

Next issue
in 5 weeks:
Sat., August 29

The Main Street **WIRE**™

29th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

The First Children of "The Rock," Now Adults, Gather in Mass Reunion



That's what they called it back then – "The Rock." Late last month, these and over 100 more of the island's "original" kids gathered at Southpoint Park.

by Jennifer Dunning

They grew up on Roosevelt Island, the children of pioneering parents who decided, in the mid-1970's, to take a chance on an unfinished, visionary, planned community on a sliver of land in the East River that had once been home to the inconvenient poor and sick, warehoused out of sight from the glittering metropolis beyond. The children went to school in the modern equivalent of the one-room schoolhouse. As toddlers, they straggled alongside their parents and siblings up Main Street in colorful parades that marked such events in the community's life as Halloween and the start of the Little League baseball season.

They graduated to ice-skating on improvised rinks, playing ball on makeshift fields, and growing carrots on land cleared for gardens. By their teens, they were more than a little bored with it all. Many were forbidden to go into Manhattan or Queens without permission. Left to their own devices, they were roving party groups and word-of-mouth audiences for homegrown band concerts at Motorgate. They mooned passing Circle Line boats and swam in the East River at the south end of the island with a makeshift Huckleberry Finn raft to cling to.

On June 27, they returned – these first-generation island children, many of them out of touch for a good two decades, to remember and celebrate life on "The Rock" in all its prickly glory.

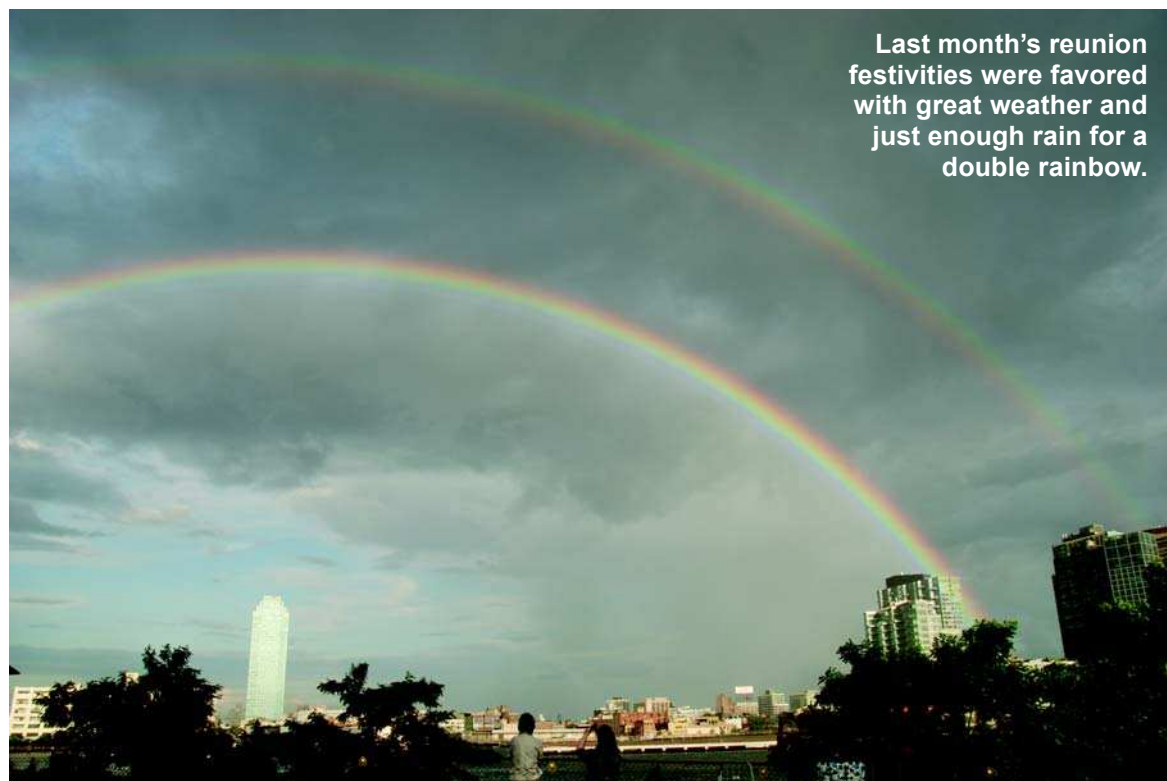
There was never anything like Roosevelt Island,

most agreed, and quite a few stayed to raise families of their own despite the many ways the place had changed in more recent years. "Growing up on the island, at least in the beginning, was like following a crazy old recipe from a great aunt: a mixture of *Lord of the Flies*, kibbutz living, a dollop of love, and a sprinkling of magic," Lindsey Roth-Rosen recalls. "Although the ingredients were strange, we had an absurd amount of blind faith and, when all was said and done, the dish was delicious."

Planning began a year ago for the event, *The Rock Reunion Picnic*, organized by Dana Doyle, Paula Spiaggia Heist, and Olya Turcihin Stern. Dana and Paula had been close childhood friends. "Together with our families and a few Roosevelt Island friends, we have had an annual picnic on Rivercross Lawn/Meditation Steps for the past few years," Dana writes in an informal account. "We had always thought it would be nice to invite more people that we grew up with and to create somewhat of a reunion. Once we discovered Facebook, I decided that this might be the way to locate more people. Little did we know that the response would be so incredible. Via Facebook and word of mouth, the reunion grew to over 200 people (plus spouses and children). We were initially going to hold the reunion on Rivercross Lawn/Meditation Steps, which was a staple meeting spot for us during our teen years. But as the RSVPs multiplied, we realized that this event was too big to hold on such a small

See **Reunion**, page 8

Additional interviewing
by Jim Baehler.
Transcripts
by Sherie Helstien.



Last month's reunion festivities were favored with great weather and just enough rain for a double rainbow.

Town Meeting on Public Safety Goes Smoothly

by Dick Lutz

A year and a half into his service as Roosevelt Island's Public Safety Director, Keith Guerra is still struggling with what he considers the most difficult part of the assignment – the public's perception of his Public Safety Department.

That's something he can't control directly, so his multifaceted efforts have centered on services like free bike helmets for kids (almost 250 given away), "summits" for parents about youth problems and gangs, and a RIRA-sponsored session Wednesday night in which he handled a series of questions from residents, after giving a presentation on the law under which

See **Public Safety**, page 10



Disorderly Conduct Charges Dismissed in Adib Mansour Arrest

Disorderly conduct charges against Island House resident Adib Mansour were dismissed Wednesday morning. He had been charged after a May 30 incident on Capobianco Field, reported in *The WIRE* June 13 (nyc10044.com/wire/wire2919.html).

See **Mansour**, page 13

Kellner Plans Body to Receive Complaints Against PSD Officers

Assemblymember Micah Kellner is working on legislation to provide a form of Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) for the Public Safety Department (PSD) and similar police forces.

"Elected officials would appoint members to a CCRB," Kellner told *The WIRE*. "It would have an executive director and staff, and would review citizen complaints."

New York City has a CCRB that considers complaints against city police, as well as an Internal Affairs unit that can look into allegations of police misconduct. On Roosevelt Island itself, the route of appeal for a resident who feels s/he has been dealt with improperly by PSD, is RIOC itself, though RIOC President Shane says PSD is subject to the city's CCRB.

On Thursday, Kellner told *The WIRE* that he will also ask for an audit of Public Safety by the state Department of Investigations and the state controller.

"We need an independent body to investigate complaints," Kellner said, "not just the president of RIOC and the Public Safety chief, who have a vested interest in saying everything was done by the book."

Kellner said his staff is researching the CCRB legislation, and he hopes to have a draft of a bill ready for January introduction and "to get it done in the next legislative session."

The state has officers with police powers in the Department of Environmental Conservation, the MTA (commuter trains), and other agencies.

Siblings Charged, One in Felony, After Traffic Stop & Ruckus

A 17-year-old Roosevelt Islander, Herns Ferdinand, has been charged with felony assault on a police officer in an incident that began when his sister was stopped on Main Street for using a cell phone while driving. The sister, Kimberly Ferdinand, has been charged with multiple misdemeanors.

The incident began Tuesday night, July 14, shortly after 9:00 p.m. Kimberly says she dropped her mother off at M&D Deli, turned at Blackwell House, and was flagged down by Public Safety Officer Nicholas Sach while chatting with a friend in Florida. Shortly after the stop, Herns happened along, returning from the Blackwell basketball courts with a

See **Siblings**, page 13

Public Safety Officers Rescue a Goldwater Patient from the River

Public Safety Officers rescued a Coler-Goldwater patient late in June. Public Safety Director Keith Guerra described the incident this way:

"On Saturday, June 27, a Goldwater Hospital patient jumped off the dock into the East River. Sgt. Raul Hernandez led the rescue effort by the Public Safety Department. Det. John Malone lowered him onto the rocks because they couldn't see the jumper. Apparently, he was trapped under the dock. The officers were able to throw a life ring to him and attempted to pull him to safety. He was a bit incapacitated and could not be pulled out, so Officer David Vernet maintained control of the line while Sgt. Ramon Azular held onto Sgt. Hernandez. They maintained control of [the patient] until members from the NYPD and FDNY could respond to complete the save."

"All in all, it was a great job by the Public Safety Officers, who aided the other agencies in the rescue. I received many calls complimenting the job the officers performed. I'm very proud of them for putting themselves in harm's way to rescue the hospital patient."

The WIRE Problem

Just how much of a problem is *The Main Street WIRE*? “You’re promoting an adversarial relationship between the community and RIOC and Public Safety... You’re doing a dis-service to this community.” Those are the words of RIOC President Steve Shane who, in his conference room in a Monday meeting that included Public Safety Director Keith Guerra, also said, “I’m telling you that, in my view, your reports are counterproductive. What you’re doing in this community is promoting a sense of disaffection between the people in the community and the people who are here to serve them, and if it is your intention to try and demonstrate that Public Safety is an abusive, aggressive, occupying force here, then we have a real problem.”

Indeed we would. But the “occupying force” language was heard Wednesday night from Assebllymember Micah Kellner, who used it in describing the attitude toward the Public Safety Department of some in the Roosevelt Island community; until this paragraph, it has never appeared in *The WIRE*, to our knowledge.

All this seems to have grown from two recent incidents: First, this newspaper’s thorough reporting of the May 30 arrest of Adib Mansour, who had gone to a ballfield to take pictures of Public Safety clearing it of Little Leaguers so that a duly permitted off-Island group could take over the field. He was handcuffed when an officer felt he wasn’t leaving the field fast enough, though many observers think the camera is what caught the attention of the arresting officer. On Monday, asked about his reaction to that reporting, Shane said, “You blew it up all out of proportion.”

