

Welcome,
Fireworks
Visitors!

Saturday, July 1, 2006

The Main Street WIRE™

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With U Thant Island and the East Side in the background, this collection of birds seems to be waiting for the start of Tuesday's fireworks. And lately, a heron has been spotted cruising the edges of Roosevelt Island.

Island Self-Governance Bill Fails Again in Albany

Senate Kills Tram Funds; Pataki Re-Promises Them

by Erik Kriss in Albany

A change in New York State's Public Authorities Law and resistance by Republicans will likely keep a self-governance bill for Roosevelt Island bottled up in Albany until at least next year.

Meantime, end-of-session negotiations resulted in \$15 million for Roosevelt Island Tram repairs being dropped from the State budget "cleanup" bill State legislators ap-

proved last week, though Governor George Pataki has said he will make money available for Tram repairs that could begin in the fall.

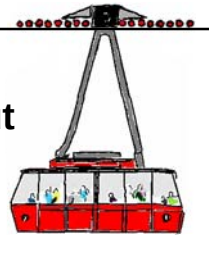
On the final day of the regular 2006 legislative session last Friday, the Democratic-controlled Assembly unanimously approved the self-governance bill.

It would expand the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation's Board of Directors to nine members, require that at least six be Island residents, and provide for Islanders to vote for the majority of Board members, who are now appointed.

The legislation would also authorize RIOC to commission an audit to determine needed capital repairs and to then borrow up to \$25 million to do the work. And it would prohibit development of designated open space in the General Development Plan for anything other than park purposes.

But the bill died in the Republican-controlled State Senate, as it has since versions of it were first introduced in 1998.

Days
Without
Tram:
74



Assemblyman Alexander B. "Pete" Grannis, the Democrat who represents Roosevelt Island, blamed late submission of the legislation and complications caused by last year's overhaul of the Public Authorities law.

"There were a great many other issues around" at the end of the session, said Grannis, who added the need to conform the self-governance bill to the new authorities law required extra focus by the Assembly's program and counsel staff and the staff of the Committee on Assembly Corporations, Authorities and Commissions chaired by Richard Brodsky of Westchester.

See Albany, page 7

Put the Requiem Theme on Hold: Island Kids Has a Survival Plan

by Jami Bernard

When Nikki Leopold went to see about enrolling her daughter Kristin, 2½, at Island Kids, she found the venerable playschool in dire straits, rather like a teeter-totter tottering on its last teeter. Instead of enrolling Kristin, Leopold herself signed on, volunteering her time and her 15 years of expertise in rejuvenating frayed non-profit institutions.

The result can be seen starting July 11, when an eight-week summer camp begins for children ages 7-12, along with various music and dance classes designed to shake the groove thing of children, teens, and parents too.

"My vision for Island Kids – and I've been thinking about it for some time – is that it could be a much bigger community resource," says Leopold, the unpaid executive director of the group that began with a handful of social-network-starved parents back in 1981. It attained non-profit status in

1994.

Leopold sees Island Kids as a place that can grow with the growing needs of the community, "where we could do an outreach to single parents and younger parents between 18 and 25 who may need their own kind of support."

But first, there's a crisis in need of immediate attention. Leopold and a reporter for *The Main Street WIRE* are seated at a miniature table on pint-sized chairs to discuss the future of Island Kids, but Anika, 2 years and 3 months, armed with a tube of day-glo Play-Doh, has perceived an injustice. She is wailing as only a child can wait when she believes someone is sitting in the very chair that makes her heart sing.

"You sit in my chair!" sobs Anika, her Play-Doh drooping from one hand that has been raised to the heavens in apparent supplication.

Like any good executive director (and babysitter), Leopold

rushes to the rescue, finding Anika another chair. The tears dry like magic. Once seated, however, Anika realizes just how insanely boring and unproductive it is to sit among adults, and off she runs to take a phone off the hook so that, eventually, an endless *phone-off-the-hook!* signal will echo through

See Island Kids, page 6

Anticipating Spitzer as Governor, RIRA Council Sends an Appeal

Calling Roosevelt Island a "severe casualty of the Pataki administration's incompetence and indifference," the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) has written Attorney General Elliot Spitzer, who is a candidate for Governor, asking for strong measures of redress early in his term – presum-

ing he is elected.

"Most of the problems visited upon this community over the past twelve years [are due to] poor decision-making and a literal rubber-stamping of Pataki's wishes by a Board of Directors hand-picked by the Governor," the letter says. It goes on to praise Assembly-member Pete Grannis and City Councilmember Jessica Lappin (as well as former Council Speaker Gifford Miller) for their efforts on behalf of the Island, but says the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) has largely ignored them, including their offers of financial assistance for Island needs.

The letter asks Spitzer for three things. Quoting directly from the

letter:

- Immediate replacement of the current resident Board members with individuals democratically elected by Island residents.
- An immediate moratorium on all development, and resident approval of leasing and sales efforts until [Spitzer] has filled positions on the RIOC Board.
- Support for legislation to insure that Island affairs continue to be managed with substantial resident control.

These would "put us back on the democratic map of the U.S.A.," says the letter (full text on page 13).

Most members of the Residents Association Common Council
See RIRA Letter, page 12

Resident Has a Double Scenario: Stem-Cell Therapy in India for MS, And to Film It and Show the World

by Gianna Pontecorboli

"The worst I risk is that nothing happens," says Toni Spottswood. But if, as she strongly believes, she will come back walking again, "people will be able to see that there is an option there."

Sixty-two years old and a resident of Roosevelt Island since 1977 when she moved to New York from Boston with her husband and two children, Toni is about to embark on a challenging double mission. The first is to get rid of her wheelchair – to be able to walk again. The second is to show in a movie, moment by moment, that stem-cell therapy can work for her and for thousands of other people. "My hope is to put a little pressure on George Bush, the Congress and the Religious Right," she says.

When she was 32, a bad flu left her with fingers tingling all the time. At first, doctors dismissed it but, a year later, the diagnosis was Chronic Progressive Multiple Sclerosis, a disease with no cure and gradually worsening symptoms.

"I was young and I had two young kids," she remembers, "and I decided that I could not procrastinate any more. I wanted to become an interior designer, so I went back to school. For three years, my life was all cooking, doing laundry, attending lessons, and doing homework. But at the end I could have my own design firm. Peter Jennings was one of my clients."

See Spottswood, page 10



Briefly...

• Again this weekend, **no F service from Manhattan** to Roosevelt Island. (See ComingUp, page 3, for routing.) The Tramway is still out of service.

• **Tramway Plaza in Manhattan** is about to get a \$779,000 reconstruction by the City Parks Department – new planting beds, shrubs, and trees, new fencing, pavement, security lighting, and a water supply and draining system, according to an announcement made Thursday. All but \$11,000 is coming from Solow Development, which has plans for adjacent land. The City is providing the \$11,000 portion. There's a diagram and additional information on page 12.

• **Macy's Fireworks** promise a thousand shell bursts per minute for this year's display – over 120,000 in all. (See ComingUp, page 3.)

• Residents were alarmed Tuesday when **trees came down** at the east edge of Capobianco Field (just north of Eastwood). The U.S. Department of Agriculture removed two trees, estimated at 50 years old, because they were infested with the Asian longhorned beetle. It kills trees, boring holes a half-inch in diameter. Elsewhere on the Island, another infested tree was removed. USDA's plant inspection service can be reached at **800-554-4501**, ext. 72087.



The Editorial Page

Damn! Shot Down Again

The WIRE barely had a chance to report that there was self-governance legislation being presented in Albany (last issue) before finding (this issue) that the Albany machine had killed it (lead story, page 1).

We have to give Assemblymember Pete Grannis a pat on the back for giving it a try, once again.

But the most important effect of Grannis’s re-introduction of the idea of democracy for Roosevelt Island is that the bill is there, largely in final form though possibly subject to a few technical corrections, for consideration after the November elections when it’s reasonable to believe Albany will have a new – and better – administration running things from the Governor’s office. (Actually, there’s a *very small* chance it could be considered again before the current Legislature folds its tent.)

