

Holiday issue
in two weeks:
Sat., Dec. 18

The Main Street WIRE™

25th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Construction Progress Behind a stand of London Plane trees late Thursday afternoon, earthmoving equipment dug out the area around the Octagon landmark, preparing it for the apartments project that will shortly be the target of a RIRA suit (story, right).

Meeting Thursday Night Final Southpoint Plan: Mostly “Wild Gardens”

The Trust for Public Land will present its preferred plan for Southpoint Park Thursday night (December 9) at 7:00 in a public meeting in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

In public meetings and a survey aimed at discovering public preferences for the park, TPL found that commercial elements were generally rejected, and most presenting their views favored the plan known as “Wild Gardens / Green Rooms.” A “village crescent with commercial rental space” and three floors of speculative rental space “received the highest ‘don’t want this’ rating,” according to Charles McKinney, the project director for TPL.

McKinney and Andy Stone, the City program director for TPL, said that two-thirds of those who selected a favorite plan chose the Wild Gardens plan over two others. McKinney told *The WIRE* on Thursday, “There was a clearly expressed preference for a park that did not feel planned and that would be unique. Wild Gardens / Green Rooms will intrigue all generations like a fantasy novel.”

In a letter to members of an advisory committee, Stone and McKinney wrote that the FDR memorial designed by Louis Kahn received the third highest “don’t want this” rating, “described as too much ‘concrete’ and as ‘blocking the view.’” They also reported that the stabilized Renwick Ruin and the “scale of adaptive reuse is the area of greatest ambiguity and bears further exploration.” They continued, “If proposals emerge for other uses consistent with the Wild Gardens / Green Rooms design, such as a conference center, these can be explored.”

In their letter, Stone and McKinney said, “The Sloping Lawn for performances is thought by the most people to be an element that would improve the economy and cultural vitality of Roosevelt Island. A close second is the stabilized Renwick ruin either with gardens, café and performance space incorporated into the stone structure,” or in a four-story glass building within the ruin.

They reported that the components most often rated among the top five priorities were:

- Stabilized ruin with café / performance space
- Perimeter path with waterfront overlooks
- Gatehouse visitor center
- Winter landscape and ice skating
- Boat dock

The final plan is posted at <http://www.markkmorrison.com/roosevelt>.

Briefly...

A new credit union is near certain for the Island. Representatives of USAlliance Federal Credit Union made a presentation Wednesday night to the RIRA Common Council, which voted unanimously to “invite” the institution to the Island in a required formality. The branch would locate next to the card shop in space occupied until recently by Montauk Credit Union, which closed its branch for lack of deposits. USAlliance, which has assets of \$500 million, sees an opportunity in the Island’s movement toward resident ownership.

The possibility of an NYPD Substation for the Island may be drawing closer. City Council Speaker Gifford Miller has asked Police Commissioner Ray Kelly to meet with the Roosevelt Island Safety Committee (RISK) and the Island’s governmental representatives to explore the possibility. Representatives of the Sheldrake Organization have also indicated they favor a de-emphasis of the Public Safety Department in favor of NYPD (see story, this page).

Department of Transportation (DOT) work on the **Roosevelt Island Bridge** has been rescheduled to be completed six years earlier than originally planned, according to a letter to the ex-President of RIRA, Matthew Katz, who had asked for the change through a Community Board 8 resolution. The bridge will remain movable, and rehabilitation work should be finished by late 2009, according to the new schedule.



RIRA Suing to Stop Apartment Development at Octagon Park

RIRA will sue to stop the Octagon Apartments project.

The Residents Association Common Council voted 16-1 Wednesday night to file a petition asking the court to halt work on the open space at Octagon Park, where two wings of a 500-plus-unit project are to be built on designated parkland.

The vote was taken after a 50-minute closed session, unusual for the RIRA Council. Only one councilor, James Whalen, dissented when a vote was taken upon resumption of the Council’s open meeting.

