

Next issue
in two weeks:
Sat., Apr. 21

The Main Street WIRE™

27th Year as Roosevelt Island’s Independent Community Newspaper



Paul Katz

Spring is coming. The proof is in these flowers in Southtown.

Looking for “Clout,” Some Island Democrats Gather and Form a Club

by Jami Bernard

The fledgling Roosevelt Island Democratic Club held an “exploratory” meeting last week in the Good Shepherd Community Center, and what it lacked in numbers it made up for in spirit. The 16 attendees agreed in principle that the time was right for a club that, ideally, would develop enough political clout to help choose and elect Democratic candidates, then hold them accountable to serve the Island’s best interests.

“There’s only one pot, so every leader fights for what they want from that pot,” said Archie Seale, a long-time Islander and owner of

the Grog Shop. Seale instigated the meeting along with another old-timer, Deirdre Breslin, sister of the columnist Jimmy Breslin and a board member of the New Visions Democratic Club in Queens. “Believe me, when Jackson

Heights needs books for their library, they get them,” said Breslin, pressing the point that the purpose of political clubs is to get the ears – and maybe the coattails – of the powers that be.

See **Democrats**, page 12

Southtown Gets New Affordable Apartments

Twenty-five apartments in Southtown building #4 will rent at affordable rates, according to an advertisement running in this issue of *The WIRE* (page 4). Another 40 will rent at market rates, with all other units in the new building going to Sloan-Kettering and New York University for faculty housing, according to David Kramer of Hudson Corporation, which is partnered with The Related Companies in the development of Southtown’s nine buildings.

The 25 affordable units include 3 studios at \$887 per month, 14 one-bedroom apartments at \$949, and 8 with two bedrooms at \$1,142, with qualifying annual incomes ranging from a minimum of \$37,223 for studios to a maximum \$56,720 for a four-person household in a two-bedroom unit. The ad contains additional information about income ranges.

The *WIRE* ad provides an address for securing application materials. Applications must be postmarked by Sunday, May 20. The ad indicates that current residents of the area covered by Manhattan Community Board 8, including Roosevelt Island, will receive preference for half the available affordable units, and there are other preferences for municipal employees and households that include individuals with mobility, hearing, or visual impairments.

The market-rate units become available in May, Kramer said.

a good story Thursday morning by WNYC’s Beth Fertig, available on the station’s website at wny.org. *The WIRE* has reported extensively on the innovative plan to harness East River tides, and reports are available on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com. Verdant is in the process of installing its initial six-pack of turbines in the east channel next to Motorgate. (Photo, page 13.)

• The press is also giving some attention to residents’ campaign for direct **walking access to the Queensboro Bridge** via a stairway

and elevator, the subject of a recent exchange of letters between City Councilmember Jessica Lappin and the City Department of Transportation (see the March 24 issue of *The WIRE*, also available on *Website NYC10044*).

• Mark Marcucilli, a former Assistant Director of Housing Management for **DHCR**, got a year in federal prison for schemes involving attempts to secure Mitchell-Lama housing for himself and friends, and to steal funds intended for 9/11 victims.

With Eastwood Sale and Steven Shane on Agenda, RIOC to Meet Thursday

News Analysis by Dick Lutz

Roosevelt Islanders will get a new cast of management characters when the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation meets Thursday at 4:00 in Good Shepherd Community Center.

Chairing the meeting will be Deborah vanAmerongen, Governor Eliot Spitzer’s Commissioner of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). She has a strong housing background and can be expected to ably represent DHCR’s interests on Roosevelt Island. On the other hand, Islanders are likely to be monitoring her chairing of RIOC Board meetings, and the activities of RIOC itself, before making a judgment on her abilities to manage the affairs of a Board of Directors that is supposed to supervise the management of a community.

Waiting for formal confirmation

as President of RIOC will be Stephen Shane, who was the subject of an extended interview in the March 24 issue of *The WIRE*. (It’s on line at nyc10044.com.) Shane does have a Roosevelt Island background though his, too, was from the perspective of DHCR rather than from the broader perspective of community management.

If matters go according to precedent, the RIOC Board will appoint Shane to the post with a round of welcomes. (There’s an

See **RIOC**, page 11

Days since the
RIOC Board
has met:

128

RIOC Board will
meet Thursday
at 4:00 –

Day 133

Grannis Confirmed After Rough Senate Process

by Erik Kriss – *WIRE* Albany Correspondent

Roosevelt Island’s State assemblymember for more than three decades took over as the State’s top environmental official Thursday, but the road to Alexander “Pete” Grannis’s new job was a bumpy one.

A “Watergate Baby” first elected to represent the Island and Manhattan’s East Side in 1974, Grannis became an instant lightning rod when Gov. Eliot Spitzer nominated him in late January to become commissioner of the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Gun-rights groups came out in opposition to Grannis, an unabashed liberal Democrat who staunchly favored gun control during his time as a legislator.

Sportsmen’s groups, while remaining neutral on the nomination, voiced concerns about the Chicago native’s sensitivity to their concerns.

Business groups also stayed on the sidelines, but expressed some worry about a potential “gotcha” environmental enforcement policy that could unfairly hurt legitimate New York companies.

But environmentalists practically jumped for joy, citing Grannis’ long record in the Assembly of championing their causes.

In a blue state like New York, a consumer-rights Democrat like Grannis might expect few roadblocks. But the only remaining bastion of Republican power in New York, the State Senate, was the one place Grannis needed approval.

See **Grannis**, page 13



Eight Months Scaffolding has gone up around Island House, from Trellis to the Deli, to facilitate facade work. Workers say, “Eight months.” In response, Trellis proprietor Kaie Razaghi predicts, “Two years.” This could be the makings of a pool to predict the date it starts coming down.

The Editorial Page

The Rule of Law

RUBBER STAMP

No Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation has yet fulfilled its legal role – coded into New York State law – with regard to the hiring and firing of the President of the Corporation.

For a dozen years under Governor George Pataki, the Board routinely turned its back on its right, power, and responsibility to seek out and hire a qualified chief executive for the public-benefit corporation over which it supposedly exercises ultimate authority.

Pataki first sent an absolute zero named Jerome Blue to play the role of RIOC President. For three years, Blue ran roughshod over the Board and over anything resembling a responsibility to serve the public interest – the interest of the Roosevelt Island public or the interest of New York State’s citizens. The Board of Directors of RIOC did nothing about it. *Nothing.*

When Blue’s presence finally threatened to become a putrid embarrassment – when he refused repeatedly to be fired because Senator Al D’Amato would each time veto that idea on behalf of his old political servant, but when he could no longer be allowed to conduct operations here in a way that would surely, ultimately, rise to a level of public and press notice past the shores of the Island – Pataki pulled him out and gave him another high-paying State job in which he lasted about a minute and a half.

Yet for three years, the RIOC Board had tolerated – and even cooperated in – the Pataki administration’s perversion of RIOC.

Then Pataki sent Robert H. Ryan. While Blue was an absolute zero on a scale of 1 to 10, Ryan ranged from a one to a minus one, at times looking good but ultimately going through an embarrassing public meltdown, screaming, uncontrolled, before a large audience of Roosevelt Islanders. The administration found a reason to fire him. Then, of course, Pataki made him Assistant Secretary of State.

Then Pataki sent Herbert E. Berman. Had the Board learned a lesson? No, out came the old **RUBBER STAMP** again.

Next week, the RIOC Board will meet on Thursday at 4:00 and it will surely **RUBBER STAMP** the better choice of a new and better Governor, Eliot Spitzer. Taking nothing away from Spitzer or Steven Shane, we can anticipate that the RIOC Board will fail totally to observe this State’s and this nation’s tradition of the rule of law and will **RUBBER STAMP**, quite literally, the Governor’s choice for the high-paying (\$140,000 a year, anyone?) position of RIOC President.

