

Next issue
in 2 weeks:
November 17

The Main Street WIRE™

28th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

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Kahn's FDR Memorial Gets United Backing of Lappin, Other Politicians

Politicians representing the Island have endorsed the Louis Kahn-designed FDR Memorial for Southpoint Park. Led by City Councilmember Jessica Lappin, they spoke late last week at a press conference staged in the new Tramway Plaza park in Manhattan. They included Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Assemblymember Micah Kellner, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Councilmembers Jonathan Bing and Daniel Garodnick, and Borough President

Scott Stringer. With TV news cameras gathered, Lappin said, "The time is now. We're finally building Southpoint Park, and we should build the beautiful FDR Memorial within it. Over 30 years have passed since Louis I. Kahn designed this memorial. Yet, we still don't have a monument here, or anywhere else in New York, that honors President Roosevelt in his home state." Maloney described Kahn's design as "lyrical and powerful."

Lappin has secured \$4.5 million in City funds for the first phase of Southpoint Park development, and the State is supplying \$8 million. However, use of those funds is concentrated at the northern end of the park, in a segment being designed by the Trust for Public Lands (TPL). No firm decision has been

See **FDR Memorial**, page 14

97 DAYS
to Island-wide
balloting

for residents' RIOC Board nominees

Next event:
Candidate Orientation Meeting
Thur., Nov. 8, 8pm
(see ad, page 7)

Briefly...

- RIOC President **Steve Shane** suffered a heart attack last week. He's confined to home quarters through next week.
- **Subway diversion this weekend:** No Manhattan-bound service until Monday at 5:00 a.m.
- **Free flu shots** for seniors are scheduled for next Friday. See page 3 to make an appointment.
- After reading a book about the vessel, students at **PS/IS 217** collected \$400 and have contributed it to preservation of the historic fireboat, the John J. Harvey.

Housing Rivercross Plans Departure From Mitchell-Lama Without Extension of Its Ground Lease

by Dick Lutz

A Rivercross committee preparing the way for the building's departure from New York State's Mitchell-Lama affordable housing program has announced that it is ready to begin the process sooner rather than later. A broad outline was presented last weekend in meetings of the building's residents. "We were determined," said Committee Chair Jay Jacobson, "to come to shareholders with a report before reaching the building's 30th anniversary," which will be observed in eight days.

The committee reported, in an October 24 memo, that summer meetings with the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) seeking "a clear statement of their policy needs in order to proceed with an extension of our ground lease to 2068... did not produce any basis for an agreement" on departure from Mitchell-Lama. The memo continued, "Our building faces very real problems that will not go away. To do nothing and wait for a change of policy in Albany does not seem to be a sensible way to proceed. Therefore, the committee has developed the outline of a different plan to exit Mitchell-Lama... We are still working on the details, but are prepared to discuss the outline..."

The committee's plan is to have Rivercross leave Mitchell-Lama under the current ground lease, which runs to 2028.

On Saturday, Jacobson told shareholders, "We found very quickly, in meetings with RIOC and DHCR, that while we are talking about our homes, they are talking about housing, which are two very different subjects."

In the memo and in the Saturday sessions, members of the privatization committee's working group told shareholders that three figures had to be known before a plan could be devised: the cost of mortgage interest; real-estate taxes; and ground rent charges. They said that the need for those numbers has now been satisfied – though not entirely as originally hoped.

- The mortgage was taken private a year ago at 5.5%, satisfying the need to know the interest cost.
- The range of the possible payments in lieu of taxes

(PILOT) is now known, following a recent tax valuation by the City. (PILOT payments go to New York State, but are based on a building's value that is determined by the City.)

- Because the plan is to go forward under the current ground lease, the ground rent cost is known through 2028.

An extension of the ground lease was once considered a prerequisite to securing a private mortgage. (The term "privatization," in fact, refers to the mortgage, though in general use it has come to encompass formal departure from Mitchell-Lama.) The conventional wisdom was that no financial institution would grant a long-term mortgage to a building that could lose its land rights in 20 years. The 20-year mortgage arranged for Rivercross opens the way, the committee said, to leaving Mitchell-Lama control without first securing an extension of the ground lease.

With the three cost figures in hand, the committee will now work out more details of a plan and schedule a "sense of the building" vote soon, its members said on Saturday. They will then employ expert help to devise a formal plan, known as a prospectus.

As outlined so far, the draft plan calls for three key elements:

- Continued affordability for tenant-shareholders while maintaining the present corporate structure.
- Use of no outside "white knight" sponsors or outside stockholders.
- Keeping maintenance costs from being increased by the privatization process.

Several steps of approval will be required, including a vote of the shareholders and approval of the plan by the State Attorney General. If all requirements are met and the building leaves State control, apartment owners would then be in a position to sell their apartments, bequeath them, or trade up or down without the family-size or income restrictions that govern Mitchell-Lama developments.

The "Flip Tax"

Apartments will be kept affordable for current residents through assessment of a transfer fee (often called a "flip tax") on the first sale of each apartment. The committee said that the transfer fee will probably amount to half of whatever portion of an apartment's sale price exceeds an owner's investment. It estimated that selling prices will exceed \$400 per square foot.

(The numbers suggest that the average Rivercross apartment would sell for \$500,000 or slightly more, yielding about \$240,000 per sale in transfer fees.)

But the plan would mean that sellers need to find buyers willing to hope that, sometime in the next 20 years, a State administration will grant a ground-lease

See **Rivercross**, page 6

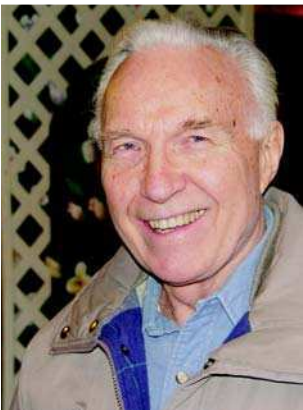


The Island's Halloween Parade in color – pages 8 and 9

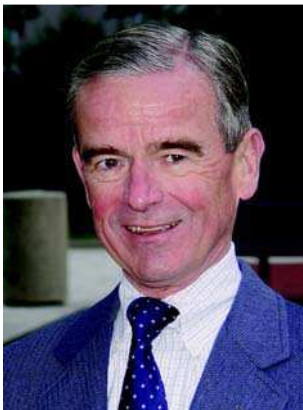
Candidates Lining Up for RIOC Board Seats

Six candidates (pictured below) have announced they intend to run for available seats on the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). Another eight to twelve residents have indicated they're considering joining the race, but haven't yet gone public.

Information on the balloting is available at nyc10044.com/RIOCElec and in previous issues of *The WIRE*, also available on line at nyc10044.com. Voting will take place on Presidential Primary Day, February 5, 2008.



Jim Baehler
Rivercross



Michael Carew
The Octagon



Fay Christian
Westview



Frank Farance
Island House



Jonathan Kalkin
Manhattan Park



Howard Polivy
Rivercross

The February 5 voting is Island-wide, not building-specific. Each voter will vote for up to six, regardless of residence. Candidate residences are shown here for identification purposes only.

