

Next issue:
Saturday,
October 9

The Main Street WIRE™

31st year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper

FDR Four Freedoms Park

received blocks of granite last week as officials, including the Governor and Mayor, came to mark that occasion with President Franklin Roosevelt's United Nations in the background. More photos, page 8.



At Roosevelt Landings, Again, the Question of Electrical Submetering

by Ronald Gift Mullins

The electrical submetering issue has come back to life in Roosevelt Landings. "Urban American is attempting to get you to believe that submetering of Roosevelt Landings is moving forward," said Joyce Mincheff, the head of the Roosevelt Landings Residents Association (RLRA) in a tenant meeting last week. Emphatically, she added, "This is not so!"

Referring to a newsletter distributed by Urban

American that said they were moving ahead on submetering, Mincheff said, "They led us to believe something has changed. In fact, *nothing* has changed. The Public Service Commission has *not* given them permission to move ahead."

Once in place, submetering would require tenants to pay for electricity that they use. At present, it is folded into a total rent figure.

In October 2008, Urban American was given permission by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to install meters in all apartments in the building then known as Eastwood. When sample bills were ready in early 2009, many residents were jolted by the high cost of the electricity they used. Elected officials, prodded by resident leaders, got the PSC to delay submetering and order the owners to meet a number of complex and detailed requirements before resubmitting their request for submetering. Assemblymember Micah Kellner was "very concerned with this issue," Mincheff said. "He stays on top of it every day."

At last week's tenant meeting, Mincheff stoutly declared that Urban American has not been "consultative" (one of a number of PSC requirements in a 106-page order) during meetings with tenant representatives at the company's various complexes. She said, "We are not buying their arguments that they can claim to the PSC that they have been consultative with us. They have not been. One of the problems we've experienced with Urban American is that they play foot-

See **Submetering**, page 10

RIOC Board Nominating Election Slated for 2012

The next community-wide election to nominate residents to the RIOC Board of Directors will be held in November, 2012. The Residents Association (RIRA) Common Council chose the 2012 date over a possible 2010 date in its meeting last week, in a 14-4 vote (with three abstentions).

The choice between 2010 and 2012 was briefly the subject of a dust-up between the Maple Tree Group (MTG), which has managed the last 13 years of the community's quest for a greater resident role in Island governance, and RIRA President Frank Farance, who favored 2010 (*The WIRE*, August 28 and September 11 issues, online at nyc10044.com).

Introducing a resolution prepared for MTG, Common Council member Ashton Barfield (who chairs

See **Nominate**, page 12

Election

Matthew Katz Announces Run for RIRA Presidency

Matthew Katz, former President of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) and a current member of its Common Council, announced last week that he will run for another term, his fourth. He held the office for two terms from 2000 to 2004, and another 2006-2008.

The incumbent President, Frank Farance, says he has not yet decided whether he will run in the November election for a second term.

Both Farance and Katz have a long history of involvement in the resident organization, serving as Common Councilors when not occupying the Presidency.

Katz's decision was spurred, in part, by the recent conflict between Farance and the Maple Tree Group, a subcommittee of RIRA's Government Relations Committee that has worked for the past 13 years to increase residents' control over the Island governance exerted by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. MTG, recommending that the next nominating election for RIOC Board members be held in 2012, aroused the ire of Farance,



who preferred 2010. (The RIRA Common Council voted last week, 14 to 4 with 3 abstentions, to accept the MTG recommendation.)

"Last evening, after the 9/11 memorial event ended," Katz wrote to his fellow Common Councilors, "I informed [Frank] that I intend to run for an unprecedented fourth term..."

"I told him that his remarks in the last two issues of *The Main* See **Katz**, page 12

Residents Association Makes Bi-Annual Call for Candidates

The Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) has started its search for candidates in November's election.

Members are elected from each Island building or building group, with representation on the Common Council keyed to the size of each. The only Island-wide officers are President and Vice President.

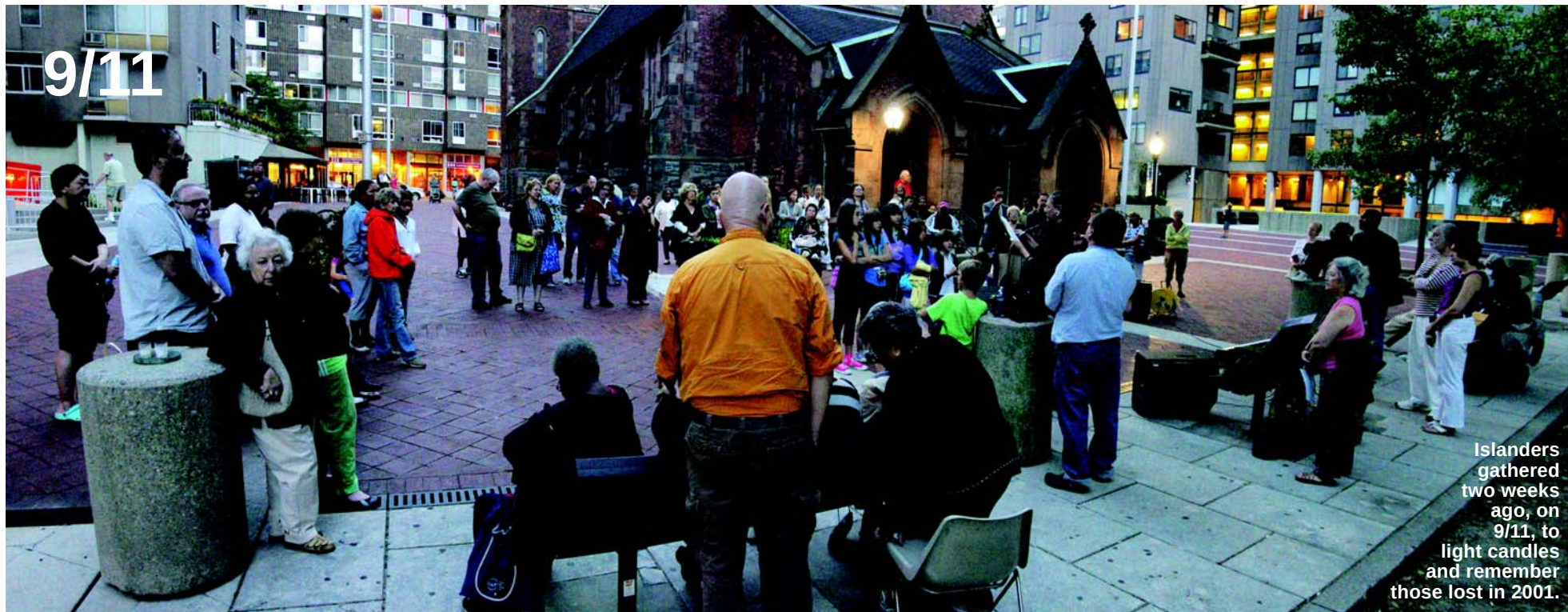
All Island residents, regardless of national citizenship, are eligible to run for a seat on the Council, the only restriction being age 18 or above.

The Council meets once a month (except in summer), almost always the first Wednesday of the month, at 8:00 p.m. Typically, meetings last two to three hours. RIRA is recognized by the State as the representative resident organization on Roosevelt Island.

Elections chair Aaron Hamburger says, "Nomination forms will be ready and available after September 30 at the Public Safety office (552 Main Street), or by e-mail request to ashamburger33@gmail.com.

