

Next issue
in 2 weeks:
September 22

The Main Street WIRE™

27th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Photo: Ali Nuru

This red-tailed hawk was photographed at Capobianco Field on Sunday. If the bird fledged in the City, it could be a descendant of Manhattan's famous Pale Male, according to the Audubon Society, though there are at least three pairs of red-tailed hawks that have been producing offspring in the City long enough to be its grandparents.

Oklahoma City Survivors Will Join Islanders at Tuesday's 9/11 Ceremony

by Dick Lutz

"Healing is a journey, not a destination." That's the considered view of Betty Robins, a survivor of 4/19.

In Oklahoma City, where Robins lives and works, 4/19 means as much as 9/11 does to New Yorkers. April 19, 1995, was the day the Murrah Federal Building was bombed. She, and the other survivors of that day, are still on their journey of healing. Over the six years since 9/11/01, they have forged a relationship with the New York survivors – those who made it out of the Twin Towers or, through a wisp of happenstance, were not where they might have been.

That relationship includes

Roosevelt Island's Brendan Chellis.

"To this day, I still have things come back. A split second – what things sounded like, smelled like," says Chellis. Yet, he feels a subtle remove from some of it. "For a couple of years, I had flashbacks

and remembered a certain thing from that day, and it would just keep playing, over and over. Now, when I remember things that happened on that day, it's almost like I've memorized someone else's story. It's like it's not my memory,

See 9/11, page 12

Bring a Candle

Roosevelt Island's 9/11 Memorial Event will begin just before sunset (7:00) Tuesday evening, at the Memorial tree and plaque just west of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The brief ceremony will include songs, readings, and a moment of silence with candle lighting, and conclude with an optional walk to Meditation Steps. There will be a reception in Gallery RIVAA for the visitors from Oklahoma City.

Six Merchants Get New Leases in "First Step"

Six Main Street merchants are getting lease renewals. They had been renting month-to-month as RIOC struggled with provisions of the State Public Authorities Law. The RIOC Board voted approval Thursday morning. RIOC President Steve Shane described the action as a "first step" toward filling the many vacant retail spaces on Main Street.

- China 1 (609 Main St.): Annual rent increased from \$31,392 to \$41,250. Renewal for 10 years plus five-year option, with rate adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) after five and 10 years. Reduction from 2,650 square feet to 1,650 square feet (elimination of unused space).

- M&D Deli (579 Main St.): Annual rent increased from \$50,082 to \$54,000 for first five years, \$60,000 for second five years, \$66,000 for third five years. Renewal for 10 years plus five-year option. A memo from RIOC President Steve Shane to the RIOC Board of Directors says, "Tenant will make extensive interior renovations." 2,000 square feet.

- Roosevelt Nails (570 Main St.): Annual rent increased from \$9,583 to \$12,000. Renewal for 10 years plus five-year option, with CPI adjustments after five and 10 years. 800 square feet.

- Full Service Hair Salon (523 Main St.): Annual rent increased from \$15,067 to \$15,675, with 4% yearly escalation. Renewal for 10 years. 800 square feet.

- Roosevelt Island Cleaners (567-571 Main St.): Annual rent reduced from \$78,200 to \$74,400, with 3% yearly escalation. Renewal for 10 years. 2,168 square feet.

- Accountable Financial Management (599 Main St.): Annual rent increased from \$10,200 to \$14,400. Renewal for five years plus two five-year options, with CPI adjustments after five and 10 years. 386 square feet.

RIRA Sets February "Plebiscite" To Propose Nominees for RIOC

Common Council Votes to Accept Unrestricted RIOC Funds; Will Then Conduct Island-Wide Balloting

by Dick Lutz

The Residents Association Common Council voted Wednesday night to ask the President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation for an allocation of unrestricted funds, and voted to use that and other money to conduct a first-ever "plebiscite" to choose residents to be proposed to Governor Eliot Spitzer as potential nominees to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

Huh?

OK, it seems multi-layered (it is) and complicated (not really). Try it backward:

- Only the Governor can nominate RIOC Board members.
- But anybody can make suggestions for nominees.

- For years, residents have wanted the power of the popular vote to determine who fills seven of the nine seats on the RIOC Board.

- Laws have been proposed to make that happen, but they've never been enacted.

- A way to thread that political needle is to conduct balloting so that residents, by popular vote, can put forward the names of their choices, and ask the Governor to accept those democratically selected individuals as his nominees and send those names to the State Senate for confirmation.

Better?

Seems straightforward enough now, right? (1) Candidates will declare themselves and campaign. (2) Residents will vote. (3) RIRA, the Residents Association officially recognized by the State as the voice of the residential population here, will ask the Governor to consider the winners as that population's suggestions – backed by the ballot box – as possible nominees to the RIOC Board.

That's indirect, but it's the closest yet that residents have come to getting a direct say in choosing the policymakers who run the State public-benefit corporation that has the most impact on daily life and long-term quality of life on Roosevelt Island.

RIRA's Wednesday night vote came after four months of groping toward a formula that would be acceptable to all concerned. At one point, DHCR and RIOC put the "election" on "hold," uncomfortable with the word "election" and the word's suggestion that it was the last step in the process – that if the Governor then followed the legally required course, it could ap-

pear he was thwarting democracy.

Acceptability for RIOC, for the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), and for the Governor's office meant that the Governor could not appear to be relinquishing his right and duty to nominate members of the RIOC Board. Even more important, given the recent teeth-baring between Spitzer and Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno, is that the Spitzer administration could

not appear to be giving away any of the Senate's power to consider and confirm Board nominees.

That being the case, the

word came down: Neither DHCR nor RIOC, who exercise the administration's power here, could give official sanction to an election.

But the financial cost of mounting an election and doing it right can be considerable – especially a first-ever election with the layers and the seeming complexity. It involves finding ways to attract candidates from every walk of Island life, then helping them mount campaigns. Some may never have run for anything. Then there's a need for a substantial investment in public information: a voter-education process that ideally should reach even those Islanders who are not normally "awake" to elections, as well as a significant population of non-citizens, who may never have voted before. (U.S. citizenship will not be a requirement for voting – the only qualifiers are Island residency and age 18+.)

Perhaps most important for RIRA in this process – given that it doesn't have any official endorsement from the State – will be the number and quality of the candidates, and the number of resi-

See Plebiscite, page 8

153 DAYS
to Island-wide
balloting

for Residents' RIOC Board nominees

Briefly...

- Trellis is running a **clothing drive** for earthquake victims in Peru (see ad, page 13).

- Work will begin in earnest soon on the **Roosevelt Island Bridge**, with sandblasting for paint removal and a variety of other measures. Traffic may be single-lane at times, but the bridge will remain open.

- Some **affordable** apartments on East 60th Street are in the application process. Details are on line at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/downloads/pdf/East-60th-St-apts.pdf>. There's a preference for Community Board 8 residents (including Roosevelt Island) for half of the 41 units.

- With the death of Lew Perkiss, *The WIRE* is seeking **pro bono legal counsel**. Call Managing Editor Dick Lutz at **212-826-9055**.

- **Website NYC10044's** webmaster, Elena Zarembo, has moved away, so nyc10044.com is in search of a volunteer to maintain the site. Call **212-826-9055**.



Eager Hands Participants in the Island Library's summer reading program clamored to be chosen for games Wednesday at an event celebrating the success of the 2007 edition. Under-12s read a total of 2,150 books over the course of the summer.

The Editorial Page

Suffrio Ergo Sum*

This week, Roosevelt Island reached toward democracy. Wednesday night’s vote by the Residents Association Common Council (story, page 1), a decision to hold a plebiscite in which residents will choose their proposed nominees for the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), represents another important step in efforts to democratize the management of this community. Even if you’re a “new kid on the block,” you may already know that the Island, which is City property, is leased to and managed by the State of New York through RIOC. The RIOC President and all the members of the RIOC Board are appointed by the Governor – not elected. This has meant the absence of democracy here. While we vote in elections for a City Councilmember, a State Senator, a State Assemblymember, and the Governor, there has been no recourse to the ballot box if and when Island management falls short (and it has fallen short many times over the years).

