

Next issue
in 2 weeks:
Sat., Apr. 26

The Main Street WIRE™

28th Year as Roosevelt Island’s Independent Community Newspaper



The cherry trees on the west channel at the south campus of Coler-Goldwater Hospital are in bloom. It’s one of Roosevelt Island’s *don’t-miss* experiences.

RIOC Considering an MTA Strategy for Getting Main Street’s Storefronts Filled

RIOC may have found a detour around the roadblock that’s been standing in the way of leasing out Main Street’s retail storefronts.

It’s an approach used by the MTA, which “licenses” its retail spaces to operators. “We met with their general counsel and the head of their real-estate operations,” RIOC President Steve Shane told *The WIRE*, “and they have given us all their forms. What they do is elide the legal issue by calling them ‘licenses,’ recognizing that there is a problem [with ‘leases’] under the Public Authorities Accountability Act.”

The Public Authorities Law was passed in response to a Pataki administration attempt to sell land along the Erie Canal to a developer at fire-sale prices, among

other concerns. It provides that the State must get full value when disposing of property (as in leasing it out), which can involve cumbersome bid preparation not compatible with the usual small-business way of doing things.

Shane said the MTA’s approach rests “on a questionable legal foundation,” though the policy has been approved by the MTA’s board. It provides that each ‘license’ may be terminated with a 60-day notice if the landlord chooses to do so for public purposes. “The difference between a 10-year ‘license’ and a 10-year ‘lease’ is not intellectually or practically a whole lot of difference,” Shane said, but, “If we, as a very peanut organization, can get behind the draft of somebody like the MTA, maybe that’s the way to go and say, ‘Well, we’re following the herd.’ We have to bite the bullet intellectually and legally to do that, and it’s certainly something we’re actively considering at this point.”

Shane said the RIOC administration is likely to bring the approach to the RIOC Board in time for its meeting on May 22.

Website NYC10044
Related video coverage by Kim Lengle is on line with this issue of *The WIRE* at nyc10044.com.

Public Safety May Get Added Space Next Door

RIOC is considering an expansion of the Public Safety Department (PSD) offices that would include the vacant bakery property and, between PSD’s present quarters and the bakery, a portion of the ground-level entryway to the Cultural Center and the Main Street Theatre.

RIOC would “use the mezzanine across the top of the bakery,” RIOC President Steve Shane told *The WIRE*, “probably moving our engineering department out of [RIOC headquarters at 591 Main Street] because we’re completely out of space.” Shane said the change would give PSD separate locker rooms for the men and women in the department, an exercise room, and “really good executive offices” for the director and assistant director. He added, “It would provide a place for the community to come in and address Public Safety that doesn’t look like a real rat-hole or something out of Dickensian England.”

RIOC had been considering the former Lilies Christian School space at the north end of Eastwood (504 Main Street) as a possible new home for Public Safety, but met resistance from the community and from some members of the RIOC Board. The change being considered, Shane said, “would solve the space problem and it looks like, programmatically, it would work for them, and it will answer some of the community concerns about locating Public Safety elsewhere and, at the same time, take care of our overflow problem here [at 591 Main].”

Shane said there are people who propose to use 504 Main Street as a restaurant. Two years ago, the Youth Program sought to take over that space, but the RIOC Board refused to award it to the program without further information. A City grant of nearly \$2 million, earmarked to prepare the facility, was lost.

Will It Matter? Survey Seeks Resident Views on FDR Memorial Planned for Southpoint

by Dick Lutz

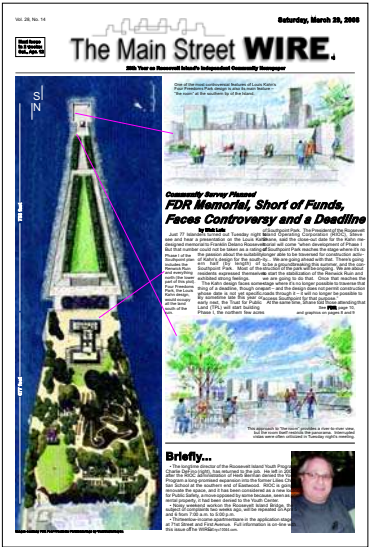
In a survey distributed with this issue of *The Main Street WIRE*, Roosevelt Islanders are being asked what they think of the late Louis Kahn’s design for *Four Freedoms Park*, in a poll planned by the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. But it’s not likely they’ll have much influence on the future of that lower half of the length of Southpoint Park, at least as RIOC President Steve Shane sees it.

Late last week, Shane talked with *The WIRE* about the history of the Kahn plan and the factors going into a decision. The full 29-minute interview is available as high-definition video on *The WIRE*’s Website NYC10044 at nyc10044.com.

“This is a bigger project than just for the people of Roosevelt Island, especially for the 100 people who really care about this or the 77 who showed up at the meeting [last week]... Maybe there were people who couldn’t come, so let’s double that number. Let’s *triple* that number. Whatever it is, it’s not a significant portion of the population of Roosevelt Island, let alone of the City of New York, the State of New York, the United States, and the world. And this is a project that transcends the immediacy of interest of the people of Roosevelt Island, especially given its antecedent agreement... The fact is that for the present people [living here] to be the decision-makers for the next 100 years seems to me to be a little self-assuming.”

But it’s not Shane alone who will determine the influence of present-day Roosevelt Islanders on the future of Southpoint Park. Those “antecedent agreements” will be an important factor, as will the ability of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute [FERI] to raise \$30 million or more – triple the amount it says is presently committed.

Shane talked about the history. “When the Island was dedicated by the City to the State and its name was changed from Welfare Island to Roosevelt Island, it was done with some ceremony, which included, among other things, the execution of an agreement... that on the southernmost point would be created a memorial park to FDR, to be designed and built along the lines of a plan that UDC [the Urban Development Corporation] was to develop. They were to hire and pay the architect, Louis Kahn, which they did, and that plan was to be built by UDC. The



The March 29 issue of *The WIRE* provided an extensive set of graphics illustrating the Louis Kahn plan for *Four Freedoms Park* at Southpoint. It is on line at nyc10044.com/wire/2814/wire2814.pdf. Additional renderings and information also on the website of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute at www.feri.org.



The Editorial Page

Lo, a State Budget

It's pretty good, when you think about it. A Governor leaves office in personal disgrace and, less than a month later, we have a budget for New York State. Late again, but a *budget*, almost on time, in spite of the turmoil.

And now?

And now we may hope that a small slice of Governor David Paterson's time may be available to deal with Roosevelt Island, and this community's recent election of six among us as our nominees to the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), the New York State agency that runs the show here.

Important decisions lay in our path:

- RIOC may have found a way around the provisions of the Public Authorities Accountability Act that involves slipstreaming the MTA, and that may hold the key to revitalizing Main Street retail, where storefronts have gone empty despite the availability of renters who want to do business here.
- Something really must be done about the way the Island houses its Public Safety Department (report, page 1). If we want truly professional behavior on the part of our Public Safety Officers, we have to treat them like professionals, and that means facilities that meet minimal code, at least.