"Completed forms are due by 8:00 p.m. Sunday, October 24," he adds. They are to be deposited in the RIRA nominations box at the Public Safety office.

The election is Tuesday, November 2, at the same time as federal and state elections. See **Election**, page 12



Islanders gathered two weeks ago, on 9/11, to light candles and remember those lost in 2001.

Politics

(A clip-and-mail editorial)

The WIRE sticks close to home most of the time. There’s enough going on here that is ingored by the “main-stream” press that we tend to swim happily in our own very special stream. That means that we rarely editorialize about anything beyond the promenade that graces our shores. Oh, sure, there’s the occasional nod toward Albany, since what they do there can have an impact here, as when the Governor recently vetoed legislation that would have inched us closer to democratic governance. Mostly, we leave the “big” editorials to *The Times*.

But this one’s a clip-and-send. It’s intended for your off-Island friends in other parts of the USA.

Roosevelt Island, you see, is very likely to vote Democratic in November. But the media are packed, these days, with predictions that the mid-term election will turn against the incumbents in Congress.

So we have to ask – and we hope you’ll ask your off-Island friends who might be tempted to punish the Democrat in the White House and the ones in Congress with their November ballot... We *have* to ask:

What part of ***Bush Recession*** don’t they understand?

What part of “We gave them the keys for eight years and they drove the country into the ditch” do they not understand?

W’s eight years of *Let the good times roll* for the financial industry, his macho attitude toward the rest of the world, his administration’s addled stagger into two wars (one of which had nothing to do with anything other than showing Dad that he could do *something* better), the years of mounting irresponsibility capped by an unavoidable bail-out...

And now, a Congress that is marked by partisan Republican unity designed wholly and solely to make an Obama presidency fail...

The prospect of Democratic incumbents being punished for all these Republican misfires and misdeeds is just a little too much to contemplate without comment.

So we hope you’ll clip this editorial and send it along to anybody you know who might be thinking of voting for the party that created and sustains the debacle of the Bush years. (And if you’re a reader who prefers not to cut through page 1, you can find this on the NYC10044 website, and print-clip-send that or just forward the address as an e-mail.)

We like the slogan: *Don’t give them back the keys.*
DL

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of local interest to the community, and to/from officials. Requests for a *Name Withheld* signature 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 MainStreetWIRE@usa.net 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 receive none, *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 are subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.



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Letters

To RIOC Vice President Fernando Martinez:

I am concerned about Public Safety removing bicycles that are locked up overnight.

I use my bicycle for commuting both on and off the Island, as I am sure many other residents do. I choose to leave my bike locked up outside because I do not have a lot of space inside my apartment, not because I don’t care about it.

Having my bike makes Island life better, especially with the Tram shut down and the unreliable, often slow red bus system. Knowing I can walk outside and ride saves a lot of time, and ends up saving me a lot of money on transportation costs.

I feel like the decision to not allow overnight bike parking is a bit beyond a simple decision to improve public safety. I don’t feel that banning bike parking makes the Island any safer and, in fact, it decreases the quality of life because it discourages commuting by bike (something that is taken into account when calculating the livability of boroughs and neighborhoods – it helps bring new residents and opportunities to Roosevelt Island).

I like having my bike outside. It is a sturdy bike that is made to be left outdoors, and I don’t feel I should have to store it inside if I don’t want to. It is not in disrepair, and does not blemish the appearance of the Island, nor does it pose any safety concern. I understand bicycles are stolen on occasion, but a bike can be stolen in Manhattan, or Queens, or Cleveland, and I have a responsibility to purchase a sturdy lock and acknowledge that I am taking a risk by leaving it outside.

I am writing in the hope that this policy will be reviewed and found to be unnecessary and wasteful.

As you can see, I have copied other members of RIOC as well as *The Main Street WIRE*, with the hope that a joint decision will be made in the best interest of the entire community.

Maggie Windsor

Dear Ms. Windsor:

RIOC encourages the use of cycling on the Island as a mode of transportation, recreation, and exercise. To that end, we want to ensure that there is available space on bike racks by prohibiting bike owners from using the racks as permanent storage. The policy is essentially that bikes are not permitted on the racks between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. daily. RIOC originally concentrated the enforcement of this policy in the Riverwalk area, which is the area most impacted with bikes left significantly unattended by their owners. However, the [housing] management companies recently asked the Public Safety Department to extend the policy to the bike racks at or near their respective properties. Finally, [Octagon manager] Barbara Clark responded to your original e-mail and stated that you should use the bike racks within the Octagon parking garage.

Fernando Martinez

To the Editor:

Our family has lived on Roosevelt Island since February 2007. As all who live or have lived on the Island know, it can be a rather special place. Sometimes, however, events occur that just wouldn’t happen in any other place.

For instance, I returned at the end of July from a two-week vacation in Germany. My family stayed on in Germany for several weeks more. At some point the week after I got back, I realized that our family’s two bikes, parked at the bike rack in front of Manhattan Park’s 20 River Road, were missing.

Indeed, all of the bikes that had been parked there when we left were missing.

I asked our usually very helpful building concierge what happened to the bikes. She simply rolled her eyes and suggested I speak with Manhattan Park management. So, I called the management office and spoke with a man named Brian. When I inquired about our bikes, he nervously explained that they had been removed by Public Safety at the request of Manhattan Park management because the bike rack was unsightly and a “health hazard” (yes, he actually said it).

I asked whether any notice had been given to the residents of Manhattan Park that their property was about to be handed over to Public Safety, as neither my wife nor I had seen any. Brian told me that a letter had been handed out to residents – it was no doubt placed on the floor in front of our apartment door, as are many other letters from management – giving those with bikes two weeks to remove them from the bike rack. As I found no letter from management upon my return, I’m guessing that the same person who placed the letter at our door probably picked it up a week or so later while we were on vacation. It apparently never occurred

to Manhattan Park management that to do something like this in the middle of summer, when people are gone for longish periods of time, might take a bit more effort at giving proper notice.

In any event, Brian suggested I speak with Public Safety in order to retrieve our bikes. So, off I went. I spoke with a somewhat embarrassed officer who informed me that Public Safety only kept the bikes for a week and then “donated” them to the Thrift Store on Main Street. He added, again somewhat apologetically, that there were “just so many bikes, we couldn’t store them all,” adding, “There have been a lot of people in here looking for their bikes.”

Off I went to the Thrift Store, willing to pay something in order to recover my property. Instead of a sympathetic hearing, I was rather brusquely informed that “All the bikes are gone.” I was a bit startled, so I asked “all of them?” Yes, I was told, they had all been sold (no doubt to a broker or bike dealer before their owners could claim them).

So, I went back to Brian to ask him what Manhattan Park management, having set off this chain of events, was going to do about it. That was at least a month ago and Brian is “still working on it.” He’s not been very good about following up with me, so I have to call every week or so. He might hope that we’ll just go away, but, then, there is just the little matter that Manhattan Park brought in Public Safety to seize our property and give it away to the Thrift Store – all without actual notice to us. I invite other Manhattan Park residents who were victimized by management to contact me at daniel.yorks@yahoo.com. Perhaps we can discuss together ways to address this matter.

Daniel Yorks

To the Editor:

As I have done for the past 30 years, I recently tried to donate some gently used toys, books, and children’s clothing to our Roosevelt Island Thrift Shop. Reversing a policy that had been in effect since the founding of this worthy Island exchange, the worker on duty refused to give me a receipt for my donation. When I asked why, she said I should ask Father Miqueli. I did. His answer? “People have abused the receipts.”

