

Next issue
in four weeks –
Sat., Jan. 14, 2006

The Main Street **WIRE**™

26th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Christmas Magic Amelie Scicluna Traas threw the switches Wednesday night to light the Christmas tree at Blackwell House. She then stepped back to admire her work.

Two in Eastwood Arrested on Drug, Weapons Charges

Two Island residents have been charged on multiple drug and weapons counts after a December 3 search of an apartment at 510 Main Street.

Sean Christianson and Cindy Duran are to be arraigned in State Supreme Court on felony charges that could result in sentences of up to seven years, according to a press representative in the office of the Manhattan District Attorney. In an initial court appearance December 4, Christianson's bail was set at \$50,000, the representative said.

Christianson, whose age is listed as 25, allegedly had seven zip-lock bags of cocaine and two of heroin in a dresser in his bedroom, along with some marijuana, a Glock handgun and eleven bullets.

Under his bed, police say, they found a Desert Eagle pistol with six bullets, an Uzi machine gun with 13 bullets, a 12-gauge sawed-off shot-

gun, and a supply of various kinds of ammunition. Serial numbers were scratched off all the weapons found, according to court papers.

Arraignment is set for January 11.

A spokesman for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation said, in response to a question about the involvement of the Island's Public Safety Department in the case, "The Roosevelt Island Public Safety Department works closely with the NYPD and did so in this case, as well." He provided no further details.

Doryne Isley of Roosevelt Island Housing Management, which manages 510 Main Street along with the rest of Eastwood, said that although she does not yet have full information on the case, RIHMC's normal procedure in cases of this kind is to proceed with a "holdover action," which is an eviction process used in cases other than non-payment of rent.

Growing, Making More of a Difference All the Time, Orphans International Draws Island Participation

Roosevelt Islanders have taken Orphans International to heart.

The Island-based charity held its fourth annual benefit at the Harvard Club during Thanksgiving week, and many Roosevelt Island residents in attendance signed up to sponsor children in OI Houses around the world. Somewhat like the Icla da Silva Foundation, which matches bone-marrow donors with leukemia sufferers, OI has become "a Roosevelt Island thing."

The "Roosevelt Island Group" and the Island-based "Con Brio Group" sponsor ten-year-old Abigaëlle, in Haiti. In Sumatera (the new official spelling of Sumatra), home of Roosevelt Island House, Grodzins House, Lena Lutz House, and Luce House, where every child

is a tsunami orphan, eight-year-old Rizky is also sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Group. Ten-year-olds Dina and Rahmi are sponsored by Nina Winteringham. The children and staff of PS/IS217 also sponsor a child, ten-year-old Ishaq.

Each orphan needs up to four sponsors at \$600 each. To make participation affordable, people have banded together in groups of up to six to sponsor children, sharing the cost. Group leaders handle the affairs of each group.

But solo sponsorship is also a popular way to contribute. Doris Chernik of Toastmasters sponsors six-year-old Bernadine, and Residents Association Common Council member Ethel Romm sponsors

twelve-year-old Rose Nancy – both in Haiti. Residents Association Vice President Margie Smith sponsors second-grader Veila in the Celebes Islands, today's Sulawesi.

Other Island sponsors include Claude Lestelle, Ron and Marilyn Walter, City Council member-elect Jessica Lappin, and a member of Jessica Lappin's family.

The motto of Orphans International is "Raising Global Citizens." Founder Jim Luce, an Eastwood resident, has set forth a goal of staying with a child into his or her college years. "By sponsoring OI children, my neighbors on Roosevelt Island provide immediate aid to some of the world's most disadvantaged children," Luce says. "More than that, they are helping develop a child through education and vocational opportunities."

Sponsorship funds are used to cover food, housing, clothing, houseparent, medical, and educational expenses, as well as recreation, local administration, and college scholarships and microfinance credit for graduates.

Rivercross resident Bonnie Goodman is OI's Sponsorship Director. She can be contacted via e-mail: Bonnie@oiww.org.

In Banda Aceh, Indonesia, Roosevelt Island House is being built with funds raised by the Residents Association at a benefit concert last year, and by an auction of art donated by artist members of

the Roosevelt Island Visual Artists Association (RIVAA). It features the Armida Heimerdinger Boys' Room, named for the late Rivercross resident (mother of Linda Heimer, an Island activist and *WIRE* proof-reader), and a Girls' Room named for Member of Congress Carolyn Maloney, who represents Roosevelt Island in Washington.

Jim Luce, Roosevelt Island resident, president and founder of Orphans International, encourages any Island organization that would like to do fundraising to contact him

at jim@oiww.org.

In Sumatera, at the Princess Grace Home for Tsunami Orphans, the campus has a health clinic open to the community, and a multi-function classroom. (The Chair of OI Worldwide's Global Advisory Board is HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco.) A satellite-linked computer clinic is being opened with contributions from corporations such as CNN/Jakarta. Air France, Singapore Airlines, and China Airlines have provided transportation

See **Orphans**, page 8



The boys of Grodzins House in Aceh Province, Indonesia, were orphaned a year ago in the tsunami disaster. The House, on the Orphans International campus, was funded by Rivercross resident Ethel Romm.