• A voice must be raised immediately about rush-hour transportation to Manhattan, to which the MTA holds the key. In response to repeated suggestions as to how frequency of service might be improved here, or ways in which we might be provided with less jammed trains arriving here in the morning, the MTA always responds, "No, that idea won't work." As Rivercross resident Marc Diamond and Island House resident Frank Farance have observed, the MTA must be stimulated to get proactive on this. The MTA must come up with some ideas of its own well *before* the Tram goes down for renovation. Solutions tried for the Tram's down period might also serve as the Island's population grows, and a short-term fix might blaze the path for the long-term fix that is badly needed.

• Southpoint decisions are imminent (story, page 1). While RIOC President Steve Shane says that RIOC may be the mere implementer of decisions made "on high," what happens to Roosevelt Island's parkland – how it is used – has become critically important as, over the years, park space has given way to more residential development. The RIOC Board has a role in this. We need our resident nominees in place as those matters are considered.

The Governor knows – because Assemblymember Micah Kellner has told him and will tell him again – that Roosevelt Island needs the creeping democracy represented by these community nominees. In fact, it shouldn't creep quite so much, and we would greatly prefer direct election of the RIOC Board.

But while the law says the Governor must appoint, he is *the critical link* in the chain and right now, it is up to him to give Roosevelt Island a greater degree of democracy. We are standing by.

DL

Errors & Omissions:

In *The WIRE's* March 29 issue, credits for some graphics, all associated with Southpoint Park, were omitted. The Southpoint Park Site Plan on page 1 was by WRT, LLC, composited by Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. The digital renderings were reproduced courtesy of Langan Engineering. All other renderings were courtesy Mitchell/Giurgola Architects.



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Once again, Roosevelt Island is preparing to don its mantle of cherry blossoms, and that glorious tree between Rivercross and the Chapel of the Good Shepherd is leading the way. Spring is our best season, I think you would agree, and I'm checking out my warm-weather duds in preparation for spending many hours out-of-doors. Happy Pesach, *landsleit*, and you know who you are!

You will find colated within the pages of this week's *Main Street WIRE* a Community Survey asking for your opinion as to the appropriateness of the Louis Kahn-designed Roosevelt Memorial intended for the southernmost three acres of our Island. For the decision-makers to hear this community's opinion on this project, it will be necessary for all of us to understand what the plan entails and to complete and submit the survey. Unless large numbers of completed surveys are deposited at the Public Safety office before next Saturday evening, or mailed to the RIRA post-office box, we will again be told that our response is invalid and that nobody here really cares what is built or how we go about honoring FDR.

I hope you were able to attend the presentation of the plan on March 25, or availed yourself of the considerable information in the last issue of this newspaper. You can refresh your memory on *The WIRE*

The RIRA Column

April, 2008 with spring in the air, cherry blossoms in bloom:

1. Board of Directors: At the April 10, 2008 meeting, the fiscal year 2008/09 Budget was presented for adoption by the Board. The Board authorized the creation of the position of Vice President for Planning and Inter-Governmental Relations and approved the appointment of Rosina Abramson to the position. For those with long memories, Rosina was the President of RIOC from 1986 to 1991, during which I had the pleasure of working closely with her. We are fortunate to have her back, with her institutional memory and depth of contacts with other governmental agencies with which RIOC interacts. Welcome back, Rosina!
2. RIRA-RIOC nominations for the Board of Directors: No word from Albany while the focus is on the budget, congestion pricing, etc.
3. Public Safety: The seven new hires are into their training program. All existing members have had their training and certifications updated. Director Guerra met with the Port Authority's Office of Emergency Management and it seems likely that RIOC will be extended privileges at some of their training facilities to cover the multiple disciplines the PA faces.
4. Renwick Ruin: Contracts for fencing and clearance have been let, and stabilization work is to commence shortly. Applications have been filed for necessary permits. RIOC is working on the necessary documentation to get the appropriated \$4.5 million from the City into accessible funds.
5. Roosevelt Memorial: A community meeting was held on March 25 at the Good Shepherd Community Center for a presentation by FERI. RIOC recorded the event and has made it available on its website. Councilwoman Lappin attended and spoke to the matter. The architect explained the drawings and plan, which has evolved from the original design. Community opinion was expressed, both pro and con, by the relatively few residents who came to the meeting. A questionnaire is included in this *WIRE* distribution to try to get a much broader expression of opinion from the approximately 4,000 residential units.
6. Public Purpose Fund: In the draft budget is a proposed annual contribution of \$100,000 from the operating funds of RIOC to the Public Purpose Fund. The present uncommitted fund balance is approximately \$165,000. The Governance Committee of the Board, chaired by Board Member Patrick Stewart, is going to propose a structure for administration of the Public Purpose Fund, hopefully by the May meeting of the Board. RIOC has begun to receive applications for funding for the next year, and the process would then be implemented. The Governance Committee's report and suggested protocols should be followed by the Island residents and the organizations they support. The Youth Center is not included in the Public Purpose process, as it has long been supported by RIOC. There is \$175,000 proposed in the RIOC budget for the Youth Center.
7. Tram: Drafting RFP and final specs for the overhaul is in full swing by both engineers and lawyers,

The RIOC Column

website: nyc10044.com/wire/2814/wire2814.html. For far too long, nobody has asked for our input in honoring Roosevelt Island's namesake or how best to utilize the southernmost three acres of our Island. The purpose of this exercise is, at long last, to rectify this glaring omission.

Yes, there have been surveys in the past, as well as town meetings at which concerned Islanders were able to express themselves. However, the numbers were never sufficient to convince anyone that there was consensus here. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) included us in the planning for a new Southpoint Park in a way that no one has attempted in planning for the FDR Memorial. Why? I think it's because TPL came here with an open mind eager to build the park that its primary users, this community, would value. The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI) has been tied

See **RIRA Column**, page 8



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

hopefully to be ready for publication in May. Thornton-Tomasetti is engaged to do structural engineering analysis, and RIOC is seeking a project manager to take control of the entire enterprise.

Loading protocols at the Island side station have been changed to permit waiting on the platform, easing crowding by permitting faster turnaround of the Tram.

Please Note: Safety drills for rescue and evacuation from the cabins are scheduled for Sunday (April 13). The Tram will be closed from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

8. Health & Fitness Day: Mark Saturday, May 17, on your calendars as the annual Island-wide rite of spring. Lots of outdoor activities, races for the kids, basketball tournament for bigger kids, etc. Watch for announcements of activities [ad, page 7].

9. Resurfacing fields: RIOC is carefully watching and following the New York City lead on the question of appropriate materials to use for artificial surfaces on playing fields. Both RIOC and its consultants are well aware of the health concerns expressed about recycled rubber surfaces, and will await a determination before proceeding. We hope to get the architectural and engineering work done and let contracts soon.

10. Motorgate: There seems to have been a recent spurt in malicious mischief at Motorgate and, despite two recent arrests, it has continued. NYPD's 114th Precinct made an arrest on Vernon Boulevard on April 8, and the person confessed to 20-25 incidents of break-in at Motorgate. Perhaps this is a resolution. Higher levels of patrol and more camera surveillance are being employed to address this problem.