If you’ve been in hibernation or you’re a fireworks visitor (*welcome!*) or otherwise new to the Island, the background facts are these: a residential Roosevelt Island has always been run by a State agency (not the City) and always by appointees of the Governor. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation’s Board of Directors consists of appointees, including a number of residents – increased to a majority of five (out of nine) a couple of years ago. They serve without pay and quite selflessly but, beholden to the Governor for those positions, they’ve traditionally given the Governor whatever he’s wanted.

So when the Governor sent his first appointee as RIOC President to us, the man turned out to be an uncommunicative patronage lifer who gave “unqualified” a bad name. He left after three years, clearing out his desk in a quick afternoon escape after – we are told – at least one earlier episode of telling the Governor’s staffers that, no, they couldn’t fire him, for he was a pal of Al D’Amato, who at the time was pretty much running the State Republican Party and calling the shots in Albany. Next up as RIOC President was a former Pataki campaign manager. He, too, lasted three years, leaving when the RIOC Board was forced to fire him because he’d found a way to tap the till for more than his pay grade called for. (Why in the world would anybody making over \$100,000 feel a need to milk the State, or this Island, for more?)

Things are a little better now, but RIOC still consists of political appointees in all the top jobs. The latest bunch seems to have been chosen with competence somewhere on the list of qualifications, but they’re still political appointees who don’t really answer to the residents of this community; they answer, instead, to the Governor and the mutually supportive political and real-estate forces of New York State.

So it’s high time Roosevelt Island got a little democracy. It’s messy, it’s true, but it *belongs to the people* and, in the long run, it works to let the governed control those who govern. And after a long, long wait – twelve years under George Pataki – we’re yearning to breathe free here – to have something to say about the way Roosevelt Island is managed.

So the legislation calls for a Board (excepting two State officials and two mayoral appointees) elected by residents – one empowered to hire (and fire) a well-qualified community manager. It works all over the country.

Why not here?

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The WIRETM

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To the Editor:

Your June 17 report on Southtown with its headline “For Developers, Southtown Is Now a Stunning Success Story” fails to focus on the project’s serious “failures.” By placing the back of the first building across the existing Main Street, a physical barrier or “wall,” 17 stories high, has been created between the existing and new community. The diversion of the existing Main Street at the traffic circle for about 150 feet east towards the Queens side of Southtown also means there is no integration of the two communities. Indeed, very few pedestrians from Northtown will or can be expected to wander that considerable distance out of their way to even take a look at the new Southtown Main Street.

Why did this separation of the Island into two distinct parts occur? First and foremost, RIOC, in its desperation and eagerness to accept any developer to build Southtown, refused to insist on a design that conformed to the Island’s shape and intended small-town character; it also refused to spend any money (in a State with a budget of over \$100 *billion*), on basic infrastructure to continue the road from the existing Main Street through Southtown to the Tram. With a wider road, such a continuous path would also have helped cure the too-narrow and canyon-like effect of the existing Main Street in Northtown.

Fearful of losing the developers chosen for the resulting project, and proceeding on the basis that just about anything is better than nothing, RIOC then sat by passively and allowed the first two buildings to be located smack in the six acres of parkland that was supposed to separate Southtown from Northtown according to the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP) which is attached to the Lease the State signed with the City. (Appeals to the courts to require the State to adhere to that full six-acre park commons failed when, although the idea was not even presented by any of the litigants, the court counted some acreage in front of Rivercross to make up for the required six acres.)

Another design failure was to allow the first three buildings to attach eight-story wings that leave almost no space between them, thus creating still another high wall blocking views east to west.

Compounding those design failures, the developers, again with RIOC’s passive OK, left the two

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*. If you e-mail a letter, expect a confirming response and, if you don’t receive one, resend and call 212 826-9055 to alert us that it’s been sent. **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 July 29 issue: Tuesday, July 25
Letters received after deadline considered on a space-available basis.

Letters

To the Editor:

We would like readers of *The WIRE* to know of a wonderful outpouring of generosity on behalf of our family which has taken place among the generation of young people who grew up on Roosevelt Island in the 1980s and 1990s.

Our son-in-law, Tim Sheehy, has become the victim of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) and our daughter Katie has been providing total care for him at their home in Brooklyn, as well as for their two-year-old daughter, Frances Rose.

Tim and Katie grew up together on this Island, first met here, and were married in 1999. Tim’s set-design company, Composition Workshop, employed many Island young people over the years.

In response to this crisis, Tim and Katie’s childhood friends formed a non-profit organization, Project Main Street, and sponsored a benefit on April 17 at the Supper Club in Manhattan. The sold-out event was attended by 350 people, including many current and past Island residents, despite the lack of any mention of the event in *The WIRE*.

As Tim’s condition worsens, Katie has been able to continue to care for him at home, thanks to the generosity of so many people. Those neighbors and friends who want to contribute or to communicate with Tim and Katie should visit the organization’s website: <http://www.projectmainst.org/>.

Project Main Street, which began with this event, is very much a product of the special spirit of the Roosevelt Island community and will continue to host benefits to help similarly afflicted families. The organization is headed by Island native Brad Armstrong and includes many others who were raised on Roosevelt Island. Those who wish to become a part of this organization should contact Brad at Brad.Armstrong@equiscorp.com.

Mike and Barbara Cooney

roads in Southtown intact. That means there are four lanes for traffic circling the residential buildings; this on an Island that was supposed to have limited vehicular movement! I have not even mentioned the negative visual impact the massive building number 1 has on the historic Blackwell House farmstead.

Indeed, by the time the nine buildings of the current plan are finished, Southtown will look a lot like mid-town Manhattan with a high wall and diverted Main Street blocking views and access from Northtown, with minimal open space between its nine buildings, with no six-acre commons, and with massive, dense structures.

I represented Island residents who fully supported the building of Southtown (a position not always understood by others) but who believed it should be built in a different way, and that the State had to exert its power over the developers to be sure they conformed their plans to the Island’s shape and General Development Plan. Our committee, called the “Alternative Southtown Design Committee” to emphasize it supported an alternative “design” of Southtown, retained the professional architectural and urban planning firm of Thoresen and Linard. These architectural experts, an award winning experienced firm, studied the Island and in a few week’s time designed a Southtown with the same number of housing units that continued the Main Street and widened

To the Editor:

Although I’ve never known him well enough to call him a friend, I’ve known Steve Marcus for several years since I served a brief term on the Common Council. Steve has invariably shown himself to be insightful, well-informed, and passionate about Island issues. I’ve never met anyone who felt differently about him. So, it comes as a great curiosity that his columns reflect a man so different from the one I see on the streets and in the subway.

I wonder why one of the many people who know him better than I do doesn’t take him aside and tell him how demeaning attacks that refer to opponents as “jokers” is and how destructive to the dialogue this Island must have with RIOC in order to impact decisions. How can a man this smart mistake disagreement for some strange strain of evil? Two other Island stalwarts I’ve been lucky enough to know are David Kraut and Patrick Stewart, both members of RIOC’s Board and also men who were duly elected to hold the same position in RIRA Steve now holds. Steve tosses these thoughtful, committed Island residents into the bucket as jokers. If you’ve ever met either, you’ll understand how untrue that rings. They’ve simply disagreed with Steve and, so, earned the privilege of being publicly insulted, courtesy of *The WIRE*. I don’t get it. This public behavior undermines everything Steve and RIRA hope to accomplish and pushes the compromises necessary for achievement further away.

When RIRA and the Maple Tree Group complain about not being included in RIOC’s decision-making process, did it ever occur to them that the continuing negativity, now salted with gratuitous insult, may have something to do with it? Herb Berman has no need to float an idea past Steve when he already knows the answer. If RIOC likes an idea, RIRA doesn’t. Case closed. No consideration required. Isn’t it time to stop?

What I would give to see Steve Marcus come to his senses, walk over to RIOC’s offices and start working with them in the creative, passionate style he knows. Maybe a fresh column extolling all the great improvements to our environment in recent years would be refreshing. We could all use some sportsmanship.

