

Next issue
in two weeks –
Sat., Sept. 24

The Main Street WIRE™

This issue begins *The WIRE's* 26th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



City Council Speaker A. Gifford Miller, as he spoke Tuesday night in the Good Shepherd Community Center.

Candles at 7:00 9/11 Observance Set for Sunday Night in Plaza

Sunday evening's observance of the 9/11 tragedy will take on an additional dimension – New Orleans – in its fourth annual ceremony. The event will begin at 7:00 p.m. in Good Shepherd Plaza at the 9/11 memorial just west of the Chapel. Residents are asked to bring their own candles for a short, quiet ceremony of reflection and remembrance of the Island neighbors and firefighters lost in the 2001 attack. There will be music, including a group-sing of *America, the Beautiful*. The occasion will also be used to announce a clothing drive being conducted by the Senior Association (RISA) and the Disabled Association (RIDA). The event will conclude with a walk to Meditation Steps. "It was agreed at Wednesday night's Residents Association Common Council meeting that helping the victims of the New Orleans tragedy is a most appropriate and sensitive way for all of us to honor the memory of those whose lives were lost in New York City's tragedy – and to offer our solidarity with those who have lost so much," said Sherie Helstien, secretary of RIRA.

Power Hit Hangs Tram for 95 Minutes

What started as a routine four-minute Tramway trip last Friday (September 2) took an hour and 35 minutes when an apparent power surge halted the system's two cars, each only about 200 feet into their trips. Before the mid-air stoppage was over, there were more emergency personnel standing by on Roosevelt Island than there were passengers stranded on the cables. The heaviest rush-hour had not yet started. But aboard cabin 2, operator Tony Popescu had 59 Island-bound passengers, including a handful of kids and a pregnant woman. Cabin 1, with operator Linda Parker aboard, held about two dozen Manhattan-bound passengers who were destined to be late for whatever was taking them to the City. On the Island, two dozen emergency vehicles gathered: fire trucks, police cars, ambulances, and the odd Public Safety Department car or scooter. The vehicles blocked the roadway and turn-around at the Tram station, halting hospital-bound traffic and Red Bus

service. On the East River, police launches and a Coast Guard boat stood by. In the air, three NYPD helicopters occasionally buzzed the cabins; well above them, newscopters fed pictures to TV stations. Firefighters brought a gurney to the Island station's platform, just in case. The supervisor on duty apparently became rattled by the challenge of diagnosing the problem and dealing with the flood of emergency personnel. (He was later fired.) A call was placed to Armando Cordova, the system's lead supervisor, who was in Westchester County. Cordova eventually found himself stuck in a massive traffic jam caused by an accident on the Taconic Parkway, and to get him where he was needed, he got a State Police escort to Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla. There, a police helicopter picked him up for a quick ride to Firefighter's Field, on the Island. Shortly after his arrival, power was restored and the 85 or so passengers were headed to solid ground. See **Tram**, page 10

Gifford Miller Goes for the Big Score Tuesday, Seeking City's Mayoralty

by Dick Lutz
Gifford Miller came home, in a sense, on Tuesday night. He was in the Good Shepherd Community Center to debate Congressman Anthony Weiner, but Weiner canceled his planned appearance at the last minute, and sent a representative. The other candidates in the City's Democratic Mayoral Primary

were absent, as well. C. Virginia Fields had not responded to the Residents Association's invitation, and Fernando Ferrer had accepted, then changed his mind. So Miller had the audience of about 85 to himself, and he was among friends. He didn't need to recite the long list of good turns done for Roosevelt Island during

his nearly ten years in City Council as the 5th District representative. His listeners were aware of consistent support for the Youth Program (\$76,000 in this year's budget), for the Main Street Theatre (\$10,000), for the Day Nursery (\$7,000), for the Disabled Association (\$5,500), and the Seniors (\$20,100). Many knew of his role, in the past decade, in moving Roosevelt Island's community library into the New York Public Library system, and that his power as Speaker of the City Council was used to appropriate \$2,850,000, over two years, to expand the library. Or that he was instrumental in a \$5 million deal to bring the MetroCard to the Tramway. Or that he's managed to set aside \$4 million in City money See **Miller**, page 8

Southpoint Park Gets a \$4 Million RIOC Pledge

A full realization of Southpoint Park was nudged closer to likely fruition Thursday night when the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) agreed unanimously to set aside \$4 million in 2007 capital funds for the park, earmarked for development of the northern half of its length. The amount matches a City commitment of \$4 million for the same time period. Some Board discussion centered on the status of potentially competing plans for the park, especially for the southern half. A "Living Library" plan put forward by Bonnie Sherk after a year or more of consultation with residents is one possibility, but the Board on Thursday night was thinking in terms of a plan put forward by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) after its extensive consultations with the population. While Sherk had a role in the TPL planning requested by the RIOC Board, Board member Mark Ponton expressed a concern over whether she and those proposing the FDR memorial for the southern half had been given a fair

chance to compete for the right to design the park. Some discussion led to a tentative conclusion that Sherk's plan might be superimposed. See **RIOC Board**, page 8

NYC Comptroller Agrees Privatization May Breach Terms of Island Lease

New York City Comptroller William Thompson says he agrees that privatization of Mitchell-Lama buildings here may violate the Island's General Development Plan (GDP), which is part of the lease under which New York State is developing the City-owned Roosevelt Island. The issue was raised in April by attorneys for Westview residents facing removal of their building from the State's Mitchell-Lama affordable-housing program. In a letter to the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), the lawyers wrote, "...by the terms of [the] 99-year agreement... [Westview] must be maintained as housing for middle-income tenants..." In support of this position, it points out that the GDP provided that, until midnight on December 22, 2068, the division of housing in Northtown (Westview, Island House, Rivercross, Eastwood) must remain 20% for those eligible for Federally assisted public housing, 20% for those eligible for interest-reduction payments under Section 236 of the

National Housing Act, 35% for families eligible for limited-profit housing financed under the State Private Housing Finance Law, and 35% for those who can afford market-rate units. The letter points out that the current law See **Westview**, page 10

Island House Hitch

Three members of the Island House Tenants Association Board resigned Wednesday night, leaving Renato Folla as the only active member and touching off a process that will lead to election of as many as nine new Board members at month's end. Amrah Cardozo, Geoff Kerr, and Mario Naves resigned; Naves's wife, Harriet Lieber, had resigned earlier in response to a tenant-imposed bylaws change restricting Board membership to no more than one representative per apartment. The change comes at a crucial time, because the Board has been negotiating with the Sheldrake Organization over plans for privatization of the building.

