Vol. 27, No. 17

Saturday, May 5, 2007

Next issue in two weeks: Sat., May 19

The Main Street WIRE™

27th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Lt. Gov. David Patterson was on hand last week as additional turbine generators went into the East Channel at Motorgate, in Verdant Power's Tidal Energy project. Patterson talked with Verdant President Ron Smith.

RIRA to Plan for Residents to Pre-Elect RIOC Board Appointees

Subcommittee Projects Possible June 26 Balloting

by Dick Lutz

A subcommittee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) has been working through the question of just how Island voters will "pre-elect" appointees to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

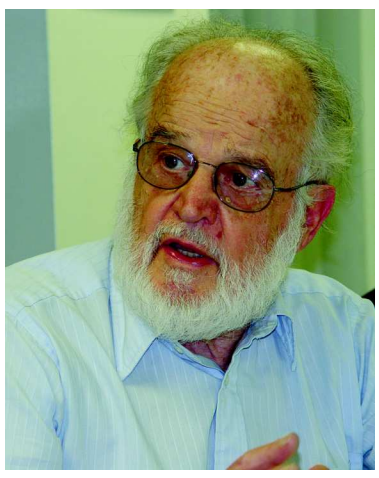
The effort stems from a suggestion by RIOC President Steve Shane to RIRA President Matthew Katz, made at the April 12 RIOC Board meeting in which Shane was hired. "Those seven non-statutory positions can be filled and should be filled, in my view, from Island people," Shane said, referring to all but the two Board seats that are filled by State officials. He said the indirect process is more readily workable than trying to change the law. RIOC Board Chair Deborah VanAmerongen was in synch with Shane on the idea, as reported in the April 21 *WIRE*.

Devising a process is made difficult by timing, and by the fact that it would initiate an indirect sequence of events in which residents would vote on a list of nominee-candidates, which would then be presented to the Governor. But that election would be preceded by candidates declaring themselves by presenting a nominating petition and completing a multi-page State-mandated disclosure form required of appointees to State public-benefit corporations and authorities. After an election, the Governor would then presumably appoint the top winners who passed muster. Those appointments would then be subject to acceptance by the State Senate.

During the twelve years of Governor George Pataki's tenure, such appointments were routinely approved by the Republican-controlled Senate, but there's no past standard by which to judge how the Senate might view the Roosevelt Island process, or Democratic Governor Eliot Spitzer's appointees coming out of it.

There is also a question of the State Senate's session schedule, which could result in months of delay.

(RIRA President Matthew Katz discusses the process in *The RIRA Column* in this issue; see page 3.)



David Bauer, who formed the Maple Tree Group ten years ago, as he chaired Monday's meeting.

The RIRA subcommittee working on the process is the Maple Tree Group (MTG), formed in 1997 in response to resident feelings that RIOC was doing a poor job of maintaining the Island, managing Island resources like retail storefronts, and providing services for residents. MTG ultimately concluded that the problem was systemic, and drafted a revision of the legislation that established and governs RIOC. That draft called for direct election of resident Board members, with the Board fully em-

See **Election**, page 6

Octagon Shows Environmental Green Can Take a Lot of Green ($)

by Jami Bernard

As the Muppet sang, *it's not easy being green*. But despite the hassles and cost, challenges and pitfalls, the Octagon is about as green as it gets – at least in terms of being one of the most eco-friendly buildings in New York City. It wears the color well.

It's been just about a year since the Octagon opened as a market-rate rental building, with 20 percent of its 501 units reserved for moderate-income renters. Its success can be judged by leases renewed, length of the waiting list, and awards on the mantle of architectural firm Becker + Becker Associates.

Those awards cut two ways: Some are for the building's historical-preservation features, since the design recreated the landmarked rotunda using some of the original blue-gray schist, while keeping its 14-story dimensions within the footprint of the original structure designed by Alexander Jackson Davis. But most of the plaudits have been for the building's green elements, which far surpass what the City building code requires and which seem to go off at times into sci-fi territory: complicated heating/cooling loops, furniture panels made of repurposed food byproducts, 250 solar panels that look like a herd of shiny dominoes grazing on the rooftop.

Becker + Becker's John Renner took *The WIRE* on a top-to-toe tour of the Octagon's green-ery earlier this week. Some of the features he pointed out were what you'd expect in most new construction: recycled steel, for example, or insulated windowpanes. Some of the most impressive features are simply part and parcel of Roosevelt Island itself, such as the underground pneumatic system for whisking away garbage, or the hybrid Red Bus, or the stunning views that make any apartment here seem to be in sync with the landscape.

But the Octagon really does go the extra mile in its metaphorical Birkenstocks – from the mundane (non-toxic cleaning products) to the wacky (recycled sunflower seeds pressed into composite furniture panels; if you look closely, you'll see that the "grain" is really… er… grain).

Nearly everywhere you look, there's a recyclable: Wheatboard kitchen cabinets made from an inedible straw product left behind after the harvest. Hardboard planks and stair treads by way of weathered old Pennsylvania barns. As much of the character-laden gneiss as could be salvaged from the original Octagon structure, the last vestige of the insane asylum that undercover reporter Nellie Bly once exposed as stinky, dangerous, and downright crazy.

"In comparison, how much easier it would be to walk to the gallows than to this tomb of living horrors!" wrote Bly in her late-19th century exposé.

The former "tomb of horrors" now boasts underground parking, a day-care center, a pool, and its own bodega, gym, and tennis courts. The rotunda's grand spider-web of a staircase, where Bly observed inmates being choked by guards when they weren't being frozen by forced, icy baths, features curved, airy spaces for an art

See **Octagon**, page 7

Youth Program, Rebuilding Itself, Gets New Board and New Director

by Dick Lutz

Imagine all the energy of a Cape Canaveral blastoff and 1,200 kids letting loose after school. Now add the explosive excitement of a ninth-inning game-winning home run.

You're still a little short of the enthusiasm going into the rebirth of Roosevelt Island's 26-year-old Youth Program, which has a new Director, a new Board, and more eager determination than a field of eight candidates for the Presidency of the United States.

For one thing, there's Scot Bobo, the 13-year resident and father of two who says he "literally busted the doors down" to get into a meeting of the Youth Program's Board. Now, he's formed a new Board of Directors after setting a high bar: "I wanted parents who would say, 'Yes, I definitely want to be part of this.' The ones who are a little reluctant, concerned about the time – and it *will* take a lot of time – we'll bring them in once we get our feet firmly on the ground."

For another, there's Tina Gonzalez, who starts Monday as Director of the Program. She got to sing *The Impossible Dream* in a big high school event, "and it's become the theme song of my life," she says. "Sometimes we feel that things are impossible – that the obstacles are too great. But I've experienced enough to know that you can't say 'no' until you've tried it, and even then it might be just a temporary 'no.'"

Tina herself – named Agustina after a French-Indian grandmother – is as diverse as Roosevelt Island. "Oh, I'm a mutt," she says. "Both my parents were

See **Youth Program**, page 7







Youth Center's future – and a piece of its past – Scot Bobo, left, is the Roosevelt Island Youth Program's new Board Chair, recruited by its past Vice President and continuing Treasurer, Steve Kaufman, right. The new Board has hired Tina Gonzalez as Executive Director. She starts Monday. Kaufman is the sole holdover from the previous Board of Directors.

Briefly...

• RIOC President Steve Shane toured the Island's **Steam Plant** with resident engineers Robert Liss and Willard Warren, RIOC Board member Mark Ponton, RIRA President Matthew Katz, and representatives of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) on Wednesday, and asked NYPA for a report on using the plant to produce lower-cost power for the Island. The report is three to six months away, assuming NYPA agrees to prepare one.

More Briefs on page 3

The Editorial Page

tick Tick ***Tick TICK TICK***

There is danger in a ticking clock.

For both Island House and Westview, that clock ticks louder by the day. Repeatedly extended deadlines have been missed in the tenant groups' drive toward resident ownership.

Under the rules of the game called Mitchell-Lama, the owners have the right to leave the program. Once out, they slip away from the control of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). But without an extended ground lease, leaving would be suicidally unprofitable unless rents were raised substantially – perhaps doubled – something tenants feared that Christopher Daly's Sheldrake Organization was likely to do, at least until Daly got discouraged and/or pinched financially and went away.

But the option remains for the current owner – or their corporation in other hands.

If that happens – if the owners grow weary of delay, and muscle their way out of Mitchell-Lama and raise rents (a distinct possibility despite an official presumption that they cannot) – almost every tenant in Westview and Island House will be forced out.

Resident groups in both buildings have devised plans that will avoid the legal wrangling that would follow a Mitchell-Lama departure accompanied by big rent hikes – and they've been working their way past all the ambiguities and lack of full and willing help from the State agencies involved, coaxing them along. Those include both RIOC and DHCR under George Pataki.

Now, there are new players at both those agencies, and a danger that plans carefully made under Pataki will not fit the new set of rules.

Each plan – as well as the plan to privatize Rivercross – may need minor tweaking. But it is time for officialdom to stop being officious and reluctant. *It's been ten years, more or less!* It is time for bold moves that will ensure affordability for today's residents, and ensure availability of the funds needed for repair and rehabilitation of the buildings.

What will we have in 20 years? "Affordable" housing so run-down that razing is a better choice than repair? Or buildings owned by their residents, carefully brought back to even greater livability than at any time in their history?

There's only one good answer, and it's time – right now, before summer relaxation sets in – to resolve all this, implement the resident plans, and secure the future.

Red Bus Redux

RIOC has changed the Red Bus routing again – this time a more thoughtful change than anything tried before – and, we might hope, one made with a plan to *measure* the results to make sure the new plan is the best possible with the available resources. (A *WIRE* e-mail bulletin announced this earlier in the week; for bulletins, send an *AddMe* e-mail to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com.)

The WIRE will measure, as will every resident who uses the rush-hour service. If RIOC measures, too, to test its revision rather than assuming it will work – and there's every reason to believe *this* administration will – we'll be on the right track.

DL

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The RIRA Column

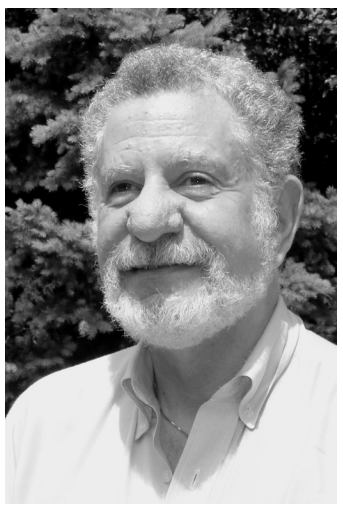
I want to devote most of this column to the extraordinary opportunity we've been afforded, at long last, to affect the administration of Roosevelt Island and to impact our future here through an elected RIOC Board of Directors. The parameters were discussed in the last *WIRE*, both as a news story and in my column, and the hard work of devising an election mechanism and anticipating glitches has begun.