That has meant no opportunity to influence, through votes and majority rule, the policies and activities of RIOC – an absence, simply put, of any influence over the government that is closest to our daily lives. But local democracy has also been absent on Roosevelt Island in another way: A substantial portion of residents, citizens of Roosevelt Island in fact but not in vested rights, are foreigners who can bring new perspectives and welcome voices to a local Roosevelt Island democracy. On February 5, the important step will be residents – U.S. citizens or not – going into voting booths to make their choices among candidates who seek their endorsement in a quest to become a member of the RIOC Board of Directors. While there will be further steps – the Governor must ultimately decide whom to appoint – a strong turnout that day, and strongly expressed preferences, are likely to mean a great deal to a Governor who did well in Island voting. Whether a directly elected RIOC Board is somewhere in the Island’s future hasn’t yet shown itself in the available models of crystal balls, but that idea is clear and strong in the hearts and minds of all those who have worked to bring it about. The coming campaign and vote can demonstrate to the State government that Roosevelt Islanders can handle democracy just as well as any other local community, and that demonstration will become a key rung on a ladder leading toward true local suffrage for all Roosevelt Island adults.

Don’t just watch it happen. Be part of it. Think about running for the RIOC Board. Your judgment and your power to think creatively might make this a better community. There will be the satisfaction of having a direct positive impact on the lives of your neighbors. Whether you run or not, examine all the candidates and consider their positions and their overall merit, and help the community make its best choices at the ballot box. This indirect process isn’t perfect democracy. It’s a valuable and important step, though, and we all must take it together.

DL

*I vote. Therefore, I exist.

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Where did the summer go? With the onset of the U.S. Open, football, the first day of school at PS/IS 217, and, oh yes, RIRA Common Council meetings, the calendar’s protestations that summer extends until September 23 fall on deaf ears. We know better; this summer has kicked the bucket. While I love my neighbors dearly, there is one jerk on this Island for whom I have less than warm thoughts. I’m referring to the twit who tore down all the RIRA Common Council agenda posters I taped to kiosks the length of Main Street last Sunday. Forty-eight hours later, when I walked down Main Street, they were ripped down, crumpled, and tossed in the street. Not only is this idiot no friend of RIRA but he’s a litterbug to boot. You should know: I am constitutionally required to inform the community of each Common Council meeting (even though few of you attend), and I do so with posted flyers and notices in *The WIRE*. All it takes to undo my best intentions is one bozo with a grudge against RIRA and the heart of a vandal. Whoever you are, what’s your story? Don’t you want people to come to the meetings? Your RIRA Common Council, volunteers all, works too hard to be treated so cavalierly. Please, cut it out. While I’m on the subject, let’s talk about kiosk courtesy (courtesy?). When you see a time-sensitive posting that hasn’t expired yet, kindly do not cover it with your own material. And when you see an undated poster, still in good shape and conveying information, please have the civility to find an empty space or a defunct flyer to cover. Everything is cleaned off periodically by RIOC anyway, so respect your neighbors who might have something interesting to impart. By the time you read this, the RIOC Board of Directors will have met and, God willing, provided new commercial leases to several of our merchants who have been without one for far too long. They include the Chinese restaurant, M&D Deli, the cleaners, Accountable Financial Management, Roosevelt Island

The RIRA Column

Post Labor Day, 2007
The summer season is over, the kids are back in school, families home from vacations. Here’s what’s on our plate:
1. Street Cleaning: We are trying hard to maintain the public appearance of the Island. One of our tasks is frequent street cleaning. The schedule for street cleaning, per the signs posted on Main Street to that effect, is for Monday and Thursday mornings between 10 and 11:30 AM. Applicable to the west side of Main Street, no parking is permitted during that time. RIOC has put notices on cars left on the street to warn the parkers of impending enforcement by ticketing and towing, if necessary. Even for the handicapped, if the Island is to have clean streets, the cars must be moved.
2. The Tram: How best to prepare the Tram for the future continues to occupy much of RIOC’s time and attention. To determine the capability of the existing towers before any decision about change in configuration is made, a study of stresses and load capacity is underway by the engineering firms. Assuming an answer that it will tolerate a different configuration, the discussion and decision will then be on the issues of reliability, predictability, and flexibility in the future. On one hand, a dual system would require larger immediate expenditure of funds (available by an appropriation in this year’s State budget) and greater downtime in the present, but should result in reduced downtime in the future, with predictable maintenance cycles and costs, together with the redundancy of a dual system. No significant gain in capacity can be achieved because of the physical limitations of the towers and the stations at either end. On the other hand, the present Tram system works well and if appropriately modernized and refurbished, at less present cost and downtime, could continue indefinitely, but, of course, subject to the increasing vagaries of age in a complicated mechanical system. A cost-benefit analysis considering the essential nature of the Tram will be undertaken to assist in the decision-making process. Complicated.
3. Assemblyman Micah Kellner will be holding open-house district meetings in RIOC’s offices at 591 Main Street commencing Thursday, September 13, from 5 to 7 p.m., and every Thursday thereafter. Staffers will stand in for Kellner when the Legislature is in session.
4. Commercial leases: RIOC’s Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Real Estate

The RIOC Column

Nails, and the hair salon. The rent increases vary from store to store as do the lengths of the lease extensions, which range from five years to ten years with a five-year option. The good news is that we will have the benefit of these goods and services for some time to come. I expect this action will calm the fears of store owners who have been operating day-to-day without knowing what their future would bring, and allow them to invest in their shops’ appearance, their equipment and new merchandise secure in the knowledge that they will still be in business tomorrow. It’s about time!
There is still no movement regarding the empty Main Street stores. Southtown will soon offer us a Duane Reade branch, complete with a Chase Bank ATM, soon to be followed by Japanese and Italian restaurants. This is possible because the commercial leases are privately owned and not controlled by RIOC, a Public Authority. But whatever it takes to move Albany into allowing this community to provide the basic retail amenities has not happened and doesn’t seem likely to happen in the foreseeable future. And so...no bakery or ice cream cones for four years; no pizza for three years; no fish store, no sports bar, no credit union, no shoe repair. A State government that passes laws *preventing* commerce, that screws up badly and then can’t fix the problem, well; New York State has earned the sobriquet “the most dysfunctional state government in America.” This Tuesday will be the sixth anniversary of 9/11. Each year, RIRA has arranged an observance of the
See **Katz**, page 14
Committee, will be asked to vote upon the approval of leases or extensions for six of the existing tenants on Main Street. We are still working hard on the issue of process to solicit tenants and lease up the vacant stores. Southtown will be opening two restaurants and a pharmacy in the near future.
5. Island House and Westview: Extensive joint discussions with DHCR as to “affordability” structures have been held.
6. Public Safety: At the suggestion of RIRA, we have been in touch with the NYC 911 operation, installed a special line, and expect final confirmation from NYPD that RIOC will get notification of all 911 calls. Coordination with the emergency responders to offer whatever assistance possible should expedite matters here on the Island.
7. Blackwell House: With work on the exterior reaching a conclusion (mid-October), the Historical Society, led by the indefatigable Judy Berdy, has wangled a \$400,000 appropriation from the City’s department of Cultural Affairs for use in restoration of the interior, *provided* there will be a dedicated approved public use. The Historical Society is drafting the program to be reviewed by all concerned.
8. Comfort Stations: At the suggestion of the RI Blog, RIOC is following up a DOT program to make some additional restroom facilities available. It is a competitive process, so we shall see. We understand the need and are studying the possible solutions.
9. Netcasting: RIOC is recording the proceedings of both committee and Board meetings and making them available on the web site. Check out the meetings of the Real Estate and Governance Committees and the Board. Modern technology is wonderful, but existing bandwidth constraints make simulcasting almost impossible on the Island. Closed captioning is also daunting, but we are pursuing adding it to the tape to be in compliance with the Governor’s Executive Order 3.
10. Seniors Sportspark Swimming: RIOC has been trying to promote pool time for seniors. Free admission
See **Shane**, page 12



Matthew Katz, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
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Steve Shane, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
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COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Registration for **Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance** classes, **today** (Sat., Sept. 8), 11:00-3:00, downstairs at the Howe Theatre behind the Video/Hardware Store. Fifteen-minute demonstration classes for teens and adults include: 12:45, Aeropump; 1:05, Contemporary Dance; 1:30, Ethnic Dance Aerobics; 1:55, Disco Dance Workout; 2:15, Pilates; 2:35, Yoga. Classes start Sept. 15.

Opening Reception for **Stone and Fire**, exhibit of the photography of Tad Sudol, **tonight** (Sat., Sept. 8), 6:00-9:00 p.m., Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Gallery hours: **Sat.-Sun.**, 11:00-5:00; **Wed. and Fri.**, 6:00-9:00. ▶



Music Outdoors at Trellis, Fridays and Saturdays, 6:00-10:00 p.m., through Sat., Sept. 15.