The recently elected President of RIRA, Steve Marcus, issued the following statement after the RIRA Common Council’s vote:

“Once again, RIOC is engaging in expedient, cash-oriented, piecemeal development. Without a thoughtful revision of the Island’s General Development Plan, RIOC and its mostly non-resident Board is attempting to solve a temporary cash-flow problem by making an ill-advised permanent decision to sacrifice parkland.

“The community has expressed itself repeatedly against the destruction of this parkland. The response from RIOC at each turn, has been to urge the developers to build higher and take up even more space. On November 2, voters in the RIRA election gave their residents organization a clear mandate with an 83% vote against any change in the 2002 Open Space Law. That law is clear in prohibiting use of this historically designated parkland for anything other than park purposes.”

Marcus continued, “RIOC’s operations are wasteful and top-heavy, paying patronage-level salaries to the Governor’s friends. The problems produced by this unconscionable waste must not be solved by destroying parkland. I am proud of the RIRA Common Council for stepping up to the plate Wednesday night. We represent the people who live here; the RIOC

Board does not. Morally, we have no choice but to take action to save our parkland for future generations.”

Marcus discusses the suit in his column on page 3.

Coincidentally, Governor George Pataki issued a press release yesterday hailing the “landmark project.” The release quotes Pataki, RIOC President Herbert E. Berman, Commissioner Judith Calogero of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), Developer Bruce Becker, the President of the Bank of America, a union president, City Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, and Roosevelt Island Historical Society President Judith Berdy in praise of the project. (The Governor’s press announcement is available, with an extended version of this report, on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/wire/2507/wire2507.html.)

The 2002 law which, RIRA contends, prohibits the planned development, was the product of a process that involved Assemblymember Pete Grannis and Senator Olga Mendez, both of whom represent Roosevelt Island in the State Legislature, and the Governor’s office. The original Grannis-Mendez bill was aimed at giving residents an elected majority on the RIOC Board of Directors. The Governor’s staff insisted on modifications, and the bill ultimately passed as the “Roosevelt Island Open Spaces Law.” While residents got a majority of seats on the RIOC Board, they are appointed, and over two years later the Governor has still not made the appointments. In addition, language introduced into the law by the Governor’s office appears to forbid commercial development on the Island’s open spaces.

On Thursday, Grannis told *The WIRE*, “I’m certainly very supportive of RIRA’s position. We have been cautioning RIOC and DHCR about proceeding without getting the legislation changed. Now we will

See **Octagon**, page 2

Housing

Sheldrake Wants to Drop Funding of Public Safety from Ground Leases

The Sheldrake Organization and its Blackwell Management subsidiary may seek to drop support of the Public Safety Department (PSD) in future negotiations with RIOC. That was one of several points brought out Monday and Tuesday evenings when the new owners of Westview and Island House met with residents in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

Neither meeting touched more than passingly on possible future resident ownership. Charles Lucido, who for many years has headed the investor groups that have owned each of the buildings, explained that such conversations are prohibited by law. He did say that intractability in various RIOC administrations over the years had thwarted his personal goal of resident ownership, and added, “I will say this: I look forward to a positive outcome for all of us.”

Lucido praised his new partner, J. Christopher Daly, the owner of the Sheldrake Organization, as someone who shares his “principles and ideals” and has the wherewithal to get the job done. “We’re meeting with your [building] steering committee, and will continue to do that, as long as things are being handled constructively,” he concluded.

“Obviously, we understand there are probably a lot of questions about the future of the buildings,” said Robert Klehammer of Sheldrake. “We are discussing is-

sues with RIOC and it would be difficult to address those issues. That’ll be another meeting at a later time.”

A building security operation would replace PSD within the buildings, Daly said, adding, “The overall plan should be that the New York City Police Department should have a presence on the Island.” His company is in continuing negotiations with RIOC, he said, on this and other matters.

In the course of Q&A sessions

at both meetings, residents and Sheldrake representatives touched on needed repairs, the closed swimming pools, management procedures, and a number of other issues. These are covered in an extended on-line version of this report on *Website NYC10044*, at nyc10044.com/wire/2507/wire2507.html. That coverage includes a statement by Lucido on the buildings’ histories leading up to his deal with Sheldrake.