First, the basics: Why, if the Governor is appointing Island residents to this Board anyway, is an elective process so important? Well, it's about control, about political power, if you will. For over two decades, New York's Governor has placed his choices on the Board and they served at his pleasure. For the last twelve years, a Governor who had never set foot on Roosevelt Island controlled the development of this community through his appointments and, to my mind, did a horrifically bad job of it. Even if we elect the same folks who currently act as RIOC Directors, the control shifts to *We the people*. We elect those whom we consider most likely to serve the community well, and (this is the key point) we can remove them through our votes if they disappoint. That's only all the difference in the world, it seems to me.

Make no mistake: The process would be served better if the statutes that created RIOC were amended to include an elected Board. The Maple Tree Group (MTG), which has espoused this fundamental premise for well over a decade, will continue to push for legislative reform of RIOC's leadership by changing the 1984 law that created RIOC. But the chance to alter the process *now*, to give political clout to this community *now*, is just too good to pass up.

The long-dormant Maple Tree Group will create a working plan that we can offer to RIOC. As an *ad hoc* subcommittee of RIRA, the group will present its recommendations to the Common Council for their approval. What we've been offered now is the chance to finesse a thus-far unsuccessful legislative approach in favor of a plan that will informally empower residents to choose their own leadership where it counts – on the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board of Directors.

Now, some things will remain the same. The Island's choices will still be required to undergo a thorough background check. This is hardly surprising; after all, the Board will oversee a budget targeted at $32 million in expenditures for FY 2007-2008. Also, the winner(s) of RIOC elections will still require confirmation by the Governor and the State Senate. Therefore, your Residents Association will require a memorandum of understanding, assuring us that our efforts will be endorsed by RIOC, by DHCR, by the Senate, and by the Governor, all things being equal. All things being equal includes the same guarantees that Presidential appointments must have before Congress approves them, i.e., no skeletons in the closet. I think that all parties understand the necessity of this. RIRA is certainly not willing to invent a *sui generis* election procedure for RIOC without a guarantee that politics and patronage (a/k/a business as usual) won't befoul our efforts. Also, we need to understand that the procedures we invent will outlive this



Matthew Katz, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
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See **Katz**, page 12

The RIOC Column

A very interesting two weeks. The major items to have come across our desks:

1. The Lieutenant Governor, David Patterson, was on the Island April 25 in a promotion of the environmentally friendly East River turbine project and the Octagon Tower's "greenness" (solar panels, tinted windows, etc.). Unfortunately, the event was cut short by the tragic death of a New York State Trooper upstate and the Lieutenant Governor's need to leave.

2. I met with RIRA representatives to encourage the democratization of the RIOC Board of Directors process. No wonder the Continental Congress had to call a Constitutional Convention to work out the competing interests. I have promised a copy of the Federalist Papers on the development of a workable plan.

3. I met with representatives of both the handicapped and senior citizens to discuss their concerns and to give them my assurances of prompt attention to, and as rapid resolution as possible of, matters of special concern to them. I know that Roosevelt Island was designed and built with a special needs population sympathy, and as time has gone by and standards (see the ADA) have changed, RIOC will be empathetic and accommodating.

4. I met with representatives of the Trust for Public Lands and the FDR Memorial group. TPL will be making a presentation at the next Board meeting on May 17 for the information of the Board members and the community.

5. I have had several meetings and discussions with the representatives of Island House and Westview together with the owner of both, to move towards a resolution of the future ownership of the buildings, with a strong concern for the protection of existing tenants and the affordability requirements of the General Development Plan. As the holder of the ground leases, RIOC must serve its public purpose, honoring its contractual relationships and the requirements of law.

6. We were unexpectedly requested (but very pleasantly surprised) to submit a request for funding of the repairs for the seawall through Congresswoman's Maloney's office, and dropped everything to meet her time requirements for the non-defense appropriations bill. Let us all hope that yes, there is a Santa Claus.

7. At the Governor's Cabinet meeting in Albany, I made contact with Elliot G. Sander (a/k/a Lee), the Executive Director and CEO of the MTA with whom I served at DHCR many years ago. I asked if the MTA would be interested in assisting with our crowd control and transportation issues for the Fourth of July event, and he invited me to send him the particulars so he could address them with his operations people. I hope we will have a much more pleasant and safe exit for the attendees this year.

8. I have had discussions with the developers of both Southtown and the Octagon as to their ideas for improvement of the Main Street streetscape, an initiative that the Chamber of Commerce had started more than a year ago, but was becalmed in the transition. With cosmetics (radical surgery is really not possible), we ought to be able to freshen, brighten, and make the central corridor more attractive to all. To the same end, we have invited the Island's Garden Club to participate with us in floral displays and selection. An ongoing project.

9. We continue to work on the street lighting issues. With the help of Margie Smith of RIRA and her ability to enlist the attention of public officials to prevail on Con Edison, the lights at the Tram were electrified. Arcade lighting outside our office is working, and we are about to resolve the circuitry issue for the lights behind Manhattan Park. Progress is being made and we will continue the effort.

10. We have initiated a study to move Public Safety from its present location to 504 Main Street. The present space must be overhauled (and for anyone who doubts the imperative, they are invited to drop in for a tour), and rather than keep Public Safety in limbo while doing a rehabilitation and for several programmatic reasons (such as getting those vehicles off Main Street, centralized location, etc.), the idea is very appealing.



Steve Shane, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
e-mail: SShane@RIOC.com

11. As a first step in the Roosevelt Island Bridge rehabilitation, the toll booths are being demolished at the Island end of the Bridge.

12. And last, but not least, I think we had a very successful Health & Fitness Day last Saturday, with former Mayor David Dinkins lending his support. The weather was good and there was a very good turnout and participation in the various activities (I admire those who tried the climbing wall!). I want to thank all the community volunteers who contributed their time and effort to the day. I also want to thank Erica Wilder and Donna Masly of the RIOC staff for their hard work.

On we go. Again, please bring to my attention any issues that you think RIOC may be helpful in resolving.

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Subway Diversion, all weekend, through Monday at 5:00 a.m., no direct subway service to Manhattan. (Use the Tram, or take a Queens-bound F to Roosevelt Avenue, then cross to the opposite platform and board a Manhattan-bound F train.)



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

Vernissage 6, members' show, continues at Gallery RIVAA through May 20. Gallery hours are Sat.-Sun. 11-5; Wed. and Fri. 6-9. ▷

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

Children's Learn-to-Swim Program, Sat., noon; Tues. and Thur., 5:00 p.m. Information: **212-753-3611**.

– The Coming Week –

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. (Future meetings June 6, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5.)

– Future Events –

Mother's Day, **Sun**., **May 16**.

Nutrition v. Dieting, **Tue**., **May 15**, 7:00 p.m., Westview lower community room, 595 Main Street, presented by Dr. Craig Fishel of the Wellness Center, Manhattan, sponsored by Orphans International. Refreshments. Information: **212-735-2511**.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat**., **May 19**. (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., May 10; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Mon., May 14; they are due Thur., May 17. **Additional issues in 2007**: June 2, 16, 30; July 28; Aug. 25; Sept. 8, 22; Oct. 6, 20; Nov. 3, 17; Dec. 1, 15; then resuming fortnightly January 12, 2008. **News phone**, **212-826-9055**; urgent matters, **917-617-0449**. **Phone** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**.

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

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur**., **May 17**, 9:30 a.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. (Future meetings 4:30 June 28, 9:30 Sept. 6, 4:30 Oct. 25, 9:30 Nov. 29.)

Book Discussion Group: ***John Henry Days*** by Colson Whitehead, **Thur**., **May 17**, 6:30 p.m. Group meets monthly, third Thursday, at the NYPL Roosevelt Island branch.

Honk!, presented by the Main Street Children's Theatre, **Fri**., **May 18**, 7:30 p.m. Additional performances **Sat**., **May 19**, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m; **Sun**., **May 20**, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.; and **Mon**., **May 21**, 7:00 p.m. Information and reservations: **212-371-4449**.

Memorial Day, **Mon**., **May 28**.

Toastmasters public speaking group, **Mon**., **May 28**, 8:00 p.m. Call **212-751-9577** for location and other information.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, presented by the Main Street Teen Theatre, **Fri**., **June 1**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sat**., **June 2**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sun**., **June 3**, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Information and reservations: **212-371-4449**.

Special Election for State Assembly seat representing Roosevelt Island, **Tue**., **June 5**.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed**., **June 6**, 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.(Future meetings Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5.)

Dance Concert, presented by dance students of the Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, **Sat**., **June 9**, 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Information and reservations: **212-371-4449**.

Toastmasters public speaking group, **Mon**., **June 11**, 8:00 p.m. Call **212-751-9577** for location and other information.

A History of the American Film, presented by Main Street Teen Theatre, **Thur**., **June 14**, 7:00 p.m.; **Fri**.-**Sat**., **June 15-16**, 7:30 p.m.; **Sun**., **June 17**, 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Roosevelt Island Day, **Sat**., **June 16** (date changed).

Book Discussion Group: ***House of Splendid Isolation*** by Edna O'Brien, **Thur**., **June 21**, 6:30 p.m. Group meets monthly, third Thursday, at the NYPL Roosevelt Island branch.

Town Hall Meeting – ***Ask Your Elected Officials***, with City Councilmember Jessica Lappin, Borough President Scott Stringer, **Thur**., **June 14**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City University of New York, 535 East 80th St. at East End Av. Co-sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association with other East Side associations.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur**., **June 28**, 4:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. An open forum for residents to bring matters before the Board will follow the formal session. (Future meetings 9:30 Sept. 6, 4:30 Oct. 25, 9:30 Nov. 29.)

Book Discussion Group: ***The Secret Agent*** by Joseph Conrad, **Thur**., **July 19**, 6:30 p.m. Group meets monthly, third Thursday, at the NYPL Roosevelt Island branch.

Book Discussion Group: ***Collected Novellas*** by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, **Thur**., **Aug**. **16**, 6:30 p.m. Group meets monthly, third Thursday, at the NYPL Roosevelt Island branch.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed**., **Sept**. **5**, 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. (Future meetings Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5.)