Briefly...

• As *The WIRE* goes to press, there is the possibility of a **transit strike**. The strike will not involve Tramway workers, and Tram service will be increased to a rush-hour schedule if the strike happens, according to RIOC President Herb Berman. No word on whether service will continue through the night.

• The New York Cares Coat Drive is on and, through December 31, the RIOC Public Safety office at 552 Main Street is a collection point.

• RIOC received 16 proposals in response to its recent set of five RFIPs asking investors and developers to propose uses for plots at Southpoint Park, near the Coler campus of Coler-Goldwater Hospital, and around the Tram station, as well as for the Island's older retail strip and for RIOC's interest in Motorgate. There was at least one response for each of the five sites. A spokesman says a report will be made to the January meeting of the RIOC Board.



Happy Holidays from All the Volunteers Who Bring You *The Main Street WIRE*

The Editorial Page

The Season of Thanks

So many Roosevelt Islanders put volunteer time into making *The Main Street WIRE* happen that it's never possible to give proper acknowledgment to each one.

At The WIRE, we're thankful for their efforts, and we hope you are, too, as you read these pages. They do it because they see the value of independent reportage on Island affairs. We hope you read it for the same reason.

Happy Holidays to you – and to every one of them.

RIOC News

It's not in the League of the Bush crowd paying conservative commentators to spread Administration propaganda via right-wing radio. Nor does it measure up to the Bushies planting rah-rah stories in the Iraqi press.

But RIOC's new *RIOC News* does fall into the category occupied by all those publications put out by government agencies that think they can't get their messages into the media. We know – because it's repeated to us – that the current RIOC administration feels that way about *The WIRE*, perhaps forgetting that this publication's purpose is to serve its readers, not government.

But RIOC had a public-relations guy on the staff for years. He generated a grand total of one press release that made it from 591 Main Street to 531, where *The WIRE* is cobbled together. So it's hardly a matter of RIOC's message being ignored in these pages. It's more like there was *no message*, or perhaps no effort to create coherent policies that could be embodied in a corporate message.

So now, your ground-rent money will be spent to “ensure that residents receive timely and accurate information on RIOC activities.” We notice, though, that the phrase “big-box retailer” never made it into *RIOC News*' “accurate” report on its consultant's efforts to market Island properties.

State revenue will also be spent giving away free advertising, and it *is* about time RIOC did something, however insignificant, for beleaguered Island merchants. The fact that such a giveaway at State expense competes with and undermines a community publication that attempts to *sell* advertising in this micromarket seems not to trouble RIOC or the free enterprisers in the State Administration. *Does it trouble you?*

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Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from officials. *Name* *Withheld* publication 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, but allow extra time before deadline for typesetting. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. **All letters are 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.

Letters deadline for Jan. 14, 2006, issue: Tuesday, Jan. 10
Letters received after deadline are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

Thanks to RIOC for faking us (disabled and low-income households) out by not revealing the cost of affordable housing at the Octagon Apartments. What is meant by “affordable?” Is \$1,300 a month for a studio affordable? It seems that RIOC wants to eliminate any new disabled or low-income people from living on our beautiful Roosevelt Island.

I would like to give you my idea of what affordable means by using my Grandpa Russo. Grandpa was a shoemaker on the other side of the river, one block from Rainey Park. Times were tough in the 1930s with 8 children and a wonderful wife, but Grandpa would have to sometimes charge families only what they could afford, sometimes taking a loss. But when Grandpa died, we had to open up 2 extra rooms to hold the overflow of people who came to pay their respects for all he had done for them. Yes, Grandpa is still remembered in the old neighborhood. Yes, he was special to me for, you see, Grandpa died in my arms in 1962.

Are the middle class next to be eliminated from affordable rents on our beautiful Island?

As for the recent *RIOC News*, I trust that in the future we will have news that is new to us Islanders and not just repeating what our Island paper, *The WIRE*, has already reported.

How about an issue on where people with special needs (elderly and disabled) would go in an emergency, and how they would get to a shelter?

Jim Bates

The writer forwarded this response:

Firstly, thank you for reading, commenting on our first newsletter, and for your suggestions. We will, as time goes on, improve the news it contains. By the way, the term “affordable” is a definition set by the City and State of New York.

Herb Berman

To the Editor:

Last week, there was a ceremony at the newly renovated East Side Branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL). This three-story building was constructed about 100 years ago as one of the Carnegie Libraries, known for their architectural design, quality of materials, and utility. Paul LeClerc, the Director of the NYPL, noted in his remarks that Gifford Miller had been instrumental in the allocation of \$3 million in City funds for this renovation and modernization – i.e., all

areas available for wireless equipment, etc.

The WIRE has recently reported that Miller was also instrumental in an allocation of \$2.85 million for the expansion of NYPL's Roosevelt Island branch. The Thrift Shop has been mentioned as a possible site for the expansion. Why could not the collapsing Blackwell House be designated for our new library? We could have a beautiful, historic, freestanding building providing considerably more space, reno-

To the Editor:

The Real Estate section the Sunday *New York Times* published an article on Roosevelt Island. While the information it presents seems to be mostly accurate, a specific paragraph on Riverwalk Place caught my attention: “Prices for studios, which have sold out, were \$275,000 to \$375,000. For one-bedrooms, they are \$400,000 to \$700,000; two-bedrooms, \$550,000 to \$850,000; and three-bedrooms, \$800,000 to \$1.5 million.”