Dave Stone

it, integrated the two communities in a continuous path, retained a six-acre commons park, and restrained traffic by replacing the two roads with four lanes to one widened one with only two lanes.

Instead of considering this alternative design, the developers succeeded in persuading RIOC to go along with their massive one that cuts this Island in two. Why? Because the developers care little about design; they simply want to maximize their profit by building the biggest, most dense structures next to one another. And for the developers and State, it was cheaper to keep the two roads with four lanes of traffic and not build a new continuation of Main Street. Some money was also saved by placing the first two buildings closest to the existing town’s AVAC, electrical and gas systems, despite being in the very space that was supposed to be a six-acre park.

Former RIOC president Robert Ryan remarked to me when I pointed out the 17-story wall cre-

See **Letters**, page 10

July 4 is the day we welcome the rest of the City to Roosevelt Island for the annual fireworks display. We hope our visitors spend a little more time to visit the Island and see why we are so proud of this special spot in the middle of the East River.

What we now know as Roosevelt Island was called

The RIOC Column

Minnahannock Island by the Algonquin Indians before the Dutch purchased it in 1637. It went through various names and identities in the first decades of European control, depending on who owned it at the time.

The City of New York purchased the Island, then called Blackwell Island, in 1828, as the home for institutions such as prisons, mental hospitals and nursing homes. Renamed Welfare Island in 1921, it continued as a repository for these types of institutions. But in 1968, Mayor John Lindsay formed a commission to look into the future of the Island.

In 1969, the New York State Urban Development Corporation signed a 99-year lease with New York City to develop the Island, using a master plan designed by architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee as its guideline. This plan called for a mixed-income community of 20,000 people living in 5,000 units in a largely traffic free environment. The plan was later amended to lower the intended density, but its general principles remain in effect today.

Roosevelt Island is a jewel of the City, home to over 9,000 people living in a nationally-recognized model mixed-income community. The Island has six historic landmarks, several spacious parks, sports facilities, numerous playgrounds, a waterfront promenade, and unparalleled views of Manhattan.

And we have the aerial Tramway that first opened in 1976 to provide residents of the Island direct access to Manhattan. The Tram is currently being repaired and expected to resume service this fall to transport thousands of riders safely

across the East River, offering vivid views of the most spectacular urban vistas in the world.

We urge visitors to take the time to walk around the Island.

Both the northern and southern tips boast historic sites linked to Irish architect James Renwick, Jr., who also designed St. Patrick's Cathedral. The northern tip boasts the 134-year-old Lighthouse built with stone quarried on the Island by convicts and inmates from the Island's institutions. The southern tip has the remains of the 152-year-old



Herbert E. Berman, President
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Smallpox Hospital, the City's only landmarked ruin.

In the center of the Island stands the Blackwell House, dating to 1794, and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, which dates to 1888.

The "newest" addition to our historic inventory is the Octagon Tower. Once the center of a mental health hospital, it has recently been renovated as part of the development of an apartment building, just one example of how the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), the State-created public-benefit corporation that controls the Island, works to include public amenities in its development contracts.

Check our website at www.rioc.com for more information about who we are and what we do.

So let's welcome visitors who come for the fireworks and urge them to spend a little more time seeing what Roosevelt Island has to offer. Maybe today's visitor will become tomorrow's neighbor.

Roosevelt Island News, History, and more: Website NYC10044 on the Internet at nyc10044.com.

Allow me to introduce myself: I'm Matt Katz and immediate past president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. RIRA President Steve Marcus offered me the opportunity to fill in for him this issue and, print junkie that I am, I was glad to comply. During the four years I was responsible for this column I found that, by venting my spleen in ink, I was less likely to misplace my ire on the woman and pussycats with whom I share my life.

First order of business: To neighbors and first-time visitors to the Island, a Happy Independence Day and welcome! The Fourth always seems to mean more when our nation is at war and threatened by enemies, don't you find? For those of us of a certain age, we've had ample opportunity to test this hypothesis. In any event, I hope the fireworks on the Glorious Fourth are the best ever.

The RIRA Column

It's been 20 months since I left office and I've worked assiduously to keep my distance from the Common Council and leave RIRA business to those whom you

elect. The temptation to backseat drive was overwhelming at times after four years of heading the group, but I tried hard to stay away. RIRA's sole power is that its Common Council is the *only* elected entity to represent this community (as a stand-alone village in the heart of the City) and it takes all of us to make that work by voting and volunteering to run for office in RIRA elections and, in that regard, we're all of us RIRA. So, what have we been up to lately?

June 10 marked the tenth Roosevelt Island Day and I spent the morning planting flowers and vegetables with the Living Library's Bonnie Sherk and the children of PS/IS 217 in their schoolyard. Bonnie has been a major factor in the planning for Southpoint Park (site of the fireworks seating), offering her expertise in international and educational programming to make this 13-acre park something extraordinary. I spent that afternoon taking aspirin and kvetching about my aching back.

Did you attend the RIRA Greek wine tasting on June 17? It was a delightful, bibulous evening with excellent Greek wine and delicacies and netted \$1,400 for the RIRA treasury. These funds allow RIRA to produce their own events and to support the programs of other Island organizations. Thanks to all for their hard work.

I offer additional kudos to the 26 CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) graduates who completed eleven weeks of training and whose numbers include my wife Sherie and me. Under Team Leader Howard Polivy, we shall forge a cohesive group that will seek additional training to become a significant provider of emergency services should the need arise.

At the last RIOC Board meeting I attended (some habits are hard to break; I've attended every one over the last eight years), a resident Board member chastised the RIRA Common Council for not being represented in larger numbers at the meeting. Why, I asked, should working people attend a 4:30 p.m. meeting when their only opportunity to be heard

is after the meeting has adjourned and the agenda debated and voted upon? In further defense of the Common Council's devotion to our Island home, I would add that six Council members took the CERT training; not one of the RIOC resident Board members found the time to volunteer. Make of that what you will.

Let's follow up on some old business from my administration: The Verdant Power plan to place underwater turbines in the East River estuary began with a single unit in the East Channel. Based on the success of that template, we can expect a "six-pack" of units to be installed starting this September, according to Verdant Power honcho Trey Taylor. *Newsday* ran an excellent pictorial story on May 30, should you be interested in seeing what the hardware looks like.

I had initiated discussions between RIOC and the NYC



Matthew Katz, Past President
Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
e-mail: MatthewKatz@verizon.net

Transit Authority back in 2002 that resulted in the inclusion of our Tram in the MetroCard system. It's ironic that, with the Tram operating at capacity, it should so utterly fail last April. With the Tram grounded until fall (we are told) and projected major renovations scheduled for nine months starting in 2007, the track work on our overtaxed F train has become more than an annoyance and the transportation needs of this growing community are reaching a critical mass. More anon.

When the desperately needed renovation plan for the Roosevelt Island Bridge was announced with a 2012 starting date, I was able to convince the Department of Transportation Commissioner that an earlier start time was essential. The failure of the bridge lift mechanism five times in two days during the summer of 2004 was a powerful argument in our favor. This effort culminated in the April 19 DOT presentation to Island residents of the details of the three-year major overhaul now promised to begin in or about December of this year.

Let's talk about Southtown. This nine-building development will increase (and one hopes enhance) our population, RIOC revenue, the retail presence here and, in general, the Island's prosperity. But what of the promises of affordable housing, codified in the General Development Plan? Hudson and Related Companies, with the compliance of RIOC, have included the first two buildings, leased to two East Side hospitals and made available to their employees at reduced rents, as part of the required ratio of affordable apartments. While this may be valid under the

See **RIRA**, page 10

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

No F-train service from Manhattan to Roosevelt Island. Queens-bound trains are diverted from 12:01 a.m. Sat., July 1 through 5:00 a.m. Mon., July 3, skipping the Roosevelt Island stop. (Take the F from any station below 47th-50th Streets to Roosevelt Avenue, Queens, then change to the Manhattan-bound platform to take the F toward Manhattan.) Trains bound from Queens to Manhattan will run normally.