– The Coming Week –

Open House Reception and **Toastmasters** public speaking group meeting, **Mon., Sept. 10**, 7:30 p.m., Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Information: **212-751-9577**.

9/11 Observance and Ceremony, Tue., Sept. 11, 7:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Plaza. Bring a candle.

Roosevelt Island Democratic Club meeting, **Tue., Sept. 11**, 7:30 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center, lower level.

State Assemblymember Micah Kellner, District Office hours, Thur., Sept. 13 and **every Thursday**, 3-7 p.m., RIOC Conference Room at 591 Main St.

Free Art Instruction offered by the Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association, **Sat., Sept. 15** and five subsequent Saturdays, 11:00-2:00, Sportspark Art Studio. Free, sponsored by RIOC; supplies provided.

– Future Weeks –

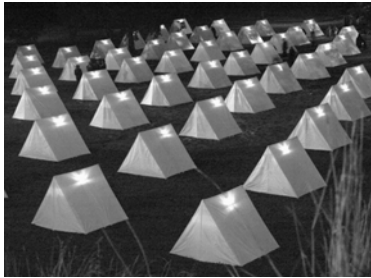
Primary Election, Tue., Sept. 18.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Sept. 22**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, **Thur., Sept. 13**; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, **Mon., Sept. 17**; they are due **Thur., Sept. 20**. **Additional issues in 2007:** Oct. 6, 20; Nov. 3, 17; Dec. 1, 15. **Issues 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 display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**.

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Sept. 24**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **917-691-8836**. **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. **Toastmasters** meeting, **Mon., Oct. 8**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577**.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Thur., Oct. 18**, 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.)

Open House Reception and **Toastmasters** public speaking group meeting, **Mon., Oct. 22**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **917-757-3215**. **An Evening with Peter Yarrow** of Peter, Paul & Mary, the Orphans International Sixth Annual Benefit, **Tue., Oct. 30**, 6-9 p.m., in Mr. Yarrow's Manhattan home. Attendance limited; call **212-755-7285**.



Open House Reception and **Toastmasters** public speaking group meeting, **Mon., Oct. 22**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **917-757-3215**.

An Evening with Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul & Mary, the Orphans International Sixth Annual Benefit, **Tue., Oct. 30**, 6-9 p.m., in Mr. Yarrow's Manhattan home. Attendance limited; call **212-755-7285**.

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

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

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

Flea Market, Sat., Sept. 8, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
IHop Trip, Mon., Sept. 10, 2:00 p.m.
City Island Trip, Tue., Sept. 17, 9:30 a.m.
Yonkers Casino Trip, Mon., Sept. 24, 12 noon

To the Editor:

“Cowed and ignorant public opinion,” wrote Ike Nahem in the oversized manifesto (Letters: *The WIRE*, August 25). That implies that the writer considers himself an enlightened person.

Following are some quotes. Decide for yourself:

- “...it was virtually impossible to find an outright opponent of the war on the mass media outlets ...Nearly half of the country opposed it.”

Facts:

I read various opinions in leading media. Some were pro-war, some were anti, but the vast majority were analytical. By the way, how did Ike learn about half of the country? That information is anti-war. What was the source? Did Ike spend big money for private research or just get it from the “oppressed” media?

- “...financial interests of US corporations AND banks.”

Facts:

Does the enlightened author understand the meaning of those words? Virtually every bank is a corporation. *The WIRE* is published by a U.S. corporation. So what?

- “...its (Middle East - H.S.) vast oil and energy platforms 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.”

Facts:

a) The Middle East became a major object of world politics 50 years ago, when the Soviets decided to use oil as a tool to destroy the Western economy.

A century ago:

- The developed world was not oil-dependent, but horse-dependent.

- Most oil resources of the Middle East were not yet discovered.

b) The Middle East did not have great significance during both world wars.

c) One of two parties in the struggle for Middle East (the Soviet Union) was neither rich nor a capitalist power.

Etc., etc. Virtually every statement in the letter is nothing but groundless propaganda intended for an ignorant public. Keeping my letter short, I will not comment every point.

Please, do not be placid. It was propaganda and ignorance that inspired the 9/11 suicide terrorists. Propaganda and ignorance inspire haters now. Propaganda and ignorance were, are, and will be the most powerful weapons of masterminds of death.

Henry Savransky

Letters

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

Last week, we discussed the inappropriate behavior of some of the officers of the Public Safety Department (PSD). This letter addresses only one of those issues – the persistent and illegal parking habits of PSD Deputy Director Rene Bryan.

As captured in photos and discussed in posters I have been handing out, Bryan parks his monster SUV in a variety of parking spots on Main Street, including spaces reserved for PSD patrol cars and regular spaces where muni-meter parking permits are required. Yet no permits (muni-meter or otherwise) are displayed on Bryan's vehicle. When I asked you about this in a recent conversation, your explanation was that Jim Fry, the director of PSD, says that Bryan needs to park his vehicle on Main Street “because he transports people.”

This is not an adequate explanation. Who are the people Bryan needs to transport? If Fry means people who are arrested, then surely law or reason or liability issues requires the use of real NYPD vehicles along with real NYPD officers. (And how often are prisoners transported on the Island?)

The real reason that Bryan parks wherever and whenever he wants, for free, is *because he can*. It is his office that hands out the parking tickets, after all.

Certainly, any Island residents who were to park their car where Bryan parks, and without paying, would receive a summons. As CEO of RIOC, you cannot permit illegal activity by a RIOC employee. And if Bryan's parking is *not* illegal, please cite the appropriate legal citations and rationale.

In their weekly staff meetings, PSD officers reaffirm that they “are here to serve the community.” Yet it seems that many PSD officers often do not perform to that standard. Although PSD or RIOC staff keep pulling down my posters (don't worry, I have an endless supply, and you can get the full text and blog entries at <http://blog.rira-council.org>), I have discovered something about Island residents as I put up more posters: Invariably, strangers come up to me with PSD horror stories of their own, about PSD officers treating/ticketing them unfairly, enforcing arbitrary rules, and abusing the parking situation from their position of authority.

I have two suggestions: (1) The rules for residents must be the same as the rules for PSD officers; e.g., RIOC employees should not have special parking privileges on Main Street. (2) Please give more thought to the ongoing dissatisfaction of Island residents with PSD; we interact with PSD on a daily basis and it is not a pretty picture.

Finally, as I was putting up flyers this morning, I noticed that they were taken down within ten minutes. I caught Officer Candelario ripping down the flyers. I asked, “Why are you taking down the posters?” His response was, “I was told to.” No other posters on the kiosks or elsewhere were taken down. Can you explain why PSD officers are permitted to violate our First Amendment right to publicly complain about the Government, and why their RIOC/PSD management chain encourages them to do so?

Frank Farance

Letters deadline for Sept. 22 issue: **Tues., Sept. 18.**

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



Alex Gamburg (*The WIRE*, September 12, 2001)

History from the Island viewpoint: Read the 9/12/01 EXTRA edition of *The WIRE* on line at <http://nyc10044.com/wire/2202/wire2202.html>

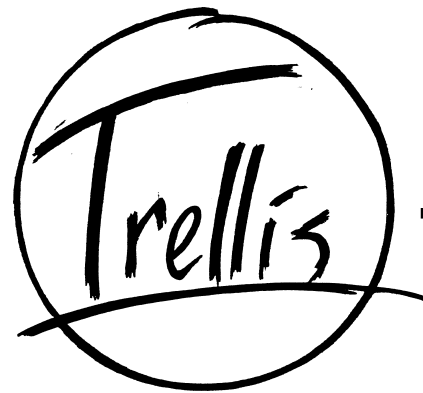
Letters Policy

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:** 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 will be considered if their content merits the required space.

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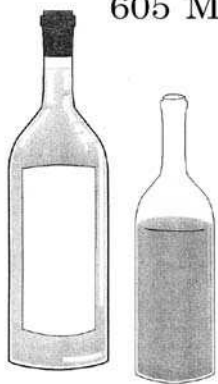
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Library Again Celebrates Summer Reading

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

The Island branch of the New York Public Library held an end-of-summer celebration Wednesday, treating children and adults who participated in its Summer Reading Clubs.