Briefly...

- There's a **Primary Election Tuesday**. You'll find a *Guide for the Last-Minute Voter* on line at gothamgazette.com/article/issueoftheweek/20050905/200/1557, and a very useful *Mayoral Issue Grid* at gothamgazette.com/mayor_grid_05.shtml.
- It appears that **USAlliance Credit Union** may have a strong chance of coming to Roosevelt Island, after all, according to a spokesman for the company, who said its officials met with RIOC President Herb Berman recently.
- The need for **New Orleans Relief** is getting attention from Islanders. There's a roundup on page 10.
- **School started** Thursday at PS 217, with Principal Sherry Gregory being able to deliver some good news to teaching staff: In grade 4, math scores are up, with 81% of the students in the grade as a whole scoring above standard – 90% when special-ed students are not considered. On the English Language Arts (ELA) test, the percentages were 76%/84%. *The WIRE* plans a report next issue.



The Editorial Page

Endorsements:
Gifford Miller
Jessica Lappin
Scott Stringer

Miller and Lappin are no-brainers for Roosevelt Islanders grateful for the support they have given this community’s institutions. At *The WIRE*, we have a strong sense that Miller will make a great Mayor and, though November’s election may not be his turn at bat – Mike Bloomberg’s well-funded campaign could well overwhelm any opposing effort, let alone the City’s divided Democrats – he should have the firm vote of confidence this Island owes him.

A Miller-Lappin combination would be potent for the Roosevelt Island community. Jessica Lappin knows this Island’s issues as well as anyone and, equally important, knows the ways she can make an important difference here with the leverage of a seat on the City Council.

We must send a nod in the direction of Dan Quart, with the wish that the Island could have two representatives on the City Council. Dan’s hard work, unpaid, on behalf of Islanders and on Island issues, makes him a deserving recipient of the firm support he’ll find among this Island’s voting citizens. But elections are about choice, and in this choice, this election, our endorsement goes to Lappin.

For Manhattan Borough President, we endorse Scott Stringer in an overcrowded and attractive field of candidates, with appreciation for his careful thinking about the role of Community Boards, a well-informed focus on government accountability, and his sponsorship, in the Assembly, of a rule ending empty-seat voting.

Even More Important:
Vote on Tuesday

Across New York City, registered Democrats will most likely turn out in anemic numbers on Tuesday.

Let’s not let that be the case on Roosevelt Island. This Island’s voting districts should come in with the highest proportion of turnout of any and, if enough of us vote, the quantity of votes could make a key difference in the race for Manhattan Borough President and in the question of a Mayoral run-off.

Here’s the deal: If the raw total of Roosevelt Island votes are enough to make the difference in putting Miller – or any other candidate – into a run-off election, **no future candidate will ever be free to ignore Roosevelt Island again** – not during an election, and not after.

There’s voting **clout** here, but it depends on turnout. It depends on *your* vote, and perhaps upon your making sure a neighbor – or two or three – vote.

Want to do something for your Island community? In the coming week, the best thing you can do is to demonstrate that this neighborhood **votes** – however you cast your ballot.

To the Editor:
The agreement approved by 115 Eastwood residents on Aug. 25, and disapproved by 19, is a document of shame.
Was it a coincidence that one- and two-bedroom apartments were taken “off the table” as having to abide by strict family composition in the final agreement to qualify for the landlord assistance program (LAP)? How many of those on the negotiating committee live in one- or two-bedroom apartments? With such a concession from the Eastwood owners, no wonder the committee members were so willing to abase themselves to Belson and cohorts, and let those in three- and four-bedroom apartments that are not fully occupied suffer the consequences of either paying “market-market” rent or in some cases 25% above their current rent, or relocate to lesser-sized apartments, or move from Eastwood. In the end, we in this minority were sacrificed for their benefit.

It is unfair. We have lived here in a four-bedroom apartment for 28 years, raised our three daughters and spent time, energy and money to improve the property manifold, especially the patio. As long as we paid the rent, management seemed not to care that eventually we were a couple living in a four-bedroom apartment. Further, we have paid more rent over the years than most in studios, one-, two-, or three-bedroom apartments. For these historical mandates, we are entitled to the same considerations as those in one- or two-bedroom apartments who have paid less.

I intend to make an official complaint. It seems to me that the committee did not use the one lever that Belson most feared – legal suits that would hold up the exit date. The committee members were duped.

Belson wants the three- and four-bedroom apartments because he knows he can rent those for big bucks to couples (married or otherwise) who can afford the “market-market” rents. (Whatever the rents here, they will be considerably less than in Manhattan, a short Tram ride away). It has nothing to do with family composition. That the Eastwood Negotiating Committee fell for this obvious ploy says a lot about their looking out for their own self-interest, and the cleverness of the Belson Team in offering them this tasty carrot.

Shame. Shame on you. And I want a refund for the money I contributed to hire that ineffectual lawyer.

Ronald Gift Mullins

To the Editor:
What a beautiful summer! Unfortunately, it is difficult to enjoy these last beautiful summer days without thinking of the people in New Orleans.