During the Pataki reign, a hard-working cadre of Roosevelt Islanders called the Maple Tree Group worked hard to get an *elected RIOC Board* for this community, on the theory and hope that an *elected RIOC Board* would actually be responsible – would actually follow the law – would actually find a qualified community manager and hire her or him. Voters backed that effort with overwhelming votes, even though a Residents Association President who was serving on the RIOC Board tried hard to keep the very question off the ballot. Finally, in the environment created by the failures he’d already appointed to the RIOC Presidency, Pataki agreed only to increase the RIOC Board complement of residents to a majority, still appointed by him.

There seemed to be reason for a restrained celebration: Actual *residents* would finally have the controlling votes on the Board. That situation obtains today.

In the 128 days we’ve waiting for a changing of the guard at RIOC, the RIOC Board has been rendered ineffectual by the castration of its real-estate committee, which tried to move forward on resident-ownership plans for Island House and Westview, and for a Mitchell-Lama exit for Rivercross, but was told to wait for new personnel to settle in at DHCR. In short, that committee was summarily stripped of its power, along with the power for the Board to pass on its recommendations.

Residents now have the controlling votes on the RIOC Board. They took no timely action against Blue. They took no *timely* action to jettison Ryan.

And, next week, the RIOC Board will surely act true to past form and **RUBBER STAMP** the Governor’s choice.

OK, let it happen. But then?

Then, we have to hope that *this* RIOC Board will *finally* start to act responsibly – start to follow the rule of law and actually govern the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.

There is a lot to be done to arrest the alarming slide of Roosevelt Island from the starring role it once held as a stunning example of what government could do with the right people in charge. Let’s hope Steve Shane acts decisively to correct that situation. Let’s hope the RIOC Board will finally exercise its lawful role.

And let’s hope that, if Shane doesn’t and the Board doesn’t, the residents of this Island will finally rise up in an indignant and angry protest to demand something better than the perversion of democracy we’ve had for the last dozen years.

DL

To the Editor:

I write as a member of the disabled community of Roosevelt Island, who can only use the Tram if the lift is working on the Manhattan side. It is an outrage and shame to our disabled community not to be able to have access to our beloved Tram.

I cannot understand why the lift on the Manhattan side is not completed. I was first told, “by the end of December.” It is now three months past the December date and the lift is still not completed, nor has it been inspected, which I was told in February should be in about two weeks. I have spoken to RIOC and they can only say “soon” or, if I look on their website, I see it is “another month.” I trust with the changes made in the leadership of RIOC that a two-week job will no longer take four months plus.

Jim Bates

Letters deadline for Apr. 21 issue: Tue., Apr. 17

After deadline, letters considered on a space-available basis.

To The Editor:

The writer of the banner headline in the March 24 *WIRE* may have miswritten with “Spitzer Names Stephen Shane RIOC President.” I am sure that what was intended was some variation of ‘Spitzer Nominates Stephen Shane for the Position of RIOC President.’

Chapter 899 of the Laws of 1984, item 7 in Paragraph 4 of Section 3 says the Corporation shall appoint officers of the Corporation.

I would imagine that the Board of Directors of the Corporation will respond favorably to the nomination by the Governor. As far as I know, there has been no meeting of the Board to take action on the appointment of the President.

David J. Bauer

Editor’s note: The writer is correct. By law, only the RIOC Board can hire/fire the RIOC President. *The WIRE* editorialized February 24 suggesting the Board get on with the process. But, for good or ill, the RIOC Board has always accepted the Governor’s choice.

To the Editor:

Your newspaper of March 10 with the letter from Ronald Gift Mullins did the community a real service by describing the experience of being towed by Tony’s Towing. As a former Roosevelt Island resident, I, too, experienced the unpleasant and expensive situation when my car was towed to Salamis Service. My suggestion: Have your car towed to your own mechanic.

Barbara B. Deyerle

To the Editor:

Due to an error in transmission, my commentary on the City-wide developments that may affect Roosevelt Island’s housing plans (*The WIRE*, March 24) should have concluded as follows:

“This real estate environment and media climate complicates negotiations by residents and owners of the Island’s *WIRE* buildings. To leave the Mitchell-Lama system without a long-term ground lease and tax concessions makes no See **Letters**, page 14

RIOC Must Get Serious About Its Job

Commentary by Ellen Polivy

Reading the last *WIRE*, I was struck by the similarity of two very distinct items. One was the interview with Stephen Shane. The other was the letter from Neil Weissman in which he shared the Department of Transportation’s response to Jessica Lappin in which it refused to consider a stairway to the Queensboro bridge because of “heightened security measures.” I was struck by the dependence we have on the powers that be and by how much impact one person or group can have on our daily lives. I would hope that those people make decisions thoughtfully, with our needs in mind.

The residents of this Island are captives to the decision makers. In no small way, our well-being, our livelihood, and our very lives depend on our ability to make healthy choices in the food we eat, and on having a sure way on and off the Island. September 11 security issues have forced our only walking bridge into more frequent use as a lift bridge when boats are diverted to the east channel. That bridge, stuck in an up position, or blocked by some emergency at the power plants (as I eerily experienced one day for four hours), makes another walkway off our Island a necessity. This is not a frivolous request for us and must be treated by the DOT as worthy of a more thorough evaluation. Our security depends on it. We cannot accept a dismissive “bear-with-while-we-take-care-of-your-safety” response.

Mr. Shane seemed affable, smart, and eager to get to work. I would like to give him a chance. But did I pick up a patronizing attitude? (Tree-huggers? Soccer-field lovers?) We had a GDP that allowed for parks! Wouldn’t it have been a nicer community if we had a central park between Northown and Southtown, usable by all? By not living here, Mr. Shane doesn’t have to experience daily off-hours discussion of our problems. But that’s not all. He also doesn’t have to experience now-empty stores, live with the anxiety that his home will become unaffordable, be dependent on RIOC to act sensibly and in a timely fashion so he can get out of Mitchell-Lama without losing his home, wonder if he will be able to fit into the next subway car, or fear being late to work if he misses the Red Bus.

We live with the sad daily disconnect between what our community is and what it could have been if our needs had been considered when decisions were made for us. Wouldn’t it have been a nicer place if RIOC actually worked hand in hand with RIRA, the elected residents, to elicit and consider their input? Perhaps everyone’s lives would have been easier.

We are a planned community and, more importantly, a captive community. The community was planned carefully to accommodate the handicapped and infirm, who are captive to the stores and services available here. It is difficult for them to go off the Island, and they are therefore dependent on what we have to offer them. We need every storefront filled with use-

ful establishments. A critical mass of stores will lure back the people who now shop off-Island and will inspire Octagon and Southtown residents to walk out of their way for their purchases. Then we can have real community resources with good utilization.

There can be no rationale for evicting storeowners for defaulting on rent, then letting storefronts sit idle for years, bringing in no money. Maximizing revenue has always been RIOC’s stated goal. I suggest that incentives like those given to the developers of Southtown might have saved the stores that we lost,



Ellen Polivy is a member of the RIRA Common Council

and could have given them the ability to make needed upgrades. Improved stores with increased business add to the value of the leasehold and provide a way to maximize revenue to RIOC. A creative-thinking RIOC might have used the success of RIVAA as a model to offer an RFP to the community to develop profitable, rent paying, locally run enterprises such as, perhaps, a cafe staffed by our international neighbors, a cooperative bakery or a youth-oriented coffee shop run by and servicing the Island’s young people. The seemingly careless multi-year warehousing of stores on the Island is leading to the inevitable consolidator and, sadly, an end to the potential of small mom-and-pop boutique-type stores, or cooperatively run community stores that might have created a destination community. I certainly hope that RIOC will work with the community to ensure that the consolidator provides the types of stores we need.