We don’t think so. When a camera seems to be the fuse that leads to an explosion of the kind that happened May 30, journalists are concerned. Officially, it wasn’t – of course, because there’s no crime in taking pictures. But Mansour, who had been interviewed a month earlier about playing field conflicts, knew *The WIRE* might have an interest in the pictures he was taking, and that’s why he went to Capobianco Field – well after the time that the officer involved had started pulling out handcuffs and threatening arrests. Mansour simply had the misfortune of being the last in a group of people to cross the third-base foul line in leaving the field. (On Wednesday, a judge dismissed the case for “vagueness” and lack of substantiating information, according to Mansour’s lawyer.)

Second, last week and on Monday, *The WIRE* was asking tough questions about a traffic stop that escalated into a felony charge (see page 1). That’s what we do: We ask tough questions, especially of authority. Because the questions were based, in part, on the claims of the teenagers arrested, they triggered the *bias* alarm in Shane and Guerra. But tough questions are a reporter’s responsibility, and answering them directly is the responsibility of the political structure – including the RIOC and PSD administrations.

A hostile crowd had gathered at the stopped vehicle on July 14. “When this car was stopped, a hostile crowd gathered. You are part of the problem,” said Shane.

We doubt that those in the group that surrounded the arrestee’s car read *The WIRE* regularly, though we wish they would. Readers or not, we doubt that anything we’ve ever printed would incite them to surround a vehicle and chant *Leave them alone!* at arresting officers.

Shane’s response to this doubt was, “I find your attitude to be really over the top.”

He added, “Your report [on the traffic stop incident] should be that there were two individuals who were arrested...” Asked if he objected to *The WIRE* investigating the matter, he responded, “Yes, because that’s not your job. You’re a reporter, not an investigator.” He added his belief that reporters don’t report on such matters “until the situation is resolved.”

It’s not unusual for elected or appointed officials to wish that reporters would stand down until an official, “resolved” version is ready for print, or to wish fervently that reporters would just accept officialdom’s rendering. But the function of the Fourth Estate in our society includes a watchdog function, and a responsible news organization cannot shrink from that responsibility. Official versions of things aren’t always forthright in every respect, and it helps for officialdom – *and the community* – to know that somebody else is looking, too.

The WIRE will continue to ask probing questions. And while a traffic stop that escalates into a felony charge isn’t Watergate or shaky evidence of WMDs, in a community like Roosevelt Island, some things that government does through those empowered to use pepper spray and nightsticks – some of those things done under authority of government – sometimes, those things deserve a hard look by an independent eye.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

The red buses we have here all have signs saying that seats are reserved for seniors and disabled persons. Why doesn’t the tram also have such signs? Children and young adults often grab the seats first, and seniors are denied seating.

E. Roy Rich

To the Editor:

On June 25, the RIOC Board of Directors approved construction of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park. We want to thank everyone involved in the last three years who enabled us to reach this point. In particular, we are grateful to the members of the RIOC Board for patience, the RIOC staff for perseverance, the island community for support and criticism, our elected officials for determined resolution, and the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association for the opportunity to work with them to enrich the story of FDR.

All things worth doing take time, and sometimes events conspire to delay a project until the moment is ripe. Certainly, this is an extraordinary time to commemorate President Roosevelt and his enduring legacy.

The Roosevelt Institute looks forward to its continued work with the Corporation as well as its work with the community to assure that the story of Roosevelt’s disability, perhaps along with the unique history of Roosevelt Island, will be told appropriately, so future generations will understand and appreciate our country’s continuing commitment to our disabled citizens.

As I stated during the June 25 board meeting, the \$100,000 contribution from Paul Newman (Newman’s Own Foundation) will be dedicated to this purpose. Our executive director, Gina Pollara, has already reached out to the disabled community and other interested parties to work toward a consensus as to the form the presentation will take.

William J. vanden Heuvel
Chair, FDR Four Freedoms Park

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

Several years ago, we awoke one day to see the stop signs missing from the crosswalk at the bus stop in front of Gristede’s. In their place was a sign, reading “State Law: Slow for [cartoon of a pedestrian].” In the years since, I have tried to wrap my mind around the possible rationale for this. I have concluded that there are mysteries we lowly Island residents cannot possibly comprehend – decisions about our lives, made by executive types far wiser than we.

I constantly fear that someone, likely a child, is simply going to *die* in this crosswalk, and the last thing they will ever see is a sign saying “Fill Your Prescriptions Here.”

Now, I pick up *The WIRE* and read where Sherie Helstein witnessed an SUV jamming through the intersection. Clearly, it could have hit her, or a child... or anybody. I, too, have walked through there and had to stop short as some oblivious driver barreled through. Sherie’s suggestion that RIOC spend the money to hire some kind of crossing guard will probably never see fruition, frankly... even if it did, I doubt that guard will be there at 2:00 a.m., when various Happy People jam through that same intersection, unrestricted by the modest suggestion on the sign about maybe slowing down, because of the nice state law.

Again, pardon my naïvete if there’s some compelling reason why RIOC cannot just *put the stop signs back where they were for decades*.

Taking into account my longtime residency in a building in front of this crosswalk, I offer my services, as an expert witness, to the family who is destined to file the first wrongful death suit. Because really, why should even a good driver not realize a more compelling need to come to a full stop there, if there are no signs telling him or her that?

Look, save someone’s life, please? Just *put the stop signs back*, please, and get this problem *solved*. Thank you.

Russ DiBello

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

We are writing to thank you for the generous gift of sponsoring “The Rock” Reunion Picnic at Southpoint Park. If it were not for you, the option of Southpoint Park would not have been a reality. We thank you for your perfect suggestion of holding this event at this exquisite site surrounded by water, with views of Manhattan and Queens. This gathering of the original teenagers who moved to Roosevelt Island between 1975 and 1985 was such an important event in all of our lives.

Michael Smith, the Parks and Recreation Manager, was pivotal in making this happen. We are grateful to him for all the time and effort he spent on creating an atmosphere that was both beautiful and enjoyable. He made sure that the park itself was ready for our event, was always available to us for any questions or concerns, and, with your help, offered us the amenities that made everyone feel so comfortable.

The RIOC staff, including Public Safety and the maintenance crews, was not only incredibly helpful, but also instrumental in making us feel welcome and recognized as an important part of Roosevelt Island history. The tents that RIOC provided not only sheltered us from the sun, but also from the little bit of rain that eventually created a double rainbow. This rainbow was such a symbol of Roosevelt Island unity and uniqueness.

We speak for all the reunion attendees when we say that we will never forget the feelings we all experienced that day on the tip of Roosevelt Island. Although we were all looking back on shared memories, it was also wonderful to experience Roosevelt Island in its present state, and to look forward to the future of our special little island.

Dana Doyle
Olya Turcihin

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*. Submit letters by e-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com or on a disk 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 **212-826-9056** 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.

To the Editor:

For the 31 years I have lived here, the St. Frances Cabrini Parish has always had rent-free space for use as a thrift shop.

This shop serves an important purpose by recycling articles, selling necessities at low cost, and supporting the parish activities.

The last few years. the shop has been going downhill. It is a sorry site, with clutter, dirty windows, and a general dirty appearance and odor. As the Eastwood (Roosevelt Landings) public lobby areas are cleaned and refurbished, the thrift store stands out for its messiness.

There are dozens of thrift shops in Manhattan and Queens that are properly managed (as ours once was, by Sr. Regina Palamara).

The parish has a social responsibility to maintain a clean and attractive store, in exchange for not paying for rent or utilities. It is time to take this responsibility seriously.

Gallery RIVAA and Orphans International maintain attractive storefronts, and they are not-for-profits. It is time for the thrift shop to emulate them.

Judith Berdy

To the Editor:

I am distressed to see that Urban American has paved a portion of the 576 courtyard (adjacent to the Child School gym building) that contains a tall, healthy tree. The paving extends from wall to wall in this area, leaving no space for rainwater to reach the roots of the tree. The small unpaved area around the trunk of the tree is useless for this purpose.

Unless significant areas of paving are removed, allowing rainwater to reach the roots of the tree, it will die very quickly, and Urban American will have the challenge of cutting down a several-stories-high, hitherto healthy tree that must surely please the tenants whose apartments look out on its greenery.

Perhaps this newly created parking area can be modified in time to save a flourishing tree?

Ann Hollowell

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

I am writing this letter to express my special gratitude to RIOC, your leadership, and the Public Safety officers who work to make this island a safer and better place.

As you know, I am running a nail salon on Main Street. There have been incidents in the past when, had a Public Safety officer not been passing by to notice a broken window in my storefront or a leaking pipe, my business and livelihood could have been seriously hurt. I recall their dedication to service as they stood watch at the front doors of my salon until the necessary measures had been taken to fix the respective situations.

When I have elderly customers who have trouble walking home alone, I call Public Safety, and the officers arrive promptly and ready to assist. I have yet to find any other community in New York City where the residents receive this kind of personal service.

Summer evenings on a bench with a friend near the river are spent peacefully and in security, because the Public Safety patrol car can often be seen passing by.

I am very proud to live on Roosevelt Island, where every time See **Letters**, page 14

Letters deadline for Aug. 29 issue: Tuesday, Aug. 25

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Roosevelt L'Ve event, *Jones Street Station* with Diane Birch, **today (Sat Jul 25)** (American music), 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

Bearded Bards Folksing, **today (Sat Jul 25)**, 5pm, Library. Islanders Howie Leifer, Chris Fuller, Matthew Katz. Free.



— Continuing —

Open Swim Hours, Sat 12-3pm & 4-7pm, Mon-Fri 6-11am, Tue & Thu 6-9pm, Sportspark. Adults \$5, children \$3, seniors & infants free.

Holocaust – Never Forget, Never Again, a memorial exhibition of hammered lead schulpures by Dana Baldwin Naumann, continuing through Aug 7, Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 6-9pm, **Wed & Fri** 11am-5pm.

Living Library program starts (and runs Mon-Wed-Fri through August 31), **Mon Jun 29**, 2-5:30pm, schoolyard at PS/IS 217 and gardens at both north and south campuses of Coler-Goldwater. Info: alivinglibrary.org. Limit of 25 students/day unless accompanied by an adult. Wear hat, bring water, wear sunscreen.

Light jazz at Trellis, Thu-Sat, 6-10pm, through the summer – Thu rain (indoors) or shine (outdoors); Fri-Sat outdoors only, weather permitting.

Day Nursery Registration continues. Information: **212-593-0750**.

Knitting for Adults, Tue noon, Library.

Crafts for Children (ages 4-12), Tue 3:30pm, Library.

Poetry Hour (adults), last Tue of month, 6pm, Library.

Picture Book Hour (age 4 and under), Wed 11am, Library.

Book Bingo (ages 5-12), Thu 4:00pm, Library.

— Coming Week & Next Weekend —



Island pianist Roy Eaton plays at Bryant Park, **Mon Jul 27 thru Fri Jul 31**, 12:15-1:45 (except Thu 2:15-3:45pm), 6th Av at 42nd St, Manhattan

Summer Movie, Kung Fu Panda, at Firefighters Field, **Mon Jul 27**, 8:45pm, following pre-sunset entertainment. Free, sponsored by RIOC.

