

Next issue
in 2 weeks:
September 8

The Main Street WIRE™

27th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



With \$15M to Spend (Or Not), RIOC Considers Tram's Future

by Dick Lutz

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and its Board of Directors face something of a deadline in making decisions about the future of the Tramway. The State Office of Management and Budget is encouraging RIOC to decide, within two months, whether it will use a budgeted \$15 million – or part of it – on the Tram.

It's not an easy decision, despite the appearance of "free money" set aside in the final budget of the

Pataki administration. It involves downtime, a host of legal restrictions, technical and structural limits, some judgments about durability of aging parts and availability of replacements, future capacity needs, the potential greater reliability and serviceability of a new system, and – if a decision is made to upgrade – just what upgrades should be done.

It is Safe

But one thing is clear. All the experts say the Tram is safe. An extensive series of inspections and tests by a half-dozen experts ranging from the builder-operator to a Columbia University professor, René Testa, hired to synthesize the findings of the others, pronounce the Tram safe as it stands today.

So safe and structurally sound, said Testa, that "It's possible you won't have to replace the system for another 30 years."

So why the rush?

After the Tram stranded two cabin-loads of passengers above the East River for hours in April, 2006, the State promised help, and the \$15 million was budgeted.

Even earlier, the operator of the Tramway had put forward a plan to replace cabins – a proposal that drew a skeptical response from at least one RIOC Board member, who noted that the operator also sells trams. A consultant was hired, and he seemed to concur with the recommendation to replace the

cabins, though not without some doubt expressed on the part of that same RIOC Board member, Mark Ponton, who refused to believe that some "inaccessible" parts of the cabin and hanger-arm assembly couldn't be inspected to verify their safety.

More consultants were brought aboard, some doing their work as recently as last month. There were more inspections, more testing, more examination of options. That led to a special meeting of the RIOC Board of Directors last week in which the final consultant, Prof. Testa summarized the findings for Board members. Other consultants then outlined some of the options for upgrades, and Board members – particularly Ponton – elicited some best estimates of just how long the existing Tramway could last.

The answer to that question – how much useful life is left in the 30-year-old system – is at least five years and, perhaps, more than another 30, assuming judicious maintenance, inspections, and testing.

One of the consulting firms, Thornton-Tomasetti, working with two subcontracted consulting firms, Lucius Pitkin and Hardesty & Hanover, looked for "fatigue cracking," which Prof. Testa identified as the enemy of systems built of metals. "No fatigue cracking was found" anywhere in the system. See **Tram**, page 10

Deal in the Making

Deep-Pockets Buyer Found to Guide Westview and Island House Out of Mitchell-Lama to Tenant Ownership

by Dick Lutz

A deal is in the works to sell Island House and Westview.

Charles Lucido, who heads the consortium of current owners, told *The WIRE* on Wednesday that he is working – with a specific buyer he described as "deep-pocketed" – on a sale that will be conditioned on the buyer "striking an arrangement with the tenants for a tenant-friendly conversion." Such a conversion would involve departure from the State's Mitchell-Lama affordable-housing program. It would also involve tenant ownership, he said, but with protection for tenants who decide to stay in the building as renters.

"My partners and I have always favored a tenant-friendly deal. Unfortunately, that didn't emanate from our previous buyer, but we intend to be more directly involved with this negotiation." Lucido said the tenant organizations at Island House and Westview have been generally aware of the search for a buyer.

Lucido said he could not yet name the prospective buyer, but described the firm or group as "New York people," with strong

experience, who "have the capability to self-finance the entire project." He said the buyer would be named "when we have a firm, binding contract."

"The plan must be affordable," Lucido said. "That's a condition. Absent there being an agreement and progress, then the worst option is coming out of Mitchell-Lama or selling to a buyer who comes out, and that's not what anybody wants at this stage." He said the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) is aware of the sale plan.

Effectively, the unidentified purchaser would become the sponsor of a tenant-ownership deal, Lucido told *The WIRE*. "It's been expressed to me that the tenants do not have the capability to bring off the deal themselves. I see the need for a deep-pocketed owner as a sponsor." He added, "We do not want to slow-track this project. I'm sure the tenants don't want to be in suspense any longer than necessary."

In a Monday interview, RIOC President Steve Shane said that tenant groups have been meeting with

DHCR, and that the two buildings have been encouraged "to bring their plans together. They are not totally distinct entities as a matter of public policy. Their future affordability plans ought to be similar. I have made it clear to them and DHCR has made it clear to them [that] we are interested in long-term affordability on the Island for public-housing policy purposes, as well as for compliance. See **Housing**, page 12

February 5, 2008

Residents Association Will Run Balloting to Nominate RIOC Board Members, Despite Hitches

The "election" in which Roosevelt Islanders will nominate potential appointees to the RIOC Board of Directors is on again, and now scheduled for February 5, 2008, which is presidential primary day in New York State – an election judged to be the best overall "draw" for voter turnout.

But the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) are now calling the event a "plebiscite" – a way of backing off from any

hint that the Governor would be giving up his statutory right and obligation to nominate those who serve on the Board, and send their names to the State Senate for confirmation.

The change came about when people on the Governor's staff became concerned that any seemingly official endorsement of a process called an "election" could – should the Governor decline to accept one or more nominees – appear to be a thwarting of democracy.

Actually, anyone can suggest a name for the RIOC Board, so the question was one of just how "official" the process run by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) could be. As now configured, it won't be "official" as far as the State is concerned, and the names forwarded to the Governor will effectively be "suggestions" – albeit suggestions backed by community-wide voting and, presumably, by the political structure.

In his Monday interview with *The WIRE*, RIOC President Steve Shane expressed some of the concerns that have arisen in the back-

and-forth between RIRA and the State (that is, DHCR and RIOC) in looking ahead to the election. "Early on, we were told in no uncertain terms that this was likely to be a one-issue campaign on the ground-lease extensions on Island House and Westview. To me, that trivialized the whole business. While I know the ground leases are important to the 761 people who live in those units, there are now 4,200 units on the Island and growing, and that is not the most important issue on the Island."

Shane continued, "I have urged [RIRA President] Matt Katz to be sure to do as much outreach as he can – more than he can – to be as inclusive as he can. It's really important that he do that. There is no surer killer of a program in the day and age in which we live than to have even the suggestion that political correctness is not being observed. You have to lean over backward to be correct. I would hope that some of the candidates are of different persuasions, that they are as representative of all the buildings as possible, the different constituencies in age, race, color, See **Plebiscite**, page 14



With RIOC's Cooperation, *The WIRE* has provided this literature rack at the Manhattan Tram station to welcome visitors with a copy of the newspaper and a brochure, *The Roosevelt Island Survival Kit*, which includes the map of the Island published last issue. Trellis paid printing costs. With the welcoming kiosk now open on the Island side (see page 11), the community is more ready than ever to receive the tourist trade.



The Editorial Page

PacePacePacePace

The pace is picking up. If you don't feel it already, you will soon.

There is, for one thing, this business of what to do about the **Tramway**, and a serious deadline imposed by the fact that State budgeting goes in yearly cycles. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation and its Board of Directors face some hard choices that involve trade-offs of increased downtime for improvements that seem marginal once the list extends beyond those things that can be accomplished anyway during the period of a track-cable adjustment (or replacement, should that be necessary).

The money part isn't a problem, except that there are fears about it being swept away in an end-of-fiscal-year new-budget. But the experts make it clear that it wouldn't be wise to overreach just for the sake of spending State money. We don't have all the nitty-gritty carefully packed away into neat mental pigeon-holes, so what seems obvious here may not be quite that simple. What seems obvious, though, is to key the amount of fix-up and modernization to the length of the necessary track-cable operation, which could be weeks if it's just a matter of shifting, or months, perhaps a year away, if at least one cable (and therefore all four) should be replaced.

Why? Because transportation problems here are already difficult, and Tramway downtime exchanged for marginal improvements with no boost in passenger throughput at the morning rush are not worth it. The experts say we have a solid Tram; let's fix what needs to be fixed, but let's not mess with success.

Then there's **Island House and Westview**. Against all expectation, Charles Lucido is negotiating with a buyer – the supposedly unfindable “deep-pockets” purchaser. If he manages to work out a contract that requires advantages for the tenants, rather than risk, this could be a good development. But there are matters of timing involved, and some delicate decision-making that will surely be required at DHCR and RIOC.

Lucido says he doesn't want to “slow-track” this deal, so there again, *pace*, and a need for DHCR and RIOC to focus and help move things along in a way that will benefit residents of these two Roosevelt Island “anchor” buildings.

And there's the **RIOC Board “Plebiscite,”** too. Although the balloting is now scheduled to take place in February, the five months between now and then will melt off the calendar like snow in a tanning salon, and Islanders who want a hand in this community's future should think deeply and fast about running in this quasi-election. They should know that, even though it's not a direct election, the names of the winners will go to the Governor with the solid backing of what we must hope will be an overwhelming turnout of Island voters.

Kids are going back to school. Orphans International's summer fundraising competition is wrapping up. Vacations are behind us. *The WIRE's* back on an every-two-week schedule. Summer's over, and Roosevelt Island is back to its usual bustle.

The pace is picking up.

DL

Whole month of August:

1. The movies have been going well, although one got postponed because of the threat of a rain-out. Each event costs about \$4,000, so attendance is important. If a forecast is for bad weather, cancellation (before noon of the preceding Friday) is necessary to avoid the cost. There is no weather insurance feasibly possible.