Imagine if people from Manhattan could stroll a few blocks across the Queensboro Bridge, walk down a wheelchair-accessible ramp to Roosevelt Island, and visit the quaint retail establishments that RIOC has nurtured. Perhaps they would make a visit to Southpoint Park part of their day. Then RIOC would have done its job of both maximizing revenue and creating a vibrant community.

We need reliable transportation on and off the Island and within the community. I hope that RIOC solves the transportation problems before allowing the last buildings to be built in Southtown. If, as Mr. Shane says, he has no control over the MTA, then we should not be adding more people by building more residences in Southtown. Alternatively, he could practice good advocacy and figure out a way to get the MTA motivated to address our problems. Maybe we, as a community, can help him. Together we can pressure the MTA to fix our rush-hour cram and look into a walking bridge access ramp.

Perhaps it is not too late for Roosevelt Island. Maybe Mr. Shane really will give us an opportunity to work with him to plan this community in a way that wins for all of us.

I also hope that he will make it his business to find out what it feels like to live with the actions he takes. We residents are dependent on his good will and administrative prowess.

This is a time of great change on Roosevelt Island but, if you are waiting for RIOC to comment upon it, you will be sorely disappointed. Once again, *The RIOC Column* is missing from these pages, and has been since it last appeared in the March 10 issue. Granted, Herb Berman has entered his last week as RIOC President and CEO, but then, like *The RIRA Column*, RIOC's offering is presented as *The RIOC Column*, not the RIOC President's column. Further, RIOC has a publicity consultant, Bob Liff, as well as a community liaison staffer, Erica Wilder, who are charged with keeping the residents informed. But this is not to be and so, I will fill the breach as a public service.

At long last, and after four and a half months, the RIOC Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, April 12, at 4:00 p.m., in Good Shepherd Community Center. It seems that the long interregnum is over. DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen is expected to convene her first Board meeting as Chair and, perhaps, we will learn whether she intends to continue in this role or delegate it to a subordinate, as is her prerogative. The paramount piece of business will be to appoint Steve Shane as President and CEO of the Corporation. As I mentioned in my last column, it is the Board's responsibility to fill vacancies in this office. However, the reality is that the Governor makes the appointment and the Board rubber-stamps it. Such is New York politics. Nevertheless, we wish both public servants well as they assume their new posts.

You can download the Board's agenda (www.rioc.com) or read the posting at 591 Main Street, but I'm happy to fill you in. First, I must remind you that, at the conclusion of the Board meeting, there will be a Town Meeting forum at which time you will have an opportunity to address the Board, the new Chair, and the new President. That alone is worth the price of admission! Seriously, these folks make decisions that affect your life here on Roosevelt Island and so, if you *can* attend, *do*.

In addition to the Board's approving the new president, the RIOC CFO and financial staff will present the new RIOC budget, FY 2007-2008, to the Board and to the community. It's mostly our money that they're spending, so it pays to pay attention. Now that the Eastwood complex has left the Mitchell-Lama system, Jerome Belsen is selling his interests to something called the Putnam Holding Company, and requires Board authorization in conjunction with the ground-lease extension, one assumes. One also assumes that the new owners will be required to abide by the agreements hammered out between the Eastwood Building Committee and the current owners. Doppelmayr, the company that runs the Tram, will have their contract extended, and we hope that the lack of oversight that led to last year's Tram failure will not be allowed to recur. And the Roosevelt Island Youth Center will learn whether its request for Public Purpose Funding has been approved. Also, mark your calendars: the Board will set dates for the rest of this year's meetings. Most of the juicy stuff the Board addresses often takes place in Executive Session, which means that it's secret, and the April meeting is no exception. The Board will discuss "proposals to lease real property." The agenda doesn't indicate which real property is under discussion and apparently, this information is too sensitive to reveal. The agenda states that Board action is required, but the State's sunshine laws mandate that all votes be taken in open (public) session. What you are likely to hear is a vote where the subject matter is undefined and therefore, its ramifications for the community will be unknown until such time as the Board determines that the public has a need to know. It's

amazing how much Island business, critical to our lives here, has been passed in this fashion and without public review. While the committee reports one usually finds on the agenda have not been included (was this an editing omission or have the RIOC Board committees truly not met over the last 4½ months?), the President's Report has, and I wonder whether President Berman or President Shane will make it. Why don'tcha come to the meeting and find out?

What will not be addressed, at least publicly, is the question of ground-lease extensions for Island House and Westview. These negotiations drag on month after month without resolution, and the residents of the 761 apartments involved can only hope and pray that the building owners will maintain a collegial relationship with the buildings' leaders. I, for one, hope that the new RIOC chiefs will bring their considerable housing expertise to the fore and end this logjam.

Did you attend the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) "scoping" meetings that were held on-Island last month? This involved the RITE (Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy) project that Verdant Power has initiated. You will recall that they are anchoring huge turbines at the bottom of the East River, which will use the water power of that estuary to generate non-polluting, sustainable power. This is state-of-the-art technology, using turbines that were developed at New York University during the 1980s, that will be applied commercially for the first time here.

We learned that the "footprint" of the project, scheduled to extend from the southern tip of Roosevelt Island, along the East Channel almost to Wards Island, has been revised. The current plan is to site 150 to 200 turbines north of the Roosevelt Island Bridge and extending to the northern tip of the Island, and also in the West Channel for about 0.8 mile adjacent to the United Nations. This plan has the potential to produce 4-6 megawatts, with an average annual generation



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

tion of 25,000 MWh (megawatt-hours) of electricity. The issues that must be addressed prior to final licensing include: fish migration, the impact on diving bird populations, threatened and endangered species, recreation and navigation questions, historical and cultural resources and others. All are being considered through this scoping process.

So what's in it for us? I don't know; it's not clear yet whether or how much electricity will be provided to Roosevelt Island, and at what cost. The potential for savings on your costs, whether you pay for power separately or as part of your rent/common charges, remains to be seen. Verdant Power tells us that the first six-pack of turbines will be installed by April 20. I've been excited by this project for years, both for the pleasure of seeing innovative engineering at work and in anticipating the savings to Roosevelt Islanders' bloated utility bills. Stay tuned.

At the February 7 meeting of the RIRA Common Council, the following resolution was passed unanimously: "RIRA supports an inquiry into the development of access from Roosevelt Island to the Queensboro Bridge." I forwarded this resolution to a variety of official agencies, including our elected representatives, DOT (Department of Transportation, responsible for the bridge), and Community Board 8 Manhattan. This is not a new idea; once upon a time, before the Roosevelt Island (36th Avenue) Bridge was built, all deliveries and street traffic to the Island descended from the 59th Street Bridge by way of an external elevator. That facility has long since been dismantled but, as our population grows, additional

See **Katz**, page 14

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Weight Watchers, Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. (weigh-in at 9:30), Good Shepherd Community Center.

Vernissage 6, members' show, continues at Gallery RIVAA, Sat.-Sun. 11-5; Wed. and Fri. 6-9. ▷

Children's Learn-to-Swim Program, Saturday, noon; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00 p.m. Information: **212-753-3611**.



— The Coming Week —

Advanced Children's Swimming Classes, Mon.-Wed.-Fri., 5:30; Sat., 9:30, Sportspark pool. Information: **212-753-3611**.

Toastmasters public speaking group, **Mon., Apr. 9**, 8:00 p.m. Call **212-751-9577** for location and other information.

