

Primary Election – Candidate Debates Coming Up

City Council Contenders Wednesday (August 31), Mayoral Candidates Tuesday, Sept. 6, at Good Shepherd

Vol. 25, No. 23

Saturday, August 27, 2005

Next issue
in two weeks –
Sat., Sept. 10

The Main Street **WIRE**™

This issue completes *The WIRE's* 25th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Website NYC10044 nyc10044.com

Octagon Tower The Flag flew over the skeleton framework of the Octagon landmark's dome Thursday morning, after the ironwork was completed this week. More photos on page 6 and in color on *Website NYC10044*.

Housing

Eastwood Residents OK Owner Privatization Plan

Eastwood residents gathered Thursday night in Good Shepherd Community Center to vote their approval, 182 to 19 (with four abstaining), of a renegotiated deal with the building's owner as the Belson organization takes the building private, opting out of the State's Mitchell-Lama program.

There had been an agreement – a unanimous vote – one week earlier, but it included an assumption that tenants failing to qualify for Section 8 subsidies, who would fall under a landlord assistance program (LAP) would not have to move if they were underutilizing their apartments – that is, with more bedrooms than required by family composition. That assumption was at odds with the landlord's intent; for about a week, the agreement was in limbo.

In a Thursday night negotiating session, the tenant committee and the tenants' lawyer, Serge Joseph, met with representatives of the owner, and hammered out a modification of the LAP provisions affecting residents of about 42 apartments. Under the revised agree-

ment, tenants in one- or two-bedroom apartments will not be required to downsize if their family composition represents underutilization. Tenants living in underutilized three- and four-bedroom apartments will have the option of staying in those apartments, but paying a 25% surcharge over base rent, if the underutilization amounts to one extra bedroom. If the underutilization amounts to two bedrooms, however, downsizing will be required unless the tenant is willing to pay market rent.

The agreement triggers a process in which apartments will be inspected by DHCR to assure compliance with standards, and in which all tenants will complete Section 8 applications. That latter process will effectively "sort" the tenants into those eligible to receive Section 8 subsidies (believed to be about 870 apartments) and those who are not and who therefore will fall under the LAP.

Several residents saw the different treatment of LAP tenants underutilizing two-bedroom apart-

See **Eastwood**, page 8

Assembly Report Critical of RIOC's Past, But Sees Possible Hope Under Berman

by Erik Kriss in Albany
with Dick Lutz on Roosevelt Island

"The Committee has determined that for a number of years the effective operation and management of RIOC was compromised by secrecy, political patronage, a lack of long-term financial planning, and questionable fiscal policies." So reads one sentence of the interim report of a State Assembly Committee released this week.

The report, by State Assemblymember Richard Brodsky, also said the 1997 discontinuation of a New York State subsidy by Governor George Pataki led to "destructive financial practices" by RIOC. The "unfortunate withdrawal by the State from fiscal responsibility to the Island may have been an additional reason for the policy of one-time [developer] payments, instead of [a policy of] long-term ground rents...", says the report, later adding, "This trend of one-time cash infusions when development rights are sold, with minimum ground rents charged to developers, hurt the long-term financial health of the Island." It notes, "RIOC's President and Chief Operating Officer, Herbert E. Berman, now states that one-time payment agreements are no longer the policy of RIOC."

Brodsky found signs of improvement under Berman. "It is clear... that in many areas, past mistakes have been acknowledged and corrective steps have begun to be taken. New staff appointed by the Governor and working with the Board has begun to change RIOC's management culture by ending the policy of one-time payments [for development rights], making public long-term financial planning documents, and acknowledging the need for greater transparency and accountability."

Brodsky, a Westchester County Democrat who is running for State Attorney General next year, plans hearings in the near future on a spate of concerns Island residents have expressed over how their community is governed. He said his committee will conduct joint hearings with the Assembly Cities Committee, chaired by Assemblymember Scott Stringer, a Manhattan Democrat. Brodsky chairs the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions.

"While RIOC's new leadership acknowledges the need for change," Brodsky writes, "they must establish these policies by action and fact. Roosevelt Island has enormous potential for its residents and for the City of New York. In addition to its physical and social attributes, it has an active, concerned, and intelligent resident population, whose organizations have performed important services to the community. "There is every reason for RIOC to establish more effective relationships with the community and its organizations."

On Wednesday night, Brodsky told *The WIRE*, "In the end, what we have here is another example of the [State] authority system being used as a patronage mill, and the leadership, rather than fight for the institution it works for, became a handmaiden of the executive department."

But, Brodsky said, "There is a real opportunity here for progress. There is an opportunity for residents and members of RIOC to establish a more cordial relationship. Mr. Berman has clearly made some changes. But the new administration will be tested by their actions." The report credits Berman's administration with "acknowledging the need for greater transparency and accountability."

Brodsky set no timetable for hearings, other than to say "soon." He also could not say whether any hearings would be held on Roosevelt Island, but did say they would be conducted in the City.

His 25-page report found plenty of fault with the administrations of Berman's predecessors in the RIOC presidency, Jerome Blue and Robert Ryan.

Blue and Ryan

"An Inquiry into the Management of Roosevelt Island by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation" recounts residents' criticisms of Blue. A protégé of former U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, a Republican also credited with nurturing the career of the Gover-

nor, Blue cut services, reduced open space, and refused funds in the name of Island self-sufficiency, notes the report. A January 22, 2004, request by the Island's Assembly representative, Democrat Pete Grannis, as well as requests by residents and resident groups, led to the investigation and report.

Grannis hailed the report in a statement issued Thursday: "I welcome this report and its well-deserved focus on critical issues concerning RIOC's management and operation of the Island over the past decade. The findings highlight and confirm issues I have been raising since the Pataki administration came to office and installed Jerome Blue as RIOC's president, and, following his dismissal, Robert Ryan, and abruptly ended State support for the Island's operations."

The report is heavily critical of the RIOC board for refusing to discuss the circumstances surrounding its 2003 dismissal of Ryan, who was campaign manager for Gov. George Pataki's initial election in 1994. "RIOC, to this day, has not revealed the circumstances surrounding Mr. Ryan's tenure and departure," the report says. (Ryan now works for the New York Department of State, whose head, Randy Daniels, is expected to run for Governor in 2006.)

Noting that the stated reason for Ryan's dismissal involved his approval of unauthorized payments to RIOC employees for volunteer work following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the report found particular fault with the RIOC Board of Directors for blocking release of a 100-page report on an investigation into Ryan's tenure by lawyer Michael Hitsman.

"The failure to release the Hitsman report or to publicly discuss the matter has impeded the committee's work, has not been justified on grounds of public need for confidentiality, and is contrary to policies of openness and transparency required of a public entity," the report says. "The committee will vigorously pursue the report and the other information sought..."

"The circumstances of Mr. Ryan's dismissal and the reasons for it have never been made public, giving additional weight to claims that RIOC lacks transparency and accountability."

See **Brodsky**, page 12

Rivercross Gets Over 1800 Requests for Applications in Lottery

The recent Rivercross waiting-list lottery drew 1,804 requests for application forms during the two-week period allowed in an announcement published at the end of July in *The WIRE* and other area newspapers. According to Rivercross General Manager Mitchell Hammer, 1,717 forms were sent, on August 22, to those following the published guidelines.

Eighty-seven requests for the forms were not filled because they didn't follow the guidelines, according to Hammer.

The response would seem to dispel any doubt about the desire for ownership of affordable housing on the Island.

In the two-step process, those receiving the application forms are now required to complete the application before Monday, September 12, and submit it, with a \$150 processing fee that will be refunded for those not selected in the lottery. A further fee, non-refundable, for a credit check, will be required of those applicants chosen in the lottery process.

Thereafter, applicants will be canvassed as their names come up. The final approval process involves a review of financials and an interview.

The last Rivercross lottery was held 14 years ago, in 1991. The current lottery was scheduled when the reserve of applicants dropped to zero for two categories of apartments, studio and four-bedroom units. Ac-

See **Rivercross**, page 9

Briefly...

RIOC advises that the **Tram** will operate on an hourly schedule, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., on Tuesday and Wednesday (August 30 and 31).

The Editorial Page

Getting Along

When Dr. Jerome Blue showed up missing one summer day on Roosevelt Island in 1999 – rescued from a bad situation of his own creation by the governor who had put him here – residents were cheered that an arrogant and uncommunicative RIOC President was gone. Ironically, Blue had been hastily reassigned to become the State's Commissioner of Human Rights, a position in which he proved just as inept and lasted only a year.

The WIRE expressed residents' pleasure at the turn of events with an editorial cartoon suggesting it was time, as the apothegm has it, to let sleeping dogs lie – and make a new start.

Then, George Pataki appointed Robert H. Ryan as the new President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. "It's Rob," Ryan said when residents called him "Mr. Ryan," and there was a period of good feeling until Ryan said, one time too often and too late in the game, in response to legitimate resident complaints, "I only just got here."

Ryan had a "meltdown," to use RIRA President Steve Marcus's term for it, when he exploded at a resident during an environmental hearing on the Octagon Apartments project. Ryan's keepers from the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) defended him, but it seemed clear his days were dwindling in number. Indeed, he was caught with a beefy hand in RIOC's financially loose cookie jar, and the RIOC Board suspended him with an unconscionably large paycheck not to work for an unconscionably long time – then fired him.

Patrick Siconolfi, who had shown himself to be a thorough man with the company books, was put forward as an Acting President of the organization, and there was a period of genuine – and potentially lasting – good feeling between his administration and resident leaders. But, New York State politics being what New York State politics are, Siconolfi had to move on, and Pataki appointed a Brooklyn Democrat, Herb Berman, who occupies the office today.

And Berman's *intent*, at least, has gotten an endorsement this week from Assemblymember Richard Brodsky, in an interim report on RIOC operations that is the subject of our lead story this issue. But both Brodsky and Assemblymember Pete Grannis, who represents the Island, say that the intent and promises must be translated into something real. Words are cheap, and action speaks volumes.

So Brodsky will have to understand that, after George Pataki gave us Jerry Blue and Rob Ryan – each clearly a patronage payoff – it is not easy to give a RIOC President a lot of time to show his worth. Berman has been with us for two years now, and any resident leader can come up with a long punch-list of deficiencies in RIOC operations. For examples, we need only refer you to RIRA President Steve Marcus's column in this issue.

Brodsky says RIOC and RIRA should bury the hatchet and try to get along. But Berman's the guy who collects a considerable paycheck to make things run smoothly, and we look forward to his first (or next?) steps in improving relations between his organization and residents.

DL



To the Editor:

We want to publicly thank Vicki Feinmel for her efforts in getting the MTA to install netting at the Roosevelt Island subway station, to keep out the pigeons who were sitting overhead in the trusswork. As much as we all joked about it, this area was unsightly and was creating a health hazard.

Vicki spent countless hours calling, writing, and weaving her way through the MTA bureaucracy to reach the appropriate people and to get them to do something about the situation. Her efforts have finally paid off. On behalf of all Roosevelt Island straphangers, thank you, Vicki, for your persistence and hard work.

Margie Smith & Harry Small

Mr. Jerry Groschke
NYC Transit Division of Stations
370 Jay Street / 427-4
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Mr. Groschke:

Having lived on Roosevelt Island since 1977, I feel compelled to write you this letter and vent my frustrations. "Seeing is believing," and enclosed are photos of the pigeon mess.