2. RIOC's summer crew has done a lot of seasonal projects and many of the young people have left to return to school. The Blackwell house renovation is now scheduled for completion in mid-October as the front porch is the latest holdup. The seawall repair project is almost completed. BBQs installed.

3. The Tram: Following the special Board meeting on the 17th, the engineering firms concluded that the present system is safe and can continue to operate while we are studying the possibilities for the future. Predictability, reliability, capacity, and minimum current disruption of service against maintenance requirements and service disruption form the matrix for decisions. The State budget imperative of committing funding is also involved as the cost-benefit analysis of any action is evaluated. Stay tuned.

4. The New York City Department of Sanitation is outlining a plan for upgraded AVAC facilities as the present system is showing its age. More to follow.

5. Leases with several of the existing merchants on Main Street have been discussed. Plans for the vacant stores are being considered in contemplation of the requirements of the Public Authorities Law.

6. RIRA and selection of candidates for RIOC's Board of Directors: Legal concerns have been expressed about the statutory non-delegable authority of the Governor to make nominations, subject to Senate confirmation, making direct RIOC involvement problematic. The discussions continue.

7. Teleconferencing equipment has been installed

If these are the dog days of summer, today is one wet, chilly doggy. Summers are never long enough for me. As Shakespeare lamented in his sonnet, “...summer's lease hath all too short a date.” Once again, my hopes of transformation into a bronzed Adonis are dashed by the onset of fall. So it goes.

Speaking of Shakespeare, I hope you had the opportunity to attend one of the performances of *The Tempest* presented at the Eastwood Amphitheater two weeks ago by RIRA. It was simply superb. Director Mike Flanagan and producer Julie White promise more of the same next summer. Bravo and we look forward to the next productions from our own two Joseph Papps.

Summer is undoubtedly winding down, and the last Southpoint movie screening is tonight. The film is “National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation” and the starting time is dusk. The last movie, “Funny Girl,” was preceded by a short subject: a ten-minute film called “Uncle” that was filmed right here on Roosevelt Island, or as we like to call it, Hollywood East. Thanks

The RIRA Column

and is functioning to bring RIOC into compliance with the Governor's Executive Order for meetings. The netcasting capability was utilized for the special meeting on the Tram. RIOC is evaluating the methodology as the technology is evolving and experience gained.

8. In conjunction with NYSERDA (New York State Energy Resources Development Agency), the study of the feasibility of the Steam Plant being utilized for co-generation has been preliminarily scoped and the



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

9. Catalyzed by Councilwoman Lappin, we met with planners for the New York Public Library to discuss a newer, enlarged space to be located in the northernmost of the Southtown buildings (#7) just south of Blackwell Park. RIOC and the Developer are reviewing agreements and physical issues of such development.

10. Southpoint Parks: The Trust for Public Land and the Roosevelt Memorial groups met to discuss matters of common concern such as utilities, comfort stations, maintenance, security, visitor center, etc. Economies of scale under joint management of either State Parks or City Parks would make much sense.

to Erica Wilder and RIOC for offering this delightful summer treat.



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

See **Katz**, page 12

The plans for Fall for Arts continue, with Saturday, October 6 chosen to present home-grown and off-Island artists and performers. The deadline for applications to present your artwork or to perform has been extended to September 7 and you can find information on the RIOC website www.rioc.com or by calling Erica Wilder at **212-832-4540**, x349. That same weekend, *The Encampment* will set up their tents for three evenings at Southpoint Park. I invite you to attend the first fall RIRA Common Council meeting

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We said goodbye to Lew Perkiss a couple of Sundays ago. (Formal obituary, page 12.)

Lew and his wife, Ellen, had been two of the pioneer residents of Rivercross, moving here in 1977. One of their children, Mark, was active on *The Main Street WIRE*, later going on to a career in journalism that led to employment in the New Jersey state government. Ellen died some 16 years ago, leaving Lew to carry on with a career as a lawyer in retirement.

There's an obituary elsewhere in this issue, but neither those words nor these can truly capture the man and the importance of his works. It could be enough to say that Lew Perkiss served *The WIRE* for the last several years as its pro bono counsel, offering advice on everything from potential libel to strategies for collecting from deadbeat advertisers.

At a performance of a Mahler symphony, Lew, a violinist, could grow rapturous.

Telling stories of his service in Europe in World War II, he could entertain a dinner partner for hours. But he made his mark as a civil liberties lawyer.

island observer



He believed passionately in free speech – so passionately that, although a Jew, he defended a hater in an upstate town when the man was arrested for handing out literature that espoused a view that Lew despised. On the books, he was defending the man. In his heart and in a keenly felt reality, he was defending the principle that even unpopular views deserve an airing without the interference of the state.

He believed that stupid ideas suffered in the light, and the more light the better.

He won that case but let the client know, in terms clear and certain, that he could not stomach the man nor his warped ideas. Listening to Lew tell the story, you could tell that he had been challenged many times by legal colleagues and friends with the simple “why” question. *Because*, he said by his demeanor and in words also clear and certain: *Because the right to advocate transcends the question of the acceptability of the particular advocacy.*

We said goodbye to Lew Perkiss a couple of Sundays ago. It is our good fortune that we will never have to say goodbye to his ideals.

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Movies at Southpoint, *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, tonight (Sat., Aug. 25), 7:30 (gate opens), 8:30 (movie), Southpoint Park, sponsored by RIOC.

***Timeless Photography* exhibition, photography of Island resident Selwyn Fund, continues through Sept. 2, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St.**



◀ ***Cultivating Stillness*** by Island resident Gerald Starlight, display window at New York National Bank, continuing through Sept. 1. Works in stone, wood, metal, ceramics, and ink.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, Fridays and Saturdays, 6:00-10:00 p.m., through September 15. *Summer Expressions* show ends tomorrow at Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours: Sat.-Sun., 11:00-5:00; Wed. and Fri., 6:00-9:00.

— The Coming Week —

State Assemblymember Micah Kellner, District Office hours, Thur., Aug. 30, and every Thursday, 3:00-7:00 p.m., in the RIOC Conference Room at 591 Main St.

— Future Weeks —

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.)

***The Main Street WIRE* — Next issue, Sat., Sept. 8. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an AddMe message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, Thur., Aug. 30; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Mon., Sept. 3; they are due Thur., Sept. 6. **Additional issues in 2007:** Sept. 22; Oct. 6, 20; Nov. 3, 17; Dec. 1, 15. **Issues scheduled in 2008:** Jan. 12, 26; Feb. 9, 23; Mar. 15, 29; Apr. 19; May 3, 17, 31; June 14, 28; Aug. 2, 30; Sept. 13, 27; Oct. 11, 25; Nov. 8, 22; Dec. 6, 20. **News phone, 212-826-9055; urgent matters, 917-617-0449. Phone** for dis-



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.

play and classified advertising placement and information, 212-751-8214.

Primary Election, Tue., Sept. 18.

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.)

***The Encampment*, art installation by Thom Sokoloski, Fri., Oct. 5 through Sun., Oct. 7, Southpoint Park. Volunteers are being sought to help with the installation; encampmentcollaborators@gamil.com. ▶**

Fall for Arts Festival, Sat., Oct. 6, Island residential areas.

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.)

Election, Tue., Nov. 6.

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.)



To the Editor:

A generally good editorial (*Democracy on Hold?*, *The WIRE*, July 28) on the need for more democratic governance on Roosevelt Island was made surreal and totally absurd by the flippant analogy that opened it. You write, “While Americans are dying in an effort to bring democracy to Iraq, the State of New York can’t find its way around legalisms to bring even a pseudo-democracy to Roosevelt Island.”

While U.S. soldiers are certainly dying and suffering horrible, mutilating wounds (for which they receive scandalously poor treatment) in increasing numbers in Iraq, the purposes for which they have been dispatched to die and kill have nothing to do with “democracy.” At this late date, over four years since the U.S. invasion — paved on a highway of mendacity, half-truths, manipulation, fear-mongering, and unremitting media and politician boosterism — is it still necessary to say that “freedom,” “democracy,” “human rights,” etc., ad nauseam, were just a necessary rhetorical cover by the Bush Administration, backed by large majorities of the Republican and Democratic parties (including, by the way, Clinton, Schumer, and Spitzer) to win over a cowed and ignorant public opinion for a war of aggression in anticipation of huge profits from control of vast energy resources? Do the *WIRE* editors think that if Iraq’s main resources were pickles that we would be witnessing this “war for democracy?”

In fact, this war, like all imperialist wars, necessarily increases pressures against democratic rights, political space, and civil liberties at home. For example, in the initial pro-war drumbeat, it was virtually impossible to find an out-right opponent of the war on the mass media outlets, or even op-ed pages, even though up until the actual invasion, nearly half the country opposed it. Now, of course, it is a different reality, public opinion is bitterly and increasingly disillusioned, still very confused, but seeing through the lies to the point where big-business politicians must appear to be against the war, even as they continue to fund it and unanimously stand against immediate withdrawal, hiding behind talk of “timelines,” “benchmarks,” and “redeployment.”