Information on the Riverwalk website, www.riverwalknyc.com, shows studios priced at \$400,000 (no indication of their being sold out), one-bedrooms are \$650,000-\$740,000, two-bedrooms are \$815,000-\$1,025,000 and three-bedrooms are \$1,150,000.

Now, which is which?

It makes one wonder who gave those numbers to *The Times* – and why there is a \$265,000 discrepancy between the *Times*' minimum price for the two-bedroom apartment and the one posted by Riverwalk.

And, speaking of Riverwalk, has the issue of offering some of the condos for purchase to Island residents at better prices ever been addressed? I wouldn't know, I've only lived on the Island for the past 19 years.

Ideas, anyone?

Mirella Menglide

ated with the best materials available, and outfitted with the most modern facilities and equipment for even less than the \$2.85 million allocated.

Bill Raiford

Commentary

When the Phones Die, Who Has the Responsibilities – Before and During?

by Raye Schwartz

Island-wide phone outages on November 18 – with a repeat on November 30 – raise very serious concerns for the safety of residents and workers on the Island. Both outages were caused by construction workers, who simply severed cables as they were doing work related to the new buildings in Southtown.

The first issue is the Verizon response. As many of us who have cell phones discovered when we called, Verizon has no process in place to let the workers in their repair call center identify an outage, such as a cable break. Thus, each of us was told, when we called November 18, that someone would have to be home the following Monday between 8 and 5. When we pointed out that the outage was Island-wide, we were told that they can't declare an outage until three calls come in from the same location. Yet they admit that the folks in their call centers have no way, such as a GPS system, to tell where the cell-phone calls come from, or even how many called. Worse, because Verizon is now no longer just a local phone company, the person we reach can be anywhere. One worker I spoke to said there was “no record of an outage on Staten Island.” She was in Massachusetts. Even when some of us told repair people that we have two hospitals and two senior-citizen buildings with people cut off from access to emergency services, we were given the same runaround. And, apparently, each of us was told we were the only ones to call.

Worse than the Verizon response is that RIOC has let this happen. It appears that there has been no line of accountability built into any of the construction projects. There should have been stipulations that no project shall be service-affecting. If there were such provisions, they are certainly not being enforced.

RIOC is not only responsible for generating revenue in the form of new development, but it is also responsible for the operation of the Island. It even says so on its website: *Its mandate is to manage, develop, and operate the 147 acre Roosevelt Island...*

RIOC therefore has a fiduciary responsibility. Webster's dictionary definition of *fiduciary* does not mention managing money or generating revenue (even though RIOC seems to think that's its reason for ex-

istence): *Fiduciary – adj. 1. Of, relating to, or involving one that holds something in trust for another.*

Generally, the law recognizes three major fiduciary duties:

- Duty of loyalty, i.e. a fiduciary must not place his own interests ahead of the beneficiary's interest;
- Duty of care, i.e. a fiduciary must exercise an amount of care appropriate to manage the beneficiary's interest; and
- Duty of disclosure, i.e. a fiduciary must disclose certain information to the beneficiary.

It's clear that RIOC, in not acting in a way to prevent both the occurrence and then recurrence of these outages, has abdicated its fiduciary responsibility to this Island. What if a child in one of our schools became ill or had an accident? What if one of our disabled residents or senior citizens, many of whom do not own cell phones, had a medical emergency?

I call on RIOC, as well as our elected officials, to take the following steps to ensure that there are no further outages:

- Immediately halt all construction activities which may impact on phone service;
- Conduct an objective investigation into the cause of the cable breaks, identify all parties responsible, and develop an action plan to ensure continuous service during future construction, even if it means delaying the opening and occupancy of new buildings;
- Impose penalties on the companies which caused these outages;
- Engage in negotiations with officers of Verizon and the Residents Association to remedy the poor communications and processes for addressing such outages;
- Assess the companies involved for any cost of overtime incurred during the outages for police, fire department, Island, hospital and building personnel.
- Develop a line of command and contacts so that personnel from Verizon are on-site during any and all future work that potentially could affect service.

Finally, these events further illustrate how vulnerable and unprepared this Island is when it comes to handling emergencies. I think that RIOC doesn't even know they had two when the phones died here.

At the end of a productive year on Roosevelt Island, I want to take the opportunity to extend the warm wishes of the season to our entire community.

We saw great progress this year – laying the groundwork for new parkland at Octagon and Southpoint, completing renovations on the infrastructure at Motorgate and building on our past progress to ensure that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation

The RIOC Column

continues as a self-sufficient, financially sound entity working for the benefit of the 9,000+ residents who call our Island home.

Some of the work is physical in nature, as is evident by the construction going on at

Octagon on both the apartment building and the renovation of the historic tower. Some is less visible, though certainly no less important.