As previously indicated, the monthly rental is being increased to \$190/month for all monthly parkers, both on Island and off, eliminating the favorable differential for the off-Island users.

11. Blackwell House playground: Demolition of the old castle has been completed in anticipation of a new playground to be installed with the benefit of guidance from Island Kids and Kaboom, a not-for-profit focused on urban playgrounds.

12. Restroom facilities: RIOC has published an RFP for prefabricated facilities to be located at Light-house Park, Firefighters Field, and Capobianco Field. Hopefully, they should be available by mid-June. Similar facilities are contemplated for each of the east and west entrances to Southpoint Park Phase I.

13. Octagon lights: To resolve a public-safety issue with some dark areas, the lights on the tennis courts were used to illuminate adjacent walkways, but turned out to be bothersome to some tenants. By rewiring some circuits, we have now balanced the lighting and safety issues to accomplish the goal.

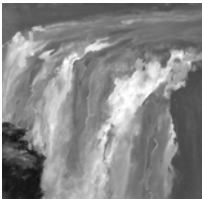


Steve Shane, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
e-mail: SShane@RIOC.com

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Vernissage 7, members’ seventh anniversary show, continues through Sun Apr 27 at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Gallery hours Sat-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed & Fri 6-9pm. ▸



– The Coming Week –

Toastmasters Open Meeting, Mon Apr 14, 8pm, Westview Community Room. Information: **212-751-9577**.
Community Board 8 Meeting, Wed Apr 16, 6:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Open to the public. Information: **212-758-4340**.
Constituent Service Hours for Assemblymember Micah Kellner, **Thu Apr 17** (and every Thursday), 3-7pm, RIOC office, 591 Main Street.
Book Discussion – *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, **Thu Apr 17**, 6:30pm, New York Public Library Roosevelt Island branch. Books available at library.

– Future Weeks –

Cherry Tree Walk and Southpoint Park Tour, Sun Apr 20, 1pm, sponsored by the Roosevelt Island Historical Society. Donation, \$5. Meet at the Visitor Center Kiosk, Tram Plaza (on the Island).
The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat Apr 26**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, Thu Apr 17; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Mon Apr 21; they are due Thu Apr 24. **Additional issues in 2008:** May 17, 31; June 14, 28; Aug 2, 30; Sept 13, 27; Oct 11, 25; Nov 8, 22; Dec 6, 20; then every two weeks starting Jan 17 2009. **News phone, 212-826-9055**; urgent matters, **917-617-0449**. **Advertising**, display and classified: **212-751-8214**.

Meet the Authors of *Images of America: Queensboro Bridge*, Judith Berdy and Robert Singleton, **Sat Apr 26**, 11am-1pm, Visitor Center Kiosk, Tramway Plaza (on the Island).
Toastmasters Open Meeting, Mon Apr 28, 8pm, Westview Community Room. Information: **212-751-9577**.

Roosevelt Island Young Artists Show, opening **Sat May 3**, 3pm, Gallery RIVAA, running through Sun May 25. Works by students of PS/IS 217, the Child School/Legacy High School, and the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery. Gallery hours Sat-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed & Fri 6-9pm.

Deadline to sign up for Health & Fitness Day Basketball Tournament, Tue May 6. Contact Othniel at **212-832-4540**, ext. 321.

Constituent Service Hours for State Sen. José Serrano, **Tue May 6**, 3-7pm, RIOC office, 591 Main St. Info: **212-828-5829**.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed May 7**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.

Toastmasters Open Meeting, Mon May 12, 8pm. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577**.

Book Discussion – *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser, **Thu May 15**, 6:30pm, New York Public Library Roosevelt Island branch. Books available at library.

Free mammogram, Sat May 17, starting at 9am, mammography van at Capobianco Field. Appointment required – call **800-564-6868**.

Second Annual Health and Fitness Day, Sat May 17, 11am-4pm, Capobianco Field. Free health screenings, information booths, aerobic clinics, sports clinics, free giveaways, activities for kids. Information: **212-832-4540**. Sponsored by RIOC.

R&R Chamber Music Concert, Sat May 17, 7pm, Good Shepherd Community Center.

RIOC Board Meeting, Thu May 22, 4:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Town-hall meeting, at end of formal session, for resident comments and questions.

Toastmasters Open Meeting, Mon May 26, 8pm. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577**.

Shakespeare in the Park, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Sat-Sun May 31-June 1, 2pm, Rivercross Lawn.

Senior Center

Monday
9:30, **Hawaiian Hula**
10:30, **English as 2nd Language**
11:00, **Tai Chi**
12:30, **“Oldies” Movies**
6:00, **Yoga**
Tuesday
9:00-1:00, **Tax Help**
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**
12:30, **Movie**
Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:45, **Theater Group**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events
Atlantic City trip, Tue., Apr. 15.
IHOP trip, Mon., Apr. 21, 2:00.
Mt. Haven trip, Tue., Apr. 29.
Senior Day, Sun., May 18, 1:00.

Home-delivered meals: **212-744-5022**

Letters

To the Editor:

Here are a few points that have not been made about the Kahn FDR Memorial. (I was unable to attend the public meeting.) Perhaps they will help readers see things differently.

- The tip of our Island is unstable landfill from the various tunnels dug through. Kahn has anchored the shifting dirt with huge (and expensive) stone pillars going down to bedrock.
- He edged the narrow finger of parkland with stone to withstand the pounding high tides, pounding storms, spraying briny water, constant erosion. It’s called the East River, but our little Island sits in a salt water estuary with tides so strong they are the first site of an experiment to harness them for electrical energy.

Any green lawn or shrubbery planted along the shore, touched by the moving salt water, will not last the first storm that whips up a higher tide.

- The lovely tree-sheltered walkways under shade trees are a master stroke. There is something about a formal garden that encourages our best behavior. You don’t see people drop cigarettes or soda bottles in formal gardens. This one is a miniature jewel.

- Just a few hundred feet north is the original southern part of our Island – high, wide, solid, stable ground. A thousand people and more watch the fireworks, and gaze at the incredible vistas and the iconic buildings of the greatest City in the world.

We’re surrounded on all sides of our Island with the overwhelming industrial marvel that is New York City. Is it possible to experience nature here, which we yearn for? Can we recapture how it was for Henry Hudson, for the Blackwells, for the American Indians?

Kahn has given us the way – protected grass, walkways under the trees, directing our eyes low to the moving waves and the changing tides, to the alighting birds and flopping fish, screening out the 21st century from a mere three acres.

It’s us and nature here, not overwhelmed by the sights of a rich City from which we may not share the largesse. Only a Kahn could figure out how to do that on a spit of unstable earth.

- The roofless stone “room” – the fingernail at the end – is Kahn at his timeless best. It can take brutal storms and rising tides, even if global warming raises the water level 12 inches or more.

It is open to the sky, inscribed with Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms (for which we fought WWII, my war), a space for contemplation and celebration, its open side facing the UN, where so many Island residents have served. Anchored in bedrock, with low maintenance costs, it is a fitting memorial to the great man for whom our Island is named.