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur**., **Sept**. **6**, 9:30 a.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. (Future meetings 4:30 Oct. 25, 9:30 Nov. 29.)

Letters

To the Editor:

My family moved into the Octagon in November. Besides feeling as if I have missed the best-kept secret in NYC – until now – I do also feel compelled to comment on a number of items reported on in the most recent issue.

First of all, in the interview with Shane, there were reported comments to the effect of "Octagon residents won't shop on Main Street." If you think about this, it doesn't make sense. If anyone is likely to shop on Main Street, it is the people who will walk right down it all of the time. The weather has only been nice a couple of weeks, but I can assure you that many Octagon residents are walking from the train/Tram to their home. Give us more attractive stores or restaurants to shop in and I, for one, will most certainly be there. I enjoy Trellis, but I would also like an upscale Italian or Mexican restaurant with a nice cocktail lounge.

Second, as far as transportation goes, how much support is there for a ferry? This is the obvious alternative idea. I admittedly do not know the economics of ridership/stops, but I know that the infrastructure costs would be minimal and therefore the time to implement would be minimized. Fighting for walking access to the bridge seems to me a waste of time, energy, and effort – given the impediments mentioned by Shane.

Last, in this day and age of focus on recycling and the waste of plastic, why deliver *The WIRE* in plastic bags? It would be more environmentally responsible – as well as less labor-intensive – to just leave the papers on the floor.

I do love it here, but I also wish the longtime residents would not be so resentful and disdainful of us who have chosen this lovely building on this lovely Island to live in.

Denise Shull

To the Editor:

In his letter (*The WIRE*, April 21), Frank Farance does raise several interesting alternatives on how others could help us off the Island. A Circle Line service contract that would promise to come for us in the event of an emergency is not a bad idea. I hope they are able to come for us. I also would welcome more frequent F trains, and the addition of the Q train on those same tracks would also be a welcome improvement to our daily commute, if they can do it.

All good ideas, but I don't see that doing these things means that we should not also have a staircase/elevator to the Bridge.

The staircase, which some have called "the Roosevelt Island Fire Escape," is the one option where we can be self-reliant, not waiting for someone else to save us. Would everyone use the stairs? No. Would everyone use it at the same time? No. But in those times when there is a less-than-perfect storm going on, when the pressure is building, this could siphon off some of the pressure for those of us who feel trapped, and not connected to Manhattan at rush hour.

I have taken measurements, and the height to the walkway on the bridge is 174 feet from the ground, 278 steps or 21 floors, and that equates to an easy three-minute walk down and a five-minute, heart-pounding walk up. I suggest that, if we do build a staircase, there be a landing with a bench halfway up for those who might need a rest stop. The stairs should be wide enough to allow for two-way traffic, and the stairs should be well-lighted.

Neal Weissman

To RIOC:

Please explain again, if possible, the reasons behind the Octagon express bus schedule. I'm sure they exist.

Ah, but do they justify the fact that an empty Octagon bus does not stop at the 'other' bus stops where people stand and wait, on a rainy morning (April 27, 9:15)?

It may come as a surprise, but we, the non-Octagon people, are not outlandish; all we want is get to the subway or Tram and get to work, in the most humane fashion possible.

If we promise to behave and not to stare at the high-rent-clean-hallways-non-urine-smelling-fire-staircases building tenants, will the Octagon bus please stop and pick us up, too? We'll keep to ourselves and step right to the back of the bus.

M. Menglide

The letter above was submitted before last week's change of routes.

Letters deadline for May 19 issue: Tue., May 15
After deadline, letters considered on a space-available basis.

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 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, *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 lobby desk at 531 Main Street; allow extra time for typesetting. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief. 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.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed**., **Oct**. **3**, 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. (Future meetings Nov. 7, Dec. 5.)

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur**., **Oct**. **25**, 4:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. An open forum for residents to bring matters before the Board will follow the formal session. (Future meeting 9:30 Nov. 29.)

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed**., **Nov**. **7**, 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. (Future meeting Dec. 5.)

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur**., **Nov**. **29**, 9:30 a.m., Good Shepherd Community Center.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed**., **Dec**. **5**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level).

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
9:30, **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

Yonkers Raceway, Sat., May 5, 12:00 noon
General Meeting, Tue., May 8, 7:00 p.m.
Mothers Day Party, Sat., May 12, 6:00 p.m.
Atlantic City, Wed., May 16
Coler-Goldwater visits RISA, Mon., May 21, 10:30 a.m.
Senior Day, Sun., June 3

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

Briefly from page 1

• State Senator José Serrano has included member items in the State budget for the **Historical Society** ($5,000) and RIVAA, the **Visual Arts Association** ($8,000), as well as the New York Junior Tennis League ($6,500), which has a program on the Island, directed by Joyce Mincheff.

• A Roundtable of PS/IS 217 students from grades 5-8 made grants – funds raised in their recent **Penny Harvest** – to a charitable group in Kenya and to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

• Following up on last October's light-aircraft crash on the Upper East Side, Rep. Carolyn Maloney has urged the Federal Aviation Administration to **permanently prohibit East River overflights** except when pilots receive advance permission from air traffic control.

• Minority Democrats in the State Senate are trying to revise the 421-a tax incentive program for creation of new affordable housing, calling the present program a "hundreds-of-millions giveaway for luxury housing." In a press release, they quote a study by the Pratt Center for Community Development, which cited Roosevelt Island's **Riverwalk Place** as having a lifetime tax break of $24.7 million. The Democrats propose that developers should get 421-a tax breaks only if their projects are 30% affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families, with 50% of the affordable units set aside for residents of the local community board area.

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED
APARTMENTS
FOR RENT

Riverwalk Landing #4 is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for 25 affordable housing rental apartments now under construction at **Riverwalk Landing #4** on **Roosevelt Island**. This building is being constructed through the Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program of the City of New York's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The size, rent and targeted income distribution for the 25 apartments are as follows:

# Apts. Available	Apartment Size	Household Size	Monthly * Rent	Total Annual ** Income Range Minimum	Maximum
3	Studio	1	$887	$37,223	$39,680
14	1 Bedroom	2	$949	$37,960	$45,360
8	2 Bedroom	3	$1,142	$47,858	$51,040
		4		$47,858	$56,720

* Includes gas for heat and cooking
** Income guidelines subject to change

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.

No Brokers Fee. No Application Fee.

MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, Mayor
The City of New York
Department of Housing Preservation and Development
SHAUN DONOVAN, Commissioner

www.nyc.gov/hpd

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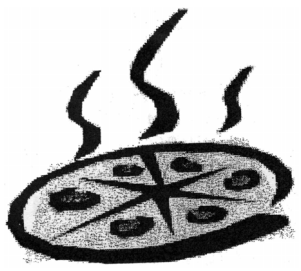
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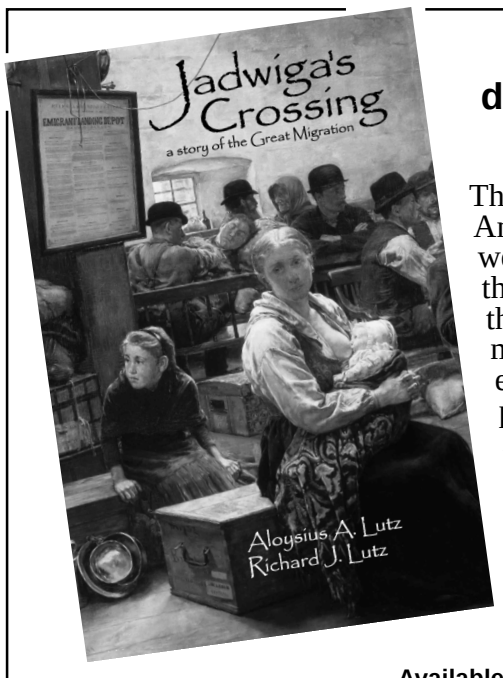
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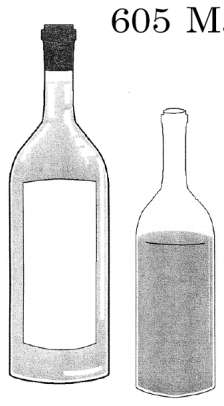
The people who built upon the American dream after the Civil War were immigrants who responded to the promise of a free country with the confidence that they could make their way in a new environment. The people who prepared the way for the American Century were people like Jadwiga Wdowiak and Paul Adamik. This is their story.

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Micah Keller is Endorsed by: Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Councilwoman Jessica Lappin, Borough President Scott Stringer, Comptroller William Thompson and NYS Senator Jose Serrano

I am running to succeed Pete Grannis as the Assemblyman representing Roosevelt Island. As Pete begins his new job in Governor Spitzer's administration, it is important that the working families of Roosevelt Island continue to have a progressive member of the Assembly fighting for them in Albany to:

- *Preserve the affordable housing and character of Roosevelt Island.*
- *Work for increased accountability and transparency of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.*
- *Ensure that South Point Park becomes a reality.*

Together we can fulfill the promise of Roosevelt Island.