The Iraq invasion and occupation was about defending the economic and financial interests of U.S. corporations and banks in an area of the Earth, the Middle East, which, because of its vast oil and energy platform, has been at the center of the power struggles, intrigues, and, yes, world wars, of the richest capitalist powers and empires for over a century. The truth is that Washington has always supported the most reactionary anti-democratic and anti-secular forces in the Arab East, and opposed democratic movements because they also tended to be socially progressive and anti-imperialist with programs that would have impacted negatively on U.S. economic and financial interests and domination. It is a fact that Washington, and its CIA, fought against the 1958 democratic revolution in Iraq that tossed out the British flunkie monarch, and played a key role in elevating the Ba’ath party and the then-young assassin Saddam. It is a fact that Washington covered up Saddam’s chemical warfare against Iran, because the Reagan Administration supported Hussein

To the Editor:

I was excited to read about the option of Steam Plant co-generation for Southtown buildings for the sake of reducing global warming carbon dioxide emissions. This makes the lack of energy efficiency of current Southtown buildings all the more unacceptable. Many of the apartments in my Southtown building are baking hot in the summers and too cold in the winters. What good is improved energy supply if the building consumes large amounts of energy to heat and cool? We have the technology to improve the energy efficiency of buildings; see the Octagon building.

Roosevelt Island leadership should meet with the developer of Southtown buildings and ensure that future buildings achieve a higher standard of energy efficiency so that future residents/owners avoid living in discomfort, high electricity bills, and the need to invest in retrofitting to achieve higher standards that will be mandated by law. A first step would be to have NYSEDA (New York State Energy Resources and Development Agency) conduct an energy audit of one of the existing Southtown buildings.

Dinah Koehler, Sc.D.
Economics and Decision
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National Center for Environmental Research

The writer, a resident of 475 Main Street, is an environmental health scientist with the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

To the Editor:

After moving from Roosevelt Island two weeks ago to Hollywood, Florida, here are the top ten things that we miss:

10. The new stores opening up.
09. Hearing people *suggest* how to “fix” Roosevelt Island
08. Eating at Trellis
07. Ordering from our Chinese take-out restaurant
06. The diversity of the people
05. Living in a high-rise
04. Manhattan
03. The convenience
02. Gallery RIVAA special events, openings, and participation.
01. Saying hello and being with friends and neighbors on a daily basis.

Top ten things we love, so far, about living in Hollywood, Florida:

10. Our HDTV
 09. Wall-to-wall carpeting
 08. Convenient location — Fifteen minutes from Costco, airport, Aventura, malls, beach, consignment stores. Three minutes from Target, Starbuck’s, CVS, Fedex/Kinkos, Publix, nail salon, barber, bank, etc., etc.
 07. Publix supermarket
 06. Less expensive Starbuck’s
 05. Our laundry room in our apartment
 04. Our friends and family living here
 03. Our view of the golf course, palm trees, grass, flowers
 02. Our pool, spa, bowling alley, sauna, steam room, tanning salon, free yoga, indoor racquet ball court.
 01. The weather
- Harry Small and Alan Ulick**

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*. **Recommended method of submission:** Please 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 are subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters considered if content merits the space.

Letters deadline for Sept. 8 issue: Tues., Sept. 4.
After deadline, letters considered on a space-available basis.

against the Iranians. The Iraq invasion and occupation was also about Washington seeing the need and the opportunity to displace the growing economic penetration of the region by rival (although formally allied) economic powers like Germany and France, as well as Russia, who were cozying up to the Saddam Hussein regime.

Of course, the Arab world desperately needs a real national-democratic revolution that will toss out the semi-feudal landowners, oil sheiks, monarchs, and reactionary religious hierarchies that oppress its working people and peasants. But all of these anti-democratic forces are intimately and unbreakably intertwined with the Western powers, going back to the British and French Empires, and,

at least since the end of World War II, to Washington. They are inextricably tied to U.S. and European giant corporations and financial institutions that could never tolerate — and never have in the past — genuine democratic transformations in the Arab East that would immediately lead to a massive redistribution of wealth and power toward the oppressed and exploited majority.

Washington has to at least pay lip service to popular democratic aspirations, although no one serious in the Arab world is unaware of the overwhelming stench of hypocrisy. In short, talk of “democracy” is a fake and a fraud. The bottom line is profit. Their profit, our blood.

Ike Nahem

Senior Center

Monday
10:30, English as 2nd 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
RISA Flea Market, today (Sat., Aug. 25), 9:00-4:30
Bronx Zoo trip, Thur., Aug. 30, 10:00 a.m.
Stop & Shop, Thur., Sept. 6, noon
RISA Flea Market, Sat., Sept. 8
IHOP Trip, Mon., Sept. 10, noon
General Meeting, Tue., Sept. 11, 7:00 p.m.
City Island trip, Mon., Sept. 17, noon
Atlantic City trip, Wed., Sept. 19, 9:00 a.m.
Yonkers Casino trip, Mon., Sept. 24, noon

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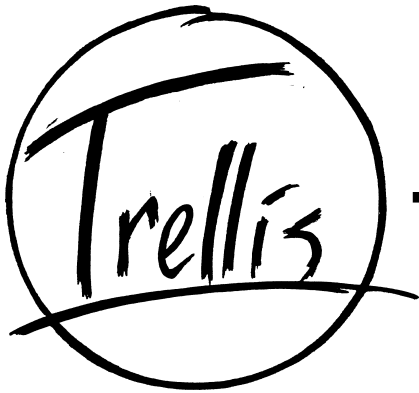
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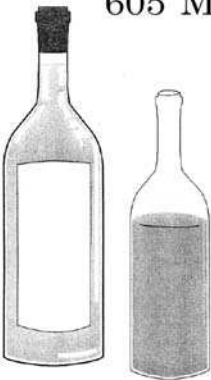
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Thursday, September 13th

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Tashlich at the Meditation Steps Approximately 1:30 p.m.

Evening Service 7:45 p.m.

Friday, September 14th

Second Day Morning Service 9:15 a.m.

YOM KIPPUR SERVICES

Friday, September 21st

Kol Nidre 6:30 p.m. *SHARP*

Saturday September 22nd

Morning Service* 9:15 a.m.

Yiskor Service 11:15 a.m.

Rabbi's Study Session 4:15 p.m.

Afternoon Service & Ne'ilah* 5:15 p.m.

Tekiat Shofar (approximate) 7:35 p.m.

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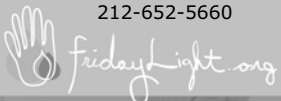
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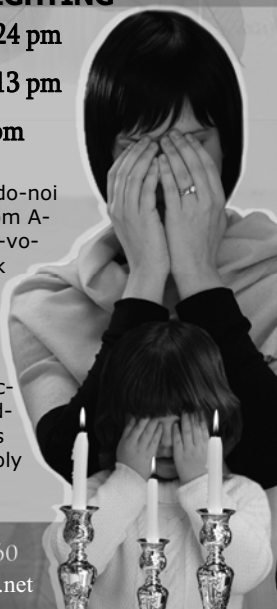
• Friday, August 24 at 7:24 pm

• Friday, August 31 at 7:13 pm

• Friday, Sept. 7 at 7:02 pm

Blessing: Boruch A-toh Ado-noi
E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-
sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-
sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik
Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-
desh.

Translation: Blessed are
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ments, and commanded us
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On a Trip to Haiti, *Raising Global Citizens* Suddenly Becomes...

by Jim Luce

Founder, Orphans International

“Ti melèt!” “Child-thieves!” The angry mobs were screaming at us in Creole. I didn’t learn what that meant until the careening, heart-stopping ride was over at the mountain-top Haitian police station. I knew only that we were all in grave danger – three small children from our orphanage and we three adults.

As founder of Orphans International Worldwide, the U.N.-recognized network of orphanages around the globe, I am used to travelling to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Togo, and Peru, overseeing operations globally. This was my 16th trip to Haiti, visiting our project in Gonaives. With me were OI Haiti director Jacques Africot, and Dr. Doris Chernik of Roosevelt Island, a psychologist and our educational advisor.

With a new government in place, Haiti was doing better than we had ever experienced. Local friends had assured us that the political and economic violence was over. Our kids were never at the smallest risk from that violence – which was directed only at people of means. For the first time, as Americans, we felt safe in Haiti. Of course, like firefighters, we understood that international development workers can find themselves in harm’s way in a flash.

The day before our departure back to New York, we had a half-day free and took our three youngest kids – Patrick, who is four, and Walter and Jean Kerby, both five – wading in the fresh river 20 minutes up the road from our home. Leaving hot, dusty Gonaives, we welcomed the cool green of the mountainous countryside. We splashed around in the cold waters. Then, fuel tank almost empty, we drove a few miles further up the road for gas, planning to head back to the orphanage for dinner.

Kids don’t like waiting in the back seat in 94° heat when the engine is turned off to get gas, so gripping tiny hands, I took the children to explore the large parking lot. We passed a busy restaurant with many motorcycles outside. What an active space it was – seemingly the village’s social center.

Much of today’s Haitian population was brought as slaves by the French from what are now Benin, Togo, and Ghana to the island of Hispaniola, which Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti became the first independent slave state, freed by the slaves themselves. Since then, Haiti has been betrayed by her own leaders as much as by slave owners. Today, Haiti is the poorest nation in the Americas.

Our children in Haiti all come from the Gonaives area, four hours west of Port-au-Prince. They were raised by their parents in unimaginable poverty, most of them not even attending school. In 2004, Hurricane Jeanne washed much of Gonaives into the sea, including the parents of our Orphans International children.