My children, Wilson and Illiana, have been asking questions lately about what’s going on in the world (the tsunami, the war, and now the flood), and I have to say that some days words come easily and some others they don’t.

We watched the Larry King Special Edition together and made a donation on the Internet to the Red Cross. I told them that they always have to remember how lucky they are to have a family, a roof, food in their bellies, and a room full of toys. They then decided to clear out their closet and will have a tag sale by the church tomorrow. They want all the proceeds to go to the American Red Cross, including all the toys and books they will not sell during the day. They priced everything and kept talking about all the money they were going to make for these people. Barbies, books, clothes, cars that were so precious until now, suddenly got a total different meaning.

I’d like to suggest that every parent encourage their children to do the same thing. We have a lot of beautiful weekends coming up, and it would be a good opportunity to think about those who have a rather gray sky in the next weeks, months, even years to come.

We have to keep in mind that we, too, could go from Islanders to refugees any second. Since we can’t really count on our President, let’s act like civilized citizens by helping each other. A little is already a lot when one has nothing. It just “takes an Island...”

Karine Wong



Wilson & Illiana Wong with their three-year-old neighbor, Noah.

Letters deadline for Sept. 24 issue: Monday, Sept. 19.
Letters received after deadline considered on a space-available basis.

A Gift Subscription
For a Former Islander?

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

To the Editor:
Incredible! The inadequate sound system at the City Council candidates’ debate was a slap in the face to all concerned.
The Roosevelt Island community has used the Good Shepherd auditorium for 25 years for a variety of community functions. Now RIOC denies community groups the use of the public address system bought with money from the residents. It denies community groups the coverage of the insurance paid for by money from the residents.
RIOC concentrates on being a single-purpose real estate company. What is it RIOC does not understand about being the public leaders and public servants of a diverse community?
It is time for the absentee RIOC management to be replaced.
David J. Bauer

To the Editor:
I’m a frequent customer at the Cabrini Thrift Shop, and a frequent donor, but a recent incident has ended both those relationships with the shop.
On August 19, I was being waited on by a very nice gentleman when a man, sloppily dressed, interrupted, cutting ahead of me. I was offended, and made my feelings clear to him. The response surprised me.
“Do you know who I am?” he asked me. I don’t have his exact words for the rest of his tirade, but he went on to say, “I am the owner of this shop. I am a priest. You are nasty.” He then told me to leave, and threatened to call Public Safety if I did not. I responded, feeling I had done nothing wrong, “Go right ahead.”
He then *did* call Public Safety, and within two minutes, two officers walked in. A minute later a third one walked in. One approached me and asked what the problem was, and I attempted to explain. The officer interrupted me and told me that the man was a priest and that I should leave. The man calling himself a priest then spoke to me and told me to *leave and never to return*. I was told that he’s Peter A. Miqueli, Pastor.

I’m appalled by this behavior – the “owner” (is he, really?) of the Thrift Shop embarrassing a customer in front of others. Given his demeanor and dress, I had no way of knowing of the special status he claims until he angrily made me aware of it. Even after being informed, I see no excuse for his behavior in cutting in front of me, and none for his handling of the situation, either as a priest or as the “owner” of his parish’s Thrift Shop.
Does this man really represent his church here? We’re a friendly community, aren’t we?
Louise Dumicich

Editor’s note: *The WIRE* invited Fr. Peter Miqueli to respond to this letter. No response had been received by press time.

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.

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The Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions recently released an interim report on the management of Roosevelt Island. The report cited RIOC’s full cooperation with providing the Committee with all requested documents and additional material, with one exception due to attorney-client privilege. RIOC will continue to fully cooperate with the Committee.

The RIOC Column

The allegations continue to raise issues that have already been settled in RIOC’s favor in the courts at great expense to Roosevelt Island residents.

RIRA’s lawsuit against RIOC on the Octagon project was ruled decisively in RIOC’s favor on all three grounds and prompted the judge to issue stern language that questioned the “good faith” of the plaintiffs. The result of RIRA’s lawsuit was to remove any ambiguity as to the actions of the Corporation and caused the expenditure of great sums of money for attorneys’ fees that could have been used for maintenance or capital improvements.

The Youth Center, which RIOC has consistently supported, also was raised in the Committee report. An enormous amount of misinformation is circulating about the Youth Center, including the idea that the center will lose its City and State funding because it cannot get the necessary lease from RIOC for the Lilies School space. As I mentioned in my column last month, RIOC has worked on behalf of the Youth Center with both the landlord and the City Office of Management and Budget to ensure that the Youth Center can obtain capital funding in their current location and obtain the necessary lease. RIOC will continue to support the Youth Center as it always has.

The Committee report cited unsubstantiated allegations by RIRA. In those few instances where the report cited legitimate concerns, corrective steps have already been taken, in some cases more than two and a half years ago.

Notwithstanding the distraction and expenditures caused by having to defend the Corporation against meritless claims, RIOC has made significant financial strides in the past several years, achieving financial independence from the State and increasing its fund balance from \$3.9 million in 1995 to \$7.5 million in 2005. Meanwhile, RIOC has launched a five-year capital plan that calls for renovation of the exterior Blackwell House, replacement of two elevators at the Motorgate parking facility – a project that will be completed in October, a complete renovation of the Tramway, replacement of four “red” buses, among other projects.



Herbert E. Berman, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.
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Islandwide, bench repair and painting Islandwide, among many other improvements. This plan is the result of careful financial planning by RIOC and productive collaboration with the community.

