

Next issue
& **Fall for Arts**
in 2 weeks:
October 6

The Main Street WIRE™

28th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Photo:
Paul Katz

Sr. Barbara Leonardo and Sr. Maria Therese Petersen were honored last Sunday, on the 60th anniversary of their entry into religious life, with a party on the lower level of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, attended by several dozen parishioners, relatives, and friends. They joined the Missionary Sisters of the Sacret Heart at the same time – Sr. Barbara at age 18, Sr. M.T. at age 19. They are Roosevelt Island pioneers: Sr. Barbara came in 1975, working with Fr. John McCarthy for four years, after which she became the Provincial (a top administrative position) of her order. Sr. M.T. came to live on Roosevelt Island in 1979 while teaching at Mother Cabrini High School in Washington Heights; these days, she's a volunteer Learning Leader at PS/IS 217. Sr. Barbara volunteers in the parish here and gives Enneagram Workshops, using a personality analysis system that helps participants gain greater self-knowledge.

In Two Weeks, It's a Saturday to *Fall* for Arts

The Fall for Arts Festival, on Saturday, October 6, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., will turn Roosevelt Island into a hub of art and creativity, with the proverbial "something for everyone."

- Original oils, acrylics, watercolors, photographs, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, and ceramics by some of New York's most talented visual artists and craftspeople. (An opportunity to meet the exhibiting artists, and also a great start to the holiday shopping season!)

- Continuous live performances on an outdoor stage on the Rivercross lawn, including:

- A *Tap Jam* by the Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance (Bring your tap shoes & join in.)
- Puppets, Irene "Tiger" Clark
- Tai Chi, Sharon Bermon
- African dance, Zen Holmes
- Hip Hop Group, Dakota Holmes

- International dance, Sonia Jung
- The Child School/Legacy High School students sing, act, and showcase artwork

- Guitar/voice, Matthew Katz
- Guitar/voice, David Kraut
- Spoken word/poetry, Naomi Imbrogno

- Comedy, Ron Reid
- Singing/storytelling, Linda

Stanley

- Singing, Blair Strain Madison
- The Child School/Legacy High School Music Chorale
- Improvisational theatre/comedy, Julie White and Michael Flanagan

- Klezmer, classical clarinet, Mitch Elinson
- A children's area, with an "Imagination Station" for creating sidewalk chalk murals and mask designs, and featuring a storyteller and music.

- Food stations, including soul food, West Indian and other international foods, fish and chips, lemonade, ice cream and other desserts, and much more.

- A 7:30 p.m. concert in the Good Shepherd Community Center, featuring vocal and instrumental artists including pianist Roy Eaton, Mitch Elinson, jazz and gospel singer Juanita Fleming, folk guitarist/singer/songwriter Chris Fuller, classical flutist Natalia Gruzdeva, classical soprano Sherie Helstein, opera singer Marianne Labriola, and classical guitarist David Lieber.

- *The Encampment*, an art installation at Southpoint near the former Smallpox Hospital, featuring 100 illuminated tents, from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Friday (October 5), Saturday, and Sunday.

Everything is free except food. Organizations participating in this year's event include RIVAA, the Youth Program, the Main Street Theatre (MST&DA), and the Senior Association (RISA).

Thursday, October 4

Considering Tramway's Future, RIOC Sets Community Meeting

News Analysis by Dick Lutz

RIOC President Steve Shane will meet with the community Thursday evening, October 4, to lay out the possibilities for servicing and upgrading the Tramway. The session will start at 7:00 in Good Shepherd Community Center.

"I'm going to give everyone who comes the preview of the presentation to the Board," Shane wrote in an e-mail to *The WIRE*, referring to the scheduled October 18 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. "The idea is to gather community sentiment as to the question of whether to do only an overhaul or to go for the whole system change. There are pluses and minuses to either, and gradations in between." One Tramway consultant will be present, and another available by telephone.

Shane continued, "While much of the money will be State funds, the difference of almost \$10 million is still an expenditure of public funds."

Referring to the different lengths of time required for the two extreme options – overhaul vs. system change – Shane added, "The timing differences between current inconvenience for downtime and the future should be thoroughly understood. The cost/benefit analysis will also be presented."

Consideration of the current options for the 31-year-

old Aerial Tramway system arises because the previous State administration budgeted \$15 million for work on the Tramway after the April, 2006, crisis in which passengers were stranded aloft for many hours. The State Budget Office has urged RIOC to make a decision about use of those funds before the end of October – meaning, probably at the latest, the October 18 RIOC Board meeting. But at least one of the track ropes – the cable trackway from which the two cabins are suspended during their journey across the East River – is now overdue for replacement. The time required to do that job, in which all four track



By the heart of the morning rush, passengers are stacked up, waiting. Between 8:00 and 9:00 Wednesday morning, about 50 had to wait for another trip, including 27 of these customers, who were lined up at 8:57 a.m. Facing a "full-up" morning rush on the subway, RIOC has few options for increasing Tramway capacity.

ropes are likely to be replaced, means the system will be out of service for a couple of months. Adding on other work that is sensible to do at such a time pushes

See *Tramway*, page 12

Dance Alliance, Too

Speaking of the Arts... It's Year-Round Enthusiasm at the Main Street Theatre

by Rachel Durfee

548 Main Street is a nondescript building. A passerby wouldn't suspect that its ground floor, below street-level, contains the heart of the performing arts on Roosevelt Island. This Fall, the pulse will be

even stronger. The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance (MST&DA) is offering the largest number of classes in its 23-year history – over 20 courses in fitness, dance, and acting and drama, open to everyone from practically-pros to novices, toddlers to retirees.

Mary McCatty, the Executive/Artistic Director of the non-profit organization for the past two years and a dance instructor there for the past ten, is especially proud of the instructor corps on board for the September-January semester.

"They're all very experienced," she says, speaking of résumés peppered with Broadway shows and national tours. And, it seems, very motivated. "Teachers don't just teach here. They are paid, but they volunteer a lot of hours. They love the kids and that's what they do."

At an open house, a visitor can watch a theatre workshop in action. Longtime Islanders might recognize Carla Steckman playing improv games with her class. Once a student at the MST&DA herself, Steckman now runs the children's program for third through seventh graders, which attracts around 40 kids a year. She began her own acting classes as a third grader with MST founder Nancy Howe, who, she says, "gave me the best training I ever had." After graduating

with a theatre degree from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, she realized that she wanted to teach rather than act herself. She returned to NYU for a master's in education, and now teaches at the Metropolitan Montessori School in Manhattan. For her, the best part of community theatre is the fun and the non-competitive environment. "I get excited every year. I've known some of these kids for four years and they are always growing in their abilities. It's wonderful to watch from this side."

Another time, a visitor might catch Sean Hagerty's classical theatre workshop for teens. Born and raised in the U.S., Hagerty has studied and performed extensively in England. He teaches a similar workshop at the Neighborhood Playhouse in Manhattan. In his hands, the black-box theatre below Main Street is transformed – to a battlefield for Henry V, to a balcony for Juliet, to a castle for a lonely Hamlet. Last year, Hagerty produced and directed the Spring show, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the first Shakespearean production tackled by MST students. This year, he plans to workshop during the fall, exploring Shakespeare, Restoration Comedy, and French farce, and then in January to focus on one play that the

See *MST&DA*, page 6



Marietta Clark is one of several dance instructors at MST&DA

139 DAYS

to Island-wide balloting

for Residents' RIOC Board nominees
Ad, page 5; Calendar, page 11

The Editorial Page

Decision Time

There’s an ad on page 5 that is the most important ad ever to appear in *The Main Street WIRE*.

The ad anticipates February 5, a primary election day, on which every Roosevelt Islander 18 and over will have the opportunity to vote for nominees to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC).

Those nominations will go to the Governor with the endorsement of the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, of the political officeholders who represent Roosevelt Island, and – most important – of a democratic majority of the residents of Roosevelt Island.

It is likely the Governor will then send those names on to the State Senate for confirmation to the RIOC Board of Directors.