The Editorial Page

Squeak a Wheel Today

The MTA is asking riders to evaluate subway service. This is Roosevelt Island’s chance to raise the MTA’s consciousness about our inadequate rush-hour service – service that leaves passengers waiting on the platform, sometimes as multiple trains pass by, until space is available. It’s not a simple problem, as *The WIRE* has reported from time to time, but there’s every possibility that the MTA is having trouble thinking outside the box, and a massive nudge cannot hurt. Go to this address on the web: http://enterprise.mtanyct.info/survey/english/pick_station.asp?iLine=F From there on, it’s simple. Choose Roosevelt Island as your starting station, and click a few times to evaluate the service. We call your attention to items 1, 2, and especially 3, which has to do with *Adequate room on board at rush hour.*

Rider Report Card

Please grade each of these topics based on your experience

Rate your service on the Subway Line Bullet	Excellent	Pretty Good	Satisfactory	Not So Good	Unsatisfactory
Click on a Circle to mark your grade for each topic	A	B	C	D	F
1 Minimal delays during trips	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
2 Reasonable wait times for trains	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
3 Adequate room on board at rush hour	☒	☐	☐	☐	☒
4 Sense of security in stations	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
5 Sense of security on trains	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
6 Working elevators and escalators in stations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 Signs in stations that help riders find their way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Signs in subway cars that help riders find their way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 Cleanliness of stations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 Cleanliness of subway cars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11 Station announcements that are easy to hear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12 Station announcements that are informative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13 Train announcements that are easy to hear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14 Train announcements that are informative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15 Lack of graffiti in stations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16 Lack of graffiti in subway cars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17 Lack of scratchitti in subway cars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18 Courtesy and helpfulness of station personnel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19 Comfortable temperature in subway cars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20 Ease of use of subway turnstiles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21 Availability of MetroCard vending machines	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22 Overall performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What three improvements in your ride do you most want?

From items 1 through 21 listed above, indicate the three areas you would most like to see improved:

- 3

☒

Highest priority for improvement
- 2

☒

Second highest priority for improvement
- 1

☒

Third highest priority for improvement

You may also want to comment on item 6 – escalators. At the bottom, there’s an opportunity to rank three areas you’d like to see improved. For the overall health of the Island, whether you ride at rush hour or not, we recommend you make number 3 your first entry.

DL



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e-mail **editor@MainStreetWIRE.com**
Website NYC10044 – nyc10044.com

Managing Editor – Dick Lutz
Reporters – Jami Bernard, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Rachel Durfee
Photographers – Maria Casotti, Misha Cohen, Vicki Feinmel, Paul Katz
Chief Proofreader – Linda Heimer
Proofreaders – Ashton Barfield, Dick FitzPatrick, Lillian Shaman
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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.

End of October:

1. **Tram:** After I returned from my birthday jaunt to Scotland, the Board of Directors adopted a resolution expressing the sense of the Board to pursue the most expensive, and presumably the best, Tramway alternative for the future transportation needs of the residents of Roosevelt Island. This forward-looking action should be a reliable mode for the foreseeable future.

There is a lot of work to be done, but the roadmap has been set.

2. **Bicycle racks:** RIOC has tried to encourage use of bicycles by providing racks at the subway and the Tram. Chaining to the fence is not acceptable. Bikes will be removed and brought to Public Safety, where they may be reclaimed in exchange for accepting a summons. RIOC would much prefer never to do that. Please use the bike racks.

3. **Parking:** There has been a great outcry about the difficulty of accessing the very limited number of spaces on Main Street. At the Operations Committee meeting, it was agreed that there will be an experiment of strict enforcement, so vehicles without valid

First things first: To RIOC President Steve Shane, who we’ve learned suffered a heart attack earlier this week, our best wishes for a speedy recovery. We know you can handle the job; it must have been your recent vacation that made you ill! If you would like to wish Steve well, why not e-mail him at sshane@rioc.com? I’m sure he would appreciate it.

Who Pays?

Solipsist that I am, I don’t usually comment on the work of other correspondents in *The WIRE*. However, I would like to clarify one or two things from the previous issue: In a letter to the editor, Helen Chirivas wrote, regarding the Octagon express Red Bus service, “A public, taxpayer-financed amenity...” Not so, Helen. Once upon a time (actually, prior to George Pataki’s three terms as Governor), Roosevelt Island was subsidized by the State of New York to the tune of \$1.6 million per year. Those were tax-derived funds. Governor Pataki reduced this subsidy to the RIOC operating budget to zero and, from that day to this, RIOC has functioned entirely on Island-generated revenue. This includes residential building ground leases, commercial leases, Motorgate fees and revenues from the Tram and Red Bus fare boxes; that’s where the money comes from to run this Island. Sure, Island organizations get funding from government and other grants. Sure, New York State has money for capital projects like Southpoint Park and the Tram. But we’re talking about the operating funds that pay the salaries of 105 RIOC employees, keep the Tram and the buses running, fix the street lights (sometimes) and the roadways, attend to the landscaping, and provide amenities such as the recent Fall for Arts Festival.

And so, when you hear old-timers talking about how “No taxation without representation” is still an issue here, keep in mind that New York State sends precious few of our tax dollars back to this community, and that the Governor runs the show here virtually without community input. And that, dear friends, is why we’re busting our tushies to offer you a choice of candidates for the RIOC Board of Directors!

Bridges and Ecological Parks

Did you read the RIOC Column written by first-time correspondent and RIOC VP Fernando Martinez? I thought it was a fine effort, chock full of information. A correction: Fernando stated that construction started October 9 on the Roosevelt Island Bridge. Not so. I’ve been updating the work on our bridge based on Department of Transportation press releases for over a year now, and the work actually started last March with asbestos abatement. As I mentioned in my October 6 column, the current work to remove lead-based paint is just the next phase in a three-year project to entirely renovate the bridge.

Here’s another nit to pick: In discussing seawall repairs, Fernando identified a targeted area as “located by the Octagon Ecological Park.” Huh? Has anyone noticed anything that could be defined as an ecological park in the vicinity of Octagon Apartments? There’s a brand-new picnic area, but that’s not it. The General Development Plan (GDP), written by architects Philip Johnson and John Burgee, requires the construction of an Urban Ecological *Center* (not a Park) in Octagon Park; in fact, no one has ever explained exactly what this is. Even after the Mayor amended the GDP to include a residential development on our parkland, this item was retained in the document that is part of the Master Lease between

The RIOC Column

permits will receive summonses. Handicapped car parkers will first be given a warning if there is a problem with the displayed permit. If not corrected within two weeks, summonses will be issued.



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

from the Octagon developer. Will be gladly used for the many infrastructue needs.

6. Finally, I write this week’s column from my hospital bed. I hope to be back the week of November 12. [Sent from my BlackBerry wireless device.]

the City and the State. Perhaps, once we decide what an Urban Ecological Center should contain, we should build one. But until that day, I think it’s just confusing to use the designation as a location marker.