(Rain date Sat Aug 1.)

Jazzmobile with Lily White, **Thu Jul 30**, 7pm Good Shepherd Plaza. Host: Urban American.

Open-Mike Performance by Islander Irene Clark, **Fri Jul 31**, 6:30pm, Nola Studios, 250 W 54th St., Manhattan.

Roosevelt L'Ve event, *The Flanks* (underground country music) with *Hawke & Owl* (alternative bluegrass/rock/Americana), **Sat Aug 1**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

— Future Weeks —

Roosevelt L'Ve event, *Wakey! Wakey!* (music), **Sat Aug 8**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

Summer Movie, Forrest Gump, at Firefighters Field, **Sat Aug 8**, 8:05pm, following pre-sunset entertainment. Free, sponsored by RIOC. (Rain date Sat Aug 15.)

Opening reception for Real People Realizing Potential exhibit at Gallery RIVAA, in cooperation with the Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State, **Thu Aug 13**, 7-9pm. Show runs through Sep 7. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 6-9pm, **Wed & Fri** 11am-5pm.

Roosevelt L'Ve event, *Dance L'Ve / Hip Hop*, **Sat Aug 15**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

Summer Movie, Hairspray, at Firefighters Field, **Mon Aug 17**, 8:05pm, following pre-sunset entertainment. Free, sponsored by RIOC. (Rain date Sat Aug 22.)

See **ComingUp**, page 14



Published by *The Main Street WIRE*,
©2009 Unisource2000™ Inc.
531 Main St. #413, NYC10044

News **212-826-9056**
Urgent news **917-617-0449**
Advertising **917-587-3278** or
212-751-8214
Circulation **212-935-7534**
e-mail editor@MainStreetWIRE.com
Website NYC10044 – nyc10044.com

Editor & Publisher – Dick Lutz

Reporters – Jim Baehler, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Jennifer Dunning

Chief Photographer – Paul Katz

Chief Proofreader – Linda Heimer

Proofreader – Ashton Barfield

Advertising Sales – Ellen Levy

Circulation Managers – Sherie Helstien, Matthew Katz, Teri Sheridan

Circulation Assistants – Jim Bates, Brandon Cruz

Human Resources – David Bauer

Legal Counsel – A. Ross Wollen

Website NYC10044 facilities – Frank Farance

Founding Publisher – Jack Resnick

July 21, 2009

While *The WIRE* has been on summer vacation, RIOC is chugging away on the following:

1. **Board of Directors:** No meetings scheduled during the summer. The nominations of Margie Smith and Mike Shinozaki to the board have been made by the governor and forwarded to the state senate for confirmation. They would replace Charlee Miller and Patrick Stewart. Dr. Grimm has been re-nominated. Given the state of the senate, their confirmations will occur at some future date.

2. **Southpoint:**

(A) **Renwick Ruin:** Stabilization work is complete, and the entrances to the building have been gated to secure the interior and prevent trespassing.

(B) **Green Rooms/Wild Gardens (GR/WG):** The contractor is completing phase 1 rough grading, paths, and stone walls. A request for contractor proposals for phase 2, to complete the park, including finish grading, capping, utilities, fencing, and planting, will be issued as soon as grades to meet MTA requirements for Strecker Lab and the subway emergency exit are complete.

(C) **FDR Memorial:** Following board project approval in June, RIOC is in consultation with the state Division of the Budget, Parks Department, and the city to work out funding mechanics for the \$4 million state appropriation, the matching \$4 million from the city, and at least \$8 million from the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute as necessary for phase 1. Department of Environmental Conservation permitting is being integrated with GR/WG. Legal work on finalizing development relationship is in drafting.

3. **Tram Overhaul:** The schedule is now for a

The RIOC Column

1. **Reunion of young residents, circa 1976-1985.**

If you remember ice skating next to Westview, if you remember swimming in the Island House pool... the invitation read. It's being covered in this issue of *The WIRE*. As a "kid" (age 21), I remember all my musician friends on the island. I was a mentor for younger musicians, who became mentors themselves, and so on. On some Saturday mornings, we'd pull together keyboards, guitars, amplifiers, and drums, and play at the back of Motorgate – in those days, Motorgate was far away from disturbing any residential building. On June 27, we musicians returned for a reunion jam. Ah, the pleasure of playing Mustang Sally on a summer day. Thanks to Mike Smith and his staff at RIOC for making everything go perfectly. And thanks to RIOC President Steve Shane for suggesting and supporting Southpoint as the venue.

2. **RIOC tea party for Blackwell Park renovation.** Rosina Abramson, RIOC Vice President of Planning and Inter-Governmental Affairs, has continued her work on developing a master plan for the park. She held an informal "tea party" on July 15 to present Lee Weintraub of LWLA landscape architects, who will be working with a team of talented designers and community specialists, including Alyce Russo (former RIOC development director) of Schall & Russo Planning Works, BSKS Architects, Jane Clark Chermayeff, and other creative team members (some of whom designed the science playground at the Queens Children's Museum). Abramson says, "We hope, collectively, to develop a master plan incorporating community aspirations regarding the kind of recreation and pastoral area Blackwell Park can be." Great idea, and off to a good start.

3. **Two steps forward, one step back on red bus schedule.** The experiments in the red bus schedule

The RIRA Column

March 1, 2010, shutdown and end-of-August, 2010, reopening. Sliding the shutdown period permits better coordination with architectural work for the two stations, and avoids the holiday street closure and weather issues of working through the 2009-10 winter. See the concept presentation of the proposed tram stations on our website.

4. **Projects:** Work is ongoing on many projects, and others are being completed. Alex Snedkov has joined our engineering department as a senior project manager. Alex's area of expertise is primarily electrical and mechanical engineering.

5. **Bank:** Amalgamated Bank's takeover of the NYNB space is completed, and the branch has officially opened as of July 20. Welcome, Amalgamated.

6. **Southtown**

Buildings 5 and 6

are almost complete, with occupancy to commence within the next few weeks. Tram turnaround fountain is under construction, and should be operational by mid-August.

7. **Red Bus:** The

joint experiment

with RIRA in

morning schedul-

ing is ongoing, al-

though we have

discontinued the collection of ridership statistics until school resumes in the fall. The Octagon Local buses are scheduled to leave The Octagon southbound at 8:55, 9:25, 9:55, 10:15, 10:35, and 10:55. Firehouse

See **RIOC Column**, page 14



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

have been successful in the late morning. The buses arrive and depart reliably and consistently (at Octagon: 9:55, 10:10, 10:25, etc.). Unfortunately, it appears that RIOC has discontinued this regular schedule. (I will investigate.) Although it is summer vacation for schools, I will continue to prod RIOC to work on experiments and improvements in the red bus schedule for the evening rush and nighttime.

4. **RIOC eliminates 22% of Main Street parking, residents are not consulted, school drop-off is impossible.** One day last week, RIOC removed the parking spots in front of PS/IS 217 and made them

No Stopping, No

Standing, No Park-

ing. That's 12 spots

of the 55 available

that affect the

6,000+ residents

and contractors of

the WIRE build-

ings. RIOC did not

consult with the

school. The head

custodian, made

aware of the park-

ing loss, mused that

RIOC should have

had a town meeting

to get community

input. Steve Shane

defended the ac-

tions as replacing

signs that were pre-

viously stolen

(photo evidence back to 2004 shows there were no

restrictions) and as Department of Transportation

(DOT) guidance (which he didn't cite) on making

spots available to the Board of Education (PS 85 on

57th Street and Second Avenue still has muni-meter

parking, contrary to Shane). In fact, RIOC *already*

has 10 parking spots reserved for PS/IS 217 in the

alley next to 2-4 River Road. RIOC has backtracked

See **RIRA Column**, page 10



Frank Farance, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
e-mail: rira-president@rira-council.org

Senior Center

Monday

10:30, **English as 2nd Language**

11:00, **Tai Chi**

6:00, **Yoga with Nurit**

Tuesday

9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**

10:20, **Shoppers' Bus**

11:00, **Arabic**

2:00, **Paint & Sculpt**

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

Wednesday

9:45, **Yoga**

10:20, **Shoppers' Bus**

10:30, **Spanish**

10:30, **Computers**

7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

Thursday

9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**

11:00, **Arabic**

12:30, **Movie**

Friday

9:45, **Yoga**

10:30, **French**

1:00, **Bridge**

1:30, **Korean Games**

7:00, **Games (RISA)**

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

This calendar is subject to change. The next issue of *The WIRE* will not appear until August 29. An updated calendar of senior events for August will be available at the Senior Center, 546 Main Street. We recommend consulting that calendar when making plans.

Juliana Apollus, Judi Arond, Bubu Arya, Aaron Barth, Jennifer Barth, Steve Bessenoff, Paco Bozzano-Barnes, William Buckley, Bob Cagle, Carol Chen, Mark Chipman, Malcolm Cohen, Lunita De Manuel, John Dougherty, Wanita Elliot, Arlise Ellis, Elizabeth Erickson, Gloria Gonsalves, Matthew Gonsalves, Tiffany Gonsalves, Angela Grant, Margie Harris, Teresa Hasing, Steve Heller, Darrell Henry, Roberta Hershey, Todd Jagerson, Mickey Karpeles-Bauer, Mary Jo Knight, Michael Kolba, Clinton Narine, Kira Narine, Sandra Narine, Essie Owens, Florence Paau, Joan Pape, Richie Ramdeen, Ronnie Rigos, Ron Schuppert, Raye Schwartz, Beryl Seaforth, Stephanie Smith, Nina Wintringham; students of Legacy High School; and members of the Beacon Island Kids Project.

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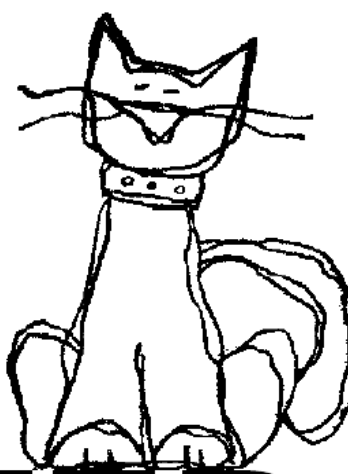
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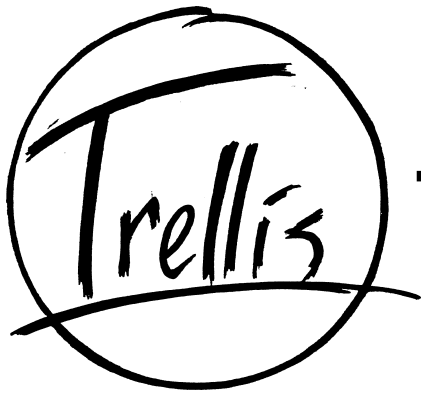
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Reunion from page 1

lawn. This is where RIOC [the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation] came in. They suggested that we move it down to Southpoint Park, and it turned out to be the perfect setting for our special day."