Today, eleven children live with us at OI Haiti. We have already opened our pre-school, and we are building a community health center, an elementary school, and an Internet-connected computer center. As we raise additional funds, we will take in more children.

Returning from our tour of the parking lot, we sat on the shaded curb to wait for the jeep to be serviced. The locals started to gather around us, curious to see these beautiful children who were smiling and happily clapping their hands together. Then the villagers began to question our kids. Their mood shifted. Suddenly, they seemed less friendly. Our kids stopped smiling and fidgeted nervously. A man stomped over to me and loudly, very angrily and with eyes bulging and nostrils flaring, began to scream at me in Creole. I can get by in five languages, but not Creole. I had no idea what he was saying, only that he was enraged.

I called out to Jacques that we had a large problem, not knowing yet what it was. Doris was still in the passenger

seat. I helped the three boys climb into the back seat. The people who had been sitting on the curb began to screech in Creole at our Haitian director, Jacques, who had just closed the hood and was getting back into the hot, steamy jeep. Jacques continued to explain to the crowd in Creole that he was the project director of an orphanage helping Haiti’s children, but the angry mob refused to believe it. They dismissed him as merely a driver for the rich whites, “Blanc,” as they called us. The growing crowd began to chant louder and louder in the local dialect, “Ti melèt!” I learned the



Orphans International founder Jim Luce, as he spoke last week at a fundraiser in Southtown. The organization hopes to raise \$10,000 or more in this summer’s competition among Roosevelt Island buildings. The grand finale is set for Saturday, September 15, at the Manhattan Park Theater Club. (There’s contact information in an ad on page 8.)

meaning later – *child-thieves*.

In seconds, the mob had exploded from ten to twenty to fifty. Jacques motioned for the crowd to move and tried to drive away. The villagers, now shouting louder and banging on the car, refused to budge. In reverse, the car could not move. Our rear wheels had been blocked with boulders.

Jacques, calm and in control, shouted that he was going on foot for the police. Where? The police presence in the Haitian countryside is sparse. Violence is centered in the cities, and a strong police presence outside the cities has never been necessary. The crowd was screaming louder and louder, and strong hands soon reached into the car to pull out our children. I kept trying to lock the back doors, but every time the driver’s door opened, they all automatically unlocked.

Suddenly little Jean Kerby was screaming, high-pitched and frantic, as the crowd began to yank him from our car. I held on to his feet and, as the adrenaline kicked in, pulled him back, winning this human tug of war. Calm but determined in the front seat, Doris was pulling Patrick back from the angry crowd as well.

A man forced his way into the car, next to me. In English, the stranger shouted over the crowd’s roar that he would help us get to the police station. He got out of the car

and tried to scream over the crowd, now numbering, I believe, over one hundred. No one listened to him. Many were arming themselves with stones and cement blocks.

The back door again opened and Jacques jumped in. A gigantic policeman clambered into the front seat. Jacques had found him, with his brother, in the restaurant, and explained that “white people” were about to be hurt. This local police officer rushed to our aid. The crowd was pounding on the car but recognized him, this local authority, and slowed their violence. He drove the car forward 30 feet.

The crowd parted, then surrounded us again. A man was about to heave a cement block through our front window and another one raised a block to our left side. The policeman jumped out and screamed that he was taking us to the local police station. Once more, they backed off a bit.

He clambered back in, backed up the jeep violently, and we were on our way. He later estimated that 200 people – a tenth of the village – had surrounded us. In haste, he drove a mile down the road and then stopped. He now seemed as frightened as we were, but he needed to get some facts. Our kids were in a state of shock. Doris and I could feel their hearts pounding wildly. A thought charged through my head: *I have never in my life been in more danger. Would I ever embrace my son Mathew again? Would these three kids be the last children I would ever hug?*

As soon as we stopped, new people began to gather around us. I was worried, but the big policeman in the driver’s seat ignored them. Doris and Jacques kept explaining who we were, and the policeman seemed satisfied. We now understood, for the first time, that the angry crowd thought we were kidnapping their children for the international black market.

Again, cinder blocks were raised and were about to be thrown through our windows. For the first time, the policeman pulled out his gun and aimed it squarely at the lead block-thrower’s chest and with his booming voice screamed something, perhaps *Back off or you die!* It worked. We then began a desperate race.

Flooring the SUV down the pot-hole pitted road, the officer quickly came to the village square and a sleepy police station. Dozens of people on foot were chasing us. Typical of Haiti, there was no one in the police station, so we could not stop. Like a beast that kept coming back to life, the crowd was literally right behind us, and growing ever larger again.

Tires squealing, gravel flying, the policeman raced our jeep around the village square. He clutched a pistol, a steering wheel, and a gear shift simultaneously in his hands. He looked panicked, but was shouting out the window to friends on their porches to use their cell phones to call for reinforcements. He then made the critical decision to head up the mountain, on a narrow zigzag road, to the next police station 14 miles away in the village of Marmalade.

Our reinforcement was waiting at the foot of the mountain road. He was the police officer’s civilian brother, riding the officer’s police motorcycle, now serving as our escort. Up the hill we sped, ten times as fast as sanity would dictate, bouncing off the huge pot-holes and careening around the S-curved road.

A modern phenomenon: With an automobile we can outrace mobs, but with cellular technology, the villagers could dial their friends and family all the way up the mountain. Many groups were lying in wait to attack us. We did not know that a truck had driven up the mountain while we were circling the village square, in some vigilante equivalent of Paul Revere’s ride, shouting along the entire 14 miles that the whites were kidnapping Haiti’s children and must be stopped at all costs. *Ambush! Block! Kill!*

In halting English, the policeman assured us that reinforcements would come down the mountain to reach us, and we raced upward. At the first market, dozens of angry Haitians stood ready to block the road and burn our car. The policeman, continuing this action movie that was far too real, maintained his Bruce Willis image and, with his large torso hanging out of the car window, was able to point his weapon at each and every mob member who then backed away as we raced by, police motorcycle in the lead.

Jacques sat in the back seat, little Jean Kerby balanced on his lap, calling on his cell phone, trying desperately to reach the Haitian National Police, and the U.N. Police, both an hour away in Gonaives, as well as the American Ambassador and the U.N. Peacekeepers in Port-au-Prince, six hours

An Additional Note from OI Founder Jim Luce

Orphans International Worldwide (OIWW) was started here on Roosevelt Island. The Roosevelt Island community has made possible the creation of this interfaith network of Internet-connected orphanages, providing an international perspective towards raising global citizens with kids who have lost everything.

This summer we are having a fund-raising competition among the seven Island buildings. ***Roosevelt Island for Orphans*** kicked off on Roosevelt Island Day, June 9, with an invitation-only spring brunch in the penthouse community room of Riverwalk Place. And over \$1,000 was raised at Southtown last week with an event hosted by Silvia Kramar. The event featured a kids-only party. Don Hoskins, Ethel Romm, and Jim Luce addressed the crowd. The event was also a great opportunity to get to know new neighbors and make them aware of OI.

The Westview gala, coordinated by Marlene Flom and held in July at Gallery RIVAA, raised approximately \$2,200. That put Westview in the lead.

The campaign finale, sponsored by Air France, will be held Saturday, September 15, at Manhattan Park, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Performers will include Islanders Kay Story & Damon LaScot with original songs, Islander Juanita Fleming (gospel/jazz), and possibly Africussion (Japanese-Ghanaian jazz).

Each building in the competition has a coordinator, and the coordinator who raises the most for OI will be flown to Sri Lanka, with a donated ticket, to write an article on the opening of OI Sri Lanka for *The Main Street WIRE*. Coordinators in each building have put together a variety of methods – a cocktail party, kaffee klatsch, lobby posters, door-drops – to request building-wide support for OI’s kids. What it takes is whatever will raise money for the children.

Roosevelt Island for Orphans, OI’s 2007 Summer Campaign, has been a fun time on Roosevelt Island, strengthening bonds among neighbors, building a heightened sense of community – with a rousing way of putting food on the tables of children around the world.

As this issue of *The WIRE* goes to press, Rivercross leads all buildings in the world in support for Orphans International, followed by Eastwood, The Dakota, Riverwalk, and The Octagon. But it’s a spirited competition on the Island this summer, and those rankings may change.

OI can use your help. To volunteer, call the OI office at **212-755-7285**, or e-mail info@oiww.org.

...A Very Perilous Mission for a Pair of Roosevelt Islanders

away. The policeman also was on his cell, speaking to friends, family, the police at the top of the mountain, and getting word out to the National Police.

As we raced past roadside markets, we flew through the mobs, the officer’s cold metallic pistol offering our only protection. Fourteen miles was never so long. At every curve we visualized road blocks. With every bus or truck ahead, we knew that the drivers could stop and completely barricade our way. Then, our hero cop received word that the police at the top of the mountain could not help us, as their only car was broken. We were on our own.

The horror of the ride is already fading from my mind, but what has not left me is the feeling of impending death, for more than an hour, probably worse than knowing your plane is going down. Despite our fears, Doris, Jacques, and I never stopped cheerfully chatting with our kids, telling them in English, French, and Creole that this really was scary – and how brave they were not to cry!

At a bend in the road a man was waiting for us with a mayonnaise bottle of gasoline. We had not managed to fill up at the gas station and were driving on empty. The small bottle of gas did the trick and our jeep and the motorcycle sped on, entering the mountain-top village. It reminded me of Machu Picchu. God help any innocent old woman crossing the street at that moment—perhaps no motorcade had ever travelled those narrow village streets faster than we did.