A prime example is the manner in which the Board of Directors uses its leverage in renegotiating ground leases with the owners of the Eastwood building to maintain the apartments as affordable even as the building moves out of the Mitchell-Lama mortgage-subsidy program. That process of monitoring the proposed Mitchell Lama opt-outs at the WIRE buildings (Westview, Island House, Rivercross and Eastwood) will continue into next year. Residents should be assured that our commitment to maintaining the mixed-income community first outlined more than 35 years ago in the General Development Plan remains unshaken.

Some of the progress came in winning the lawsuit

filed by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association concerning the Octagon project. That cleared the legal underbrush to allow continued development of the building, which will bring new neighbors to our Island even as it restores one of the Island’s remarkable historic treasures to public access.

We also moved forward in assessing issues as varied as the future of transportation alternatives, including potentially a ferry service, improvements in the tennis center, and the seeking of ideas about the future for several sites on the island.

Finally, we saw a change at the top of the RIOC Board of Directors, as long-time Chair-designee Mary Beth Labate stepped down to take a senior budget position in the State government and was replaced with Deborah Boatright. We thank Mary Beth for her service and look forward to working with Deborah as we continue to improve this unique Island in the middle of the East River that so many call home.

Happy holidays.



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

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Send an *AddMe* message to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com.

In the spirit of the holidays I thought I’d make this column a little upbeat. With the diversity of nationalities on Roosevelt Island, the only way to cover everyone is to start with a very big ***Happy Holidays to All!***

I know New Year’s is a more appropriate time for making wishes, and thanking people for their work during the year, but if I don’t do it now, Steve Marcus will do it in his next column, so I’m going to beat him to it.

I know it’s hard for many of you to celebrate the holidays when your futures are uncertain because of the building conversions. My wish for Eastwood is

The RIRA Column

that the deal that was struck works well for everyone, and my thanks go to the building committee who worked so hard for so long to pull it all together. My wish for Rivercross is that however things work

out, we remain the close-knit building that we’ve always been and at the end of the day everyone feels good about whatever arrangements are worked out. My thanks to all the residents who are working on the project. My wish for Island House and Westview is very much like my wish for Rivercross. May RIOC and the Sheldrake organization realize what a unique opportunity they have here to make money while still doing the right thing for people who have come to call Roosevelt Island their home. My wish is that the negotiations be conducted with integrity and reasonableness so that all parties walk away feeling that they’ve been treated fairly and with respect.

My wish for the rest of the Island is that Manhattan Park, Southtown, and Octagon residents become more involved with Island activities. We need more of you to join RIRA, the Residents Association. If we’re not working on projects that are relevant to you, come and tell us; start new committees that address your needs; plan functions that you and your families would look forward to attending. We promise you’ll be greeted with a warm welcome and we’ll do everything we can to make you feel like part of the Island family.

What I wanted to do next was thank all the organizations on Roosevelt Island that enhance our day-to-day lives through their work. But, as I began to think about it, I realized that I only get about a thousand words in this column and that’s not nearly enough to do justice to these organizations, so I’ll try to mention a few of them and apologize to the others for not saying more. Just know that we all appreciate what you do and we wish you the very best in the upcoming years.

The Youth Center does an outstanding job and my wish for them is that the powers that be will recognize how important it is to build that new state-of-the-art center for the kids (this one will require some extraordinarily fast work by a higher power if it’s going to happen before allocated funds are no longer available).

Then there’s the Senior Center which, I believe, has achieved the unusual goal of keeping the rest of us young. I don’t know about anybody else, but I have trouble keeping up with them. I want to thank the Disabled Association for their active contributions to

the Island and for never letting us forget about our neighbors who at times need our support. I want to thank the Garden Club, the Tree Board, the Art Gallery, and the Living Library who use their talents to enhance this already beautiful landscape. Thanks to all the merchants who provide much needed services for the residents and the doctors who are there for us; the religious organizations, and the hospitals.

Thanks also to the other groups who provide services to the children and the adults, like PS/IS 217, the Child School, the Scout Troops, the Nursery, the Tennis Association, the Library, the Thrift Shop, the Tennis League, the Historical Society, the Main Street Theatre, etc.



Margie Smith, Vice President Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
e-mail: MSmith@quintennium.com

headed up by Jim Luce, which has provided homes for dozens of children worldwide. Check out their website at www.oiwv.org. Let’s also wish happy holidays to the members of the FDNY Special Ops unit housed on the Island, who put their lives on the line daily for us.

We also owe thanks to our politicians for giving us grant money when we need it and for their hard work reminding Albany that we’re here and we deserve their attention.

A big thank you to the hard workers in the multiple housing companies and in RIOC who take care of the buildings, the grounds, and the rest of the Island infrastructure. We probably don’t say this often enough during the year, so let me just take this opportunity on behalf of all the residents, to express our gratitude and say that we appreciate your hard work.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to *The WIRE* for bringing us the news and for allowing us to publicly speak out on issues that are important to us.

Now, a great big ***Happy Holidays to All*** from your Residents Association.

P.S. On a personal note, a special warm welcome to Sarah Loftus (from my home town of Broad Channel), who just moved into Manhattan Park with her two friends Diana Tam and Lydon Sleeper. Sarah, come visit and bring your friends – it’ll make your mother happy!