Since 1977, I was fortunate enough to take our Tram to work and, to be perfectly honest with you, very rarely took the subway after it opened many years ago.

Now, however, for the past two years, my job has changed and I take the subway twice a day (sometimes more on weekends since MetroCard).

I have a few questions for you. Your name is very prominently displayed as the station manager.

- 1) Have you ever been to Roosevelt Island?
- 2) Have you ever stood under the concrete awning waiting for a bus?
- 3) Have you ever looked down on the ground?
- 4) Have you ever walked through a turnstile with pigeon poop all over it?
- 5) Have you ever been pooped on?

If the answer to any of the above questions is a yes, I must say I am very disappointed in the management of this station. I personally have no idea who the architect is who "wrongfully" designed the overhang/awning. However, if you know who the person(s) are, I highly suggest that you invite him/her back to see what a totally miserable job they did in designing our station.

The welcome sign at our subway station is rather repulsive pigeon poop. Residents duck it daily. I have a backpack home now that has to be cleaned (will NYC Transit pay my bill?); what about my blazer that was targeted a few weeks ago? I had to pay for dry cleaning! Believe me, I don't stand under the overhang – I dash in and out as quickly as I can, and still get pooped on.

This issue (pigeons in general) has been a pet peeve of mine literally for years. Not all of it is "subway" related. The pigeon population gets worse year after year. Not only do we have pigeons, we have gulls, squirrels, rats, and vermin. A dear friend of mine was on the Queens side of the platform about two weeks ago with her infant and saw a large rat on the platform! What is going on here?

See **Letters-Brooks**, page 7

Letters deadline for Sept. 10 issue: Monday, Sept. 5. Letters received after deadline are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

Have you ever told many of the Island residents that they have an inferiority complex? I mean no disrespect to them at all, actually. We do live 200 yards from some of the most highly priced real estate in the world and it's hard not to constantly compare ourselves to the supermodel living next door. Recently, however, this complex has reached national news and I wanted to give you my support.

I've been following the *Dark Water* discussion and the decision, assuming it was your decision, to allow *Dark Water* to be filmed here, was actually a stroke of genius. The director is brilliant. The writer is an outstanding horror writer in Japan who wrote a book that was made into one of the scariest movies I have ever seen – *The Ring*. In addition, *Dark Water* is a remake of one that's been in Japan for some time. I don't think it was a shock to you or anyone involved in the decision that the movie turned out the way it did. These people did what they set out to do – they created a creepy, make-believe world on our Island.

Why do I think the decision was genius? Well, beyond the fact our Island is in need of money to replace such things as spontaneously combustible Public Safety vehicles, the movie has attracted priceless national attention to our Island. The attraction to the story for the media is not that Roosevelt Island really is as the movie portrays (although some with a deep inferiority complex may differ), but that residents actually believe that our Island is being misrepresented. I never read one complaint when the Green Goblin in *Spider-Man* blew up the Tram Station and held a Tram full of passengers at his mercy. Was this because the movie was a hit and was somehow "cool"? Did tourists and residents stop using the Tram? Nope. The only way I could be upset about *Spider-Man* is if the Tram Station really could blow up and a green man on a flying scooter really could cause the Tram to fall. Clearly, neither are true and the same is true for *Dark Water*.

Dark Water, is just that – dark – more dark than *Spider-Man*. But it's not real! It's a horror movie filmed in dreary greens and browns that was created to creep people out. I think the media attention is because they think people on the Island are a bit too creeped out, as if it's too real for some. It's not the Island itself that's the story, it's the residents' reaction to it and the reaction is so odd that it has made national news! For this resident, the movie was make-believe. The Island has its problems, but many of its residents have deep inferiority complex issues about where they live that consistently cloud the way to making the Island all it can be. This is the common thread that permeates through most of the comments I read and I applaud you for your creative ability to acquire needed resources for our community while navigating misguided attacks on your decisions.

Colton Wright

To Roosevelt Island Residents:

We wish to somehow communicate our affection to the wonderful, gracious, welcoming, talented, and exceptionally clever (of course!) people who came into our lives during the past 23 years. The gifts of friendship, support and goodwill that were given to us personally and through the MST&DA far exceeded what anyone would expect from their neighbors.

The beauty of it is the simplicity of it: We did what we loved to do, sharing our joy of theater and dance with the children and adults of Roosevelt Island, and you reciprocated by valuing what we were offering and returning the affection that we felt for you.

Thanks for the memories. We will miss you.

Nancy and Worth Howe

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

As you must know by now, Roosevelt Island is supposed to be handicap friendly, but I recently rode on the Red Bus with my wheelchair and could barely get on the bus. I and many other disabled people found that we were unable to get on with our handicap scooters.

I trust your new buses on order will be more handicap-accessible and allow us the same rights as other people who live on this wonderful Island. All other buses have the disabled enter and exit from the rear door, which on the red bus would be perfect, as the door entry is very large.

Jim Bates

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

I am very curious. Do you park your car in Motorgate? If you do, it is hard for me to believe that you abide the terrible conditions. The one elevator that is working, by the grace of God, has the most filthy floor I have ever seen. The carpet is dirty and the metal stripping around it is disgusting. Not to mention to fact that one never knows if it will be working when we need it. The windows on the doors at each floor look as though they haven't been washed in years, and the general condition is not very clean at all. Why don't you see that our rents are decreased since we do not have the full use of the facility with one elevator and no escalator? I would suggest that we should be paying half the monthly rent until everything is back in perfect working order. I would appreciate your response.

Louise Maniloff

To the Editor:

I am pleased that RIOC has been making the effort to repair and clean up the Island this summer. As echoed by letters in this newspaper over the past four years, the state of repair of facilities and the general appearance of the Island has taken a turn for the worse. However, I think it is just as – if not more – important for the good to be recognized and encouraged as for the bad to be admonished.

Getting the lights working by the river near Manhattan Park, refurbish

See **Letters-Klesh**, page 7

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 will not be published.

Preferred method of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file) 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. **All letters subject to acceptance and to editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Zen, an exhibit of art works in stone, wood, metal, ceramics, and ink by Gerald Starlight, continuing through Sept. 1 in the display window at New York National Bank, 619 Main St. ▶



— The Coming Week —

Tramway out of service for maintenance, **Tue.-Wed., Aug 30-31**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Double-Feature Outdoor Movie at Socrates Sculpture Park, **Wed., Aug. 31**, preceded by a traditional Korean dance performance by Song Hee Lee Dance Company at 6:30 p.m. and Greek music by Mikrokosmos at 7:00. Movies: **Zorba the Greek** (1964) and **Take Care of My Cat** (Korea, 2001). Free. Bring blanket or seating.

City Council Candidates' Debate, Wed., Aug. 31, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center, sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) and Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC).

— Future Events —

Mayoral Candidates' Debate, Tue., Sept. 6, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center, sponsored by RIRA and RIHMC.

RIOC Board of Directors Meeting, Thur., Sept. 8, 4:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. The Board's afternoon meetings usually conclude with an opportunity for public comment, specific time uncertain.

Drama, dance, and fitness class registration at the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, **Thur., Sept. 8**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., or **Sat., Sept. 10**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at MST&DA, under the red awning behind the video store. Additional information: **212-371-4449**. (See ad, page 14.)

Southpoint from Ruin to Rejuvenation, exhibit at Gallery RIVAA, **Sat., Sept. 10** through Oct. 9. Opening reception Sept. 17, 6-9 p.m. Gallery hours 11-5 Sat., Sun.; 6-9 Wed. and Fri. Exhibit opens an international competition; for more information, see www.enyacompitions.org.

The Main Street WIRE — Next issue, **Sat., Sept. 10**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Sept. 1; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Tue., Sept. 6; inserts due Thur., Sept. 8. **Future issues:**

Fortnightly through December 17: Sept. 24; Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17; then fortnightly, resuming Jan. 14, 2006. **News phone, 212-826-9055**; urgent matters **917-617-0449**. **Phone** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**. **To list your organization's Island-related event in this column**, e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions. There is no charge for such listings.

Primary Election, Tue., Sept. 13. **Book Discussion Group, Thur., Sept. 22**, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *The Swallows of Kabul* by Yasmina Khadra. Discussion series continues the third Thursday of every month.

Senior Center

Monday
9:30, **Yoga** (starts Sept. 12)
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, **Weightlifting**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
2:00, **Painting and Sculpting**
6:00, **Yoga Class**
7:30, **Games (RISA)**

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
3:00, **Drama Class** (starts 9/21)
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

Thursday
9:30, **Weightlifting**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance**
Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events

Wed., Aug. 31, Atlantic City trip
Fri., Sept. 2, late morning, MetroCard Bus
Sun., Sept. 4, 2:00, Labor Day Party
Mon., Sept. 12, 12:15, Farmer's Market Trip
Wed., Sept. 21, Atlantic City Trip

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

There has been much discussion within the Roosevelt Island community and in *The WIRE* regarding the Roosevelt Island Youth Program. Firstly, let me state unequivocally that the Corporation supports the concept of a vibrant and growing youth center for the Island. A well-run, thriving Youth Program enhances the quality of life for residents and contributes to the overall well-being of the community. RIOC has supported the Youth Program for more than ten years with grants of \$60,000 or more annually — an investment that exceeds half a million dollars to date.

The Youth Program was incorporated on Roosevelt Island in 1980. It currently occupies space in Eastwood, which is provided free of charge. In addition, as required by the Youth

Program's participation in the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development's Beacon Program, it also delivers a large percentage of its programs in a public school building on the Island.

The Youth Program came to RIOC with a request for a 30-year rent-free lease to occupy the former Lilies School on Main Street. The Youth Program was under the impression that their current landlord would not grant them a 30-year lease. The Youth Program was also under the impression that, absent a 30-year lease, they would not be eligible for \$1,800,000 in capital funding that the City Council has recommended. RIOC has had discussions with the Youth Program's landlord, who has indicated a willingness to negotiate with the Youth Program for a 30-year lease. Moreover, RIOC forwarded to the City's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) the 2001 plans for the former Lilies School submitted to RIOC by the Youth Center and was told in the past week that the lease requirements for the extensive repairs proposed would be only 15 years. On behalf of the Youth Program, RIOC has worked with both the landlord and OMB to ensure that the Youth Program can obtain capital funding in their current location. At this juncture, it appears that unless the Youth Program Board opts not to work with their landlord and OMB, there is no obstacle to their obtaining the \$1,800,000 in capital funding.

In requesting the Lilies School space, the Youth Program has stated: (i) they have the necessary funds required to renovate the entire building; (ii) they can obtain increased future funding to maintain and operate the entire building (including utility bills in excess of \$35,000 per year); (iii) additional space is required to meet increased demands by the Island's youth; and (iv) there is a demand for broader service offerings. To date, RIOC has not received sufficient information from the Youth Program on any of their state-

ments to satisfy its due diligence requirements. In a letter to the Youth Program dated July 12, 2005, RIOC asked the Youth Program to provide basic information that would allow the Board to make a reasoned decision on turning over more than 12,000 square feet of space for the next 30 years. At current projected market rates, the request is essentially the equivalent of a \$420,000 annual grant to the Youth Program by RIOC, or \$12.6 million over 30 years. Unfortunately, in a letter dated July 25, the Youth Program states that they will not respond to RIOC's request for information. The Youth Program states that the requests for information "are clearly not material to the lease evaluation process." RIOC asked the Youth Center to provide:



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

statements, recent audits, certificate of insurance, internal controls, City or State agencies that oversee or fund the Youth Program.