RIOC calls the shots on Roosevelt Island. The RIOC Board sets policy for RIOC, and votes on many matters that have a direct bearing on our daily quality of life, as well as a direct bearing on the long-term direction for Roosevelt Island. If we were a City, the RIOC Board would be our City Council.

This is, in short, the beginning of democracy for this very special little Island in the midst of one of the greatest cities in the world. Until now, no resident here – other than those selected undemocratically to serve on the RIOC Board – had any meaningful say in policy for Island development, use of parkland, law enforcement (including parking), RIOC personnel standards, government performance, budget... The list goes on, and there has been no meaningful say for residents because we haven’t had the power of the ballot box to hold over the heads of those making the key decisions.

Now, we will.
But it now becomes extraordinarily important that citizens of good will, with the time and inclination to serve, step forward and become candidates for the six available seats in that February 5 balloting. Precedents are about to be set. Traditions will be created. A fully new direction is likely to emerge. Things will change now, and if you believe you can help them change for the better, consider running. Consider serving your fellow Islanders by resolving that this is something for which you can make time as busy as you may be. The degree of success in this new democratic order of things will determine much about the nature of the path ahead.

Consider running to become a RIRA nominee for the RIOC Board. The ad on page 5 is important, but your decision will be far more important to the future of this very special community.

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Fall is definitely here. Midway through September:
1. The U.N. General Assembly is going into session. RIOC has been notified as to the following security precautions until October 2:

A. Roosevelt Island Bridge: Because the security agencies have blocked off the west channel of the East River to all but pre-cleared large ships, the NYC Department of Transportation is requiring that the bridge from the Island to Queens be in operation during the hours of 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., necessitating disruption of vehicular and pedestrian traffic for the estimated eight minutes each time the bridge is raised for passing boat traffic. Be prepared for traffic tie ups.

B. Southpoint: RIOC has been notified by NYPD that Southpoint is subject to closure for security reasons. When notified by NYPD, the gates will be closed all day. We will post on the RIOC web site as soon as possible.

2. Tram: While the preliminary engineering studies of the present status of the Tram system are done, giving all comfort in the immediate operational safety and functionality, decision time is at hand as to what to do next. To that end, a community meeting has been scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Thursday evening, October 4, at the Good Shepherd Community Center, where a full presentation will be made and commentary and questions from the public welcomed. The preliminary engineering analysis has been made available to *The WIRE* for prepublication [on line at nyc10044.com with this issue], as will additional information when available. The Board of Directors will

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consider the matter at its regularly scheduled meeting to be held October 18 at 4:30 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Center, with the decision as to direction to be taken. With the initial decision, planning and budget implications will be more clearly established, with the long lead times for design, bidding, contracting, procurement, operational preparation, and staging begun before actual physical implementation occurs. Please study the materials as available and attend the meeting to participate in the process. Everyone on the Island will be substantially affected by the determination for many years to come.

3. Streetlights: With the shorter days comes more attention to the street light situation. RIOC gathers reports weekly on outages, tabulates them, and addresses the different types of issues, ranging from bulb outage to circuit problems. Construction of Southtown has caused difficulty with some of the lights adjacent to the subway station, and Riverwalk has been asked to take remedial action. Many of the outages are the responsibility of individual properties and not in RIOC’s domain.

4. Blackwell House: Construction continues on
See **RIOC Column**, page 10



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

As summer segues into fall, the pace of life here on Fantasy Island certainly is increasing. Today is Yom Kippur and the Jewish High Holy Days will end at sunset. *Shana tova, gut yontif* and a happy 5768 (seems like yesterday it was 3271!) to all.

Restoring Subway Benches

The Duane Reade at 425 Main Street has opened and with it, the Chase ATM that will surely make my life easier. With the completion of the landscaping abutting 455 and 425 Main Street, there seems to be an opportunity to restore the benches at the subway station where tired Islanders were able to await the northbound Red Bus. They were removed during the new building construction. I e-mailed David Kramer, who represents the Hudson Companies, developers of Southtown, earlier this month as to the feasibility of this plan and I’m hoping for an answer sometime soon. Stay tuned.

9/11

As has become our custom, RIRA held a memorial observance at the 9/11 plaque and cherry tree just west of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd as dusk settled over the site. The rains that had threatened our program all day abated just in time, although the stiff breeze made maintaining lit candles problematic. It was difficult to see the twin light beams from Ground Zero that are such a stark symbol of those terrible events. In addition to survivors of the World Trade Center disaster, this year we were joined by guests from Oklahoma who survived the April 19, 1995 bombing at the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

These lovely people brought us a cutting from the Survivor Tree, an 80-year-old American elm that was almost destroyed by the blast and has become a symbol of the resilience and endurance of the people and the rebirth of this part of their city.

The program included songs from Blair Strain Madison and Sherie Helstien. Event organizers were Margie Smith, Vicki Feinmel, and Dolores Green. Vicki and Margie offered readings and then hosted our guests at a reception at the Gallery RIVAA. And thanks to photographer Alexander Movshovich whose spectacular blowup of the twin light beams graced the memorial site. A videotape of the event is on-line at rooseveltisland360.blogspot.com/2007/09/video-of-roosevelt-islands-9-11.html, thanks to Eric Schwartzman. The inscription at the base of the Survivor Tree in Oklahoma City applies to people everywhere who have endured the madness of a terrorist attack: *The spirit of this city and this nation will not be defeated; our deeply rooted faith sustains us.*

Orphans International Gala

Last Saturday night was the closing event in the summer-long fundraising competition to aid Orphans International. If you’ve been paying any attention whatsoever, you must be aware of this extraordinary international organization, founded right here on

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Roosevelt Island, that is funding, building, and operating campuses for destitute children in Third World countries around the globe. Assemblymember Micah Kellner spoke and our City Council member, Jessica Lappin, presented a Proclamation of the City Council.

The evening offered food and entertainment free of charge, although the temptation to buy raffle tickets and bid on treasures during the silent auction was more than I could overcome. My wife Sherie and I made the winning bid to join folksinger and activist Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary fame, for dinner next month. Many of you know that I’m an old folkie and guitar picker and so I’m looking forward to kibitzing with a man I’ve idolized for decades.

The editor of this rag, Dick Lutz, and I were masters of ceremonies and we managed to be quite silly while officiating over the gala evening. The entertainment included our own Juanita Fleming and her band and, as always, they brought down the house. Singer/songwriter Elza Müller-Römer offered a set in a style she calls “Acoustic-Soul,” offering her own songs in a jazz- and blues-oriented context. For those of you who heard her and liked what you heard, Elza has a CD coming out this fall. My Westview neighbors, Damon LaScot (he’s a 28-year resident of the Island) and Kay Story, were a closing act worth waiting for and they regaled us with their Nashville sound. They combine terrific musicality with Damon’s virtuoso guitar playing, and their performance and studio work are worthy of your consideration. And besides, they just look so great together on stage!

Orphans International founder and director (and Eastwood denizen) Jim Luce created a good-natured competition that pitted building complexes against one another for the honor of having raised the most money during summer fund raisers. I was privileged to perform with my guitar at the Westview party held at the RIVAA gallery in July. The goal was to raise a total of \$10,000. Well, the totals are in, and Jim has raised \$11,695 to sustain his efforts in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Haiti, and a growing list of residences around the world. At the end of the evening, Westview and Manhattan Park were tied for fund-raising honors, having raised \$3,300 each. The OI building organizers, Marlene Flom and Kimberly Andino respectively, will share the prize for most successful organizer: a trip to Sri Lanka!

It seems to me that these are the reasons for living
See **RIRA Column**, page 11



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

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Stone and Fire, exhibit of the photography of Tad Sudol, continues through Oct. 7 at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Gallery hours: **Sat.-Sun.**, 11:00-5:00; **Wed. and Fri.**, 6:00-9:00. ➤

Southpoint Park subject to closure through October 2 because of U.N. sessions.