Suddenly, as we had feared, the road was blocked. We braked to a stop. Office tables lay across the street, with construction debris piled behind them. An angry official demanded to know why the policeman was assisting the kidnappers – or something to that effect – the exchange was in Creole. I later learned that he was the village mayor, and the policeman had told him our lives were in severe danger and to *move out of the way now!* The tables were moved aside and our policeman drove over the piles of debris.

Six blocks later we screeched to a stop in front of the mountain-top police station, where eight policemen had gathered to protect us. But first, we needed to be processed. We were officially in police custody. We showed ID and explained again the entire macabre situation to the police chief. They gave our children water and allowed us to use a bathroom.

A new mob gathered outside the gates, including some familiar faces from the gas station far below. Soon the media arrived. Satisfied with our story, the police chief continued to call the National and U.N. Police in Gonaives for reinforcements. He assured us that we would be safe in his station.

The ringleaders of the gas station riot were brought in to be questioned in front of us. Pointing at me, the two women, faces enraged, charged that the day before I had tried to kidnap the son of one of them as he was swimming. So that is how it all started. Or had they just invented the story? The police quickly determined that she only had heard that “two whites,” whom she had never seen, had tried to kidnap her child. Nor had she reported the alleged kidnapping to the police. Luckily, we had a receipt showing that we had hosted a swimming and pizza party for our children at Doris’s hotel, 60 miles away.

The police scoffed at the women’s story and then scolded them in Creole, apparently ridiculing how their idiocy had

come very close to getting international development workers killed. The police explained that we were completely innocent, and in fact were in Haiti to help children. Three reporters had pushed their way into the police station and went out

side to tell the story to the crowd, which finally began to disperse. We were kept in police custody for several hours until the crowd outside was entirely gone.

But the police talked about the dangers of getting us back down to our orphanage. Ambush, they thought, was still possible. Perhaps not everyone had heard or believed we were innocent. Some six hours later, another police car arrived, and with police literally riding shotgun, we drove down the mountain. It had been arranged that the Gonaives National Police and the U.N. Police would meet us at the bottom.

The ride back was tense but uneventful. The reinforcements met us, including French-speaking U.N. Police from Guinea and Niger. We happily provided the mountain-top police with gas money to return to their station. After dropping off our hungry and exhausted children at the orphanage, we were debriefed at the U.N. Police Headquarters. Our rented SUV was dented from angry fists, but the raised cement blocks never reached their target. We had managed

to escape with our lives. Our team, our children, and our spirits were unscathed.

Sitting at the breakfast table the next morning in Gonaives, writing this account, I realize I have saved other people’s lives before, but this was the first time my own life had been saved. Our Bruce Willis was Florestal Olondieu, and the commander of the mountain-top police station was Fanel Blanc, with assistance from officer Jacklin Pierre. I am exploring how the United Nations, with which we are affiliated, can honor these extraordinary men who saved our lives at great risk to their own.

I am pleased this story can be told with a happy ending, but saddened that Doris and I were to be killed because of the color of our skin. The OI mission is “Raising Global Citizens,” and it is precisely these future citizens – our children – who will resist the call of the mob when they grow up. Our approach is specifically interfaith and interracial, and we will raise leaders from our kids who will move their nations beyond the narrow village concept that whoever is different – White, Asian, African – is a danger to them. The Haitians and Africans who saved us will forever serve as role models for our children.

We came to Haiti in peace, yet for the very ignorant, living in darkness, this was incomprehensible. Doris and everyone in our organization are committed to providing the light for our children around the world to push away this vast darkness. We will return soon to our project in Haiti, and we call on people of goodwill around the world to walk with us.

Gonaives, Haiti, July 10, 2007

A Sad Postscript

A week after this incident, I learned from our Haitian director, Jacques Africot, that Officer Florestal Olondieu was dead. He, Fanel Blanc, and Jacklin Pierre – our three heroes – were called out to take on a group of gangsters holed up in a house in the village.

They stormed the home, but were overpowered by the gangsters. Olondieu had his gun kicked out of his hands, and then was shot to death with it. Jacklin was struck so hard in the head he remains hospitalized today. Officer Blanc managed to escape with his life. The gangsters did not. The angry villagers, seeing their police force decimated, attacked the home with sticks and stones and the gangsters were killed quickly.

I sit in New York, writing this, and feel an emptiness inside me. I ache for Haiti, and for her children.

Political Activist Ken Mills of Community Board 8 Is Dead at 83

by Madelaine Piel

Kenneth A. Mills, a noted housing advocate and Manhattan Community Board 8 member, died August 4 at age 83. The cause was complications of Parkinson’s Disease. He was on vacation with his family at the Jersey Shore. Ken Mills was known among New York Democrats as a determined advocate of the rights of tenants and the disabled. He worked tirelessly to elect Democrats who shared his views on these issues to the Mayoralty, the City Council, the State Senate and Assembly, the Borough Presidency, and the U.S. Congress. Over time, he became known as the “Petition King” of the Upper East Side.

From the 1960’s to the present, Mills worked tirelessly as a campaign manager, advisor, and organizer to get generations of Democratic politicians on the Upper East Side elected. The list includes, among others, Gifford Miller, the former Speaker of the City Council; Congressman and then Mayor Edward I. Koch; Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney; Manhattan Borough Presidents Ruth Messinger; C. Virginia Fields, and the incumbent, Scott Stringer; City Councilmember Jessica S. Lappin; City Councilmember Dan Garodnick; State Senator Liz Krueger; Assemblymember Jonathan Bing; and – this June – Assemblymember Micah Z. Kellner, who won a special election to replace Alexander “Pete” Grannis.

Ken Mills served as a Democratic District Leader from 1969 through 1978, and as President of the Lexington Democratic Club in the late 1960’s and again from 1995 through 2000. He served as a delegate to the Democratic Presidential conventions in 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1996.

Kellner said, “Ken Mills was a passionate political leader and tenant activist who had an impact on everyone he knew. His dedication to affordable housing for middle-income New Yorkers continues to be an inspiration to all of us.”

Mills served as one of the 50 members of Community Board 8 for more than 25 years, attending his last meeting this summer. Earlier, in April, he attended the annual full Board meeting at the Good Shepherd Community Center on Roosevelt Island. He was a most active member of the Housing Committee, working closely with its Chair, Nneka Pope of Roosevelt Island, on Community Board-sponsored housing forums.

He also led the Board’s Communications Committee as its Chair and Co-Chair. In this role he originated and was Executive Producer of “CB8 Speaks,” the Board’s monthly television show, which is both cablecast and webcast on Manhattan Neighborhood Network. The show has aired



Ken Mills with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

for twelve years and reaches more than 600,000 households. His final show, a rebroadcast of “Hurricane Preparedness Comes to Roosevelt Island,” will air Tuesday (August 28) at 7:00 p.m. on TimeWarner Channel 34, RCN Channel 82, and on the web at www.mnn.org.

Jessica S. Lappin, the City Council member, representing Roosevelt Island, said “Ken Mills was an inspiration to me. He was dedicated to improving our political system and was instrumental in reforming the Democratic Party in New York City. He loved his family, his friends, and his city. He was always looking out for the little guy. He worked hard on behalf of all of them until the very end, even in extremely frail health. I loved him and will miss him.”

The skills that he put into action on behalf of the Democratic Party were honed in the world of business. He served as Vice President of Media Relations and spokesperson for Chase Manhattan from 1982 through 1994. In 1981 he became Public Information Officer for the New York State Banking Department, then led by Muriel Siebert, a Republican. Mills had no problem crossing party lines to help the forthright Superintendent (she reminded people that the initials of her title were “S.O.B.”) maintain the stability of the state’s banking system during perilous years of stagflation.

In the late 1970’s he served in the Koch administration as

Press Secretary to the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development. From 1948 until 1978 he was a vice president at the Katz Agency, a radio and television sales representative firm.

Mills was a determined, vigorous opponent of the Vietnam War; he organized and participated in many protest marches in Washington. But he was an equally committed New York Mets fan, attending every Mets home opener since 1962. The Mets rewarded him a certificate of appreciation this past spring for his 45 years of ardent support.

Each year, Mills hosted a holiday party in his modest East 70’s apartment. There he brought together young, aspiring politicians with the seasoned veterans of New York’s political wars. It was an important stop on the rounds of many of the City’s powerful elected officials, who even helped trim the tree.

One of those, Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, said, “Ken Mills left an enormous legacy and made a deep impact on the lives of countless individuals, in particular among those of us connected to his beloved community on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island. He was a giant in the distinguished annals of East Side political history, and a seminal figure in the reform movement that became the dominant force in Manhattan’s Democratic Party. Ken was a deservedly beloved leader who could inspire both hearts and minds in service to causes great and small. In many ways, Ken Mills was my ‘political father.’ I know in the very bottom of my heart that I never could have been able to make so many of my own personal and professional dreams come true if Ken Mills hadn’t been there for me, ever ready to show me the way – and I will never forget it, or him, for as long as I live.”

Ken Mills was born on March 20, 1924, in San Francisco. He attended The Browning School, the Choate School, and Princeton University, from which he graduated in the class of 1945. He served in the Navy during World War II on a troop transport ship in the Pacific. He is survived by two daughters from his first marriage to the late Jane King: Polly Whitehorn of Great Neck, New York, and Penny Mills of Bethesda, Maryland; and a son by his second marriage to the late Elizabeth (Betty) Elstad, John Mills of Manhattan. There are four grandsons, two sons-in-law, and a daughter-in-law. His long-time companion and political ally on the Executive Committee of the Lexington Democratic Club, Natalie (Niki) Stern, died in June of this year.