• Future Costs: 5-year operating budget, scope of work for renovation, rationale for costs based on projected population to be served.

Information of this type is typical of requirements for funding from major foundations and Federal/State/City agencies. The RIOC Board of Directors was quite clear at their June meeting that they desired a recommendation from me in the near future on the Youth Program. Various Board members have raised concerns about the lack of accountability and processes of Youth Program operations. The Board has raised legitimate concerns and RIOC staff drafted questions on the information request designed to provide Board members with a level of assurance to proceed with evaluating the proposal to lease, rent-free, an entire building to the

See **RIOC**, page 14

are, and when March 2005 statements will be available. And speaking of their website, why aren't there any **meeting minutes** posted since March?

Barbecue areas — RIOC agreed in May to move the grills and benches to new sites, since they destroyed those at Octagon Park. Four months later, we can forget about this year, but will RIOC get another site ready for 2006? Likewise with the \$90,000 authorized for new **trash cans and planters**. One wonders why they weren't installed for use during this summer.

And the **construction around Octagon** has done a lot of damage. The stone masonry seats by the Octagon baseball field were removed and never replaced. There is a mudslide on the west promenade by the soccer field because the grass and vegetation were destroyed by the heavy equipment. They also destroyed the masonry at the "prow" between the promenade and the water tunnel.

In January, RIOC said that repairs to **Blackwell House** were set to go. In March, RIOC deferred those repairs. Is the plan now to wait another winter and let the thing collapse?

RIOC installed **new street lighting** in front of Trellis and Mr. Berman solicited resident feedback on these lights, with the plan to replace all the defective units with these new ones. Most people in RIRA think that these lights, although reasonably attractive, are far too dim. But most of our lights are still broken, and we've been waiting for a solution for at least five years.

Under new RIOC guidelines it is impossible for RIRA or any other community group to use any part of **Good Shepherd Community Center** without insurance. Since most groups don't have insurance, this rules out any use of the Chapel, a community resource supported with community funds, from being used by the community. RIOC has promised to look into this matter but, to date, has not altered its policy.

So, it looks like there is plenty for them to do; as for us — get your questions ready, and see you at the debates!

The RIRA Column

Both debates will take place at 8:00 p.m. in the Good Shepherd Community Center, to be sponsored by Roosevelt Island Housing Management and RIRA. Please mark your calendars and get your questions ready. This will be an opportunity to hear what your local politicians can do about the issues that affect you the most.

It's been a lazy summer both for RIRA and it seems RIOC as well. We have provided a list of questions to RIOC and perhaps Mr. Berman has already provided some answers in the adjacent column. Although housing issues are definitely the major concern of residents in Eastwood, Island House, and Westview, and their friends elsewhere on the Island, here are some of the other issues of concern:

Island Maintenance — A list of things to be fixed over the summer was to be prepared and disseminated in April. Now that it's almost September, we wonder what was on the list, what was done, and what remains. We hope that RIOC gets around to repairing the **promenade at Lighthouse Park**, still blocked after a barge hit the seawall many months ago. The bottom of the **Island access ramp** continues to disintegrate and will undoubtedly get much worse over the winter. We are also still waiting for the promised restoration of the **side-walk at the Card Shop** after the awful patchwork done by Con Ed last year.

The **elevators in Motorgate** have been under repair since May. We've all seen the signs counseling patience, but the job isn't even half complete. When are we going to see the first new elevator in service, and when will service be restored to both elevators?

RIOC hasn't gotten around to completing the **Audited Statements** for March 2004, which they promised to post on their website at their June meeting. We wonder where they

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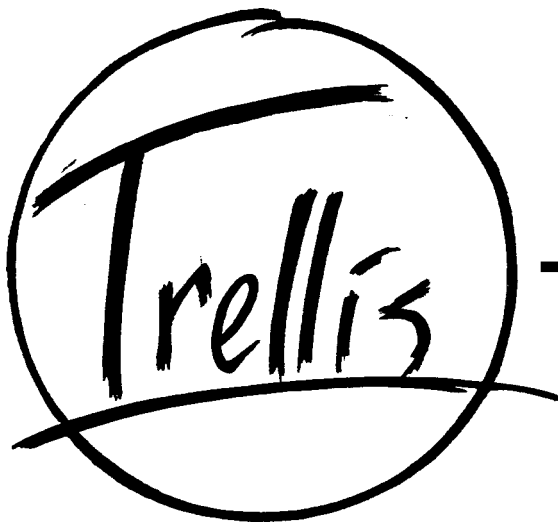
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Labor Day

There are those who feel that a person who
can avoid real work is blessed – lucky beyond
words. But few of those who are so “blessed”
agree, for we all need the satisfaction of
accomplishment and reward in some form.

Labor Day recognizes those who *labor*,
making life and the world better. We think
we do our fair share of that at Trellis, and we
salute our employees and customers who
count themselves among those who work.

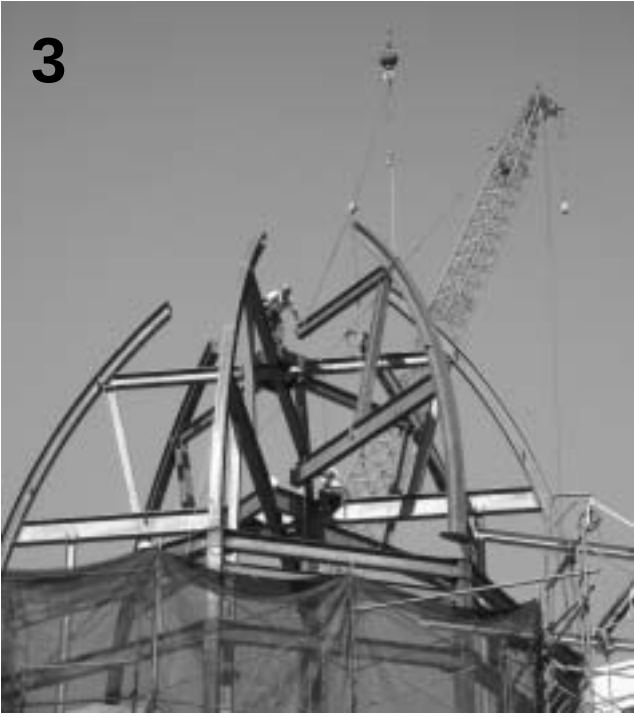
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Giving the Octagon Landmark Its New Crown



Erector set, adult size:

Workers put heavy iron in place on Monday morning, building the dome of the landmarked Octagon as it approaches its new life through adaptive reuse. They waited (photos 1 and 2) as a crane brought a segment within reach (3), then bolted it near the dome's center (4). Each (5) then slid down the arc of the segment to its outer foot (right), gentled that into place, then bolted it (6). By Wednesday morning, they were adding pieces to the top (inset photos, below). Additional photo on page 1.

Website NYC10044 photos



Mayoral Candidates Seek Islander Votes in September 13 Primary

The Main Street WIRE invited Democratic candidates in the September 13 primary for Mayor, Borough President, and the City Council District 5 seat to submit campaign statements oriented to residents of Roosevelt Island. (Invitations were e-mailed, and were also made available on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/temp/primary.html.) Responses were received from the candidates on this page and the next three pages.

Starting Wednesday night Debates Scheduled For Councilmember And Mayor Primary

Democratic candidates seeking the opportunity to challenge Mayor Michael Bloomberg will debate Wednesday night (August 31) at the Good Shepherd Community Center. The session, set for 8:00 p.m., will be moderated by former RIRA President Matthew Katz, and is sponsored by the Residents Association and Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corporation (RIHMC).

RIRA Vice President Margie Smith says that Fernando Ferrer, Gifford Miller, and Anthony Weiner have agreed to appear and, at press time, was awaiting word from C. Virginia Fields.

A debate for candidates contending for the District 5 City Council seat is set for Tuesday night of the following week (September 6), also at 8:00, and also at the Good Shepherd Center. For that event, Smith says that Jessica Lappin, Dan Quart, and Erik Cesnik have accepted the invitation. At press time, she was waiting for word from another candidate, George Spitz.

The debate format calls for 90-second opening statements, a series of questions by the moderator with one-minute answers, then audience questions and, finally, closing statements. Each event is expected to last 90 minutes.

Some candidates who have campaigned on Roosevelt Island over the summer have expressed a feeling that, at least for certain offices, Roosevelt Island votes could put a candidate over the top. In the case of the mayoral race, Miller's strategy is said to be to force a run-off with the presumed front-runner, Ferrer. Because Miller, the City Council Speaker, is well known here as the Island's representative on the City Council, Island votes are considered crucial to his success.

Letters-Brooks from page 2

I am not an engineer. However, I know for a fact there are basic improvements that can be made immediately (they seem like pretty easy solutions).

- Anti-pigeon gel (I have it on my window ledges; it really works).
- Steam-clean the concrete overhang/awning and put up a wire. What is the big deal?
- I see the top of the overhang/awning has some sort of anti bird spikes (although I see pigeons between the spikes)

It must be mating or nesting season – you hear little birds chirping and cooing and see them pooping. Our subway station is not a bird sanctuary. I think these photos taken a few weeks ago on a warm Saturday afternoon will tell the whole story.

I also know for a fact that another resident, Vicki Feinmel, is also on the “pigeon warpath” and has been in contact with you. I'm sure your maintenance workers can find much more valuable work to do than cleaning up pigeon poop! It can't be healthy for anyone cleaning this mess up daily, can it?

So, besides chronically “out of service” escalators and elevators, we have to try and avoid getting pooped on daily – great, just great!

Looking forward to your reply.

Joan Brooks

To the Editor:

I wouldn't mind seeing *Dark Water* again. I didn't find anything wrong with the way the film made Roosevelt Island a “slum.” I found it very entertaining that it chose 540 Main Street as a focal point. I grew up on Roosevelt Island, I lived there from 1976-2000 and, as a matter of fact, in 540 Main Street. My only problem was I was focusing on all the scenic shots throughout the movie and I didn't pay attention to the plot... (such is life). After talking to family and friends who saw the film, they felt the Island was portrayed in a dark, miserable, and ghettoish film. In my opinion (don't get upset), Roosevelt Island became ghettoish a long time ago, so I don't see why they would get upset. It's only a movie....right?

Eric Nedball



Gifford Miller
Speaker, City Council

My name is Gifford Miller and I'm running for mayor of New York because I believe this City needs new leadership and a new direction.

When you look at our past, New York has always succeeded because New York was always reinventing and renewing itself to keep up with changing times. But that's not happening right now because we have a mayor who's a caretaker mayor with no real vision or ideas for where he wants to take this City in the next four years.

I know where I want to lead this City. In a Miller Administration, class sizes will be reduced, our subways will run on time, renters will receive much-needed tax relief, and our City will get its fair share from Albany and Washington.

Mike Bloomberg's bureaucratic reshuffling and high-stakes testing is not the way to improve our schools. We know what works, and it's not as complicated as some claim it is. Improving our schools means reducing class size, retaining quality teachers, ensuring safe schools and providing a universal after-school program. I have a real plan for reducing class size by as much as 20 percent across the board – and a way to pay for it.