— The Coming Week —

Bridge closings should be expected through October 2, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., each lasting 10-12 minutes, as river traffic is restricted in the west channel, diverting traffic under the Roosevelt Island Bridge.

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

Ready New York presentation on preparation for emergencies, **Thur., Sept. 27**, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. An American Red Cross event, hosted by Assemblymember Micah Kellner. Free, with refreshments. Information: **212-875-2424**. (See ad, page 7.)

State Assemblymember Micah Kellner, District Office hours, **Thursdays**, 3-7 p.m., RIOC Conference Room at 591 Main St.

— Future Weeks —

Poetry Reading: The Madison Poets, **Sun., Sept. 30**, 4:30 p.m., Gallery RIVAA. Open mike to follow. Suggested donation \$5. Information: MadisonPoetry@yahoo.com.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Oct. 3**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level). Meetings, open to all, begin with public access period for residents to present matters to the Council. (Future meetings Nov. 7, Dec. 5.)

RIOC Community Meeting on Tramway, **Thur., Oct. 4**, 7:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center, to gather community input on choices in the Tramway upgrade: Overhaul or whole-system change?

The Encampment, art installation by Thom Sokoloski, **Fri., Oct. 5** through **Sun., Oct. 7**, 7:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m., Southpoint Park. Volunteers are being sought to help with the installation; contact encampmentcollaborators@gamil.com. ➤

Stuffing Session for *The WIRE*, **Fri., Oct. 5**, 10:00 a.m. to completion (usually by 1:45 p.m.); lunch provided; willing hands welcome. Call for details: **212-826-9055**.

The Main Street WIRE — Next issue, **Sat., Oct. 6**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, **Thur., Sept. 27**; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, **Mon., Oct. 1**; they are due **Thur., Oct. 4**. **Additional issues in 2007:** Oct. 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**.

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.

Fall for Arts Festival, **Sat., Oct. 6**, 11:00-5:00. (Report, page 1; ad, page 9.)

Art Instruction by the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, **Sat., Oct. 6**, 11:00-2:00, Sportspark Art Studio, sponsored by RIOC. Free. Paper and art supplies will be provided. Future sessions Oct. 20, Nov. 2, Nov. 10, Nov. 17.

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Oct. 8**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577**.

Art Sale, paintings and prints of G. Bertoli, **Sat.-Mon., Oct. 13-15**, 4:00-8:00 p.m., 531 Main Street, apt. 627. Refreshments.

Roosevelt Island Democratic Club meeting, **Tue., Oct. 16**, 7:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center.

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.

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**
9:45, 10:45, 12:30, **Senior Swim**
bus pickups at Good Shepherd stop — transport to Sportspark.
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events
Yonkers Casino Trip, **Mon., Sept. 24**, 12 noon

A Punch List for RIOC: Housing, Storefronts, Parking, Transit

Commentary by Steve Marcus

To my mind, the difference between a tyranny and a benevolent dictatorship is simply in the way that the ruler treats his subjects. By that measure, the despotic reigns of RIOC chairmen Blue/Ryan/Berman would be classified as tyranny, and, the current term of Steven Shane would tip to benevolent. In my limited observation of the new RIOC, Mr. Shane has been responsive in dealing with the maintenance needs of the Island, and has shown that he can get things done when he wants to. The bar is not too high, since his predecessors were utterly inept in this and all other departments.

I would now respectfully call on Mr. Shane to turn his full attention on the longer-term and more challenging issues that face the Island — the disposition of ground leases to those buildings exiting the Mitchell Lama program, the leasing of the commercial space that RIOC controls, the improvement of rush-hour access and egress, and clear and fair policies on parking and other Public Safety priorities.

Mr. Shane’s concern for affordable housing on the Island is laudable, and both Island House and Westview have recently made comprehensive offers that will ensure this goal for the foreseeable future. If Mr. Shane and DHCR don’t act quickly on these offers, there is a very real risk that these buildings will be sold to a landlord who will choose to jack up rentals to market rates to make a significant profit, even if they don’t make any deal with RIOC on the ground rents (and there will certainly be a governor before 2026 who will sell them the lease extension, anyway). When and if this occurs, RIOC will have inflicted a grievous injustice on the residents of these buildings and on the community as a whole.

RIOC has also just offered new leases to our current Main Street merchants. This was evidently done without any of the fear and hand-wringing over possible violations of the Public Benefit Corporations Act, which has strangled any commercial leasing on the Island for the last several years. Now, why not offer the same reasonable yet competitive leases to new tenants, like a pizza shop and a bakery? What’s the difference between offering a lease to an existing tenant that doesn’t already have one, and to a new tenant?

Now that the great Red Bus Wars have subsided, and Mr. Shane has reverted bus service to a semi-useable status, he’s pretty much picked all the “low-hanging fruit,” and additional improvements in the rush-hour adventure will be harder to achieve. Serious thought should be given to pedestrian/bicycle access to the Queensboro bridge, ferry service, and the creation of a local station on the E/V (53rd Street) line, which runs under Southpoint Park just south of

Goldwater Hospital. All these options will help relieve overcrowding, and deserve careful consideration. While he’s dealing with those, I hope he can fix the lights north of the train station (they’ve all been out for quite a while — and why doesn’t Public Safety regularly report on these outages? — but more on that later). Working street lights would be a fine replacement for the grotesque and dangerous series of blinding lights below the traffic circle that Herb Berman erected as a landing strip for UFO’s.

It’s also time for a parking policy that everyone has to respect. We all know that parking tickets are issued randomly, and certain cars are never ticketed even if they don’t have handicapped-driver plates. The plaza in front of RIOC’s offices between Westview and Island House has even been cleared of benches so that RIOC vehicles can park there. Some lucky drivers freely park under the spiral and in Eastwood breezeways. This abuse is even worse now than it was under the old Stalinist days. If RIOC really wants to project a “good-government” image, they must address these travesties by:

1) Enforcing a rule that *everyone* has to park in the garage, except for 20-minute loading and unloading.
2) Removing the cars from the plaza in front of RIOC offices and restoring the benches that have been there for 30 years.

3) Identifying what it is that Public Safety can and cannot do. What is their charter, what are their priorities? After years here, I really have no idea why we are paying these guys \$2 million a year — so they can ticket u-turners and issue summons to hapless picnickers who open a bottle of wine near Octagon Park? This may be an unfair assessment, but I know it is shared by the majority of residents — so why not do some positive PR by telling us what we are paying for and why?

As a RIRA Council member, I thank Mr. Shane for RIOC’s financial support, which will be used for democratic election of candidates for the RIOC Board. Every one of the issues above, plus a myriad more, could be very satisfactorily addressed by a Board composed of active and motivated elected residents. I urge community-minded citizens from all walks of life to consider running in this election, and I hope every resident exercises his right to vote for them in February. This is the first step toward a local government that is fully answerable to, and replaceable by, the polity that it serves. On that day, we’ll be ensured that the RIOC President won’t be a dictator, benevolent or otherwise, but even better — an honest and competent public servant who works with the advice and consent of the community.



Steve Marcus is a past President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association

Letters

To the Editor:

Many thanks for publishing Brendan Chellis’s extensive recollection of his survival of the 9/11/01 World Trade Center attacks (*The WIRE*, September 8). It really makes vivid an almost minute-by-minute sense of what survivors went through. I was not near the WTC complex that day, and family members who were seem to prefer not to relive that moment by recounting it to me in any detail.

The final paragraph of Mr. Chellis’ recounting raises a question: “...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.”

Some of the ongoing news and analysis programs on WBAI 99.5 FM and its stream and archive at www.wbai.org can help to provide answers to this kind of question,

but one quick partial answer to Mr. Chellis’s particular question may be obtained from the response given to reporter Lesley Stahl by then U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright, seen on *60 Minutes* program May 12, 1996 (pre-9/11):

Stahl (in regard to the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the U.S.): “We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?”

Ambassador Albright: “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it.”