Adult Swimming Classes, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 p.m., Westview Pool. Information: **212-753-3611**.

Community Board 8 Transportation Committee meeting, **Tue., Apr. 10**, 7:00 p.m., New York Blood Center, 310 E. 67th St., Conference Room 1. Direct access from Roosevelt Island to the Queensboro Bridge will be discussed.

Roosevelt Island Democratic Club meeting, **Tue., Apr. 10**, 7:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level).

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Apr. 11**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level). Meetings, open to all, begin with public access period for residents to present matters to the Council.

RIOC Board Meeting, **Thur., Apr. 12**, 4:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center.

— Future Events —

Community Board 8 Board Meeting, **Wed., Apr. 18**, 6:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center.

Book Discussion Group: Blessings by Anna Quindlen, **Thur., Apr. 19**, 6:30 p.m. Group meets monthly, third Thursday, at the NYPL Roosevelt Island branch.

The Main Street WIRE — Next issue, **Sat., Apr. 21**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.)

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.

Advertising Deadlines: Ads in the paper, **Thur., Apr. 12**; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, **Mon., Apr. 16**; they are due **Thur., Apr. 19**. **Additional issues in 2007:** May 5, 19; June 2, 16, 30; July 28; Aug. 25;

Sept. 8, 22; Oct. 6, 20; Nov. 3, 17; Dec. 1, 15; then resuming fortnightly schedule in January, 2008. **News phone, 212-826-9055**; urgent matters, **917-617-0449**. **Phone** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**.

Café Society, presented by the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, **Sat., Apr. 21**, 8:00-midnight. Adults only. \$12; \$20 per couple. Attending or performing? RSVP to cmkashton@yahoo.com.

451st Birthday Celebration for William Shakespeare, **Sun., Apr. 22**, 2:00-3:30 p.m., in Good Shepherd Plaza (in case of rain, at Main Street Theatre). Free. Elizabethan games; royal cake cutting at 3:00 sharp. ▷

Toastmasters public speaking group, **Mon., Apr. 23**, 8:00 p.m. Call **212-751-9577** for location and other information.

Roosevelt Island Health and Fitness Day, **Sat., Apr. 28**, 11:00-4:00. More information at www.RIOC.com; to volunteer or to provide sports instruction, e-mail AskErica@rioc.com.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., May. 9**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level). Meetings, open to all, begin with public access period for residents to present matters to the Council.

Toastmasters public speaking group, **Mon., May 14**, 8:00 p.m. Call **212-751-9577** for location and other information.



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Managing Editor — Dick Lutz
Reporters — Jami Bernard, Mary Camper-Titsingh
Albany Correspondent — Erik Kriss
Photographers — Maria Casotti, Paul Katz, Ghila Krajzman
Chief Proofreader — Linda Heimer
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RIOC has not supplied a RIOC Column for this issue of *The WIRE*

Senior Center

Monday
10:30-11:30, **English as Second Language**
10:30, **Blood Pressure**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
1:00, **Computers**
5:45, **Yoga**
Tuesday
9:00-1:00, **Taxes for Seniors**, first-come, first-served (to Apr. 10).
9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
2:00, **Paint & Sculpt**
7:30, **Games (RISA)**

Wednesday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**
Thursday
9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
11:00, **Tai Chi**
12:30, **Movie**
2:00, **Lotto**

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

Special Events
General Meeting, **Tue., Apr. 10**, 7:00 p.m.
Last day of tax assistance, **Tue., Apr. 10**
Atlantic City trip, **Wed., Apr. 18**

Home-delivered meals:
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		4		\$47,858 – \$56,720	

* Includes gas for heat and cooking
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Qualified applicants will be required to meet income guidelines and additional selection criteria. Applications may be requested by **regular mail only from the following address: Riverwalk Application Requests, 328 Eighth Avenue, Box 235, New York, NY 10001. Completed applications must be returned by regular letter sized mail only (no priority, certified, registered, express, or overnight mail will be accepted) to a post office box number, or its equivalent, that will be listed with the application, and must be postmarked by May 20, 2007.** Applications postmarked after May 20, 2007 will be set aside for possible future consideration. Applications will be selected by lottery; applicants who submit more than one application will be disqualified. Duplicated applications will not be accepted. Preference will be given to New York City residents. Current and eligible residents of Manhattan Community Board #8 will receive preference for 50% of the units. Eligible households that include persons with mobility impairments will receive preference for 5% of the units; eligible households that include persons with visual and/or hearing impairments will receive preference for 2% of the units; and eligible City of New York Municipal Employees will receive a 5% preference.



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Tax Experts Predict Increased IRS Audits

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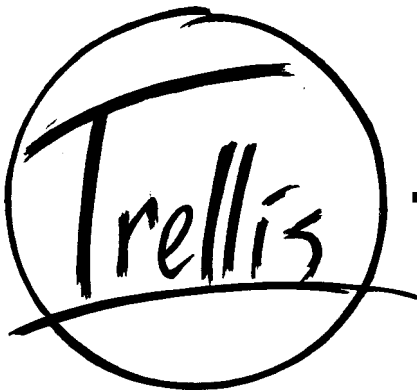
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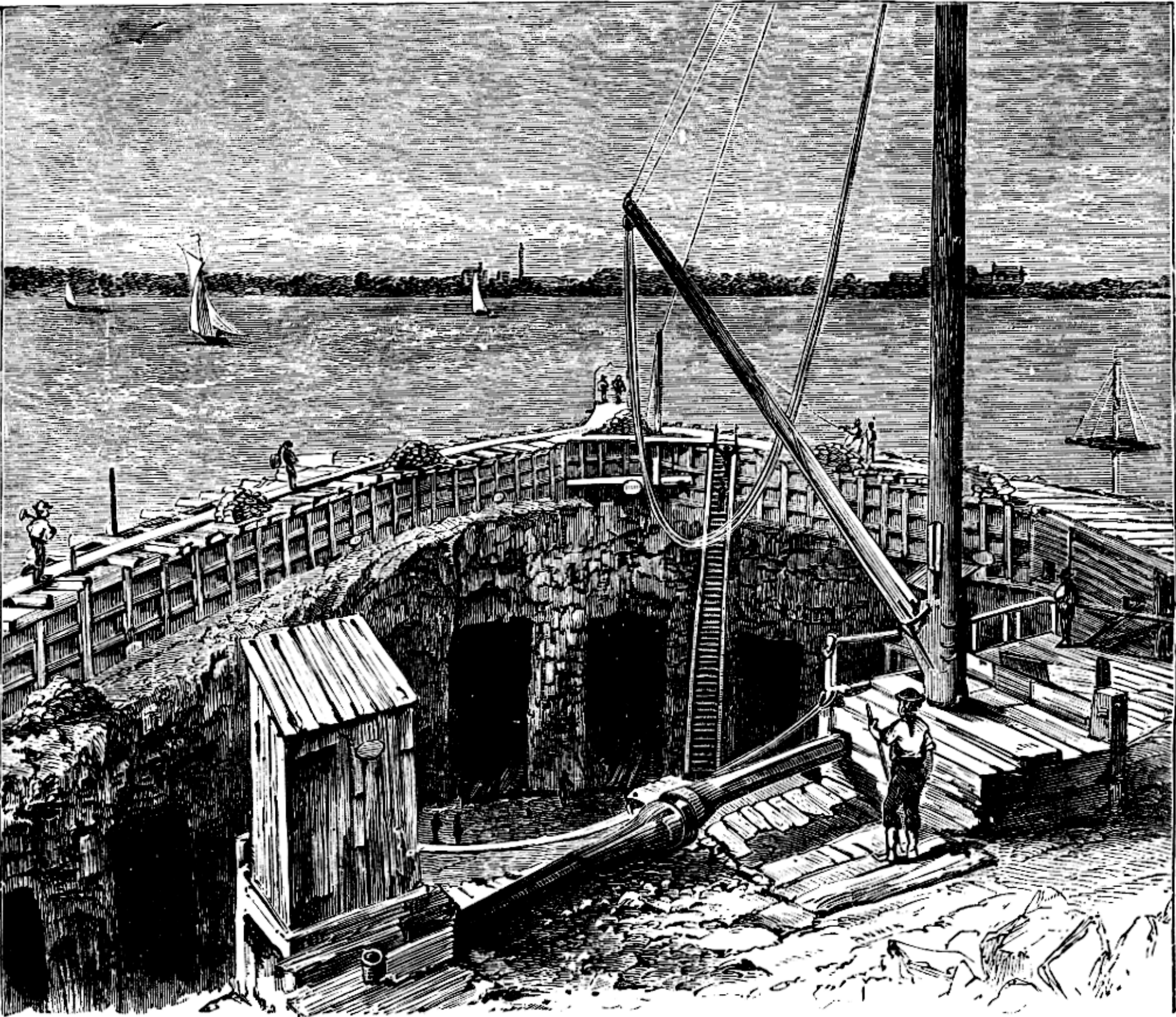
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...Were Treacherous, Until a Massive Project Made Them Safe