Kahn Memorial in Southpoint Park

There was a press event on October 26 at which several of our elected officials, including Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, City Councilmember Jessica Lappin, Assemblymember Micah Kellner, Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, and others endorsed the Louis Kahn-designed memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. I was invited but declined, and I’d like to tell you why, taking excerpts from a letter I sent to our representatives:

- The RIRA Common Council has not voted in favor of, or against, the Kahn Memorial.
- I have been opposed to this use of the southernmost three acres of Southpoint Park for the better part of a decade. My neighbors have clearly indicated that they want the greenest, least formal park that can be built; the Kahn plan for these three acres combines “pollarded” linden trees, a manicured lawn, and a concrete and stone “mausoleum” at the southern tip of the Island that is 180° opposite of this goal. No variations in the Kahn plan may be permitted and it is not at all clear that Louis Kahn, who died 33 years ago, would still approve this plan for the 21st century.
- The survey taken by the Trust for Public Land and made public in October 2004 found that most users of the park favored the least “built-up” of the three conceptual plans, the Wild Gardens/Green Rooms plan, and specifically that, “The Roosevelt Memorial had some supporters but mostly detractors; people saw it as too much concrete.” The only design item that was more highly repudiated was a “commercial crescent” to be imposed on the park. While this survey has been criticized as being flawed (not enough park users queried), it is the only survey commissioned by RIOC so far, and for elected officials to support this project without the endorsement of the “end users” of the park seems premature.
- RIOC has stated that, if FERI (Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute) has not raised the \$40 million required for the project (and for which they have had 33 years to raise the funds) by the end of this year, the project would be scrapped. My last report was that just over \$5 million has been raised. Whether RIOC will stand by its self-imposed deadline remains to be seen.
- When I spoke to NYC Parks Commissioner Adrian Benape at the commissioning of the Manhattan Tram Plaza, his take on the project was that the architectural community would show up for the ribbon cutting and never be seen again. Parks should be built for the people who will use them.

Some proponents of the Kahn Memorial believe that its construction will prevent anything else (residential? commercial?) from being built on this land, and See **RIRA Column**, page 14



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

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Gallery RIVAA exhibit of recent works by Beatrice Popoiu and Ioan Popoiu continues through Nov. 11. Gallery hours: **Sat.-Sun.**, 11:00-5:00; **Wed. and Fri.**, 6:00-9:00. ▷



— The Coming Week —

Art Instruction by the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, **Sat., Nov. 3**, 11:00-2:00, Sportspark Art Studio, sponsored by RIOC. Free. Paper and art supplies provided. Future sessions Nov. 10, Nov. 17.

Election Day, Tue., Nov. 6.

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

Candidate Orientation Meeting for those running (or considering candidacy) for RIRA nomination to the RIOC Board of Directors, **Thur., Nov. 8**, 8:00 p.m., Westview lower community room, 625 Main Street. For information: **212-593-7259**.

Pastel Workshop – Art Instruction by the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, **Sat., Nov. 10**, 11:00-2:00, Sportspark Art Studio, sponsored by RIOC. Free. Paper and art supplies provided. Future session Nov. 17.

— Future Weeks —

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Nov. 12**, 8:00 p.m., Westview lower community room (625 Main St.). Visitors welcome. Information: **347-615-7268**.

Book Discussion – Pere Goriot by **Honoré de Balzac**, **Thur., Nov. 15**, 6:30 p.m., New York Public Library Roosevelt Island branch. Books available at library.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Nov. 17**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.)

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave information at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide a phone number for possible follow-up.

Advertising Deadlines: Ads in the paper, **Thur.**, Nov. 8; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, **Mon.**, Nov. 12; they are due **Thur.**, Nov. 15. **Additional issues in 2007:** Nov. 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**.

Merit Scholarship Examination for the Garden School, **Sat., Nov. 17**, 9:00 a.m., 33-16 79th St., Jackson Heights. Advance application required; \$40 fee. For information, call **718-335-6363** and/or see nyc10044.com/misc/GardenSchool.html.

Art Instruction by the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, **Sat., Nov. 17**, 11:00-2:00, Sportspark Art Studio, sponsored by RIOC. Free. Paper and art supplies provided. (Final session.)

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Nov., 26**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. For location and information: **917-691-8836**.

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

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Dec. 5**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level). Meetings are public, and begin with a public access period for residents to present matters to the Council.

Toastmasters meeting, **Mon., Dec. 10**, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. For location & information: **347-615-7268**.



Senior Center

Monday

9:30, **Hawaiian Hula**
10:30, **English as 2nd Language**
12:30, **“Oldies” Movies**
5:45, **Yoga**

Tuesday

9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Blood Pressure**
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**

Friday

9:30, **Yoga**
9:45, 10:45, 12:30, **Senior Swim**
bus picks up at Good Shepherd stop – transport to Sportspark.
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**

Saturday

7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events

Atlantic City trip, **Sat., Nov. 3**
Stop ’n’ Shop, **Wed., Nov. 7**, noon

Free Flu Shots, **Fri., Nov. 9**, 10:30-1:00 p.m. For appointment (required), call Paul at **212-860-4906**

Movie trip, Why Did I Get Married, **Fri., Nov. 9**

RISA General Meeting, **Tue., Nov. 13**, 7:00 p.m.

Atlantic City trip, **Wed., Nov. 14**
Trip to Kennedy Senior Center in Harlem, **Fri., Nov. 16**

Annual Dinner, **Sat., Nov. 17**, 6:00 p.m.

Green Acres Mall trip, **Fri., Nov. 23**, 11:00 a.m.

Aqueduct Race Track trip, **Fri., Nov. 30**, 11:00 a.m.

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

Letters

To the Editor:

It is encouraging to see that those in power are seriously considering Roosevelt Island’s growing traffic problems and looking at several factors, i.e.,

- Upgrading of the existing Tram system
- Increasing frequency of the subway service
- Clearing Main Street for traffic
- Institute ferry/water taxi service

I have the following brief suggestions, which may be worth a second look:

The Tram: Would it be worthwhile to reconsider a second location in Northtown, which would not only increase the capacity but redistribute the utilization of the “surface transit” by giving residents the choice between taking the northern Tram or the southern Tram?

At the same time, it would shorten commuting time in both directions and reduce the congestion on Main Street. The above would get Octagon residents and Coler-Goldwater employees and visitors, as well as many in Manhattan Park, off Main Street during rush hours and shorten commuting time for everyone.

A second location might also shorten the down-time of the Tram system, while the longer lead time means that the East Side subway may be close to completion by the time the Northtown Tram service will be ready.

Main Street: Limit (by prior appointment) deliveries to Main Street, including move-ins, during rush-hours and hours when school buses descend on the Island. Also, consider eliminating the present Red Bus fares in order to speed up the buses.

Mogens Petersen

To the Community:

It seems longer than only one month since the last sounds of live music filled the air on Main Street on Friday and Saturday evenings. With the collapse of the last music stand and the close of the last instrument case, a worthwhile community experience, like our Roosevelt Island summer, came to an end.