There is much to be proud of on Roosevelt Island. Next week, Roosevelt Island will host the second biennial international ideas competition for emerging architects. This competition is a collaboration between

Island residents hopefully have noticed improvements this summer on the Island that are also a result of careful management of the Corporation’s resources. The foot bridges at Light-house Park have been rebuilt, the Meditation Steps have been replaced, the Belgian block along the west promenade is new, upgrade of Blackwell Children’s Park, pavement repair, z-brick repair, repair of catch basins

See **Berman**, page 6

As I pen this column, it is four days since a natural disaster decimated New Orleans and Mississippi, four days with virtually no help from any governmental authorities, where people are literally begging for water and food, and corpses are literally being dragged to corners of the Superdome. It is also almost exactly four years since 9/11, and the government’s ineptitude and indifference is a stunning commentary on

The RIRA Column

our state of preparedness. Of course we are sympathetic to these poor souls who are enduring so much loss, and many of you, I’m sure, are offering the help you can through charities. But it is natural and legitimate to wonder what

would happen to us should another disaster, natural or otherwise, strike our City.

So, on this awful intersection of historic and current tragedy, let me tell you what I know about our own community’s emergency planning. During the blackout of August, 2003, the Island was totally unprepared for power shortages of any significant duration. RIRA put out a list of the most obvious issues to address that was completely ignored by RIOC. Instead, they asked for time to formulate a coherent plan. Six months later, they distributed brochures from the State Office of Emergency Management and called a meeting at the school auditorium to discuss the plan, which was merely a speech from the OEM rep on general procedures. Attendees at this meeting were incensed that RIOC had offered nothing new. Subsequently, RIOC has claimed to have upgraded their supplies of emergency equipment, but whether anyone will be able to access or operate them when needed is not clear. They have also held seven bi-monthly emergency-planning meetings since July 2004. These meetings, chaired by RIOC’s computer systems guy, have been variously attended by representatives from RIRA and other resident associations. Housing Management, Coler-Goldwater, PS 217 and the Child School, the State OEM office, FDNY, NYPD, Con-Ed, and Keyspan have been invited. According to full reports from Matt Katz, RIRA’s former president and representative in these sessions, RIOC is still investigating the resources available on the Island for emergency response. To date, no conclusions have been reached or disseminated. What is clear at this point is that any emergency evacuation point in the event of extended deprivation of heat or cooling will be to LaGuardia High School in Queens. If the red bridge is raised and stuck, we are screwed. Otherwise, it’s up to each resident to get there on his/her own, since RIOC refuses to operate Red Bus service off-Island, sometimes claiming the vehicles are in “poor condition,” and other times citing insurance issues (which haven’t stopped them

from using the buses off-Island for other purposes).

It is apparent to me that RIOC doesn’t give a damn about making any serious efforts to safeguard us in an emergency. Invariably, there are problems handling even the basic, predictable procedures like, say, a Tram power outage. (I’m sure you can read plenty about that in other parts of this *WIRE* issue!) Until Pataki is gone and we have a shot at getting a RIOC board and staff that makes the residents a priority, if we want to improve our chances of getting by in emergencies, we will have to work by ourselves to improve readiness. Anything useful that we get from RIOC should be considered a welcome and unexpected bonus. In the coming months, I will be suggesting to RIRA that we coordinate with the hospitals, schools, and Office of Emergency Management to see if we can get a reasonable plan to house the most physically challenged at local sites with generators, and a viable plan to evacuate residents or bring in supplies in the event of a disaster involving Big Allis, the generating plant across the East channel, or the Roosevelt Island bridge. As always, we solicit the help of any residents to help in the creation and planning of such initiatives. It’s really up to us, because when trouble strikes, RIOC is invariably the problem, not the solution.



Steve Marcus, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
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thanks to Roosevelt Island Housing Management for invaluable help in providing the insurance and public address equipment, these civic events can take place.

Finally, The Roosevelt Island Seniors Association is conducting a clothing drive to aid victims of the hurricane. Starting Monday, please take your donations to the Senior Center at 546 Main Street.

If you are a registered Democrat, please plan on voting in this Tuesday’s primary. We may be small, but with historically large turnouts, we can make our elected officials take us seriously.

Warmest thanks to RIRA Vice President Margie Smith for her wonderful efforts to bring City Council and Mayoral candidates here to our church, so that you can make an informed decision. RIOC’s new guidelines for use of Good Shepherd Community Center, requiring insurance for any use of that or other public property, make it far more difficult to stage community meetings. But,

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Registration for drama, dance, and fitness classes at the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, **today, 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**.



◀**Emerging Artist Fellowship Exhibition**, opening reception, **today**, 2-6 p.m., Socrates Sculpture Park, Vernon Blvd. and Broadway, Long Island City. Exhibition on view through March 5, 2006.

Roosevelt Island Free Theater presents **Ross the Mentalist**, **today**, 5:00 p.m., Eastwood Amphitheater. (Rain date: Sun., Sept. 11, 5:00 p.m.)

Southpoint from Ruin to Rejuvenation, exhibit at Gallery RIVAA, **today** through Oct. 9▷. 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.enyacompetitions.org.

9/11 Memorial Observance, tomorrow, Sun., Sept. 11, 7:00 p.m., at the 9/11 Memorial tree and plaque in Good Shepherd Plaza just west of the Chapel. Candles, music, and launch of an effort to help victims of New Orleans flooding (see story, page 10).



– The Coming Week –

Open House for **Toastmasters** public speaking group, **Mon., Sept. 12**, 8:00 p.m., Westview community room, 625 Main Street. Additional information: **212-755-7285**.

Primary Election, Tue., Sept. 13.

Roosevelt Island Free Theater presents **American Society of Magicians** with jugglers and clowns, **Sat., Sept. 17**, 5:00 p.m., Eastwood Amphitheater. (Rain date: Sun., Sept. 18, 5:00 p.m.)

Opening Reception for **Southpoint from Ruin to Rejuvenation**, **Sat., Sept. 17**, 6-9 p.m. Gallery RIVAA. See other Gallery hours above.

– Future Events –

La Leche League meeting for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, **Mon., Sept. 19**, 10:30 a.m., 536 Main Street (behind Capri Pizza). Free. Information: **212-832-1188**.