- Dr. Jack Resnick offers a splendid idea to celebrate Roosevelt’s disability, which he hid, standing on pre-set braces, never ever permitting his picture to be taken in a wheelchair. (He thought he would not be elected – and probably wouldn’t be, even today.) There’s plenty of room for a statue of him in a wheelchair, or drawings incised on the walls.

I invite you to stop me on the street or in Trellis to talk. This is a timeless work of genius, it will guarantee that no one will build a motel down there, and I would like to help raise money for it.

Ethel G. Romm

Governor David Paterson
Executive Chamber
State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224
Dear Governor Paterson:

I am writing on behalf of the residents of Roosevelt Island on this, the anniversary of the creation of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), a public-benefit corporation which governs the Island and whose board members are appointed by you as Governor. For many years now, Roosevelt Islanders have sought a greater role and a more democratic voice in determining the future direction and operation of their Island home.

In response to the Islanders’ calls for better representation on the RIOC Board of Directors and in the affairs of running the Island, the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) held an Island-wide referendum on February 5, 2008, to recommend residents’ choices for filling the six vacant or expired Board seats.

Turnout for this historic vote was unprecedented. More people voted for the RIOC Board than in the Presidential primary or for Governor in the 2006 election. Altogether, 1,718 residents came out and cast ballots.

The top six candidates were Kathie Grimm, Jonathan Kalkin, Frank Farance, Erin Feely-Nahem, Fay Christian, and Howard Polivy. These individuals truly represent the diverse nature of Roosevelt Island and include a pediatrician, lawyer/entrepreneur, systems analyst, social worker (who runs a women’s shelter), teacher, and an actuary. Together they represent hundreds of years of Island residency and activism.

Former Governor Spitzer was gracious enough to begin the vetting process by scheduling interviews with each of the winning candidates and his Appointments office. However, these appointments were understandably cancelled during the recent transition to your administration. It is my hope that you will pick up where former Governor Spitzer left off and these interviews can quickly be re-scheduled so that the vetting process can go forward.

I believe that the recommendation vote was a stunning example of civic activism and democracy in action, and I hope that you share in that sentiment. I am very supportive of the process undertaken by the residents of Roosevelt Island, and I request that, if they are successfully vetted, you appoint the six winning candidates to the RIOC Board of Directors so that, as set out by statute, they may be confirmed by the State Senate as swiftly as possible.

I very much look forward to working with your administration, and I know that you will be a friend to Roosevelt Island’s thousands of residents. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Very truly yours,
Micah Z. Kellner
Assembly Member

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to comments made about Roosevelt Island Search and Rescue (RISAR) by Mr. Steve Shane, President of RIOC, that were published in the March 29 issue of *The WIRE*. As Chief of Operations of RISAR, I feel the need to clarify a few things that were mentioned in his column.

First and foremost, RISAR has never responded to any Public Safety calls. Calls from FDNY are monitored on a RISAR scanner, so we hear all calls before Roosevelt Island Public Safety. They respond when they see FDNY coming down Main Street. That is when they are summoned. I believe that all residents call 911 first, not Public Safety. That’s the rule of thumb. RISAR is not, and should never be, compared to or confused with Public Safety. RISAR was established to enhance the Emergency Medical Response times on Roosevelt Island. This was done primarily because the response time for an FDNY ambulance to calls on Roosevelt Island averages 15 to 25 minutes. Although we are considered part of Manhattan, all EMS [emergency medical] services are sent from Queens. When ambulances are not available in Queens, some are redirected from Brooklyn. This affects the quality of life for residents experiencing a medical emergency on Roosevelt Island.

It is not our function to interfere with the job of Public Safety. Our members have responded to calls for an intoxicated person or an injured person that were dispatched by FDNY/EMS, but we were there in case the person needed immediate medical attention. We have also: revived several residents who were victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest; rescued people from stalled elevators; responded to “lift jobs” (people who have fallen out of wheelchairs, etc.); and assisted residents in opening their cars when they had locked their keys inside.

Second, all members of RISAR are certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and comply with the standards set forth by the New York State Department of Health. The majority of RISAR’s members are New York State-certified Emergency Medical Technicians who work either in the private sector or for a 911 system. Other members are certified in basic first aid and professional rescuer CPR/AED (cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillation). Although at this point we are not recognized as a First Response Service or a Transporting Ambulance Service, RISAR is covered under the Good Samaritan Laws, as defined by the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, under Article 30, Section 3000-A (Emergency Medical Treatment) of the NYS Public Health Law. This section
See Letters, page 8

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 or submit 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 531 Main Street; allow extra time for typesetting. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief. We are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

Letters deadline for Apr. 26 issue: Tuesday, Apr. 22
After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.



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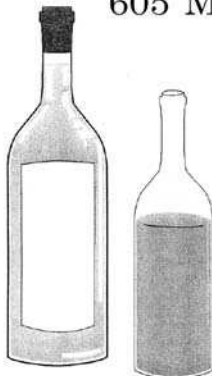
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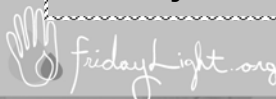
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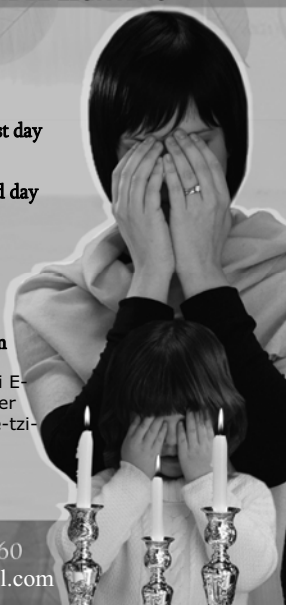
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In Memory of Yisroel Ben Schneir Zalman Halevi duchmansri@gmail.com

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- Friday, April 11 at 7:13 pm
- Friday, April 18 at 7:21 pm
- Saturday, April 19 - Eve of the 1st day of Passover after 8:23pm
- Sunday, April 20 - Eve of the 2nd day of Passover after 8:24 pm
- Friday, April 25 - Eve of the 7th day of Passover at 7:28 pm
- Saturday, April 26 - Eve of the 8th day of Passover after 8:31pm

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





Roosevelt Island Search And Rescue
546 Main Street – 7th Floor
Roosevelt Island, New York 10044
Office: 212-752-4003
E-Mail: RISAR10044@aol.com
WWW.RISAR10044.COM

April 2008

To the Residents of Roosevelt Island:

This is to introduce you to **Roosevelt Island Search And Rescue (RISAR)**. **RISAR** was incorporated in 2005 as a non-profit tax-exempt corporation to bring emergency medical care to the residents of Roosevelt Island. **RISAR Volunteers** are Emergency Medical Technicians, and are certified in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and basic first aid. **RISAR** is also certified by NYC and NYS as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

RISAR is conducting a fund drive in which we hope to raise the monies associated with providing a Volunteer Ambulance Corps to the Island. We are hoping that the generosity of the Roosevelt Island residents will help us achieve our goal. We are asking that residents make a “suggested” donation of \$30 a year to **RISAR**. This adds up to about 8 cents per day. Of course, you may donate any amount you wish and all donations are fully tax-deductible.