Sponsored by Trellis Restaurant along with the greatly appreciated encouragement of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, musicians from all over the City and tri-state area shared their talents from mid-July to mid-September, bringing out neighbors to share each other’s company and good humor, not to mention a meal and music under the stars. It became an opportunity for a single parent to enjoy a social gathering with her children nearby, with safety and convenience. It brought seniors out to enjoy the music they danced to when they were young and courting. It welcomed new Island residents and sports fans using our fields, and provided a great photo for *The Roosevelt Island Survival Kit* brochure [available at the Tram station, Manhattan].

This was the brainchild of Kaie Razaghi of Trellis, with neither a cover charge nor minimum.

I am a music industry executive producer by trade, and professional musician and singer by heart and soul. As your neighbor for the last ten years, it has been my pleasure to volunteer to contact the many musicians and schedule this summer music series as a community service.

I want to thank all who enjoyed, supported, or were involved, especially Kaie Razaghi and his Trellis family, and the visionary Steve Shane and the RIOC staff for responding so favorably to inquiries and requests. To the many who signed petitions and wrote letters to reinstate this program, I am appreciative of your support and the time you took to voice your opinions in favor of reinstating this program. Thanks, too, to Public Safety for its very important unseen role. To all the musicians and performers who accepted the tenuous “weather permitting” conditions of this gig, I am eternally grateful for your creativity and generosity. I would like especially to acknowledge all those who personally came out and enjoyed this program.

Claudia Koal
K2 Productions

To the Editor:

On September 26, glass was broken in my car while it was parked at Motorgate.

The main office of the garage sent me a letter, in reply to my report of the criminal mischief, denying me any compensation, saying that “reasonable measures are taken to provide a safe and secure location” and that “the garage is a ‘park at risk’ facility.”

There are no cameras on any floor except on the fourth, where they are least needed, as that is where the garage personnel have their office. No thief with a sound mind would dare to touch a car on that floor.

When one of the garage cleaning personnel was asked by a Roosevelt Island security officer whether he notified his management or the Public Safety office of the “breaking” when he discovered it that day, he replied *no* and added that it seemed that another cleaning person whose shift is before his must have swept the broken glass, partially. That second maintenance guy did not report it to his management or to the Public Safety office.

So I wonder what kind of “reasonable measures” are or have ever been taken to make it safer to park in the garage.

I would like the whole Island to know what kind of risk they are taking by parking their cars at Motorgate, even though they pay good money for that, and how irresponsible the garage management/owner is. All that matters to them is money. They should install enough cameras on all floors to minimize such unfortunate cases.

Also, I am sure there have been similar cases, if not worse, and customers probably do not bother to claim anything, thinking it rarely happens. I am sure it takes place more frequently than one would think. On September 27, I was informed by one of the garage employees that another car was broken into and that, in the past, it has always taken place, and so will in the future as long as there are no cameras installed.

Also, I would like the Public Safety office to release all such or similar cases to the public, to make them aware of the situation and make the garage management/ownership accountable for their carelessness.

Fouad Bennani

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

I was absolutely outraged to read Jami Bernard’s report in the October 20 *WIRE* (nyc10044.com/wire/2804/wire2804.pdf) about the ongoing, systematic *illegal* parking abuses by RIOC employees.

Further, the abuse that elected RIRA representative Frank Farance endured at the hands of RIOC’s Public Safety employees while compiling data – *including PSD officers turning their heads and chastising him as Mr. Farance was being threatened with assault* – is shocking, reprehensible, and illegal. What is this, Tammany Hall? This is a disgrace!

Your statement to *The WIRE*, “PSD enforces DOT regulations,” is clearly a willful dismissal of a known condition (you were put on notice several months ago), and proof that you have no interest in truly serving the 13,000 residents of Roosevelt Island, but rather a few dozen of its *employees*. I urge you to step down and resign as RIOC president immediately, as you clearly do not represent the best interests of this neighborhood’s residents whom you supposedly serve. I would also call for the immediate resignation of RIOC employees and Public Safety Department heads Jim Fry and Rene Bryan, as they are a disgrace to the term “Public Safety” and their policies are in clear breach of their duties to serve the *residents* of this neighborhood.

This scandal is indicative of the ongoing, self-serving, systemic corruption that you’ve refused to address.

Damon LaScot

To the Editor:

I was reading Jami Bernard’s article this evening regarding the blogs of Roosevelt Island and wanted to address a single fact stated in the article. I have never posted a single flyer advertising my blog on any lampposts. I have generally posted them on the poster kiosks, the occasional bus shelter, and on the structural columns leading up the stairs at the Manhattan Tram plaza. I am not sure who Ms. Bernard saw, but it was not me.

Overall, thank you for the article about my and Rick’s blogging efforts, as we both appreciate this paper and see ourselves as an extension of resident-based efforts to bring information and discussion to Island residents.

Eric Schwartzman

Editor’s note: Reporter Jami Bernard says “lamppost” was an error; “kiosk” was intended.

To the Editor:

Could the RIOC Board explore the possibility of using the proposed Tramway funding to add a Water Tram? It would be a ferry running from the existing dock by the subway station on Roosevelt Island to the FDR drive at 63rd Street, where there is an existing walkway to York Avenue.

Something like this would give Roosevelt Islanders the increased commute capacity, which it needs more and more, as well as provide service when the Aerial Tramway is down.

For Islanders commuting to the Upper East Side hospitals, of which there are many, it would offer a very convenient trip!

Chris Enock

Letters deadline for November 17 issue: Tuesday, November 13
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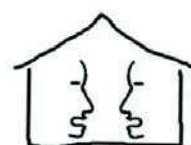


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Rivercross from page 1

extension. (Meantime, the committee is still trying, its members say, with the current administration.) It is widely considered virtually impossible for the State *not* to grant a ground-lease extension eventually, since the alternative would mean residents would be forced from their homes on the day the lease runs out. Nonetheless, there would probably be a cost – in the form of a selling-price discount – for the “hope factor,” until the extension is granted.

The State’s Position

The plan puts Rivercross at odds with the policy of DHCR under Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen, which is to avoid any further loss of the State’s affordable housing stock. There has been a rush to exit Mitchell-Lama, with loss of a significant percentage of affordable units, in the years following expiration of the waiting periods for the buildings constructed under the plan. No State affordable-housing program has been put in place to renew the supply.

In a conversation with *The WIRE* late last week, RIOC President Steve Shane said that the basis for DHCR denying Rivercross exit from Mitchell-Lama could be provisions of the Island’s General Development Plan (GDP), which specifies the percentages of affordable housing required in Northtown, which consists of the “WIRE” buildings (Westview, Island House, Rivercross, Eastwood). The GDP is appended to the lease under which New York State is developing Roosevelt Island, which is owned by New York City.