Fixing our subways can't wait. We've got to get our trains running on time and upgrade the system's Prohibition-era equipment. We also need to place subway security in the hands of the NYPD. We can't trust the MTA bureaucrats to balance their books right, so why are we going to trust them with our safety and security? Our riders are paying more for less, and in a Miller Administration that will change.

Two-thirds of New Yorkers are renters, and more than one quarter – 540,000 households – pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent. This is a crisis, and we have just found out that rents have skyrocketed to an all time high. I have has proposed creating a renter's tax credit of 3 percent of annual rent for individuals making less than \$100,000 a year. The credit would total up to \$1,000. I have also proposed doubling the local Earned Income Tax Credit, resulting in the average credit increasing to more than \$2,400.

Each year, New York City's taxpayers send \$24 billion more to Albany and Washington than we get back. Schools, healthcare and affordable housing are all shortchanged. As Mayor, I will do something this Mayor hasn't: I'll stand up to the Republican leadership and demand our fair share.

As Speaker, I have fought tirelessly for New York's priorities. I stopped Mike Bloomberg from cutting hundreds of millions of dollars for healthcare, child care, college scholarships, programs for seniors, and HIV/AIDS prevention. I also worked to create New York City's first Earned Income Tax Credit, and passed legislation to protect children from the dangers of lead paint, require hospitals to provide emergency contraception to sexual assault victims and bring a living wage to 50,000 workers.

I've proven I can get results as Speaker, and will get results as Mayor.

Letters-Klesh from page 2

bishing the meditation steps, restoring the stone work along the river, replacing the small wooden “footbridges” up by the Lighthouse, replacing and painting the wooden borders in Lighthouse Park, patching holes on the eastern walkways, installing more planters around Eastwood, cleaning up and painting the community bulletin boards, and now continuing the projects of the Motorgate elevator renovation and z-brick replacement in front of Manhattan Park are all welcome signs, I hope, of more good things to come. Herb Berman deserves a big “kudos” for taking these steps to help restore our pride in the Island!

Finally, however, I am also saddened to see that vandalism continues on the Island – a slap in the face to those of us who live here and appreciate the Island's resources and beauty. I have noticed that graffiti now covers various parts of Lighthouse Park including the west-facing cement benches, some of the same red wooden walls that were just painted, and the Lighthouse itself – an Island Landmark. These outrages must be stopped through more frequent Public Safety patrols of Lighthouse Park, better lighting (i.e. get the lights working at the base of the Lighthouse so that it is not obscured in darkness), and an immediate cleanup of graffiti to discourage its spread (as is done in Central Park). I truly hope that Herb Berman and RIOC will clean up and stop this disturbing trend before it gets out of hand so that the efforts to improve the Island will not have been in vain.

Kevin Klesh



Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress

Hi. I'm Anthony Weiner and I want to tell you who I am, and why I am running for Mayor.

I grew up in Brooklyn. My mom taught in our public schools – my Dad hung a shingle outside our home. I went to our public schools. I graduated from PS 39, JHS 51, Brooklyn Tech, and the State University of New York. I served as an aide to Chuck Schumer, our great Senator. I then served for seven years in the City Council, and for the last 7½ years I've represented Brooklyn and Queens in the United States Congress.

Today, I'm running for mayor because I don't think anyone is looking out for regular people.

Let me tell you some of my specific ideas.

I think the middle class is getting squeezed. I'm the only candidate with a plan to cut income taxes 10% for everyone making \$150,000 a year or less.

I'm committed to making government more efficient – cutting or reprogramming taxpayer dollars going to the worst performing 5% of City programs every year.

I will focus like a laser beam on our schools. My mother – who taught in our public schools for 31 years – left the system because she was convinced we were moving in the wrong direction. We cannot afford to let bad management drive our best teachers to retire early or leave for jobs at suburban schools.

We need to pay teachers more. We may not ever be able to pay them what they truly deserve, but they should get a raise. We need a curriculum that gets back to the basics, that lets teachers teach and gives principals the power to impose discipline in the classroom so every child can learn.

And finally, fighting for hardworking New Yorkers means putting New York in charge of its future. Albany and Washington have proven that they aren't reliable partners in our efforts to improve all five boroughs. So it's time that we take back control of the things that matter most to New Yorkers.

I will fight to take back control of the MTA and our subways. Most of the MTA's revenue comes from the five boroughs, but the agency spreads that funding all around the State. That means that a board controlled by the Governor and the surrounding counties is raising subway and bus fares on New Yorkers, while using City straphangers to subsidize transportation elsewhere in the State. As Mayor, I'll take control of the MTA so that we can restore our subways, and keep them secure.

Beyond that, it's time that we fought for a New York City Bill of Rights – to ensure that Albany stops short-changing us. The City should be able to reduce the costs of tickets and fines without having to seek Albany's permission. Albany should not be able to prevent us from ensuring that the City has adequate middle-class housing. And we should be able to create innovative solutions to our health-care crisis without getting permission from the State bureaucracy.

I have a whole agenda of ideas that I'd like you to know about – I put them on my website www.anthonnyweiner.com – ideas for providing more people with health insurance, fighting crime, and making sure we do something about the disgrace of 500,000 children needing emergency food last year in our City.

So I will be a different kind of Democrat. And I will make you two promises.

First, my administration will be about offering New Yorkers real solutions.

I am the only candidate with a middle-class tax cut of 10%. I am the only candidate to propose budget reform to save billions by cutting ineffective spending. And I have a plan to give great teachers a raise and put discipline back in our schools. If you are looking for a Democrat with a different approach, I am your guy.

Second, I won't forget where I come from or who I am fighting for. I will fight for the hardworking people of New York City everyday.

Four generations ago, my family came here and worked hard and dreamed big dreams. We owe it to all of those who came before us, and everyone working hard now to make it, to keep building a City that is getting better: a City that's safe, prosperous and full of opportunity.

Thank you.

The **Public Safety Blotter** for the first half of August is now available on *Website NYC10044*, at nyc10044.com, with this issue of *The WIRE*. When the August 16-30 information becomes available, it will also be posted with this issue.

Candidates for Manhattan Borough President Make Their Pitch for September 13 Primary Votes From



Brian Ellner

I am a native New Yorker with fond memories of taking the Tram to Roosevelt Island for tennis matches when I was younger. I am grateful for the opportunity to tell you a little about myself, and my plans for the borough.

I'm running for Borough President because, while we live in a vibrant and diverse City, we are facing an affordability crisis that threatens to destroy what makes this Borough unique.

Affordable housing has been central to my life. My grandparents lived on Rivington Street, in what used to be called a "tenement." Today it's referred to as a "luxury walk-up." I grew up in Stuyvesant Town. My mother worked incredibly hard but, without rent control, I would never have had the chance to grow up in this City.

I will not stand by while Manhattan becomes nothing more than an outdoor mall for multi-millionaires. And I will not stand by while Roosevelt Island risks losing existing affordable housing through Mitchell-Lama buyouts, and while the remaining open space on the Island is sold off to developers in sweetheart deals. Every time politicians side with wealthy developers instead of us, it means that teachers, firefighters, police officers, nurses, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and young families are forced to move away. When that happens, we all lose.

My first priority in office will be the creation and preservation of quality affordable housing throughout the borough. I called for the use of Battery Park City Authority monies to be used for their intended purpose – the creation of new affordable housing – over a year before the Mayor addressed the issue, and will be a vigilant watchdog to make sure that this promise is kept. I have stood up for guaranteed 30% permanently affordable housing in all rezoning plans, and repeal of the Urstadt Law and a return to home rule to save rent regulation. I believe we must both expand SCRIE to include people with disabilities and further increase the income eligibility for the program, and that the 421a incentive program is out-dated and in need of reform.

My plan will address the affordable-housing crisis in many neighborhoods, but because of Roosevelt Island's unique governing structure and the role RIOC plays in the island's development, it will not be enough. We need to stem the flow of buildings from the Mitchell-Lama program, and must also find a way to both offer tenants the right of first refusal in Mitchell-Lama buyouts and create an opportunity for them to get low interest loans to make that purchase a reality.

At a time when we face an administration in Washington that seeks to end public support of housing and the Section 8 program, and an administration in Albany that often seems to treat Roosevelt Island as an afterthought at best, the City and the Borough President must be a more forceful advocate for the community.

As Borough President, I will be an active voice for the preservation of affordable housing and sensible development on Roosevelt Island, and will monitor the activities of RIOC, speaking out against unjust actions.

We need a new approach to development throughout Manhattan, one that does not stand against all development, but rather focuses on the needs of neighborhoods, and on bettering the lives of the people who have built them. This is nowhere more true than in Roosevelt Island.

As we develop, we must make sure that we are providing what the community needs. We must ensure that schools and youth centers are built, and that we promote economic development that truly benefits the community. We also must create open space and parkland, and reexamine the Open Space Law in light of recent court decisions. I am excited by the advent of RI-311.com, and will work with the community to evaluate current levels of service and ensure that we both plan for the future and implement these plans.

I'm concerned about the role that the State and quasi-public agencies are playing in the direction of development of our Borough. There is a need for reform of RIOC, and I will work with the community to address these issues.

Finally, I will fight to protect equal rights for *all* New Yorkers. Whether ensuring equal rights for the LGBT community, combating racial disparities in health care, ensuring the full accessibility of our transportation system, or fighting for women's rights I will be a tireless advocate for civil rights.



Margarita Lopez
Member, City Council

I am running for Borough President because I'm interested in preserving the Manhattan that has attracted the best and brightest from near and far – the Manhattan of dreams and myth that we have made our home.

As Councilmember for District 2, I have fought for new equipment in schools, funded programs to combat HIV/AIDS for women of color, secured funding for the first-ever Girls Club in New York State, authored the bill to stop stray voltage on our streets by Con Edison, and fought for equal access for the elderly and disabled.

And while I'm proud of these and other steps I've taken, as Borough President I can make great strides, doing even more for both islands – Manhattan and Roosevelt.

I share your concern over the lack of affordable housing for people who make \$20,000, \$50,000 and even \$70,000 dollars a year. I will tackle this crisis head on and work towards ensuring comprehensive planning – not failed piecemeal approaches – so that the needs of every neighborhood are met from the very beginning. The creation of affordable housing can happen. I know because, since 1978, I have led efforts to create more than 2,000 affordable housing units throughout the Lower East Side.

The Borough President must pay special attention to the transportation problems throughout Manhattan and Roosevelt Island. Unfortunately, there is a profound lack of commitment to this issue, specifically in building the 2nd Avenue subway – it must be built. And I will fight Albany and Washington for much needed money to build new lines and fix the antiquated systems already in place. Without efficient mass transit, workers cannot get to their jobs and the economy slows down.

As your Borough President, I will use capital dollars to ensure public hospitals have state-of-the-art technologies. Proper infrastructure in public hospitals means that New Yorkers can receive quality health care, regardless of whether they have insurance or not. The Borough President must have a deep understanding of the role of hospitals as a vital economic engine, and how best to utilize capital funding to ensure that our hospitals are performing at their highest levels.