Renato Folla was among tenants speaking at this week’s meetings between the Sheldrake Organization and residents of Westview and Island House. Listening, left to right, are Sheldrake owner J. Christopher Daly, maintenance chief Joe Driscoll, and Jennifer Jones, who heads the Blackwell Management subsidiary that now runs the two buildings. Also speaking at the meetings were Robert Klehammer (left inset), Sheldrake’s Executive Vice President, and Charles Lucido (right inset), who talked about the buildings’ troubled financial history.

Frances Tauchner

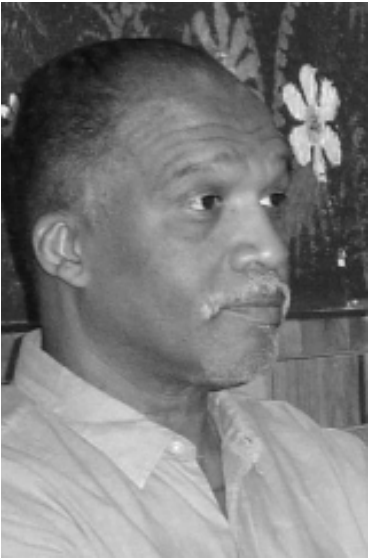
Frances Geffner Tauchner died peacefully in her sleep November 19.

An outstanding teacher, beloved by students and principals alike, her career spanned 31 years. She was a graduate of Evander Childs High School; then graduated from Hunter College in 1938. She later did postgraduate work though the New York Department of Education.

She was an active member of Free Synagogue of Flushing, and Hadassah for many years. Dr. and Mrs. Tauchner moved into Rivercross when it opened August 25, 1976, her 60th birthday. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Abraham, and their grandson David.



Arthur A. Gray



Dr. Arthur A. Gray, a former resident of 40 River Road, died November 19 at age 62 after a long struggle with cancer. Born in New York City in 1941 and raised in the Bronx, he attended Bowdoin College, Lincoln University, and Howard Medical School.

He will be remembered for his kind and gentle manner, his smile, and graceful nature. He was widely admired and respected by members of the Roosevelt Island community. He could be seen playing basketball each weekend morning.

He was Chief of Staff and a Senior Vice President of Forest Hills Hospital, and served as a shareholder and board member of Queens Long Island Medical Group. In tribute to his leadership,

Forest Hills Hospital is naming its Orthopedic program in his memory.

He is survived by his wife, Sigrid Martin Gray; two daughters, Nicole and Heather; his mother, Ida; a sister, Pamela; and a brother, Victor.

The Public Safety Blotter

for November 15-30
is now available on *Website NYC10044* at
nyc10044.com/wire/2507/blot2507.html.

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find out whether we’re right or they’re right. I think it’s a very risky move by the developer and RIOC to proceed, but obviously, when you look at the Governor’s press release, it is made to seem a fait accompli. But that press release is certainly not going to be the determining factor in whether the project can go forward.

“RIRA did the right thing,” Grannis continued. “That’s been our position all along. Since residents voted so strongly, I intend to be as helpful as I can in any way RIRA and its attorney deems appropriate.”

The WIRE has reported extensively on the Octagon project over the past several years. A list of back issues with links to earlier stories is online, on *Website NYC10044*, at <http://nyc10044.com/wire/issulist.html>.



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Letters

To the Editor:

As I waited for my Trellis take-out last Saturday, I was told to remove my “Beat Bush” pin and to “move on and unite” by another customer. When I disagreed, my bona fides as an American were questioned and I was called a “friend of Al Qaeda.” Later that evening, I perused reader Jim Baehler’s analysis of the 2004 Presidential election in the November 20 issue of *The WIRE* and, as a Democrat, I am compelled to offer my thoughts on the same subject.

Even with the subtle widespread death-by-a-thousand-paper-cuts voter suppression (voter participation up 20%, wait time to vote up 10,000%), the hundreds of thousands (millions?) of fraudulent Bush votes courtesy of the touchscreen voting machines’ manufacturers, Diebold and ES&S (both CEO-ed by major Bush fundraisers... and we still wait to hear even one story about voting “glitches” favoring the Democrats), the fact is, *We Got Beat* (I think)!