— The Coming Week —

Macy's Fireworks at Southpoint, Tue., the Fourth of July, 9:00 p.m. Gate opens at 5:00 p.m. Tickets (\$18) available on line at fireworks.RIOC.com (credit cards only) or call **212-832-4540**. Large coolers, alcoholic beverages, over-size bags, backpacks not permitted; food and drink available on the grounds.

Orphans International World Congress III, Sat., July 8, at Columbia University. \$20; call **212-755-7285** for reservations and information. (Also see related story, page 6.)

— Future Events —

Coastal Storm Preparedness Event, Thur., July 20, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center, with Councilmember Jessica Lappin, presented by Community Board 8 and the City Office of Emergency Management.

Book Discussion Group, Thur., July 20, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith.

The Main Street WIRE — Next issue, **Sat., July 29**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, July 20; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Mon., July 24; they are due Thur., July 27. **Future issues:** Aug. 26, Sept. 9 and 23, Oct. 7 and 21, Nov. 4 and 18, Dec. 2 and 16 (Holiday issue). In **2007:** Jan 13, 27; Feb 10, 24; Mar. 10, 24; Apr. 7, 21; May 5, 19; June 2, 16, 30; July 28; Aug. 25; Sept. 8, 22; Oct. 6, 20; Nov. 3, 17; Dec. 1, 15. **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., Aug. 24, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *Daughter of Fortune* by Isabel Allende.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, Wed., Sept. 6, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. Meetings begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council on matters of concern.

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.

The Main Street WIRE's e-mail bulletins keep you up to date on important developments. Send an AddMe message to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com

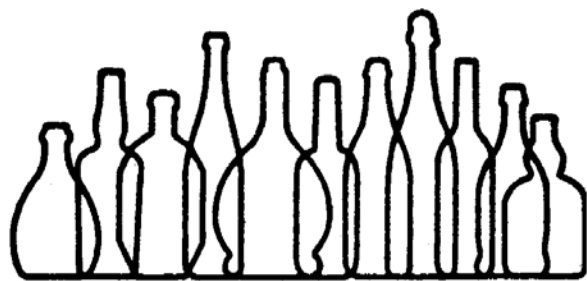
Senior Center

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

Special Events

Sun., July 2, Atlantic City trip
Tue., July 4, RISA Fourth of July party, 1:00 p.m.
Wed., July 19, Atlantic City trip

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Growing, Orphans International Brings New Staffers to the City for Orientation and, Well... Fun

Roosevelt Island’s home-grown Orphans International Worldwide, created by Islander Jim Luce, is growing – and growing fast. This summer, the Roosevelt Island-based international NGO (non-governmental organization) will be playing host to four new international staff members for three months of training before they ship off to various locations around the world to begin their tenure with OI Worldwide. Andres Erawan of Indonesia, Boris Stankevich of Belarus, James Lareche of Haiti, and Nathan Byrd of Ohio have arrived on the island to learn the ins and outs of the organization before taking positions as lead officers in charge of compliance, administration, development, and programs at OI sites around the world.

Though they will be working over sixty hours a week under Luce, the new staff members will also enjoy a new program to introduce them to life in New York. Through *Live NYC*, the staff will have the opportunity to see many of NYC’s finest locales and most interesting spots through the generous sponsorship of some of Roosevelt Island’s most hospitable patrons. While a few events are already on the books, Orphans International is still seeking members of the Roosevelt Island community to take on the role of ambassador and show the four out-of-towners how we live in New York individually or collectively. New York National Bank has provided baseball tickets for one out-



Orphans International Founder Jim Luce of Roosevelt Island with the Haitian Ambassador to the United Nations, Leo Méorés.

ing. Committed to OI’s mission of raising global citizens, the new staff is already working hard. Coupled with their “volunteer” status, this leaves little room economically to see the “lighter side” of New York City – thus the premise of

Live NYC. If you are interested in showing these four young men around your neck of the woods, or want to take them out for a night on the town to show them NYC at its best, please call Javier or Alicia in the Orphans International Worldwide office at **212-755-7285**, or e-mail OI at info@oiww.org.

OI also hosted a fundraiser at the United Nations last week, attracting nearly 300 people, including many Roosevelt Islanders, in support of OI’s mission in Gonaives, Haiti. The fundraiser was held to raise \$10,000 for the purchase of land for the Haiti project so that the twelve children currently being provided for may be relocated to a permanent campus that can be updated to suit the needs of the children.

The next event will be OI’s *World Congress III* held on Saturday, July 8th on the campus of Columbia University. The annual congress is a gathering of OI stakeholders, supporters, and staff from around the world with the purpose of providing an annual update throughout OI Worldwide and creating a clear and cohesive vision for the coming year with input from all in attendance. Food will be provided by Air France, and a reception at the OI office on Roosevelt Island will follow. Tickets are \$20, and all are welcome. For more information or to reserve your spot at the congress, please contact the OI office at **212-755-7285**.

Island Kids from page 1

the play area of 536 Main Street.

Island Kids is located on the ground floor of that address, in the courtyard behind the now-defunct pizza place. The large space is donated by Roosevelt Island Housing Management, and includes a blue-carpeted play area where the main classes are held, a smaller room for arts and crafts, and a tiny kitchen that could conceivably be expanded with modest renovation into a teaching kitchen. There’s already a kiln there, an artifact from the days when Island Kids offered pottery classes.

Leopold’s plans for the new Island Kids include an array of support groups, such as one for sufferers of post-partum depression, and a speakers’ program where experts will expound on such hot-button topics as learning disabilities. “I’m thinking of other groups I know, like Families First, in Brooklyn, that have a much larger vision,” says Leopold. “That’s what we’re hoping to accomplish in the

next year. It’s a lot.”

A lot, yes, considering the state of the group’s finances. When Leopold joined in May, Island Kids was running on fumes. The only income came from a single music class whose tuition barely covered the cost of Anika’s Play-Doh.

“We were left with a dire financial situation, and right now, we’re doing crisis management,” says Leopold.

When she says “we,” she refers to the new board of directors she’s put together, which includes herself, two former board members, and two mothers, one of whom has a 15-year-old daughter who attended Island Kids back in the project’s heyday. “A big part of what we’re going to be doing is fund-raising. We’re just about to apply to RIOC for public-purpose funds, and we’ve contacted different foundations, hoping they’ll help us with grants.” (At Thursday morning’s RIOC Board meeting, Leopold watched as the chair of the RIOC Board’s Public Purpose Funds Committee listed her

\$75,500 proposal as one of two the Board will consider soon, mentioning it favorably.)

The group needs publicity, too. Registration forms for the summer program, which includes music, dance, and guitar lessons for older age groups and parents, are available at Starbucks and the lobbies of 555 and 625 Main Street and 10 River Road. But leaflets and ads are expensive, the posters that have been put up on Main Street have largely been torn down, and the trickle of available cash needs to go toward sprucing up the physical space, laying in supplies, and paying the salaries of the seven or so new teachers on staff for summer and fall.

Leopold is a former Island kid herself: she moved here with her family in 1976, then moved back here again when she was grown with children. She also runs the non-profit Midtown Pregnancy Support Center in Manhattan. In her 15 years of experience with non-profit organizations, Leopold has seen how easily such organizations can founder due to lack of funds and the burn-out factor inherent in a volunteer workforce. (She hopes someday that Island Kids will be able to pay her a stipend.)

But she says she’s dedicated to helping breathe new life into something she sees as essential for the Island.

“This was a great place to grow up. I went to school on the Island, and I have a real attachment personally to the community,” she says. “Island Kids adds to the great things the Island has to offer. It provides an opportunity for people who’ve been here a long time, and also for people moving here from Manhattan who are used to convenience and having things at their fingertips. They don’t have to run into the City to go to Gymboree, which charges double what we do. And this adds to that small-town feeling.”

As an insider, Leopold is also sensitive to the subtleties of the local scene. For instance, although her summer program offers belly-dancing, African dance, aerobics, and yoga, she is determined that the fall schedule not compete with or undermine the (mostly dance) classes offered by the neighboring Main Street Theater & Dance Alliance, which welcomes children starting at age 2 ½.