MICAH KELLNER

DEMOCRAT FOR ASSEMBLY

For more information, or to volunteer, please email kellnerforassembly@gmail.com

Swim Team at Health & Fitness Day

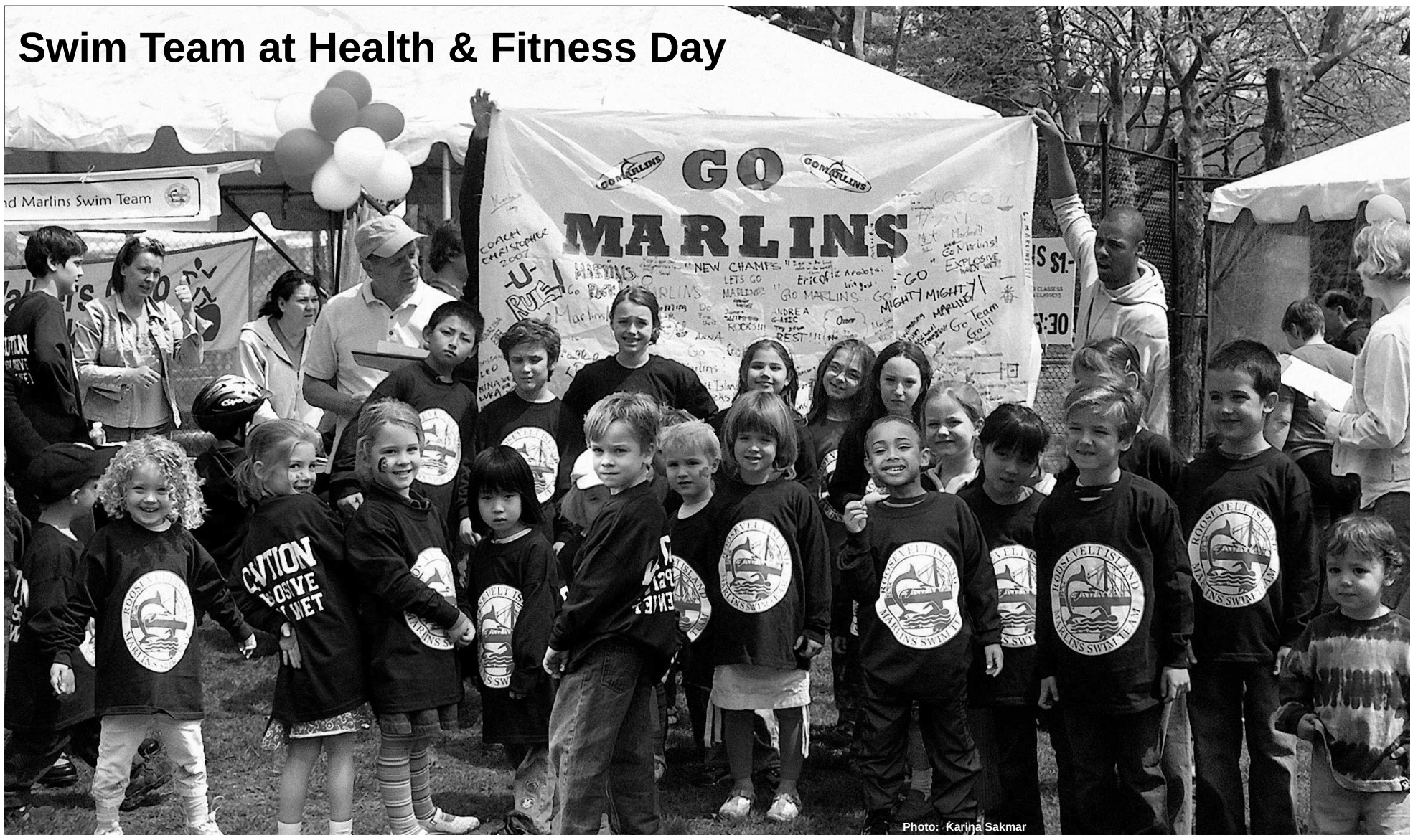


Photo: Karina Sakmar

Kids in the Island's Learn-to-Swim program (see ComingUp, page 3) put on their Marlins Swim Team shirts to participate in last Saturday's Health and Fitness Day. Coach Igor Shoukhardin and Instructor Christopher Johnston are holding the team banner, left and right.

Election from page 1

powered to hire and fire the President of RIOC – a power the Board already has, though it has always accepted the Governor's choice, as in the case of Shane.

MTG's efforts, through RIRA, ultimately led to a compromise in which Pataki accepted an increase in the number of residents on the RIOC Board. Resident seats now comprise a majority of the nine-member Board but, under the plan envisioned in the remarks by Shane and VanAmerongen, the only non-residents on the Board would be those required by the RIOC statute – the Chair, who is the Commissioner of the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), currently VanAmerongen, and a representative of the State Budget Office.

While the City's mayor has the right to propose two names for the Board, one of whom must be a resident, the presumption is that he or she would agree to put forward the name of someone pre-elected by residents.

An election of Board members, whether held in June or after, could produce considerable change if it fills all the terms that are currently expired or soon will expire. They include, with term-end dates as supplied by RIOC:

- **David Kraut** – June, 1995
- **Patrick Stewart** – July, 2001
- **John Mannix** (non-resident) – June, 2005
- **Mark Ponton** – May, 2006
- **Alberteen Anderson** – June 10, 2007
- **Michael Shinozaki** – December 27, 2007

The term of **Charlee Miller**, the most recent appointee, is listed by RIOC as expiring in June of 2009, though the law specifies four-year terms. (Deborah Beck, who was dismissed from the Board by then Governor Pataki when Miller was appointed, did not serve a full four years.)

RIOC Board members whose terms have expired serve until replaced.

MTG will meet again Monday evening to further refine its draft plan, which will be presented to the RIRA Common Council at its meeting on Wednesday (May 9) at 8:00 p.m. in the Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level). The MTG meeting on Monday night (May 7), like the RIRA meeting, will be open to the public. It will be held in the lower community room at Westview (595 Main Street) at 7:30 p.m. Whatever the RIRA Council approves would then be subject to further discussion with Shane and, possibly, acceptance by the RIOC Board of Directors.

In its draft form as of *The WIRE's* Thursday night press deadline, the MTG proposal envisions an election on Tuesday, June 26. (It was deemed unworkable to attempt to have the election coincide with the June 5 special election to fill the State Assembly seat vacated when Pete Grannis resigned to become Commissioner of the State Department of Environmental Protection.) That date would be preceded by a storm of activity: Nominating papers and petitions, the State background questionnaire, and a campaign with public Q&A sessions.

As the plan is envisioned, all Island residents 18 and older would be able to vote, regardless of national citizenship, though each voter would be required to present evidence of Island residency, such as a driver's license or other official document showing age and address. (Building tenant lists might also be used.)

After the election, there would be State follow-up – inquiries to confirm candidate suitability under State regulations, then gubernatorial appointment, and State Senate approval.

Under the plan, residents would vote Island-wide on all nominees. Ways of achieving some sort of proportional representation for each Island building were set aside in favor of a method of getting the best possible list of nominees, no matter the buildings in which they live. MTG members commented that running RIOC is concerned with the Island as a whole, and has little to do with individual buildings, which have their own management structures.

The plan drafted by MTG – subject to acceptance by the RIRA Common Council and then by RIOC President Shane and, possibly, by the RIOC Board – envisions subsequent elections being held at the same time as elections for the Residents Association Common Council, which falls on the November election day in even-numbered years. It also contemplates asking for a moratorium on replacing any Board members until an election can be held.

Trace Islanders' efforts toward self-governance in the *WIRE* archive at nyc10044.com.

Shane Says Public Safety Will Move to 504 Main St.

RIOC President Steve Shane told *The WIRE* last week that the Public Safety Department (PSD) will move to 504 Main Street, the Blackwell "minischool" space last occupied by RIOC itself while its quarters at 591 Main Street were repaired, and before that by the Lillies Christian School.

Speaking of Jim Fry, the current PSD Chief, Shane said, "I asked Jim if he would like to get out of the current space on a permanent basis." Initially, 504 Main had been seen as a temporary relocation space during repair of the PSD facility in Eastwood across the street from Trellis.

Shane listed a series of advantages to making the move permanent: A more central location once Southtown is completed, getting PSD cars off Main Street, more privacy when people are brought into the station, space for lockers, better "holding pens," and a more separated office area. Shane described the PSD staff as "wildly enthusiastic" about the move. He said he "tried the idea out" on "a couple of other resident associations" and that RIRA President Matthew Katz "didn't jump up and down and start screaming."

Asked about past plans to use the 504 Main Street location as expansion space for the Youth Center, which occupies adjacent space in Eastwood, Shane said, "There must be other ways to deal with the Youth Center. We've got plenty of available space."

Shane said he envisioned setting aside a portion of the building for retail space.



The Maple Tree Group's Monday night meeting, working on an election plan. Present when this photo was taken, clockwise from left: RIRA President Matthew Katz, MTG Convenor David Bauer, RIRA Secretary Sherie Helstien, Lee Edelman, Vicki Feinmel, Ivens Stanton, and Margie Smith, who chairs RIRA's Government Relations Committee.

Octagon from page 1

gallery and the Roosevelt Island Historical Society.

Back in the day, as Bly's rowboat approached the Island, she trembled in fear. "What is this place?" she asked of a man "who had his fingers sunk into the flesh of my arm." Blackwell's Island, he replied, "an insane place, where you'll never get out of."

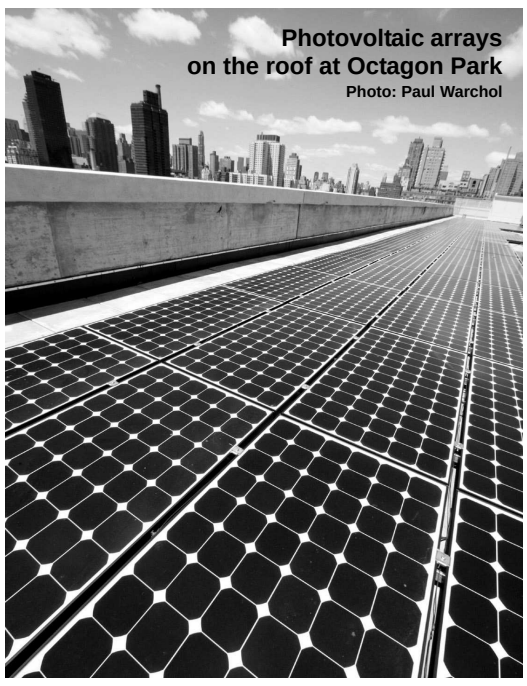
Had she arrived today, though, Bly could have gotten out pretty easily: the Octagon has its own express Red Buses during rush hour, and as soon as the Army Corps of Engineers gets its act together, Bly's old dock will be ready to welcome a New York Water Taxi for smartly-dressed commuters; the permits are already in place.

Once Becker+Becker got the green bug, they kept going. The list of green elements they rejected is possibly longer than what they wound up using, but that's the way it goes when you're charting new territory. "Building green is very fun in theory, and it's fun when you're finished," explained Renner, a city planner by training. "The technology is so new that there's trial and error, and a lot of investigating of things endlessly that you may or may not implement."

Like the fuel cells that were rejected in favor of the rooftop photovoltaic panels. Or the pricey natural bamboo they wanted for flooring until they realized that the energy expended in importing it all the way from Asia outweighed any green benefits.

Bruce Becker, president of Becker+Becker and the chief force behind the Octagon restoration, would have been on this little Octagon tour, but he had a couple of things on his schedule that got in the way. Last Tuesday alone, he spent the morning at Development New York's first Green Building Awards ceremony, where Gotham Construction won for its work as contractor on the Octagon and two other projects.

Then, Tuesday evening, Becker received the Lucy Moses Award for the Octagon from the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Octagon has also won the Green Apple award from the Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Protection. Becker outlines the awards he's received in terms of color: there's a silver certificate coming soon for surpassing yet another environmental standard. He barely has time to design new and greener buildings for all the colorful awards he has to pick up.