Alas, John Kerry was, as Mr. Baehler pointed out, a far too-many-shades-of-nuance guy in Bush’s now-accepted black & white world, with a far too complex résumé... War hero and anti-war protester? A Senator who voted to give war authority to Bush but didn’t agree on how the POTUS incompetently and dishonestly used that authority? A man whose religious beliefs run counter to his political beliefs concerning abortion? How can anyone be expected to figure out where the heck Kerry stood on anything with all these tricky and indecipherable positions... other than paying attention to what he said, of course?

And yes, as Jim further points out, Kerry was from Massachusetts, the home of gay marriage, Paul Revere, the Red Sox, Ally McBeal, baked beans, Aerosmith, the Kennedys... and the lowest divorce rate in the USA.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party simply had no clue whatsoever as to how viscerally gay marriage was, for so many USA citizens, a life-and-death issue... one that blotted out any number of highly damaging (to Bush... and the nation) realities. Clearly, Mr. Baehler is/was more in touch with the widespread repugnant bigotry of Bush’s “Christians.” Jim’s comments regarding John Edwards’s “gratuitous attack” on the Cheneys were amusing. Mary Cheney has earned her living as the gay liaison for Coors Beer and worked on salary for her father’s “reelection.” Gay marriage is/was a smokescreen issue the GOP put front and center. “Gratuitous attack” is precisely how to characterize the despicable and totally fraudulent Swift Boats for Truth campaign that G.W. Bush “could not bring himself to apologize for.”

Editor’s note: The following letter responds to a Sheila Chazin letter published November 20.

To Sheila Chazin:

Thank you for your e-mail. I appreciate the concerns that you have set forth. Let me prefix my response by telling you that many of the items identified by you require considerable capital expenditure and I have spent a significant amount of time during this past year gathering capital dollars so that we can start a reasonable and intelligent capital program. Having said that, I would like to respond to your e-mail.

1. Needless to say, we are very aware of the problems with the elevators. To that end, I have arranged for and we have implemented an RFP for the elevator repair. We have spent a considerable amount of time on this RFP and RIOC is prepared to proceed with elevator repair. We are awaiting Manhattan Park’s participation (they partner with us on Motorgate). It is our hope that they will agree to participate.

2. As to leaks, an engineering survey was just completed so that we can determine what has to be done. A more comprehensive survey must be done and will be done once the division of cost is agreed upon with Manhattan Park.

3. We worked out an improved cleaning schedule about three weeks ago. To my eye, the place is cleaner than it’s been in a long time. That doesn’t mean it can’t be improved. We intend to monitor same. Of course, your continued input would be helpful.

4. We have initiated a monthly walk-through between us, Manhat-

tan Park, and the operator.

5. There is a specific time that must elapse before we deem a car to be abandoned, particularly if the rental tab is paid.

6. We closely monitor “break-ins” and I can tell you that there have been virtually no break-ins for a long period of time. In fact, we have initiated random patrols by off-duty NYPD. These patrols together with our uniformed patrols have gone a long way in stopping same. We try to be diligent and if there is a record of break-ins then we will take appropriate action.

7. As to your questions about Central Parking, I have requested that information and if you contact me next week I will try and have that information for you. But you should know again, that oversight is partially performed by our regular meetings at Motorgate and personal inspections. Also, again I stress that much of the maintenance that you refer to requires capital expenditures and we are working toward the ability to accomplish same.