It clearly is the right of the Thrift Shop to refuse to give receipts for shoddy or undesirable contributions. But to deny legally required receipts to everyone seems a bit of overkill. The Thrift Shop has long been a valuable and important symbol of the good Samaritan spirit of our community. It saddens me to see the loss of this spirit in the management of this community resource.

I ended up taking my contribution to “Hour Children,” a thrift shop just a few blocks from the 36th Street bridge at 36-11A 12th Street, where it was gratefully received – *with a receipt!* Not only was the contribution acknowledged with the sentence “*We are deeply grateful for your donations to Hour Children,*” but there was also the legal disclaimer, “*Values listed above have been assigned by the donor. Hour Children is not responsible for the listing and the evaluation of the items donated. All contributions of goods are tax deductible for income tax purposes to the extent allowed by law.*” Isn’t this a more enlightened way to deal with possible “abuse?”

I suggest that RIOC make the suggestion to Thrift Shop management that it comply with the legal obligation to give receipts for donations. Failing their agreement to do this, I’m sure the voluminous space they occupy *free of charge* would be greatly appreciated by other charitable organizations as part of the current re-examination of Main Street spaces. Recently, “Hour Children,” for example, received the highest rating of 4-stars from Charity Navigator, a highly respected charity evaluator. Only one-quarter of all charities evaluated by Charity Navigator have received this highest rating, indicating an organization’s ability to efficiently manage and grow its finances, and execute its mission in a fiscally responsible way. For more details, see www.hourchildren.org.

Roy Eaton

To the Editor:

I have just finished attempting to read the barrage of four letters from Maple Tree Group (MTG) members, in the September 11 issue, castigating RIRA President Frank Farance. These letters occupied more than one page, or almost 20% of the total.

I have no quarrel with the letter writers, but I do with *The WIRE*’s policy of publishing all letters received.

Four letters were overkill and were probably read only by a small number of readers, many of whom scratched their heads. Based on a sampling of my Island friends, even old-timers, the response was consistent: Why does *The WIRE* waste news space on repetitive letters on an arcane subject of limited interest to the vast majority of us? One statement by the MTG would have been better focused and received more attention.

Don Eremin

Additional **Letters** on page 12

Letters deadline for Oct. 9 issue:
Tue, Oct. 5, 5:00 p.m.

The Annual Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (GA) is under way and New York City is in gridlock. Even Roosevelt Island is affected, from an increased police presence because of the proximity of sight lines from our southern tip to the United Nations, to a delay of our Red Buses on their special run to Manhattan and the postponement of a scheduled police department security inspection of our new Tram system. And, although President Obama does not have us on his route as he visits the GA, with so many UN families living on Roosevelt Island, we are truly part of the diverse tapestry that makes up New York City. Though experiencing some delays, we, however, are not in gridlock – as this week’s review of our projects, upcoming activities, and events demonstrates.

The RIOC Column

Major Projects Under Way

Tram Opening – The updated schedule to open both the north and south lanes of the Tram has been moved to November. Although RIOC, along with our Tram contractors, had hoped to re-open by mid-October, several delays have made that impossible. Even though the engineering work is near completion, the Tram system will have to go through a variety of inspections by the State Department of Labor (DOL), as well as New York City emergency services, before it is formally certified by DOL as ready for operation. Our goal continues to be to have a safe and beautiful Tram in operation as soon as humanly possible. The Tram cabins have arrived. If you would like to sneak a peak, for the next few days, they will be located in the parking lot east of the Riverwalk oval lawn area.

As previously reported, rather than further delaying re-opening, the renovation of the two stations will

be performed after the restart of Tram operations. Construction work on the stations will be, to the best of our ability, coordinated with non-peak Tram schedules, minimizing travel disruptions. Completion of the station work is scheduled for spring 2011.

FDR Memorial – Phase I construction is on schedule, and construction of phase IIA has started ahead of expectations. On September 13, the Governor and Mayor were both on hand at a ceremony celebrating the arrival of the first granite blocks for the memorial.

Southpoint Open Space (Green Rooms/Wild Gardens)

– The comfort station has been delivered and assembled. Paving of the east drive near Strecker Lab has begun. Fall planting has begun, and the opening date is scheduled for spring 2011. We are working closely with the FDR Memorial developers to coordinate our two projects and create a smooth transition between the two areas.

Other Projects in Progress

AVAC – Installation of the first of two new compactors has been completed. Delivery of the second compactor is expected shortly. The NYC Department of Sanitation is sprucing up the interior of the AVAC building in time for Open House New York (OHNY). RIOC’s AVAC facility (along with other Island venues) has been chosen as a site for New Yorkers to visit as part of the OHNY October 8-9 City-wide project. See **RIOC Column**, page 6



Leslie Torres, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
LTorres@RIOC.com

The WIRE publishes these columns as a service to RIRA, RIOC, and the community, and does not control or censor either.

1. RIRA Elections. We elected Aaron Hamburger as Chair of the RIRA Nominations Committee, which is responsible for getting candidates for RIRA’s approximately 50 seats, including building representatives and two Island-wide representatives (President and Vice President). We elected Joyce Mincheff as chair of the RIRA Elections Committee, which is responsible for running the elections. Unfortunately, Mincheff has since resigned because of difficulties with the Nominations Committee, who didn’t include her in discussions and review. I haven’t seen the documents forwarded to *The WIRE*. Hamburger has not responded to questions on who was on the committee and when they met. You would think that with all fuss made previously, Common Council members would be sensitive towards including *all* members that wish to participate, but this still continues. Immediately, I will look for a new Elections Committee Chair for proper elections this November.

2. RIOC Director Nominee Elections to be held in 2012. We voted 14-4-3 to postpone the RIOC elections. I believe they made a serious mistake. With no resident nominees, the Governor will start filling the spots. What will we do? We’ve already lost this argument. The Governor will say, *You had the opportunity to run elections, but chose not to*. A quick election in response? *But short elections don’t give the best candidates* (according to MTG). Running a longer election? *But only elections in conjunction with biannual general elections produce good candidates* (according to MTG). We have thwarted every line of rhetoric for the Governor to pay attention to us. MTG suggested elections *after* term expiration.

For example, RIOC director seats expiring in June 2011 (Kalkin and Kraut) would not face elections until 2012, giving them two extra years. In the 2012 elections, the next candidate’s four-year term is shortened: starts in 2013 and expires June 2015. Elections *after* expiration *never* produce a good result, unless you’re interested in keeping the current RIOC Board members in place (which gets back to the secret meetings, apparent conflicts of interest, etc.). The Governor understands this: manipulation to keep present Board members. Mr. Katz worries about burning bridges, but doesn’t consider MTG’s legislation to be “taking all the marbles” (we have 5 resident directors now, we want all 7), which is just a poke-in-the-eye to the Governor. Katz and others don’t see the RIOC Board, in exerting much more force than necessary, was the perfect corporate manipulation: coax them to flex their muscles to toss Shane (unwanted by the Governor), then point out that the all-resident Board is predisposed to too much force (mere Board resolutions could have boxed in Shane). The Shane firing becomes long-term rhetoric for why the Governor will give no more on self-governance. In sum: (1) we’ve ruined the rhetoric and elections to provide our own nominees, (2) MTG legislation is our own power grab that caught the at-

Continued at right



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

The RIRA Column

Monday
9:30 **Ballroom Dancing**
11:00 **Tai Chi**
6:00 **Yoga with Nurit**

Tuesday
9:30 **Chinese Massage**
10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**
10:30 **Ping Pong**
11:00 **Blood Pressure**
2:00 **Paint & Sculpt**
7:30 **Games (RISA)**

Wednesday
9:30 **Yoga with Irene**
10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**
10:30 **Computers**
10:30 **Spanish**

Thursday
9:30 **Stronger Bones**
10:45 **Ping Pong**
12:30 **Movie**

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

Friday
9:30 **Yoga with Irene**
10:30 **Ballroom Dancing**
10:30 **English as 2nd Language**
1:30 **Korean Games**
6:00 **Ballroom Dancing** (last Fri each month)
7:00 **Games (RISA)**

Special Events
None listed.