Photovoltaic arrays on the roof at Octagon Park
Photo: Paul Warchol

Clearly, the Octagon has emerged as a champion in the suddenly hot field of "green" – buildings whose design, systems, and upkeep are consistent with the goals of a new, Earth-friendly construction aesthetic. But the developer's commitment to green isn't only about being kind to the environment. Renner figures they received about $5 million in tax breaks and other construction incentives for going green, in addition to the lower cost on the back end: the gas and electric bills are about 35% less than in buildings that are energy hogs. (Renters get a break on their own electric bills estimated at $90-$270 per year, depending on the size of the apartment.)



Photo: Paul Warchol

Back to Kermit, though… it's definitely not easy being green. Renner is candid about the brave new world of green, in which no one is quite sure these newfangled mechanical systems will work precisely as planned, because "you rely on your mechnical/electrical/plumbing engineers, you hire specialists. They do energy models where they look at how this equipment will perform. But it comes down to how well your engineer designed it, and how well it was put in."

Take the pool, for example. The elaborate system whereby the water from the pool mingles with the water from the HVAC system, sort of a literal One Hand Washes the Other, sounds great on paper. And it does work, in its way, to use cold water to cool what needs cooling and hot water to warm it elsewhere. In practice, though, the pool water only gets a few degrees warmer than otherwise, which is not the same for swimmers as stepping into a warm bath. "In ten years, they might want to install some other kind of heater," suggested Renner.

Then there are the gorgeous old floor planks in the rotunda. As you walk on them, you can imagine yourself in one of those Northeast Pennsylvania barns. Unfortunately, a few of the planks endured recent water damage from a sprinkler-system mishap, and there's no way to match the damaged pieces of wood to the barns whence they came. Any replacement boards will look decidedly different.

There's also a great plan to get in on the energy savings provided by that turbine experiment that's going on in the East River. Currently, Gristedes is drawing power from the fish-friendly turbines. "We're in the queue," said Renner wryly, meaning that the Octagon isn't the only entity waiting its turn for those turbines.

All those tax incentives aren't exactly free, either. On Monday, May 7, an army of inspectors will arrive with 50 sensor devices to test the air and make sure that no one mopped a floor with ammonia or mistakenly sprayed Pledge on a wooden bannister. Because the tax credits are allocated over a five-year period, the building is tested annually to make sure they're earned. "We need to meet certain benchmarks in order to continue to receive this financing," says Renner.

He points to a reception-area photo of one of the sensor devices. "It's pretty sophisticated equipment," he said, then corrected himself after a *WIRE* reporter looked dubious. "Actually, in this picture, it doesn't look so sophisticated," he agreed. It looked like a low-tech prop from the original *Star Trek* TV series.

"But if you break it, that's $100,000 right there," said Renner, cheering up considerably.

Green is good, but it comes at a price.

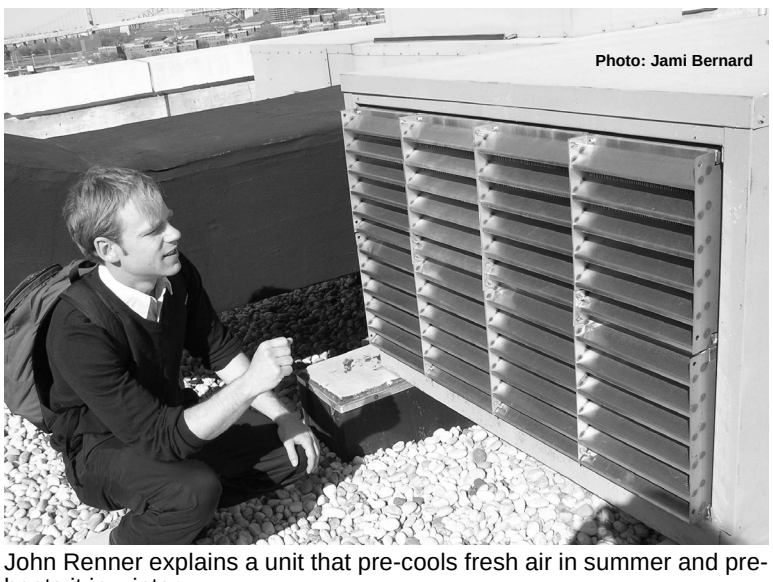


Photo: Jami Bernard

John Renner explains a unit that pre-cools fresh air in summer and pre-heats it in winter.

Youth Program from page 1

born in Puerto Rico, but our family is... Well, I have German, French, Indian, and my great grandfather was a Spaniard, on my mother's side." So she appreciates – no, absolutely *adores* – the diversity of Roosevelt Island. "Just walking down the street and going to the school and seeing the seniors, and the youth... It is what a community really should be. You have such a diverse community, and that should be *celebrated* every which way."

She intends to celebrate it through her role as replacement for Charlie de Fino, who left the Youth Center in January of 2006 after his twelve-year dream of a Youth Center expanding into 504 Main Street, the former Lilies Christian School space and, before that, an Island minischool, was quashed by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board of Directors, which wanted more documentation of Youth Center programs than de Fino wanted to supply. Both de Fino and Rivercross resident Steve Kaufman, then the Chair of the Youth Center Board, said the information had been supplied to RIOC Boards repeatedly. The impasse meant that $1.5 million in City funding has been returned.

[The space at 504 Main Street is now to become the new home of the Island's Public Safety Department, according to RIOC President Steve Shane.]

But Kaufman is newly fired with enthusiasm, too. He's staying on the Youth Program's Board during a transition from a 16-month period in which he did what he could to fill in after de Fino's departure. He's the only holdover from the old Board. "All their kids grew up. Mine, too," he says. "We needed a new Board with parents of kids actively involved in the program, and every one of the new Board members does."

The involvement of those parents is seen as a key to the Youth Center's future by both Tina Gonzalez and Scot Bobo. Says Bobo, "The level of parent involvement is a lot lower than it could be because I don't think a lot of parents knew how to get in the door. Now, a top item on the agenda is how do we get more parents involved.

"There are new families on the Island. This was the biggest signup we've had for baseball in ten years, up from 60 to 80 for the minors, and in minor-league baseball we now have two groups. And a lot of people from off the Island are getting the word that our programs are good." Bobo feels it's a good idea to have off-Island families involved. It just adds to the Island's diversity, he says.

"When I moved here 13 years ago, there was a lot more action at the Youth Center," Bobo said this week when he sat down for a chat with *The WIRE*. "The facility was more full than it is now. There were Scout sleepovers, more music programs – a lot more going on.

"Everybody on the Island is touched by the Youth Center, whether they know it or not. There's Roosevelt Island Day, and the Halloween parade and party. All the people on this Island are part of this program, but we need to get the word out." Bobo says his own ten-year-old son discovered the Youth Center about a year ago and loved the big-screen TV, the computers, and the friends. "He started hanging out there, which was fine, because we knew where he was." But as the program "dwindled" without a full-time executive director, Bobo's son drifted away. Bobo wants to bring back all the youth who've drifted away, and bring more newcomers and their parents into the program.

Old Youth Program Board	**The New Board**
Michael Babcock, Chair	Scot Bobo, Chair
Steven Kaufman, VP/Treasurer	Christina Ewing, VP
James Kaufman	Steven Kaufman, Treasurer
Steve Marcus	Patti Fallone
Jimmie Wan	Jennifer Fitzgerald
	Rebecca Hogan
	Brian King

Gonzalez, who has raised three children and doesn't look anywhere near old enough to be the grandmother of another two, feels the same way. "Being a parent – that's my proudest profession – you realize that you have to partner with people, to be conscious that they are human beings, not labels. You have to bring them in and work with them." She enthusiastically describes a program in which even security guards at a youth facility began, under her guidance, to know that program's clientele as families.

As for the kids, she sees a broad mission: "I've worked with gangs, with children in Rikers, with youth groups... It's not only looking at them as future presidents and councilpersons and doctors and nurses. When you look at today's children, you're looking at the environment in which your own children will live as they grow. It is that changing environment that will be our future."

Gonzalez confesses to having a soft spot for teenagers. "After a certain age, people seem to think that kids should have it all together. I hate to break it to everybody but, if you look around in the world, there are a lot of people in very strategic places who don't have it all together." She adds, "We have a lot to learn from our youth."

Asked about her plans for the Youth Center, Gonzalez says, "I hope to become part of this wonderful community. With progress comes change. I hope I'm going to be part of very positive change as well as development. The previous Board did a great job of making sure the Youth Center is there and sustaining it. Our goal will be to take it to another level – enhancing and enriching it – and seeing to it that people have and feel *ownership* of the Youth Program. It should be a community resource."

It's like the motto of the Police Athletic League, Gonzalez says. "Before kids can go places, they need a place to go." She adds, "That needs to be a place they want to be." She clearly intends to make the Youth Center that place for well over a thousand kids who already participate directly in activities at the Center and at PS 217, where the Youth Program runs Roosevelt Island's Beacon Program – and she wants to reach more.

Scot Bobo invites parents who'd like to get involved to get in touch with him at LScotBobo@yahoo.com or at **212-486-3338**.

The number at the Youth Center is **212-935-9365**.



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Eileen has a Master's Degree in Developmental Psychology, and has worked as a child development specialist, early childhood educator, and parent counselor, and developed the Creative Play for Kids program in various locations in Manhattan and here on Roosevelt Island for Island Kids.