Mr. Baehler sensed that voters were “bewildered looking for a consistent theme other than opposition to everything that President Bush had done for the past three and a half years.” Did the public miss all of John Kerry’s specific proposals on a wide range of essential issues? Are we to suppose that Kerry won all three debates, proclaimed the winner by pundit and public alike, by being vague and inconsistent? No, the problem is/was that “Civilized Discourse” is ineffective when one’s opponents are criminals who will cross any line, tell any lie, commit any fraud to achieve their nefarious goals. John Kerry and the nation would have been better served by hammering home the simple truth... G.W. Bush and his handlers are liars, murderers, profiteers, fear/warmongers, cheaters, thieves, and horrifically incompetent. That John Kerry and the Democratic Party nambypambyed this is mind-boggling. One seriously doubts “honorable” hacks like Leiberman and/or Gephardt would’ve been any more aggressive.

Yet, according to Mr. Baehler, wind-surfing was a key issue. Do our fellow citizens pick Presidents on the basis of which sports the candidate indulges in?

And now, we’re told that Bush has achieved a commanding 51% to 48% mandate.

Let’s visualize that “mandate.” If you were to have 51 Eastwood tenants stand on one side of Tony Capobianco Field and 48 Westview tenants stand on the other, you’d literally have to count them one by one to discover there was a numerical difference.

The entire concept that the Democrats are “captive to the left wing” is a fallacy continually perpetuated by those in the GOP and their toadies in the “liberal” media who would wish it so. If indeed, the Democratic Party must “separate itself from its lunatic fringe,” what are we to make of the Republican Party, now held hostage by Christian jihadists, bigots/racists, and Big Business gangsters (how would *you* characterize Tom DeLay and Dick Cheney)?

Luckily, the GOP has a long and ignoble history of self-destructive hubris. Perhaps by the midterm elections of 2006, Mr Baehler and I won’t have to worry about piddling trifles like gay marriage and other “mainstream” values. Perhaps, by then, this country will vote a Democratic majority into the Senate and House based on the *facts* and we can impeach, convict and remove the cancer on this country that is George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

As Mr. Baehler so aptly put it, “for the good of America, let us hope it happens.”

John Philips

Letters Policy

The WIRE 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 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. 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 December 18 issue: Tuesday, December 14
After deadline, letters will be considered on a space-available basis.

Dear Mr. Berman:

Many thanks to RIOC and the Roosevelt Island children of every age involved in naming the playground across from PS 217 after me. Thanks as well to Sari Dickson, from your office, for organizing such a lovely ceremony following the annual Halloween Parade down Main Street.

I am honored and delighted to have a playground in my name. Now I’m really on the map. X marks the spot where children will gather and play under the beautiful sign, “Grandpa Al Lewis Playground.”

It was a concerted effort, no doubt, to make all the arrangements. To all those who made it possible, including Judge Jerry Crispino, and those who made a special visit to participate, Speaker Gifford Miller and his family, the Honorable Carolyn Maloney, and RIRA President Matthew Katz, much gratitude. I hope the kids enjoy *my* playground half as much as I do!

Herb Berman

Grampa Al Lewis

A great deal has happened on Roosevelt Island over the past year. I want to spend a bit of time in this column going over some of the things that were accomplished this year, and in my next column I will look forward to the things that we hope will take place in 2005.

The RIOC Column

I am so happy to welcome all of the newest members of the Roosevelt Island community who came to the Island in 2004. The opening of Southtown 1 and 2 added several hundred new residential neighbors to the Island. We also have several new members of the Public Safety family, as well as a new bus driver. Finally, the Child School completed construction and is now at full capacity. That brings both students and teachers into the Roosevelt Island community.

RIOC was also able to engage a different elevator contract for the Tram elevator. Since that time we have had very few outages. That elevator was a great frustration for me until we were finally able to get it operational. It is my great hope that it remains fully functional and I will make every effort to see that it does.

The elevators at Motorgate remain a frustration for me. They will appear both in this recap of 2004 and in the plans for 2005. In 2004 we were able to issue an RFP for an elevator company to repair and maintain them. It is my great hope that for 2005 that company will be working to improve the conditions at Motorgate.

The road repair by Gristede's has started and will, in all likelihood, be complete by the end of the year. While this work will greatly improve the road conditions at that end of the Island, I know that the road on Main Street is also something that will require additional work in 2005.