Pan to 9½ feet and Ways Reef to 13 feet below mean low water. Then an accident disabled Maillefert and killed three assistants in 1852, putting an end to the effort. But it had been worth it: not only had the obstructions been lowered, but a dangerous whirlpool had been eliminated and the tide eased!

This demonstration also had a political effect: Congress appropriated \$20,000, and this became the first major harbor job for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which still performs these tasks. After the Civil War, efforts began in earnest with a study of the best way to remove the rest of the rocks and the Hallet's Point reef in spite of a midwar suggestion that the channels be filled in.

A contract was awarded to an inventor who had come up with a floating rig designed to make demolition easy, but it ran afoul of uncontrolled river traffic and was ruined. Lt.

Col. John Newton of the Corps' New York district granted a contract to an inventor who had come up with a drilling machine on a barge to implant underwater charges in the rock but, by 1871, this boat suffered the same fate as the earlier one.

“...the exclusion of larger craft from this much-needed entrance to the harbor of New York... makes the bars of Hell Gate so hurtful to our commerce. The fleets of ships and steamers that do our European carrying trade are now compelled to enter by way of Sandy Hook. The approaches to this entrance are stormy and perilous... It was natural that the masterminds of our commercial interests should covet the shorter and safer entrance through the Sound, so provokingly barred at Hell Gate... But how could the channel be cleared? An enterprise of the kind so vast in scope and so difficult in character had never yet been undertaken.”

The obvious conclusion was that removing rocks and reefs would have to be done by underwater tunneling, which had been given a shot in the arm by the invention of trench warfare during the late War of the Slaveholders' Rebellion.

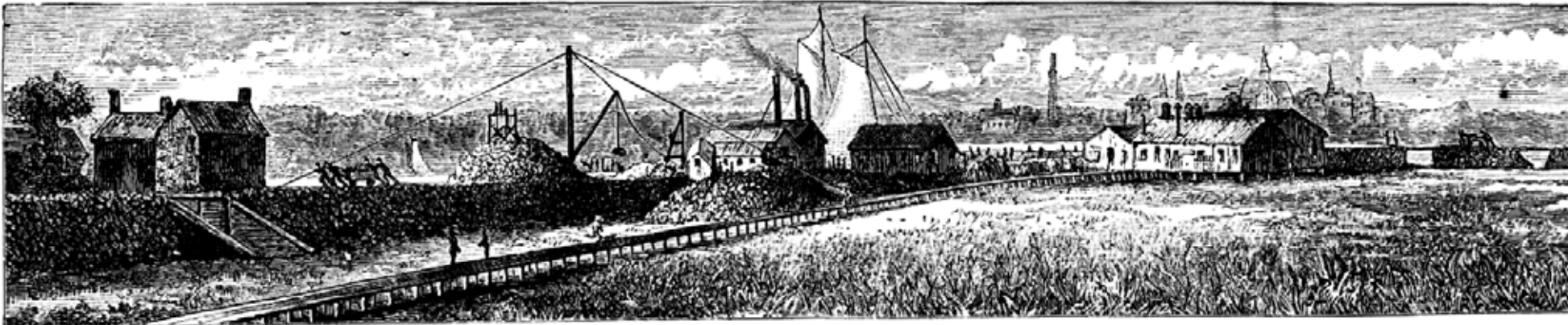
This approach involved a complicated tunneling system under Hallet's reef, where numerous radial and transverse tunnels were dug under the reef from Fort Stevens. It took seven years of tunneling, rock-breaking, and digging to create ten headings and connecting gallery arcs. Seven thousand holes were dug to receive 30,000 pounds of nitroglycerine, a high-powered charge, new at the time. On September 24, 1876, they were set off in a massive explosion whose force was mostly contained underground but produced a 123-foot plume. It then took another six years to remove the ninety thousand tons of debris produced by the blast.

—Scribner's

Hallet's Reef was no more, and the channel was upgraded. This tunneling method proved to be the key to future success.

Efforts then returned to the rocks in Hell Gate. The large...

...continues on page 10



General view of works at Hallet's Point, showing offices, shops, stone removed from tunnels, etc.



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News Headlines

Steve Shane to Head RIOC
Robin Russell Dead
RIOC Evicts Fish Store
RIHMC: Eastwood Emerging OK

Features

Island History Timeline
Island Contacts
Island Observer

Island Websites

Visual Arts Association
Residents Association
Community Board 8
Councilmember Jessica Lappin
State Senator Jose Serrano
Orphans International
Main Street Theatre
R.I. Historical Society
Island Kids
R.I. Day Nursery
PS/IS 217
Island House Residents Site
Octagon Tenants Site
Westview Task Force
455 Main Street Site
Library
Youth Program
Cats Project
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Website NYC10044 has been revamped to provide a jumping-off point for other Island and Island-related websites. It's on line at <http://nyc10044.com>. If your organization's site is missing or doesn't link properly when tried, please notify editor@MainStreetWIRE.com.

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FAMILY CENTER

MONDAY NIGHT PARENTING SERIES

Island Kids is sponsoring a series of talks facilitated by experts in the fields of early childhood issues, private and public school admissions, and navigating the college process.