“What they’re going to do and how they would propose to do it, I don’t know,” Shane said. “As for the legalities, they have a row to hoe... getting through DHCR. DHCR isn’t without any discretion in fashioning the exit plan. There is a routine – hearings and publication of facts and so on. It’s a public process to make sure that the interests of everybody are heard, if not protected. DHCR has a statutory obligation to *accept* the application... Whether they will have to *act* on it, with respect to Roosevelt Island and the GDP, is an issue that hangs out there because if [the plan] does not further the purposes of affordable housing and is not in compliance with the GDP, DHCR may take the position – as they have with regard to other land-use covenants – that they’re not eligible to remove themselves from Mitchell-Lama. That’s happened before and they’ve prevailed.”

Commissioner VanAmerongen, Shane said, “is looking for reasons *not* to let people out. Preservation [of affordable housing units] is what the [State administration’s] program is about. It is a high priority to preserve that inventory of housing wherever possible, because it’s irreplaceable. It just is.”

Shane added, “You’ve got to remember – the GDP says that the Island’s housing is supposed to have 25% low/mod-

erate income, 35% middle income as defined in Mitchell-Lama, and 40% market rate. So those are the parameters within which we are trying to operate.” (Provisions specified in the GDP, as amended in 1990, are: 20% for those eligible for Federally assisted public housing; 20% for those eligible to benefit from interest-reduction payments under the National Housing Act; 35% for those eligible for limited-profit housing financed under Mitchell-Lama; and 25% market rate.)

There is a clear conflict between the Mitchell-Lama law, which allows buildings to exit the program after 20 years, and the GDP. If Rivercross exits Mitchell-Lama and the cost of housing there goes up, the Northtown percentages called for in the GDP would be “broken.” However, those percentages are already strained by the fact that Eastwood has departed from Mitchell-Lama and, while subsidies from Section 8 “sticky” vouchers make the building affordable for most current occupants, when they leave, the apartments become market-rate rentals. Because Eastwood contains nearly half of the apartments whose percentages, in the aggregate, are specified in the GDP, the GDP’s percentages were effectively violated when the Pataki administration allowed Eastwood to exit Mitchell-Lama.

Nonetheless, the Spitzer administration intends to hold the line, albeit a receding line by virtue of the Eastwood arrangements. “Selling [Rivercross apartments] at high prices would inevitably drag in people who wouldn’t qualify as a moderate-income population,” Shane said. “Somebody who can afford to buy a place for \$1.5 million or \$2 million, even if the monthly maintenance were zero, doesn’t do anything for you. If they are earning what everybody would recognize as multiples of the reasonable limit for the populations that are recognized as moderate-income, they’re not eligible.”

The Rivercross committee plans to have the building go forward in the apparent belief that it will eventually succeed, possibly through negotiation, or possibly through legal action. The departure schedule imposed by the Mitchell-Lama law may allow adequate time to reach some form of agreement that will avoid litigation. Among other things, DHCR has a 180-day period, once the intended departure is announced, to raise questions and require submission of additional information.

Committee Chair Jay Jacobson’s letter to Rivercross shareholders said that politicians representing the Island have expressed support for its departure from Mitchell-Lama. The basis has been an argument that funds must be raised for needed repairs and rehabilitation of the 30-year-old building, and that such funds cannot be raised through increases in monthly maintenance charges. In addition to providing the funds to keep apartments affordable for shareholders

who stay, proceeds of the “flip tax” will also be used to fix up the building. Just how much fix-up will be possible will depend on flip-tax collections, which, in turn, will depend on the rate of sales and actual, rather than projected, selling prices. The committee said last Saturday that its calculations have been based on very conservative assumptions about how many shareholders will sell their apartments year to year. But a plan to improve the building’s energy efficiency, including the electric heating system, will probably have to be deferred, they said.

In response to the contention that Rivercross (and Island House and Westview) need a source of funds to rehabilitate the buildings, Shane said, “We are in a position and have talked about, with HFA [the Housing Finance Agency], programs to help people with deferred maintenance.”

Once that problem is resolved, Shane said, referring to the current owner of Island House and Westview, “The [only] issue that remains is the need of the Lucidos of this world to walk out of here with a big pot of money and – in the case of Rivercross – the people who would like to move out and go to Florida or Arizona with a big pot of money.” That, he has said in the past, is “just not going to happen.”

Rivercross has worked toward some form of privatization plan for over ten years. Work being done now is pursuant to a 1996 vote in which shareholders authorized explorations toward developing a privatization plan. During the decade since that vote, various attempts have been mounted to create a workable plan. One member of the committee, Steve Meed, told shareholders that he is optimistic about the current approach. Because of the arrangement for the private mortgage, credited to committee member Sanjeev Tandon, the building is closer than it has been in the past.

Last Saturday, Jacobson tried to preserve hope that negotiation will produce an agreement with DHCR and RIOC. “I can’t predict what DHCR or RIOC will do, or what plans either of them may have in mind in response to our effort to exercise the rights we have under the Mitchell-Lama law to convert to a conventional New York cooperative,” he said. “But our Committee stands ready to discuss, with any State official, any aspect of the Rivercross Plan that any of them would like to raise with us, and to be responsible and imaginative in trying to meet the public policy issues that come up in those discussions.”

Island House and Westview are also trying to work out plans for departure from Mitchell-Lama. Shane commented late last week that he hasn’t had as many visits recently from representatives of the three buildings as earlier. The three committees have actually focused their recent efforts on DHCR, according to their members; they appear to remain optimistic, though no material progress has been reported publicly.

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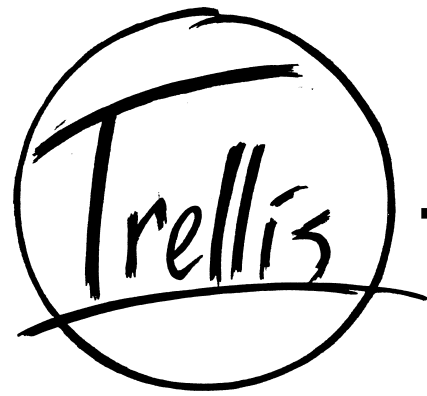
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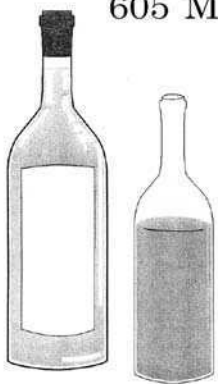
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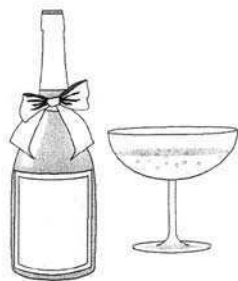
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Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul and Mary) hosted a fundraiser for Orphans International at his West Side home Tuesday night, and invited Roosevelt Island Residents Association President (and folksinger-guitarist) Matthew Katz to join him in a couple of numbers. Behind Katz is OI Founder and Eastwood resident Jim Luce (wearing a tie).

Trying the *American Idol* Thing, Islander Gets a Reject, and Renewed Determination

by Amber Kalamaras

For six seasons, millions have watched. Thousands have auditioned. But only one will make it to the top. The popular Fox Network television show has become a staple in many homes across America. Viewers are enthralled by the talented and not-so-talented. Who will soar to the top and who will be sent home? Yes, ladies and gentlemen, *this ... is ... American Idol*, the show that provides an opportunity for young talents to be discovered. And that's just the kind of opportunity young Blair Madison was looking for.