Edwin Bergmann

Letters deadline for October 6 issue: Tuesday, October 2
After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of local interest to the community, and to/from officials. Requests for *Name Withheld* publication will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records; *letters submitted anonymously will not be published*. 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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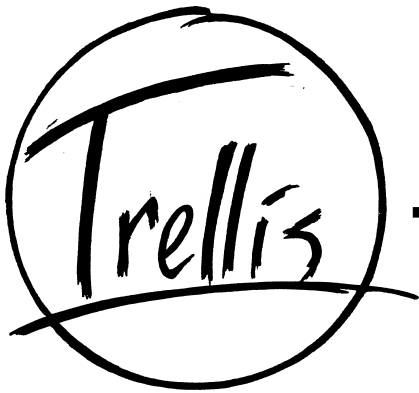
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in the October 6 *Main Street WIRE*
about the launch of a website
with all the information you'll need
to toss *your* hat into the ring.

*Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens
can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

-Margaret Mead

Six seats on the RIOC Board are currently eligible for new appointments.

Under State law, the final choice of appointees is made by the Governor, and their names are forwarded to the Senate for confirmation.

MST&DA from page 1

group will perform at the end of May.

Then there’s Sofia Landon Geier, a former soap opera writer who teaches drama and directs the musical theatre program. In these fun, creative, and energetic teen and adult acting classes, students pair up to work on scenes together, use lots of improvisation, and focus on storytelling. In keeping with McCatty’s promise that “We will find the right class for every child, teen, and adult,” Geier is also leading two new courses, Stand-Up Comedy and Ground Control Crew. These provide opportunity both for the future Jay Leno and for the person who prefers to work magic behind the scenes.

The Musical Theatre Workshop is a staple in the MST&DA drama department. There, dancing, acting, and singing come together. Open to teens and adults, it employs three instructors: Jackie Lucid Cufick, a professional actor, directs; Paul Johnson controls the music; and McCatty choreographs. The participants are diverse – some seasoned veterans, and others who have never stepped foot on stage.

McCatty says she loves to see people coming out of their shells. “We’ll get people up there who haven’t sung a note in their lives and get them singing solos. It’s a great confidence builder.” Come spring, costumes, make-up, and sets bring the show alive in front of sell-out audiences.



Carla Blumberg

MST&DA also has a strong dance department, which attracts over 150 participants annually. Priscilla Costas is teaching jazz dance now, but she was once a dance captain in the Ringling Brothers circus. A fellow teacher, Xavier Auza, recommended her to MST&DA. He is a champion ballroom dancer who keeps himself far from clowns and lions. He participates in the American Ballroom Theatre’s “Dancing Classrooms” program, which brings classical dance into New York City public schools. He joined the program as a teacher the year after it was chronicled in the 2005 documentary, *Mad Hot Ballroom*, a film that showed that having two left feet don’t have to stop you from learning to waltz.

Debra Orenstein is another seasoned member of the dance faculty. She was a Roosevelt Island resident for 21 years, and has been teaching at MST&DA since the early ’90s. A former professional dancer, she is a student of the Isadora Duncan technique – a free and lyrical balletic style named for the famous 20th-century dancer who perfected it. Says McCatty, “There are few dancers who know that technique well, and Debra is one of them.” Orenstein has an undergraduate degree in dance, a teaching degree in nursery, elementary, and special education, and a master’s in special education. She’s the Assistant Director of Education for the Isadora Duncan International Institute, and teaches at the 92nd Street Y and Rutgers University. Having witnessed the incredible growth of the MST&DA first-hand, she says it is “truly a labor of love... very old-fashioned that way and very sweet. [It is] the ultimate non-profit.”

Orenstein especially likes working with young children in classes like Moving Rhythms for Tots. Though some might view taking on a class for toddlers from 18 months to three years as a prescription for a migraine, Orenstein says it’s enjoyable. “Kids are in the moment. They are pure spontaneity.”

McCatty herself continues to teach four dance classes a year in addition to overseeing the entire program. More than ten years ago, having graduated from the Joffrey Ballet School, she was performing as a Rockette when she joined the MST&DA as a substitute. “I was rehearsing for the Christmas show, and teaching on Roosevelt Island on my day off,” she says, laughing as she recalls that hectic season. Having participated on Broadway and in multiple national tours, McCatty has since hung up the sparkly costumes, and dropped out of the kick line of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, to work behind the scenes as a teacher and choreographer.

On any given weeknight, a visitor can stop outside the MST headquarters and listen for tap shoe rat-a-tat-tat, a Shakespeare monologue, or a classic showtune, but what you are most likely to hear is the amped-up music from the MST&DA’s third component, fitness classes. For more than 15 years, aerobics instructor Barbara Parker – also the Head of Fitness at the McBurney YMCA on 14th Street – has helped people fight the urge to hibernate during winter by keeping them energized with some of the MST&DA’s most popular courses, such as Pilates and aeropump, which is her own inventive combination of weights and aerobics. “Don’t be concerned if you’re unsure about your body,” she says. “I’m very hands-on, so I will come over and move you, don’t you worry!” She says she keeps people motivated by reminding them to take it one step at a time – literally: she tells them to buy a pedometer. “Then I say, challenge yourself, just a little bit. If you walk so many thousands of steps in a day, imagine what you can do in a class, just by showing up.” Filled with warmth and enthusiasm, she adds that “Teaching at MST is a gift because I learn as much from the people that I’m teaching as they learn from me. It’s a family type of thing that is different from teaching even at the Y. There’s a different camaraderie... a real community.”

Those with less urge for yoga and more desire to dance

can try Saturday morning hip-hop. John Ollom, a third-year teacher, is a professional dancer with his own contemporary dance company. His class, Disco Dance Fitness, involves stretch, strengthening, and aerobics, all done to the catchy tunes of the 70s and 80s. No leg-warmers or side ponytails required.

For a new twist, people can try Qi Gong, a fitness routine derived from the martial arts and designed to ease tension, release energy blocks, and develop strength, balance, and coordination. Diana Herman, a registered nurse for 20 years, is now a full-time Pilates and Qi Gong instructor. She welcomes all ages and abilities. McCatty speaks of a man well into his 70s taking the class last year – and enjoying it immensely.

Though it can be tough to stay motivated when it’s cold and dark outside, Parker insists that you “just have to get your body there [to class], and your head will follow after you get in the door. Don’t think, just go. Afterward you’ll say, ‘I’m really glad I did that.’”