First talk takes place Tuesday, April 17, at 7:15 p.m.
An Introduction to Private School Admission Feeling overwhelmed by the process? Topics include understanding the process, selecting appropriate schools, completing applications, managing the interview process, and applying for financial aid.
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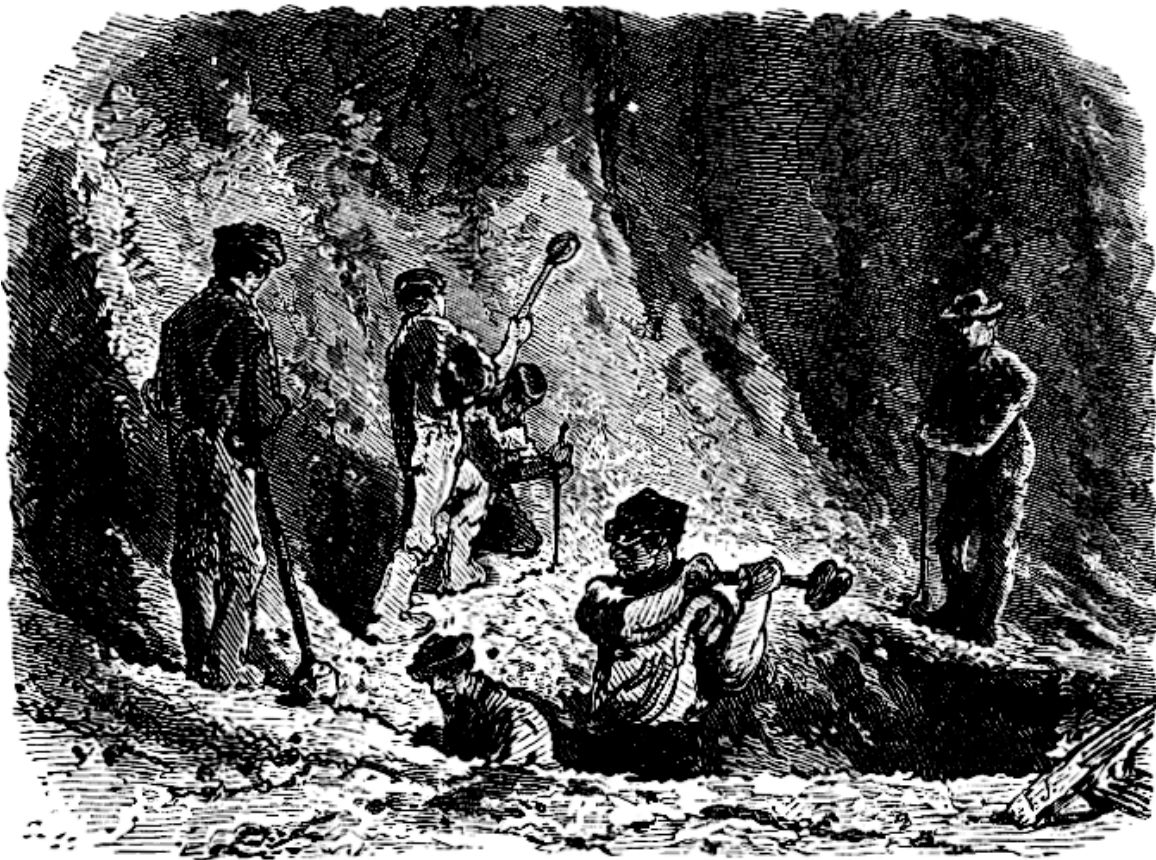
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Hell Gate from page 7



Miners at work

est was Flood Rock. About 50 feet square, it was a major obstruction to navigation. A seawall was constructed around it, with a lift tower to remove debris from a shaft sunk 70 feet down. The work went on until four miles of tunnels were built and fifteen thousand holes for explosives dug.

From Mill Rock, the only one of the original islets that still exists, workmen tunneled to Flood Rock and the other obstructions, and planted 280,000 pounds of a hybrid explosive dubbed “Rack-a-Rock,” 5,000 pounds of dynamite in 50,000 charges. Of these, only 3,000 were wired for charges; the rest were to be set off sympathetically.

On October 10, 1885, General Newton’s daughter Mary pressed a key and set off the largest explosion the world was to see until the atomic age. Nine acres of water surface were lifted up into a 150-foot plume of rock and water witnessed by 50,000 spectators and a hundred cameras. Although this blast exceeded by six times the next largest explosion ever set off, everything went off perfectly, with no casualties or collateral damage.

The effect was startling – the channel was clear. No longer would there be three dangerous and narrow ship channels. Hell Gate was open! Port traffic increased to \$4 million a year, and seers predicted that Ward’s, Randall’s, and Blackwell’s (now Roosevelt) Islands, all of the East River shore in Harlem, and the Queens shore – all then quite rural in character – would become bustling ports. This didn’t happen; the freight port remained at South Street and Brooklyn’s Red Hook, but later migrated to the lower Hudson as ship size further increased during the 20th Century.

The Corps went on to dredge Lower New York Bay and the Atlantic entrances off Sandy Hook to further open up the port from the south. New York then became an even more dominant entryway for the entire nation, a position it would maintain until the significant growth of Pacific trade after World War II and the invention of the container ship. These ships are massive (and growing larger), and require deep water ports – something New York has had trouble providing. The original ports on Newark Bay are becoming outmoded, and are being replaced by one on the Upper Bay at Bayonne. The Brooklyn shore, which has deep water, has become too densely built up to accommodate a large port that requires warehousing, parking, and factories.

Today’s relatively peaceful Hellgate is our remembrance of that heroic time when, working from below, miners, engineers, and explosives calmed the waters just north of Blackwell’s Island.

Island resident Robert Furman is a New York City historian. He is currently working on a book entitled *Before Brownstones and After: A Preservationist History of Brooklyn*. His e-mail address is bobfurman1@juno.com.

“The work goes on day and night. The miners are divided into three shifts, each working eight hours a day, so that three days’ work is accomplished every twenty-four hours. About two hundred men are employed in all. Good wages are paid, and to ensure a fair day’s work from every man, miners using one-hand tools – holding the drill-bar in one hand and striking with the other – are expected to furnish five feet gauging at a shift, in average rock. For second-size tools, worked by two men on face or bench, seven feet are required; and an equal depth for third-size tools, worked by three men.”

–Manufacturer and Builder



“Three recent inventions, the new explosives, and the ignition of charges by electricity, have insured the success of one of the boldest engineering schemes ever undertaken by man: the scheme of nothing less than the blowing out of the entire rocky bottom...”