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.

The Roosevelt Island Jazz/Pop/Gospel Concert for New Orleans, Thur., Sept. 22, 7:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center; produced by Roosevelt Island’s Juanita Fleming and featuring singers Janice Pendarvis, Louise Bethune, and Juanita Fleming; pianists Roy Eaton and Alva Nelson; drummers Jaimeo Brown, Wally Gator, and Xavier Gadpaille; guitarist Billy “Space-man” Patterson; and alto saxophonist Riley Bandy; and others. Free-will contribution at the door.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Sept. 24**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Sept. 15; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Tue., Sept. 20; inserts due Thur., Sept. 22. **Future issues:** Fortnightly through December 17: 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.

Open House for **Toastmasters** public speaking group, **Mon., Sept. 26**, 8:00 p.m., Westview community room, 625 Main Street. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

Open House New York, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 8-9. City-wide event will include guided tours of Roosevelt Island’s Southpoint.

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Oct. 10**, 8:00 p.m., Westview community room, 625 Main Street. Additional information: **212-751-9577**.

La Leche League meeting for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, **Mon., Oct. 17**, 10:30 a.m., 536 Main Street (behind Capri Pizza). Free.

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

Senior Center

Monday

9:30, **Yoga**
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**
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

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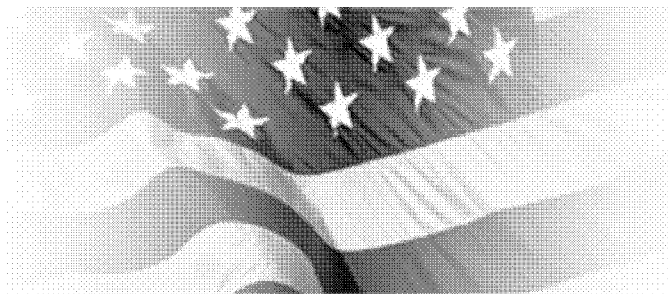
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- Steve Marcus – President, Roosevelt Island Residents Association
- Byron Gaspard – President, Eastwood Building Committee
- Sonia Jang – Roosevelt Island Korean-American Association
- Amelia Fontes – Second Vice-President, Eastwood Building Committee
- Sherie Helstien – Member, Roosevelt Island Residents Association

**Why? Because Dan has given years of service to the
Roosevelt Island community:**

- Pro bono attorney for the residents of the 1,003 apartment Eastwood complex on Roosevelt Island.
- Pro bono attorney representing the Roosevelt Island Residents Association in its suit to stop the Octagon Development.
- As Community Board 8 Transportation Co-Chair, helped integrate the MetroCard on the Roosevelt Island Tram.

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Armida Heimerdinger

Island resident Armida Heimerdinger, age 92, passed away peacefully on September 2 after a long illness.

One of nine children born to Pasquale and Rafaela Bergamini, and the great granddaughter of the Baroness Lorenzina di Napoli, she was born in Manhattan on October 6, 1912. Raised in the Bronx, she married the late Hans Heimerdinger in 1937 and moved to Colonial Heights, Yonkers, in 1945, where she had a home for 60 years.

Her career in fashion spanned 60 years as a Sales Associate and a Millinery and Dress Buyer at Bloomingdale’s, The Fashion Shop in Yonkers, and at Saks Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, from which she retired in 1990 at age 78. A member of the 915 Club, she was given many honors for her professionalism and expertise.

She often spoke of the numerous interesting people she dealt with at Saks, including President Lyndon Johnson; Jackie Kennedy Onassis and her mother, Janet Auchincloss, and her sister, Lee Radziwill; James Mason and many other Hollywood actors; and famous couture designers. She had a loyal following of distinguished customers from Newport, Rhode Island, Canada, and Europe, who insisted on purchasing only from her. Some stayed in touch with her for years after her retirement.

Armida designed jewelry which sold in Macy’s and Fifth Avenue boutiques; was a member of the SFA Choir, the St. Eugene’s Senior Association, and the Elmsford Widow and Widowers Association; and enjoyed writing poetry, dancing, gardening, and world travel.

A few years ago, she moved to live with her daughter, Linda Heimer, on Roosevelt Island, where elevators and dis-



abled access made life easier, and where she made many new friends. She was a “stuffer” for *The WIRE*, a responsibility she took very seriously, and a member of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini parish. She enjoyed “flirting” with Rivercross staff, which was reciprocated with affection; Main Street Theatre productions; walks along the river; and magnificent Island views which she wrote about in letters and poems to relatives and friends.

Rivercross neighbor Ethel Romm writes: “What a great lady, Armida. She would stop by to chat when I was sorting mail in the lobby. She was dying, and knew it, yet she always looked as if about to attend an opera matinee. And not just the clothes. Her whole bearing. Alive, involved. Interested in you. Penetrating questions about what you’re up to. Aristocratic down to her bones... She found (she was a bit surprised, I think) that this was an extraordinary place to live. And to die.”

She is dearly loved and survived by her daughter, Linda; sisters Irma Bergamini of Croton-On-Hudson, Lisa Gardner of Yonkers, and Evelyn Zella of Fort Pierce, Florida; and numerous nephews and nieces and their progeny. She will be remembered for her elegance, her stunning jewelry designs, her charm and warmth.

Her daughter has suggested that, in her mother’s memory, donations be made to Orphans International, 540 Main Street #418, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044.

Visitation has been scheduled for Friday, September 9, 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., at Flynn Memorial Home, 1652 Cental Park Ave., Yonkers, with a Funeral Mass at St. Eugene’s Church, Yonkers, on Saturday at 10:00 a.m., followed by internment at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Valhalla, New York.

Berman from page 3

the Emerging New York Architects, RIOC, RIVAA and Coler-Goldwater Hospital and will highlight the unique qualities of Roosevelt Island. Many public events are planned for Island residents in conjunction with this competition.