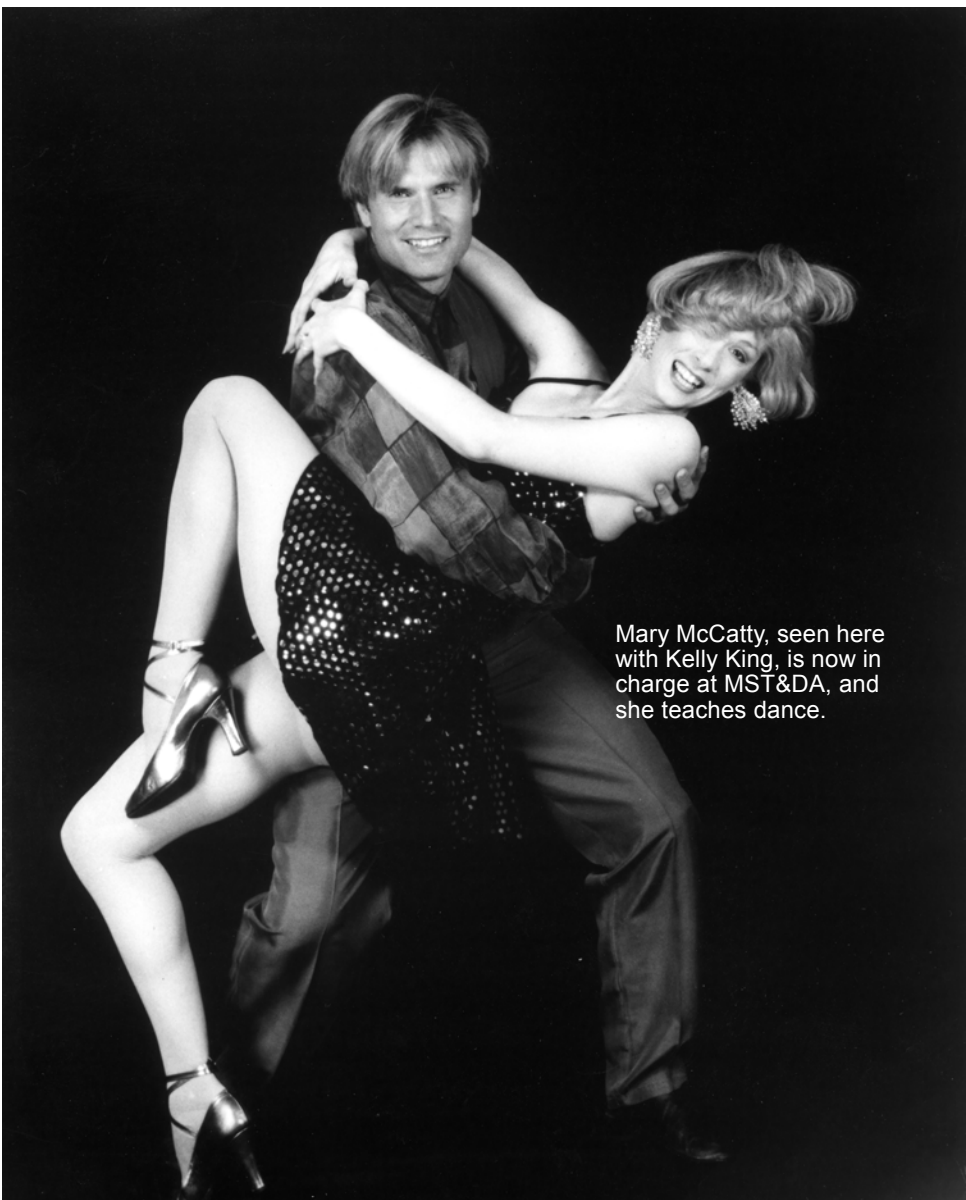
With such a wealth of offerings, the MST&DA is looking forward to its most productive and exciting season yet. McCatty believes it’s “the energy” that makes this studio a unique place.

“We are really working together – and especially working for the kids. The people who participate are wonderful, and they make the program what it is.” Orenstein agrees, saying the MST&DA has contributed to her personal as well as professional growth, allowing her to meet people from all walks of life. “People will call me years later,” she says. “It’s like a big family.” Steckman echoes the sentiment, saying simply, “Every class, I’m smiling.”

Offering classes at half the cost of a typical Manhattan studio (sometimes less) means the MST&DA is able to accept participants at all socio-economic levels. The organization is supported by City grants from the Department of Cultural Affairs, as well as by private donations and fundraising, which allows the Board of Directors to provide full scholarships to those who qualify. The idea, explains McCatty, is that the alliance be all-inclusive. “We accept children and adults of all abilities, levels, and financial circumstances.” The President of the Board of Directors, Nina Wintringham, further describes their important role: “The Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance is one of the organizations that sustains the cultural life of the community and brings the rich diversity of its residents together.”

Though the official registration period has ended, students are welcome to join a class at any time during the semester by simply showing up 15 minutes ahead of time to enroll. For adults who can’t commit to a weekly session, there is a ten-class card available, which allows the cardholder to take any ten dance or fitness classes piecemeal.

All classes are held in the Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance studios at 548 Main Street. More information is available at www.mstda.org, or by calling 212-371-4449.



Mary McCatty, seen here with Kelly King, is now in charge at MST&DA, and she teaches dance.



Priscilla Costa



Sofia Geier, left, seen here with friends, teaches drama.

Orphans International Raises \$11,000+ in Summer Campaign, Slates October Benefit at the Manhattan Home of Peter Yarrow



Juanita Fleming



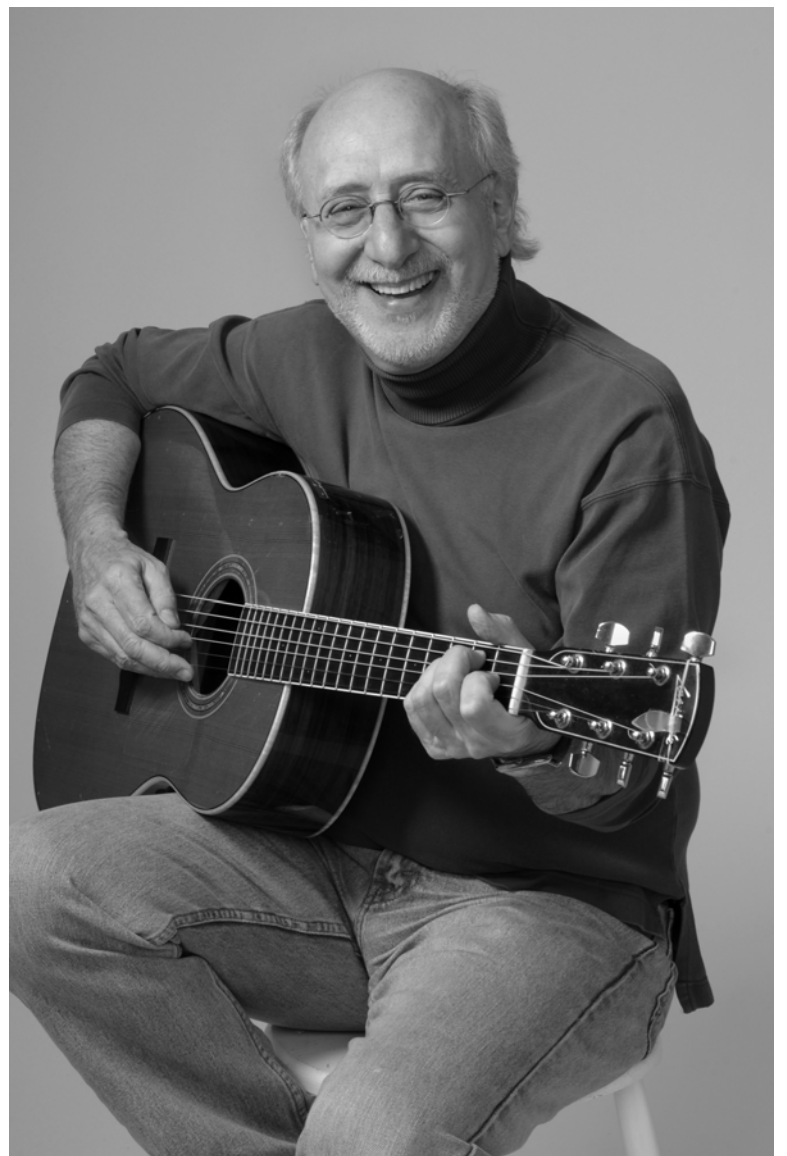
Damon LaScot and Kay Story

Roosevelt Island residents came through for Orphans International over the summer, raising \$11,695 in a friendly competition among Island buildings.

Westview and Manhattan Park topped the scores, each with \$3,300 raised. The results were announced last weekend in a Saturday night party at Manhattan Park Theatre Club, with entertainment that featured Islanders Juanita Fleming with gospel/jazz, and Westview residents Kay Story and Damon LaScot. The political community was represented by Assemblymember Micah Kellner and City Councilmember Jessica Lappin, who presented a citation from the Council to honor the organization.

Other buildings in the competition, and the amounts raised, were: Riverwalk, \$2,900; Eastwood, \$1,108; Rivercross, \$577; and Island House, \$510. The Octagon apartments were not represented in the competition.

Meanwhile, Jim Luce, the Eastwood resident who founded Orphans International, has announced an October 30 benefit – with attendance limited to 90 – at the Manhattan home of Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary. Tickets are \$1,000 (Benefactor), \$750 (Patron), and \$500 (Friend). Tickets are available from O.I., with payment by credit card or check mailed to 540 Main Street #418, NYC10044, or by calling 212-755-7285. The event is presented by OI's corporate sponsor, Air France.



Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary



Hosted by
Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner

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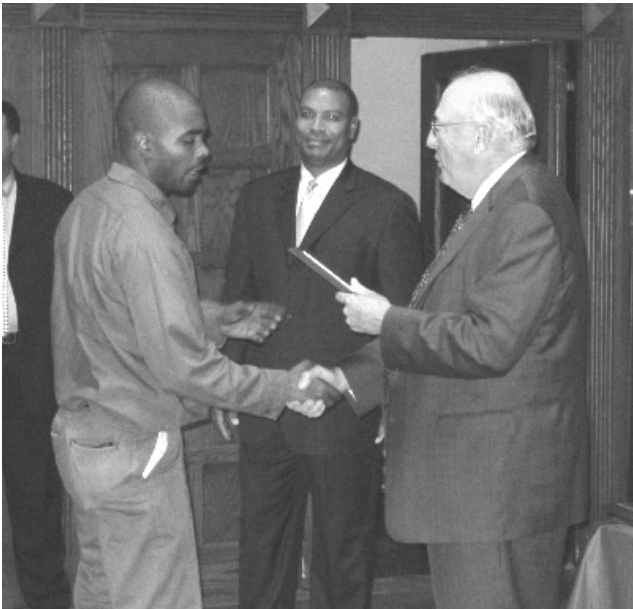
RIOC Employees Get Service Awards

RIOC Press Release

On Thursday September 6, 2007, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation held an Employee Service Awards Ceremony and luncheon at 2:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Community Center. Fifty-two employees were honored for their service and commitment – with six receiving special recognition for over 25 years of dedication and hard work with RIOC.

Awards were presented by Director of Human Resources Claudia Mcdade, and included RIOC President Stephen Shane, Vice President Fernando Martinez, and René Bryan of Public Safety. RIOC recognized the following employees for their years of service:

25 + Years	
Carl Bradford	Bus Garage
Jagatnarain “Joey” Harnarain	Bus Garage / Admin
Basdeo Mangal	Bus Garage
Greg Paravati	Tramway
Rajmat-Sukhnandan	Tramway
Elliot Isaac	Tramway
20 + Years	
Uriel Trujillo	Tramway
David Deyerle	Tramway
15 + Years	
Hilda Rivera	Public Safety
Michelle Williams	Public Safety
Gary Yee	Public Safety
Rudolph Rajaballey	Accounting / Admin
Fabien Munson	Bus Garage
Ion Popescu	Tramway
Emilse Rojano	Tramway
Barry Culvar	Tramway
Armando Cordova	Tramway
10 + Years	
James Fry	Public Safety / Admin
Wayne Jones	Public Safety
Rodell Lindsey	Public Safety
Esther Diaz	Admin
Norma Torres	Grounds
John Vasselmann	Tramway
Michael Finnen	Tramway
Robert Kelley	Tramway
Mark Long	Tramway
5 + Years	
Roberto Rivera	Bus Garage



As RIOC Vice President Fernando Martinez looks on, RIOC President Steve Shane recognizes Jamal Perry for more than five years of service on the grounds crew.

Kenneth Sales	Bus Garage
Jadoo Singh	Bus Garage
Ronald Rene Bryan	Public Safety / Admin
Leonard Bunbury	Public Safety
Wanda Coleman	Public Safety
William Dentone	Public Safety
Michelle Evans	Public Safety
Frensheria Michael	Public Safety
Wilson Toro	Public Safety
Lisa Williams	Public Safety
Jose “Bobby” Colon	Bus Garage / Admin
Steven Friedman	Accounting / Admin
Joe Galletti	IT / Admin
Karline Jean	Exec / Admin
Kenneth Leitner	Legal / Admin
Arnold Moskowitz	IT / Admin
Eddie Perez	SP / Admin
Mark Rothman	IT / Admin
Innocent Ulahannan	Accounting / Admin
Juan Martinez	Grounds
Robert Mely	Grounds
Jamal Perry	Grounds
Ionel Teodorescu	Tramway
Kenny Black	Tramway
James Daniel	Tramway

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Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech
Ho-olom A-sheer Ki-de-sha-nu
Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu
Le-had-lik Ner Shel: **(for Shabbat:** Sha-bos Ko-desh.
for Yom Kippur: Sha-bos
v'shel Yom Ha-kipurim. And
blessing 2. **for Holidays:** Shel
Yom Tov. And blessing 2)
Blessing 2. Bo-ruch A-toh
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Ho-olom She-he-che-ya-nu
Vi-kee-yi-ma-nu Vi-hi-gee-
an-u Liz-man Ha-zeh.

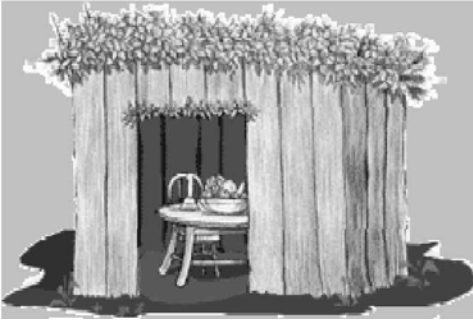
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- Eve of Yom Kippur, Friday, Sept. 21 at 6:38pm
- Eve of the 1st day of Sukkot, Wednesday, Sept. 26 at 6:30pm
- Eve of the 2nd day of Sukkot, Thurs., Sept. 27 after 7:26pm
- Friday, Sept. 28 at 6:26pm
- Eve of Shmini Atzeret, Wednesday, Oct. 3 at 6:18pm
- Eve of Simchat Torah, Thursday, Oct. 4 after 7:15pm
- Friday, Oct. 5 at 6:15pm

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Shabbat, September 29th 1:00—3:00pm.
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Special thanks to The Octagon Management and RIOC for all their help.

RIOC Column from page 2

pace for a mid-October exterior completion. Interior programming and reconstruction will follow.

5. Tram rescue drills: On Sunday the 16th, the Tram was closed from 6:00 to 2:00 for drills as to rescue methods in the event that the Tram gets stuck and passengers are stranded in mid-air. With the cabin recovery systems in place, that should be very unlikely, but there is the possibility. So the Tram staff of RIOC and this writer practiced evacuation by first being lowered to the ground from the cabin in a basket and then later by crawling into the rescue cage. Judy Berdy was the civilian who showed up to participate, took pictures, and was also successfully “rescued.” It works.

6. Assemblyman Micah Kellner held his first district open house in RIOC’s conference room on September 13. A number of his constituents showed up to discuss a variety of issues with the Assemblyman. Open house meetings will continue on Thursday afternoons starting at 3:00 and lasting until 7:00.

7. Senior Swim: To promote good health and socializing, RIOC has tried to set up special senior swim times at Sportspark but alas, very little interest so far. Special bus pickup at the Senior Center and return. Fridays 9-12. Come on out, Seniors!

8. Fall for Arts: The scheduled festivities for the weekend of October 5-7 are in active planning [report, page 1]. See the street banners. Be a participant.

9. RIRA: We understand the process for obtaining candidates for the RIOC Board of Directors is under way. Everyone who is interested should get involved. RIRA is staging the process and, whether or not one is involved in RIRA, everyone from The Octagon, Manhattan Park, Eastwood, Island House, Westview, Rivercross, and Southtown (Riverwalk), and all Island organizations should be represented and included. If this experiment is to be successful, there must be the broadest participation. Please contact Maple Tree Group Convener David Bauer at **212-593-7259**.

10. RIOC Employee Appreciation Day [report, this page]: For all in the Roosevelt Island community that the employees of RIOC serve, we held a ceremony on September 6 to recognize employees with longevity of service in five-year segments. There were six with more than 25 years, two with more than 20, nine with more than 15, nine with more than ten years and 27 with more than five years. These 53 individuals from the Tram, the Bus Garage, Grounds, Administration, and Public Safety are the institutional memory for the details of the Island and know many, many of the residents. We thank them all.