Madison, 16, began singing at a young age. "But it wasn't until sixth grade, when I sang *Happy Birthday* to myself, that I realized I wanted to sing professionally," she said recently when describing her *Idol* experience for *The WIRE*. She had already developed a love for writing poetry, and wanted to combine that with her singing skills.

The longtime Roosevelt Island resident has performed at numerous events and venues throughout the City. Realizing she met the *American Idol* age requirement, it was time to see if she could take her career up a notch.

Unfortunately for Madison, the producers decided to focus on smaller cities for season 7. No auditions were held in Los Angeles or New York. But that didn't stop the young singer. She began her journey in late August with her mother and aunt to Philadelphia – site of the last round of auditions. This was her only shot.

On August 27, Madison stood with thousands of other dedicated hopefuls outside Wachovia Center. When asked if she was nervous, she says, "Not at all," rather calmly. "We waited for six to eight hours, but the time just flew by."

Then it was time. She was in a stadium full of people, before one judge, and this was her chance to shine. Madison was prepared to sing *Listen* by one of her favorite vocalists, Beyoncé. "They lined us up and gave us about 30 seconds to sing. The judge said my voice wasn't strong enough and that was it."

"I cried when I didn't make it and wanted to scream at the judge, but you can let it make or break you."



Blair Madison

Showing great confidence, she adds, "I won't let it break me because everything happens for a reason, and it was definitely a good learning experience."

She seems to be taking the whole experience in stride. In fact, she seems somewhat relieved. "I think *American Idol* is a good opportunity, but I don't like how they push your career in a certain direction," says Madison. "I want to work hard and do the struggle; after all, when I make it big, I need a story for THS." ("THS" refers to *True Hollywood Story*, a program on the E! Entertainment channel.)

In order to make it "big," Madison feels she needs to focus on the content of her music. "I don't want to be like everyone else," she says. "I want to be influential and sing about political issues and frustrations. I will never sing about anything that I haven't personally gone through." She also admits that she's a very emotional person and hopes to influence others by letting them see her vulnerabilities.

Although she's very clear about the direction of her career, Madison admits to relying on her personal support group. "My mom is so supportive, it's annoying. We argue a lot, but it's because she cares way too much, and she really is one of my closest friends."

Until the next big opportunity presents itself, Madison will continue attending classes at the Lower Manhattan Arts Academy. Like many other teenagers, she admits to getting bored in school and wishes she could focus more on her singing career. But at 16, she realizes the importance of a good education.

As for future plans, she hopes to write a book and prepare a demo recording. If *American Idol* decides to hold auditions in New York next year, she will definitely try again, but doesn't plan to travel to another city. This was just the first year for Blair Madison and, according to *American Idol* requirements, she's eligible until she's 28.

This is only the beginning for her, and she's confident but impatient: "I don't doubt I will be successful, I just want it to happen already."

Island Women Have New Children's Book

by Gianna Pontecorboli

A long, long time ago, way before Japanese videogames and YouTube, heroines of children's books resembled Vannah, the heroine of Jennifer Toussaint-Cali and Nathalie Essomba's new book. In *Meet Vannah of the Seychelles*, Vannah is a happy child of seven. She has a mother who spends quality time with her, an affectionate and helping big brother, and a hard-working father. She lives in a simple and beautiful world, the Seychelle Islands, where she and her large extended family of uncles, aunts, and cousins enjoy a diverse culture and a rich natural setting. Vannah watches little TV and has no computer, but she loves to work in the garden with her mother, admires her teachers, and is ready to hug her classmates when they are sad. She'd almost be perfect, if she did not repeatedly affirm her love for American junk food.

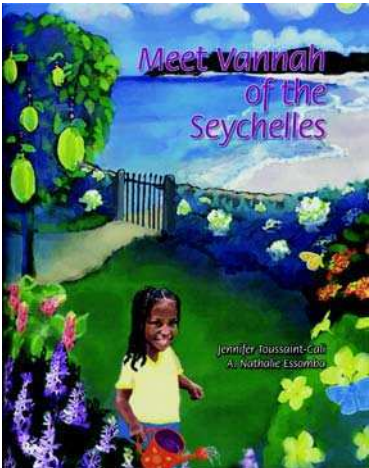
Certainly not by chance, *Vannah* was born on Roosevelt Island, an Island far away from the Seychelles, but where families have always tried to give to their children something valuable and different. "Our goal was to offer an inspiration to the kids and to their families," says Jennifer Toussaint-Cali, "something you can read to your children at bedtime." Jennifer was born in the Seychelles but left in 1976, going first to Italy and then to New York. She now goes back for a visit every year, and *Vannah* portrays her real niece.

But for Jennifer, and for Nathalie, a New Yorker whose mother is from Cameroon, the book is only the first step in an ambitious program. They have started their own company to create inspirational products for kids age 4 and older. With the help of Stacey Byer, a graphic designer who lives in Grenada, they have already produced six different posters, the latest inspired by the Ten Commandments. *Meet Vannah* is to be followed by seven more books.

"It took us more than six months to write the first text, but now we are faster," says Nathalie. "Our next books will describe a girl from the Dominican Republic and one from the United States."

Vannah is on sale at Target and on Amazon.com, and on Roosevelt Island at the We Are One boutique (599 Main Street).

"The Island is very supportive," says Jennifer. "In just one day we sold 15 copies at the Art Fair. One lady from Rivercross bought four copies. It gave us the courage to go to Harlem and to Brooklyn."



Island Kids to Help Parents With The School Selection Challenge

Island Kids, Inc., has decided to help parents tackle the problem of selecting schools and getting their children into them.

"It can be confusing and anxiety-provoking," says Dr. Gina Lipton, an Islander who is a psychologist and former admissions director at a private school. She will lead the Island Kids course.

"It's particularly true for Island residents who aren't from this area and face a maze of school choices." Lipton said many parents automatically exclude private schools, believing tuition costs are out of reach. "But many schools in Queens have lower tuitions, and financial aid is often available."

Lipton's program with Island Kids will kick off Wednesday, November 28, at 7:00 p.m. with a presentation by Kew Forest School, which is six F-train stops from Roosevelt Island in Forest Hills, Queens. The program will cover the school's academic curriculum, social environment, and extracurricular activities. Parents of current students will be on hand, as well as the school's administrative staff.

Through the fall, other private schools will visit the Island to make presentations, and the program will eventually expand to include support for parents exploring alternative public school options.

Lipton also offers individual guidance sessions to parents: developing a list of appropriate schools for a child, completing applications, maximizing chances for financial aid, and understanding the overall process.

Additional information is available from Island Kids at 212-317-0216 or Dr. Gina Lipton at 212-479-8422.

Wedding: Gilbert-Samstag



Islanders Leila Gilbert and Martin Samstag were wed October 21 in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, with Vicar Lewis Johnson officiating. The bride is a playwright. The groom is a singer/entertainer.