Goldwater Hospital is particularly unique, since it is the only public hospital in NYC that has long-term care for the disabled and treats catastrophic illnesses. Once treated, some of these people could be discharged, but because they have no home – often, the lack of wheelchair-accessible apartments – people remain in the hospital for years and years. The Borough President must fight towards making sure these disabled people become a priority for NYCHA retrofit apartments. Doing so will help people, the hospital, and the Island.

I will also work with the Mayor to resolve the problem of sanitation, including looking into new technologies that create clean energy. The Borough President must monitor the sanitation problems very closely and work with the Queens Borough President to ensure special attention is paid for Roosevelt Island residents and businesses. Unless there's an advocate for Roosevelt Island in the budget process, City services don't reach them in the same proportion.

The Borough President must embrace the Island and ensure it receives the same treatment and benefits that Manhattanites enjoy. Incredibly, most people don't realize that Roosevelt Island is a part of Manhattan. Personally, I am very familiar with the Island – its hospital, people, and challenges – from my 12 years as an outreach worker with the homeless, mentally ill, and disabled populations.

However, because Manhattan elected officials haven't always paid adequate attention to the issues that affect Roosevelt Island, it does not enjoy the same benefits as Manhattan. For instance, as Borough President, I will advocate for more tourism, highlighting the Roosevelt Island Tram, as well as the only landmarked "ruin" (the leprosy hospital) in the U.S.

The next Borough President must have a solid record and a real grasp of the issues affecting every neighborhood. I am that candidate. I will play a key role in rezoning and historic preservation. My ideas, such as the City's only cultural improvement district, located in the East Village, will enhance every community; and the creation of an anti-displacement unit in the Borough President's office will ensure we aren't priced out of our homes. I will not settle for "it can't be done." (Please visit my website, www.margaritalopez.com for more information).

I have the vision, passion, and experience to make a real difference and I would be honored to have your vote on September 13 for Manhattan Borough President.



Carlos Manzano
Member, City Council

For the past 18 years, I have lived in Midtown on the Westside of Manhattan. I have proudly served the people of New York City holding elected and appointed offices and working within City agencies and organizations.

My parents brought me to New York City at the age of 16. They provided me with strong family values, a sense of responsibility, concern for others, and a strong work ethic. They also stressed the importance of education. After graduating Martin Van Buren High School in Queens, I continued my education and earned a Bachelor's Degree in 1992 from Queens College while concurrently working full time on Wall Street.

While working in private and public sector jobs such as serving as an Assistant Commissioner at the Department of Youth and Community Development, as a teacher's assistant for the New York City Board of Education, as a recertifier for Section 8 Housing and as a technology specialist working on citywide projects – I continued my studies and received a Master's Degree in Public Administration from New York University in 2003.

Presently, I hold the elected office of Democratic State Committeeman and Democratic County Committeeman. I have served on Community Board 4 and as a Board Member of the Westside Student Outreach Program. I also serve as a Board Member of the Hell's Kitchen's Encore Senior Citizen Center.

Most importantly, for the last 12 years I have had the honor of serving as President of the McManus Midtown Democratic Association, an organization I have been a part of since 1987. It was this organization where I came under the mentorship of veteran District Leader Jim McManus. This is where I learned how politics and government are intertwined and how they can be tools for improving the quality of people's lives.

As President of the McManus Club, I initiated an aggressive program of outreach and community service. The effort not only increased membership and community participation, but created innovative programs to help immigrants achieve citizenship and educate young people as public policy interns.

I have worked face-to-face with thousands of residents and continue to assist them with their day-to-day concerns and solve their problems. The problems they face are the problems all residents of Manhattan face: security, transportation, traffic, affordable housing, economic development, funding for education and the arts, day care, senior services, healthcare, parks, and the environment. I have learned that listening is a leader's most important skill.

Recently, I have been working with the Roosevelt Island Youth Program to help preserve its funding and to continue to enhance those programs that impact on the children and families living on Roosevelt Island.

As your next Manhattan Borough President, I will tackle all these issues and use the power of the office – and this is a powerful office – to improve the quality of your lives. I will be in charge of overseeing New York City's budget, advocating Manhattan's needs by developing an annual budget statement with the 12 Community Boards and by lobbying for borough needs and service restorations. I will allocate funds to important services by using the \$13.7 million dollars the Borough President has control over. And I, together with my appointees to key City agencies, will always have your best interests in mind.

You can learn more about me, my positions and my campaign by logging onto www.Manzano.org. On Tuesday, September 13, I ask you for your support and your vote so I can serve and represent you as your next Manhattan Borough President.

Eastwood from page 1

ments vs those underutilizing three-bedroom and four-bedroom units as divisive and unequal treatment. Attorney Joseph agreed, but said, "This has been a negotiation. We got everything we could." Doryne Isley, General Manager of Roosevelt Island Housing Management, said occupants of only about 21 apartments are likely to be adversely affected by the surcharge/downsize requirement. She said the landlord feels that larger families should have an opportunity to occupy the larger apartments.

gh President Make Their Pitch for September 13 Primary Votes From Island Democrats



Eva Moscowitz
Member, City Council

Let me start with a simple fact that others won't tell you: the Borough Presidency may not be the most powerful office in New York, but it will be extremely valuable to the residents of Roosevelt Island – if the right person holds the job. I hope you'll agree that I'm that person.

I would like to be the problem-solver-in-chief for all of Manhattan. As your next Borough President, I will work to make City agencies more responsive, and to do the work the public depends on them for. I have spoken to scores of Roosevelt Island residents during my six-year tenure on the City Council and over the last several months of my campaign who are tired of getting the run-around from City agencies. They are tired of "bad government" – government that lacks urgency about your immediate need for Mitchell-Lama and other affordable housing programs, public safety, transit access, or better schools.

As your next Borough President, I look forward to continuing "bottom-up" policy-making practices. In my six years on the Council, I have found that by far the most meaningful and effective policy ideas come directly from my work in the community. If elected, I plan to develop, solicit input for, and hold hearings on a three-year plan to:

- Significantly curb the tide of demolition, deregulation, and mass eviction in Mitchell-Lama and other affordable housing units.
- Broaden the City's subsidies for affordable housing to include middle and moderate-income.
- Streamline application process for low, moderate, and middle income housing units and subsidies. Prospective tenants should be able to apply, and to check up on the status of housing applications online.
- Develop a more ambitious target for new affordable housing units in the Borough.

As your next Borough President, I also plan to continue my passionate commitment to public education. As Chair of the Council's Education Committee, I have considered it my responsibility to worry about all 1,356 schools in the City. As Borough President I will concentrate on Manhattan's 200 schools. On the Island, I plan to focus on expanding early childhood education; resurrecting the "forgotten subjects" of art, science, and sports; ensuring equitable access to after-school programs such as chess and school newspapers; and advocating for students in non-traditional academic programs – those with special needs, those in vocational programs, gifted and talented students, and students returning to the school system from juvenile detention.

About me: I am a life-long New Yorker who attended PS 36, PS 6, and Stuyvesant High School, where I met my husband, Eric Grannis. I grew up in the same one-bedroom apartment where Eric and I now live with our six-year-old son, Culver (a second-grader at PS 290); our 2½-year-old son, Dillon; and our one-year-old daughter Hannah.

I hold a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University and earned a B.A. with honors at the University of Pennsylvania. I taught history as a Professor at the University of Virginia, Vanderbilt University, and CUNY. From 1996 to 1999, I was the Chair of the Faculty Seminar in American Studies at Columbia University. Prior to my election to the Council, I served as the Executive Director of ReadNet, a children's literacy organization, and taught civics and managed leadership programs at Prep for Prep, a program for gifted minority students.

Where we're headed: Over the last several months, I have worked closely with Roosevelt Island community activists on a number of issues, and I look forward to continuing our work. Together, we've secured a historic library expansion, demanded a more responsive public-safety unit, and brought much-needed capital dollars to area schools. I also share your concerns about recent attempts to sell out Roosevelt Island to speculators. Potential developers are ignoring longstanding contracts between the City and State. The Roosevelt Island General Development Plan mandates percentages of affordable housing, yet these speculators are ignoring the vision of Roosevelt Island as a planned community with low, middle, and high income New Yorkers co-residing. More specifically, I am working with the State Comptroller's office to prevent the Westview buy out.

It has been my honor to spend so much time on Roosevelt Island during my candidacy to be Manhattan's next Borough President and during my tenure on the City Council. If elected, I look forward to serving you with the tenacity, enthusiasm and vigor that have become my trademarks. Too many people don't know that Roosevelt Island is actually a part of Manhattan, and the issues of the Island are far too often overlooked. I will make it a priority to ensure that they aren't.



Bill Perkins
Member, City Council

Throughout my life, I have been a consistent, ardent, and aggressive fighter for basic justice, equality, and to make City government more responsive to the people. As a neighborhood leader, tenant leader, and City Council leader, I've fought to knock down barriers and to give every single child the same chance to succeed that I was given and every parent the same confidence that my mother had – that through hard work and opportunity their children can achieve anything.

While my parents and grandparents didn't have much financially, they taught me about hard work, discipline, and provided me with the opportunity to get a good education, graduate from Brown University, and now serve three terms in the City Council. Throughout all the success, I have never lost connection to the people nor forgotten the road I have traveled.

It's why I fought to open up City government, empower Community Boards, and make government more responsive to the needs of neighborhoods. It's why I fought long and hard for The Childhood Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention Act of 2004 to protect children from the deadly – and irreversible – effects of lead in their homes. New York now has the best preventions in the country.

It's why I've fought against giving the billionaire Jets \$600 million in this tough fiscal environment to build a football stadium when there are so many other unfunded projects that truly meet the public interest. As a City Councilmember, I've provided funding for libraries and computer technology centers in our public schools; helped safeguard the health of children and adults by fighting asthma, infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, and cancer and by making quality health care more accessible; and led the fight against rats on our streets.

It's why I have worked to protect tenants from unscrupulous landlords and provide affordable housing. When tenants were being illegally evicted from their homes, I fought side-by-side with them, exposed a nationwide scandal, and provided the opportunity for the tenants to own their own homes.

And it's why, when peaceful demonstrators rallying during the Republican National Convention last summer were wrongly arrested, held in unsafe conditions, and denied basic rights, I was the first to hold hearings and expose the abuses. It's why I spoke out early and loud against the War in Iraq and introduced The Patriot Act Resolution that mandates that anti-terrorism laws and policies that are implemented in New York do not infringe upon the fundamental rights and liberties of New Yorkers.

And this year, I joined with Councilmembers from Boston, Chicago, and around the country to launch "Cities for Progress" – a new nationwide network of locally-elected officials and community-based activists working to create national change at the local level. It was born out of Cities for Peace, a project which helped pass nearly 200 City Council resolutions opposed to the invasion of Iraq, citing local costs.

I am running for Manhattan Borough President to improve our schools, provide accessible healthcare and affordable housing, promote our cultural institutions, and continue my lifetime fight to knock down barriers, create opportunities, and end discrimination.

Democrats have lost many recent elections because voters didn't think they stood for anything. People have never doubted where I stand. I will stand up for those now being shut out. I stand for protecting tenants in Mitchell-Lama housing and improving mass transit. I stand for opening doors and protecting neighborhoods; providing for our children and senior citizens; supporting the arts and culture and the things that make our City great. I will be an activist voice – an advocate for hard-working New Yorkers who just want a fair share, a chance to succeed and a strong vision for New York's future.