They came from as far away as California and as near as Main Street, returning to a home that represented, for many of their parents, a place that was both New York City and a green retreat, with affordable housing and a population that promised to represent the city's diversity much better than the suburbs and inner-city enclaves the families left for Roosevelt Island. Here, children would grow up accepting the ordinariness of different races, nationalities, and classes, of the aged, and of the disabled. And here, idealistic parents could – and did, at the start – create the world very like the one they wished to live in.

Sequestering the older children on Roosevelt Island was a largely lost cause. "I used to sneak off the island over the bridge into Queens behind a friend," Geanine Wasserman recalls. "Someone would spot me and I'd sit there saying, 'Oh my God! Oh my God! Please don't let my mother come into the room and say someone saw you going over the bridge!' My territory was the island and between 65th and 59th Streets. Other kids went to Queens, but they didn't have the strict parents I had. I was tortured!"

But it was an ideal world for most of the younger children, where they could run free, watched over, sometimes almost imperceptibly, by an islandful of surrogate parents that included tram operators and long-suffering security officers. "I'm going to pretend I don't see you," Beth Ehler, one of five Ehler children who grew up on the island, remembers some parents calling out to her and her friends as they puffed on cigarettes near the church. "We had a great deal of respect for everyone's parents. We weren't snotty to them. This was a different time."

But as the children got older, life on The Rock, as they called it, came to seem suffocating.

"Are you kidding?" Olya exclaimed in horror when her mother suggested years ago that she sign onto the waiting list for Rivercross, the island's Mitchell-Lama coop building, where she grew up. Olya remembers, laughing now, because she ended up settling on the island with her husband and two daughters.

Forced to develop their own pastimes, some of the teenagers became good enough as musicians to turn professional. Several participants in the island's various children's theater programs went on to perform on television, stage, and film. And there was unpaid work as extras in movies made on Roosevelt Island, with a few lovesick girls managing to talk their way into the trailers of male stars like Sylvester Stallone, in *Nighthawks*. (Ghosts of stars who grew up on the island wander through conversations, among them Sarah Jessica Parker and Vincent Spano, the Tony award-winning actor.)

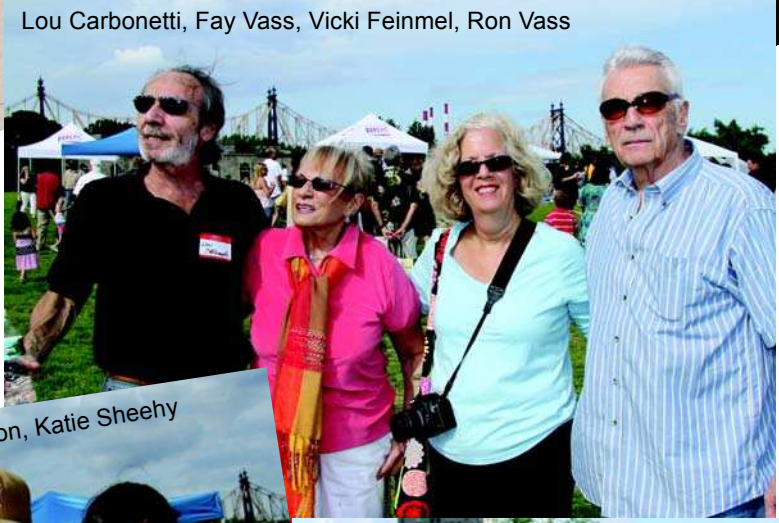
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A certain amount of pot got smoked on The Rock, which reunion participants swore they had not named after Alcatraz. Beer was

Lou Carbonetti, Tony Capobianco, Shelly Feiner, Pete Belssinger



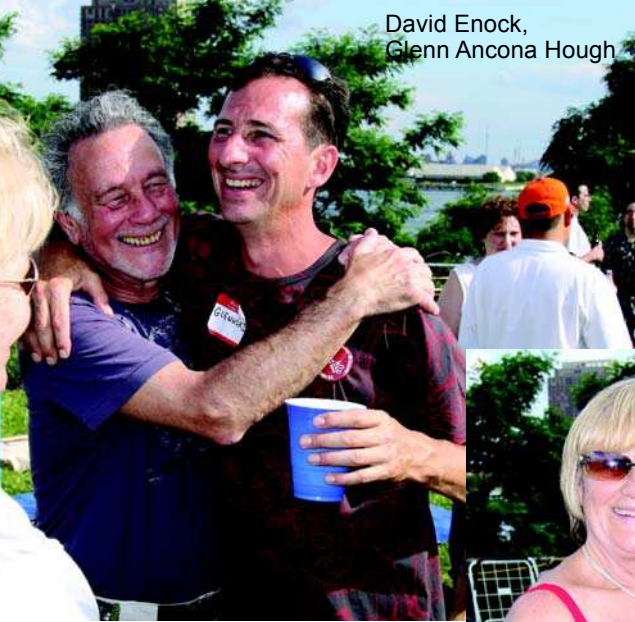
Lou Carbonetti, Fay Vass, Vicki Feinmel, Ron Vass



Terry Christianson, Katie Sheehy



David Enock, Glenn Ancona Hough



Rachel Warren

Karen DeParis



Heidi Becker



Pia Doane



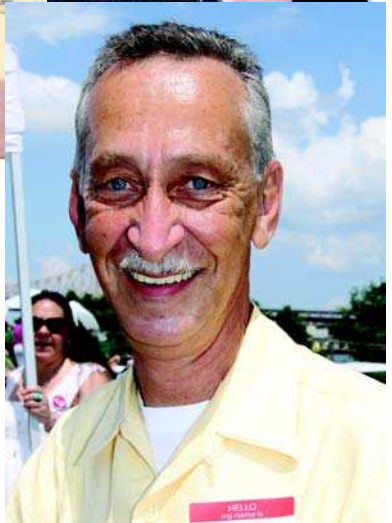
Robert Medina



John Matterso



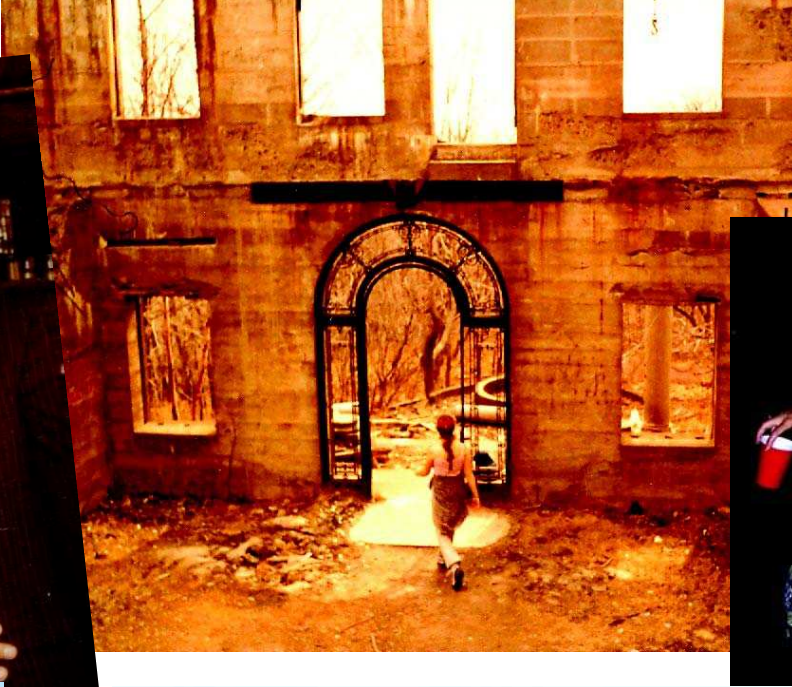
Carmen Diaz



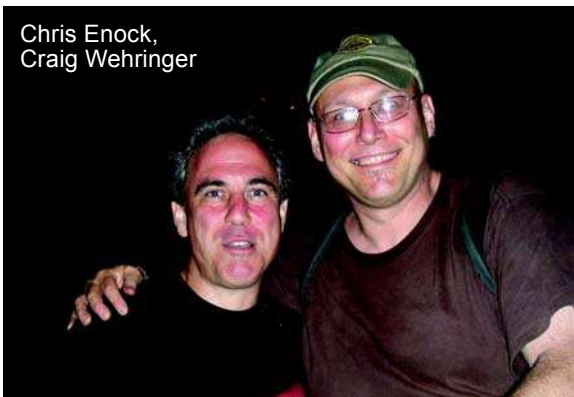
Manny Diaz, left and above, and the Little League AllStars of 1982



Yonn Geron



As a teenager, Jennifer Spano ran through the Renwick Ruin (left). At the reunion (below), she joined old friends. She's on the left with Meg Flather, Paula Spiaggia, Dana Doyle, Pam Livingstone, and Olya Turcihin. Doyle is on the left in the long-ago photo at right, with Veronica Garcia and Spiaggia.



Chris Enock,
Craig Wehringer



Dana Harary Cotton, Jennifer Dorfman, Frank Farance, Lisa Grossman



Cheryl Price Ochoa



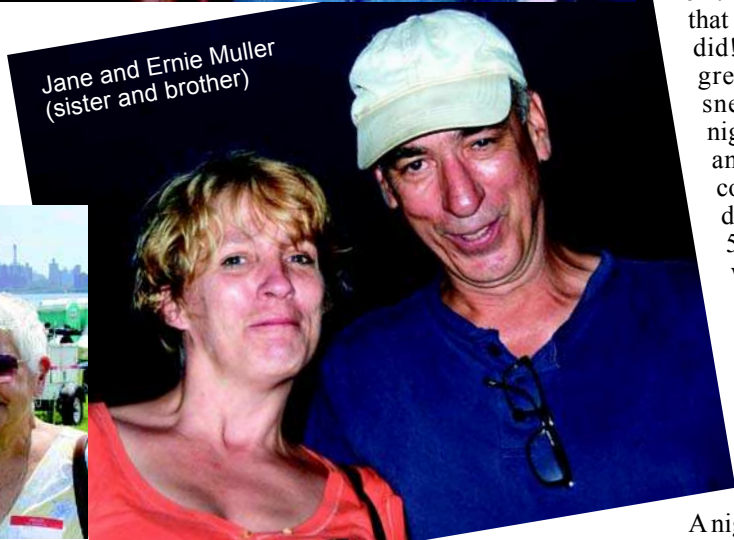
Patti Stanych Fallone,
Alicia Fischer Panayatakis



Brian
Dorfman



Ray and
Connie Alvarez



Jane and Ernie Muller
(sister and brother)

a favorite drink, sometimes stolen from the local supermarket and deli. And empty apartments seemed the perfect setting for just about everything your parents had ever told you not to do.