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RIRA Column from page 2

on Roosevelt Island. It sure isn't for the superb shopping, five-star restaurants, and the carefree commuting our F train provides. If you can't find time to participate in the social, artistic, and cultural life of this Island community you'd just as well live in Canarsie, ya know what I mean? So come out and get to know your neighbors!

RIOC Board Balloting

With the advent of autumn, the effort to provide Governor Spitzer with nominees for the RIOC Board of Directors chosen by the community has gone into high gear. You will find a full-page ad in this issue of *The WIRE* [page 5] urging qualified residents to campaign for a seat on the Board. David Bauer, convener of the Maple Tree Group, has offered his phone number (212-593-7259) to answer your questions. We have been working for months on a comprehensive website designed to explain the requirements of the job and the mechanism of the campaign process, offering a timeline of the election events and, most importantly, explaining why it is so important for you to involve yourself. It will be completed and available for your inspection within the next two weeks.

As a result of the February 5, 2008 plebiscite, we expect to offer the Governor six nominees to replace Board members whose terms have expired. We shall try to reflect the building, ethnic, and financial diversity

of the Island and to provide the financial, governmental, organizational, and engineering experience that would enhance the functioning of the Board. But ultimately the choices will be yours, the Roosevelt Island electorate, to limn the Board's requirements and to provide them by virtue of the ballot box. As Board member David Kraut said at their last meeting, "...[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... can be hired." If we can provide Governor Spitzer with candidates who include those with needed skill sets, those with long Roosevelt Island experience, and those who bring wisdom and consensus-building skills to the table, how could he deprive us of our right to help choose our leadership? And if the residents of this community rise up and insist on their rights by voting in large numbers on February 5, how can we possibly be ignored?

We can, in this first effort to include our neighbors in participatory government, set a precedent that cannot be denied. This is exciting stuff, folks, and we get to be there at the creation of something very special. Pay attention; the successful application of the democratic ideal doesn't happen every day!

Key Dates in RIOC Board Balloting

The Residents Association (RIRA) plans to hold an orientation session for Islanders interested in running for nomination to the RIOC Board of Directors during the week of November 5. The final "filing" date for candidates will be during the third week of January. Those and other key dates are:

- Week of Nov. 5: Campaign orientation for candidates
- Week of Jan. 14: *Meet the Candidates* (first of two)
- Week of Jan. 14: Nominations close
- Friday, Jan. 18: Candidate statements due at *The WIRE*
- Saturday, Feb. 2: *Meet the Candidates* (second event)
- Tuesday, Feb. 5: Primary election and balloting to choose RIOC Board nominees.

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ReServe, a new nonprofit, is now receiving applications from New Yorkers interested in challenging, skills-based work for nonprofit agencies. The professionals sought are retired or soon-to-be-retired journalists, teachers, lawyers, accountants, artists, social workers, consultants, advertising, ad sales and public relations specialists, librarians, paralegals, human resources specialists, administrators and anyone with skills and experience to share.

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ReServe
Next Steps for Older Adults

Tramway from page 1

the duration out to at least five months – possibly seven. But if the “whole system change” is undertaken, the time requirement is likely to be over a year. It depends on how much is done.

Independent Systems

One major change under consideration is separation of the two sides of the system, so that the cabins can move independently. Currently, the “clothesline” operation, or “classic reversible ropeway,” as one consultant called it in a report, means that both cabins must be ready for travel before either can leave its dock.

While a major and costly undertaking, separation of the systems is said by the consultants to offer the advantage that one side can be taken out of service, for example for maintenance work, while the other side continues to operate. At a RIOC Board meeting in August, a consultant also suggested that in the event of a cabin getting “stuck” aloft as in last year’s incident, the other cabin could ride to the rescue on the adjacent track.

There was disagreement over whether separation of the systems might result in faster operation and, therefore, higher capacity – a desirable goal on an Island with a growing population and with subway service said by the MTA to be operating at its absolute morning rush-hour limit. On Tuesday morning, in fact, waiting passengers were left in the Island-side station as cabins filled up in the hour between 8:00 and 9:00, though the number waiting may have been bumped upward by some 90-second stops en route to pick up or drop off workers attending to matters on the towers.

But increasing capacity by separating the system might produce only the illusion of a gain in capacity. On Tuesday morning, a round-trip aboard cabin 2 (and therefore for cabin 1) took 16.5 minutes. On the Manhattan side, unloading a full cabin and loading the few passengers headed for the Island took just 30 seconds, but the return trip couldn’t start for about two more minutes because cabin 2 had to wait for cabin 1 to load on the Island side.

In an independent-cabins system, cabin 2 might therefore have left from 90 seconds to about two minutes earlier, completing almost half its Island-bound trip before cabin 1 was ready to depart.

But even that potential gain might be an illusion, since the major part of the loading time on the Island side consisted of about 100 passengers passing through the turnstiles two by two, a process that took 1:55, 2:17, or 2:34 during three cycles timed during Tuesday’s morning rush and, on Wednesday, averaged 2 minutes and 55 seconds between 7:35 and 9:15. (The longest involved five passengers whose MetroCards balked or proved empty, halting progress.) Presumably, a substantial part of that time might be saved if passengers were pre-staged on the Island-side dock, already past the turnstile bottleneck.

That hasn’t been tested, but one knowledgeable Tramway worker said that during a recent subway outage, pre-staging passengers on the platform saved considerable time, moving the Island’s entire rush-hour load “by 10:00 a.m.,” a feat he considered an accomplishment worth noting.

Faster Travel

The consultants wrote, “It should be noted that upgrades to the existing Tram system, such as providing faster station-to-station travel speeds to accommodate anticipated future needs such as increased ridership, are potentially feasible by upgrading certain system components.”

A faster trip, trimming some time off travel, might increase rush-hour capacity, and consultants have indicated that some system upgrades would make that possible. With the trip taking 4.5 minutes, a 50% increase in travel speed might save as much as a minute per transit (allowing for slow docking speeds). Saving eight minutes per hour would allow an increase in the number of trips from eight to nine, or perhaps almost 10. Faster movement over the towers might make the trips somewhat more adventurous, however, and the consultants are looking at ways to tame the swaying, including shorter hanger arms.

Combining faster speed with pre-loading of the Island-side platform could save as much as three minutes per round



As Cabin 1 passed Cabin 2 at the halfway point Wednesday morning, Gregg Paravati talked on his two-way radio with its cabin attendant.

trip, or 12 minutes per hour. That would make time for as much as two more trips, or a capacity increase of about 200 passengers, roughly 25%.

Recommendations

RIOC President Shane told *The WIRE* (lead story, August 25 issue) that he’s had two qualified Tramway suppliers working on options for what might be done for Roosevelt Island’s system, and how the downtime might be minimized. He is likely to report on those results in the October 4 meeting.

Meanwhile, a team of consultants that includes the original builders of parts of the Tramway has been examining the system, looking for problems but generally pronouncing almost the entire physical operation to be safe, in good health, and capable of reliable and safe operation

well into the future. A consulting firm involved in the original construction of the Tramway, Thornton Tomasetti, wrote in an executive summary of its recent report, “...evaluation of the Tram’s machinery indicates that it is in generally good condition and that with appropriate monitoring, inspection, and maintenance, can be expected to perform reliably for an indefinite period of time. No major problems or issues were noted...” Even the electrical components of the system, seemingly the most subject to glitches and the most likely candidates for a relatively easy upgrade, get a strong passing grade: “It is expected that the electric system should perform reliably for the next 5 to 10 years.” But the consultant continues, “However, considering that the Tram system has been successfully operating since 1976, we estimate that after 31 years and major overhauls, its electrical system service life is finally approaching the end.”

The lengthy consultant reports, with appendices, are on *Website NYC10044* with this issue of *The WIRE* at nyc10044.com.