In any case, her fall schedule isn’t yet set in stone. Plans are for playgroups in Spanish, bilingual music classes, “creative play,” and

cooking classes for children 5 and up. The cooking classes will be taught by a former food editor of *Woman’s Day* Magazine who already has her eye on knocking down the wall that separates the kitchen from the main room, and also, it seems, walls off her dream of a grand teaching kitchen. Other classes include a mother-daughter book club, and a workshop devoted to making a gingerbread house.

In the beginning, Island Kids was “a group of parents who just wanted to socialize, who wanted to get together with other mothers and have their kids play with each other. It was a way to build community. Basically, it was a parenting playgroup,” says Leopold.

She feels this paved the way for an Island Kids that evolves with community needs, where parents and teens can take yoga together (such a class is already on the summer schedule), and where there will be a group solely for fathers with their babies – a far cry from a mere six years ago, when *The Main Street WIRE* noted the Big News that Island Kids had its first stay-at-home dad show up; the former construction worker created a big stir.

One thing Island Kids will not have is quiet. Leopold interrupts

the interview, cocks her head to one side, and registers that concern common to all mothers: “It’s a little *too* quiet.” She runs to check on her daughter and playmate Anika. “Girls? Girls?” There’s a rising note of panic in Leopold’s voice, then ... “Oh, okay. You’re okay.”

Now, boys and girls, it’s time for the part of the day we all love, when the *WIRE* reporter attempts to take a photo of two little girls happily at play on a blue-and-yellow plastic slide. Kristin climbs to the top, her gorgeous eyes big and trusting, her pretty face framed just so, and ... bursts into tears.

“No picture! No!” she frets. “Wouldn’t you like a nice picture of you in the newspaper?” cajoles the reporter.

“No!” A siren-like sound of distress emerges that is likely to alarm pedestrians on Main Street.

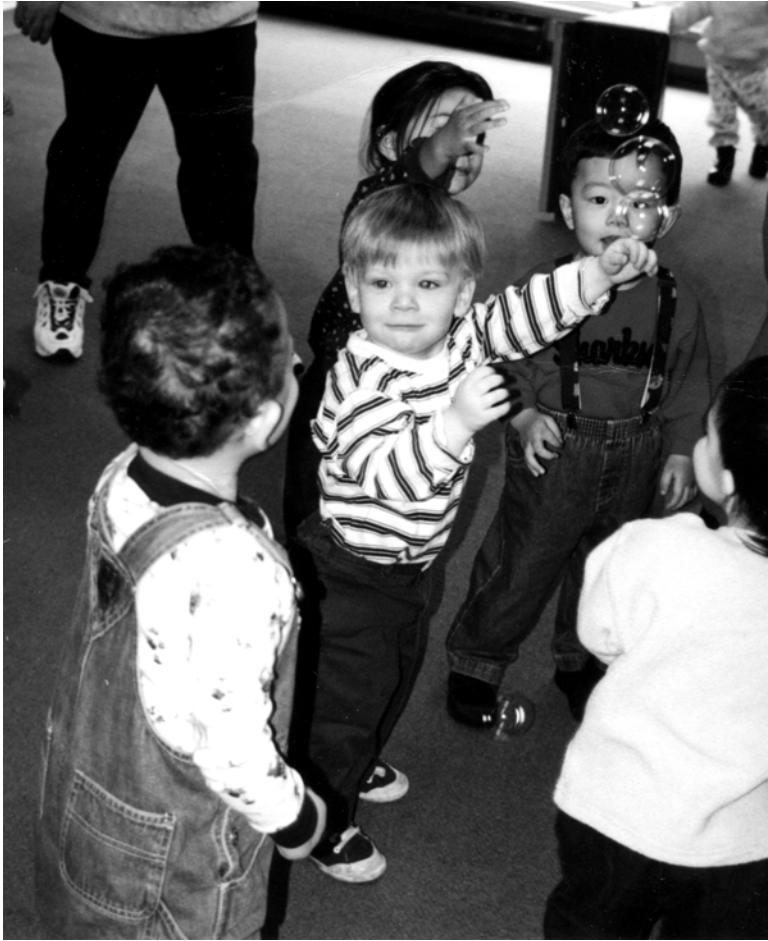
Anyway, Anika is anxious to be photographed. She poses perfectly ... for a millisecond. Then she runs off to her next appointment with a pink, stuffed thing that was once an identifiable animal.

There are no usable photos to be had today, but then, the all-new Island Kids is still in its infancy. You have to give it time.

For more information on the Island Kids summer program, call Nikki Leopold at **212-317-1216**.



Photo: Jami Bernard



Back from Ukraine and 27 Months in the Peace Corps, She Saw Peaceful Revolution

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

Carole Kennedy is back on Roosevelt Island. She's returned from 27 months of service with the Peace Corps in independent democratic Ukraine. She says the Orange Revolution, which took place during her stay in the former constituent republic of the Soviet Union, was the most dramatic and exciting highlight of that period.

Ukraine's 2004 presidential election was declared null and void by the country's Supreme Court and a run-off election was mandated. The incumbent prime



minister's "Blue" party was accused of foul play, vote rigging and intimidation. The opposition "Orange" party's candidate, Victor Yushenko, ran on a platform favoring a turn to the West and joining the European Union. He won the run-off election.

Though Peace Corps members were not allowed to make comments one way or the other and were required to be in by dark, Kennedy found the street demonstrations "spectacular and generally non-violent. People wore orange ribbons and tied them on door knobs, lamp posts, and tree branches. There was great pressure to vote. The run-off elections were seen as an opportunity to make a democratic choice after years of Russian domination."

The town where Kennedy was stationed after several months of training and learning to speak "survival Russian" was Poltava, an industrial center in a

rich agricultural region of east-central Ukraine. It was also one of the principal centers of Ukrainian literature and the home of Nikolai Gogol, the renowned novelist and playwright.

As the retired president of a wholesale costume jewelry business in NYC, Kennedy was uniquely qualified to train small entrepreneurs. She was assigned to an organization that went to small villages and towns to inform their mayors and entrepreneurs what their legal rights and responsibilities are. Encouragement was especially provided for small business owners who are women.

The Peace Corps also provided her with grant money for workshops on human trafficking, a very serious problem for the one in five Ukrainians, especially young women, who work outside the country. With another grant Kennedy established an organization to care for orphans.

"Our tax money that supports the Peace Corps and USAID is money well spent and carefully monitored," she said. "There are no fifty-dollar hammers. Expenditures are stringent and documented. I was very, very impressed; our government is doing a spectacular job and is training Ukrainians to carry on when the Peace Corps leaves."

After retiring from her business in 2002, she followed a friend's suggestion that she take a look at the Peace Corps application available on the Internet. She was chosen even though only six percent of Peace Corps applicants over the age of 30, mostly teachers, are accepted. Her experience developing a small business was just right for the Peace Corps' work in assisting and developing small business entrepreneurs.

She lived alone in a pleasant, though small, apartment in Poltava and shopped at nearby open markets. She attended two or three symphony concerts each week and enjoyed the beautiful choral singing, a specialty in Ukraine.

She found the people of Poltava very polite. "The people in Ukraine killed me with kindness," she said. All through her 27 months stay, she indulged her wanderlust, traveling, mostly by train or bus, during the 48 days of vacation allotted. She visited Kiev, Lvov, Yalta, Odessa on the Black Sea, and also went to Egypt, Poland and Turkey.

"It was a great experience," she says.



Carole Kennedy in her office, PolBi Center for Small Business, in Poltava, Ukraine.



Ruth Kolins

Ruth Kolins died Friday, June 16, just thirty days short of her 85th birthday. She was a highly involved Islander, active in RISA, the Roosevelt Island Senior Association. She served on the RISA Board, and was active on the Eastwood Building Committee.

She was an inspector for the Board of Elections, working at the Roosevelt Island polls for many years.

During her working life, she was an accountant. She leaves two sons, Allan Kolins and Bruce Kolins.

A memorial service was held last week. In her honor, the Eastwood Building Committee made arrangements to have three trees planted in Israel in her name, and in memory of her work ethic on behalf of her fellow Eastwood residents.