RIOC reinstituted its Summer Sounds series, which was enjoyed by over 300 residents over three beautiful summer evenings.

In two weeks, a “topping off” party will be held for the Octagon Building, an architectural landmark that dates back to 1839 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An historical building, once reduced to rubble, will be restored to its historic grandeur. Debris-strewn space, for more than a decade closed off by a chain link fence, will be transformed to open greenery for our residents and visitors. The Octagon, which will dedicate 100 units to affordable housing for middle-income New Yorkers, utilizes state-of-the-art “green building” technology including high-efficiency boilers, heat pumps, solar panels and windows – the project has been cited for its leadership in applying sustainable design principals to residential development.

As always, RIOC welcomes all residents to Board meetings. Our evening meetings offer residents the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns with the Board. We would welcome new voices and constructive suggestions to continue moving the Island forward.



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Gifford Miller has made a tremendous difference in the quality of life on Roosevelt Island. His record as our City Councilman demonstrates that he has already made the right choices for all New Yorkers, and he has provided consistent, strong leadership on key issues for Roosevelt Island residents. As Speaker of the City Council, **Gifford Miller** has fought to protect Roosevelt Island through his legislative initiatives and through his budget priorities: he provided funding for capital improvements at **PS/IS 217**, allocated funding to support our **Senior Center, Youth Center** and our branch of the **New York Public Library**, as well as vital funding for our **cultural institutions**. **Gifford Miller** was responsible for bringing **MetroCard** services to the **Tram**, by providing the MTA with the reimbursements they required.

Gifford Miller has been a staunch champion for tenants and an advocate for affordable housing. He fought to preserve and expand the City's affordable housing stock and passed the "Tenant Empowerment Act" giving Mitchell-Lama tenants the right of first refusal to buy their buildings if the owners decide to exit affordable housing programs.

Every year, **Gifford Miller** has fought Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to eliminate AVAC services on Roosevelt Island. **Gifford Miller** has been endorsed by **U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney** and **Assembly Member Pete Grannis** because he is the Democratic candidate with the energy, experience and new ideas to take our City in the right direction.

GIFFORD **miller**
DEMOCRAT / MAYOR

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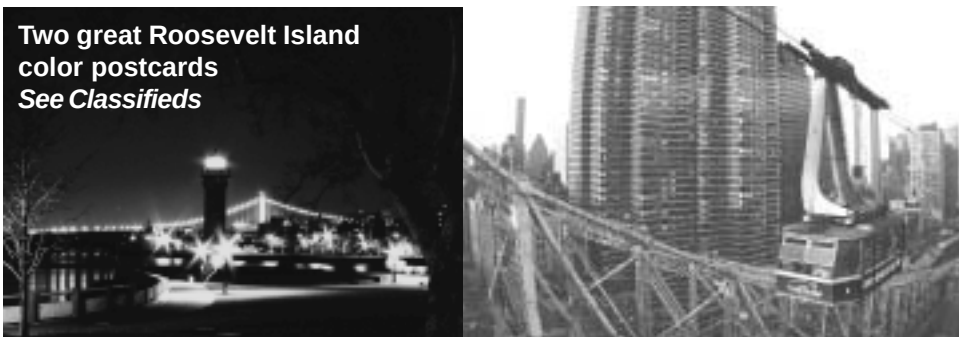


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What George Spitz Can Do for Roosevelt Island

- **Constituent office to be located at 60th and 3rd (endorsed by Bloomingdale’s Union), requiring one stop for Roosevelt Island residents. Minority staff included.**
- **Introduce legislation for two-year instead of four-year Council terms. Election by proportional representation making probable election of one Council member from Roosevelt Island in 2007. May be initiated by petition in 2006.**

George Spitz is supported by: Congressman Charles Rangel; past Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton; former Reform City Council members Sal Albanese and Ronnie Eldridge; retired Progressive Assemblyman and Supreme Court Justice Frank Barbaro; Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) including Local 3, representing Bloomingdale employees; Public Employees Federation (PEF); Organization of Staff Analysts (jointly with Jessica Lappin); and the American Engineering Alliance.



George Spitz for City Council, 5th District

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Miller from page 1

as a challenge to the State to get on with creation of Southpoint Park.

At one point in his opening statement – untimed because there was no need to observe any equal-time requirement with no opponents present – Miller recalled his first debt to Roosevelt Island: “When I ran for City Council ten years ago, there were an awful lot of people who didn’t believe in me, but Roosevelt Island did, and if you look at what the margin of victory was in my race ten years ago, the margin of victory was Roosevelt Island. [Applause.] And I’ll tell you what... I know that when we get back, I intend to win by a little bit larger margin than that, but Roosevelt Island is going to be a

huge part of that for me.”

Miller spoke of Roosevelt Island and its residents as “we” through the rest of his remarks.

“I love this Island. To me, this Island is really at the heart of what New York is supposed to be about. It’s an Island with people from all over the world, an Island where we make it possible for people of different incomes to live together; it’s an Island where sometimes we struggle with one another but, in the end, we all love each other. It’s an Island that is the heart of New York in so many ways.

“But it is also like the rest of New York [in that it is] an Island that faces real challenges and needs real leadership – an Island that has suffered from neglect, particularly over the last 9 or 10 years under this

governor. It’s an Island that has both tremendous assets and fundamental problems that need to be solved, and that’s true of the City broadly. And that’s why I’m running for mayor.

“I’m not running for mayor because New York City is falling apart. [It isn’t.] I’m not running for mayor because I think this mayor has been a complete disaster, and I’m not trying to convince New Yorkers that we haven’t made progress over the last few years. I’m proud of the fact that the city hasn’t fallen apart. [As Speaker of the City Council for the past four years,] if the city had fallen apart, I would deserve some of the blame.”