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Date: Monday, May 14
Time: 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Where: Island Kids, 536 Main Street
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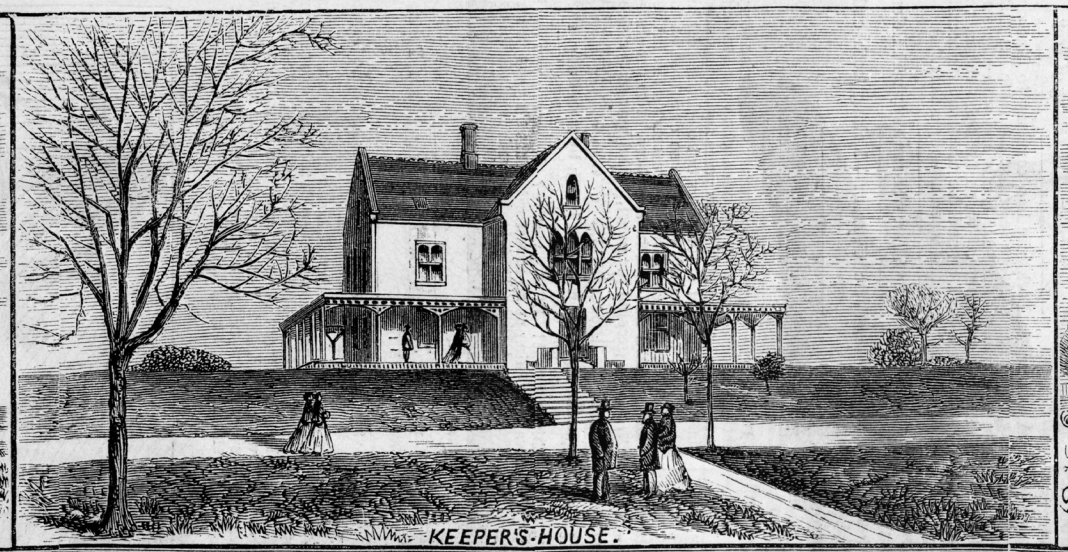
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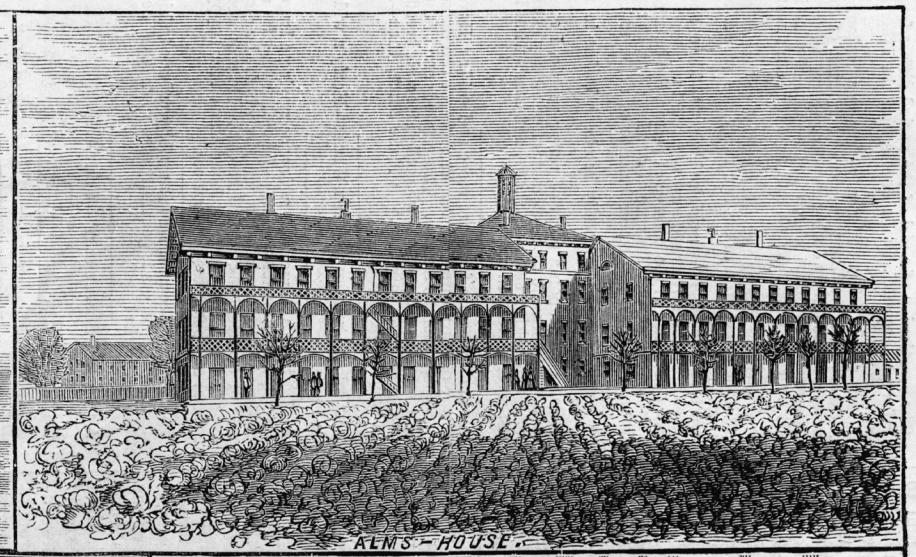
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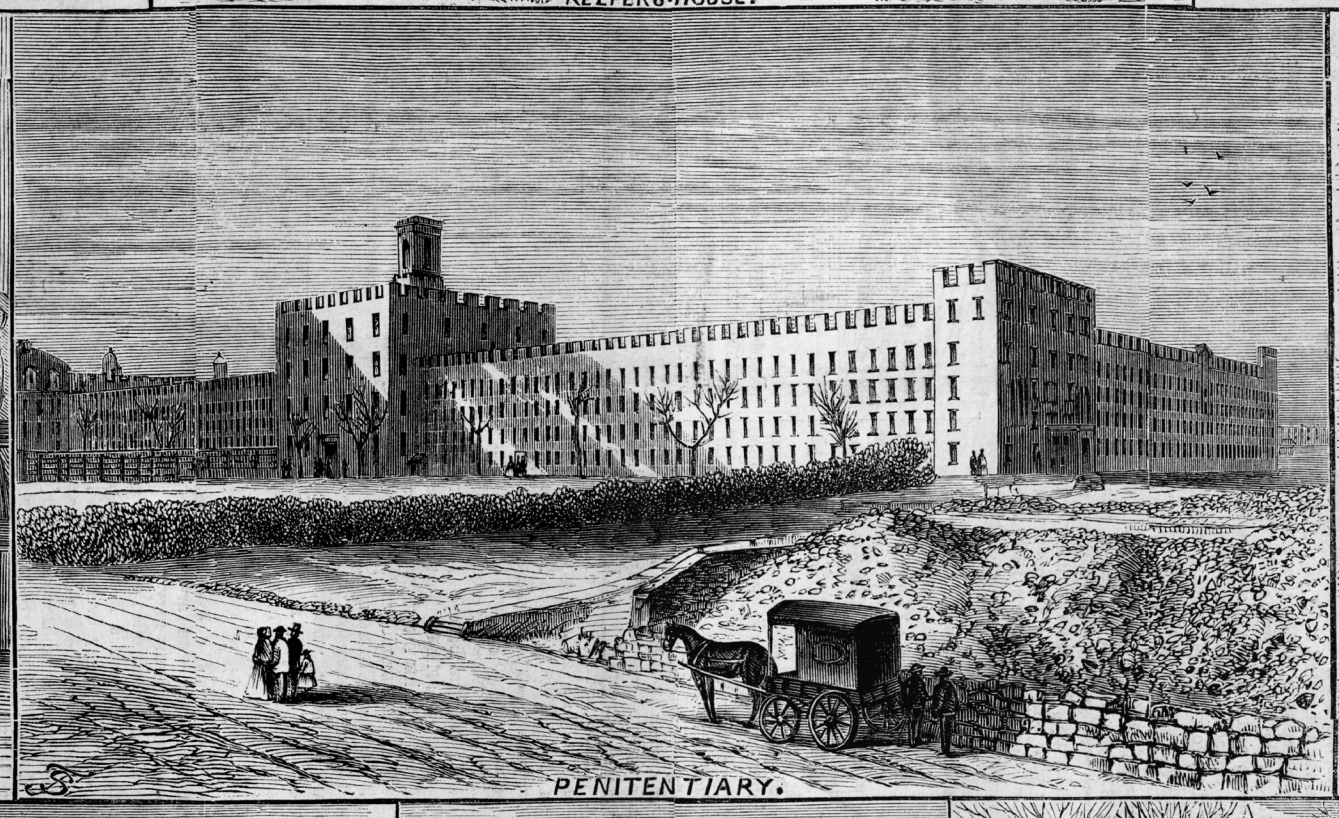
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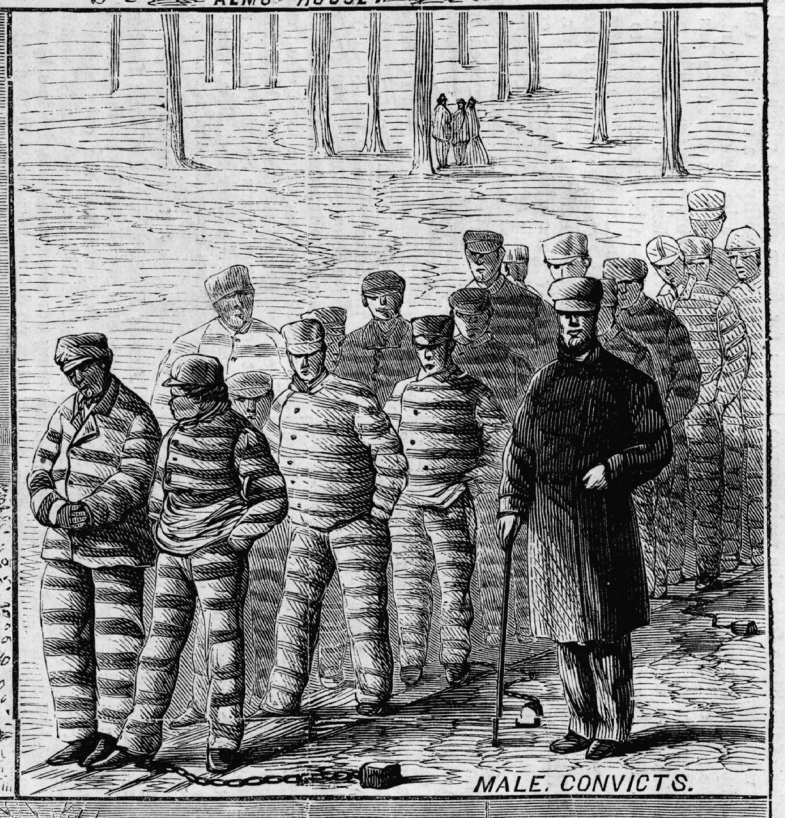

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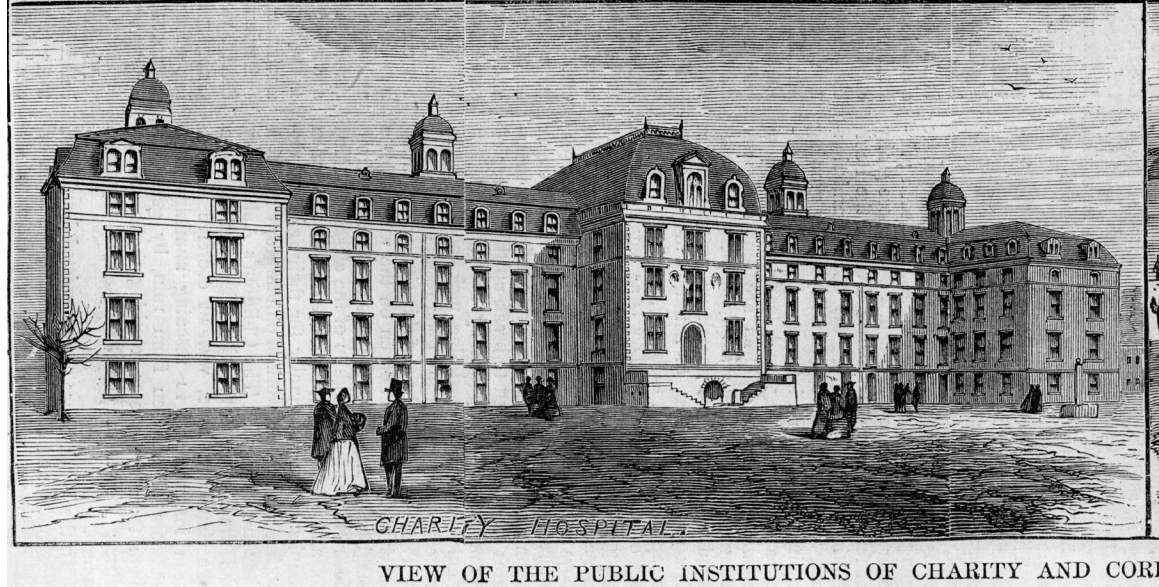