Condolences can be sent to the family c/o Kolins, 560 Main Street, apartment 484.



Nurses Return to Octagon

Nurses, many now in their 80s and 90s, returned to the restored Octagon recently at the invitation of developer Bruce Becker, and restaged an historic 1942 Christmas photo (inset). They had been students of the Metropolitan School of Nursing, which graduated its last class in 1958.

Albany from page 1

In fact, Pataki's office cited the new authorities law in explaining the Governor's concerns about the bill.

Pataki spokeswoman Lynn Krogh said authority board members are not supposed to have "self-interest" in the matters they oversee. If RIOC Board members live on the Island, "it would clearly be a self-interest problem," she said.

Grannis and State Senator José M. Serrano, the other sponsor of the self-governance bill, called that argument illogical and inconsistent.

"I can understand if it's a business person looking to make money off a particular deal," Serrano said of the self-interest argument. "The only interest they (RIOC Board members) would have is the greater good of the Island and to have proper representation of the Island."

And Grannis pointed out that under current law, the majority of Board members must be Island residents.

"The difference is they (current Board members) are [now] hand-picked by the Governor instead of being chosen by the people who live there" as would be the case under the self-governance plan, Grannis said. "We're just changing how the selection process works for the people who sit on this board."

Grannis contended Pataki didn't adhere to principles espoused by the Commission on Public Authorities Reform headed by lawyer Ira Millstein when the Governor renominated Joseph Strasburg, a lobbyist for landlords and developers, to chair the State of New York Mortgage Agency, whose mission is to provide affordable housing.

"It seems to me that a board made up of parties whose lives are at stake is totally appropriate" for RIOC, Grannis said. "If there are technical problems, we would be prepared to negotiate those with the governor."

Aides to State Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, a Republican from Rensselaer, said boards such as RIOC's are normally appointed, rather than elected, and said they didn't see strong advocacy for the bill as the 2006 session came to a close.

"I don't know what they consider to be advocacy," said Serrano, who, as a member of the political minority in the Senate, has a much tougher time winning approval for bills than do majority Republicans. "It is a good bill and the hope is that that would be enough to warrant bills going forward. When I was on the City Council, we didn't have to do this back room lobbying to get bills to move forward, but we don't see that level of reform going on in the State Senate. Joe Bruno and others in the Senate understand how important this is to my constituents."

Whatever the reason the bill failed, both Grannis and Serrano expressed the hope that Pataki's decision not to seek a fourth term this year will give the bill new life in 2007.

"My hope is next year, when we have a new governor, we won't see the kind of resistance to do what's in the best interests of the residents of Roosevelt Island," Serrano said.

Grannis said the bill now is "in its proper form and it lays the groundwork for the next administration to determine whether or not it's appropriate to turn the Island and its destiny to a RIOC Board made up of residents of the Island."

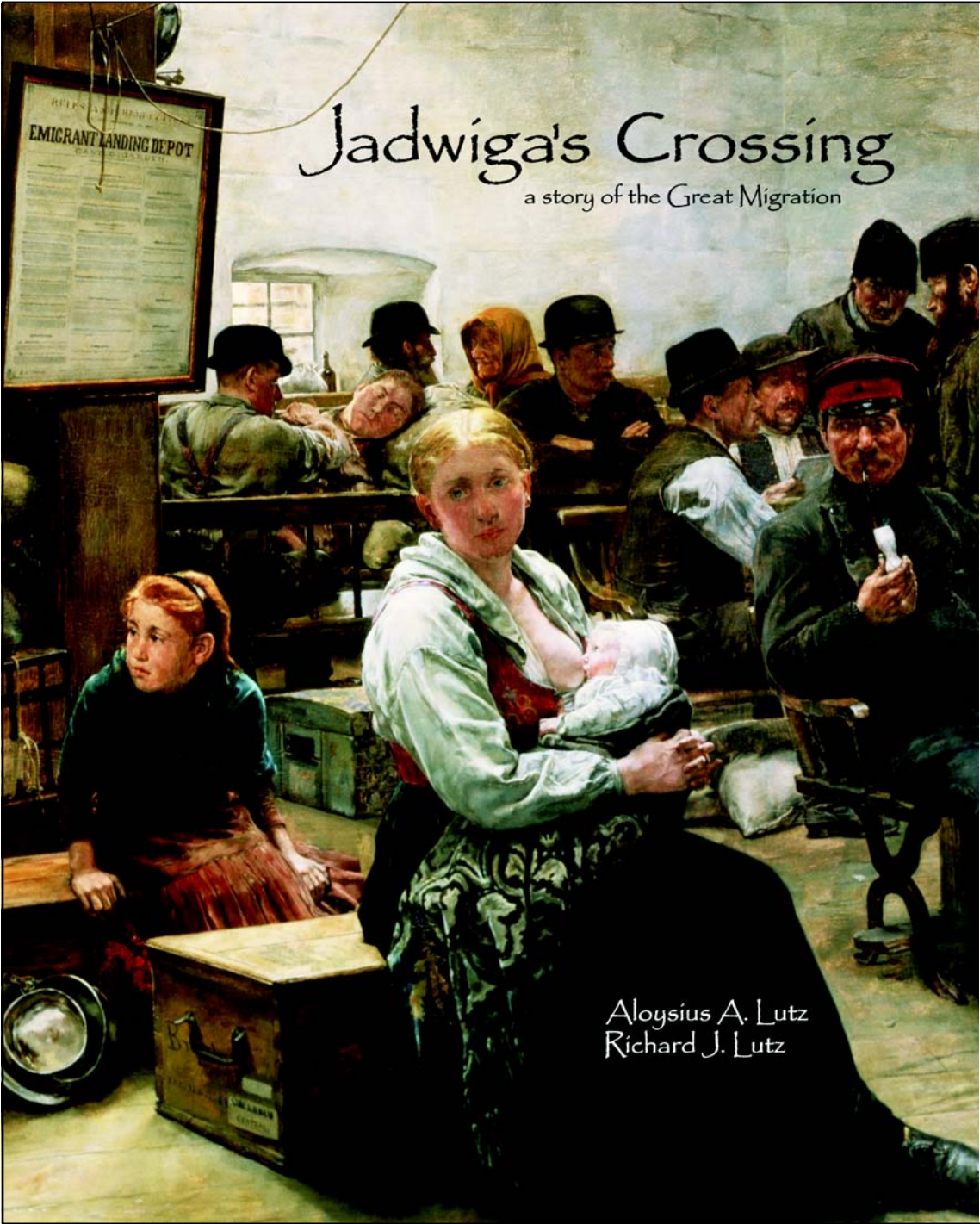
Among other things, Grannis noted, the latest version of the bill does not call on the State to fund capital work needed on the Island, as previous incarnations had. The latest bill authorizes RIOC to borrow money to pay for the work, and Grannis said that change comports with the new public authorities law.

Grannis acknowledged that State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, the front-runner in the race for governor, has not tipped his hand on the self-governance issue at events at which Island residents have asked his opinion.

But Grannis called the matter "a micromanagement item on the agenda of someone running a statewide campaign. It's something to talk about after inauguration day."

As for the Tram repair money, Grannis said the Senate insisted the \$15 million not be included in the budget cleanup bill and that the Assembly went along so as not to hold up the deal. Bruno's office denied this, saying the budget bill was passed as Pataki sent it up.

"It seems to me very petty on their part," Grannis said of the Senate. "I was surprised. I think everyone was surprised."



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“For many Americans today, the story of Paul and Jadwiga Adamik’s crossing offers a fresh look at the courage of, and sacrifices made by, their grandparents and great-grandparents over 140 years ago. *Jadwiga’s Crossing* offers masterful storytelling – a riveting journey into the past.”

Dr. Deborah Anders Silverman
Author, *Polish-American Folklore*

On the web: JadwigasCrossing.com

On the Island, also available at WeAreOne, 599 Main Street

It Happened on the Island...



The USDA removed two trees at the east edge of Capobianco Field because they were infested with the Asian Longhorned beetle; each tree was believed to be at least 50 years old.