But Miller said Mike Bloomberg is a “caretaker” who is “out of ideas. I know that I can make New

Yorkers better off four years from now. I know that we can fix our schools and I have a positive vision to do so. I know that we can fix our subways and I have a positive, specific plan to do so. [I’m running] because I know that we can get our fair share – that we don’t have to roll over for this president and this governor and throw up our hands. Because I know that we can make this City a better and more competitive place to do business and a more effective place to create jobs. I know that we can preserve and create affordable housing and this Island is at the center of all those issues – not just some – all of those issues.”

Miller said, “I have a record of real results,” and then he listed some of the things Roosevelt Islanders know him for: MetroCard for the Tramway, the Library, and preserving the AVAC system from routine annual deletions from the City’s budget.

“What I’m talking about are tough issues,” Miller continued. “The reason it’s taken all this time and we haven’t had mayors solve [the City’s many difficult] problems is because they *are* tough problems. But you look at my record. It’s one of real results for the City – passing four budgets while preserving values that are important to our City – accomplishing things that people said couldn’t be done by not listening to those voices and by focusing on what needs to be done and how to do it.”

Miller drew applause again with a reference to the inattention some mayors have lavished on Roosevelt Island. “When Roosevelt Island turns out and puts me over the top as the next mayor of the city of New York, you’re going to finally have a mayor who not only knows where

Roosevelt Island is, but understands what Roosevelt Island’s concerns are and is committed to solving them.”

Urging voters to get out to vote on Tuesday, he concluded his opening statement:

“We don’t have to settle for where we are today. We can dream bigger, we can dream better, and we can make this Island and the City a better place.”

Miller responded to questions prepared by the leadership of the Residents Association. On transportation, he described the N train as so bad that people avoid it to use the F, causing morning-rush overcrowding at Roosevelt Island. “We’ve got to fix the MTA and make it more responsive to New Yorkers.” Advocating ferry service for the Island, he said, “We are an Island in the middle of the greatest harbor in the world.”

Miller remembered battles to save Southpoint for use as a park, and mentioned the \$4 million he has set aside for a City contribution. “We have to challenge the State to come up with their portion, as well,” he said. “This is a jewel. This is an extraordinary opportunity. We don’t get opportunities like this very often.” Later, he added, “I’m proud of the fact that all of us have fought very hard to protect it. In staving off [a hotel-condo plan for Southpoint], ‘the people in this room saved something very special for future generations. We now need to have leadership that’s committed to converting that into the tremendous opportunity that it is.’”

Miller committed himself, as he has throughout the campaign, to fighting to preserve affordable housing. “We need to preserve what we have. It’s much less expensive to preserve what we have

See **Miller**, page 10

RIOC Board from page 1

posed on TPL’s Phase One infrastructure and plan, done by Mark K. Morrison Associates.

Board Chair Mary Beth Labate reported that she has not heard from the FDR Memorial advocates since the Board gave them an assurance that nothing would be done for 18 months that might make their plan for the southern half of the park impossible. In voting the funds while indicating a continuing willingness to consider all ideas, the Board responded to a TPL caution that momentum needs to be preserved in its fundraising activities for the park.

Youth Center

In an extended discussion of the Roosevelt Island Youth Program’s longstanding request for the Blackwell Minischool space, several members of the RIOC Board lamented a refusal by the Youth Program’s Board to respond to a three-page request for additional

information seeking a wide variety of data about the Center, its finances, its clientele, and its management. A member of the Board’s real-estate subcommittee, John Mannix, said, “We’re trying to get to ‘yes.’ We’re not trying to get to ‘no.’”

A member of the Youth Center Board, Steve Kaufman, engaged in a brief exchange with RIOC President Herb Berman, whom Kaufman’s Board had accused of closing the door to any possibility of the Youth Center taking over the Blackwell minischool space. Ultimately, Board members, including Board Chair Labate, urged Kaufman to supply as much of the requested information as possible. “If the message from this Board is asking that we comply with a reasonable request, then I’ll supply the information,” Kaufman said.

Labate seemed to suggest expediting the delivery of the data, pointing out that new State legisla-

tion could make it more difficult to give the Youth Program a rent-free lease after the start of 2006.

Other Items

- The Board approved a resolution authorizing exploration of options for ferry service for the Island, in response to a request from Octagon Apartments developer Bruce Becker, who would like to bring ferry service to the Octagon Park area.

- Berman reported that the Roosevelt Island bridge will be raised often in the September 13-28 period, during a United Nations session. Public Safety Department Chief Jim Fry reported that he has arranged with the Bridge and Tunnel Division of the City’s Department of Transportation to have personnel on the Island during the period, to handle any problems such as occurred last year when traffic backed up on the Island after the bridge got stuck in the raised position.

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Westview from page 1

rent mix of Northtown housing fits the proportions prescribed in the GDP, and that any change would distort the proportions and, therefore, violate the GDP.

Assemblymember Pete Grannis, who represents Roosevelt Island, forwarded the letter to Comptroller Thompson in May, pointing out that the Comptroller’s “authority to monitor compliance with the terms of the Master Lease is set out” in the lease; the position was endorsed, at that time, by a “Coalition of Roosevelt Island Elected Officials,” including Grannis, City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, State Senator José Serrano, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum.

Late last month, Thompson responded, “I agree that the proposed removal of Westview from the Mitchell-Lama program raises some legal concerns and may violate the amended General Development Plan... that specifies the percentages of affordable housing units to be maintained on Roosevelt Island.” Thompson continues by promising that his office will “closely monitor” the matter.

The contention raises a classic question about laws and contracts. Since the Mitchell-Lama law allows withdrawal of buildings from the program after required periods of non-profit operation (now satisfied in the case of all Roosevelt Island Mitchell-Lama developments), is that landlord right compromised by the lease, which is a contract between the State and the City?