“Uncover the World” was the theme of the reading program, which this year, for the first time, included a separate Adult Reading Program. Thirty-six adults participated, reading 474 books. In the under-12 set, 312 children read an impressive 2,150 books. Among teens, 213 read a total of 237 books.

The celebration was held in the amphitheater behind the library to the enthusiastic applause of proud parents. Certificates of

achievement and gifts were presented to the Children’s First Prize Winner, Collen Doyle, who read 98 books over the summer months. The Young Adult First Prize Winner was Sean Doyle with (120 books), and the record-holder for the adult “Uncover the World” Reading Program was Mrs. Chiyo Sakai (40).

The names of all the other participants were called out, as well, and they received presents. There were sheets of laser stickers and painted flower pots donated by Roosevelt Island’s Video-Hardware store, pencils and balloons from the Card Shop, a picture frame with a pretty painting from We

Are One Boutique, a bouquet of fresh flowers from the Island Flower shop. Four gift certificates were donated by Roosevelt Nails, a gift certificate was donated by the Roosevelt Island Cleaners, and another by the Beauty Salon at 523 Main Street. The Thrift Store gave ten second-hand books and ten tapes for children. The library provided brand new Scholastic Books titles, too.

This year, instead of hired entertainers as in the past, the children entertained themselves. Led by library staffers Kariria Martinez and Lateshe Lee, they competed in active games such as sack-hopping, the Alphabet Song, water balloon hot potato, an egg-and-spoon race (a bit messy), and tattoos (paper).

Trellis donated platters of appetizers. China One donated pork or vegetable fried rice. M&D Deli gave potato chips, soft drinks, and ice. There were three large sheet cakes with colorful icing.

Supervising Librarian Petra Kolokotronis explained that during the successful children’s and adult’s reading programs, participants can read any books they wish and then enter the titles into the reading logs provided by the library. “However, I can supply book lists with titles under various categories. For instance, the adult book list includes titles for “The most popular Mystery novels of the 20th Century,” “Banned Books,” “Pulitzer Prize Winners of 2007,” and a list of titles for Book Discussion Groups. These lists are still available at the library.”

The Roosevelt Island Branch Library, at 524 Main Street, is now open six days a week with newly expanded hours on Tuesdays and Fridays:

Monday – 12 noon-8 p.m.
Tuesday – 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Wednesday – 12 noon-8 p.m.
Thursday – 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Friday – 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday closed

David Levy



Former Roosevelt Island resident David Levy died August 29 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 62.

David, who came to Roosevelt Island from Brooklyn in 1980, lived for many years in Eastwood, Rivercross, and then Manhattan Park. After moving to Manhattan in the mid-’90’s, he remained a frequent presence on the Island. Residents may remember him from his early-morning jogs or for his stops at Trellis for corn muffins in his Brooklyn Dodgers cap. He is remembered for helping many Roosevelt Island youngsters find their first jobs.

In testament to David Levy’s influence, Neal Herman, who grew up on Roosevelt Island, will be running the New York City Marathon in his memory and to raise funds for Sloan Kettering, the hospital that helped David fight his illness.

He is survived by his partner, Suzanne Weissman, and his children, Andrew and Dana Levy.



Summer reading participants lined up Wednesday afternoon to spell out “Summer Reading 2007”

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Plebiscite from page 1

dents who step into a voting booth on February 5.

RIRA has an important role in the Roosevelt Island community, so doing something to support its activities – which, as it happens, will now include February 5 balloting to choose those nominees – made sense at the top of RIOC, where Steve Shane sits as President.

RIRA President Matthew Katz talked it all through with Shane, and the formula was found:

- RIRA will ask RIOC for an allocation of funds.
- Shane, acting within his authority as RIOC President, will give RIRA some money to carry on its activities in the Roosevelt Island community.
- That money will not be earmarked for an election. In fact, it will be specifically “unrestricted.”
- No State agency – certainly not DHCR or RIOC – will tell RIRA what to do with the money, or how to do it. There will be, in short, no RIOC hand on or in what RIRA does between now and February 5, 2008.
- RIRA will mount an election – oops, *plebiscite* (Shane’s preferred term) – working hard to attract a field of candidates that represents every shade and hue of Roosevelt Island’s diversity in income, housing mode, geography, physical ability, ethnicity, and so on.



MTG convener David Bauer, as he described the subcommittee’s decision to the RIRA Common Council Wednesday night.

- RIRA will submit the winners’ names as residents’ *suggestions* to the Governor as potential nominees to the RIOC Board. (RIRA leaders are also likely to seek the assistance of Democratic officeholders in persuading the Governor to take the suggestions very seriously.)
- The candidates will have to complete all the normal paperwork – and it’s not a small amount – associated with being appointed to any New York State authority, and go through the usual vetting by the State Police and the Governor’s

appointments office.

- The formula, as developed:
- Allows RIOC to avoid any official endorsement or involvement in the voting.
 - Allows RIRA to get the job done right – perhaps so right that it will have a moral force that will make the democratically chosen winners very appealing to the Governor as nominees.

But was it easy? No. The debate Wednesday night at the RIRA meeting was fervent and heartfelt, though never heated.

In the Maple Tree Group (MTG), the working subcommittee of RIRA’s Government Relations Committee, there had been an earlier debate over accepting funds from RIOC that might seem predestined to cover the cost of an election... er, *plebiscite*.

As MTG convener David Bauer reported to the Common Council Wednesday night, the MTG vote had been 5 to 3, with Government Relations Chair (and former RIRA Vice President) Margie Smith as one of the three dissenting votes. Said Bauer, “The people who were on the [losing] 3 side of the [subcommittee] vote were concerned that, if we accept financial help from RIOC, there may be a taint to the process that would be uncomfortable. I think that’s a point that has to be considered, but I think we must also face up to the fact that if we ever were to achieve nirvana – nirvana being a change in the State law requiring an election of Island residents by Island residents – those elections would be run by RIOC, and necessarily so because they are the responsible agency. The feeling on the [majority] 5 side of the vote was that we are not putting ourselves into an even worse situation by asking RIOC for the money than we would be if we were ever to get the law changed.” Bauer concluded his presentation by urging that RIRA accept funding from RIOC and from any other source that might be available.

In proposing a motion, RIRA President Katz, who is a member of MTG, said, “This is the first time we’re doing this. If we don’t do it right this time, we’re never going to get the chance to do it again.” He advocated accepting funding to ensure RIRA would have the resources to conduct an effective election. “I see no ethical constraints here,” he added. Katz suggested that this might set a prece-



Bicycle Built For Two The Angelica Foundation has donated a Duet Wheelchair Bicycle Tandem to Coler-Goldwater. It allows a passenger in a wheelchair to be placed in the front of the bicycle while a staff person provides motive power. Ron Becker, Director of the hospital’s Department of Therapeutic Recreation, said, “Clients expressing interest and assessed for appropriateness and safety will be taken for rides along the water’s edge on the Island.”

-Judy Berdy

Qualifications: Three Views

On Thursday morning, resident RIOC Board member Patrick Stewart commented on a discussion in his Governance Oversight Committee, with RIOC President Steve Shane and Counsel Ken Leitner, on qualifications for service on the RIOC Board. David Kraut and Mark Ponton, both resident Board members, also commented. Their remarks, presented here verbatim, are interesting for the varied viewpoints they reveal.

Patrick Stewart

The subject was, broadly, qualifications for membership in the [RIOC] Board, or, what would be the qualities that a corporation would be looking for in their membership in terms of furthering the corporation. While that is indeed true, this Board like any other board I know of has a fiduciary responsibility not just to the corporation but to the community. So that, understanding that, a Board member should come as clean as possible, unfettered with prior opinion, with the greatest amount of business expertise as possible. We discussed how the corporation operates, and it operates like most any other private-sector corporation in that we have management, we have financial, we have real estate, we have marketing, and all of the things that a corporation [that] makes money needs to have. In this case, however, the money we make goes back to the community, and that’s why the dual purpose of the fiduciary responsibility. We discussed that at some great length; we decided that it needed re-discussion, so Mr. Leitner and I will be meeting in the near future to cut down or make more clear that we need some certain priorities and skills in addition to what might be called ethical community service standards. Mr. Leitner and I will be meeting on that, probably next week.

Mark Ponton

It would seem to me that one of the things the committee could do, inadvertently, is add such an aura of excellence and complexity that no one would dare try to run, and I would hope that, somewhere, you were able to separate what is preferred from what is absolutely essential. For instance, if a guy with an IQ of something [high] wants to run, it seems to me that he should, according to the democratic process, and if he wins, he wins. So somehow, I would hope that we would watch that, because there may be people who are not qualified in any way but emotional and patriotic predisposition, and I don’t think we’d want to throw them out.