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Run for Congo Women, today (Sat Sep 25), 9am. Info: nyc10044.com/z/2. **Roosevelt Island Bridge closings** associated with the meeting of the U.N. General Assembly, **through Mon Sep 27**, periodically 7am-7pm, as river traffic is rerouted to the east channel.

Registration (and classes begin) at **The Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, today (Sat Sep 25), 10:30am-1pm, Howe Theatre at 548 Main St. (red awning). (See ad, page 9.)

Roosevelt Island Tram, Past and Future, exhibit by Tad Sudol, Gallery RIVAA, **closes tomorrow**. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun**, 11am-5pm.

Islander Roy Eaton in Concert, tonight (Sat Sep 25), 8pm, Sondheim Center, Fairfield, Iowa. *Quantum of Preludes* program with works by Bach, Chopin, Gershwin, Still, Joplin. \$15 (seniors and students, \$12). Information **641-472-2787**.

Vocal Recital by Islander Sherie Helstien, tomorrow (Sun Sep 26), 3pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Music of Donaudy, Faure, Schumann, Obradors. Free.



– Coming Week & Next Weekend –

Toastmasters, Mon Sep 27, 8pm. Visitors welcome. Info **212-751-9577**. **RIOC’s Fall for Arts Festival, Sat Oct 2**, 11am-4pm, Good Shepherd Plaza and nearby areas.

Book Launch with readings from *The Man Who Kow-Towed* by Islander Mary Camper-Titsingh, **Sat Oct 2**, 4-7pm, Gallery RIVAA (ad, page 9).

– Continuing –

Observations from the Urban Landscape, photographic works by Deborah Julian, **daily** 8am-9pm, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St., through October 10.

Open-Rec Basketball, Sat, 10am-1pm, 2-6pm, Sportspark. All ages; free.

Open Swim at Sportspark, **Sat-Fri**. For hours and fees, see ad, page 16. **Renaissance** painting group, **Sat pm**; oil/acrylic with mentor Art Zamora. Call **917-291-8799** for time, location, and fee information.

Reading Aloud for an audience of children, **Mon-Fri**, 3:30-4pm, at the Library.

Toastmasters, 2nd and last **Mon**, 8pm. Info: **212-669-1679**.

Knitting & Crochet Circle, Tue, 10am, Library. Adults.

Ping Pong: Open Play, Tue & Fri, 6-9pm, Sportspark. **Class, Wed**, 6-9pm, Sportspark. All ages; free.

Science-Fiction Discussion Group, first Tue of month, 6:30pm, Library.

Poetry Hour (adults), **last Tue** of month, 6:30pm, Library.

Picture-Book Bingo / Story Time for toddlers to pre-K, **Wed**, 10:30.

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

Nintendo Wii Play (kids), **Wed**, 3pm, Library.

Book Bingo for Kids 5-12 years old, **Thu**, 4pm, Library.

Robots for Kids, Thu, 6-8pm, Youth Program, 506 Main St. Pizza for the kids. Information: **917-751-2900**.

– Future Weeks –

The Main Street WIRE – Next

issue **Sat Oct 9. Advertising**

Deadlines: Display ads, **Wed Sep 29**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Oct 5**; 6,000 copies due **Thu Oct 7**.

Additional issues in 2010: Oct 23; Nov 6, 20; Dec 11 (December schedule revised). **2011:** Jan 15, 29; Feb 12, 26; Mar 12, 26; Apr 9, 23; May 7, 21; Jun 4, 18; Jul 2; Aug 27; Sep 10, 24; Oct 8, 22; Nov 5, 19; Dec 10. **News phone, 212-826-9056; urgent matters, 917-617-0449. Advertising**, display and classified: **917-587-3278**.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Oct 6**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Meetings begin with a public session for resident comments/announcements.

Open House New York, Fri-Sat Oct 8-9, 9am-4pm. On the Island, tours of AVAC, The Octagon lobby, Sportspark, and the Historical Society visitor kiosk at Tramway Plaza.

Jeremy Plays Guitar concert for children (all ages), **Sat Oct 9**, 3:30pm, PS/IS 217 cafeteria. \$10 (family, \$30). Co-sponsored by the Day Nursery and the PS/IS 217 PTA.

Toastmasters, Mon Oct 11, 8pm. Visitors welcome. Info **212-751-9577**.

Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Board of Directors meeting, **Tue Oct 12**, 5:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public-comment period precedes formal session.

From the RIOC Archives panel discussion, **Mon Oct 25**, time and location to be announced.

Toastmasters, Mon Oct 25, 8pm. Visitors welcome. Info **212-751-9577**. **Halloween Parade, Sat Oct 30**, noon, Blackwell House. (See *RIOC Column* continuation, page 6.)

Election Day, Tue Nov 2. General election and election of RIRA officers and delegates.

The WIRE

Senior Center

Monday
9:30 **Ballroom Dancing**
11:00 **Tai Chi**
6:00 **Yoga with Nurit**

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7:00 **Games (RISA)**

Special Events
None listed.

tention of the Governor, (3) RIOC Board overreacted on the Shane firing, which demonstrates why we (residents) aren’t good at governing.

3. RIRA Presidents have always spoken their own opinions in this column. I agree with Ms. Vicki Feinmel who seems to have handy my e-mails from 1999. Ms. Feinmel omits reporting that at the October 1999 RIRA meeting (recorded by Mr. Matthew Katz, then Secretary of RIRA) RIRA agreed with my suggestion: the RIRA Column in *The WIRE* is always an opinion column. Mr. Patrick Stewart, Mr. Katz, Mr. Steve Marcus, and I have always said this was an opinion column that might or might not necessarily represent the positions of RIRA.

Editor’s note: *The RIRA Column* was received after deadline, and space was not available to publish it in its entirety. The full column is posted online with this issue of *The WIRE*, at nyc10044.com/z/t.

Please continue reading at nyc10044.com/z/t

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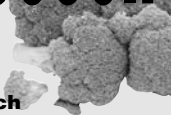
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RIRA Council Backs a Request for RIOC Action on New Library Location

The Common Council of the Residents Association (RIRA) has called for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) to take a leadership role in making 504 Main Street available for an expanded New York Public Library (NYPL) branch here.

The Council unanimously supported a resolution brought to it by Roosevelt Island Community Literary Associates (RICLA), which ran the Island’s library as an independent entity for 18 years before it became an NYPL branch in 1998. RICLA lobbied for takeover by NYPL, and succeeded with the help of then-City Councilmember Gifford Miller. Miller’s aide, Jessica Lappin, worked on the matter; she later ran for Miller’s seat when he ran for mayor, and she represents the district today.

The RICLA-RIRA resolution calls for RIOC to pay a substantial portion of the cost of making the space ready for NYPL – whatever the City cannot immediately provide – with NYPL and the City to repay those costs over a period of years, a provision made necessary by the City’s shortage of funds.