The WIRE

seeks news and feature writers
Call Dick Lutz at 212-826-9055

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

J. Wayne Olson’s *Questions for a Fetus*, a series of art installations, continuing through December, Rivercross Window Gallery, sponsored by the Mother Earth Committee. This month: *Routes* (the paths of cultures and races).

Winter Chromatic show at Gallery RIVAA, continuing through Jan. 8. Gallery hours Wed. and Fri., 6-9 p.m.; Sat. and Sun., 11-5.

Revised registration deadline for *Southpoint from Ruin to Rejuvenation*, design competition of the Emerging New York Architects Committee (ENYA), **Sun., Dec. 18**. (Submission deadline: **Fri., Jan. 13**.) For information: www.enyacompitions.org.

Holiday Get-Together with music and songs of the season, **Sun., Dec. 18**, 2:00 p.m., Howe Theatre, 548 Main Street (behind the video store), sponsored by The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance. Tag sale clearance continues. Information: **212-371-4449**.

– The Coming Week –

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

Book Discussion Group, **Thur., Dec. 22**, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi.

Christmas Eve Concert featuring Roosevelt Island’s Tex Allen and his Sextet, **Sat., Dec. 24**, 8:00 p.m., St. Mark’s Church, East 10th St. & Second Avenue. Admission \$10.

– Future Events –

– The Coming Year –

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Jan. 4**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. Meetings begin with an opportunity for members of the public to make presentations to the Council.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Jan. 14, 2006**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Jan. 5; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Tue., Jan. 10; they are due Thur., Jan. 12. **Future issues:** Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Mar. 4, Mar. 18, Apr. 8, Apr. 22, May 6, May 20, June 3, June 17, July 1, July 29, Aug. 26, Sept. 9, Sept. 23, Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, Dec. 16. **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.

Book Discussion Group, **Thur., Jan. 19**, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Be a Star Music and Talent Show, **Sun., Jan. 29**, 3:00-6:00 p.m., a fundraiser for the Eastwood Building Committee Legal Fund.

Medicare Part D Seminar on Roosevelt Island, **Tue., Jan. 31**, 7:00 p.m., conducted by Ellen Polivy. To register, e-mail your name, address, and phone number to ELPolivy@gmail.com or call **212-362-2076**. Free.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Feb. 1**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. Meetings begin with an opportunity for members of the public to make presentations to the Council.

Book Discussion Group, **Thur., Feb. 16**, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali.

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, **Chinese Massage**
10:30, **Shoppers’ Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
2:00, **Painting and Sculpting**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)

Wednesday

9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Heart Health Care**
10:30, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers’ Bus**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

Thursday

10:00, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
Evening, **Weight-Watchers**
(starts Jan. 5); time TBA

Friday

9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games** (RISA)

Saturday

7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Sat., Dec. 17, 7:00, RISA Holiday Party
Wed., Dec. 21, Atlantic City trip
Sat., Dec. 31, 8:00, RISA New Year’s Eve Party

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

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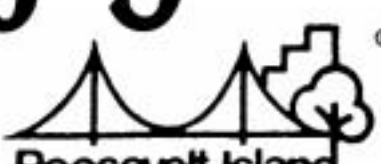


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Art in the Park By Wednesday morning, Blackwell Park south of Rivercross was well-tracked, including a bit of painting by foot at its center (inset).

Orphans from page 1

to OI staff and volunteers. Orphans International America has received bi-partisan support from leaders such as former president Bill Clinton, Mayor Mike Bloomberg, Senators Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton, Governor George Pataki, as well as

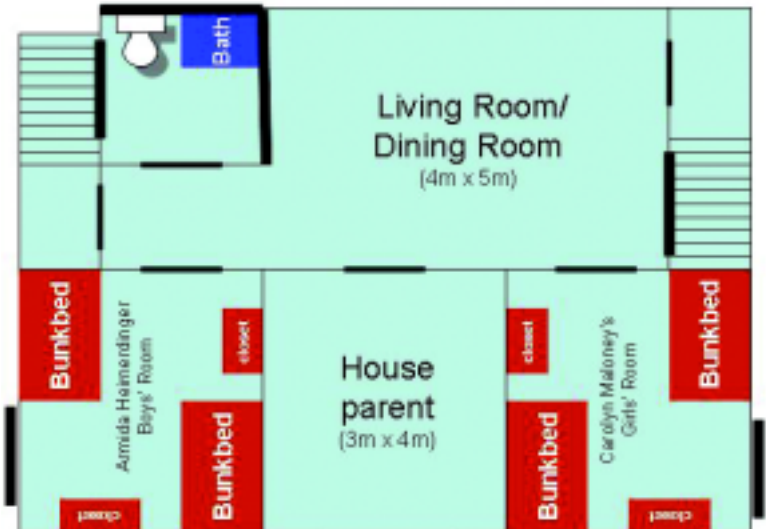
many New York City-based public officials. Assemblymember Pete Grannis spoke at the November benefit at the Harvard Club. In Indonesia last month, the Acehenese Ministry of Social Affairs recognized OI's work with tsunami orphans in Banda Aceh, along with that of UNICEF and Save the

Children. Founded in 2001, OI America is designated as a 501(c)3 organization by the IRS and listed with the New York State Department of Charities. Projects are also running in Sulawesi, Indonesia, and Gonaives, Haiti. Projects in formation include Romania, Togo, El Salvador, the Philippines, Peru, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, and Guyana. Future plans include working with AIDS orphans in both China and India. Each OI campus is working towards full programming for the orphaned children and the village community with classes for English, computer science, and a strong emphasis on the arts. Islanders and Island groups interested in joining in sponsorship of OI orphans can contact founder Jim Luce at 212-755-7285 or via e-mail at jim@oiww.org. Contributions can be mailed to Orphans International at 540 Main Street #418, Roosevelt Island, NYC10044.