David Kraut

The briefest glance around this table shows that no particular qualification is required to be a Board member. In any case, I speak in favor of what Mark said, and part of the discussion, if I may, Patrick, was along the exact lines of whether we need specific business expertise, or legal expertise, or whether we just want – I say “just” as though it were nothing – [we want] candidates [who] should be selected more based on their principles and their ethic and their broad view of the community, and what they can bring to a general discussion of the purposes and future of this Corporation as opposed to a specific expertise which – and this is presented as an alternative idea – which can be hired. You can hire consultants to help you figure out legal and financial and fiduciary matters in their specific areas. You want these consultants to be heard by people with a generally broad and reasoned outlook and a vision of what this community can become, as opposed to a specific professional skill set.



Assemblymember Micah Kellner spoke at Wednesday night’s RIRA Common Council meeting. He will start conducting weekly district office sessions at the RIOC offices (591 Main Street) on Thursday, September 13, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

dent for annual RIOC allocations to RIRA.

But Smith expressed a concern that the close coupling of a decision to accept unrestricted funding from Shane, and a decision to run an election, might incur the ire of the Governor’s office. “I just think the risk of damaging our reputation is too great,” she said, noting that the Governor has to be mindful of the implications, for other State authorities, of anything that is done by RIOC.

Smith was joined, in expressing opposition, by Eastwood delegate Joyce Mincheff (“We do not want to displease the Governor. The election and the money are two separate things.”), MTG committee member Nurit Marcus (“I think that this is an election for the residents by the residents. Fundraising is the bulk of it – getting people excited [by asking], ‘Give us your money, give us your vote...’ We don’t want to be involved with RIOC.”), and former Common Councilmember Vicki Feinmel (“We have most of the money [we need in the RIRA treasury and MTG funds]; we can do it ourselves. Because this is the first, we have to be totally independent. As soon as you take money from someone, they have a say. Money is power.”). But a majority of the Common Council members agreed

with RIRA president Katz, who said, based on his Tuesday meeting with Shane, “Are there strings attached? No... It’s about creating separation.”

Steve Marcus, representing Rivercross and disagreeing with his wife, called the decision a “no-brainer.” Aaron Hamburger, representing 455 Main Street, said “Listening to all this discussion, I’m even more convinced that we should accept the [RIOC] money and, frankly, establish the relationship between RIOC and RIRA. I think that’s a very important move. If the Governor is upset about this, that says to me that the Governor is against the whole idea of a plebiscite. We might as well know that now, rather than later. I mean, he cannot be upset about this democratic move on Roosevelt Island.”

Island House delegate Frank Farance said, “I must be on another planet right now, because I can’t see what is contentious. Every couple of years we fight to scrape up enough money to do something good, or halfway, or even not so good on elections... As for an ethics issue, that part I really don’t get.” Like Steve Marcus, he characterized the decision a “no-brainer.”

The vote, after over an hour of discussion, was 11 for, 4 against, and 2 abstaining.

With or without RIOC cash, Wednesday night’s vote sets RIRA on a step-wise march to the balloting on February 5 – a date chosen because the presidential primary voting is that day, and a good turnout is likely.

The steps:

- Publicize the process.
- Attract candidates.
- Publicize the process.
- Hold campaign events.
- Publicize some more.
- Hold more campaign events.
- Engage the population. (That is, publicize.)
- Conduct the February 5 balloting.
- Send the results to the Governor.

Along the way, there will be steps for candidates, too – orientation meetings, in all likelihood, so that they’ll understand the process and be able to raise questions – and eventually, for the winners, a thick form to complete as a preliminary to the routine background check done by the State Police on all appointees to the boards of public authorities. There will be “candidates’ night” forums, position statements to be published by *The WIRE*, and – not so incidentally – campaigning.

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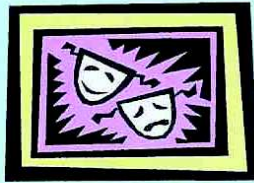


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Six Years On, 9/11 Again Falls on Tuesday

Brendan Chellis first shared this account of 9/11/01 with *WIRE* readers on the first anniversary of the tragedy. He has since updated it with additional memories.

by Brendan Chellis

Why did the worst day of our lives start out so nice? Weather-wise, September 11th was beautiful. It was one of those days that you picture them having all the time in California. There literally was not a cloud in the sky. The weather man was promising a high of around 80 degrees.

That day happened to be a “suit day”. One day a week I used to wear a suit. Since we are allowed to dress down at Empire, I needed an excuse to get my nice clothes out of the closet so they wouldn’t get all dusty. And there’s no better way to tell if you’re getting fat than by wearing a suit on a regular basis. They don’t lie. So one day a week I would wear a suit. Now when it was warm, I wouldn’t really wear a full suit. Everything but the jacket. I really wish I had worn a pair of sneakers that day.

I walked down to the subway at about 8:00. As usual I walked along the waterfront. This isn’t necessary on Roosevelt Island. One can just as easily walk down Main Street in the middle of the Island. However the view of the City would be blocked most of the way down. Or one can be really lazy and take the bus for all of two minutes. But I really like to take advantage of where I live. So when I walked to the subway, I would walk along the river. The view of the Manhattan skyline is awesome. You get the Empire State Building, the Queensboro Bridge, the UN...and the World Trade Center. Little did I know that this would be the last time I would see it from Roosevelt Island.

I got on the Sixth Avenue shuttle that runs from the Island. I took that to West Fourth Street, where I switched trains. From West Fourth Street, I had my choice. I could take the A, C or E trains. The preferred train was the E because it brought you closest to the mall underneath the World Trade Center. But if the A or C came first, I would take one of those. They dropped you closer to Chambers St. and added about two minutes of walking.

Almost 90% of the time, the E-train would come first. However, that morning nothing came for about five minutes. That may not seem like much time but on a New York subway platform, it can mean the difference between being relatively alone or sharing the platform with a couple thousand people. Finally, an A train came. Little did I know that train and the otherwise annoying delay saved my life. I was one of the last people to cram into the door. I was probably viewed as one of those people who squeezes on when there’s no room. But that morning I didn’t care.

I got off at Chambers Street and began the long walk to One World Trade Center. I walked through the underground mall just like I would do any other day. Between the mall and the lobby of Tower One, there was a bank of about 15 glass revolving doors. They were each separated by concrete columns that were the base of the columns that went all the way up the side of the building. The last thing I remember before the world changed forever was that I was thinking how empty the mall was. I was about 50 feet from the revolving doors when all of a sudden the lights went out for a second and came back on. I quickly glanced over at a cop in front of Banana Republic who looked up and reacted the same way I did. It’s not something you see every day but probably nothing to be alarmed about.

What I saw next happened so quickly I barely had time to react. I noticed that the lobby of Tower One almost instantly filled up with a rolling brown cloud from floor to ceiling. I stopped walking when all of a sudden – **BOOM** – the entire lobby exploded. The revolving doors in front

of me just vaporized. Amazingly, nothing hit me. There was a second of silence as everyone started to comprehend what happened. And then all the running and screaming started. I have never run so fast in my life. Working in that building we had always known that if terrorists ever came back to the World Trade Center, they were going to finish what they started. So even though I was running away, I was convinced I wasn’t going to make it out of the mall alive. As everybody started to run, a lady next to me fell down. I stopped to help her but she got up on her own. So I continued to run.

I reached a point where I had to make a choice. The mall formed a “T.” I could make a left and go up an escalator to the street. But I knew in the panic people were probably getting trampled there. I could make a right and go up another set of stairs about 300 yards away. But if there was a larger explosion coming or we were breathing something chemical or biological in all the smoke, I could die before I made it there. So I ran straight ahead into the N/R subway station. I never slowed down as I was doing all this thinking. At the last second, I saw a guy running at top speed in my direction from my left. It was too late for either one of us to stop. We smacked into each other really hard, bounced off, never said a word and kept running in our separate directions. I couldn’t understand why he was running from that direction.

I was about to run down the stairs to the uptown platform (where I knew I could get out to the street) when I ran into a crowd of people coming up the stairs. They were just frozen with terror in their eyes. Not once did I ever turn around to see what they were looking at behind me. But I knew it was bad. I yelled to all of them, “The lobby to One World Trade Center just exploded! Turn around! Get the hell out of here now!”