On the development side, construction started on Southtown building 3 and clearing started by the Octagon. Both projects will not only bring additional neighbors to the Island but will also bring open space. Octagon will bring an expanded park and Southtown will start the construction of the commons between the buildings.

We were also able to facilitate several meetings between

the community and different groups. An open community meeting was held with both the City and State offices of Emergency Management. Since that time we have also facilitated meetings between OEM and the president of RIRA. Those meetings will continue through the next year.

We were also able to facilitate meetings between the community and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) regarding the plans for Southpoint. The next meeting will be on December 9. As the plans progress, TPL will continue to make information available to the community.

RIOC also now has an information hotline in addition to the e-mail blasts that we send. To register for the e-mail blasts all you have to do is visit our website at www.rioc.com. For the information hotline, please call **212-308-6608**.

The Island landmarks have also remained a priority. Over the past year we saw the rose window reinstalled at Good Shepherd, the photogrammetry completed of the Renwick Ruin, and the architectural drawings for Blackwell House started. There were also some changes at RIOC. Our longtime warehouse manager, Harold Weinman, retired. Several members of the Public Safety staff left and others joined the staff. We have a new bus driver. Deborah Beck joined the RIOC board. I welcome them again to the RIOC family. Finally, I want to once again invite everybody to the holiday lighting on December 9. There will be entertainment, refreshments, and Santa Claus. I look forward to seeing everybody there. I am excited to see how much was collected for the annual gift drive for Coler and Goldwater and I am sure that Santa will be pleased with the efforts!

There were also some changes at RIOC. Our longtime warehouse manager, Harold Weinman, retired. Several members of the Public Safety staff left and others joined the staff. We have a new bus driver. Deborah Beck joined the RIOC board. I welcome them again to the RIOC family.

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\$900 million over the next 60 years.) This fills the bill nicely. It can cover more neglect, payola, and patronage until 2012, should Pataki choose to run for a third term. To those who are concerned about the loss of the \$11 million for this boondoggle, take heart in the fact that the Island should be self-sufficient in the short term with the subsidy of the Tram arranged by Gifford Miller, and in the long term when future development of Southtown is negotiated at reasonable ground rents.

I am proud to announce that RIRA has decided to sue RIOC and the developers to keep Octagon Park a park, and not another giveaway to developers. We are currently adding the finishing touches to an Article 78 petition which, if successful, will force the developers to halt construction and return the site to its former state. An Article 78 is the means that citizens can petition the courts to remedy improper actions made by government agencies. The grounds for the suit are the violation of the "Open Spaces" law written by our State legislators, Pete Grannis and Olga Mendez, and the violation of the "Doctrine of Public Trust" which protects public parks from development. I think the grounds for this suit are truly compelling and just. The recent referendum in which 83% of you, the voters, supported the Park, gives a clear message of where the entire community stands. I can promise that we will give it our heart and soul. At best, by next year we can replant the trees, and have a park that is even better than the one that was destroyed.

Since my e-mail address, SteveAtRIRA@verizon.net, was published in the last *WIRE*, I've received many e-mails, mostly about the decrepit conditions at Motorgate. I've had several

conversations with RIOC President Herb Berman on the topic. It appears that RIOC is ready to spend \$500,000 to repair (not replace) the four elevators. However, the owners of Manhattan Park, who own 40% of the operation, are not. My question, as yet unanswered, is what happens if Manhattan Park never wants to spring for their share of the expenses – are we expected to shlep indefinitely up and down through the stairwells so redolent with the rich aroma of fermenting urine?

Please feel free to keep me in the loop on any observations, both good and bad, that you have to make about our neighborhood.

Finally, and sadly, I have extended heartfelt condolences to former RIRA Common Council representative Sigrid Martin (now Sigrid Gray) on the loss of her husband, Dr. Arthur Gray. I was privileged to meet them shortly after they moved

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Annual Holiday Bazaar and Craft Fair of the Roosevelt Island Senior Association, **Sat.-Sun., Dec. 4-5**, 9:00-5:00, 546 Main Street, 1st floor. See ad, page 4.