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Islanders Doris Chernik and Rosa Suarez, President of Orphans International America, attended the opening of OI's campus in Haiti. With them, right, is Jennifer Prince of Guyana, an OI Board member.



Roosevelt Island House, nearing completion in Aceh, Indonesia.



Wirda, Indonesian Director Natasha Rahmany, and Rahmi kick up some fun at the watering hole.

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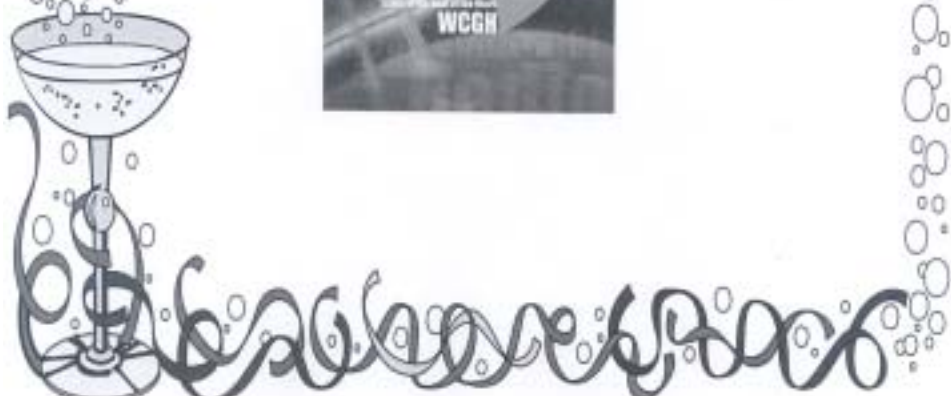
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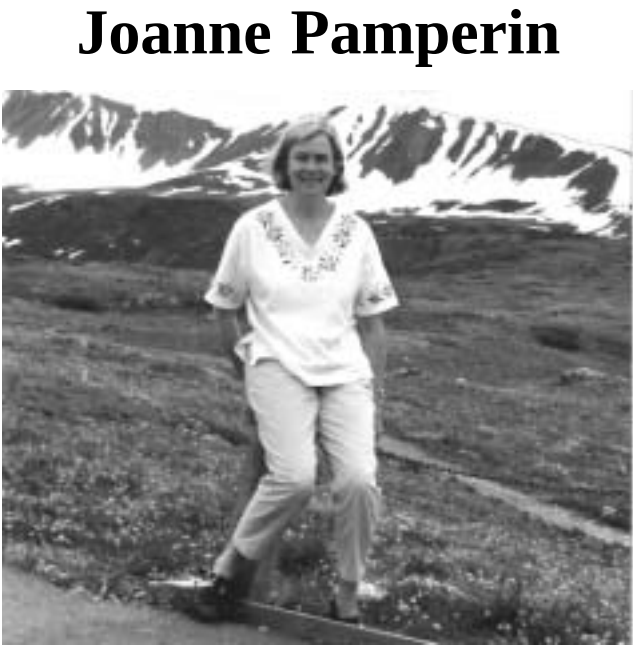
Happy
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2006



City Councilmember-elect Jessica Lappin, who will represent Roosevelt Island, spoke Tuesday night at a session arranged by the Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8.

Residents attending raised questions on the Island's mass transit crunch and housing issues.

Lappin, who scored 89% of Roosevelt Island's votes in the November election, will take office in January.



Longtime Westview resident Joanne M. Pamperin, 55, passed away December 10, 2005 of ovarian cancer. She was born February 23, 1950, and graduated from Bay Port High school and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She taught math and art at high schools in San Francisco and Manhattan, including the Jacqueline Onassis school. She dearly loved the country and the little farmette she had in Kent, where she raised thoroughbred horses. Joanne is survived by her son, Charles Weill; his father, George Weill; her mother, five sisters and two brothers. She was preceded in death by her father. Her family will always be grateful for the wonderful support from the visiting nurses of Hospice care and her neighbors.

Hevesi Proposing New Rules That Could Affect RIOC

By Erik Kriss in Albany

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation would have to create more detailed budget plans and open them to public scrutiny under regulations State Comptroller Alan Hevesi proposed recently.

RIOC is among 215 State and regional public authorities that would have to report detailed financial information regularly and follow accepted accounting and investing standards under the proposed rules.

“It is absolutely absurd that these public authorities are still not answerable to any public body, and that, even after all the irregularities we have uncovered, there remains no central accounting for the billions of dollars that flow through these entities,” Hevesi said, in announcing the proposed rules. “The public deserves to know how all this money is being spent and whether decisions are proper and appropriate.”