What Do RIOC Board Members Do, Exactly?

by David Kraut

Resident Member, RIOC Board of Directors

The WIRE has asked several experienced current and former resident members of the RIOC Board to write about what it's like to serve, with the hope that these thoughts will inform both potential candidates and voters as the Island approaches the February 5 election in which voters will select six nominees to the Board.

For the past few months I have been losing not a little sleep over the City's plan to move Coler and Goldwater hospitals off-Island and use the land for residential purposes.

What I'm worried about is, how are we going to get a few thousand additional residents on and off the Island every day for work or school, when the current transportation is straining at its limits? We have two new buildings going up, another that's built but not fully occupied, and we're committed to adding three more on the east side of Main Street. The MTA is seeking funds to extend the rush-hour service period on the F train, but this will only help those whose schedules are flexible.

We're working to upgrade Tram service, and we can extend our rush-hour service period, but that still benefits only those Islanders whose schedules are adaptable.

There is talk of ferry service, but that will serve only a few hundred Islanders a day at best, and is expensive, and only carries you to the edge of Manhattan in various places, not to your work or school.

So what are we going to do?

One answer is to build a station accessing the 53rd St. subway tunnel that crosses deep below the Island, carrying

in "running" for a seat.

One good thing that happened along the way was a modification to the RIOC legislation that mandated a majority of Roosevelt Island residents on the Board. We have some pretty good people on the Board right now, even if they were directly asked to volunteer to serve by some manifestation of the powers that be, and not elected by the community.

But now we seem to have a real "promise" that the Spitzer administration will at least consider Board candidates actually elected from the Island. And the Maple Tree Group is sponsoring an election process to be held on Primary Day. I've asked over 50 people if they would consider running for one of these seats, and a few of them said they'd think about it.

I don't blame the others. It's tough to be a Board member. First, it takes a certain amount of time, although less than you'd think

Second, it involves real responsibility, not just "having strong opinions." Right now, for instance, the current Southpoint Park design (and budget) covers only half of the dedicated lands. The very southernmost point on the Island is to have some sort of FDR memorial on it and that will be very large or it will not, and it will fit into the rest of the Park's master plan or it will not, and that's going to be a great argument.

There are three more Southtown buildings scheduled to go up. And that has to be properly handled to bring maximum return to the Island without allowing the buildings to get out of scale.

We have a Tram to rebuild.

We have seawall to repair and rebuild.

Main Street must be rebuilt.

We have recurring problems with street lights.

In the meantime, RIOC staff must be able to go on about the workaday business of sweeping the streets, mowing the lawns, watering the flowers (and replanting seasonally), raking the leaves, plowing the snow, emptying the trash cans, operating the AVAC system, keeping the drains and sewers running clear, painting the benches and mending the fences, and providing a high level of street security and first-response to certain kinds of emergencies ... all supervised by a highly-competent professional executive service that is itself overseen by the Board.

Lots of it is routine. Lots of it involves great change... and no change happens on Roosevelt Island with-

out people becoming worried about its effect on their lives, which leads them to be nervous, which leads them to be extremely critical, and that's the third thing.

But who can blame them? Change worries us all, and I myself had plenty to say in opposition to Northtown Phase II... or Manhattan Park.

But then Manhattan Park got built and it's a nice project and there are very nice people living there and some of them are friends of mine.



David Kraut, at the October 18 meeting of RIOC Directors. He is the longest-serving member of the Board.

But there were plenty of Manhattan Park residents hollering at me and participating in lawsuits against RIOC to prevent Southtown being built. And Octagon. And now here are residents of *those* projects sitting in councils and committees side-by-side with the people who sued to keep them off the Island.

Well, people get used to change after it occurs, and as a RIOC Board Member you will have to have the courage and the thickness of skin required to do what is best or what is necessary or what is possible (often very different things) regardless of how much your neighbors are yelling at you.

So who have I been asking to consider running?

Well, they're all known to me as people with fine minds, good hearts, and a strong ethic. They don't always agree with my thinking about this Island, or feel as I do, or share my own personal ethic, but that's not the point. We want people of good heart, good soul, and good mind. A vision helps too, I suppose. At least people will ask you for yours if you decide to run. But it will be bound to change once you're aboard and taking responsibility. And it will be real, actual, legal responsibility, bound round by law and the science of what's possible, or what can be made to be possible.

One of you, reading this, might end up with my seat. And then you'll get to sit up late, wondering how the hell a few thousand new neighbors, mandated by the City, are going to get to work in the morning.

I love it, and I'll do it as long as anybody wants me to. But maybe I'll be replaced by one of you.



the V and E trains to Queens... in the area of Southpoint Park.

This is totally unacceptable, especially to me. Five or six years ago I dragged the entire RIOC executive staff, Board, and DHCR people down there on a nice spring day, and smarter people than myself were quick to grasp the area's potential, and smarter people than myself have taken it from there. Government at various levels has committed large sums to developing Southpoint Park, and plans are reaching fruition. To even consider a subway station in Southpoint Park is intolerable.

But the station doesn't have to be *in* the park. You could slant the escalators up to the north, just as the current F train station escalators slant up to the west. That would put the subway platform under the park, but the actual station entrance would be at the very northern edge of the park, or even further north in the vicinity of the Goldwater Hospital auditorium.

Wouldn't it?

Why am I telling you this? Because by the time any of this happens I may very well be off the RIOC Board of Directors, replaced by one of you.

In the meantime, it's fun to think about. And also, it *must* be thought about. And it's my job as a member of the current Board to be doing this thinking.

Whatever we come up with, some of you will be angry, but that's okay: it comes with the territory, and besides, I asked for it. I ran for the RIRA presidency in 1992 on the specific platform that the Governor should keep a promise implied in the RIOC enabling legislation – but not written into the law – that the RIRA President, or some high-level RIRA officer, should always have a seat on the RIOC Board of Directors.

That "promise" was kept only irregularly at best. I think one or two of my predecessors were allowed to sit on the Board, one of my successors has been appointed, and his successors didn't even try to get on.

There was a cartoon on the front page of *The WIRE* showing Mario Cuomo attempting to hold me off with a whip and a chair.

Well, Governor Cuomo went away and guess what, I was still here, and for 12 years of the Pataki administration I, and later my colleague Pat Stewart, were the only people on the RIOC Board whom the voters of Roosevelt Island had actually suggested were fit for the job. There may have been others who were more fit, but they weren't interested

RIOC to Step Up Its Parking Enforcement

by Jami Bernard

President Steve Shane of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) has announced that Public Safety will now be required to enforce Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines (see *The RIOC Column*, page 2). Shane made the announcement late last week at a meeting of the RIOC Operations Committee. It followed a spirited discussion of the unique problems inherent in Roosevelt Island's parking situation, where there is one spot for approximately every 1000 residents.