Funeral services were private. A celebration of Ken Mills’s life will take place late in September.



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Tram from page 1

tem, said their report. Not only that, but the designer of the towers told the RIOC Board that, although his firm was originally asked to design the system to last about six years, it was effectively designed for “infinite life.” Daniel A. Cuoco of the Tomasetti firm said, “We designed the welds so that the stress wouldn’t exceed something like ten percent of what they were built for... We designed for an infinite number of cycles.”

Other parts of the system, assuming good inspection and maintenance practices and availability of replacement parts as needed, can also last well into the future.

The concern about the \$15 million, as stated by RIOC President Steve Shane at the RIOC meeting, is that “the State has its own budget imperatives, and it may not be there for the future. If we are going to face the need to do this overhaul, which has a long lead time, we have to consider the wisdom of doing the work now... It will take a year to fabricate the parts and to stage the work, because it is a massive construction project. At the same time, we have a capital need to meet, [subject to] the budgetary considerations that go on in Albany, which are outside our control and influence.”

Ponton disagreed about the urgency, suggesting that the Governor and the State Legislature would be unlikely to allow the system to go out of service. RIOC Board Chair Deborah VanAmerongen responded, “Neither the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] nor I can give you an answer about that. It would depend on the state of the budget at that point, what the competing priorities are... I think it is a risky undertaking to go down that path.”

Shane also countered Ponton’s view in an interview with *The WIRE* this week, pointing out that planning and scheduling the work, rather than waiting for a crisis, could be an important part of effective handling of the inevitable downtime involved in any overhaul or upgrade.

Component Parts

The parts of the Tramway can be divided into a variety of categories, but one way to look at them is to consider those parts that are structural and safety-critical separately from those parts with functions unrelated to any safety issue.

“The parts of the system concerned with safety are all in good shape,” RIOC President Steve Shane told *The WIRE* in an interview this week. “We need not be panicked by any excitement about areas we haven’t been able to look at. There is no present evidence that there is any safety problem, and that’s the best that modern technology can tell us.” Shane listed, as did the experts speaking to the RIOC Board, methods ranging from expert visual inspection to high-tech methods involving x-rays, eletromagnetic testing, tiny TV cameras snaked into hanger arms, and ultrasound devices that look at reflected pings to find cracks within metal structures.

“That leaves us,” Shane said, “in the position of deciding what we are going to do as a public policy matter, because the Tram is an essential part of the Island’s mass transportation system.” He added that the need for reliable Tram service is all the more pronounced “by the fact that the subway is demonstrably incapable of handling the present demand on the Island during rush hours” and there are no plans in the works that would result in greater subway throughput. In any case, MTA priorities are not under RIOC’s control, and any helpful subway change would require years. For example, improved signal systems that might allow closer spacing of trains would probably have to be implemented throughout the subway system, or at least on a long stretch of the F line.

Shane said the Tram moves about 1.5 million passengers a year. “We have reason to expect that with the buildout of Southtown, we’re talking about another thousand units, so you’ve got maybe another 500 rush-hour users of mass trans-

Kiosk Gets Formal Opening



City Councilmember Jessica Lappin spoke late last month at the formal opening of the Visitor Kiosk at Tramway Plaza. Judy Berdy, who brought the antique trolley kiosk to the Island when it was about to be discarded by the Brooklyn Children's Museum, emceed the occasion.

portation. In itself, that’s not a lot, but it is more pressure on an existing system.”

In his interview with *The WIRE*, Shane listed a series of constraints that RIOC faces in considering changes. They include:

- Cabin-size limits. Even if lighter cabins could be built to allow more passenger weight, there are limits on cabin size imposed by tower structures and a building about to go up in the path of the Tram.
- New cabins, if they were part of the changes planned, can’t hang lower over Second Avenue as they dock. Any changes in the terminal in Manhattan would be governed by limits on the height of traffic over Second Avenue that became law after the present system was built.
- There are Coast Guard limits over the East River.



Using coins, RIOC Board member Mark Ponton explains why separating the Tramway into two independent systems wouldn’t improve passenger throughput.

- Cabins couldn’t be wider without major revisions to the landing bays, and no major structural changes are possible at the Manhattan station because of zoning, permitting, and space issues.
- Consideration of separated haul systems that would allow cabins to move independently (rather than in tandem, as with the present “clothesline” haul cabling) is limited by the fact that towers 1 and 3 were not designed to support two cabins at once. While the system might be programmed to prevent an overload on those towers, only a marginal gain in capacity, if any, would result from separating the two sides of the system. (An advantage of separated systems would be in an ability to take only one side out of service at a time.)

“We’re pretty much stuck with the size of what we’ve got,” Shane said. One consultant at the RIOC Board meeting mentioned the possibility of increasing the travel speed as a way of increasing rush-hour capacity, but another consultant pointed out that the trip isn’t long enough to gain much through faster travel. The cabins would have to slow down for docking, as now. He said little would be gained.

One possibility for faster departures at the morning rush would be pre-loading of the platform waiting area, as is done on the Manhattan side when passengers go through the turnstiles to wait for a cabin to arrive. On the Island side, they are allowed to go through the turnstiles only after a cabin arrives and the attendant is present. They then do so in a slow two-by-two stream that is interrupted and delayed by the usual problems with MetroCards. By pre-loading the Island-side platforms as was done in pre-MetroCard days, rush-hour boarding could go much faster. But Shane said, “The way we now have it, we don’t have people coming out on the dock on the Island side because we are concerned that people would fall into or jump into” the docking bays. “They don’t want them out on the dock.” Whether the issue is safety or restricted entry to be sure passengers pay, platforms might be pre-loaded if a station attendant were on hand during the morning rush.

The Decision

In response to a question from RIOC Board member Patrick Stewart, Prof. Testa compared the Tramway questions with replacing a car. “The things you’re struggling with are the things that we all struggle with. You go through exactly the same questions. Is the car big enough for what I want to do in the next couple of years? Is it safe right now? How much am I going to have to pay for the additional convenience and security and feeling of not having to take it in for service and repairs? It’s exactly the same thing except we’re talking about a lot more money.”

But there’s also the downtime factor. The Island faces an out-of-service period sometime in the next year or two because track ropes must be shifted. They are scheduled to be moved every five years to avoid concentration of the extra stress encountered when cabins pass the towers, pressing the cable between the cabin “trucks” and the rounded “saddles” that support the track rope on the towers. Shane has estimates that “just shifting the track rope, you can get it done in a matter of weeks. If they have to replace it, then it becomes a matter of months.”

Jim Fletcher, a consultant RIOC hired just after the April 2006 incident, told the RIOC Board that one of the three track ropes cannot be shifted any further. He said the lead time to get the necessary ropes is “probably a year,” and put the cost in the \$3-4 million range. He suggested lengthening the period between shifts, which would gain some additional time before an inevitable out-of-service period. But Armando Cordova, who supervises Tram operations, said the last shift was done six years ago.

The downtime could stretch if a major overhaul is undertaken. Shane: “The major overhaul becomes at best, they say, maybe six or seven months. But I have said, ‘Stop. In your engineering analysis, I want you to look at doing a D-Day kind of performance. Let’s assume we do this 24-7. Let’s assume we mount a campaign on both sides of the river. Let’s assume we prefabricate everything. Let’s assume you warehouse it on site, ready to deliver. If you’re going to start this downtime at 2:00 a.m., at 2:01 a.m. I want it ready to be installed. And let’s start with the propo-

sition that I don’t care what it costs. [With these premises,] what is the minimum time it would take to do this, and what would the extra cost be?” Shane said he’s waiting for final answers, but added, “The answer in part is that they think they could cut the time down to maybe five months. They guess it’s maybe another \$3 million to \$5 million, but they’re [still] working on that.”

Shane says two possible purveyors are working on the questions – Doppelmayr, which provided the existing system and runs it for RIOC, and POMA (Pomagalski S.A.) of France.

Ponton’s View

Resident Board member Mark Ponton cautioned his fellow Board members about “spending money needlessly.” He said, “When you look at what we might do, there are things we might do, but we always have to address the question, ‘What is it that we are making better?’ It’s very easy to spend a couple million on something that sounds great, but we shouldn’t spend it just because it’s there.”

Ponton told *The WIRE*, in an interview early this week, that when he met with the consultants, “The first question I asked was, ‘What is it we need to do to make the Tram safe?’ The answer came back, universally, one word, ‘Nothing.’ I then asked, ‘What do we need to do to make the Tram more dependable.’ The answer came back again, in one word, ‘Nothing.’ There’s nothing that we *need* to do. There are things that we ought to do simply because they ought to be done. There’s rust around electrical boxes, that sort of thing, but they don’t affect safety. There are about 30 trivial things that rank with sweeping up the crumbs after dinner in a restaurant. We talked about what we might *want* to do, and we might *want* to change the electrical system. There are reasons for that, but the failure of the electrical system is probably not one of them.” Ponton explained that it has more to do with the future availability of parts, which manufacturers might discontinue.

Ponton’s conclusion, after talking with the experts, was that “There is not a prayer that we could responsibly spend \$15 million.” For things that should be done and perhaps to stock some replacement parts against future needs, Ponton thought as much as half that amount might be spent.