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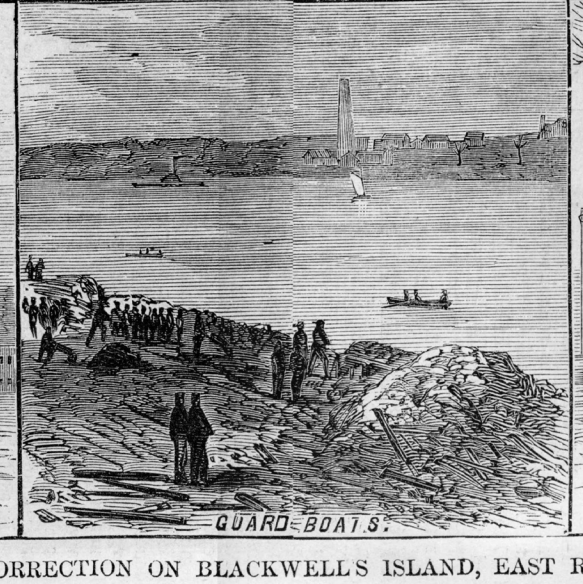

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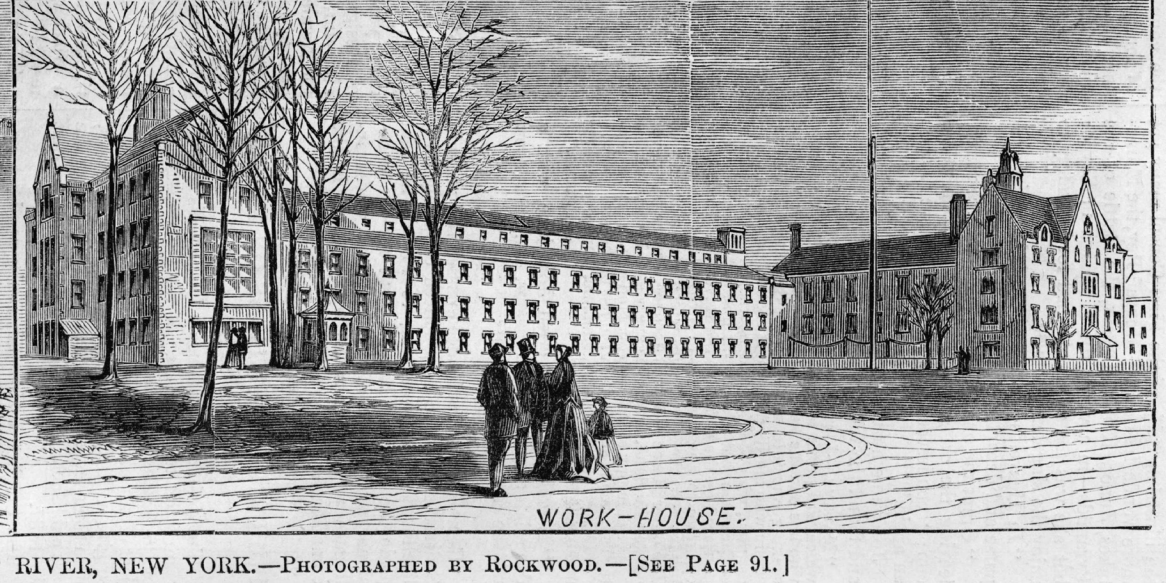

FEMALE CONVICTS.


PENITENTIARY.


MALE CONVICTS.


CHARITY HOSPITAL.


GUARD-BOATS.


WORK-HOUSE.

VIEW OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF CHARITY AND CORRECTION ON BLACKWELL'S ISLAND, EAST RIVER, NEW YORK.—PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROCKWOOD.—[SEE PAGE 91.]

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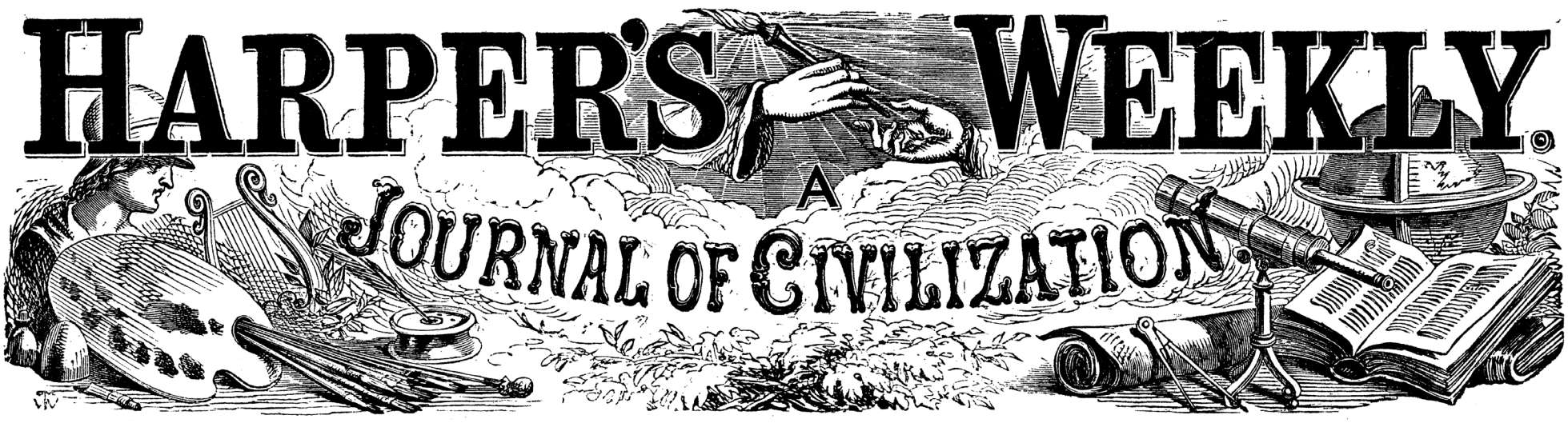
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VOL. XIII.—No. 632.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1869. [SINGLE COPIES, TEN CENTS. $4.00 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year 1869, by Harper & Brothers, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

Editor's note: Our home was called Blackwell's Island 150 years ago, before it became Welfare Island, then Roosevelt Island. The following text is taken, as published, from *Harper's Weekly*, February 6, 1869. Illustrations are on page 10, at left.

The public institutions on Blackwell's Island, committed to the charge of the Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction, form the subject to our illustrations on page 92. We propose to give a brief description of those institutions, with some facts and suggestions derived from the last published Report of the Commissioners – that for 1867.

The Small-pox Hospital, at the southern extremity of the Island, is sometimes entirely vacant. Advantage was taken of such a vacancy in 1867 to repair and paint the building throughout, and to introduce gas for lighting from the Charity Hospital. Of the 209 patients under treatment that year fifteen died.

The Charity Hospital in 1867, subsisted 6855 patients, of whom 505 died. This institution, though open to patients suffering from every variety of disease, is largely devoted to the treatment of syphilis. More than 2000 cases of this description were admitted in 1867. It will soon be necessary to erect a separate hospital for patients of this class.

No applicants are admitted to the Alms-house except those who, from old age or chronic infirmity, are incapable of earning a livelihood; for it is found that inmates, after a brief residence, lose all self-reliance and become a public charge during life. The able-bodied, who may be suffering from want, are either granted temporary relief by the Superintendent of the Outdoor Poor, or they are committed to the Workhouse. Under the present regulations the Almshouse is, as it should be, a shelter for the old and infirm rather than as formerly the abode of the vagrant and slothful. Hospital rules have been established, thorough cleanliness is enforced, and a more generous diet has been provided.

The prisoners committed to the Penitentiary, numbering 2311 in 1867, are divided into three classes, according to the gravity of their crimes, and, though subject to the same rules in respect to labor and discipline, they work in separate gangs and eat at separate tables, and each prisoner occupies a separate cell. Only those guilty of felony wear the distinctive dress of the Penitentiary. "There are," say the Commissioners, "about 30,000 children in this city growing up in ignorance and idleness. They have no occupation but to beg, and learn no art but to steal. Hordes of children are sent out every morning to beg or pilfer among the piers and bulkheads of the city, to snatch up, unobserved, a few grains of coffee, or handfuls of cotton, or scraps of iron; and their progress from the first act of pilfering to burglary is as regular as the progress of a school-boy from class to class. At the age of fifteen the girls are prostitutes and the boys professed thieves. The brevity of their lives, shortened by syphilitic disease, is the only check upon the increase of their numbers." The measures recently adopted to break up this career of crime among our youth by arresting children found begging or peddling nick-nacks in the streets promise to secure good results.

The Juvenile Asylum of this city, which is authorized to receive children on the warrant of a magistrate, has been the means of saving from destruction man children of the classes referred to, and its managers are entitled to warm thanks of the community for their zeal and devotion to the great work of philanthropy in which they are engaged. The Children's Aid Society and the Reformatory, with other charities of a like character, have, without coercive powers been instrumental in rescuing annually large numbers of children from ruin, by gathering them from the streets, clothing them, and securing for them comfortable and reputable homes.

To the Work-houses are committed drunkards, vagabonds, and disorderly persons, the terms of imprisonment varying from ten days to six months. As a house of correction it well fulfills the purposes of its establishment. Of the persons committed a considerable proportion are newly-arrived emigrants. In order to protect the counties of the State from the maintenance of foreign vagrants and criminals, the Legislature has imposed a tax upon each emigrant arriving at the port of New York. The Commissioners of Emigration collect the money thus raised, which they disburse under regulations which they have framed for their own government.

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Katz from page 3

RIOC President, this DHCR Commissioner, and this Governor. If we establish an elected RIOC Board of Directors, there must be an understanding that the enfranchisement of this community will endure.

For many years now, RIRA elections have been impeccably run and the results universally accepted. However, we can't just use RIRA elections as a template for RIOC. The RIRA Constitution requires us to elect building delegates according to a weighted schedule, so that each residential development seats a number of Council Members commensurate with its population. The result is a Common Council composed of 35 members when all the seats are filled. With the potential for electing only seven of the nine RIOC Board members, out mutual goal of widespread diversity – of representing each building group, each organization, each interest group on Roosevelt Island – is untenable.

While we surely will attempt to continue the building representation that the current Board enjoys, I believe that RIRA has a higher priority – to attract the very best and brightest residents to the job. We are asking our neighbors to take responsibility for a $19 million annual operating budget and a $13 million capital budget, and to make decisions that affect the lives of 12,000 residents (and counting). Now, more than at any time in the previous 23 years of RIOC's existence, and by virtue of the ballot box, we are asking them to accept more visiblity and accountability, not just to the Governor, but also to friends and neighbors.