The present library space has been deemed inadequate by most users and those who operate the facility. It has no restroom, for example, and it suffers from periodic floods from apartments overhead; at one time, odors from the now-closed fish store were a problem.

The resolution also calls for RIOC to “convert a portion of the second floor... to a first-class meeting and cultural space [for] general community group use [and] larger branch-library events.”

The full text of the resolution is available online at nyc10044.com/z/s.



RIOC Column from page 3

gram. See below – Upcoming Events – for additional information.

Island Security Camera System – Phase I (installation of cameras from Motorgate to 504 Main Street) is to be completed by the end of this month. Discussions of phase II (from 504 to Southpoint Park) are in progress.

Motorgate Roof Waterproofing & Stairwells – The stairwell work has been completed. Waterproofing of the rooftop and the exterior of the stairwell bulkheads is 40% finished, with estimated completion at the end of November.

Good Shepherd HVAC – Full system replacement. Demolition of the old system has been completed, and shop drawings are being prepared for approval. Project completion is estimated for the end of November.

Approved Projects to be started this Spring

Good Shepherd Plaza – Restoration of the plaza, including alleviation of drainage problems, was expected to start Oct 3. After meeting with the contractor who was the successful bidder, it became evident that the work could not be completed before winter, when it would have to halt due to weather and resume in the spring. To minimize disruption, RIOC has determined to postpone the beginning of the project to spring 2011, in order to complete the work from start to finish without interruption. We are also investigating the replacement of the existing stairway at the south side of the plaza leading to the Rivercross lobby with an ADA-compliant ramp.

Projects in Design & in RFP Stages

Octagon Field Border Landscaping – The new soccer field re-opened on August 26, to great community acclaim. Photographs are available on the RIOC website at rioc.ny.gov/. A Request for Proposals to replace trees along the west side of the soccer field has been issued, and responses are due September 24. We hope to start work later this fall.

Good Shepherd Roof Replacement – Responses to a Request for Proposals from qualified architects to provide plans and specifications for the roofing replacement were due Sep-

Islander’s Historical Novel Features Her Prominent Ancestor in His Key Trade Role

From a late-18th-century European perspective, East-West trade was in its infancy after initial contacts by Marco Polo and other travelers. Merchants knew about the markets of India, Japan, and China, but were unable to penetrate them, largely due to their respective leaders’ reluctance to engage with Westerners.

In this milieu of mistrust and potential economic bonanza, Isaac Titsingh of the Netherlands played a historic role. As the first modern European to meet with the leaders of India, Japan, and China, he opened the doors for the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC), the *Dutch East Indies Company*. In some respects, Titsingh is considered the first global merchant.

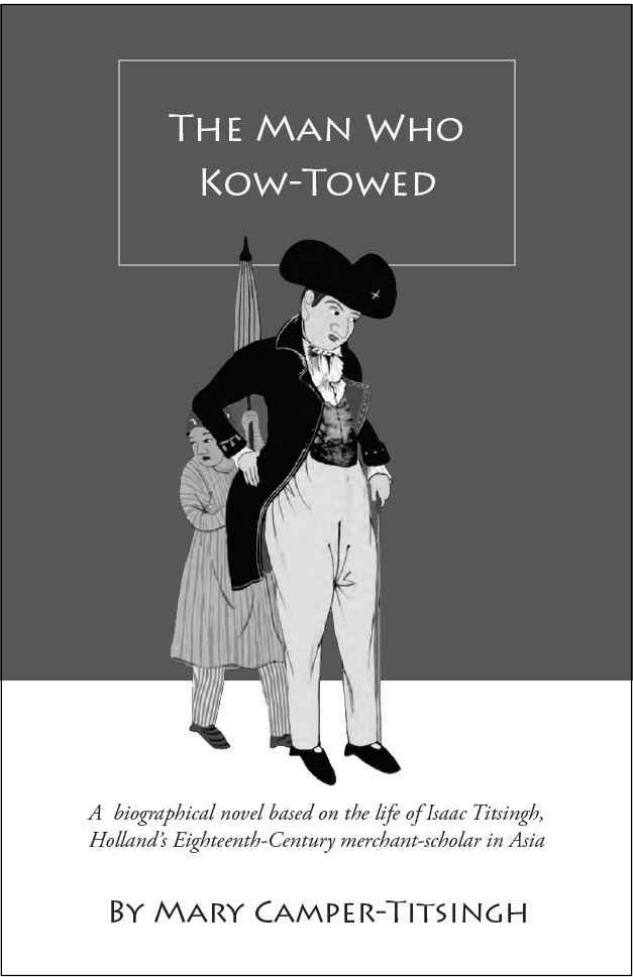
His Dutch-American descendant, Mary Camper-Titsingh, has written a fictional account of Isaac Titsingh’s travels, encounters with royalty, and commercial successes. *The Man Who Kow-Towed* recounts how, unlike the British ambassador, Titsingh did not consider it beneath his dignity to kow-tow or kneel and touch his forehead to the ground before the Chinese emperor as a sign of respect. The shrewd Dutch ambassador recognized that the profits that would follow would reward him greatly for this moment of indignity.

“Isaac Titsingh was a man of extraordinary vision who understood how to transcend cultural barriers to achieve the open markets that the VOC trading company – and the world in general – needed to prosper and grow. He had an amazing grasp of Japanese culture, as evidenced by his publications. I am honored to share his legacy with my Dutch and American family members, and those interested in global trade, through my historical novel,” said Mary Camper-Titsingh.

Drawing on maritime and royal court records, contemporary accounts, and Titsingh’s own writings and publications, her story traces the career and activities of her ancestor:

- 1766-1779 in Batavia (now Jakarta), Indonesia, rising to VOC Chief Factor and VOC Governor General
- 1779-1784 in Dejima and Edo, Japan, Chief Factor (senior VOC administrator)
- 1785-1792 in Chinsura, India, Governor General
- 1792-1793 in Batavia (now Jakarta), Indonesia, Corporate Treasurer and later Maritime Commissioner

Students of art teacher Camille Mouquinho of The Child School / Legacy High School marked the United Nations Peace Summit and International Peace Day this week with a large chalk mural.



• 1794-1795 in Canton and Peking, China, Ambassador
Ms. Camper-Titsingh will read excerpts from *The Man Who Kow-Towed* on Saturday, October 2, at 6:00 p.m. at Gallery RIVAA (527 Main Street). Copies of her book will be available for purchase for \$15.00.

For more information about Mary Camper Titsingh or *The Man Who Kow-Towed*, please visit www.petruscamper.com/titsingh.

Mary Camper-Titsingh is a Dutch-American and a direct descendant of Isaac Titsingh, who was the only European to be welcomed in audiences by all three of the major rulers in the Far East – Japan, China, and India – during the 18th century.

During travels in Asia, and while she worked as the Investment Research Librarian at the Ford Foundation in New York City, Ms. Camper-Titsingh studied trade relations between Europe and Asia in which Isaac Titsingh’s vital role was relatively unknown. Similar to Titsingh’s own publications about Asian culture and customs, she hopes this book will introduce Isaac Titsingh and, like him, inform today’s readers about the origins of globalization.

tember 14. The responses are currently being evaluated. The replacement work will be scheduled to start in spring 2011.

Blackwell House Interior Renovation and Disabled Accessible Ramp – Proposals are being reviewed, and we are pursuing some value-engineering opportunities to keep costs down. Because some funding is being provided by New York City, a Vendex check (City system to verify contractors’ *bona fides*) is required. Once the lengthy City approval process is completed, the project is expected to require six months to complete.