Annual Bazaar of the Roosevelt Island Jewish Congregation, **Sun., Dec. 5**, 10:00-4:00, Cultural Center, 548 Main Street.

– The Coming Week –

Holiday Tree Lighting and Gift Drive Kick-Off, **Thur., Dec. 9**, 6:00 p.m., outside Blackwell House.

Southpoint Park Meeting, **Thur., Dec. 9**, 7:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Final presentation of the Trust for Public Land's plans for Southpoint Park.

– Future Events –

Christmas Carol Service, **Sun., Dec. 12**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Refreshments follow.

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, **Mon., Dec. 13**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

Historical Society Annual Meeting for election of officers, with a *Holiday Program of Songs from "Patient Island,"* with Nina Katchadourian and Brian Dewan, **Wed., Dec. 15**, 7:30 p.m., Island House Community Room, 555 Main Street. Historic and new songs about Roosevelt Island's history and people.

The Main Street WIRE – Holiday issue in two weeks: **Sat., Dec. 18**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an "Add Me" message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Friday, Dec. 10; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., Dec. 13; inserts due Thur., Dec. 16. **Future issues:** Jan. 8, 22; Feb. 5, 19; Mar. 5, 19; Apr. 2, 16, 30; May 14; June 4, 18; July 2, 30; Aug. 27; Sept. 10, 24; Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17. **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-related event in this column, please 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.

Book Discussion Group at the Library, **Thur., Dec. 23**, 6:30 p.m., *Hunger*, by Chang. Copies of book available at the branch.

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, **Mon., Jan. 10**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

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.

I feel great sadness and anger to see the destruction of Octagon Park. This is the last vestige of "wilderness" on Roosevelt Island. This area has been the site of thousands of family celebrations at the barbecue area, and a nearby place where one can reflect on the City lights in peace and seclusion.

This is another disgraceful decision by the RIOC Board, which has repeatedly ignored quality-of-life issues for the

residents they are supposed to serve. Let me take you all on a stroll down memory lane to see how we got into this mess. I first started to closely observe these characters in 1999 when they approved the Southtown project. Robert Ryan, the former president of RIOC, explained why this was such a good idea with the quote, "Why have hamburger, when we can have steak?" Turns out he got the steak, and we got the hamburger helper. Ryan and the Board gave away 19 acres of priceless waterfront property to Pataki's developer friends almost for free. That wasn't enough, so he got the Board to throw in another \$4.6 million in funds earmarked for Octagon Park so that the Southtown developers wouldn't have to pay for infrastructure. The result is that, when the final payments are made on the first three buildings, we will have actually *lost* about \$200,000. Ryan was eventually accused of corrupt practices and removed from his office by Public Safety officers. The Board has never released the findings of an internal investigation on his actions, and Ryan has been relocated to a cushy job elsewhere in State government.

Pataki cut off all State funding to Roosevelt Island shortly after taking office. With the exception of some timely assistance from Msrs. Grannis and Miller, every cent that is spent by RIOC comes from Roosevelt Island sources. Manhattan Park pays \$4.5 million in ground rents, with most other income from Motorgate, commercial rents, the Tram, and Public Safety assessments to individual buildings. The Southtown buildings pay almost nothing. Pataki wasn't satisfied with simply cutting off the Island's support from the State; he insisted on plundering the Island. So he packed RIOC with a bunch of patronage appointees, and the RIOC Board with a cast of characters that want to reward developers and squeeze out enough income from real-estate deals to cover their growing budget. If he gets his way, by the time a new governor can appoint a reasonable board, he will have given away all our remaining land able to be developed.