Throughout the consultant reports, there are recommendations for dozens – perhaps hundreds – of minor repairs or maintenance attention needed (like cleaning or painting, or fixing a rusted drain opening) for the various components of the system: the stations, the towers, the track ropes, the haul cable, the cabins, the electrical system, and so on. But nothing is cited as a safety concern, and nothing is identified as imminently likely to fail.

Choices

All the consultant reports, combined with the availability of \$15 million in New York State money, leave the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, and its Board of Directors, with a set of choices that are likely to ensure the Tramway’s future for some decades. The immediate choices range in scope from a minimum, involving months, to a maximum, which is a “whole system change” that could involve separating the operation of the two tracks.

Some choices aren’t feasible, as reported in the August 25 *WIRE*, available on line at nyc10044.com:

- The cabins can’t be widened. That would require changes in the Manhattan station. In turn, that would require new construction permits and changes to 31-year-old items that violate present-day rules, regulations, and laws. It’s better, in effect, to leave the present station as it is, “grandfathered” by virtue of already existing when laws became more strict.
- The cabins can’t be much longer. They can’t be much heavier without changes to the towers, and changes to the towers would involve complying with current regulations,



Rush-hour boarding at Roosevelt Island takes an average of just under three minutes, as passengers file two-by-two through the turnstiles. When the platform is pre-loaded and all MetroCard difficulties solved before the cabin arrives, loading takes as little as 35 seconds, presenting an option for saving enough time to add two more trips per hour, should it be needed as the Island’s population increases.

too, which is seen as too difficult to contemplate seriously.

Another choice, not much discussed except by RIOC Board member Mark Ponton, is to wait, developing more options, and doing only what’s absolutely necessary to keep a solid system up to par. Ponton contends that the State would not punish Roosevelt Island for saving State money or for giving longer consideration to the best course of action. Given the \$15 million, the “get-it-done” pressure from the State’s budgeters, and the fact that some substantial downtime is in the Tramway’s near-term future in any case, it seems unlikely that the RIOC Board will get a recommendation along those lines.

The options, then, seem limited to choosing a course somewhere between the minimum necessary and the maximum possible with about \$15 million. At the meeting Thursday night, October 4, residents are likely to get a hint of RIOC President Steve Shane’s thinking, a chance to ask lots of questions and, perhaps, make a few suggestions.



Like most other trips during Wednesday morning’s rush, the 8:40 was jammed. The cabins are rated for more, but most trips are limited to about 100 passengers. On Wednesday, that meant that between 7:35 and 9:15, about 50 were left behind to wait for the next crossing.



Spalling occurs when rusting rebar forces concrete to fall away. It’s one of many non-safety problems cited by RIOC’s Tramway consulting team. This example is at the Manhattan station, on the platform.



Photos: Website NYC10044 nyc10044.com

Executive Summary: The Consulting Report on the Tramway

Thornton Tomasetti, Inc. (TT) was retained by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to conduct a preliminary evaluation of the existing condition of the Roosevelt Island Aerial Tramway system.

The evaluation consisted of assessing the general condition of representative primary architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection components in order to identify apparent and/or potential problems, if any, with these components, and identifying potential operational upgrades or improvements to the system.

To assist us in completing our scope of services, TT retained two subconsultants, Hardesty & Hanover (H&H) and Lucius Pitkin, Inc. (LPI). Their reports are attached as appendices [on line at nyc10044.com with this issue of *The WIRE*]. H&H’s work focused on evaluating the mechanical and electrical components of the Tram machinery. LPI’s work focused on examining and testing the structural condition of representative components of the three steel support towers and the Tram cars. TT’s work focused on evaluating the primary structural, architectural, HVAC [heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning], electrical, plumbing, and fire protection aspects of the two stations, as well as evaluating the existing structural condition of the three steel support towers based on LPI’s findings.

Tram Components and Mechanical Systems

H&H’s evaluation of the Tram’s machinery (via on-site visual observations and scientific testing) indicates that it is in generally good condition and that with appropriate monitoring, inspection, and maintenance, can be expected to perform reliably for an indefinite period of time. No major problems or issues were noted at the time of their site visits or reported by Tram operating personnel. Certain system components could not be readily directly accessed during H&H’s visits and thus warrant further evaluation to con-

firm their adequacy.

Tram Electrical System

H&H’s evaluation of the Tram’s electrical system indicates that it is in good overall condition and that maintenance has been exemplary. The partial system upgrade performed in 2006, which included the addition of a redundant SCR [silicon-controlled rectifier] system and the replacement of the auxiliary power system, have increased the reliability of the Tram operation. The system can be expected to function reliably, with continued maintenance and inspection, for an indefinite period of time. However, it is anticipated that in the next 5 to 10 year period the anticipated reduced availability of replacement parts will become the limiting factor on the practical lifespan of the system. Therefore, it would be prudent to plan for replacing the entire electrical system with a new state-of-the-art electrical system within the aforementioned time frame.

Support Towers

The three structural steel support towers of the Tram system were found to be in good condition and appear capable of continued service for an indefinite period of time provided that appropriate routine maintenance is carried out. LPI observed and carried out scientific tests on a representative sample of the towers’ structural welds and bolted connections (those accessible from the towers’ ladders and catwalks) and found no cracks or failed bolts in the primary structural connections.

Additional inspections of the towers, which would be carried out via rappelling down the towers (so that the portions of the structure away from the towers’ catwalks and ladders can be evaluated), are arranged and recommended. Certain routine maintenance, such as cleaning of the towers’ weep holes, should be carried out to reduce the likelihood of corrosion damage resulting from standing water on

the tower steel. Other recommended repairs include repair of spacer welds and repair of localized concrete cracking/sailing at the base of some of the tower legs. The concrete cracking/sailing warrants further investigative work, including probes, so that an appropriate repair design can be developed and implemented as part of the Tram system’s routine schedule maintenance work.

Manhattan and Roosevelt Island Stations

Our review of the representative primary components of the stations’ architectural, structural, HVAC, electrical, and plumbing systems did not reveal any imminent life safety hazards or a need for any immediate repairs of a significant nature. We found that the structure of the stations appears sound and capable of continued service for an indefinite period provided that appropriate routine maintenance is carried out. We observed a number of “wear and tear” type issues, such as peeling paint, roof leaks, air conditioning complaints, and similar issues that one might expect in a 30-plus year old facility partially exposed to the elements. Each of these wear and tear issues can be addressed in an orderly manner as part of the stations’ routine maintenance plans. Certain deterioration observed, such as localized concrete cracking and sailing at various locations, warrants further investigative work prior to design and implementation of repairs.

Potential Tram System Upgrades

It should be noted that upgrades to the existing Tram system, such as providing faster station-to-station travel speeds to accommodate anticipated future needs such as increased ridership, are potentially feasible by upgrading certain system components. Once the desired criteria for any such upgrades are established, studies can be performed to confirm the feasibility of the upgrade and to develop anticipated budgetary costs associated with the upgrade.

The full consulting report, with appendices, is available with this issue of *The WIRE* on Website NYC10044 at <http://nyc10044.com>.

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It's not too late to sign up to be a coach or assistant coach. Simply notify the Youth Center at info@riyouth.com or call **212-935-3645**. Coaching is very rewarding, totally appreciated, and incredibly fun!

Other sports programs include basketball in the winter and baseball in the spring. Additional programs will be posted soon at the Youth Center at 506 Main Street. Watch *The WIRE* and the website www.riyouth.com for more information.

unClassifieds

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Deadline for October 6 issue: Tuesday, October 2
Deadline for October 20 issue: Tuesday, October 16

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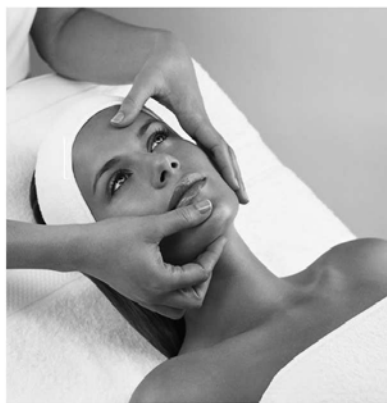
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