Somebody asked me “Was it a bomb?” I told them “I don’t know. Just get out of here!”

Some people didn’t even hesitate and turned and ran. Other people just stood there in disbelief. I yelled at them again “Turn around! Run!”

I got to the bottom of the stairs where there was an underpass to go to the Uptown platform. There were more people down there asking me “What’s going on?”

I told them the situation and told them to turn around and run. Somehow I appeared like the expert of the situation because some lady pointed to a flight of stairs to our right and asked me “Does this go up to the street?”

Only one person followed me. That was the lady that had asked me if the stairs went to the street.

We ran down to the exit at the south end of the platform. The only way out was to go back into the mall but it was right by stairs to the street. So we ran into the mall, up the stairs and out onto the street.

I really didn’t know what to expect when I got outside. When I did, the sky was black. There were burning pieces of paper, soot and debris coming down all over. I continued to run until I got across the street to a little park at the southeast corner of the World Trade Center complex. And then I looked up at the horror. At the top of Tower One were four or five floors completely engulfed in flames. Pieces of the building were falling off. There were more sirens than I had ever heard in my entire life.

I was totally out of breath and shaking uncontrollably. I had never come so close to getting killed. Just then I felt my cell phone vibrating like I had a message. I took it out of my pocket and could barely hold it in my hand. It was even more difficult to dial because of the shaking. There was a message from my brother Geoff saying he heard on the radio that a small plane had hit the building. It’s amazing that they got the story on the radio that quick. But it was obvious that it wasn’t too accurate yet because his message did not reflect what I was seeing unfold before my eyes. From his description I was standing there thinking “Holy [crap]. He doesn’t even realize how serious this is.”

So I tried to call him back. No luck. I tried my mother and then my father and then Geoff. Again no luck. I kept calling them over and over and over again but could not get any of the calls to go through. Finally I lucked out. The phone was ringing at my father’s and then it went into voice-mail. Since he has the same voice-mail service I have, I knew it meant that he was on the phone probably trying to call me. So I left him a message. I don’t even remember what I said but I remember explaining how the lobby exploded just as I was about to go through the doors, telling him that I didn’t know when I would be able to talk to him again and asking him to spread the word that I was alive and OK.

As I hung up the phone, I heard people screaming around me. They were pointing up at the building and crying. I asked a guy next to me what was going on. I could see the fire raging at somewhere around the 90th floor of Tower One and pieces of the building continuing to fall. And this guy pointed up, “Look, those are people.” It was absolutely horrible. Some people appeared to still be alive and conscious as they were jumping. Others just fell lifelessly. One guy was in a suit and his body was falling parallel to the ground with his tie pointing straight up in the air. These were just regular people like you and me who went to work one day. And they died a horrible death because of it.

I really wanted to get in touch with my mother to tell her I was OK. But it was pretty obvious that the cell phone network was down. I remembered that my brother Gerald worked a block away, but I couldn’t remember his number. I decided I would go to his building and see if I could find him. Then I could call my mother on his phone.

As I turned to walk away I heard a sound I will never be able to get out of my head. I could hear the sound of jet engines. It’s nothing you would normally think twice about as it’s just another loud sound you hear in New York. But not that loud and not in Lower Manhattan. The engines were screaming like they were being pushed to full throttle. I turned to look up at Tower Two and watched as the second jet

plowed into the building about halfway up. A tremendous fireball shot out the side of the building as we instantly got hit with an intense blast of heat down on the street. The thought going through my head was “So this is what it’s like to die.” Pieces of the building and the jet were coming down everywhere. Everyone standing in the crowd that a moment ago was almost shoulder to shoulder had now turned screaming and running for their lives. As I turned and ran towards Broadway I was just waiting for something to hit me in the back.

As I ran, I saw to my right that people were getting trampled when all of a sudden the person in front of me fell



Spencer Platt, Getty Images

I don’t know what the hell I was thinking because I said “Yeah, I think so.” I started running up the stairs and everybody followed me. I won’t tell you the expletive I screamed when I got to the top of the stairs and realized that this was no exit. At the top of those stairs I had a choice, the Downtown subway platform or the mall. I think everyone lost faith in me because they actually started heading back into the mall. By this time smoke was starting to pour into the station. There was no way I was going back into that mall there, but I knew there was another exit down at the south end of the platform. So I pulled out my Metro Card, swiped it at the turnstile and got onto the platform.

9/11 from page 1

even though it was.

“The way people describe something like this – that it’s as though it’s on a TV screen? That’s just what it’s like – as though you’re watching someone else’s memories.” Over the years, Chellis has augmented a memoir first published in *The WIRE* a year after 9/11/01. It is reprinted, in the expanded form, in this issue.

When she remembers 4/19, Betty Robins remembers her wisp of happenstance. She was on her way to a meeting. “The only thing that saved my life was that I didn’t make it from the 7th floor to the 9th floor. I turned around to pick up one of the things I needed, and that’s the only thing that saved my life.”

On Tuesday evening, 9/11/07, Robins will be with Brendan Chellis on Roosevelt Island, with other survivors of 4/19, Joanne Hutchison and Dot Hill. “I was at my desk doing a couple of letters and that’s when the bomb exploded, and darkness surrounded everything. Dot Hill came in to get me. She came back in, saw me, and helped me to get out.”

Hutchison explains her involvement with a survivors’ group that responded to New York’s tragedy: “Those of us who went through the Oklahoma City bombing were given so much. The entire world and the entire country sent out their hearts to us. It meant so much to me personally – the kindness that helped us. When 9/11 happened, we sensed that we would be needed – that what we had gone through would help.

“I feel I have a kinship with the people in New York City,” she continues. “You looked into their eyes and they immediately understood that I understood, and that those in our group understood. One of the best things that helped me was that when they talked about how they were feeling, we were able to tell them that it’s normal. That’s a big thing for me, to be able to say, ‘You know what? This is what you *should* be going through right now.’ A lot of people think they’re crazy because they haven’t gotten over it. The people around them who weren’t there don’t understand. They don’t have people in their personal lives that they can talk

Chellis from previous page

to make it home. As we walked across the bridge, every few minutes you could hear a fighter jet overhead. The sky was completely empty except for them. When I looked to my right toward Lower Manhattan, giant white plumes of smoke were blowing over Brooklyn. The World Trade Center was gone and in its place was a giant fire and death at an unimaginable scale.

And as I saw the mass of refugees crossing the bridge and the destruction in the background, I just couldn’t believe what I was looking at. This was something we had seen in newspapers and on TV our entire lives going on in other countries around the world. People escaping from war, misery. And today September 11, 2001, the invisible shield which protected us from all the evil things that went on in other places around the globe was gone. War had come to New York City. And nobody even saw it coming.

After a long, arduous journey of seven hours, I made it home. My feet were bleeding as the blisters that were there were rubbed off. I never thought my apartment would look this good. As I began to return all the phone calls I got, I realized what a lucky person I was. Twice today, I thought I was dead. But I made it. And all of my closest friends at Empire Blue Cross had lived. And nothing else mattered more than that.

I came to find out in later days that we lost 11 people at Empire and my cousin Chris who worked at Cantor-Fitzgerald. And to this day, I cannot figure out how the deaths of these innocent people made sense to some miscreant on the other side of the earth who never met them before. They were just numbers. It’s all incomprehensible how evil people can be in the name of their God. But once again the United States is faced with an attack by fanatics. And just like in earlier wars, we are going to do what we have to do to defend ourselves. But with the rose-colored glasses we wore in the 90’s, who ever thought that we would be involved in something like this again?



Kindred Spirits Brendan Chellis (third from left) with fellow 9/11 survivors and friends from Oklahoma City. Left to right, Tania Head (WTC Tower 2); Kim Ritchie (Murrah Building), who was off work on 4/19/95; Chellis; Dot Hill (Murrah); Elia Zedeno (WTC Tower 1); Betty Robins (Murrah). Murrah bombing survivors Robins, Hill, and Joanne Hutchison (inset) will be on the Island for Tuesday evening’s memorial ceremony.

to, but they have us.”

Dot Hill: “When 9/11 happened, we said, ‘We’ve got to get there. It is essential that we get there because no one else is going to understand but us. We are as close to understanding as anyone on this earth.’”