Public Safety Noise Attenuation Project – The air-conditioning system for the Public Safety Department unfortunately produces some unanticipated noise in the Roosevelt Landings courtyard area behind 550 Main Street. We are currently reviewing proposals to install sound-attenuating shielding to address this problem.

Sportspark Activities

Sportspark Activities have been expanded again. Beginning October 2, Wheelchair Basketball will be available from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. every Saturday at Sportspark. Please see the RIOC website for last-minute changes to expanded pool, ping-pong, and basketball hours.

Pool Schedule (\$5 per adult, \$3 for kids 4-17, and free for Seniors and children through age 3):

Master Swim – Monday and Friday 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Senior Water Aerobics – Wednesday and Friday 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Adult Water Aerobics – Sunday noon-1:00 p.m.
Adult Learn to Swim – Sunday 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Ping Pong (no charge):
Free Play – Tuesday and Friday 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Classes – Wednesday 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Basketball (no charge):
Open recreation on Saturdays (two sessions) – 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Recent Community Events:

Hispanic Heritage Month – On September 18, to kick off

Hispanic Heritage month on Roosevelt Island, the Willie Viallegas Entre Amigos Band performed classic Latino music at the Meditation Steps, and provided a detailed history of its development and influences on other genres of contemporary music. To view pictures from the event, please visit rioc.ny.gov/

Upcoming Events

Run For Congo – A 5K run held annually on Roosevelt Island is scheduled today (September 25) at 9:00 a.m. For sign-up information, please visit www.runforcongowomen.org or rioc.ny.org.

Fall for Arts – Annual Arts, Food, and Fun Festival will be celebrated October 2 in Blackwell Park and the Rivercross lawn. Festivities include “hands-on” art and craft workshops for all ages, performance of *Oedipus Rex* at the amphitheatre, and a live performance by the popular drum and bass group Hank & Cupcakes. There will be puppet shows for the children, food, and much more. In partnership with the RIVAA Gallery. For more information, please visit rioc.ny.gov/.

Open House New York – On October 8 and 9, Roosevelt Island will be a host site for the annual City-wide Open House New York celebration, where our fair City shows off its best features. From 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., New Yorkers can have escorted tours of AVAC, the Octagon lobby, Sportspark, and the Roosevelt Island Historical Society information kiosk. What a great opportunity for the Island!

From the RIOC Archives – On October 25 at Sportspark, a panel discussion co-sponsored with the Roosevelt Island Historical Society will explore some of the materials from the RIOC Archives.

Roosevelt Island’s Annual Halloween Parade – On Saturday, October 30, in partnership with Urban American, managers of Roosevelt Landings, the parade of ghosts and goblins begins at Blackwell House at noon and continues on to PS 217. Everyone is encouraged to come dressed in a Halloween costume. More fun and festivities are planned for immediately after the parade at Capobianco Field. In the event of rain, festivities will be held inside PS 217.

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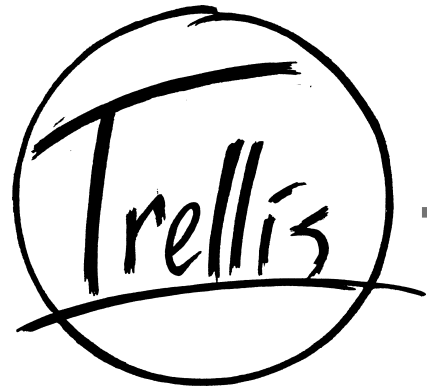
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Autumn

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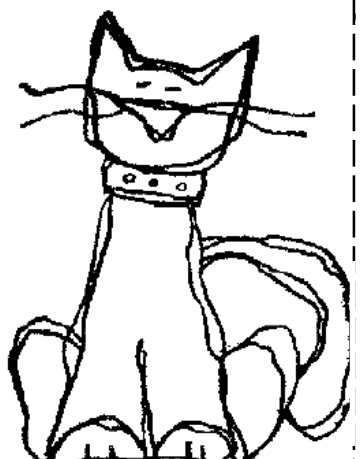
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More Photos from Last Week's Four Freedoms Park Ceremony



Politicians on Hand:
Borough President Scott Stringer, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Assemblymember Micah Kellner, former Ambassador William van den Heuvel (who chaired the event), Governor David Paterson, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.



Above, a moment at the dais between Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg; right, City Councilmember Jessica Lappin and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney; below, politicians sign a placard to be stored in the monument: Stringer, Kellner, Bloomberg, Quinn, Maloney.



Below, barges bearing the blocks of granite, and the crane that transferred them (as in the photo at right) to the construction site.



Photos:
Maria Casotti
and
Website NYC10044.com



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Tram’s Return Date Now Said to be Sometime in November; Meantime, Both Cabins Have Arrived and the Work Continues



Photos:
Judy Berdy
and
Website
nyc10044.com



“Gift-wrapped” cabin at top is one of two in the photo at right, in Tram project’s staging area. After the second cabin arrived, empty cable reels were trucked off-site.

Submetering from page 1

loosely with the term ‘consultative.’ They say we’ve had a ‘consultative’ process when they’ve simply made presentations and refused to answer our questions. It is not in our best interest to lend our help in their aim of gaining permission to submeter Roosevelt Landings.”

In a statement, Joshua Eisenberg, General Counsel for Urban American, said that, at several meetings with the resident leaders of Roosevelt Landings, “we provided as much relevant information as we had at the time, and engaged in a lengthy dialogue surrounding their questions and concerns. Between meetings, we have responded to written questions and correspondence with comprehensive information. In our most recent meeting with the resident leaders, we had prepared answers to their latest round of questions, as well as information that showed that a majority of residents would actually benefit financially from submetering. But the meeting was adjourned by the residents before we could complete our presentation and answer their questions.”

To that meeting, Urban American said it brought the data showing that a majority of residents would actually save on their annual housing expenses under submetering. “In fact, 285 residents could have saved more than \$500 last year,” Eisenberg said. “Of those, 120 would have saved more than \$1,000. We also had information to show the residents how we planned to satisfy all of the standards set by the PSC, and how we planned to help considerably those tenants at risk before any submetering went into effect.” There are 1,003 apartments in Roosevelt Landings.

“The only bit of information we gathered from what they provided,” Mincheff said, “is that 45% of our households will be financially harmed by their plan. That figure is the result of calculating tenant use over a period of one year.”

A major hurdle for installing submetering in Roosevelt Landings is that, because the buildings were built with little insulation and because they are close to the water, the power needed for heat can be very high. Urban American offered to segregate power used for heating, and charge only for other uses of electricity. But those “other uses” would include air conditioning, for which residents would be charged.

A device called WiSuite is being considered for tracking

electrical usage. Eisenberg said that, while the company is not pushing any device that would record how much electricity is used for heat, “We are excited about some of the new and innovative technologies out there, and are exploring a variety of devices to see what will work best. We are currently testing WiSuite’s system that has a wireless programmable thermostat and modules that log energy used by the baseboard heaters. It is important to understand, however, that this technology and others like it are not yet in widespread use in apartment buildings, and the PSC must approve any device to log and calculate energy use against the approved submeters that are installed in the apartments.”

Rick Bojahra of WiSuite, a Canadian company, said it had conducted a test in a three-bedroom Roosevelt Landings apartment, using its WiPoint system to measure the electricity for baseboard heating. The test results are being studied by Urban American management.