There were tunnels to race along that took you from one end of the island to the other and even to Manhattan, some- times with "Security," as Public Safety was called in the 1970's, chasing behind. island lore has it that a tunnel entrance can be found somewhere under the promenade facing Queens. Eventually, island children grew rather casual about these secret passages.

"The tram shutting down at 2:00 a.m. kind of put a slight infringement on my social calendar," Jonathan Pancyzk said. "Until the subway came. But late at night the subway didn't come often. So when I wanted to come back and I'd just missed it, I just ran on the tracks across to the island, and hoped that a train didn't come up behind me."

Beth Ehler shudders at such recollections. "I think about some of the things we did and I pray that my kids don't do what we did!" She said children who grew up in Eastwood could sneak off to visit friends at night, squirreling along the 7th- and 10th-floor hallways that connected the Eastwood addresses. "The 510 building to 580 were all connected and we'd run through the corridors, banging through the doors and up and down the staircases in our pajamas to get to each other's apartments," Beth said. "There was something very intimate about that. We were hamster kids!"

A night "at a friend's house" was sometimes in reality spent outdoors at Lighthouse Park. "But it was such a great, small, secure community," said Jill Ehler, Beth's sister. "We all felt safe and we were close to the city, so we all had the street smarts of New York City people with the home life of Norman Rockwell. It was a good blend of both."

Friendships had a special intensity. Dana and Paula felt like sisters. Scott Capobianco and Jason Gilmore, who lived one floor apart in the same Eastwood apartment line, were to some extent raised by both Jason's mother and Scott's father. The punishment was double when Jason was found to have sneaked off late one night to play roller hockey in Manhattan, driving his mother's new car and leaving a dummy behind in his bed.

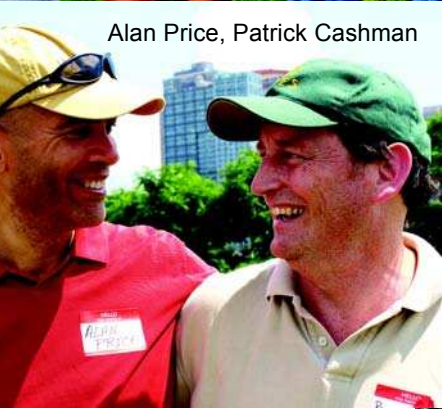
Scott's father told Jason's mother to have her son see him when he returned home. "My father told me to go downstairs," Scott recalls. "I don't want you to see this," he said. When Jason got home, he got yelled at by his mother and had his butt whipped by my father."

Many of the children, raised by single parents, found a second chance at having a fuller family of their own in this brand new place called Roosevelt Island, so distinctively comforting and full of sometimes pleasurable danger. "A lot of us had divorced parents, and we connected on that level and felt that we could share," Lindsey said. "And because we were surrounded by water, we had this feeling that it was 'us' and we kind of grew together."

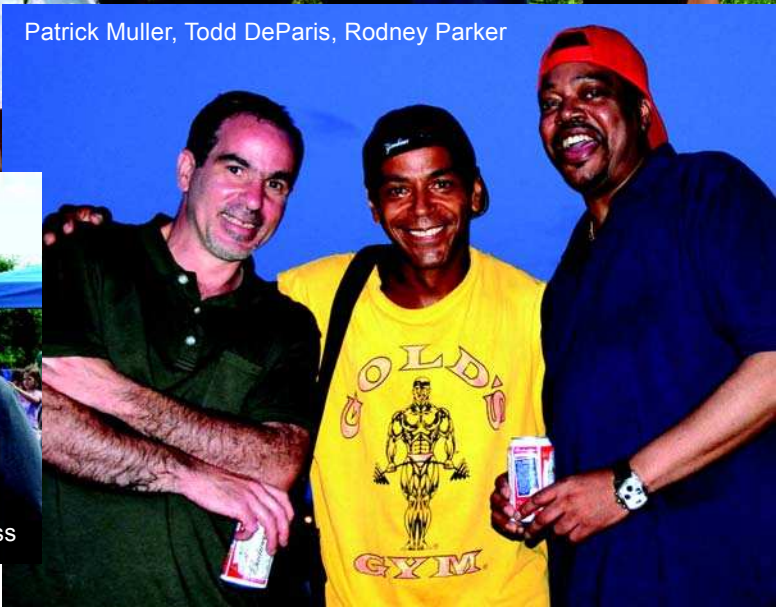
Since everyone had moved to the island around the same time, Beth pointed out, there were no existing social rituals to speak of. "It wasn't as if we were moving into a com-

See Reunion, page 12

Patti Calderoni Steuber, Frank Lapina, Martha Neal, Tara Neal, Mike Zapata, Hope Glennon, Christina Zapata; in front, Christina Zapata, Mrs. Zapata



Alan Price, Patrick Cashman



Patrick Muller, Todd DeParis, Rodney Parker



Alison Braver, Stacy Kass

Photography:
Richard Bachmann
Frank Farance
Paul Katz
Bruce Roberts
and those who were there, then and now

Public Safety from page 1

Public Safety’s officers operate. Guerra has also put effort and time into professionalizing his staff, with programs in sensitivity training and practical services like CPR and use of equipment, as well as something called “verbal judo,” which he told residents is a calming regimen for officers in stressful situations. They have new uniforms, and PSD headquarters are undergoing an expansion and renovation that will provide improved facilities, including a gym, for members of the department. He has dismissed seven officers whom he found substandard, but has lost some outstanding officers to higher-paying jobs elsewhere. He has statistics on his side. Crime here is down 12% over the past year, and Roosevelt Island remains the lowest-crime-rate sector in the 114th precinct of Queens (which handles Roosevelt Island matters, even though the island is part of Manhattan, and technically in the 19th precinct). There have been only 10 formal complaints about his officers, who handled over 7,000 calls for service of some kind in the past year. But it’s an uphill slog – he called it a “work in progress” Wednesday night – in which every rumor that circulates, or any mis-step by an officer, leads to a community regurgitation of memories of the Public Safety of old, especially among longtime residents. And one resident said that formal complaints are low because islanders lack confidence that they’ll be handled fairly. Residents’ questions and comments ranged from praise for perceived improvements and helpful

services, on the friendly end, to a less-than-friendly blast from a Roosevelt Landings resident who was confronted by Public Safety officers after approaching a noisy worker in an adjacent apartment while carrying a baseball bat, which, she admitted, she failed to drop when later ordered to do so by officers who responded to the worker’s call. There were multiple comments about the May 30 arrest of Adib Mansour at Capobianco Field, an incident covered heavily by *The Main Street WIRE* (tinyurl.com/wire2919). The Mansour charges had been thrown out at arraignment earlier Wednesday morning (related story, page 1 of this issue), but Guerra maintained that the outcome didn’t mean Mansour hadn’t committed the charged infraction – just that the legal system chose, for some reason, not to deal with it. A representative of the Manhattan District Attorney agreed, but at least one eyewitness insisted that a PSD officer overreacted and performed badly in the Mansour case. Along the way on Wednesday night, Guerra tried to make it clear that Public Safety officers are different from the officers of the New York Police Department (NYPD) only in weaponry – not in powers of enforcement or arrest. “Many residents believe Public Safety officers have less power, and that causes a problem for the island,” he said. (Related report, this page.) Among the points that Guerra made are:

- Officers, he said, are not “out to get” anyone but, while they are instructed to be friendly, they can be expected to become business-

like when dealing with violations or threatening situations.

- Minor violations are often likely to lead to a simple warning, but when someone fails to comply with an order, talks back, or gets physical, the “escalation” can lead to added charges.
- Residents must not involve themselves during traffic stops, or other apprehension or enforcement actions, against other residents. This is “obstruction of government administration,” a serious charge.
- Kids 16 and older are treated as adults.
- Juveniles (ages 7-15) will not be processed for simple violations.
- On Roosevelt Island, where Public Safety officers do not carry firearms, traffic stops (considered potentially very dangerous in law enforcement) will often involve additional responders, for safety reasons.
- Guerra said that, during traffic stops, officers may step out of a motorist’s line of sight, again for safety reasons.
- Complaint forms are available at Public Safety, to be used if a resident feels mistreated. A formal complaint is necessary for PSD to investigate a resident’s grievance against an officer.
- Guerra said he does not attempt to cover up officers’ misconduct.

State Assemblymember Micah Kellner attended the meeting and, in a brief comment during the meeting’s Q&A session, said that since the May 30 Adib Mansour incident, “there have been a ton of complaints from people who want to remain anonymous but have complaints about specific officers

Guerra Laments Attitudes of Residents Toward Public Safety

In a Monday meeting with editor Dick Lutz of *The Main Street WIRE*, Public Safety Chief Keith Guerra expressed concern over the attitude toward his organization that he has detected in the community. He said: “We are trying to change the perception of Public Safety. The residents here have to understand that they are the front-line enforcement officers of the island, and they do have powers of arrest, and powers to issue summonses, parking summonses, moving violation summonses, and criminal summonses. They are state peace officers with special police officer status given to them by the [New York City] police commissioner. “The residents here don’t understand that. They think that they are security guards who can be abused, who can be engaged in fights, who can be put in situations where their safety is put on the line, because they don’t carry firearms. That is the perception. “I’ve spoken to many residents as I walked up and down Main Street... and that is the main thing that comes up. The officers don’t carry firearms, so people think that they can test them. Why? They are here to protect and serve the residents, whether they carry a firearm or not. “Maybe the older residents here will send the message down to the kids. They have the power to arrest you, and if they give you a lawful order to disperse, and if you disobey that order, you will be given at minimum a disorderly conduct summons. Should you choose to escalate that situation, this is what happens. “My department is changing. They are conducting themselves in a more professional manner; they are taking their job seriously. They are not taking the ‘do-nothing’ approach, they are doing their job as best as they can, and they understand that at some times, somebody is not going to like it.”

who have overstepped.” Kellner continued, “They say it has gotten better, but some residents still feel Public Safety is like an occupying force. “Every time there is a bad incident, respect has to be rebuilt from the ground up. What needs to happen is respect – a two-way street.” Kellner was applauded when he suggested that “what needs to be established is a set standard for investigating complaints, and maybe by someone outside the operating corporation [RIOC].” (Related report, page 1.) On Thursday, Kellner said he will ask the state controller and the state department of investigations to audit Roosevelt Island’s Public Safety Department. RIRA President Frank Farance says that he and RIOC Vice President Fernando Martinez agreed Wednesday night to work on a number of outreach programs, to bring Public Safety and residents closer together.

RIRA Column from page 3

slightly; they’ve laser-printed a sign to tape over the existing *No Standing* sign during school hours. Now drop-off and pick-up are possible. In short: RIOC didn’t consult with anyone, the school didn’t ask for it, DOT doesn’t require it, RIOC has already assigned school parking in the alley, and parking was already scarce on Main Street. How is RIOC serving the community?