In any case, Ponton feels the time pressure – the rush to commit to a course of action by the end of October – should come off. “We should get out of the mode of ‘the clock is ticking and all of that,’ and get into the ‘take your time and do it right’ mode.”



He also wants RIOC to drop the idea of a major revision of the Tramway that would put the two cabins on separate engines, operating independently. “A little arithmetic will show you that doesn’t work,” he said. Using coins to represent the cabins, he showed that, after a first trip, there is no real gain. That is, if loading and unloading is done as efficiently as possible, a “tandem” or “clothesline” system has the same passenger throughput as a separated system, which would be costly to implement.” He pointed out that with only the middle tower designed to support two cars at a time, the system

would have to be programmed to avoid both cabins being on or very near either tower 1 or tower 3, and that would sacrifice any minor gain in passenger throughput.

Shane’s Concern

With regard to rush-hour loading, Shane told *The WIRE*, “We think we’ll be able to handle the Tram rush. We handle it pretty well now. [With the buildout of Southtown] we’re only talking about an extra 500 people, so we think we can do that. Our problem is that we have 1.5 million riders, we are projecting an increase to 2.5 million, and with the potential attractions on the Island – the parks and that sort of stuff – those are things that potentially will take our ridership up.”

Most immediately for Shane, there is the deadline for commitment of funds: “We have a deadline of October to make up our mind [on spending on Tramway work] because in Albany they are preparing, as we speak, the outlines of the budget to be delivered by the Governor next January. So we have September and October to be able to make the decision that this is sort of where we’re going. We have the engineers and the purveyors busy working on the problem, and they’ve promised to get back to us by essentially the first week in September, and at the first Board meeting in September, we’re going to have another report as to where we are and where we’re going. This is not a decision we’re going to make on our own.”

Future Factors

A factor not discussed in the RIOC Board meeting that could cause Islanders to move from the subway to the Tram is Mayor Mike Bloomberg’s plan for congestion pricing, which would encourage drivers commuting from Long Island and Queens locations to park and ride – park in Queens and ride subways, including the F, into Manhattan. If that caused morning rush-hour trains to arrive on Roosevelt Island even more jammed than now, the added pressure could cause Islanders to favor the Tram.



Ugo Anyanwu	Sebastian
Lara Briney	Chorus
William Gozdziwski	Stephano
Bret Jaspers	Alonso
Nicholas Linnehan	Caliban
T Gordon Mayhall	Gonzalo
Sharla Meese	Ariel
Chelsea O'Connor	Miranda
Clare Patterson	Boatswain
John William Schiffbauer ...	Ferdinand
Anna Stevens	Trinculo
Beth Ann Sweezer	Chorus
Morgan Anne Zipf	Antonio



Katz from page 2

on the evening of Wednesday, September 5, at the Chapel, where Thom Sokoloski and Jenny-Anne McCowan will present their concept to the Council Members and to you.

Here’s an update on the Octagon picnic area; it’s up and running. There are bright red tables and benches, eight grills and adequate trash cans with a special receptacle for hot coals. I got to grill chicken over hot coals last weekend, an activity that atavistically brings out the cavemen in many of us males of the species. Our group had a fine time as did the family assemblages surrounding us. One fly in the ointment was the ticketing by Public Safety of a picnicker at a nearby table for displaying a bottle of beer. And this without any signage whatsoever delineating the rules of usage. If you’ve attended the summer productions by the Philharmonic or the Metropolitan Opera at any of the City parks you’ve seen picnickers enjoying a beer or a bottle of wine with their dinners and without harassment from the cops. Granted, the open bottle law is clear, but is often honored in the breach when good order isn’t being violated. We’ve brought wine with our picnic dinner to the Southpoint Park movie screenings. There is a legitimate fear of inappropriate use of alcohol, but some common sense needs to be applied. We shall have to put our heads together and find common ground that doesn’t compromise safety but that allows for appropriate picnic fare. What is your experience and what do you think we should do?

Here’s your latest update on the Roosevelt Island Bridge renovation project straight from the Department of Transportation’s Office of Public Information. The project is in its early stages. Mobilization has begun, and the painting subcontractor is installing the under-deck shielding on the Queens and Roosevelt Island approaches to prepare for paint removal. The contractor also is continuing the necessary safety repairs as required. During the upcoming month, the contractor will be implementing temporary lane closures on the bridge between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Also, the construction of the right turning lane to Vernon Boulevard will start. Lead paint removal and painting activities are scheduled to start on or about October 1. Currently the project is on schedule and is expected to be finished by November 2009. Now you know.

The RIOC Board of Directors met in special session on August 16 to consider the best course of action for maintaining the Tram. I’ve read the engineering reports commissioned by RIOC to assess the Tram’s mechanical and electrical systems, and the wear and tear on the Tram towers and stations. By and large, our Tram is in good condition, certainly safe to operate for the next few years. However, decisions must be made as to whether to simply continue maintaining the present system, to renovate the tramway in its current configuration, or to build an array that would operate the two cabins independently of each other, thus providing more flexibility of operation. Regrettably, none of the above would appreciably increase the capacity of the system at a time when the rush hour crush is getting out of hand and promises to get worse. Exacerbating the problem is the possibility that \$15 million in the fiscal year 2007-2008 State budget may evaporate if the work is put off to a time when it is

more clearly needed.

I thought the expert testimony presented at the Board meeting was comprehensive, and the questions from resident Directors cogent and compelling. These are not easy questions and there are no facile solutions. The considerations involve engineering of course, but also finances and politics – a muddy mix. I wish the Board well in its deliberations.

In my last column I made reference to Deputy Mayor Kevin Sheekey and a planned tour of the Island. This took place on August 14 and included Jed Howbert, Senior Policy Advisor for Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff, as well as our own Councilmember, Jessica Lappin. On a beautiful afternoon we drove the length of Roosevelt Island, concentrating on future development and our hopes and dreams for Southpoint Park. Our guests were impressed with the concentration of the arts pursued and presented by this small community and with the newly-installed information kiosk at the Tram, but were flabbergasted by the inability of successive RIOC administrations to replace the empty retail stores on Main Street. Kevin’s jaw dropped when I mentioned that, because of an abysmal State law (among other failings), Island kids haven’t been able to buy an ice cream cone here for four summers. Why, I wonder, haven’t our resident RIOC Board members, gubernatorial appointees all, screamed their heads off to the powers-that-be? Can their directorships mean that much to them? Or if they have, why haven’t we, the community, heard about it? The reason is that they are not accountable to us, and individually and as a group have kept a remarkably low profile among their neighbors. And that’s a pity.

When I addressed you last in these pages it was to inform you that the Governor’s Office of Appointments had put any hopes of a State-endorsed election of RIOC Board Members on hold. A month later, nothing has changed. However, it has occurred to us that we don’t require the endorsement of anyone to hold a referendum here to suggest resident Directors. In fact, RIRA (or some other entity) could have done so any time over the last two decades of RIOC’s existence. RIRA has offered candidates for the Board since its creation 30 years ago; our constitution once mandated that the RIRA president be put forward for consideration. I suspect that a unilateral election was never mounted either because no one thought of it or because the idea of creating and producing an election without any guarantee of appointment was simply too daunting to consider.

We are now considering doing just that. Unless the Governor lifts the hold, we will find the best candidates, inform the electorate, and produce an election on our own. But when? As you may know, we considered Primary Day in September but abandoned it. With a poor showing expected for the off-year election in November, that seemed the wrong time to present a new kind of election where the size of the turnout is so critical. And so, we are now looking to February 5, 2008, and the New York State Presidential Primary Day, when interest will peak within a politically stoked electorate. RIOC Board Chair Deborah VanAmerongen has encouraged us to pursue this avenue and thinks we will not run into problems by postponing the balloting until a more auspicious time. We agreed that information on support by RIOC or by the current Board Directors



said of his father, “I am certain that the first two things that my Dad did when he got to Heaven were to lovingly join my mother and then find the cadre of Democrats there so he could yell at the ones who did not vote for Hubert Humphrey in 1968... Yes, he was still talking about that, even in 2007.” Perkiss was active in Democratic politics in the City and was a leader of the party’s reform movement on the Upper West Side.

Perkiss served in Europe in World War II, and in the Korean War. He was active in the American Civil Liberties Union.

Housing from page 1

with the GDP and the Master Plan. This is a mixed community, which requires that it continue as a mixed-income community. If you float a lot of these units to market, it won’t be such a mixed-income community.” Shane said that in RIOC’s and DHCR’s considerations of any possible deal, the Public Authorities Accountability Act is also an important factor governing the way the State disposes of its holdings. In the case of Roosevelt Island, those holdings include the land under the residential buildings, which is leased to the building owners.

Shane reiterated positions he has stated previously. “RIOC is interested in affordable housing, not for the benefit of RIOC’s coffers. This is for the public-housing purpose. It will require that the owner realize that he doesn’t have a pot of gold that he can cash in on. That applies to some of the tenants, as well – whatever dreams they had of personal enrichment by reason of their tenancy is not a likely thing.”

Shane continues to maintain that the value of the Island House and Westview properties, given the expiration of their ground leases in 20 years, is well under the figures that had been discussed as amounts the tenant organizations were willing to pay for the each building in a conversion. He puts the figure at a quarter of that amount and, on Monday, he expressed doubt that a deep-pockets buyer could be found to take on the buildings.

should be shared with the community as the process takes shape and coalesces.