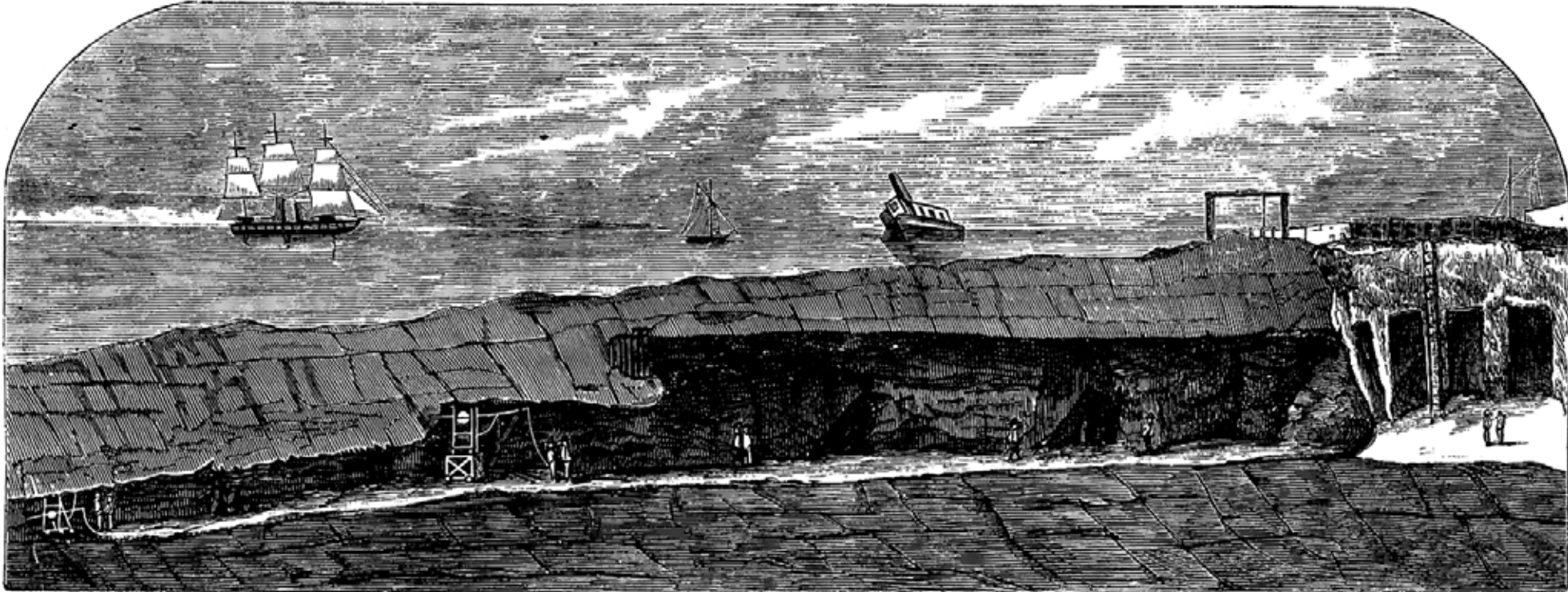
–Manufacturer and Builder



The diamond rock drill



Divers drilling rock



Section of tunnel with two diamond drills in place

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APRIL 28 11AM-4PM *FREE* (all ages welcome)
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Participating Organizations (partial list) Coler-Goldwater Specialty Hospital & Nursing Facility, RI Marlins Swim Team, RIRA, RI Senior Center, RI Tennis Association, RI Beacon Program & Youth Center, and RI resident sports and fitness instructors

RIOC from page 1

editorial on this subject on page 2.)
Pending Business

Then, after a long period of seeming RIOCI inactivity that began even before the November election, RIOCI will get on with the business of running Roosevelt Island, and Shane will face a series of challenges that arise day to day, but have also been accumulating. They range from major directional decisions on budget and resources through simple vexations that continue or crop up like seconds ticking off a countdown clock that never reaches zero.

VanAmerongen and Shane together will face the matter of pending changes at Rivercross, Island House, and Westview. As last year ended and then well into this year, the transition in Albany led to near-stagnation in moving the last two toward resident ownership, and the first toward an exit from Mitchell-Lama for its residents, who own the co-op. Governor George Pataki abruptly dismissed a RIOCI Board member, Deborah Beck, who was a key member of the Board's real-estate committee. Another member oriented to real-estate concerns, John Mannix, dropped out after the November election. A remaining member of the real-estate committee, Westview resident Alberteen Anderson, soldiered on with the help of two other resident Board members, but those efforts were shut down unceremoniously when there was a threat of actual progress. That made it clear that further action on Mitchell-Lama conversions will have to wait for DHCR's stalled wheels to labor into motion once more. As Anderson put it, "We've been asked to wait and let the new [DHCR] com-

missioner review the projects, and I think it's fair that she reviews these proposals. Who knows? She might be able to bring more to the table than anyone else can. She's been doing this for years."

The building committees trying to make things happen feel, though, that they need more than a review. They need advocacy. Rivercross, for example, has been rounding up political support for its efforts – an effort to make sure officials understand that, without the ability to tap the value of their properties, the buildings will quickly become *unaffordable* housing when they starting facing up to deferred repairs, the need to stem energy leaks and – in the case of Island House and Westview – long punch-lists of problems.

In each case, the stumbling block is RIOCI lethargy – the kind government is famous for. Ground-lease extensions are needed, along with decisions on payments that stand in for property taxes. Every dollar added on to each of those costs drains the blood of affordability from the buildings and, without knowing what the future holds, planning is stalled.

The Infinite List

But housing is not the only area needing serious attention from RIOCI. Housing was on a list of concerns Margie Smith, a recent Residents Association Vice President and its current Chair of Government Relations, handed to Steve Shane when he met with a contingent from RIRA. Here are more items, many of them from Smith's list (but paraphrased here):

- Public-Purpose Funding for the Youth Center: Director Charlie de Fino, who left last year, has still not been replaced, and it can't happen without money in the Youth Program's treasury. Once that's

done, some longer-term security is needed for the Youth Program.

- The Main Street retail crisis: Empty shops are a direct and harmful disservice to the Island's disabled population and its growing body of elderly, let alone the rest of the Island's residents. RIOCI has been stymied by the Public Authorities Accountability Act, passed in Albany to prevent borderline-corrupt deals like George Pataki's Erie Canal giveaway and the West Side Railyards fire sale. Somebody at RIOCI fears jail time, apparently, if a merchant needed in this community is given a lease at the kind of rental numbers Roosevelt Island can support – a fear that has led to a move toward a mall approach in which one master tenant would choose all the retailers. At least a few residents fear a flood of cookie-cutter chain outlets rather than the mom-and-pop kind of operations that can make the Island unique and a reasonable place to visit for folks trying to escape the cookie-cutter stuff.

- Evening and weekend staffing. The community doesn't close down at 5:00 or earlier when most RIOCI staffers flee to off-Island homes.

- RIOCI's staff mix. Herb Berman replaced a number of staffers who left as the Pataki regime wound down; it's not yet clear that the newbies have what it takes, or that the breakdown of positions and responsibilities makes sense.

- RIOCI has ignored, for years, the opportunity represented by the Steam Plant that sits behind the Tram station. Co-generation there would hold the potential for income to RIOCI and cost savings for the Island's buildings. Millions have been lost already, and each day of inaction is a further drain.

- Public Safety – about which a book might be written. There are other options that should be explored carefully. But while that happens, stronger supervision and discipline among the officers would be a good idea. They might be asked to enforce stop signs, parking rules, and U-turn regulations, for example.

- Transportation needs attention, too. The Red Bus will remain a daily irritant until the current scheduling, which has grievous shortcomings, is revised. But that's a minor matter compared to the severe overcrowding on the F train during morning rush. With more buildings and more residents coming, RIOCI needs to get down-and-dirty with the MTA about how people are going to be moved on and off the Island – and that's doubly true if RIOCI goes forward with a plan to take the Tramway out of service for over a year to replace key components.

- For that matter, RIOCI needs to address the question of whether the Tramway is actually in such bad shape that it needs key components replaced – and address it without taking the word of only the company that would do the work.

- Resident involvement must be encouraged rather than actively discouraged and ignored. The old RIOCI seemed to fear suggestions from Islanders more expert in various functions than members of its staff; the new RIOCI should tap resident expertise in a way that makes it clear the help and advice is welcome and will be acted upon.

- The Motorgate mess needs to be fixed. That includes getting tough about the north-end elevator and addressing the question of the quiescent escalator.

It's Always Something

Any alert Islander could produce

a similar list, and it need not end there. Add these items:

- RIOCI needs to learn how to communicate with residents – to use its *WIRE* column in a serious way, but also to release far more information than it's been accustomed to sharing.

- Speaking of communication, the RIOCI Board should schedule *all* its meetings when residents can attend, or schedule sessions on a separate day to hear from residents.

- The Good Shepherd Community Center, which suffers from unnecessary restrictions on when it can be used for community events, must be freed of unreasonable constraints, so that *all* users – including religious organizations – can get their fair share of time and schedule.

- The street and many sidewalks need to be fixed – and preferably not with a coating of asphalt over the traditional zee-bricks that contribute to the Island's special character.

- RIOCI needs to get active with regard to Southpoint Park, to support the efforts of the Trust for Public Land, and to make some needed decisions about the direction the park will take – "wild gardens" or a formal Louis Kahn tribute to the Roosevelts.

- Now that insurance claims have been settled regarding the seawall at Lighthouse Park, it needs to be repaired; it's been far too long in damaged condition. While they're at it, RIOCI crews should work on the rusted and damaged fencing, too.

- Elimination of playing field fees for Island groups; this is supposed to be an *affordable* community.

There is no end to this list. *It's always something* is more than a cliché here.

Attention All Roosevelt Islanders

Please come and bring your ideas
to the *second* meeting of the new

Roosevelt Island Democratic Club

When: Tuesday, April 10, at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Basement of Good Shepherd Community Center

Join us in this new political enterprise!