Hevesi’s proposed regulations, published in the December 7 issue of the New York State Register, are subject to public comment until January 23 and could be altered before being adopted, perhaps not for another six months.

Governor George Pataki’s administration has questioned whether Hevesi has the power to impose regulations on public authorities.

The proposed rules would require the authorities to:

- Develop and make public annual budgets and four-year financial plans, adhere to generally accepted accounting principles, and provide detailed estimates of revenue and spending, plus quarterly updates.
- Develop written investment policies, review them annually, and follow “prudent investor standards.”
- Establish a “pre-qualified” list of potential vendors.

Steve Marcus, president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, welcomed Hevesi’s proposal. “More transparency is good,” Marcus said. “We have very little transparency at RIOC. Anything that will force them to look into the future and plan for future requirements is also good.”

RIOC President Herbert Berman said the Corporation will adhere to whatever the law may be. But he said that, as things stand, anyone can obtain, under the state Freedom of Information Law, RIOC’s annual budget, which is approved in a public forum. He said RIOC develops multi-year capital plans and already adheres to generally accepted accounting principles. And he said the investment guidelines should not apply since RIOC only invests reserve money.

But Marcus said that, at last count, RIOC had at least \$7 million in reserves, a sum he said could grow to \$18 million in the near future based on a payment involving the Octagon development.

Berman also was not enthusiastic about the idea of required quarterly revenue and spending updates or a pre-qualified vendor list.

“For a small corporation like us, that would be something of a burden,” said Berman, noting that RIOC’s annual budget is only \$13 million to \$15 million. “The only thing I would say is, have mercy on the small guys like us.”

David Bauer, a retired city manager and founder of Roosevelt Island’s Maple Tree Group, which has called for elected resident governance on the Island, said it’s important to make budget proposals and annual reports “immediately available to the citizens,” and to give them the opportunity to “review and comment on those plans, both before

implementation and upon the results accomplished.” He added, “In the case of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, none of these things pertain. The budget proposals are not made available to the affected public, except as part of a fast-moving slide show which does not show enough detail about the anticipated activities to be funded,” Bauer added. “The annual reports are late and neither identify nor quantify the accomplishments resulting from the expense. The only public hearing and comment comes after decisions are made, more or less as an afterthought at the end of meetings which are punctuated by ‘executive sessions’ of indeterminate length, having the effect of discouraging even token public attendance.”

Both Bauer and former Residents Association President Matthew Katz said giving Island residents the right to elect the people who govern them is still the only real solution to the Island’s problems.

Hevesi said the proposed regulations are modeled on those he developed for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in the wake of an investigation by his office that accused the MTA of hiding \$512 million to justify a fare hike.

“I think there is a need,” Charles Brecher, research director for the watchdog Citizens Budget Commission, said of regulating public authorities. “How well what he proposes addresses it I’d have to study, but it is important.”

Hevesi acknowledged that Pataki administration officials question his constitutional and statutory authority to impose regulations on public authorities. “There are some in

the Division of the Budget that don’t like to see the comptroller’s office pushing the envelope,” Hevesi said. “Do we push the envelope sometimes? Yeah, within the authority of the law.”

“The Comptroller made some positive suggestions, which we will certainly take under advisement,” said Pataki spokesman Kevin Quinn. “However, we remain unconvinced that he has any actual legal standing to require these changes.”

The governor is expected to sign into law a public authorities reform bill he proposed and the Legislature passed in June.

Hevesi was asked why it took him so long to propose authority rules. “I needed an awakening, and it took awhile (to see) how bad our system of authorities is,” he said, noting that the 215 authorities he studied, plus 40 others he surveyed, have run up \$125.3 billion in debt, costing \$5.48 billion annually in interest. In all, the State has more than 700 authorities.

Hevesi said New Yorkers spend more than 6.5 percent of their gross personal income to pay off State debt, most of which is authority debt. He argued the number should be 5% or lower.

And he noted spending and interest payments by the 255 surveyed authorities has jumped 10 percent over two years.

Hevesi has the power to approve contracts for the Thruway and Long Island Power authorities, but would need a State law for the power to approve other authorities’ contracts.

Candidates for City Council Speaker Line Up on Affordable Housing Issues

by Selwa Habib

City Council members seeking to succeed Gifford Miller as Speaker were pushed, recently, to declare themselves on affordable housing. Each took a stance in favor, as could be expected, with only subtle differences separating them.

For Roosevelt Islanders concerned about the future of their housing, the views of the new Council Speaker – or of the entire Council – have little direct effect. But how hard they push for lower-cost housing – what priority they give it – could influence the climate here, and could influence the options available to any Islander who finds s/he must seek shelter somewhere other than Roosevelt Island.

(The Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation [RIOC] has said it intends to use its power over ground leases to sustain an affordable climate here, at least for current residents of affordable apartments.)

In a public meeting of over 1,000 tenants from all five boroughs, Housing Here & Now (HHN), a broad-based coalition of 120 unions, clergy, community-based organizations and advocates, put questions to Councilmembers. Four Speaker candidates participated: Bill DiBlasio of Brooklyn, Christine Quinn of Manhattan, Joel Rivera of the Bronx, and David Weprin of Queens.