I know that working together we can make government work better for all of us. All we need is the vision to see it, the leadership to fight for it and the determination to make it happen. So let us choose a new path to recapture our future. We owe it to ourselves and those who will follow us.

I ask for your support. Together, we will make a difference for families today, and for generations to come.



Scott Stringer
Member of Assembly

My name is Scott Stringer and I'm running for Borough President because I believe the next Borough President is going to have to defend our City in a way that we've never had to defend it before.

I want to use the office's greatest powers: land use, zoning, housing, and economic development, to fight for our ability to live in Manhattan. It's amazing now, when we're surrounded by all this wealth, to think back just a few years when there were huge swaths of land in Manhattan where no one wanted to move. But people did move here. And from Tribeca to Washington Heights, they built these communities into places where everyone in the world wants to live.

And suddenly now those pioneers – the artists, actors, teachers, students, and police officers, are being priced out of the neighborhoods they helped to create. That's not right and that's not fair.

I want to be Borough President because I want to protect New York City for the people who made it the center of the universe. I want to make sure their children are not priced out. I want the dream of coming to this city to be affordable for those who will come later.

We don't want to shut people out because the entrance fee to our city is a million-dollar apartment.

We have the opportunity to use the development happening across Manhattan to negotiate agreements that meet the needs of our communities. As Borough President, I'll work to set aside at least 30% of new developments for affordable housing for low and middle-income families. And I'll fight to see that incentives are granted to include day-care centers, park space, and school repairs.

I have a plan to reform and empower our community boards, so we can begin comprehensive community-based planning borough-wide.

I want to use my vote on the pension fund to direct \$450 million towards the creation of affordable housing.

And I have a plan to create a Borough President Youth Sports League, to give our kids a safe alternative to the streets.

I recognize the limited powers of the office. It means you can't "go it alone" as Borough President. You need to be independent, but you also need to work with others to get results. I learned this well in my successful effort to pass the first rules reforms to hit Albany in a generation.

I maintained my independence, I stood up to Albany leaders, I took the heat... but it isn't always about how you start – it's about how you finish. And the reason we succeeded, ultimately, was because we built a coalition of good government groups like the Brennan Center, 27 of my Democratic colleagues, as well as the entire Republican conference to pass real reforms, including the end of empty-seat voting.

The same thing goes for the office of Borough President. The Community Boards can be a force only if you can forge often-difficult compromises and bring about consensus. You can have influence on the pension fund, but only if you can foster relationships with the Comptroller and the other Borough Presidents. And I believe that my record shows that I've taken independent stands, time and again, but I don't do it in a way that alienates people or prevents me from making progress. I got results in Albany, and I can get results for Manhattan.

I'm proud to have the endorsements of Congressman Jerry Nadler, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, New York's Teachers, the Working Families Party, and many other progressive groups and elected officials. I hope I can earn your support on September 13.

Rivercross from page 1

cording to Hammer, 47 applicants remain on the list from 1991 – 16 for one-bedroom units, 27 for two-bedroom units, and 4 for three-bedroom units.

Under the rules of the lottery, which is governed by New York State Mitchell-Lama regulations and supervised by the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), household income must meet guidelines both at the time of application and at the time an apartment is awarded, a factor which would cause some attrition in the available applicant list over time. According to the announcement in the July 30 *WIRE*, "Household members must be residing together and meet the household composition requirements at the time of application and at the time of apartment availability. No substitutions will be accepted."

Candidates for the City Council District 5 Seat Make Their Case



Eric Cesnik

Eric Cesnik is a progressive Democrat who will bring courage, vision, and a new kind of leadership to City Hall. As the son of a social worker and a nurse, Eric learned at a young age the importance of serving his community. An honors graduate of Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School, he put those lessons to work as a member of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, where he protected clients from slumlords and fought to collect overdue child-support payments.

In 2000, Eric made District 5 his home and began work negotiating high profile business deals at the prestigious New York City law firm, Latham & Watkins LLP. Continuing his pro bono work in the City, Eric successfully represented a client who was originally denied assistance from FEMA after 9/11. In 2003, inspired by Howard Dean's message about standing up to George W. Bush and about bringing more people into the political process, Eric took a leave of absence from his law firm to work for Dean's presidential campaign. As a member of Dean's campaign staff, Eric saw firsthand that positive change occurs when leaders take principled stands on issues that matter and empower communities to become involved in issues that are important to them.

Eric has a history of fighting and winning for the right causes. As our new City Council representative, Eric will fight to improve our education system; he believes that it is time to stop talking about fixing our schools and take action to actually reduce class size, increase teacher pay, and improve graduation rates. He will fight for better, cleaner, and safer transportation, including a 2nd Avenue Subway, expansion of the city's hybrid vehicle program, and the creation of bike lanes. He will advocate for more aggressive oversight of the MTA to ensure that the MTA wisely spends funds available – but never used – to protect commuters from terrorism. And Eric will stand up to require that developers act responsibly and build more affordable housing.

Eric recognizes that Roosevelt Island is a model community, one with specific issues that need to be addressed. He believes that the people who choose the community leaders on the Island should be the residents, not a corporate board. As City Council Representative, he will introduce a resolution to the Council that calls on the governor of New York State to give Roosevelt Island residents the right to vote for their own leaders, an action that is long overdue. Also, as more buildings on Roosevelt Island leave the Mitchell-Lama program, Eric will demand that the new buildings contain affordable apartments and he will fight to preserve the diversity that makes our community strong. Furthermore, Eric will advocate keeping the parks and other community facilities free and open and will push for funding for a police substation.

Eric has the courage to take a stand for New Yorkers on the issues that matter most and the vision to see New York City not just as it is, but as it could be. He does not owe favors to political bosses, lobbyists, PACs or real estate donors. An independent voice, Eric will bring a new kind of leadership to the City Council, one that isn't beholden to entrenched special interests or a political machine that puts cronyism ahead of constituents. Eric believes that the answers to the issues that face our district and our city come from the residents, not from City Hall, and he will work hard to keep us informed and involved.

Please visit Eric's campaign headquarters on Second Avenue, between 88th and 89th Street, or his website, www.cesnik2005.com, to learn more about him and his campaign and to share your views.

Vote for Eric Cesnik on September 13. Courage. Vision. A New Kind of Leader.



Jessica Lappin

This fall, Roosevelt Island residents have an important decision to make: they will elect a new City Councilmember. I am running for the City Council because I have the experience, energy, and ideas to be an effective advocate for our community.

I know that Roosevelt Island has always been a special place to live, work, and raise a family. It's a place where New Yorkers of all ethnic and economic backgrounds have come together to form an exceptional and unique community.

Over the past seven years, I have come to know many Island residents through my work with Speaker Gifford Miller. I have helped countless constituents and tenants, while fighting to protect the history and character of the Island.

Together, we tackled critical issues like protecting affordable housing and improving public education. As Speaker Miller's District Chief of Staff, I have:

- Worked with tenants in Eastwood, Island House, Westview, and Rivercross, as these buildings face the possibility of coming out of the Mitchell-Lama program;
- Partnered PS/IS 217 with the Lincoln Center Institute to add an arts-based curriculum to our schools;
- Worked with the MTA and East Side elected officials to bring the Tram into the Metrocard system;
- Convinced DOT to change their policy when Access-A-Ride refused to pick up disabled Island residents and bring them into Manhattan;
- Worked with RIRA, the Youth Center, the Senior Association, the Disabled Association, and countless other groups to enhance and improve your quality of life;
- Worked with RISK to address public safety concerns on the Island;
- Successfully fought to preserve the Island's garbage-disposal system against the Mayor's budget cuts to AVAC; and
- Helped secure funding in the City budget to expand the Roosevelt Island Public Library.

With your support, I will continue to make a difference for our community.

Keeping Housing Affordable

After spending countless evenings at meetings in the Chapel, and working one-on-one with dozens of tenants, I understand the challenges that residents face and the stress caused as owners withdraw from the Mitchell-Lama program. Sadly, this problem is not unique to Roosevelt Island. Across the City, working families are being forced out of their homes.

First and foremost, our elected leaders must push to protect the affordable housing units that already exist. That means pushing Albany for home rule on housing legislation. The City Council, not legislators from upstate, should have the power to renew rent regulation, extend the Mitchell-Lama program, and address our local housing crisis.

But protecting what we have is not enough. As the city's population continues to grow, the City Council must find creative ways, like Inclusionary Zoning and city tax credits, to create new affordable housing units.

Strengthening our Public Schools

As a graduate of Stuyvesant High School, I know how important it is to reduce class size. We know that children can't learn and teachers can't teach in overcrowded and crumbling classrooms; in buildings without working bathrooms, gyms, art rooms, or science labs, and in classrooms that may leak when it rains.

Over the past five years, funding for our education capital budget has steadily declined from \$7.8 billion to \$4.5 billion. As we learned from the 1970s, deferring maintenance and delaying investment in our infrastructure is a recipe for disaster.

We need to build new schools, modernize existing ones, and make improving public education a top priority.

Improving Transportation

For too long, Governor Pataki has neglected our subway system and refused to adequately fund the MTA's capital plan. As a result, service on the F train line has suffered. As your Council Member, I will continue to fight against service cuts and fare hikes at the MTA and will advocate for the funding we desperately need to maintain and expand our transportation infrastructure.

I know that Roosevelt Island has unique problems, needs, and concerns. As your City Council Member, I will do everything that I can to protect open space, improve your quality of life, and make Roosevelt Island an even better place to call home.

I am proud to have the endorsements of Congresswoman



Dan Quart

My name is Dan Quart and I am running for City Council in the 5th Council District.

If I have not met you personally yet, it isn't for lack of trying: over the past two years, I have knocked on the door of every registered Democrat in Eastwood, Island House, Westview and Rivercross – twice. More importantly, I have been there with you to fight to preserve the two things that make Roosevelt Island such a great place to live: affordable housing and open spaces.

For the last year-and-a-half I have served as Eastwood's pro bono Attorney, representing numerous tenants on landlord-tenant disputes. These cases have ranged from ensuring that succession rights were honored, to defending tenants from being improperly downsized, to preventing the relocation of tenants to unsuitable apartments. I am appreciative of the trust placed in me by numerous tenants who saw fit to let me fight for them. I am proud of my record of advocacy – at nights, weekends, on my own time, never taking a dollar from anyone I represented.

This year I also served as RIRA's pro bono attorney with respect to our lawsuit to stop the Octagon Development. This was a true team effort, with the leadership of Steve Marcus and Margie Smith from RIRA, the Environmental Law Clinic at Columbia Law School, and myself as lead counsel. Ultimately, the Court rejected what I believe to this day was a clear-cut violation of State law. Regardless, I am proud of our effort to protect open spaces on the Island, while trying to hold RIOC accountable for what I consider was a breach of State law. The final chapter on this matter has not been written.

I want to take my passion for these issues that I have personally pursued and go to City Hall to fight on a larger scale. Together, we can work towards a more efficient transportation system; find the money in the City budget to build a police sub-station on the Island, and deal directly with the problems of school overcrowding and teacher retention.

But this race is about more than issues.