RISAR is also an authorized training agency for the **American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI)**. We provide monthly classes in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Automated External Defibrillation (AED), and basic first aid to the residents of Roosevelt Island. These classes are \$25 per person, per class. Residents who are members of various civic organizations of the Island are entitled to a further discount.

RISAR is also available to speak at your local civic association meetings and provide **FREE** blood pressure screenings at your functions. We are also available for standby at local sports and recreational events. Please notify us at least two (2) weeks before your scheduled event if you would like us to cover your event.

For more information on our class schedules, or to volunteer with **RISAR**, please call **212-752-4003**. To make a donation, please make checks payable to “Roosevelt Island Search And Rescue.” All donations can be mailed to **RISAR**, 546 Main Street, 7th Floor, Roosevelt Island, N.Y 10044.



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seeks **FEATURE WRITERS** and **REPORTERS** as contributors...

We also need volunteers for WIRE-Friday “stuffing” sessions in which the newspaper and advertising fliers are stuffed, counted, and boxed for Island-wide delivery. Lunch is provided.

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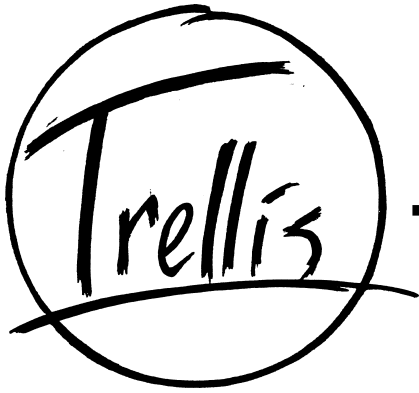
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Taxes

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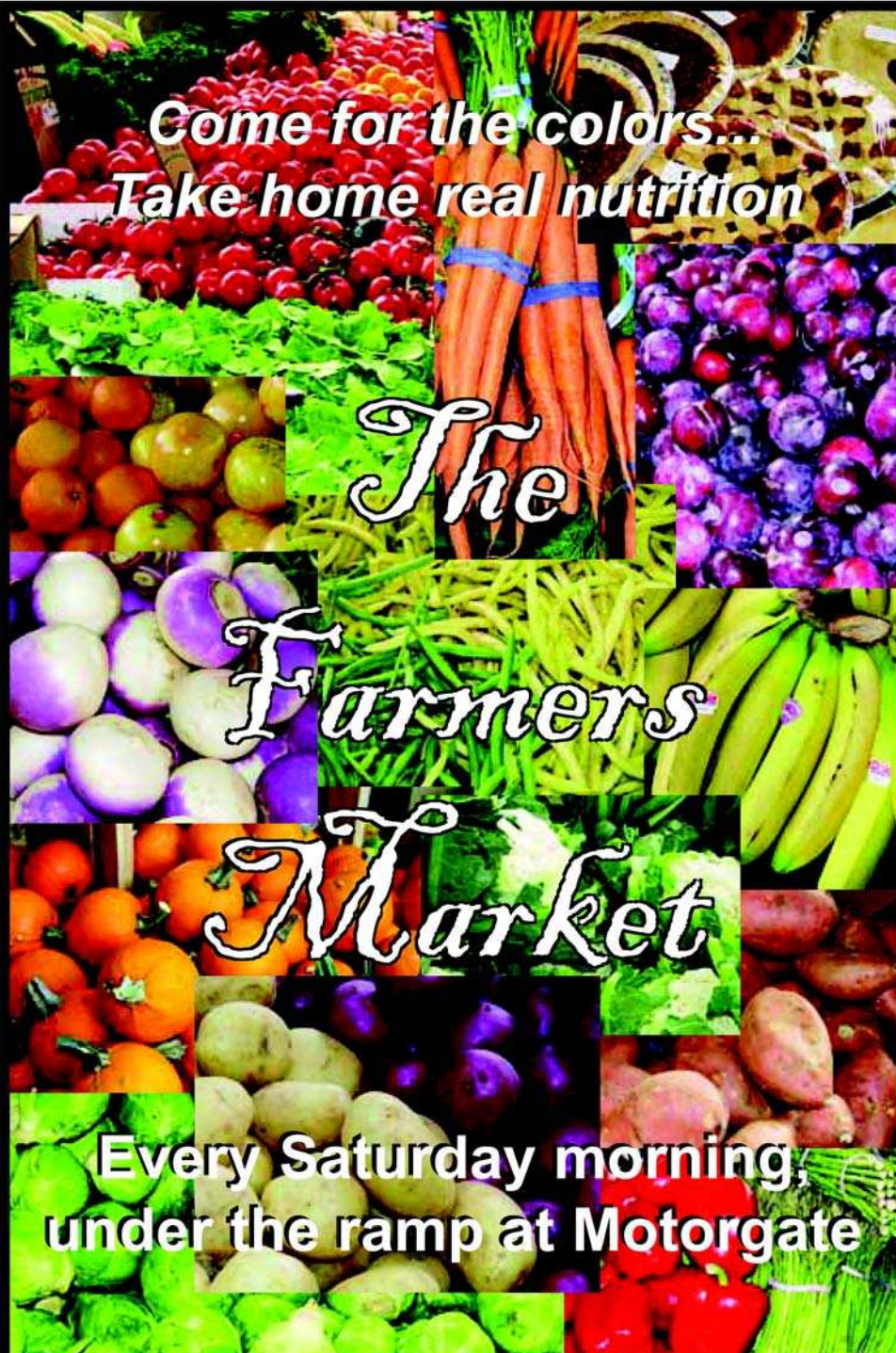
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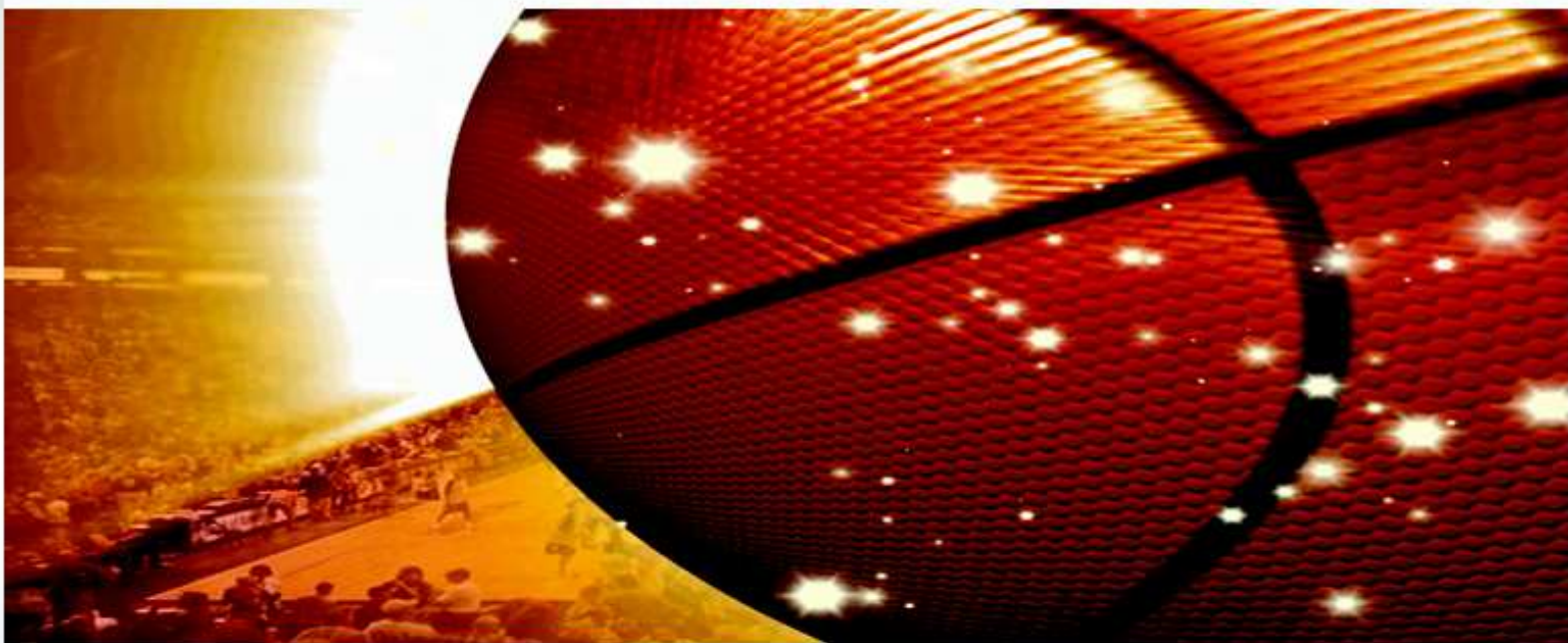
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Letters from page 3