The Residents Association netted \$1,400 in a Greek Wine-Tasting (and dancing!) event at Gallery RIVAA.



Photos: Vicki Feinmel

Water Tunnel Security to Require More of Octagon Park

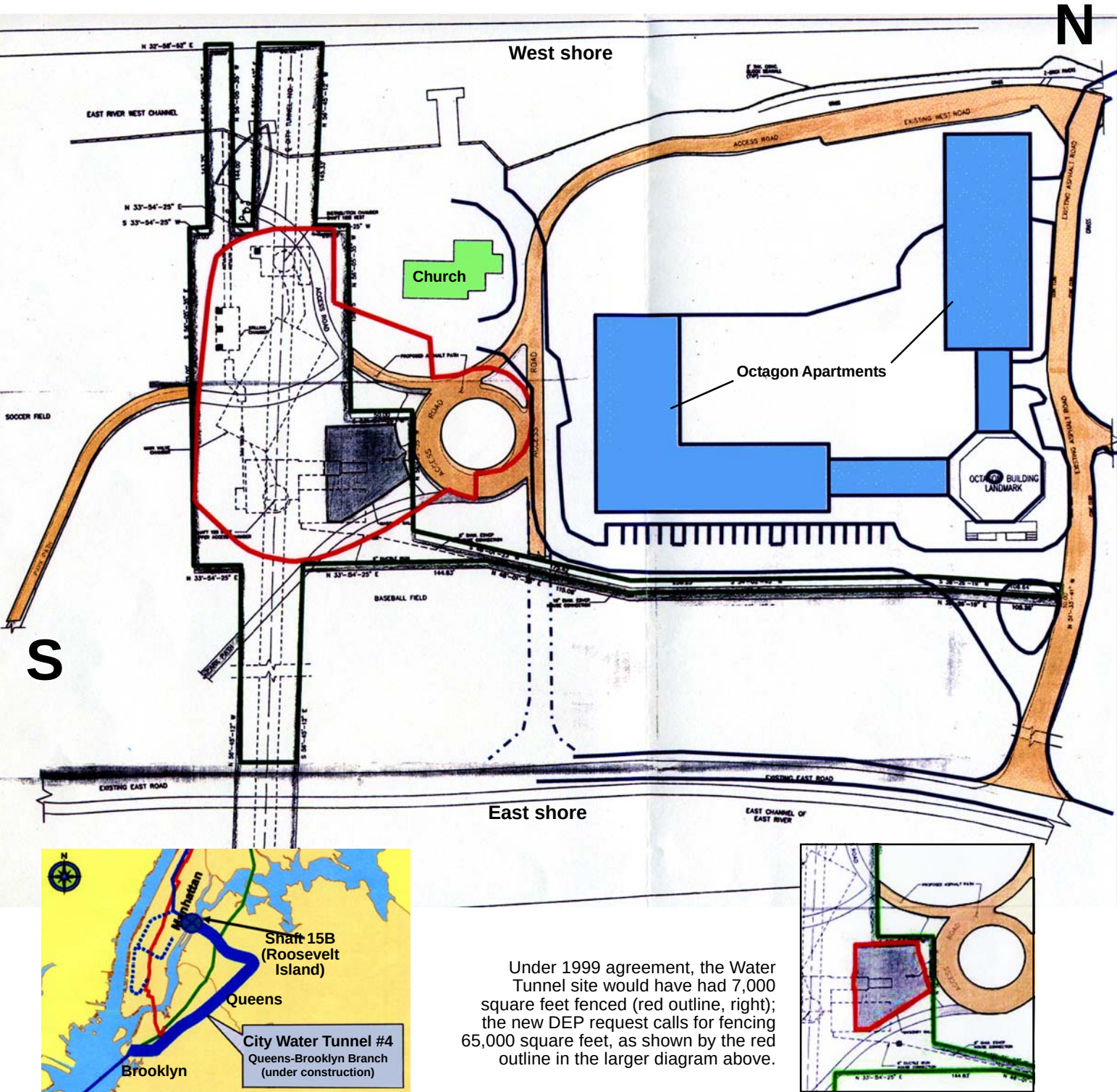
The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wants substantially more of Octagon Park for the site of City Water Tunnel No. 3. The purpose is to increase the security of the site and the water tunnel beneath it.

In the plan presented Thursday to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), DEP projects increasing the portion of the park it would control nine-fold, from 7,000 square feet to 65,000 square feet. Other easements bring the total to 114,000 square feet. The area, shown outlined in red, is to be fenced, with 24-hour security against terrorist access to the shaft, designated 15B, that services the tunnel.

In the RIOC meeting, it was also revealed that the tunnel site will be used for chlorination, with trucks delivering a liquid chlorine supply over Island roads at least twice a week. Resident Board member Michael Shinozaki raised questions about safety concerns in transporting the substance, which is highly toxic in concentration. Other resident Board members, including David Kraut, asked, "What does the Island get in return?" One suggestion, supported by Deborah Beck, was for help with landscaping or other needs at Southpoint Park.

Access for the chlorine trucks and other service equipment would apparently require retention of the service road immediately west of the Octagon Park Apartments, an area where Octagon construction plans anticipated removing the road in favor of increasing available parkland. The plan also calls for additional roads connecting to Main Street, including one between the existing baseball field and tennis courts.

No action was taken on the matter, but RIOC is to meet with DEP personnel to determine in detail exactly what is required for the security plan, and to negotiate a revision of the plan set forth in a 1999 memorandum of understanding.



Winners All! Music and Sports for Kids on the Island



Island Arts Music Center Recital: These piano students all played a piano recital two weeks ago, capping the school's third year. Front Row – Alessandro Cartegni, Melina Sanchez, Kevin Zhang; second row – Gaia Niv, Alexander Satloff, Omar Shah, Jordan Johnston, Luke Kruger-Aimone, Munin Streitz; third row – Naomi Loff, Marvin Matias, Olivier Streitz, Jonathan Geisinger, Tamara Cameo; back row – Robin Russell (teacher & school director) Welly Ekoumilong, Michael Chen. The school (212-929-8343) also offers instruction in guitar, drums, trumpet, violin, cello, saxophone, clarinet, flute, and (starting in September) voice.



Tennis Winners: Participants in the New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL) Spring program display the medals they won last week at the Manhattan Borough Championships, and certificates for League participation. Back row, left to right – Coach Alex Kornhuber; Jonathan Reese, Manhattan Borough Winner, Boys Doubles, 14 and under; Robert Gallagher, Manhattan Borough Winner, Boys, 18 and under; Elia Dewu, co-recipient of Most Improved Player Award; Sean Doyle, Sportsmanship Award; Site Director Joyce Mincheff. Front row – Colleen Doyle, Manhattan Borough Winner, Doubles, 12 and under; Shiobhan Doyle, co-recipient of Most Improved Player Award; Erin Doyle, Manhattan Borough Winner, Girls, #2 Singles, 12 and under. Missing: Jordan Campbell, Manhattan Borough Winner, Boys Doubles, 14 and under. The NYJTL Free Summer program for children will continue through August at the Octagon Park courts, beginning Wednesday, July 5, 1-4 p.m. for children aged 8 to 18. There's a Pee-Wee hour every Wednesday, 3-4 p.m., for kids 5 to 7. The NYJTL program is supported by City Council Member Jessica Lappin and the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. To join us, just register at the site. Equipment is supplied.

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Spottswood from page 1

Unfortunately, slowly but surely, the disease progressed. Toni was falling, and then not even the crutches were enough. For the last seven years, she has been forced to use a wheelchair. “Everybody was telling me to accept it, but I can’t. I am not miserable, but I am always looking for possibilities. I tried diets, physiotherapy – everything but the so-called ABC drugs (Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone), because they cost more than \$10,000 a year and all they do is delay the progression.”

Finally, it was a documentary about Christopher Reeve that gave her the hope she needed. In many countries, stem-cell therapy is already a reality, and Toni found a doctor in India who already has four MS patients and can do the therapy for a fraction of the cost charged by clinics in Europe. So, in December, she will leave for New Delhi with her mother, a friend, and a health aide. The treatment will last three months, and she will have a stem-cell injection every day. “A doctor in Mexico now does it with a single injection of 1,500,000 stem cells, but my doctor cannot do that,” she explains.