I believe that the kind of campaign I have run speaks directly to the kind of Council Member I will be. I have raised the maximum funds allowed for this race not only following the letter but the spirit of campaign-finance law. My donations have been raised as small contributions from supporters throughout the district, many here on Roosevelt Island. I have taken absolutely no money from anyone having business with the city of New York.

Furthermore, I have run a true grassroots campaign. I have made a three-year commitment to winning this race through direct, neighbor-to-neighbor voter contact and fundraising. I have knocked on over 7,000 doors on Roosevelt Island and the East Side, for months I have campaigned on the street from dawn until dark, and I have dozens of committed volunteers. I do not need a poll or a focus group to tell me that public safety services are not functioning properly, or that tenants do not get the services they pay for each month, or that RIOC is consistently unresponsive to the community's needs; I know this from listening to you.

I am the only candidate who can be an independent advocate for our community. I am not looking for headlines; I am looking for real solutions to our community's problems. I have hands-on experience dealing with the everyday issues that Roosevelt Islanders care about. Just as important, when I am elected, having run a grassroots campaign, I will have the independence necessary to fight for the community at large, while standing up for reform at City Hall.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to say that my work on Roosevelt Island will continue well after the election is over. Politicians have a way of paying attention to Roosevelt Island around election time, then passing the buck. You can be confident from my own record on this Island that I will do no such thing – I have been with you in the past, I am with you now, and I'll be with you after September 13.

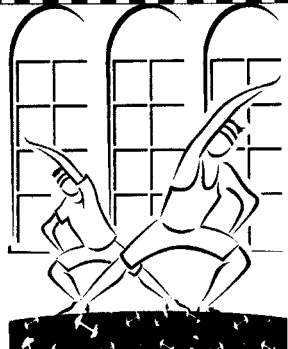
Thank you very much for your time and attention, and I hope to have your support on Primary Day on September 13.

Carolyn Maloney, City Council Speaker Gifford Miller and Assemblymember Pete Grannis – along with NOW, the League of Conservation Voters, the Central Labor Council, SEIU Locals 1199 and 32BJ, and many others.

I hope that I can count on your support and ask that you cast your vote for me on Primary Day, September 13.



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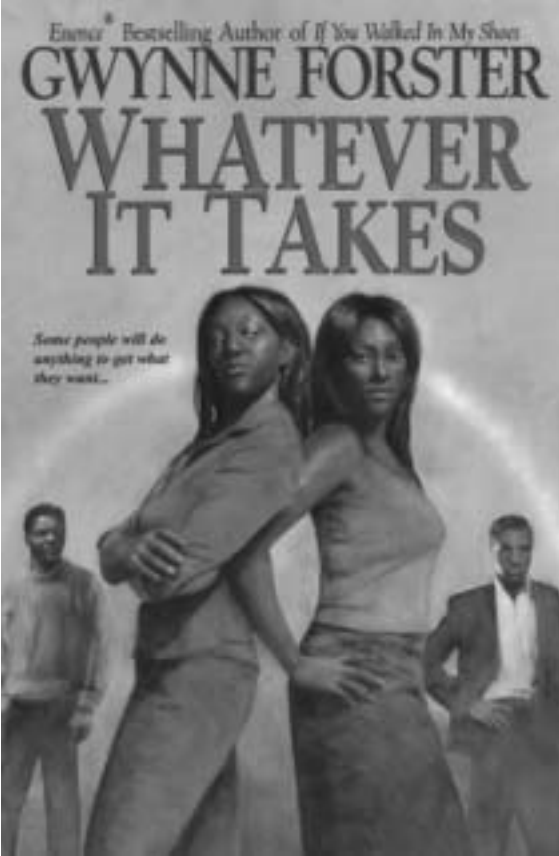
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Island Author Gwynne Forster Celebrates 10 Years, 20 Novels



Islander Gwen Acsadi, writing under the name Gwynne Forster, is about to celebrate her 20th novel and her tenth year of writing fiction. *Love Me or Leave Me*, a sequel to the best-selling *Once in a Lifetime*, will be released next month.

In “real life” – outside the world of romance and mainstream novels – Acsadi is a widely read demographer, who consulted for the United Nations and traveled to over 60 countries representing the Secretary-General.

Acsadi/Forster was featured in a *Main Street WIRE* profile by Francine Lange, available on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/wire/2120/forster.html. There’s more information on her and her fiction at www.gwynneforster.com.

A press release on her latest work, *Whatever It Takes*, describes it this way:

Lacette Graham’s twin sister, Kellie, has been competing with her since they shared a crib. And in 33 years, nothing has changed – except the stakes have gotten higher. Instead of vying for baby toys, Kellie now covets her sister’s success, property, and her man. As the more vivacious and selfish twin, Kellie uses her advantage to get what she wants, and she wants plenty. When their parents separate, and their maternal grandmother dies and wills each twin valuable jewelry, Kellie’s manipulation reaches new heights – as attempts to make more than one man prey to her machinations. And Lacette is more of a target than ever.

With her mother in a mortifying mid-life crisis, her father and greatest ally out of the house, and her twin sister scheming to steal her inheritance, Lacette must come to grips alone with the circumstances of her life. She opens her own marketing firm, but Kellie seeks to disrupt it, embarking on a frenzied spree of greed and seduction that has even her father disgusted. *Whatever It Takes* considers how one person’s lapse of judgment can affect an entire family.



Brodsky from page 1

On Thursday, Brodsky told *The WIRE* that he will schedule hearings on RIOC in September, and that he has invited RIOC Board Chair Marybeth Labate of DHCR. He said that Labate indicated that the RIOC Board would consider releasing the Hitsman report in its September meeting.

Administrative Payroll

Further on compensation to administrative staff, Brodsky’s interim report has this to say: “The RIOC administrative payroll has [increased] significantly in the last seven years. Documents received under a FOIL request showed a payroll list with approved salaries that were much lower than actual money paid to employees. In reviewing two documents – a list of all RIOC management staff containing names, positions, and salaries as of May 22, 2003, and a weekly gross payments report from January 13, 2000, to October 29, 2003, for [RIOC Vice President] Robert Antonek, [Special Counsel Barbara] Espejo, [General Counsel Kenneth] Leitner, [Public Information Officer] John Melia, and [Controller Patrick] Siconolfi, Steve Marcus, RIRA’s President, concluded that the salaries stated in the first document are 15-20 percent lower than the sum of the weekly amounts paid in 2003, and that raises of about 7.6 percent appear to have been given starting in December of 2002. According [to] President Berman, these discrepancies are due to the cost of living allocations given to administrative employees in December of 2002 and to some payments for a Savings Incentive Program that has since been discontinued. RIOC further responded to the Committee’s request to provide the approved and actual salaries over the past years [but the] Committee’s review of RIOC’s newly provided information shows a discrepancy between the FOILED documents and RIOC’s claim.” It says, “The Committee will continue to investigate the matter.”

Secrecy vs Openness

The report faulted RIOC for delays and denials in responding to requests from *The Main Street WIRE* and residents under the state Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), and for possibly violating the Open Meetings Law by allegedly denying members of the Residents Association Common Council admission to RIOC committee meetings over the years.

Residents charged RIOC and its board “consistently engaged in secrecy, political patronage, poor fiscal management, [and] failure to communicate with and be accessible to the community and its organizations,” the report said.

State Funding

The report took aim at Pataki for ending a State subsidy in 1997-98. It linked that decision to RIOC’s former policy of one-time payments instead of long-term ground rents in Southtown, and to RIOC’s failure to pay rent to the City for use of the 147 acres of Island land despite an obligation to do so.

Brodsky credited RIOC’s current administration with producing a draft capital-funds management plan and said his committee is reviewing it. And he noted Berman says one-time payment agreements “are no longer the policy of RIOC.” In the past, RIOC failed to issue long-term capital, land use, and financial plans but made long-term real estate deals anyway, the report states.

The report charges that RIOC may have squandered \$1.6 million in City capital funding and \$150,000 in state money because it has not given the Roosevelt Island Youth Center space promised years ago for expansion, or new space. (RIOC President Berman deals with that subject in his column in this issue, on page 3.)

Blackwell House

Noting that residents have complained about RIOC’s failure to restore and maintain Blackwell House, the Brodsky report notes that, “according to an audit by New York City Comptroller Thompson, RIOC has sought to obtain, or has obtained, financing to rehabilitate and maintain some of the Island’s landmarks,” and calls that “a positive step forward.” But it notes that “RIOC has not capitalized on a matching grant of \$250,000 from the New York State Parks Office for Blackwell House and thus the project has been ‘delayed’ because of budget constraints. An engineering study was undertaken, but no work has been done. The money originally earmarked for Blackwell House was allegedly [used] to bring a historical kiosk to the Island because, as the head of the Historical Society [Judy Berdy] said, ‘We were going to lose the money anyway because we’re not ready to start work yet.’” The report repeats a RIOC claim that it “is not aware of any grants originally earmarked for the Blackwell House

restoration [that have been] diverted for any purpose.”

Inquiry Continues

The interim report said the committee “continues to investigate” or “is seeking further information” on a list of allegations raised by residents. They include:

- A charge that RIOC improperly changed the rules for Southtown development by eliminating a requirement for construction materials to be delivered by barge. The cost of barging and on-site concrete mixing, or its elimination, would be a significant factor in overall cost of construction. The report notes that, “RIOC asserts that the RFQ [request for qualifications] was modified prior to the submission deadline to ‘encourage, but not require, the utilization of an on-site concrete batching with barge-based delivery systems for materials.’ RIOC claims that the modification was complete prior to the awarding of the contract to Hudson and Related, not after” in an August 12, 2005, letter from Berman. The report says the committee is seeking further information on whether RIOC gave timely notification of the change to all five of the companies seeking development rights, hinting at the question of whether Hudson-Related got special treatment.

- Charges that in Southtown, Hudson & Related is not meeting affordable housing requirements tied to a tax abatement, and that RIOC is not receiving a promised portion of a mortgage recording tax fee the developer paid the State.

- A charge that RIOC is ignoring Island master plan requirements for parks and other amenities when they interfere with development plans. The report points out, however, that in resident cases challenging the Octagon apartments development, the court ruled that “it is ultimately RIOC’s decision whether it wants to sacrifice open-space area in order to renovate a historical landmark, and to determine how the landmark would be renovated.” The report says, “The [Assembly] Committee is seeking information as to whether RIOC carefully considered residents’ opposition to the development, including the questions of preserving open space, before moving forward [with development].”

- A claim that Becker & Becker shouldn’t have received permission to build an underground parking facility as part of its plan for the Octagon Apartments develop-

ment. It notes that, “according to the office of Assemblymember Grannis, this request appears to have been made to facilitate the receipt of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) monies; however, according to RIOC, they will not receive any HUD money.” (The report notes that “negotiations are complete, with RIOC possibly receiving \$12 million for this development.”)