This brings us to the Octagon project. Faced with deficits of over a million dollars a year, and only \$7 million in reserves, the RIOC Board needed something to stop the bleeding long enough for Pataki to leave for greener pastures. They negotiated away Octagon Park for a measly one-time payment of \$11 million. (The developers expect to get about \$15 million in annual rentals, which comes to

The RIRA Column

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Steve Marcus, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
e-mail: SteveAtRIRA@verizon.net

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)

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

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Spanish Class**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
12:30, **Sculpting**
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

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

1:00, **Drawing with Pastels**
7:00, **Dance**
Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
6:00, **Dance & Relax**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events

Wed., Dec. 8, 11:15, Stop and Shop
Tue., Dec. 14, 7:00, General Meeting
Wed., Dec. 15, Atlantic City trip
Sat., Dec. 18, 6:00, Holiday Party
Thur., Dec. 23, after lunch, Holiday celebration
Fri., Dec. 31, 8:00, New Year's Eve Party

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to Manhattan Park in 1994. Arthur was a regular on the basketball courts until he and Sigrid moved to Long Island about four years ago. There isn't anyone who knew him that didn't have great respect for him. Arthur had a great deal of integrity, common sense, morality, a great sense of humor, and a very wicked jump shot. He lived and played the same way – with style, many moments of brilliance, intelligence, fairness, more wins than losses, a lot of hard work, and even more fun. He will be deeply missed.

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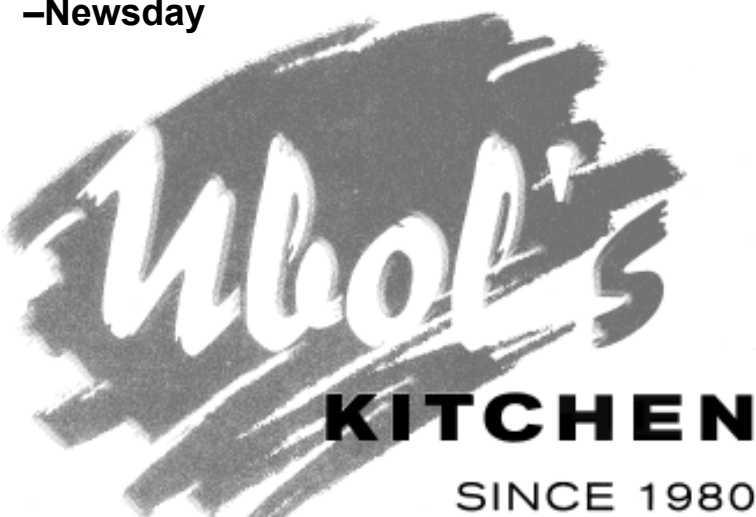


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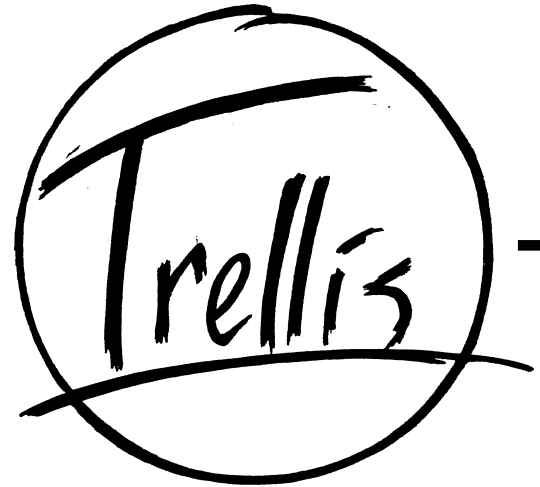
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Friday	10 th	6 – 8 pm
Saturday	11 th	10 am – 6 pm
Sunday	12 th	3 – 7 pm
Monday	13 th	6 – 8 pm
Thursday	16 th	6 – 8 pm
Friday	17 th	6 – 8 pm
Saturday	18 th	10 am – 6 pm
Sunday	19 th	3 – 7 pm
Monday	20 th	6 – 8 pm
Tuesday	21 st	6 – 8 pm
Wednesday	22 nd	6 – 8 pm*
Thursday	23 rd	6 – 8 pm*

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At 6PM**

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1. For adults only
2. Up to \$20 only!
3. Wrapped

Please indicate if gifts are for

MALE / FEMALE

If clothing item, please
indicate size.

Suggested Gifts:

Socks / Tights, Hats / Scarf
Combs / Brushes
Radios, Books
Stuffed Animals
Sweaters / Shirts
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****This year we will not be collecting
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