The Forum raised these issues:

- The use of the Battery Park City revenues to build and preserve affordable housing, as once promised by New York

City Authority;

- A guarantee of housing for low- and moderate-income people in rezoned neighborhoods;
- Support for legislation to strengthen tenant rights to healthy homes;
- Permanent housing for homeless people and those living with HIV/AIDS.

And the item of most interest to Roosevelt Islanders:

- Win back New York City’s right to pass and administer its own rent laws, which are currently under the control of the State Legislature.

As in the case of other Island housing issues, this last item is likely to affect the City-wide housing climate more than it will affect the Island directly. But a strong home-rule push under a new Governor – possibly a Democrat in tune with City Council goals – might eventually have some peripheral effect here.

All four Speaker candidates came out in favor of seeing that Battery Park City (BPC) revenue goes into creation of future affordable housing. Rivera would go a step further, and seek to recoup BPC income that has already leaked out of the affordable-housing program. DeBlasio called for a grass-roots campaign on the matter.

All the candidates aligned themselves with HNN’s goals for healthy homes, housing for the homeless, affordable housing in rezoned areas, and home rule on rent laws.



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501 Main Street • (212) 752-8722 / 23

GRISTEDE'S

of ROOSEVELT ISLAND

Prices Effective To 12/24/05

OPEN MONDAY - CHRISTMAS DAY!



We at **GRISTEDE'S** would like to take this time to wish all our customers a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS** and a **HAPPY CHANUKAH**.

John Catsimatidis, Chairman & CEO



Hormel • Boneless Fresh • Whole • 6-7 lb. avg. Pork Loins \$2⁹⁹ lb.	Cook's • Butt Half SMOKED Half Ham \$1²⁹ lb.	CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF Top Sirloin Roast \$3⁹⁹ lb.	Frozen • Uncooked 41-50 ct. Shrimp \$5⁹⁹ lb.	Frozen • Cooked 61-70 ct. • 2 lb. bag Shrimp \$12⁹⁹ each	Baked In Store Turkey Breast \$4⁹⁹ lb.
Eastern • US #1 5 Lb. Bag! Potatoes 99¢ each	Sweet • Big 24 Size 5 Lb. Box! Clementines \$6⁹⁹ each	Colossal Size Chestnuts \$3⁹⁹ lb.	Fresh Broccoli Rabe \$1⁹⁹ lb.	Fresh • Green Asparagus \$2⁴⁹ lb.	Friendship Sour Cream Assorted Varieties 2/\$3 16 oz.
Assorted Varieties Nabisco Snack Crackers 2/\$5 6.75-10 oz.	Seagram's Ginger Ale, Club, Tonic or Seltzer 99¢ 1 liter	All Purpose Heckers Flour 2/\$3 5 Lb. Bag!	Mazola Corn Oil \$5⁹⁹ 64 oz. with additional \$40 purchase Excluding Cigarettes • Limit 1	DeCecco Pasta #1,7,9,12,23 34,40,41,90 2/\$3 1 lb.	Tropicana Pure Premium Orange Juice 2/\$5 59-64 oz. Assorted Varieties

GRISTEDE'S CUSTOMER APPRECIATION HOLIDAY COUPONS!

Polly-O Mozzarella Assorted Varieties \$2⁹⁹ 16 oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9023	Pepsi Cola Regular • Diet • Caffeine Free 12 Pack 3/\$10 12 oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9024	Ronzoni Lasagna, Manicotti or Large Shells 99¢ 8-16 oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9025	Haagen Dazs Ice Cream Assorted Varieties \$1⁹⁹ 16 oz. or Yogurt Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9026
Hellmann's Mayonnaise Assorted Varieties \$2⁴⁹ 32 oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9027	Pillsbury Cake Mixes Assorted Varieties 99¢ 16.25-18.9 oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9028	Kraft Philadelphia Cream Cheese Bars 99¢ 8oz. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9029	Polly-O Ricotta Assorted Varieties \$3⁹⁹ 3 lb. cont. Limit 2 per customer • w/add'l \$10.00 purchase not including coupon items, IGT Card, or cigarettes Expires 12/24/05 • MSW 9030

HOLIDAY GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE • SEE STORE MANAGER FOR DETAILS!

USE YOUR DIAMOND VALUE CARD FOR THE ITEMS BELOW! If you don't have a GRISTEDE'S "Diamond Value Club (DVC) Card" apply now! YOU WILL LIKE THE BENEFITS!					
Mott's Apple Juice Assorted Varieties 2/\$3 64 oz. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05	Maxwell House Coffee Not Decaf 2/\$5 11-13 oz. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05	Lipton Tea Bags \$2⁴⁹ 100 ct. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05	Langer's Cranberry Juice Cocktail Assorted Varieties \$1⁹⁹ 64 oz. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05	Heineken or Amstel Light Beer 12 Pack \$12⁹⁹ 12 oz. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05	Duraflame Giant Size Log \$2⁹⁹ 6 lb. Limit 2 • exp. 12/24/05

At GRISTEDE'S, your opinions and suggestions count. If you have a complaint or problem, call our CONSUMER HOTLINE at 212-956-5770 ext. 1100, or e-mail us at customeradvocate@gristedes.com