mincheff, Kiaheem Foxworth, Alex Kornhuber (intern). Not pictured: Hasan Wazani (Co-Director).

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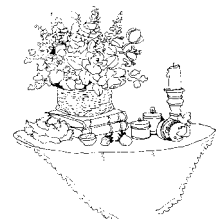
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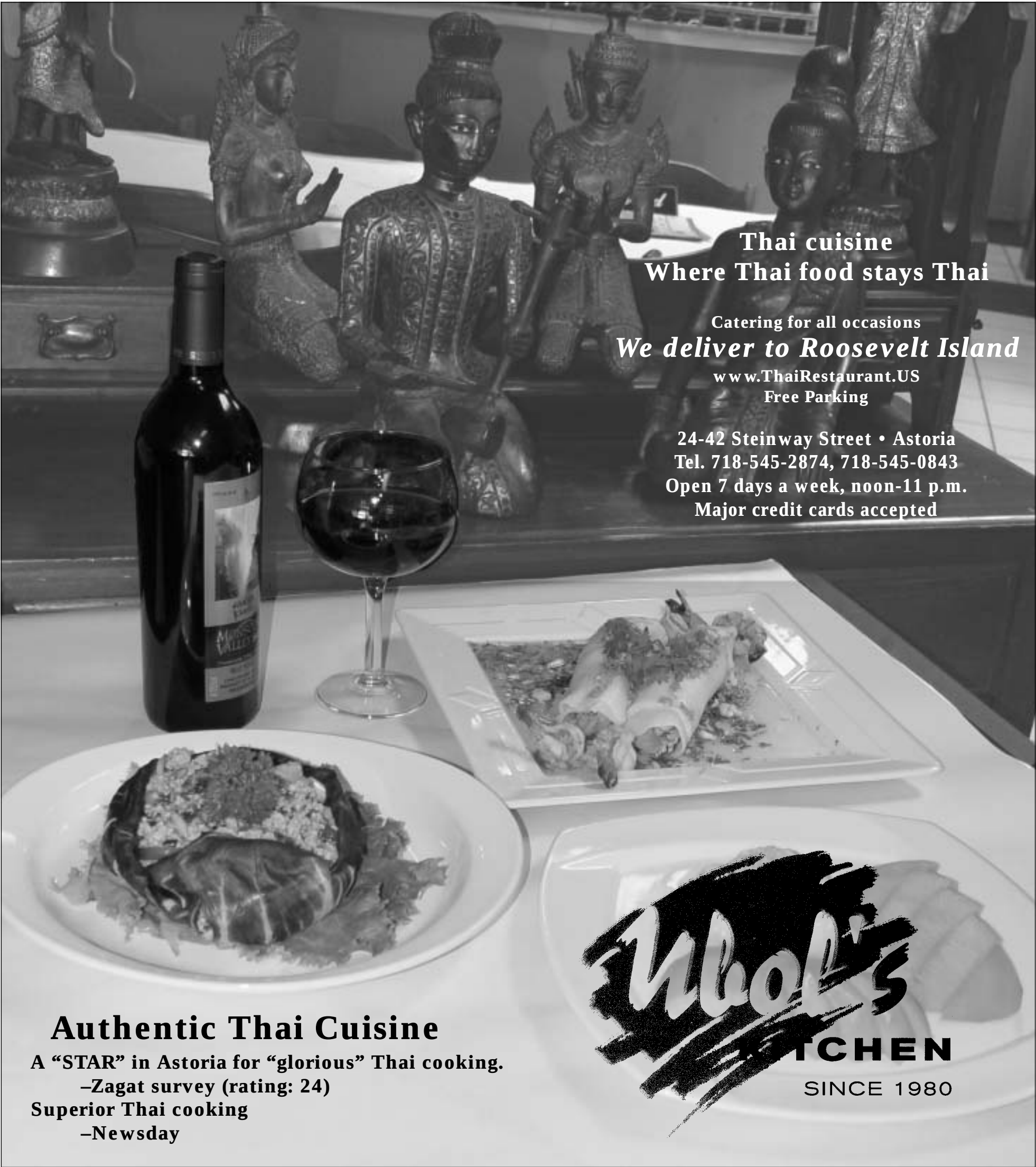
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