of the law states that:
“...any person who voluntarily and without expectation of monetary compensation renders first aid or emergency treatment at the scene of an accident or other emergency outside a hospital, doctor’s office or any other place having proper and necessary medical equipment, to a person who is unconscious, ill, or injured, shall not be liable for damages for injuries alleged to have been sustained by such person or for damages for the death of such person alleged to have occurred by reason of an act or omission in the rendering of such emergency treatment unless it is established that such injuries were or such death was caused by gross negligence on the part of such person”.

Since RISAR members are Emergency Medical Technicians, and have the proper training and equipment to handle an emergency, they are not operating outside of their scope of training. Furthermore, Article 30, Section 3000-B of the Public Health Law defines automated defibrillators and public access defibrillation providers. RISAR is registered with both the NYS and NYC Departments of Health as an authorized Public Access Defibrillation organization, and does possess an automated external defibrillator (AED) while our members are on duty. This AED is vital to save the life of a victim of sudden cardiac arrest.

RISAR is also recognized as a non-profit corporation under the Consolidated Laws of New York State, and our charter for the organization is on file with the Secretary of the State of New York. RISAR is also a tax-exempt 501(c)3 corporation.

As of this time, RISAR is obtaining the necessary insurance for our organization, and is in the process of applying for a Certificate of Need for Roosevelt Island so that we may start a Volunteer Ambulance Corps for the residents of the Island. This service, and the other services that RISAR provides, will be free of charge. Once we have the necessary insurance, we hope that RIOC will permit us once again to respond to calls within the community. As Mr. Shane stated in his column, we can only respond to calls to which we are specifically summoned.

RISAR is available to respond to direct calls from Island residents. You can contact RISAR at **212-752-4003** or **718-650-2823** (or through our website at RISAR10044.com for non-emergencies). If RISAR has a crew available, we would be happy to re-

To the Editor:
This Island is named after FDR, and we should have a memorial dedicated to this great American. It would be appropriate on this Island, of all places, that he appear in a wheelchair. It should be an outdoor statue made larger than life, but not as large as the Statue of Liberty. (We do need to save a little money to spend on Main Street.) But like the Statue of Liberty, it should be visible and lighted so it would be seen from Manhattan and the surrounding area.

Since this site will be seen from the U.N., it would also be appropriate that Winston Churchill should be present in some fashion, showing the partnership of those two great men.

Having stairs leading up to it would add to the grandeur, but it will also need to be wheelchair-accessible.

Who are the people most likely to go to the far end of the Island? For the joggers and bicyclists, there should be a continuation of the pathway that wraps around the Island.

I like the idea of a great grass lawn that would still allow for the annual fireworks display. Since that one is a money-maker, I am sure that will make it to the final plan.

As a member of the current Community Garden, given the current level of people who want to join, and the Island’s growing population, let’s have an extended strip of Community Gardens as part of this area that would be dedicated to flowers. Allow individuals control of sections of ground, access to water, a small tool shed, and you get beauty at low cost. Call it the “Eleanor Roosevelt Victory Gardens.”

Many people enjoy barbequing on this island, and there should be a separate area for that as well.

Neal Weissman

Back issues?
Website NYC10044
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spond to your call. Whether it is just to check your blood pressure, or you are injured and need assistance until an FDNY ambulance arrives, RISAR is there and will continue to serve the needs of the community.

W. Michael Acevedo

To the Editor:
On the subject of Southpoint’s Roosevelt Memorial plans, clearly Roosevelt Island residents need professional help and fast before another of our open spaces is wrenched from us by the land-grab barons! Or will we just sit back in abject timidity, allowing our common sense to be shorted out, while the rapacious governmental agencies, as usual, subvert our wishes to their own?

The Kahn proposal is not yet written in stone, so let’s ask ourselves: If it goes through, will we (or anyone else) venture to Southpoint for more than just the initial couple of exploratory look-sees? If your answer is affirmative, stop reading. But if you would rather realize more (much more) from this valuable portion of land, how about asking Columbia University’s Urban Planning Department to help define what we want and to lend gravitas and expertise toward a compromise that would give something to everyone?

Think: On that small section of our Island world, what would actually provide the most for the most people? Let’s be realists. We don’t have the expanse of Washington, D.C. A vibrantly active area – not one that is three-quarters passive – would better suit us and our needs, exciting our (and “foreign”) interest far more than would a static monument. Although minuscule, Southpoint should be considered extremely important – so much so that we should be willing to expend meaningful energy in mounting a fight toward bending the projected program. Or do we simply not care?

There was a bandshell in the prehistoric plans for this southernmost acreage. It appears forgotten. And how about the future of our revenue-producing July fireworks? And the wildly popular outdoor summer movies? To be scrapped? The community needs these morale-boosting activities, but it doesn’t vitally need this formal paeon to the Roosevelts. *They must be remembered in any plan – just not to that extent!* They would be the first to insist that such open space be used for the good of the majority of people, with their own personal remembrance modest, perhaps a medium-sized piece of polished and engraved serpentine granite, flanked by stately low-maintenance evergreens, with a nearby fountain melodiously bubbling. But a coldly elegant, otherwise mostly unusable monolith, taking up all the fantastically valuable land down there, would serve mostly as a great view for the U.N. and as an over-prideful cachet for New York! The U.N. has its own park and so does the city – Central Park.