5. RIRA town meeting on Public Safety. RIRA held a town meeting Wednesday night for community input on Public Safety. We had a good turnout, including PSD Director Guerra, his colleagues from the 19th and 114th precincts, a representative from the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, and Assemblymember Micah Kellner. All noted that this kind of community forum was a good thing to do. We had approximately 25 comments and detailed follow-up discussions: the May 30 Caobianco Field incident (the case was dismissed), an explanation of the Trespass Program in Eastwood (don’t loiter), the question of a curfew for children (there is none), the legality of taking pictures of Public Safety (it is legal), why Public Safety officers don’t respond to reports of drivers going through stop signs (officer needs to personally witness the infraction, not take the word of a resident). At my request, Guerra started the evening with a presentation on the dos & don’ts of children and adults interacting with Public Safety. Initially, residents were miffed that they were being told how to behave. (They had complaints about Public Safety’s behavior.) However, by the end of the meeting, Guerra’s presentation made for a good reference point and a good reference document for everyone. After the meeting, Fernando Martinez, RIOC’s Vice President of Operations, suggested several collaborative task forces on Public Safety, transportation, etc., to include RIOC, RIRA (which includes all residents), and other stakeholders. This is a very good sign of cooperation, and I hope we can all take advantage of it.

6. RIRA Public Safety Committee Chair investigates May 30 baseball field incident. Erin Feely-Nahem, committee chair elected by the RIRA Common Coun-

cil, has completed her investigation. Here is a summary of her findings:

- PSD Officer Payne tried to de-escalate the conflict, as reported by numerous witnesses.
- PSD Officer Toro escalated the conflict by continually threatening people with arrest.
- PSD Director Guerra’s investigation was one-sided. He interviewed only PSD officers and no other witnesses, including island residents. Guerra did receive a statement from the off- island baseball team, but only in response to Guerra’s phone request. “My officers are getting a raw deal here” – clearly a self-serving statement from Guerra.
- The initial conflict was not just an island resident hurling slurs, but also involved one of the members of the off-island team.

Here’s my analysis. Director Guerra gets a D-minus on his community approach and his investigation of this incident. Days after the event (past the heat of the moment), Guerra’s attitude was, “Either you’re with us [RIOC/PSD] or you’re against us.” That attitude makes it impossible to hear genuine criticism about his organization. Guerra advocates a policy to RIOC execs and the RIOC general counsel that can be summarized as, “We’re not giving any information out – you’ll have to FOIL your requests.” Feely-Nahem’s investigation was hampered and obstructed by Shane and Guerra. They refused to participate in the review. Shane claimed there was some legal action by Feely-Nahem, but that was not true (see below). Shane believes that, because Feely-Nahem doesn’t have law enforcement experience, she can’t do the investigation. By Shane’s logic, only a police officer can objectively investigate another officer’s actions – likewise, only police officers are qualified to be jurors in criminal and police misconduct cases. I interviewed Feely-Nahem to better understand this so-called legal issue RIOC was raising. On June 14, 2008 her son (without cause) was manhandled by PS officers. Guerra threatened her and her husband after the event: “I can still arrest your son [at any time for the next year].” After they filed an intent to claim, the harassment stopped.

The claim expired June 14 of this year, so there was no pending legal issue between Feely-Nahem and RIOC. I asked Shane to verify this with his general counsel. In response to RIRA’s request to meet with him, Guerra said that he would not share the paperwork because it was confidential. But Guerra gave a copy to another resident, Ron Schuppert, a retired detective and former head of the RIRA Public Safety Committee, whom RIOC wanted for the RIRA investigation instead of Feely-Nahem, the elected community representative. Guerra’s story and PSD’s confidentially policy are inconsistent. City Councilmember Jessica Lappin and State Assemblymember Micah Kellner have expressed concern about PSD’s actions in the May 30 incident. Kellner is working on legislation to have a citizens’ review board for state entities. Clearly, RIOC is unable to provide oversight and to investigate itself, as Guerra’s one-sided analysis shows, and as was already acknowledged by last November’s 94% favorable resident response to a referendum on a Citizens’ Review Board. Shane and Guerra will be the poster children for new state legislation. During the past couple of weeks, I was inspired by many residents’ comments (none of which Shane or Guerra chose to hear). Uniformly, the residents provided complete details, including some who acknowledged their own and their neighbors’ imperfect behavior. The honesty was refreshing; residents clearly understood what was at stake. Although I have not yet had a chance to discuss this with my fellow RIRA Common Council members, here are my thoughts on RIOC/PSD staff involved. On Officer Payne: He acted professionally, which is consistent with my personal experience with him. On Officer Toro: I think he needs training on handling these kinds of situations. I can’t suggest anything stronger because, without further background on this officer (which Guerra refused to supply), we don’t know if Toro’s actions were a one-time event in his life (and in the heat of the moment), a regular daily occurrence, or something in between. On Director Guerra: He gets my harshest criticism. He knows what a proper review

process should be (but chose a one-sided, self-serving approach), he knows how to conduct an investigation (but chose differently – something NYPD wouldn’t do), and he is expert on the process (but chose not to use his expertise). Parroting Guerra’s comments about Mr. Mansour’s infraction: I believe Guerra is a good person, but had a lapse in judgment at this moment. On RIOC President Shane: He certainly has the knowledge and experience to recognize the poor quality of Guerra’s investigation, yet he accepted it. RIOC has suspended an employee (an island resident and parent) because he asked Officer Toro not to arrest Mr. Mansour. The employee was asked to sign a statement and a waiver. At a weekend barbeque, if an employee of the City of New York had (even worse) a shouting match with a neighborhood NYPD officer, do you think on Monday the employee would be suspended from work and forced to sign legal paperwork in order to keep his job? Of course not. Likewise, RIOC and PSD have their own conflicts of interest. A wheelchair-bound island resident getting on the red bus tried to flip up his chair, but fell backwards, cracking his head. I witnessed this and called Public Safety, which then called for an ambulance. While waiting, officers asked the driver why he didn’t put down the ramp. The driver made a mistake. Rather than reporting this honestly, both PSD officers reported that the passenger refused the ramp – protecting a fellow RIOC employee, protecting RIOC from liability, and shifting the blame to the passenger, who was in no condition to object. We wouldn’t have this conflict of interest if it were NYPD. RIRA’s Public Safety Committee will hold a meeting in August to discuss recommendations on policy, procedure, and actions, which will be presented to the full RIRA Common Council meeting on September 9. The public is welcome to attend. Feely-Nahem wants the RIRA committee to be the long-term repository of residents’ complaints and to provide more transparency to the residents – a good idea. Finally, regardless of my criticisms of Public Safety, I still give them respect, which they deserve.

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- Friday, August 14 at 7:38 pm
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- Friday, August 21 at 7:28 pm
- Friday, August 7 at 7:47 pm
- Friday, August 28 at 7:18 pm

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

Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.



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You Tube – Walk Off Baseball Win at Firefighters Field – tinyurl.com/nmlnkk
You Tube – Skeletons Play Michael Jackson at Southpoint Park – tinyurl.com/kva2bn
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Reunion from pages 8-9

munity where people had grown up for 10 years,” she said. “This was all new.”

It was a moment lost in time. Olya talked of her daughters’ doubt that so many would turn up if their generation held a reunion. “They have their group of friends, but they don’t know everyone,” she said of the girls, who are 10 and 12. “In the 70’s and 80’s, we knew all the kids.”

By noon on June 27, those kids were spreading across the hilly terrain of Southpoint, a colorful quilt made up of not only the children of “The Rock,” but also their pioneering parents and their own children, all flowing lazily from one small, reminiscing group to another. The sun cooperated by shining boldly – and unexpectedly, given the otherwise torrentially rainy summer – in a clear, bright sky. Cars pulled up continuously to disgorge more and more returnees into air filled with laughter and music from one of the white tents provided by RIOC.

“Chris Cangelieri, a past resident and musician, offered to take care of the musical aspect of our party. He made a playlist and brought together all the musically talented people that we grew up with, to perform together in a spontaneous and relaxing atmosphere, just as we had done as teens many years ago.”

Dana had been surprised at how the initial word of the reunion on Facebook spread “like wildfire.” Alumni of The Rock began to come forward with other offers of help as ingenious as the pastimes they had once devised to fill empty teenage hours.

“Very early on in our planning stages, Josh Melville (past resident, whose mother still lives on the island) offered to put together a PowerPoint presentation of any old photos of us growing up together. Hundreds of photos were sent to him and, along with Frank Farance’s (current RIRA president and original island “late teen” who arrived here at age 21) screen and projector, Josh put together an amazing presentation depicting the many happy years we spent together on Roosevelt Island. Little did I know that another original teen, Christopher Scott Knell (parents and sister still live on the island), would surprise us with two amazing banners, which he hung at the entrance to the reunion before anyone arrived. The banners were incredible, and one of them was given to Frank Farance to donate to the youth center, which was originated for us way back when. Christopher also created a beautiful video entitled “2009 Roosevelt Island Reunion – The Originals Resurface,” capturing many highlights of the day as we ‘shared the love.’ This spectacular video can be viewed on YouTube at tinyurl.com/reunionRI.

Talk welled up over the hours at the reunion, an amiable buzz sometimes pierced sharply when parents reacted with horror to long-delayed details of the more dangerous of their children’s escapades. There was a lot of catching up to do, after all, and even a little reestablishing of bonds. Two alumni who had once dated, both now with families of their own, glanced at each other playfully as they talked. Clearly, the attraction had lingered over all these years between the feisty, funny woman and the man, still the slyly sexy island bad boy, who had gone on to such different lives.

But you had to be careful in those early days. “If you slept with any-

one, before you jumped out of bed everyone knew your business,” Geanine remembers ruefully. “That was one of the reasons I wanted to get out of here.”

Some memories were sad. Asked about the funniest, craziest, or saddest event of her life on The Rock, Patti Calderoni Stueber talked softly of the death of Tony Capobianco, the father of Scott and Joyce Capobianco and a beloved island figure who coached many sports teams and cooked a mean chicken cutlet. “I remember him with a smile on his face,” Patti said. “Running into him walking down Main Street always meant a conversation about how the family was.”

He was also something of a psychotherapist, at least for first-time baseball players. “I was a basketball player,” Paul Rechani said. “When I started playing baseball, my first time up at bat, he said, ‘I don’t care what the ball does, I’m gonna call a strike every time you’re up at bat!’ He scared me.” But it helped to calm the boy down.

Scott was touched by what he saw on a brief stopover earlier in the day at the island baseball field named after his father. “There was a Little League game going on, and so I think he’s up there and he’s happy.”

Others talked of lost friends. “Although this reunion was about reuniting, there was not one minute that went by without speaking of those that left us early in life,” Lindsey said a few days later. “They are a part of the island’s DNA and should not be left out,” she added, including Leyla Turcihin, Susan Schwartzberg, Ethan Gamarow, Danny Jones, Carl Duin, Randy Oliphant, and Tim Sheehy.