Democrats from page 1

“I’d like to have a power base here. We have to fight for it,” said Leonard Crooke, who did his bit by posting flyers for the March 26 meeting in his first-floor windows. “And we need more security cameras. When I first came here around 1975, there was a guard posted on the bridge. You couldn’t get on the Island without the guard asking where you’re going.”

Some of the items of interest in that metaphorical restricted pot: getting a hospital emergency room, getting a police substation, and grooming a candidate for office.

Details and priorities were hard to come by, since it took ten minutes simply to agree on a date for the next meeting: Tuesday, April 10, 7:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center.

Breslin said she was inspired to organize the meeting by a quote from the late opera singer Marian Anderson: “*There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other fellow to make the first move – and he, in turn, waits for you.*”

The exploratory meeting was meant to gauge the level of interest in such a club in the first place.



Deirdre Breslin addressed the group that assembled last week to form a Roosevelt Island Democratic Club.



“Without a Democratic club, mostly you’ll be passed over,” warned Archie Seale

“I moved here when the Island first opened,” said Breslin, “and we had an active Democratic Club back then,” whose fate was that it was so vocal and successful that its valuable members were poached by rival Manhattan clubs. Breslin spoke of that era darkly, as if the former club members had been “disappeared” to the gulag, never to fight for Roosevelt Island again.

Although some of the goals of a Democratic Club would overlap with those of the Roosevelt Island Residents’ Assn. (RIRA), and one could argue that there is only so much community spirit and volunteerism to go around, Breslin stressed that the club would be unapologetically Democratic, not

politically inclusive. “RIRA can’t do that,” she said.

“Without a Democratic Club, [politicians] will say hello, maybe listen politely, but mostly you’ll be passed over,” said Seale. “But if you have an organized political club, then they’ll talk to you. Then you have an opportunity to talk to the leadership, and they’ll listen, because they’re all looking for votes. And this is what we want for our area.”

The 16 who attended the exploratory meeting expressed enthusiasm in principle, despite doubts as to how such a club might work in practice.

“You need a constitution, you need to open a bank account, you

need more people,” bellowed Jim Whalen, who serves as secretary-treasurer for the Lenox Hill Democratic Club. “This Island has 1,000, 2,000 registered Democrats. If just ten percent of them joined, then we’d have some clout.”

Getting them to join is another story. Breslin expressed delight that the turnout of 16 was 14 more than she had originally “guesstimated,” but 16 isn’t enough to wrangle emergency rooms, patrol cars, and truckloads of library books. “Everybody,” she announced, “for the next meeting, commit to bringing at least one more person.”

Meetings are to take place every other Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

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Grannis from page 1

And Senate Republicans, echoing the concerns of gun groups and sportsmen, turned up the scrutiny of Grannis to a level unusual for gubernatorial nominees.

So intense was the interest in Grannis from all sides that the Senate took the rare move of holding his confirmation hearings in the biggest hearing room in the State Capitol complex.

And when the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee finally took up the nomination March 20, the contentious session ended without a vote – another rarity.

That session featured lengthy debate over Grannis’s legislative efforts to regulate the trapping of animals, initiatives that had helped win Grannis awards from animal-rights groups distrusted by sportsmen. Grannis voiced concerns about all-terrain vehicles chewing up precious land in the Adirondack Park.

Committee chair Carl Marcellino’s decision to schedule a continuation of the hearing prompted a news conference outside the senator’s Long Island district office by environmental groups demanding Grannis’s confirmation. Marcellino’s committee finally finished its hearing on March 27, but not without environmental groups hoisting “Free Pete” posters featuring a picture of Grannis and, again, demanding his confirmation.

Grannis was ultimately confirmed last weekend – not without official votes of opposition at both the committee and full Senate level – as lawmakers were racing to get a new State budget in place by the April 1 start of New York’s fiscal year .

“It was unlike any other confirmation process I’ve seen in my short time in Albany,” said Robert Moore, executive director of the strongly pro-Grannis group Environmental Advocates. “People who’ve been around a lot longer than me agree.”

Grannis spent most of his Assembly tenure chairing the Insurance and Housing committees but, before he joined the Legislature, he worked as compliance counsel for the environmental agency he now heads.

Environmental groups praised Grannis for what they called a stellar legislative record.

“He has sponsored, co-sponsored, and otherwise played a key role in legislation that includes New York’s Clean Indoor Air Act, measures to address the threats of acid rain and fluorocarbons, as well as bills to protect clean air and water, and to encourage recycling and conservation,” according to a letter to senators signed by three dozen environmental groups.

“Assemblyman Grannis chaired the Assembly’s first Subcommittee on Toxic Wastes, sponsored legislation ensuring a worker’s right to know about hazardous materials, and worked to regulate the transport, storage and disposal of toxic wastes. His other environmental interests include preserving New York’s natural heritage, reducing packaging waste, bringing the State into compliance with the federal Clean Air Act, and preserving the Adirondack Park.

“Assemblyman Grannis is also an avid outdoorsman and sportsman,” the letter continued. “As a fly fisherman, he has spent much of his free time exploring New York’s waterways—gaining personal first-hand knowledge of the rivers, lakes and streams, the stewardship of which he will be responsible for as DEC Commissioner.”

Moore said that even as chairman of the Insurance Committee, Grannis “tried to highlight the risk of global warming. He’s been out front in support of every major environmental piece of legislation that’s passed since he’s been there.

“His experience in the Legislature makes him understand DEC’s resource and staffing needs, its policy direction,” Moore added. “He’s in the process of rebuilding the agency, including 109 new staff that Environmental Advocates pushed for.”

A leader of New York’s largest sportsmen’s group said he hopes Grannis will include sportsmen among his new staff hires.

“The importance of developing a Statewide perspective is key to the evolution of a person from being a local politician to having a Statewide point of view,” said the leader, Wally John, legislative vice president of the New York State Conservation Council,

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Katz from page 3

methods of access to Manhattan clearly are needed.

Community Board 8 will take up the question at their Transportation Committee meeting on Tuesday (April 10) at 7:00 p.m. at the New York Blood Center (310 East 67th Street). I would characterize this as an idea with minimal potential for success. DOT has been less than enthusiastic about such a project and it's their bridge. On the other hand, getting the MetroCard system applied to the Tram was also a low-priority issue when I first proposed it to the City Transit Authority in February 2002 but, with the help of a CB8 unanimous resolution endorsing the idea, the project was completed two years later. So, you never know.

What is clear to me, and I suspect to you, is that our current transportation facilities, both on-Island and as part of the transit web, are rapidly becoming inadequate. As our population soars with continuing construction at Southtown, our needs for sufficient transportation will become acute. A footpath to Manhattan that will include conveniences (some sort of elevator, I suspect) for our disabled population may only be a stop-

gap measure, but I don't see anyone addressing increased capacity for the Tram or the F train anytime soon. RIRA will continue to look for alternatives and to encourage those responsible for this community to do the same.

Letters from page 2

economic sense. But to obtain these benefits without continued governmental regulation will require both creative proposals and skilled negotiators. Ultimately, the task is to persuade the key politicians and their bureaucracies that deregulation leading to a free market will be on terms that will not destabilize the existing population. And, they must convince the powers that be that such a transition to a free market will ultimately be better for the Island and all of its residents."

Robert Chira

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of local interest, to the community, and to/from officials. Requests for *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 CD 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 the desk 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 subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters considered if content merits the space.



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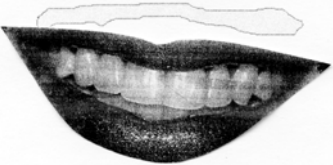
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