As for the world architectural community being “wildly enthusiastic,” to them we should say, *Build your extravaganzas on land not as short and slender as on Roosevelt Island. We simply have not enough space for such urban luxury. Would that we did!*

When thinking of that mosquito-less, channel-confluent area with yum views of the city, imagine a large, graceful shell rising above a bandstand, sitting on a securely-tethered barge in the east channel (saving land space). The orchestra inside is playing classical and pops. Bucolic-starved neighboring City-dwellers and locals (much too tightly urbanized and steeped in cement) sit enraptured on permanent, all-weather, stepped-up (as in theaters), numbered swivel seats. A large screen slides electronically from the side of the bandshell to wrap around its front opening. Weekly movies! A 90-degree swivel and everyone has the best, most comfortable site in the City of

WIRE Seeking Webmaster

The Main Street WIRE is seeking a Webmaster for **Website NYC10044**, nyc10044.com. This is an unpaid volunteer position requiring appropriate software and hardware, and a knowledge of how to compose web pages, prepare and format photographs, create features, and do general maintenance on an existing index of hundreds of WIRE issues. Opportunities for creative development doing a task that serves the community. Estimate 2-5 hours every two weeks, but with possibilities for more if your schedule permits.
Call Dick Lutz at **212-826-9056**.

New York from which to watch fireworks! South to the very tip on the west channel rises Meditation Steps II where one can sit to have dinner, a snack, or just enjoy the view. Pan a bit to the north of the seating section. Self-cleaning public toilets (as are going up in Manhattan) hide behind a refreshment building straight out of an Impressionist painting: Striped awning in front, flags on top, manned each season by Island youth – another source of income, which collectively could pay for the entire class-act Disney-like works. Quickly-erected garden-party tents, stored in the refreshment center, handle short showers. North of the refreshment building are some of the already-voted-for gardens – handsome, lighted on occasion, backdrop or envelope for the respectful granite edifice, perhaps to be known as the Roosevelt Memorial Gardens. Peace, strolling or sitting. A fast-moving thunderstorm having passed earlier, the air smells heavenly sweet and fresh, blown by twilight summer breezes, the band plays a rhapsodic Gershwin, and I... *Is that mustard on my new white silk shirt?*

After our proposal has been completed, speed a necessity, we need an Island-wide referendum, perhaps via coupons in *The WIRE*. RIRA could then transmit our aspirations and vote totals to Governor Paterson with a request for his help.

We are, *are we not*, a small town in a country dedicated to democracy? Dedicated to what local residents want, need, and (in our case) incredibly have actually already voted on! Citizens in all towns and cities across America have the privilege, *do they not*, of voting into practice what they feel is best for them. But when in our history have we *ever* been listened to – when have our views, wants, and even professionally drawn-up plans *ever* been taken seriously and adopted? When have we *ever* not been a political football, puppets of the State? Is it time? *Is it ever!* It is no time for timidity. It is time to reject such a grand but limited plan for such a small but valuable parcel of property! We should seize the day, not accepting supinely what the pols, the City/State agencies, the U.N., and “world architects” smugly think we should have! What we logically need to develop at Southpoint is a multi- (not single-) tasking area, giving joy not just to ourselves and future Roosevelt Islanders, but also to our open-space-hungry neighbors.

Funding is something we, in fact, can always get – land is not.

Shakespeare in the Park (*Southpoint* Park), anyone?
Barbara Potts

RIRA Column from page 2

to the plan designed by Louis Kahn 35 years ago, so querying us was moot.

RIRA is asking the question now. Unless you, the residents of Roosevelt Island, respond in numbers sufficient to convince even the skeptics that they have heard our voice, then this will be another exercise in futility. I’ve heard accusations that the same cast of characters always appears when questions regarding the Kahn plan are raised, and this is true. Who else is likely to show up? It’s a sobering thought that less than half of the American electorate bothers to vote for President. And yet, the vote is still valid, and the lesson there is contained in one of my favorite quotes: “Decisions are made by those who bother to show up.”

I’ve expressed my opinion on the Kahn plan many times and now it’s your turn. Islanders need to be on the record as to our opinions, just as we were 10 years ago when 92% of residents asked for an elected RIOC Board of Directors when responding to a RIRA referendum question. The result was binding on no one, but the yearning for a voice at the table has been on record ever since. My sole reason for pursuing this enterprise is to solicit your opinions and, in

writing the survey, I’ve turned to many people with many points of view to help me draft a fair and balanced document as my own inclinations are clearly biased. I hope we’ve accomplished that. However, the exercise will be pointless without your participation in the polling. Won’t you stand up and be counted?

Transportation

I would like to share with you a portion of my President’s Report, submitted to the RIRA Common Council at last week’s meeting: Yesterday, I met with Congressmember Carolyn Maloney’s Chief of Staff, Minna Elias, and Carolyn’s Deputy Chief of Staff, Brice Peyre, to discuss some of the transportation issues that we face. As the residential development of the Island continues, some long-term planning for both the on-Island and the commuting transportation problems needs to be addressed, and addressed now before the crunch turns into a crisis. While I’ve heard many statements of the problem (increased Queens subway ridership is impacting the Roosevelt Island station and so on), I have yet to hear much discussion of solutions.

Rep. Maloney’s people are arranging a

meeting with the MTA to discuss our transportation issues, and I expect to be included. [Councilmember] Frank Farance has been RIRA’s voice on many transportation issues, and I’ve asked him to share his material with Brice and Minna. The two staffers mentioned a Hunter College team of transportation experts who have offered their services here and I mentioned the possibility of a Columbia University team, which [Councilmember] Jon Kalkin brought to my attention, making a similar free-of-charge offer. Our Assemblymember, Micah Kellner, has written to New York Transit President Howard Roberts, limning a variety of our commuting issues. FYI, Roberts will host a Transit Riders Council meeting from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16, at Two Broadway, and this is an excellent forum in which to bring your bus and subway issues. When I spoke to then-president Larry Reuter at a similar meeting in 2002, it led directly to the inclusion of the MetroCard system on our Tram two years later.

New Addition to Island Arts

The Rosemarie & Robin Russell Family Concert Series on Roosevelt Island (hereafter known as the R&R Concerts) inaugurated

its fledgling project with a string-trio performance to a standing-room-only audience. Ralph Allen, Junah Chung, and Iris Jortner presented works by Mozart, Kodály, and Beethoven. Did you know that each concert will be preceded by Public Outreach Performances at Island hospitals and community centers? RIRA was able to provide seed money for the first concerts through a City Council award made possible by City Councilmember Jessica Lappin. We intend to support R&R Concerts with continued funding through grants and awards that RIRA, as an Island organization and 501(c)4 corporation, is able to procure or endorse.