Drifting from conversation to conversation on that Saturday afternoon, you could envision why the island might have seemed like a wild secret garden. Ripe staining mulberries fell on Alison Braver and other counselors as they cleared the land one summer for the island’s Camp Landrover. “There were also, I think, some railroad-like tracks, perhaps used by the quarry,” Alison recalls. “Near the north end was a fire department training tower that we used to explore. The fire department would set it on fire and teach new firemen to put fires out.” There was also an empty church. “There were rose bushes planted around this church that, obviously, someone had cared for at one time. They still produced wonderful flowers though the plants had gone wild. We used to pick bouquets of these roses and bring them home.”

The ruins at the south end were less idyllic. Until they were fenced off more impenetrably after a bad fall by Jose Reyes (he recovered), those ruins beckoned freely. “We used to climb around the old City Hospital, the smallpox hospital, and Strecker Laboratory,” Alison remembers. “There were all kinds of things in the hospital and the laboratory. We found old wheelchairs, tools, signs, boxes, jars, shelving, bed frames, parts of old furniture, and other debris. We used to enter Strecker Laboratory through the morgue. I remember you had to walk around the very perimeter of the morgue as the floor was sinking in the middle.” On one sign, she remembered, an arrow pointed upstairs for Wassermann tests, the antibody test for syphilis.

Island teenagers referred to pockets of secluded space between Island House and Westview as the “Dark Side of the Moon” after the

With *Project Main Street*, Island’s First Youngsters Honor One of Their Own

by Jim Baehler

The June 27 reunion brought together a large, joyful crowd of those who had grown up on Roosevelt Island, but there was a notable absentee – Tim Sheehy. Tim died on April 23, 2007, of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Tim’s death was especially heartbreaking to his friends because of the kind of person he was. As one put it, “His face always looked as if it was about to break into a laugh.” To commemorate Tim’s life, his friends formed *Project Main Street*, a charitable foundation to provide financial support to the families of ALS victims.

“Knowing Tim and working to preserve his memory has changed my life,” says Mike Rosen, who is Executive Director of the foundation. “I know he has had the same effect on many others.” The foundation was originally formed to help with the cost of the constant care Tim required. His wife, Katie, quit work to care for him, but their savings were soon exhausted. Project Main Street was created to help.

“Tim said he didn’t like the idea of other people sending him money, but eventually he agreed,” Mike said. Tim provided the *Project Main Street* name and asked that the effort be expanded to include other families with ALS victims. As Tim was dying, his friends promised they would continue the work – a commitment they have kept.

Project Main Street actively seeks donations from individuals and foundations, runs various fundraising events throughout the year, and is constantly working to extend its network and sources of revenue. At present, all the recipients of aid are in the New York City area, but plans are to expand the work nationwide in the future. No organization officer receives any compensation. Katie Sheehy is actively involved, saying the work provides a constant reminder of her late husband. Mike Rosen describes his involvement as “almost a full-time second job.”

“I’ll tell you what kind of a guy Tim was,” he says. “When he was living in Brooklyn, there was a blind man across the street who didn’t get out much. Tim would go over and sit with him and listen to ball games on the radio.”

Tim’s mother tells the story of a family planning to move to Roosevelt Island. The grandmother came to the island every day for a week, observing fourth-graders at recess and in class. “She approached me,” says Eileen Sheehy. “She told me of the family’s imminent move to Roosevelt Island and asked if Tim



would be a friend to her grandson. I agreed. Tim and Eric Seligman became friends for life.”

Eileen remembers that when the family would dine in a restaurant, Tim would stack the plates for the busboys and would always say, “Don’t forget, Mom, to leave a big tip.”

When Tim was nine or ten, there was some sort of transportation problem, and the staff at Goldwater Hospital had trouble getting to the island. When Tim didn’t get home from school that day, Eileen discovered that he had volunteered to help feed some of the patients at the hospital.

“He was always volunteering,” she says. “Every time there was a class field trip, he volunteered my husband and me to serve as chaperones. This went

on for quite some time and, when I finally asked to be excused, he said, ‘Mom, this is the last one. You haven’t missed one yet. Don’t start now.’”

In school, Tim was always looking out for the other students. At a parent conference, Tim’s fourth-grade teacher laughed as she said that Tim sometimes acted as if he were in charge of the class.

“She told me,” says Eileen, “that Tim liked to negotiate on behalf of the rest of the class. It was like he was their union rep.”

Tim graduated from the University of South Carolina, where he was a substitute goalie for one year on the school soccer team. He was quite athletic and did well in all sports, but had one weakness – he was a slow runner. “I don’t know what it is,” he would say, “but I just can’t run.” Mike Rosen recalls how Tim took up golf later than his friends but soon surpassed them all.

ALS attacks the nerve cells that control a body’s voluntary muscle systems, gradually stealing a victim’s strength and ability to move arms, legs, and body. It is invariably fatal; ultimately, a victim loses the ability to breathe. There is no impairment of the ability to think and perform cognitive functions. Victims also retain the ability to see, taste, smell, hear, and recognize touch. Most victims of ALS die of respiratory failure within three to five years of the onset of their symptoms.

Since 2006, Project Main Street has dispensed \$260,000 in grants. The greatest fear of those involved is that a family in need will apply for a grant and the money will not be there. Donations can be made to Project Main Street, 244 Fifth Avenue, Suite #2417, New York, NY 10001. Additional information is available on the internet at projectmainstreet.org.

title of a Pink Floyd album that was a favorite, along with music by Neil Young and The Who. “We went to every concert that came up,” Hope Glennon said.

Passing by another group, you might hear stories of “Manhunt,” a running and hiding game for groups of 10 to 15, created by the island children, that involved loud cries of “Manhunt 1,2,3.” During one game, Maria Doane recalled, she sent Tony Maestri hurtling through a ground-floor window in 580 Main Street. Beth and Holly Levine, best friends since they were nine, remembered another red-letter day, when teen-ager Byron Cotton lost control of his Camaro and drove it into the river.

Then there was the time Scott and Jason frightened Security officers by nearly bleeding to death in front of them. Or so it seemed. The blood was fake, made with red food dye, caused by a fight that never happened. Women screamed. “Oh, my goodness,” the guards said worriedly. “They

weren’t equipped to handle this kind of thing,” Jason added. “They were there to move your car along.” But the boys’ parents knew exactly what to do.

Over by the music tent, there is murmured talk of how families used to move from one house to another at Christmas time, sampling all the different decorations and cooking. And what about the time in the 1977 blackout when the island children walked the seniors downstairs to safety in the street, where barbecues were cooking and wiffle ball games were being played?

Many alumni stayed long past the advertised 11:00 p.m. close, with a group of about 75 people moving north to the Meditation Steps where they continued the reunion until around 4 a.m. The day had been, as Olya put it, “beyond perfect,” its magic sealed by something that had happened earlier in the day.

Mid-afternoon, the sky had suddenly darkened and rain pelted down. But only for a few minutes.

As the sky cleared, cries of “Look! Look!” called attention to a double rainbow materializing over the big Pepsi sign on the Queens shore. Olya had the sudden thought that the rainbow was the work of the friends no longer there, like her sister, Leyla, and Lindsey’s first husband, Danny Jones.

Even a relatively blasé alumnus like Jonathan was moved by what he found at the reunion, which organizers hope to repeat in five years. “Roosevelt Island has been compared to a prison or a ski community,” he said. “They used to call it ‘the home of the sick, the lame, the mad, and the bad.’ My girlfriends of the time used to call it Tonka Land, like the little dolls that wobble, because it was like a playland, not real.

“But it was a family. That’s why this reunion is breathtaking, because you see just wonderful folks... I’m a little emotional. We were so close, and it’s... I guess it takes thirty years to see what a family we were.”



Siblings from page 1

group of friends.

Public Safety charges that Officer Sach told Hems and his friends to disperse when they gathered at the red Honda Kimberly had been driving. She had been ordered to stay in the car, according to Public Safety Director Keith Guerra, but exited the vehicle. She disputes this, but did exit the car in the course of searching for her cell phone, which she had put down while providing her license, registration, and insurance papers to the officer. She then used the phone to telephone her mother, Mimerose Ferdinand, who then proceeded to the scene of the arrest.

Public Safety charges that Hems used profanity in rejecting the order to disperse; Hems told *The WIRE* that the first profanity was used by the officer in the course of repeating the order to disperse.

Public Safety accounts and those of the Ferdinand siblings largely agree on much of what happened in the next few minutes: Public Safety says Hems was ordered to face the vehicle (he disputes this) and hold his hands behind him (to be handcuffed), but did not. Kimberly attempted to insert herself between the officer and her brother, saying he had done nothing wrong and shouldn't be detained. Backup officers arrived and took over the handling of Hems, while Sach pulled Kimberly away to handcuff her. She admitted to *The WIRE* that she kicked Sach twice; the draft Public Safety report records two kicks then, and four more later.

During this, Hems's friends were chanting, "Leave them alone. Leave them alone," and insulting the three officers at the scene with phrases like "toy cop." An eyewitness, Mike Acevedo, says that one of Hems's friends, Rhamel Barber, struck Sgt. Anibel Ortega. Acevedo (who heads Roosevelt Island Search and Rescue), says that Barber then fled, with Ortega briefly giving chase. Guerra says that Barber is being sought by both PSD and NYPD, and asked that he come to Public Safety on his own. Guerra told *The WIRE* he will be charged in the case.

In Guerra's draft report, which he read to *The WIRE* on Monday, it is Hems Ferdinand who is charged with striking Ortega, a

Mansour from page 1

Mansour's lawyer, Paul Vincenti, said, "I expected to enter a not-guilty plea and get a trial date. But the judge called our case, looked at the summons and the officer's description of the violation, and said, 'These allegations are very vague and unsubstantiated. I am dismissing the case.'" Vincenti called the charges "absurd." He added, "The thing that jumped out at me is that his son was there and they arrested him in front of his son... I think they should exercise a little bit of discretion, especially in front of kids."

Mansour told *The WIRE* that he feels vindicated, "knowing that I did not behave in a disorderly manner... [I] tried to avoid being lured by Officer Toro to get angry and re-

act."

Mansour continued, "We have a clear and very troubling problem. Too many interactions with some Public Safety officers lead to arrests. Many residents [told] me stories of excessive force [and] of minor incidents escalating to arrest, detention, and jail." He said that he had expected a fair investigation of his arrest, and the way it was conducted, by Public Safety and RIOC, but "I was never contacted."

Mansour added, "It would behoove Public Safety to empower specific officers who have demonstrated care and commitment to the community, instead of protecting those who have damaged [Public Safety's] reputation."

"closed-fist blow."