There are still many questions to be answered. Will you, our neighbors, volunteer to campaign for an office where there is no guarantee of appointment? Will you, our neighbors, come to the polls in sufficient numbers to impress the Governor? Will RIOC subsidize this expensive (at least for RIRA) process openly so as to satisfy our ethical standards (while not upsetting the State), or will we be obliged to find the financial resources elsewhere, adding to the multiplicity of chores this exercise in democracy will require? Stay tuned.

And finally: as we ratchet headlong – prematurely I say – into the 2008 presidential election season, I would like to leave you with an unattributed quote, primarily for its giggle factor: *Politicians and diapers should be changed regularly... and for the same reason.*

Lewis Perkiss

Lewis Perkiss, a resident of Rivercross since 1977, died July 30 at 81. The cause of death was a stroke suffered while in New York University Hospital being treated for a infection affecting his heart.

A retired attorney, in recent years he had provided pro bono legal services to a number of organizations and to individuals, including other Roosevelt Island seniors. He signed on as *The Main Street WIRE*’s pro bono legal counsel in February, 2003.

Perkiss was a former member of the Rivercross Board who worked on privatization issues while maintaining personal neutrality on the matter.

He was a graduate of Bronx High School of Science, and graduated from New York University as both an undergraduate and law student. He worked for American Home Products Corporation (now Wyeth) for many years. His wife, Ellen, died in 1991. Their children are Mark, who lives in New Jersey and works for the state government, and Billy, a public school teacher in Minneapolis.

Speaking at a memorial event Sunday, August 5, son Mark said of his father, “I am certain that the first two things that my Dad did when he got to Heaven were to lovingly join my mother and then find the cadre of Democrats there so he could yell at the ones who did not vote for Hubert Humphrey in 1968... Yes, he was still talking about that, even in 2007.” Perkiss was active in Democratic politics in the City and was a leader of the party’s reform movement on the Upper West Side.

Perkiss served in Europe in World War II, and in the Korean War. He was active in the American Civil Liberties Union.

“I’m perfectly comfortable with the prospect that [the owner] might be able to get out of Mitchell-Lama, under the statutory provisions.”

Referring to the 20 years remaining on the ground leases, Shane said, “He’s still got a vanishing leasehold. Who would want it? What would they pay for it?” [Lucido revealed no figures in his telephone conversation with *The WIRE*.] “All this talk about deep-pockets people, especially in the present crisis of capital markets... Who’s going to lend to somebody who has a vanishing leasehold that presently is under 20 years and disappearing?”

Rivercross

Asked about progress on a plan for a Rivercross departure from Mitchell-Lama, Shane said, “Every so often I hear from the committee that this is a plan they’ve got. They come in and talk, kicking things around. I’ve suggested some things that would be of interest in terms of long-term affordability for Rivercross.”

Shane later described a plan for some Eastwood units that could be part of a program to keep elderly and disabled tenants in their apartments rather than having them relocate to institutions. That plan will be the subject of a future *WIRE* report, but the implication was that Rivercross might participate, in some way, in keeping Eastwood apartments affordable for the elderly/disabled cohort.

Still on Rivercross, Shane said, “I understand that Rivercross is a different animal. They are the owners themselves. Hopefully, you’re not looking at a lot of money going out the door and off the Island... You have a very different background in the sense that people did, in fact, buy their units at what was then ‘market’ for units on Roosevelt Island.” While the

implication could be that Rivercross owners are therefore entitled to gain if they sell after departure from Mitchell-Lama, Shane added, “It was made possible by the massive investment that the State made at the time, and has continued to make over a long period of time, and the fruits of that investment are beginning to be apparent. Where does that leave you on the continuum? We, as a public-policy matter, would still like to see Rivercross be part of the affordable-housing inventory.”

Asked whether that meant some or all of Rivercross, Shane said, “First choice, all of it. Whether that’s reality or not, who knows? You make compromises where necessary, but certainly every single affordable housing unit in this State is a precious commodity, especially in the New York metropolitan area. It cannot be replicated, ever. It’s not possible. The sites are not available. The financing is not available. The political will is not available. It just isn’t there, so what you’re hanging onto desperately, unit by unit, if you’re in the part of the profession that believes in affordable housing, is that every single one of these units is a precious commodity.”

Lucido, in talking with *The WIRE*, seemed sympathetic to the problem faced by DHCR and RIOC. “This is a unique situation and I appreciate the difficulty that both agencies face and how they’ve dealt with it. They’ve got a tough problem on their hands and they want to avoid Armageddon, which would be coming out of Mitchell-Lama to free-market rentals. I’ve been cooperating to try to keep that from happening.”

Lucido added, “The only reason it would happen is if cooperation falls apart and we can see no alternative.”

Dorothy Davis, Chair of the Island House Tenants Association, gave *The WIRE* this assessment of negotiations:
Affordable housing is a political, economic, and human issue. Finding the right balance among these three components lies at the crux of our negotiations. We feel that we have made tremendous progress in all three areas by maintaining open channels of communication with DHCR, RIOC, and Charles Lucido. With the assistance of our real-estate consulting partners, Community Preservation Corporation, this has resulted in our having developed a numbers-driven affordability plan that reflects the needs of the tenancy and is broadly accepted by DHCR and, tangentially, RIOC. Yet, as we seek financing, the realities of today’s financial market require all parties to be flexible and innovative. In this way, we can uphold New York’s tradition of being a national leader in developing unique approaches to affordable housing in the same way as the GDP did at its inception over 30 years ago. However, if we don’t move quickly, there is still the possibility that Charles Lucido may decide to abandon our effort.



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Youth Program Gears Up for Fall With a New Website and A Logo Creation Contest

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program is headed into the back-to-school season with lots of exciting programs and opportunities. Open to all of the Island Youth and friends, the offerings have something for everyone of school age, in sports, music, computers, art, academics, and more.

At the Youth Center itself, there have been many improvements to the facility over the past few months. There is a weight room, a music room, a kitchen, and a huge parlor room with large screen television sets, ping-pong, pool, and video games, and plenty of friends to keep you company. And there is a fantastic computer room with brand-new, very fast, and very cool workstations. All of this is in the Center at 506 Main Street.

There are also several programs just about to begin at the Youth Center, and at the Center, there's a calendar to check out.

The next sports program is Fall Soccer, which runs mid-September through mid-November. While registration has officially ended, kids 5-16 can still get on a team as long as they drop off registration forms, at the Center, before next Saturday (September 1). Registration forms are available at the Youth Center or at the new Youth Program website, www.riyouth.com. Soccer is the largest sports program offered.

There are also many upcoming programs at the Beacon Program in PS/IS 217. They will all be posted at the Beacon desk at the school. All Beacon programs are free and open to everyone.

The new website will be one of the best ways to stay informed about Youth Program and Beacon activities. There will be information about upcoming programs, calendars, sports news, and Youth Center information. Questions can be sent to info@riyouth.com.

On the website, there is also a contest to create a new logo for the Youth Program. Entries should be sent to info@riyouth.com. The creator of the winning logo will take home a \$50 prize.

Questions? Call the Youth Center at 212-935-3645.

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Deadline for September 8 issue: Tuesday, September 4
Deadline for September 22 issue: Tuesday, September 18

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Because of an editing error, incorrect rates were published in the Olympic Car Service ad in the July 28 issue of *The WIRE*.
The correct rates appear in the ad below.
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Plebiscite from page 1

sexual persuasion, religion, and what-not.”

The Maple Tree Group, with which Katz has been working on the plans for the plebiscite, has been talking about ways to ensure broad participation in the election – both in terms of candidates and in terms of voting, the latter factor being one reason that the low-interest November election was rejected as a time to conduct this balloting.

Shane said, “I’m somewhat apprehensive about the process, because I know the level of commitment and capacity that Board members must have for this enterprise to function successfully, especially given the way it has evolved over time, where the Board is very active and feels very responsible for the functioning of RIOC.

“You have a strong Board and the Board feels that they can and should be involved in a lot of the detail. There’s an inevitable tension between every corporate management and its board on that subject, and I would personally prefer to see the Board step back a little and let the professional managers bring things to the Board for ratification, the way most Boards do... The way the Board presently functions, almost every contract goes back to the Board for ratification. That’s nuts. That’s why you hire profession-

als and competent people and you repose your confidence in them. You get reports and, if you don’t like what happens, you terminate the employees. But [the Board doesn’t] act as active managers of the corporation. There is an inevitable tension along those lines.”

Shane said he is concerned not just about the diversity of the Board, but about its range of competencies, as well. “I am concerned that a plebiscite-selected Board would not necessarily have the range of talent and depth that you would want for a \$20 million-a-year operation. This is not small potatoes here anymore, and it is growing. You have a very dynamic situation here now and you have lots of decision-making. It’s not routine at all.”

RIRA plans to roll out a program of recruiting candidates to put themselves forward for six open Board slots, to provide forums in which they can make themselves known to voters, and to cooperate with *The WIRE* in making certain that Islanders are exposed to the views of the candidates. Prior to the election, the community newspaper will publish candidate position statements, among other things.

Katz discusses the election planning in his column in this issue, starting on page 2.

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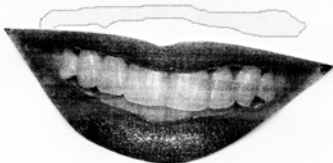
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