Bojahra said that WiSuite was originally designed for use in hotel rooms to monitor the heat needed in occupied rooms. He said that WiSuite had been reconfigured to track electrical usage on baseboard electrical heaters. The figures are stored in the device, then transferred on command to an off-site computer.

But Mincheff said, “WiSuite, which is experimental, has never been used in a residence of our sort. Even if it works, it will not deal with drafts, leaks, and infiltration issues that Urban American has overlooked for many years. It will not unravel the tangled web of wiring in each home that may or may not reflect usage by common areas or other apartments.”

To determine whether Urban American has done all that it can to make the buildings secure from severe weather, residents of Roosevelt Landings were given a two-page survey to complete and return to RLRA. It asks for information about areas where outside air could get in, or problems with electrical use. “So far, we’ve received about 80 surveys,” Mincheff said. Urban American has claimed all along that they’ve done the work that the building needs, but our survey shows that they haven’t. We know that tenants have long received doubletalk instead of action on their repair problems. You can bet, they’re listening to their com-

plaints now!” (Tenants are being asked to submit surveys by dropping them under the door at 540/1604 or 580/470. Mincheff said she’ll answer questions called to 212-486-4700.)

Urban American, responding in a statement, said “Greenfit” packages were being installed in each of the apartments last year. The package included replacement of malfunctioning heaters, air-sealing, and water-conservation measures. Along with the new windows, this package is designed to eliminate many of the drafts and air infiltration that may occur in an apartment.

The building’s residents association is also conducting an experiment called “Unplugging Eastwood.” Mincheff explained that there is concern that the apartment meters may be recording electricity used for lobbies, hallways, and outside lighting, or in neighboring apartments. “By unplugging everything in an apartment we can see that the meter does not move. If it does, then there is some other source that is drawing power. This has to be investigated.” She said the test will be done in the fall, when the heat and lights are on in public spaces. The apartments will be carefully selected so that just one will be unplugged within a section of a building.

Doryne Isley, Urban American’s portfolio manager, attended the September 15 meeting and assured the residents that if they had any problems during the “Unplugging” experiment – a refrigerator that doesn’t restart, for example – they should notify the management office. “We want to help make sure the experiment works well,” she said.

Urban American said in a statement that the majority of tenants will save money with this program. “We’ve worked very hard – and will continue to work very hard – to improve the program, to inform residents, and to improve apartments so that we can all reduce consumption.”

“Urban American has told us that they will submit their plan to move ahead with submetering to the PSC,” Mincheff said, “but we will continue to fight so that our neighbors are not financially harmed, and the landlords can’t green their pockets instead of the building. This problem is far from over.”



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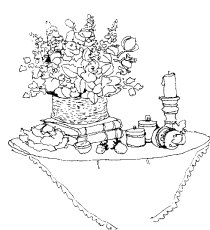
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Nominate from page 1

RIRA’s Government Relations Committee) said that MTG had concluded that RIOC Board nominating elections should be held in even-numbered years, at the same time as elections for the RIRA Common Council, state, and federal posts, as the only way “to get the turnout necessary for the election to have credibility.”

Barfield explained that RIOC Board terms are associated with the seats, not keyed to elections or appointment dates. She said that the timing of terms in relation to RIRA elections leads to a choice between “pre-election” or “post-election” – that is, holding the nominating election *before* terms expire or *after* terms have expired. “The dilemma is that, in order to have the RIOC Board nominating election coincide with the other elections, you’ve got to go long, or you’ve got to go short. It’s not a great choice,” said Barfield. The resolution passed by the RIRA Council pointed out that, as of November (2010), the current tenures of the four RIOC Board members appointed in June 2008, after the first community-wide nominating election, will be only a little over two years, and “it would be to the community’s benefit to have those Board members serve two more years, in order to utilize the more productive and valuable time following their initial adjustment and learning period.”

Council member Joyce Mincheff, who has run RIRA elec-

The Current RIOC Board	
<i>Seats up for election in 2012</i>	
Fay Christian (expired May 2010)	
Jonathan Kalkin (expires June 2011)	
David Kraut (expires June 2011)	
Kathie Grimm (expired 6/09 and reappointed; re-expires June 2013)	
<i>Seats up for election in 2014</i>	
Howard Polivy (expires December 2011)	
Michael Shinozaki (expires June 2013)	
Margie Smith (expires July 2013)	
(Two additional members serve by reason of their State positions – a representative of the Director of the Budget, and the Housing Commissioner, who chairs the Board.)	

tions for over a decade, commented, “There is no really clear answer. No matter what you do, there’s good about it, and there’s bad about it. So there really is no perfect decision.”

In discussions leading up to the choice of 2012, it was pointed out that community nominees, if elected in 2010, might face an extended waiting period while existing terms were completed. The resolution also pointed out that full terms served would better enable the community to judge the performance of those whose names had been put forward by the elective process.

Jeopardy

Farance pointed out that residents and the Residents Association have no formal or direct control over the process of selecting RIOC Board members – a gubernatorial duty. “What we have,” he said, “is the ability to have a set of candidates *ready* to be appointed.” (The community’s power to nominate RIOC Board members is based on the fact that anyone can make a

suggestion; the moral authority to do so has not been codified, but it has been informally recognized by RIOC and the Spitzer-Paterson administration for the last three years.)

The danger of the “post-election” choice made by the RIRA Council – holding the nominating election *after* terms expire – is that a new Governor might intervene and nominate someone without waiting for a community election.

There have been only two community elections for RIOC Board members – in February 2008 and May 2009. Those elections led to the appointment of six of the seven current Board members, the exception being its longest-serving member, David Kraut. Because terms expire within the next two years (one has already expired), open seats could tempt the next Governor to appoint someone without waiting for community nominations and the vetting process that follows.

Primary Election Maloney Spanks Saujani

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney scored over 90% in last week’s primary election voting on Roosevelt Island.

At PS/IS 217, Maloney received 475 votes. Her opponent got 51.

District-wide, Maloney also scored spectacularly well against Reshma Saujani, who was the first to “go negative” as she tried to pull the party’s nomination out from under the six-term incumbent. On Roosevelt Island, Democratic voters showed both party and personal loyalty to Maloney.

Other incumbents did well here, too. State Senator Jose Serrano took 86.4% of the votes against his rival, Mark Escoffery-Bey (382 to 60), and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand got 79.6% of Island votes (362 to 93) at PS 217.

Eric Schneiderman, seeking the nod to run for Attorney General, pulled 62% of the Island’s votes (313) against four other candidates, none of whom scored more than 95 votes.