Will the present RIOC Directors campaign to keep their Board seats? I don't know. Will others in the community volunteer to run for this essential task? That remains to be seen. Will RIRA be able to attract candidates Island-wide while keeping the quality of the individual Board members high? Again, we'll have to see. I know that MTG and RIRA can produce a flawless election based on mutually agreed-upon criteria.

But you, the residents, can make or break the process by providing or withholding your participation and support. If the community endorses the effort with quality candidates and strong participation at the polls, then we will have truly brought democracy to Roosevelt Island and made an enduring contribution to Island life. If the apathy prevails that sometimes destroys our best intentions and our best efforts, then the powers that be can say, "We gave them a shot and they simply weren't up to it. We'll have to continue imposing Board members on them in order to run the Island." That would be a shame, wouldn't it?

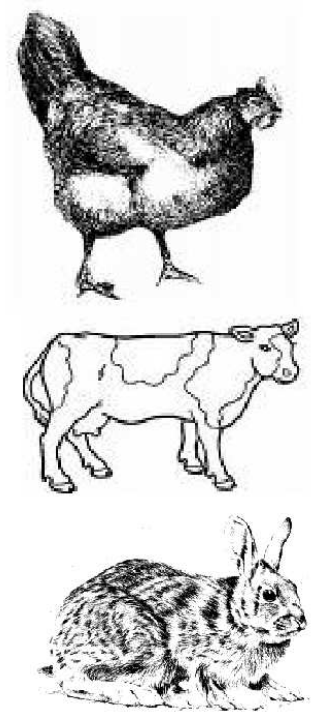
Look, I understand the pitfalls of democracy as well as anyone. As E.B. White said, "Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time." Sometimes you get an Abe Lincoln; sometimes you get a George W. Bush. If any resident over 18 can run (we haven't considered prerequisites for Board seats – education, job experience and the like – and I'm not sure we should), then utterly unqualified residents could conceivably be elected. It will be RIRA's job to vet the candidates' credentials before the public, in Town Meetings and in candidates' written communications and campaign signage, but it will be your job, the community's job, to pay attention and to vote for the very best men and women on Roosevelt Island. For this opportunity to work, you must stay attentive and you must stay committed. So, stay tuned.

A strange thing happened a few weeks ago. I was walking north on Main Street at just about twilight, and I passed a gray SUV parked in front of the cleaners. The smoked windows were closed, and so I couldn't see who was inside. Emanating from the interior was some loud music and the sweet odor of a certain proscribed herb; we're all familiar with that smell, right? Now, by itself this is not unusual and I really don't get bent out of shape if someone wants to take a toke or two some place quiet. What I found remarkable was that they chose to park directly opposite our Public Safety office. Apparently, they considered this location to be the safest place to do a dooby on Roosevelt Island, and indeed, there was no one patrolling the street as I passed. Curious, no?

And finally, this from the Department of Transportation, which has started the three-year renovation project on the Roosevelt Island Bridge. Tuesday saw the beginning of work to remove the two toll booths and toll islands adjacent to Motorgate and to level the roadway. This will improve the traffic lane's width for vehicles leaving the Island during the upcoming reconstruction project. Contractors will be working between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., but we are assured that these operations will not affect vehicular traffic on the Bridge. NYC DOT has hired a Project Community Liaison, Eric Deutsch, to provide the community with information and respond to any project-related questions, comments, or complaints, and he may be reached at **212-799-8803**, ext. 24, Monday through Friday between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

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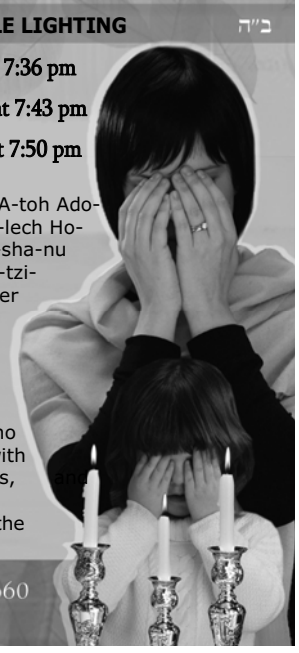
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Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.



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SPORTSWIRE

Roosevelt Island Minor League Baseball saw its Opening Day on April 28, and nearly 80 boys and girls on six teams got into the action.

In Game 1, Blue beat Maroon 7-6 in a game that was decided in the last inning. Earlier in the game, Blue's Nick "The Stick" Loveless hit a home run in his first at-bat. Not to be outdone, Maroon's Elija Cohen smacked a triple, and Kayla Tang hit a run-scoring double. Down by one run in the last inning, Blue's Aron Marfey tied the game with two outs on a solo home run. Two batters later, James Matten hit the game-winning RBI.

First basemen from both teams played brilliantly – Blue's John King and Maroon's Olivia Vordenberg, as well as Maroon's second baseman, Takeshi Fukai.

In Game 2, Green inched by Black with the same 7-6 score. Home runs were belted out by Green's Jordan Chambers (in his first-ever minor league at-bat!) and Black's Jakira Young. The game-winning homer was hit by Green's Jonathan Hurt. Black's Steven Sanchez went 3 for 3 at the plate, while Jaden Perry's timely hitting kept a rally going earlier on.

In the final game of the day, Red beat Light Blue, riding the powerful bats of Jonah Bobo, who smacked two home runs and a triple, Elvia Herrera, who went 3 for 3, and Cameron Hogan, who went 4 for 4. Hits into the outfield were quickly cut off by Red's Matthewos Butler, who kept Light Blue's runners from circling the bases. Light Blue team highlights were turned in by Luke Kruger-Aimone, who belted a 4th-inning home run and helped his team with 2 RBI's, and by Billy Cusick, with a rally-saving base hit. Light Blue's defense was anchored by Luke's play at shortstop, including an unassisted double-play, a spectacular line-drive catch at second base by B.J. Johnson, and tenacious defense by pitcher Brock Lucas.

Standings after one week are:

Red Team:	1-0
Green Team:	1-0
Blue Team:	1-0
Black Team:	0-1
Maroon Team:	0-1
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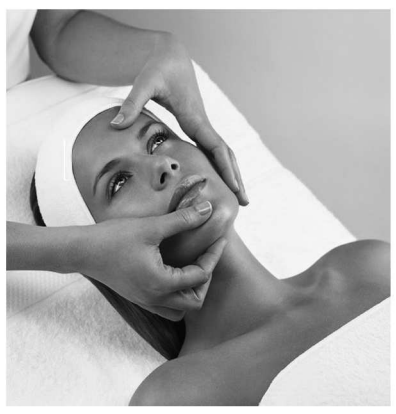
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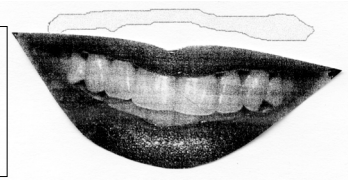
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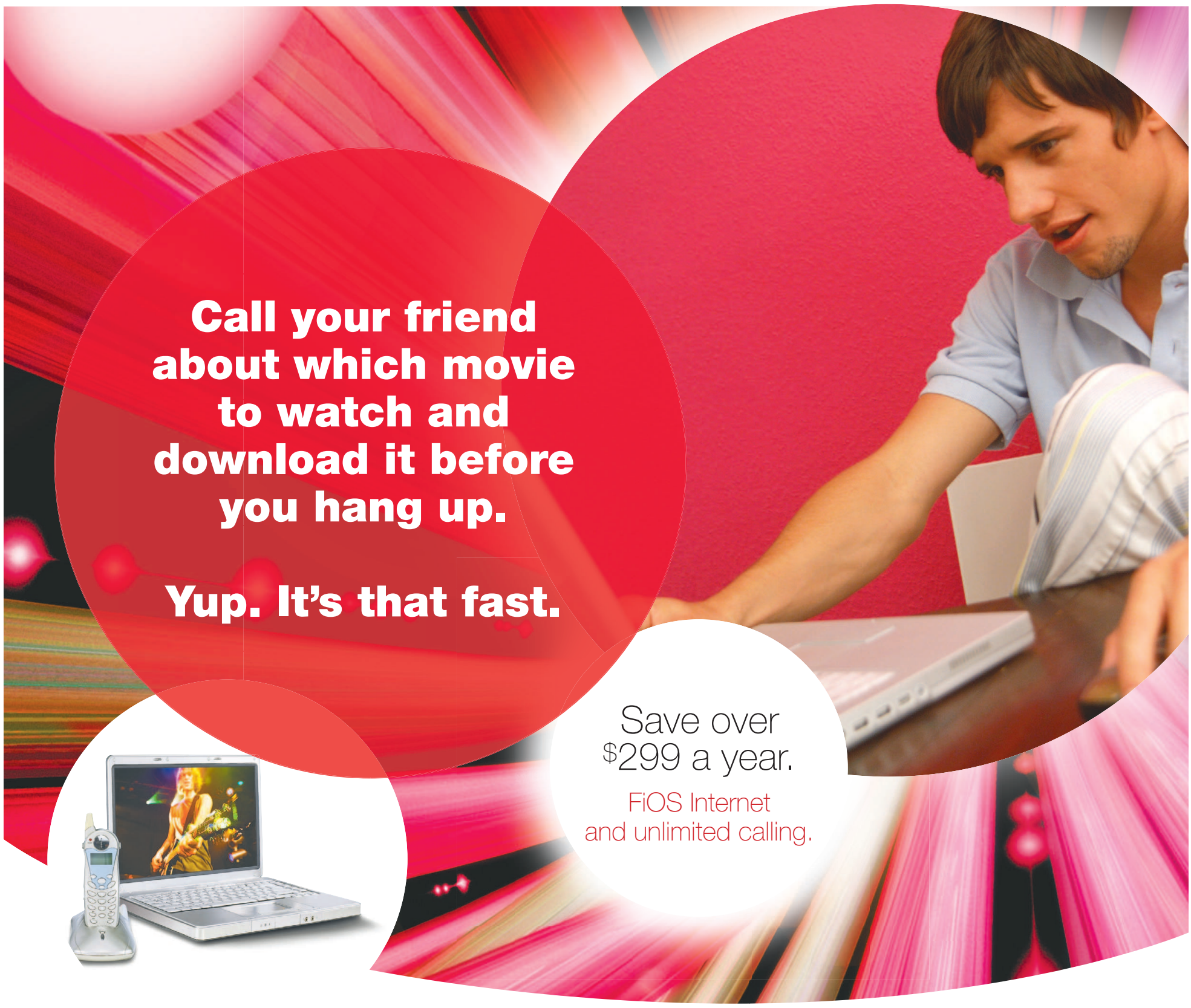
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