- A charge that RIOC diverted \$3.4 million it received from the city’s Department of Environmental Protection for damage resulting from the construction of a water tunnel from its intended purpose – to build the Octagon Ecological Park. The report describes the chain of events this way: “During the construction of the New York City Third water tunnel, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) damaged Roosevelt Island’s grounds and a perimeter seawall. RIOC claims that the original 1994 agreement called for RIOC to restore and repair the seawall and tunnel, while the City [would] reimburse RIOC for the work. The costs at that time were estimated at approximately \$1 million. The restoration, however, ended up costing RIOC considerably more. DEP therefore agreed to pay to build the Octagon Ecological Park using the \$3.4 million in damages it owed Roosevelt Island. RIOC then used that commitment of money to apply for grants and contributions for this park. After receiving the grants, the \$3.4 million was later transferred into the [RIOC] general fund because RIOC stated that it had enough funding for Octagon Park. According to RIRA, however, that money was delivered to cover the \$4.5 million infrastructure costs of the Southtown development. Because the funds were redirected, Octagon Park was only partially finished. RIOC [then] offered up the park area to developer Becker and Becker claiming that it was not being used as parkland, even though their redirection of funds prevented the park’s completion.” The explanation continues, “A February, 2004, letter from NYCDEP confirms that RIOC took DEP’s payment in lieu of the DEP constructing the Octagon Park. Robert Ryan, RIOC’s president at the time, denied that there was a link between the \$3.4 million from DEP and the \$4.5 million infrastructure payment [for Southtown]. The Committee is seeking more information on [the]

relationship, if any, between the \$3.4 million, the restoration of Octagon Park, and [funds provided for the] Southtown infrastructure.”

- The assertion that RIOC employees received more pay than their stated salaries.

- The charge that raises Ryan gave himself and employee Robert Antonek may not have been properly approved by the RIOC Board of Directors.

In one of the report’s interim conclusions, Brodsky writes, “There is a fundamental and ongoing hostility between RIOC and important segments of the Island’s community. This hostility is neither necessary nor inevitable. All parties should make immediate efforts to put aside historical grievances in favor of establishing a positive relationship to strengthen the community of the Island.”

For his part, Pete Grannis indicated his continued frustration with RIOC’s history. In his Thursday statement, he said, “In addition to turning their backs on the visionary stewardship at the heart of this experiment in urban living – an economically diverse community of, by and for the residents – these officials [Blue and Ryan], with the support and acquiescence of the Pataki administration, submerging RIOC in a cloak of aloofness and secrecy, engaged in questionable fiscal practices and sleight-of-hand budget-balancing fiscal gimmicks, and ignored repeated calls for development of long-range capital and financial planning. While it is refreshing to acknowledge the willingness of RIOC’s current president, Herb Berman, to address these and other issues highlighted in this report and reestablish a viable working relationship with the Island’s residents and elected officials, time will tell whether this happens.

“This being said, there are a number of matters cited in the report that require further investigation, and I welcome the committee’s acceptance of my call for continuing its work by way of public hearings.”

Brodsky’s interim report is available on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/wire/2523/brodskyreport.pdf.

The WIRE is seeking reaction to the report, which was received near deadline, from Berman and from members of the RIOC Board, as well as residents instrumental in starting the investigation, for inclusion in the newspaper’s next issue.

Library Gets Funding to Double Size, Add Service

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

The Library is about to grow. Some \$2.85 million in City capital funding has been allocated for the purpose, over two years, according to an announcement made here early in August by City Councilmember Eva Moscovitz.

City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, who represents Roosevelt Island, also announced the availability of the funds after the City budget was final.

The Island branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) will expand to about double its present size, into space now occupied by the St. Frances Cabrini Thrift Shop, according to RIOC President Herb Berman. (The Thrift Shop, which pays no rent and operates on a month-to-month lease, is to be relocated to another Island retail location.)

The doubling of size will allow the Library to accommodate additional computers, bathroom facilities, and a general expansion of shelf space for books, videotapes and DVDs, and other additions or expansions.

The change stems from an April 21 meeting with the President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, Herb Berman, Jessica Lappin, then an aide to Miller (and a current candidate for his seat), Moscovitz (a current candidate for Borough President), NYPL officials, and concerned Islanders.

In the April meeting, Supervising Librarian Petra Kolokotronis discussed the inadequacies of the current space, growing more critical as the Island's population expands:

- It allows for only three computers, not enough to meet demand.
- There is no public toilet, which is particularly difficult for small children.
- There is inadequate wall space to meet increased demand for DVDs.
- Access for disabled patrons is difficult.
- Square footage provides no quiet space for adults.
- An attendance of about 60 toddlers and parents at Toddler Story Hour fills the available floor space.
- Participation in the Summer Reading Program, which reached 365 youngsters this summer, 2004, strains the current resources.

Berman agreed to lease some 3,835 square feet of additional space, in the Thrift Shop area adjacent to the current Library, to NYPL. That set the stage for inclusion of the \$2.85 million in the City's capital budget.

Carmita Robalino



Carmita Robalino, Assistant Property Manager at Manhattan Park, passed away suddenly on Sunday, August 21. She had worked at the complex for the past 15 years.

She is survived by her husband, Remy; two sons, Steven and Remy, Jr.; her daughter, Michelle; and her grandson, Steven, Jr.

She was laid to rest yesterday in a funeral service held at St. Adelbert's Church in Elmhurst, New York.



At 13, Island Girl Gets a *TIME* Cover

Island resident Elle Esmeralda Dikoume was on the cover of *TIME Magazine's* August 8 issue. She shared the honor with three other 13-year-olds in *TIME's* first-ever multi-version cover. *The WIRE* reached her in Cameroon, on vacation, and asked her to write something about the experience. Here's her reply:

Dear *WIRE*:

When I got the phone call that I was invited to be on one of the four cover versions for *Time* magazine, I was speechless. That phone call was one of the best phone calls of my life! I could not believe it! That same night, I wasn't able to sleep. All that was going in my mind was that I was going to appear on a well-known magazine. Since I wasn't sure when the "Being 13" issue was scheduled to appear, I was expecting it to appear anytime. The day of the shooting was really fun. I knew the photographer, Gregory Heisler, and also the

three other 13-year-olds (Lucy Heisler, Australian-American; Philip Kay, Japanese-American; and Ivan Perez, from the Dominican Republic) because we all go to the same school, the United Nations International School. Since we are all great friends, the photo shoot was more fun and exciting. It was the first time that *Time* produced four different cover versions of the same issue. The fact that we were all of different nationalities made it even more special. Unfortunately, I was on vacation in Cameroon when the "Being 13" issue came out on August 8, so I didn't get to see it in stores. This was my first photo shoot and hopefully not my last.

Elle Esmeralda Dikoume

Deli Cited on Sanitation Concerns

M&D Deli was hit with a list of sanitary violations late last month when New York State conducted an inspection through its Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Food Safety. The report, which is supposed to be posted in the store but was not as of Tuesday, listed two serious violations, called "Critical Deficiencies," and more than a dozen "General Deficiencies."

"Live flies are observed landing on food contact surfaces in deli counter," says the report, noting that the "equipment [was] properly cleaned and sanitized during [the] inspection." The inspection was conducted July 25. "Live flies observed in and near deli counter" was the second critical deficiency. Violations in this category are listed as "serious," "which may result in the assessment of civil penalties and other action... The deficiencies must be corrected immediately."

Other deficiencies "that must be corrected without delay" include:

- Proper sanitizer test devices are not available in the establishment.
- Deli counter refrigerator fan guards noted dust laden.
- Deli display case chicken patties have internal temperature of 50 degrees (F).

- Deli counter upper and lower shelves soiled/cluttered.
- Produce display case shelves soiled.
- Retail shelves exhibit food spillage.
- Soiled restroom floor and shelves.
- Accumulated debris in storage area.
- Moderate build-up of dried food residue on Deli slicer gripper tool.

The State inspection was conducted after a resident complained to the City Health Department about an employee bare-handing sandwich meat. The City passed the information to the State, apparently because Roosevelt Island is subject to State jurisdiction, as City property leased to the State.


archives are available
on Website **NYC10044**
at **nyc10044.com**

Southpoint Getting Attention Again – This Time, It's a Contest



The Emerging New York Architects Committee (ENYA) is announcing a competition to design a "Universal Arts Center" for Southpoint.

The competition, which is open to all design students and architects, engineers, landscape architects, urban designers, and planners who have completed their education within the past ten years, is called "Southpoint: from Ruin to Rejuvenation," and focuses on the smallpox hospital at Southpoint, known as the Renwick Ruin after the architect who designed it in the mid-1800's.

Registration for the competition, which features prizes up

to \$6,000, opens September 1 and closes November 15, with a submission deadline of January 13, 2006.

ENYA's press release says the competition is tailored to fit the needs of the Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association (RIVAA) and Coler-Goldwater Hospital's Therapeutic Recreation Department, but with the "entire Roosevelt Island constituency in mind."

"The site will provide a platform to discuss issues of preservation, an opportunity to take advantage of glorious City views, and a chance to access a unique and inimitable physical environment," according to the announcement. The cen-

ter envisioned is to accommodate "both performing and visual arts."

The announcement, available at www.enyacompetitions.org, notes that "the competition results are intended to generate ideas for the site and will not result in actual development by ENYA or other parties involved." Plans for Southpoint Park currently on the table include the FDR Memorial designed by Louis Kahn and the "Living Library" ideas advanced by Bonnie Sherk after a year-long series of consultations with resident interest groups in the Roosevelt Island community.

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RIOC from page 3

Youth Program. Now that the Board has requested the information as a basis for their decision-making, in light of the issues raised, and the potential for liability, it would be imprudent to vote on granting the Youth Program the space knowing that none of the questions have been answered and that there is, in fact, a refusal to answer the questions.

Absent any of this type of data, the Board would be loathe to vote to give away the former Lilies School to the Youth Program for a term of 30 years, rent free, without contravening the Public Authorities Accountability Act of 2005. Bottom line, Board members have a fiduciary and statutory obligation to properly dispose of the Corporation's property and there exists an expanding web of enforcement mechanisms to hold Boards accountable for their conduct.

The frustration of the Youth Program's leadership having to reintroduce their proposal is palpable; however, it seems to be misdirected. In my tenure as President, I have personally endeavored to seek a solution to the needs of the Youth Program. The

Youth Program's speculation as to the insidious nature of the information request and its mischaracterization of our July 5 meeting are unfortunate developments. For instance, at the July 5 meeting with the Youth Program's Vice President and its Executive Director, an alternative resolution was proposed by RIOC which involved the Youth Program modifying its request for use of the ground floor of the school. During the meeting, there was no indication that the suggestion was being received as anything but pragmatic and appropriate, as intended; yet the Youth Program has sought in its July 25 letter to recast this overture as a refusal to lease them both floors of the building. RIOC has consistently shown its commitment to retaining a youth program on the Island and it is my fervent desire that we will be able to do this. The Board of Directors of RIOC and I remain committed to this end and implore the Youth Program's Board of Directors to provide the information requested so that the RIOC Board of Directors can make an informed decision.



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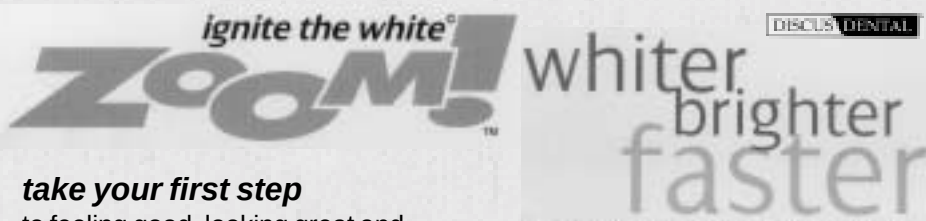
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