A further concern is that Mayor Bloomberg and the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) can agree to change the GDP which, in any case, RIOC has come to consider and treat as a “loose collection of ideas” rather than a summary of firmly binding contractual obligations.

Copies of the correspondence will be posted next week, with this issue of *The WIRE*, on Website NYC10044, at nyc10044.com.

Miller from page 8

than to create new. If we lose 10,000 units and build 10,000 units, we haven’t accomplished anything. All we’ve done is tread water. We need to have a mayor who’s focused on that.”

Miller said he would welcome an election among residents to help select the mayor’s representatives on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. He added, “I think that the [final] Brodsky report is going to show real structural problems here that need to be overhauled.”

Miller stayed to answer questions from several residents, both in the formal setting and one-on-one. His wife, Pam, watched and listened throughout, and Miller thanked her for joining him for the campaign trip to Roosevelt Island.

Islanders Launch Relief Efforts To Help New Orleans Victims

Roosevelt Islanders are responding in a variety of ways to the plight of New Orleans and its citizens. A roundup:

- Island gospel artist Juanita Fleming is planning **The Roosevelt Island Jazz/Pop/Gospel Concert for New Orleans** for Thursday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Good Shepherd Community Center. A number of Islanders and off-Islanders will perform. The list includes singers Fleming, Janice Pendarvis, and Louise Bethune; pianists Roy Eaton and Alva Nelson; drummers Jaimeo Brown, Wally Gator, and Xavier Gadpaille; guitarist Billy “Spaceman” Patterson; and alto saxophonist Riley Bandy; and others to be announced.

- **Orphans International** is planning a foster-home facility for the Gulf Coast area in its first-ever expansion outside the developing world. OI is receiving donations (which can be earmarked “New Orleans”) at its Island address, 540 Main Street #418, NYC10044. Jim Luce, the organization’s founder, says that a New Orleans foster home for Katrina orphans can be opened and maintained for \$150,000 a year. There’s additional information available on the OI website at www.oiiww.org.

- **Orphans International** is also flying in its Sumatra tsunami relief medical team to assist in recovery efforts in New Orleans, and establishing a scholarship fund to send Katrina-displaced professionals to volunteer at its Haiti and Indonesian operations for one year.

- A group of **knitters** from the Big Apple Knitting Guild have started a project to create blankets for the victims, collecting crocheted or hand- or machine-knitted rectangles to be joined into blankets which will be sent to a local distribution center near one of the evacuation shelters in the Gulf Coast region. Sessions are scheduled for three Wednesdays – September 14, 21, and 28 – from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. For additional information, call Raye Schwartz at **212-688-5446** or e-mail raye.schwartz@att.net.

- A **clothing drive** has been started by the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association and Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, to be launched tomorrow (Sunday, 9/11) as part of a 9/11 observation at the 9/11 memorial just west of the Good Shepherd Community Center. Clothing contributions will be collected at the Senior Center starting Sunday, and there are plans to place collection boxes at doorstations to receive checks payable to the Red Cross, and to collect cash and check donations outside the Senior Center at 546 Main Street.

- The **PTA** at PS 217 is joining in the Seniors’ clothing drive, and there are plans to provide an avenue of involvement for the children.

- Trellis is collecting **contributions** to be forwarded to AmeriCare. See ad, page 11.

Tram from page 1

The electromechanical hero and culprit – the system that tripped off in response to a power anomaly, and had to be reset to get things going again – was a silicon control rectifier (SCR) – a solid state Maxitron 8500 that changes ordinary alternating current power to the Tram’s particular requirements – 480 volts of direct current. Once Cordova accomplished the reset, the episode was over in a few minutes.

But shortly after the episode, RIOC Board member Deborah Beck shot off an e-mail to RIOC President Herb Berman after she heard from Island House resident Judy Berdy, whose mother had missed the 4:15 trip and took a cab back to Manhattan. “I want to know... who was in charge at the station during this shift,” Berdy wrote. Beck forwarded the e-mail to Berman (who had already received Berdy’s original) saying, “Judy’s e-mail highlights an issue I have raised in the past, who is in charge after hours weekdays and on the weekend? We need to have a protocol for this ASAP.”

Berman responded, “I have left word with Armando to meet with me on Tuesday to discuss that issue and why his staff did not know how to use the generator.” In Thursday night’s RIOC Board meeting, he reported many of the details repeated here.

Questions about handling of Tramway emergencies had been raised, as Beck wrote, at RIOC Board meetings. In at least one meeting, Board members were assured by Berman that someone capable of solving problems such as last week’s power outage is always on duty.



Temperatures climbed in Tram cabins during Friday's outage, but windows were opened and, according to reports, one passenger held up a sign suggesting a call to Spider-Man. On the Island, 25 emergency vehicles stood by, while a police helicopter airlifted Armando Cordova, the Tramway’s lead supervisor, to Roosevelt Island.



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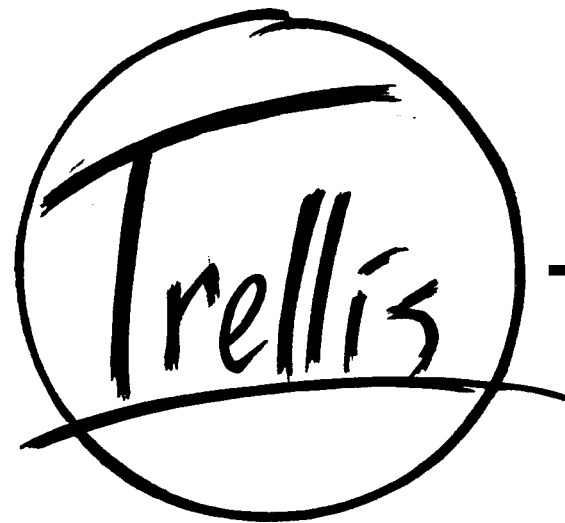
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