Under the ticketing policy that has left residents fuming, cars that bear official-looking placards in their windshields – not just for police and firefighters, but for such agencies as OTB (Off-Track Betting) and Rikers Island corrections – were given a free pass by Public Safety officers, even when those cars remained parked for months at a time, because of what Shane referred to as "social policy."

The issue of selective ticketing, which has long rankled the community's drivers, came to a head after a report in the October 20 issue of *The WIRE* describing the efforts of Residents Association Common Coun-

cil member Frank Farance to document what he perceived as a double standard in the issuing of parking citations. Farance took thousands of photos of unticketed cars, including those with long-expired registrations and placards that were essentially hand-made cardboard signs.

"There's no argument that when people are parked illegally, having a placard from a precinct from somewhere in the Bronx doesn't entitle someone to park on your streets," said Shane at last Friday's meeting.

Shane described this as "a problem all over the City of New York – people who have placards of various police departments, fire departments, which give them as a matter of grace, all over the City of New York, parking privileges where they probably oughtn't be parked. So if you want to make the decision and direct us (RIOC) to be strict enforcers with respect to that, that's something that we can certainly do."

And that is precisely what the Operations Committee, chaired by Mark Ponton, asked Shane to do in last week's meeting.

"You want strict enforcement? We'll have strict enforcement," concluded Shane, adding that he would begin no-

tifying those with legitimate handicap permits so that their cars, if parked in such non-permissible spots as commercial loading zones, would not be caught up in the sweep. Shane emphasized that the Island is a handicap-friendly neighborhood and that the crackdown on illegal parking would be aimed at illegitimate permits and scofflaws.

Farance's investigation showed that on a typical day, approximately 87 percent of Main Street's public parking spaces are occupied, many of them by cars that sit there for as long as months at a time. Although some have legal handicap permits, the majority – about 30 – display bogus or illegitimate placards from organizations that either are official or just sound official but have no special parking privileges here. Public Safety officers do not appear to ticket those cars, most likely out of the same sense of "professional courtesy" that has caused a glut of illegal parking all over the City.

Shane examined a photo of one such placard, a cardboard sign claiming to be issued by the management of Manhattan Park, and agreed that individual buildings and entities do not have the authority to issue such permits or to override DOT regulations.

NYJTL Program Starts Today



The New York Junior Tennis League’s free winter program begins today (Saturday, November 3). It will run Saturday and Sunday mornings through March. The program provides instruction, recreational play and tournaments for children 7-18, though younger children who previously played in the NYJTL’s spring or summer PeeWee program may attend as well. The program is hosted by the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club.

No prior registration or equipment is re-

quired. Children need only show up with proper tennis footwear and clothing appropriate for running. Further information is available by e-mail from Site Director Joyce Mincheff (joyce.mincheff@cbbk.com) or from the NYJTL office at **718-786-7110**.

The program is funded with City support arranged by Councilmember Jessica Lappin, and with help from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation and the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club.

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FDR Memorial from page 1

made about the future of the southern end, but TPL expects to break ground on the northern segment next summer.

President Steve Shane of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) was on hand at the press conference. He endorsed the effort but had no commitment to make, since the matter will ultimately have to go to the RIOC Board of Directors. Earlier this year, Shane said that the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI) has until year’s end to secure the \$40 million in funding believed to be required to build the Kahn design. The commitments of the politicians representing the Island and Manhattan’s East Side are likely to help to get more government funds flowing. Governor Eliot Spitzer has also endorsed the idea of building the Kahn design.



Press conference last week in Tramway Plaza, Manhattan

The President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA), Matthew Katz, was also invited to attend last week’s press conference, but he declined, citing a survey done by TPL that indicated a stronger interest by Island residents in having a “wild gardens” and green approach throughout Southpoint Park, in preference to a formal FDR memorial with tailored trees and stone. Katz deals with the issue in his column (page 2) in this issue of *The WIRE*.

Gina Pollara, the Executive Director of the fund-raising group for the FDR Memorial Four Freedoms Park, as it is formally known, this week described the united political backing as a “watershed moment.” She listed \$5 million in contributions from the late Arthur Ross and the Reed Foundation, plus funding for office operations from a Chicago foundation. Altogether, she said, funding now approaches \$6 million.

RIRA Column from page 2

insuring that these three acres are not despoiled with inappropriate development is certainly a cause for concern. I believe that the powers that be (RIOC, DHCR, City Council, State Legislature), by raising \$12.9 million, have ensured that these 13 acres will be parkland and nothing but parkland. The decisions we make now will be preserved at Southpoint for 50 to 100 years, and we should build what we think is best, not what is most expedient. Yes, we should build a memorial to FDR, but not a memorial to architect Louis Kahn, and not this memorial. If the TPL survey is not credible, then RIOC should commission another to take the temperature of this community and of other users of Southpoint Park. But to endorse the Kahn Memorial (and it is Kahn, not Roosevelt, who is being memorialized by this design plan) without the support of those who will use this park, regardless of what money has been raised thus far, is irresponsible.

RIOC Board Elections – The Beat Goes On

Candidates for the RIOC Board nominations are now coming forward, and the promised box to hold the nomination and nomination/petition forms has been placed in the Public Safety office on the floor just to the left as you enter. Get your forms in, folks; the sooner you declare your candidacy, the sooner you can begin campaigning.

I urge all candidates – committed, on-the-fence, or bidding-your-time – to attend the Candidates’ Orientation we have scheduled for Thursday, November 8, at 8:00 p.m. in the Westview Lower Community Room. We will share information on procedures and tips on how to reach the largest number of your neighbors. In addition, I have invited the current RIOC Board Directors to attend and to share their on-the-job experience with you. It should be an informative evening.

And On A Personal Note...

It seems that Orphans International doesn’t fulfill the dreams of only third-world abandoned children, but mature Roosevelt Islanders as well. Sherie and I attended an OI fundraiser this week at the home of Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary fame. This delightful man invited me to play and sing with him. This may not sound like much, but to an old folkie like me, it was a nocturnal fantasy right up there with pitching for the Yankees or starring in a love scene with Halle Berry. Peter acted as auctioneer for donated goods, the proceeds from which went to benefit OI. My buddy Ethel Romm, a great OI supporter, led the bidding on a lovely little guitar signed by PP&M, and suggested that everyone bid something and then give the guitar to me. And that’s just what they did! I will never forget this evening, the kindness of this wonderful iconic musician, and the talent of Jim Luce to make events like this happen. I’m floating on air, and I hope Orphans International made a bundle!

David Lloyd Marcus, Ph.D. Psychotherapy and Counseling

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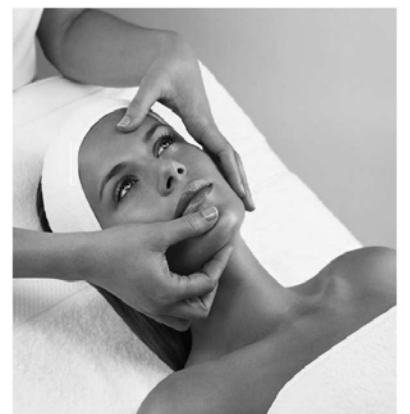


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