For herself, Toni needs very little. Her

kids, her former husband, and the many friends she has on Roosevelt Island are all very supportive; her mother is helping with expenses. But all this is not enough. And that is the reason why she will also be taking along Randeep Kumar, a young movie director whose documentary, *The Light of Khiwa*, was selected at the South Asian international Film Festival. With his camera, Randeep will shoot the treatment and her progress step by step.

“The movie will cost a lot – about \$162,000, but Randeep has agreed to be paid when we collect the money,” Toni explains. Right now, this is her job. On July 13, there will be a fundraiser at Gallery RIVAA featuring Krithika Rajagopalan, a classical Indian dancer, and the Urdu poet Roshan Pukhraj. “I sent out hundreds of invitations and I am already receiving the first contributions. I have wonderful friends on the Island who are helping me to put the invitations in the envelopes,” she says.

In the future, there will be another step. “I want to create a website and collect money to help other people with MS. I want them to know that they have an option.”

Letters from page 2

ated by the first building. “You’ll get used to it.” Indeed, when I point this out to some Island residents they ask me “what 17-story wall?” which goes to show that Ryan was right: many people not only get used to whatever is built around them but some don’t even care or lack the imagination to even think there can be an alternative. But, our Committee of residents believe that neither RIOC nor the developers should be allowed to forget that they had one of the most unique opportunities in this City to create a beautiful integrated small town along the 19-acre waterfront site from the Tram to Northtown, with a six-acre park, and instead, due to their greed and ultimately RIOC’s view that just about “anything” is better than leaving the Southtown site as is, the developers got away with dividing the site into two parts and physically separating the two communities.

Incidentally, while patting themselves on the back for their “stunning success,” it should be noted that the developers call their creation “Riverwalk;” indeed, in their sales brochures and the model in their onsite sales office you would never know there was any other community on this Island. They will make their “bucks” (and RIOC will get its share), but in our view, neither served this Island well. If anyone thinks Southtown is a “stunning success story,” they simply mean it has and will make money for the developers, not that it has been designed well to serve the entire community or future generations.

Robert Chira

The writer, a long time resident and Manhattan attorney, was counsel to the Alternative Southtown Design Committee, which fully supported the development of Southtown but in a different way.

To the Editor:

I need to bring to your attention another issue concerning me and fellow Island House residents.

Almost every other night, at midnight or past midnight, the courtyard inside Island House gets full of very noisy people (usually teens and young adults) who scream, shout, play loud music, and are disturbing residents trying to sleep.

I am already a regular at the Public Safety office, because I always call them and ask them to remove those disturbing individuals.

I know that this bothers a lot more people than me, because once the Public Safety officer told me that somebody else called ahead of me and they already sent somebody out there. The problem is that the slow-moving officer who gets dispatched to the scene does nothing other than ask those people to leave. Usually they do, but next night they are back.

While Public Safety has no problem issuing parking violation tickets, they seem to have a problem in issuing some sort of tickets/penalties to those noisy people, so they can (hopefully) learn something and stop behaving like animals in the middle of the night.

Mircea Nicolescu

Editor’s note: The writer reported that RIOC President Herb Berman assured him that Public Safety Director James Fry would make the Island House courtyard a “post” for his officers.

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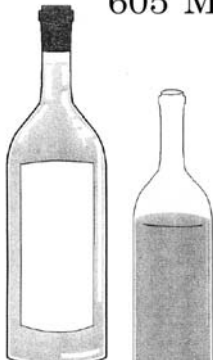
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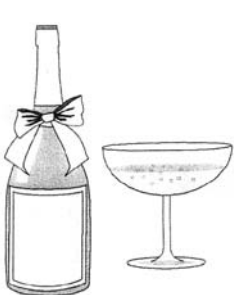
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RIRA from page 3

letter of the law, it doesn’t increase the stock of affordable housing available to Roosevelt Islanders and other New Yorkers. Wasn’t that the spirit of the GDP when it was written? And when will the remainder of the required affordable units appear and in what guise? I fear another low-income ghettoization such as the Manhattan Park/2-4 River Road solution that isolated low-income and senior tenants from the rest of the 10-40 River Road population.

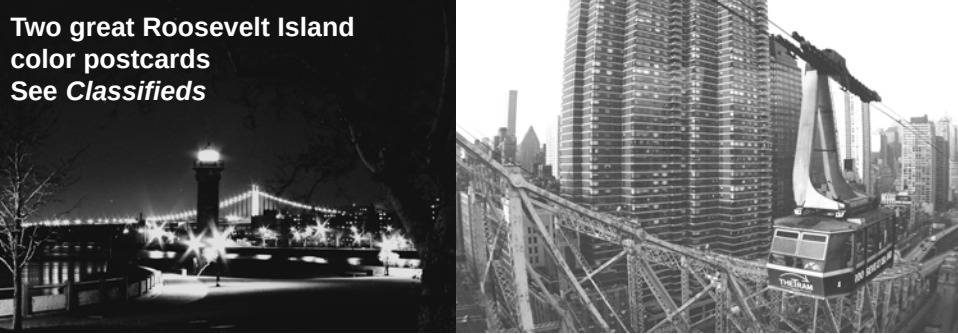
Octagon Apartments also were to include 20 percent lower-cost housing. The reality is 100 units slightly below fair-market prices and with income requirements that have eliminated many middle-class families from considering those apartments. Our elected officials (especially Mayor Bloomberg, who amended the GDP to allow 500 units of housing to be built on parkland) have truly failed us by not requiring Roosevelt Island to maintain its economic diversity and to live up to the provisions of the GDP.

Further, as the population of the Island approaches and then, exceeds the limits for this Island community to encompass, how will we commute to Manhattan? It was the responsibility of the developers of Southtown and the Octagon Apartments to consider this factor in the Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) required to commence residential construction. David Kramer of the Hudson Companies, Inc., was quoted in the last *WIRE*, stating, “We really haven’t been involved with the Transit Au-

thority on the issue of the frequency of the F train. As developers, we can only control or try to impact so much of the world.” In fact, the developers of both projects each issued an EIS stating that the infusion of new residents would not adversely impact our transportation needs. Anyone ridden the F train during the morning commute lately? Should RIOC be so foolish as to seriously consider a new residential complex at Southpoint Park, the question will remain: Will they have to swim to Manhattan in order to get to work on time?

And finally, the latest iteration of the self-governance bill that would allow us to elect the RIOC Board that runs our lives and that would then hire a seasoned community manager to be the hands-on administrator: We hear it was killed by State Senate Majority Leader, Joe Bruno, who accommodated our patronage-prone Governor by preventing it from reaching the Senate floor for a vote. I thought this version really had legs and I’m sick of upstate Republicans sticking it to New York City in general and Roosevelt Island in particular. Electing a Democratic Senate and Governor should be our highest priority.

Now that I’ve gotten all that off my chest I feel much better. This is a wonderful place to live and the more we Island veterans get to determine our future the better it will be. Support the Residents Association whenever you can; you’re simply supporting your own interests. Have a swell summer!



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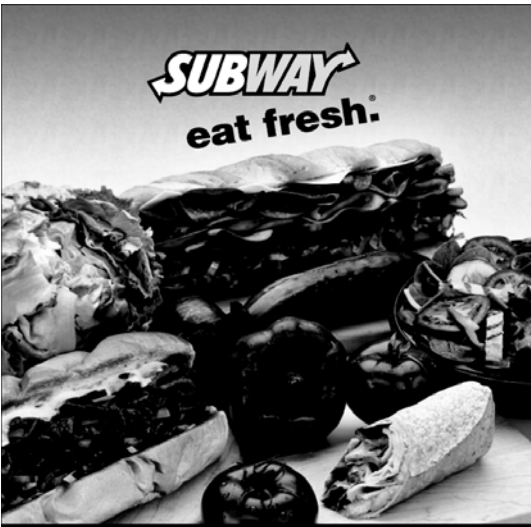
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