My hope is that R&R Concerts will become a valued tradition here, and that these professional concerts will attract audiences from well beyond our Island’s shores. I’ve always been a solo performer on guitar and so, the ability of three instruments, playing disparate parts, to create a unified piece of music is utterly magical to me. A symphony orchestra, on the other hand, is a bloody miracle! The next offering is on May 17, is free of charge, and is likely to be as charming and well received as the first. Do yourself a favor and drop on by.

What Are They Doing Over There? They’re Creating a New Park



What was a heliport almost a decade ago was officially dedicated as Manhattan’s newest park on Wednesday, answering questions about what’s been happening under the path of the Tramway. The park (left) runs north from the art piece that’s almost directly under the Tram cables and becomes a segment in a pedestrian path and bikeway that is eventually to circle the borough. City Councilmember Jessica Lappin was on hand; the park is in her Council district (along with Roosevelt Island) and she had allocated \$2.8 million for its first phase. Lappin has also been instrumental in providing New York City funding for Phase I of Roosevelt Island’s Southpoint Park.



Southpoint from page 1

original plan called for the City and State each to contribute a couple of million dollars to construction that, probably in the early ’70s, was the whole cost.

“Here we are 35 years later and the cost has escalated considerably, but the plan was always to do exactly that and, at the time, the agreement provided that the State Department of Parks would take over and police it as a State Park, maintain it... and it just never happened.”

It has now fallen to FERI to raise the bulk of the funding needed for the memorial.

As for the possibilities of scuttling the late Louis Kahn’s design, Shane says it’s not likely to happen, at least in part because some of the FERI fundraising has been premised on building it as Kahn designed it. But there is the further complication that the late architect is no longer around to consider changes. “The FDR memorial comes with the Kahn plan, modernized to deal with the changes in building codes and handicapped access and that sort of thing,” Shane said. “Yes, they can make some minor modifications, but the concept... has to remain the same.”

Shane says that while the precise letter of the City-State agreement of 35 years ago has not been met, that’s not a decisive factor in whether the Kahn design is built. “I don’t think one should get hung up on the absolute niceties or legal enforceability of that agreement. Its intent was clear, and the parties, to this day, are willing to acknowledge that it existed and that it has validity in spirit. Whether or not

they choose to execute it becomes a political matter.”

As Shane sees it, there are essentially two conditions that have to be met for the Kahn design to be built. One is the money. The other is timing.

On the funding front, both City Councilmember Jessica Lappin and Assemblymember Micah Kellner told *The WIRE* last week that, while they have joined with other politicians in backing the project, they see the State and City possibly putting in the last \$5 million to \$10 million, but they look to FERI to find most of the money necessary.

But former Ambassador William vanden Heuvel, who served FDR in England and heads FERI, said he is optimistic about raising the threshold amount that will bring State and City funding into the project. While not specific about FERI’s sources of support, he has told Shane, and he told *The WIRE*, that “about \$10 million” is pledged. That leaves as much as \$30 million of the \$40 million yet to be secured.

But there is the timing factor, too – a deadline of which Shane has spoken several times. It has to do with the start of construction on Phase I of Southpoint Park, to a design RIOC commissioned from the Trust for Public Land (TPL). “What we are going to be creating is a practical difficulty, a near impossibility, in terms of constructing anything on the southernmost point by doing the northern piece of the park – the piece that extends from the southern end of

[Goldwater] hospital down to the southern edge of the ruin. That is the real dealdine as far as we’re concerned, because in the present mode there is no way to build the FDR Memorial without construction access overland. Our experience is that gaining permission from the Coast Guard and the Army Corps of Engineers and all the rest of that stuff, to deliver by water, is nearly impossible.” Shane went on to say that, were the President of the United States to command it, barriers would somehow fall. “You could build everything from a skyhook, bring it in by helicopter or barge, but the economic impact would make the cost rise even further. If you can’t truck stuff in, you’re increasing your degree of difficulty and your cost by a significant number.”

Opponents of the Kahn design (though not of an FDR memorial), including Residents Association President Matthew Katz, have cited the fact that funds to be paid under the original agreement were not paid as a possible “out” for the RIOC Board if it were to vote against construction of the Kahn design. But Shane says RIOC and its Board would merely be the implementers of an overriding State intent. “The public policy decision is going to be made at the State level,” he said, “the same way as it’s going to be made at the City level in the executive chamber, not in the Department of Parks. This is a major commitment and it’s going to be made by the major players and those of us who are down the line may well be called upon to execute that decision. But the decision itself is going to be made on high.”

In short, Shane’s analysis is that the Four Freedoms Park project has reached the point where all the aesthetic decisions have been made, and whether the FDR Memorial

becomes a reality is a matter of money, timing, and political will.

Will the survey of Roosevelt Islanders have any influence? “I don’t know that there is *no* influence by the self-designated aesthetes on the Island,” Shane said. “Their view has been conveyed to the designers – the people in ultimate control of the aesthetic, and they’ve listened and to some extent they’ve softened their design. [The designers have] heard them and made it clear that they understand the view lines and that the trees should be trimmed underneath so you can see out. They’ve discussed softening the edges in some way. And they’re sure to make it handicapped-accessible... But in all due deference to the maybe 40 or 50 people who are passionate on the subject on the Island, they are not in a sufficient

position in terms of their background, their education, their experience, to really have an educated view on what ultimately will be produced.”

Shane portrays his own view of the aesthetics is neutral. “It’s one of those artistic things that I just don’t have an opinion about. I think you have to be educated before you can stand up and declaim on the subject, because it’s one of these projects that is here for the ages – for a matter of perpetuity, and that’s why you have people who are trained in the appropriate arts to do works that are going to be around for a long time.”

But as Shane explained it, the key factors in whether the Kahn design becomes a reality down at Southpoint are still money, timing, and perhaps, ultimately, the political will “on high.”

First R&R Concert Is SRO



Ralph Allen, Iris Jortner, and Junah Chung performed last Saturday in the first concert in the Rosemarie and Robin Russell (R&R) series to a standing-room-only crowd. Additional concerts are planned with the next, also chamber music, to take place on Saturday, May 17.

Briefly...

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Roberta Hershey A retired telecommunications worker for AT&T and a 27-year Island resident, she's on the Board of The Main Street Theater and Dance Alliance and takes tap-dancing lessons on the side. *"One Friday morning in the fall of 2000, a neighbor asked if I would join her to 'stuff' The WIRE." Thinking it was a one-time kind of event, I agreed to help out. I'm still there. Not only have I made a new group of friends at The WIRE, I just enjoy pitching in with others to get a good job done. And when The WIRE appears at my doorstep, I can catch up on all the Island news. I'm proud to have been a part of the process."*

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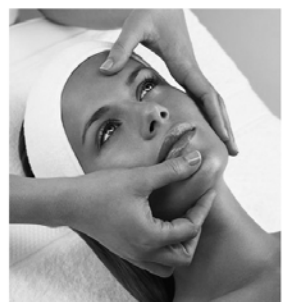
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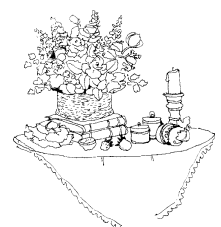
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