Hill says it’s important for the 4/19 survivors to do what she and Hutchison and Robins are doing. “It helps when you can help someone else through their difficulties. It helps you with your own. At some point, you begin to listen to yourself: ‘You can get through this. You’re stronger than you think you are.’ It truly has healed my heart to help these people in New York City. I love every one of them as though they are my brother or sister.”

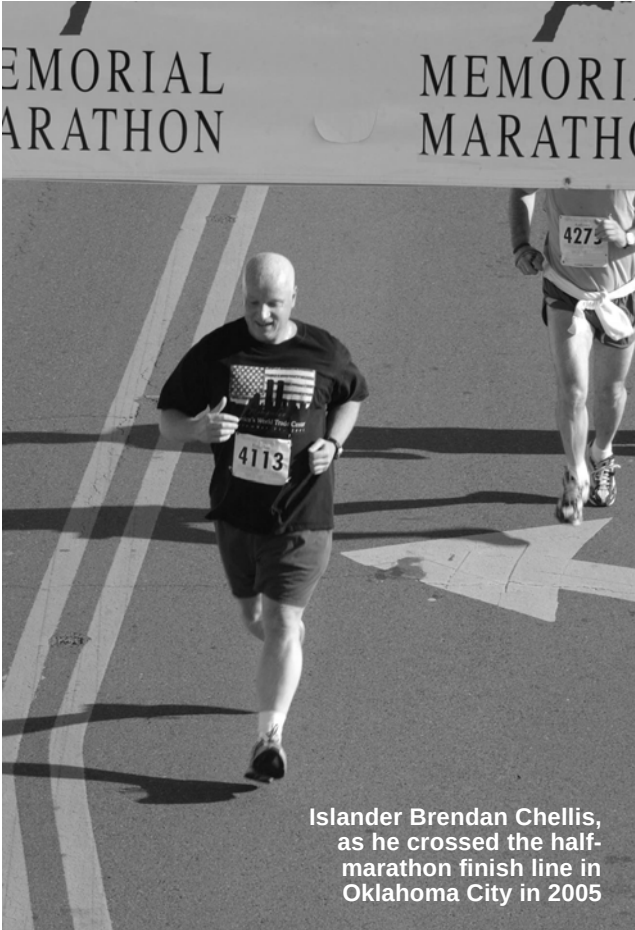
For the last several years, Brendan Chellis has gone to Oklahoma City to join in observances of 4/19. “I was really amazed when I met these people,” he says. “You knew the Oklahoma City people immediately. When you heard, ‘How you all doin’?’ you knew they were definitely not from Brooklyn. On the first night, when they started talking... talking about what they went through, how they dealt with everything, it seemed like us six years into the future. Just the way they reacted to what they saw, the way they came together, the way they helped each other out, and supported each other – it seemed to be everything we went through and, to this day, too, it seems like the whole dynamic of how everyone’s been dealing with each other. It seems like we’re following their same path.”

In Oklahoma City, there’s a yearly marathon to memorialize 4/19/95. “I went there for their marathon in 2005. I ran the half-marathon. It’s not just to remember the people who were killed. It’s to honor anyone whose life was affected by it. Everybody in Oklahoma City comes out for this thing. At the beginning of the race, they have 168 seconds of silence for the 168 people who were killed. You could hear a pin drop for almost three minutes, so it really hits you at the beginning of the race, what it’s for.

“I felt like I was kind of representing New York, and I know they appreciated that I did it.”

With his friends from Oklahoma City, Chellis will be at the ceremony near New York’s Ground Zero on Tuesday morning. “It’s rough for me, but I’ve got to do it.” He’ll give them a special tour of New York – of places not on the usual tours, he says – and then they’ll be on Roosevelt Island at dusk for the ceremony at the Island’s 9/11 memorial just west of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

In 2004, says Joanne Hutchison, “we came to New York City. There were a lot of people who just needed to talk. We had a forum. We told about our relationship to 4/19 and they just started asking question after question after question. Some cried. One woman came up afterward and hugged us



and cried and said she was grateful that we came.

“It has been an amazing opportunity. When we went through 4/19 I had no concept that I would ever have imagined something like that happening to us. I knew it was going to happen again, but never anticipated the size of 9/11.

“So much beauty and love and compassion has come from it. I know that’s not what the terrorists intended, but that’s what’s happened. There’s going to be love that comes from that.”

Shane from page 2

sion, coffee, and doughnuts, do not seem enough inducement. Wonderful exercise. Social time. Come on out! Fridays 10 a.m.-12 noon. If there is enough interest, we will add to the schedule.

- 11. Fall Arts Festival: In full planning mode. Significant on-Island involvement. Publicity for the Encampment, a tented exhibition, has hit the City’s newspapers and broadcast media. Weekend of October 5-7.
- 12. 9/11 Remembrance: The traditional candlelight vigil will be held.
- 13. New York Public Library: Upon investigation, there seems no impediment to the necessary bulk, floor area ratio (FAR), and use permissions required to accomplish the new library facility in Southtown building #7. RIOC will move forward with Councilwoman Lappin to work out the procedural requirements to fund the project and the legal steps with Riverwalk to memorialize the Agreement.
- 14. Southpoint Park: The Trust for Public Land continues the final drawings stage of their contract, and is involving the City and State Departments of Parks as to land disposition and future maintenance requirements. Preliminary clearance of some overgrown areas has begun. The FDR Memorial committee continues fundraising efforts and has participated with TPL in planning joint infrastructure requirements. Note that during the United Nations sessions held in September, the area behind the fence will be closed off by NYPD for security reasons.

Toastmasters Group Chooses Officers



Duomnova, Chernik, Taylor, Rogic, Deas, Cohen (left inset), Como, and Salaveya (right inset).

Roosevelt Island Toastmasters has a new corps of officers. Anna Duomnova will serve a one-year term as President, with Vice Presidents of Education Kim Taylor and Doris Chernik, Membership VP Rena Salayeva, Public Relations VP Branko Rogic, Secretary Woody Deas, Treasurer Elena Como, and Sergeant-at-Arms Malcolm Cohen.

The officers, members, and guests celebrated June 11 at Stamatis Restaurant in Astoria with spontaneous speechmaking.

Toastmasters was one of the first groups formed when Roosevelt Island opened for residential use in the ’70’s. The group has met regularly since then, providing members – both on- and off-Island – the opportunity to hone their leadership skills and speaking abilities in a supportive setting.

Guests are invited to attend RITM’s first meeting of the fall season on Monday, September 10, at 7:30 p.m. in Gallery RIVAA. Meetings, scheduled for the second and fourth Mondays through June, are listed in *ComingUp* (page 3). For more information, call 212-751-9577.

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Blessings for Rosh Hashanah:
1. Bo-ruch 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 Yom Ha-zi-karon.
2. Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-he-che-ya-nu Vi-kee-yi-ma-nu Vi-hi-gee-an-u Liz-man Ha-zeh.

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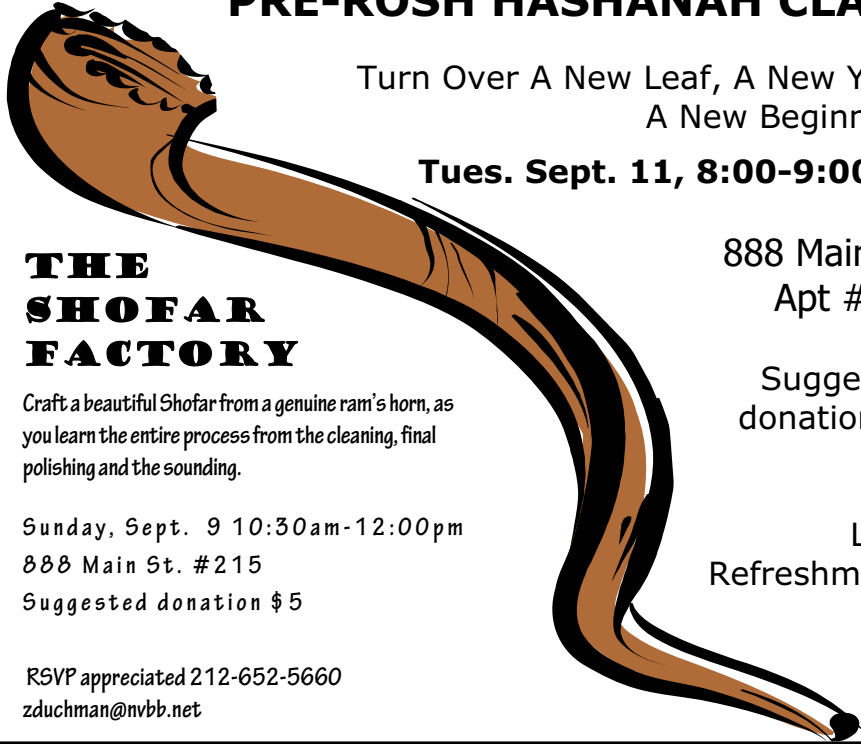
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- Eve of 2nd day Rosh Hashanah, Thursday, Sept. 13 after 7:51pm
- Friday, Sept. 14 at 6:50 pm
- Friday, Sept. 21 at 6:38pm

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Katz from page 2

disaster, and we will again convene at dusk, candles in hand, to remember fallen neighbors and friends from the Special Ops firehouse. This time, we will be joined by guests from Oklahoma City who survived the bombing at the Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995. Islanders will offer songs and readings appropriate to the occasion. You will find a news story on our plans elsewhere in these pages. I do hope you will join us in this short evening of remembrance.