At this point, the Public Safety account and the account given by the Ferdinand siblings diverge in other ways. Hems and Kimberly insist that Sach used pepper spray on Hems after he was already in handcuffs and under the control of two assisting officers. Guerra says, based on his officers' statements, that it was used while Hems was struggling, resisting arrest, before he was handcuffed. Acevedo told *The WIRE*, "They sprayed him before he was handcuffed. He was getting too wild." Another eyewitness — one of Hems's friends — told *The WIRE*, "They came and told him to move away from the car for no reason... He was resisting because they were assaulting him for no reason, and he was defenseless and, after putting the handcuffs on him, they maced him." The friend, who gave his name as Emanuel Omeele, said that he saw no punches thrown.

While the traffic stop took place Tuesday night at 9:15, the incident was not over for the Ferdinand siblings and their mother until some 27 or 28 hours later. In an odyssey on which their accounts and Public Safety accounts largely agree, it involved a trip to a Manhattan hospital for Hems (requested, according to Public Safety, by his mother), a trip to the 114th Precinct station in Queens for Kimberly, then a trip to Central Booking in Manhattan for both (where NYPD offic-

ers refused to accept the prisoners), a trip back to the 114th Precinct, where Kimberly was held in a cell, and then to Public Safety, where Hems was held. He says he was handcuffed to a rail for several hours. On

Briefly...

• **Amalgamated Bank** has now taken over, officially, from New York National Bank.

• The *Albany Times-Union* is reporting that **RIOC Board nominations** for Margie Smith and Michael Shinozaki are on hold, probably until September — fallout from recent Senate shenanigans. Dr. Katherine Grimm's reappointment is also on hold, but she continues to serve in her current appointment.

• **Octagon** residents are demanding that building management provide window screens so that they can open their windows this summer.

Wednesday, both were transported to Central Booking again, but weren't taken before a judge until Thursday morning after midnight. They were given separate court dates. They have hired a lawyer.



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The WIRE runs on volunteer power! We may need help with distribution in your building (call **212-935-7534**), or join us for our Friday-morning stuffing session (**212-826-9056**), or try your hand at reporting (**917-617-0449**). Other help is needed, too. *What would you like to do?*

MOVING? Use *WIRE* classifieds to sell the stuff you’d rather not move. Reach every apartment on Roosevelt Island and turn your discards into dollars. **212-751-8214**.

COMING UP from page 3

Book Discussion – *Seven Guitars* by **August Wilson**, **Thu Aug 20**, 6:30pm, New York Public Library Roosevelt Island branch. Books available at the branch here.

Roosevelt Live event, *Chicha Libre* (Latin/Peruvian music), **Sat Aug 22**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue in 5 weeks, on **Sat Aug 29**, resuming every-two-weeks schedule. **Advertising Deadlines:** Ads in the paper, Wed Aug 19; decision date on circulars/inserts, Tue Aug 25; they are due Thu Aug 27. **Additional issues in 2009:** Sep 12 (starts *The WIRE*’s 30th year), Sep 26; Oct 10, 24; Nov 7, 21; Dec 12 (holiday issue). **2010:** Jan 16; Feb 12, 27; Mar 12, 27; Apr 10, 24; May 8, 22; Jun 5, 19; Jul 3, 31; Aug 28; Sep 11, 25; Oct 9, 23; Nov 6, 20; Dec 4, 18. **News phone**, **212-826-9056**; urgent matters, **917-617-0449**. **Advertising**, display and classified: **917-587-3278**.

Roosevelt Live event, *Generate Records Jazz Fest* (experimental music), **Sat Aug 29**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

Roosevelt Live event, *Ethan Lipton Orchestra* (jazz/folk/country/blues), **Sat Sep 5**, 4pm, Riverwalk Commons (between 425 and 455 Main St). Free.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed Sep 9**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.

RIOC Board Meeting, **Thu Sep 17**, 4:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Town-hall meeting, at end of formal session, for resident comments and questions.

Third Annual 5K Run for Congo Women, **Sat Sep 26**, 8:30am, Firefighters Field. \$25 registration fee also covers t-shirt and beverages. Registration open now at RunForCongoWomen.org.

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

Fall for Arts, **Sat Oct 10**.

Halloween Parade, **Sat Oct 24**.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed Nov 4**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.

RIOC Board Meeting, **Thu Nov 5**, 9:30am, Good Shepherd Community Center.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed Dec 2**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.

Tree Lighting Ceremony, **Thu Dec 3**, evening.

RIOC Board Meeting, **Thu Dec 10**, 4:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Town-hall meeting, at end of formal session, for resident comments and questions.

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

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Letters from page 2

I step foot on the island soil, I feel comforted and at home, as though the entire island was my backyard.

Once again, I am grateful to you and to the Public Safety officers of this town.

Cynthia Ahn
Roosevelt Nails

To RIOC President Steve Shane:

During the past week, as I’ve had family visiting, I’ve returned home at night. There are several issues at Motorgate.

1. The elevator landing on level 6 not only has had that light out since last September, but now the second light is out.

2. The new lighting on level 5A is a joke... a bad one. Instead of bright lights over the car aisles, they’ve installed low-lumens fluorescents down the center aisle, leaving shadows and very dark spots between cars. It’s a perfect place for muggers to hide or someone to trip and get hurt – as bad as or worse than no lights at all. I truly hope that’s not what RIOC is planning for the rest of Motorgate. Surely there are other fixtures and wiring solutions that will work in that environment and, at the same time, provide adequate safety. Steve, it’s not even good in daylight, let alone at night!

3. The new flooring in the elevators, less than two months old, is already badly cracked, and it never looks clean, either. Yuk!

Steve, I hope this isn’t a case of “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” as your underlings and contractors seem to have convinced you that they are providing appropriate solutions to the problems in Motorgate. They are not! I don’t think you’d let your wife park her car and walk through Motorgate at night under these conditions. Go take a walk to Motorgate and see what I’m talking about for yourself, then tell me you think it’s okay. I doubt that you would think so!

Raye Schwartz

To the Editor:

We want to thank both Judy Berdy of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society and *The Main Street WIRE* for the time that you gave and the significance that you placed on our reunion. Your assistance, presence, and interest in our unique gathering truly made us feel special and a part of Roosevelt Island history. The years spent on Roosevelt Island created bonds that have lasted over 30 years, and, as you probably witnessed, will last a lifetime.

Thank you for being an important part of our special day. We look forward to the documentation of our event, representing the history of our “one of a kind” adolescence and the sheer joy we all experienced that day.

Dana Doyle and Olya Turcihin

To the Editor:

If one’s imagination cannot grasp the looming transportation crisis, the Wednesday subway breakdown during the morning rush should persuade any rational decision-maker that building three more high rises on the island at Southtown (Riverwalk) is *insane*. The current development plan gives the developer the option to build three buildings, up to 28 stories, on Main Street leading south from Blackwell House to the tram. If this plan is allowed to proceed, literally 1,000 or more additional residents will have to make their way to Manhattan by the lone F subway that is already overwhelmingly jammed during morning rush hours.

Today, all who were stuck by the subway breakdown headed to the tram, the island’s only other realistic option, but it holds only 125 passengers and thus cannot possibly process the overload in an efficient manner. When the tram is shut down for many months to change the system, even greater chaos will ensue at the subway station during morning rush hours.

Now is the time, before the buildings are allowed to proceed and before the obvious crisis unfolds, for residents to begin the long and difficult process of stopping any further Southtown/Riverwalk development. Neither the potential residents nor current ones will be able to get to work if three 28-story buildings are constructed. Gather petitions, march on the subway with placards, alert and inform the state’s officials, politicians, and the media, and do your part to *stop* any further Southtown development. We are truly already *stuck* on Roosevelt Island. It cannot accommodate more people. It is, after all, an *island* and, unlike other places, has very limited options to transport residents.

Robert Chira

Robert Chira is an attorney practicing in Manhattan.

To The Editor:

Thanks to Gundula Schmidt-Graute for including me in her July 13 article about those of us who have managed to add a new profession into our working lives. I wanted your readers to know that I can be contacted through the phone number in my classified ad.

Also, I’m often known as “puRRple Tiger.” I’m in the process of forming low-cost classes and an entertainment group for all ages combining music, dance, and drama. My mission is to provide quality instruction and fun for all ages!

Irene Clark

RIOC Column from page 3

Local buses will depart the Comfort Station southbound at 9:10 and 9:40. Buses arriving at the tram before 10:00 will run continuously. A bus will meet the 10:00 a.m. tram, and each tram thereafter, before heading north. After 10:00, a 25-minute loop is built into the schedule. After reviewing the data, we have expanded the experiment into the next earlier rush hour. A demonstrable result may be the ability to reduce to two the number of buses on the street after 10:00 a.m. until the afternoon rush hour and still meet the schedule of an every-20-minute departure from The Octagon and meeting the tram. The schedule after 11:30 a.m. now so provides, as does the schedule after 8:30 p.m. Savings on eliminating the extra bus during this period would be substantial.

8. **Bridge Closures:** The NYC Department of Transportation has notified us that the reconstruction work requiring complete closure of the bridge to vehicular and pedestrian traffic during July was completed without incident. As was previously done, Emergency Medical Services, police, and fire responders were present on the island. The tram and red bus ran throughout the night.

9. **Skating rink:** Think Bryant Park. The previously imagined skating rink for Firefighters Field has been considered and put aside. The cost to RIOC of between \$250,000 and \$300,000 for a three-month season is just not justifiable. Lefrak has a permanently installed facility in his Newport development in New Jersey, and discussions with the developer of Southtown, when buildings 7, 8, and 9 go ahead, might see it happen.

10. **Sportspark:** The weekly table-tennis turnout on Wednesday evenings is growing. Come participate. The pool will be closed for about a month in the fall for resurfacing.

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Robert Shick, DMD

Dr. Robert Shick received his DMD degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. He completed the residency program at Kings County Hospital and received a certificate of geriatric dental medicine at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center. Dr. Shick also received an award for American Top Dentist of the year for 2009.

Periodontist: Dr. Selma Kaplan, DMD

Dr. Selma Kaplan received her DMD from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kaplan received her post-doctoral degree in periodontics from Columbia University. Presently, she is clinical instructor at Columbia University Periodontic Department.

Endodontist: Dr. Maria Pruss, DDS

Dr. Maria Pruss received her DDS from Nova Southeastern University School of Dental Medicine in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. She went on to complete a hospital-based residency program at New York Presbyterian Hospital. In 2007, Dr. Pruss received her post-doctoral degree in endodontics from Nova Southeastern University. She dedicates her time to Friends Without a Border, including volunteer missions to Angkor Hospital for Children in Cambodia, as well as volunteer missions to Israel and Spain. She is a member of the American Association of Endodontics, American Dental Association, and New York State Dental Association.

Orthodontist: Dr. George Pliakas, DDS

Dr. George Pliakas received his DDS degree and certification of orthodontics from Columbia University School of Dental Medicine. He is proficient in Spanish and fluent in Greek. As a native of New York, Dr. Pliakas attended Bronx High School of Science and he received his B.S. degree from Harvard University.

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