Two weekends ago I repeated an event started the summer of my first term as RIRA president in 2001. I convened a meeting of RIRA officers and committee chairs on the Rivercross lawn to share a little picnic cheer, to *post mortem* our first nine months in office and to plan for the future. I noted that, effectively, our terms are half over; a year from now we'll be planning for the November 2008 RIRA elections and recruiting new members. Given how fast the time flies, we need to establish our goals and sketch out our plans now if we are to act effectively and produce programs of value in the time remaining.

Paramount in our planning is to offer Governor Spitzer our best and brightest to appoint to the RIOC Board of Directors. Under the leadership of David Bauer and the Maple Tree Group, along with Margie Smith's Government Relations Committee, we've been working all summer to design a course of action that will incorporate residents' choices in the nomination process through a plebiscite (the euphemism du jour). The quality of our efforts will determine the level of democratic participation through the Board that this community may expect in future years. Also, we hope to build on the relationships we've established with the Shane administration to forge better communication and understanding between these two organizations.

Did you know that the four-page contact sheets you've encountered in *The WIRE* over the years, which include virtually every business, every community organization, every housing company and government office, every educational and religious institution and, most importantly, every emergency

telephone number, were largely RIRA Secretary Sherie Helstien's creation, begun as a Common Council project? Y'know, by virtue of living in this community, you are a RIRA member, and if you've been looking for a way to get involved, call Sherie (212-935-7534) to find out how you can help with this task. The expanded contact sheet, now a *WIRE* project, can always use a hand. Sherie will be updating the politicians' contact information, a task essential for the Government Relations Committee to function.

We've just completed an audit of our Treasury (thanks to Geof Kerr, our RIRA Auditor), and Communications Chair Frank Farance has a RIRA blog up and running: <http://blog.rira-council.org>. Housing Committee Chair Joyce Mincheff is considering another Insurance Fair to educate renters on the necessity for apartment insurance. George Reither, who heads up the Planning Committee, will monitor development – er – developments and, especially, how our population growth is impacting our transportation requirements.

We're counting on Betty Walker's Island Services Committee to work with newly appointed RIOC VP of Engineering Tom Turick to keep our street lights burning. And it is still my hope that Ron Schuppert's Public Safety Committee can persuade the commander of the 114th Precinct in Queens to follow his predecessors in addressing the RIRA Common Council. Many of us are working with the Social, Cultural, and Educational Services Committee Chair, Amit Gupta, on plans for fund raisers, wine tastings, Shakespeare productions, Fall for Arts, dances, and, of course, the 9/11 observance. This is, for the most part, the fun committee where we get to unleash our imaginations. And, of course, Vice President Mark Chipman and I will participate, encourage, persuade, cajole, and generally annoy everybody.

Please remember that you are RIRA just as much as your Council Members are RIRA. You are allowed – encouraged is more like it – to participate in any and all committee activities. Come out and take part; you'll be glad you did!



SPORTSWIRE

Soccer Season Starts Today

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program's largest sports program begins today (Saturday, September 8) with a mandatory evaluation day for Minors, Juniors, and Seniors. The times and locations are:

Minors (ages 7-8), 10:00 a.m. on the Pony Field (baseball field next to Octagon Tennis Courts)

Juniors (9-10), 9:30 a.m. at Octagon Soccer Field

Seniors (11-13), 11:30 a.m. at Octagon Soccer Field

KinderKickers (5-6) will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, September 15, at Capobianco Field, across from PS/IS 217.

Participants who can't make it to evaluation day should contact the Youth Center.

The Youth Center would like to encourage anyone willing to be a coach or assistant coach to attend evaluation day or notify the Youth Center (info@riyouth.com or phone 212-935-3645). Coaching, say those who've done it, is very rewarding, totally appreciated, and incredibly fun.

Other sports programs include basketball in the winter and baseball in the spring – information to come.

The Beacon Program at PS/IS 217 has a new Director, Debbie Matthews. She put together one of the best summer camp programs the Beacon has seen in years. Activities included trips to water parks and museums, as well as a full curriculum of in-camp activities including education time. She also made the training of current staff a priority, so that they are even more capable of handling the Beacon kids and the situations that may arise. More information to come soon in *The WIRE* and on the Youth Program website at ri-youth.com for a calendar of upcoming events.

The Youth Center at 506 Main Street is also open to all Island youth and their friends. Recent improvements to the facility include enhancements to all of the activity rooms, including the weight room, computer room, lounge area, and more. Our Youth Center is truly a place to come to relax, enjoy, and spend time with friends in a monitored, safe environment.

Programs beginning this fall include music, computers, cooking, academic classes, and more. The Youth Center is also involved in *The Encampment* project, taking place on the south end of the Island October 5-7. To be a part of any of this, or with suggestions for programs, contact the Youth Center.

All programs and schedules will soon be online at the Youth Center website, ri-youth.org.

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Deadline for September 22 issue: Tuesday, September 18

Deadline for October 6 issue: Tuesday, October 2

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SEEKING LONG-TERM SUBLET & TO BUY on Roosevelt Island, if you are moving or relocating. Please call Linda at home 718-268-1479, work 516-683-5683, cell 917-225-0655. Thank you.

R.I. MUSIC TEACHER, pianist, with Master's and Bachelor's degrees (Juilliard, MSM) will teach your child with love and respect. 212-758-5906.

SUBLET WANTED – Island resident looking for a lease assignment or a sublet. Call 646-775-7025.

MAIN STREET THEATRE AND DANCE ALLIANCE – Ongoing registration for dance and theater classes. 212-371-4449. Unique or period clothing & furniture gladly accepted.

ROOM WANTED for October – Prefer to live with another female. Clean, considerate, professional. Max \$650. 201-675-1131.

TUTORING – English professor available. Essays / Test preparation / Grammar / Analysis. 646-319-3873.

VOICE TEACHER – Paul M. Elkin – Broadway veteran, member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing & Guest Lecturer for the New England Theatre Conference on Auditioning for Musical Theatre. New to Roosevelt Island. 212-588-1245.

LICENSED MASSAGE THERAPIST / Certified Reflexologist – Island resident Diana Brill. Gift certificates available. 212-759-9042.

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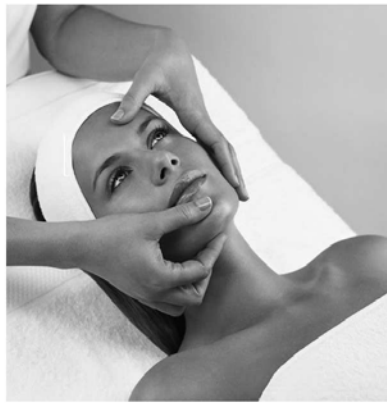


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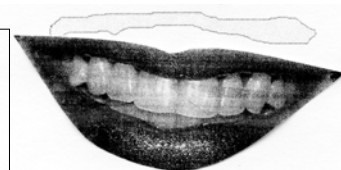
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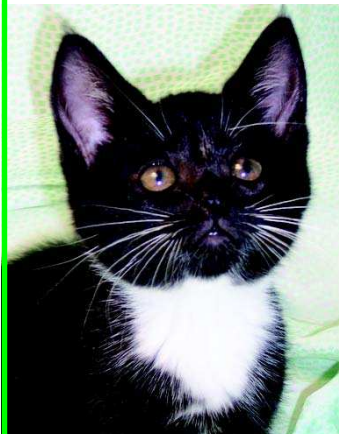
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