Republican voting was light, with only 44 votes cast in the quest for the Republican nomination for Governor, where the overall victor, Carl Paladino, beat Rick Lazio 23-21 on Roosevelt Island. Paladino’s State-wide victory sets up a campaign battle between him and Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

Voting at PS/IS 217			
Democratic Primary			
U.S. Senator			
Kirsten Gillibrand	362	80%	
Gail Goode	93		
U.S. Representative			
Carolyn Maloney	475	90%	
Reshma Saujani	51		
State Senator			
Jose Serrano	382	86%	
Mark Escoffery-Bey	60		
Attorney General			
Eric Schneiderman	313	62%	
Kathleen Rice	95		
Richard Brodsky	34		
Sean Coffey	34		
Eric Dinallo	28		
Republican Primary			
Governor			
Carl Paladino	23		
Rick Lazio	21		
Lieutenant Governor			
Gregory Edwards	20		
Thomas Ognibene	18		
U.S. Senator (6-year)			
Gary Bernstein	23		
Jay Townsend	16		
U.S. Senator (2-year)			
David Malpass	16		
Joseph DioGuardi	15		
Bruce Blakeman	10		
U.S. Representative			
David Ryan Brumberg	26		
Dino LaVerghetta	7		
Roger Blank	6		
State Senator			
Jon Girodes	20		
Keesha Weiner	14		

The Island on the Web

compiled by Rick O’Conor – rooseveltislander.blogspot.com

Roosevelt Islander – Ambulance Delay on Bridge – tinyurl.com/29n7xps
Roosevelt Islander – New Tram Cabin Arrives – tinyurl.com/2apy8zu
Roosevelt Islander – Mayor, Governor at Southpoint – tinyurl.com/2e8hlo8
Judith’s Gallery – Pictures: FDR Park Ceremony – tinyurl.com/234bgrv
Roosevelt Island 360 – New Voting Machines – tinyurl.com/2aayc7k
Susan Arcelay Tweet – Funnel Cloud Near Island – tinyurl.com/2ff39t
NY 1 – FDR Memorial Takes Shape – tinyurl.com/22oqx44
WNYC – Cornerstone Laid at FDR Memorial – tinyurl.com/28bt8w4
Arch Daily – Progress on Four Freedoms Park – tinyurl.com/2drg7gd
Huffington Post – Tram Art Gallery Project – tinyurl.com/258vbkh
WSJ New York – Octagon Fuel Cell Due Soon – tinyurl.com/23gf8g2
Queens Chronicle – Maloney Wins Primary – tinyurl.com/2bgoznw
NY Times – Community Agriculture at Octagon – tinyurl.com/2g6a94f
Gothamist – Van Hits Island Man in Wheelchair – tinyurl.com/2ejzkba
DNA Info – Resident Protests MTA Fare Hikes – tinyurl.com/26v62c3
US Coast Guard – River Closing During UN Week – tinyurl.com/29uevdr
Bordeaux Street – Grocery Shopping at Trade Fair – tinyurl.com/23b94u3
Sail Blogs – Wait for Island Bridge to Be Raised – tinyurl.com/26il435
You Tube – Lappin Speaks at FDR Memorial – tinyurl.com/2c4dmsd
You Tube – Movie Brainstorm Session at Starbucks – tinyurl.com/2cw629v
You Tube – Opening – Gallery RIVAA RIT Exhibit – tinyurl.com/24c29wy
You Tube – Walk from Subway to Southpoint Park – tinyurl.com/2fta9ch
You Tube – Feeding Roosevelt Island Squirrel – tinyurl.com/232od3f
You Tube – Octagon Gallery Exhibition – tinyurl.com/2ff9wot
You Tube – Vision of Roosevelt Island – tinyurl.com/2asnaxl
You Tube – Elite Speaks His Mind at Subway Pier – tinyurl.com/2f495rw

Letters from page 2

To the Editor:

Having sat through many an MTG (Maple Tree Group) meeting, and having been present at the meeting when we beseeched Assemblymember Micah Kellner to move forward on the governance bill he’d submitted in the Assembly, I was really shocked at your comments in *The WIRE*’s last edition.

We all agreed, the bill had been watered down as part of the wrangling that goes on in legislative matters. We were happy that it made a momentous improvement in the RIOC Board’s ability to select a President, rather than (as in the past) having one stuffed down their throats. It changed all too little about our ability to elect Board members directly, but we all agreed that the bill was not the end of the line in our struggle for a democratically run Island, but a good step forward.

We debated the pros and cons about moving the bill forward, and although Assemblymember Kellner told us emphatically that he would do whatever we asked, move it or take it off the table, we asked to have him move it forward.

I can think of absolutely no government official who has been a greater stalwart for the issues of Roosevelt Island and Roosevelt Islanders in our entire history of 30+ years. I’m amazed at the time, energy, and effort he has devoted to our community. Faulting him for doing exactly what we asked him to do is baffling, ironic, and absurd!

Joyce Mincheff

Katz from page 1

Street WIRE [in *The RIRA Column*], when coupled with the many bridges he has burned over the last two years with those Island residents who have labored to be useful, as well as those government officials who are the decision-makers here, have, in my opinion, compromised his ability to be effective.”

Katz continued, “Further, I believe Frank has used the RIRA Common Council as a platform for his own agenda, without giving Council members the opportunity to act as the leaders they were elected to be.” Katz went on to say that 36% of the RIRA Council members elected in 2008 have drifted away, “not having received sufficient incentive to remain on the Common Council.”

Katz later told *The WIRE* that he plans visits to the Island’s buildings in an attempt to rouse residents to run for seats on the Council, though he also encouraged current members to run in his e-mail to them: “It is my hope that you incumbent Council members, now

all ‘grizzled veterans,’ will run for another term and that you will encourage your neighbors to consider running for vacant seats in your building complex. Should I win another term, I will need your support, guidance, and active participation. RIRA’s power is the power of persuasion and, if we don’t take ourselves seriously, no one else will.”

In recent years, the campaign for the RIRA presidency has generally been a two-candidate affair. Katz beat incumbent Patrick Stewart in 2000, then won 55% of the vote in 2002 against Byron Gaspard. Rivercross resident Steve Marcus beat the late Jim Whalen in 2004 with a 76% score. Katz took 79% of the vote in 2006 against Whalen’s 10%. (Two others split the remaining votes.) In 2008, Farance beat Bill Buckley, 725 (62%) to 448 (38%).

Voting in this year’s RIRA election coincides with the date of the general election on Tuesday, November 2.

No candidates have yet declared

for the only other Island-wide office, the Vice Presidency. Aspiring officeholders, Island-wide or representing buildings, have until 8:00 p.m. **Sunday, October 24**, to declare their candidacies. Information on filing for offices is available from RIRA’s elections chair, Aaron Hamburger, at **212-758-2623** or ashamburger33@gmail.com.

Election from page 1

All Island residents 18 and over may vote, whether or not they are U.S. citizens. For verification of eligibility, resident lists are collected from Island landlords. When a voter’s name is not on the list for some reason, other proofs of residence are acceptable – an officially issued ID indicating residency on Roosevelt Island; a utility bill addressed to the voter; or the person’s name on their unit’s lease. (For citizens, a voter registration card also will serve as proof of Island residency.)

Hamburger, at **212-758-2623**, will provide more information to anyone interested. He can also be reached via his e-mail address, ashamburger33@gmail.com.

To the Editor:

Countering the outrageous allegations and distortions of fact in Frank Farance’s columns is an exercise in futility, because his responses contain additional outrageous allegations and distortions of fact. Furthermore, letters to the editor have the disadvantage of lagging *The RIRA Column* by two weeks. And, finally, the few members of the public who are even reading any of this are fed up. Therefore, without according any validity to unanswered charges, we are discontinuing this fruitless exercise.

Ashton Barfield
Vicki Feinmel
Linda Heimer

Ronn Mullins

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Out There on the F

Coney Island & Brighton Beach

by Andrew Gordon

When you get island fever, especially when the weather is warm and you want to travel, it’s nice to know there’s a chariot that can take you to many different places all within the City of New York. The F train runs from outer Queens, just a short hop to JFK International Airport, all the way to the ocean communities of Brighton Beach and Coney Island.

Exiting the station at Coney Island, one finds Nathan’s Famous, original location of the supposed best hotdogs in the City. Nathan’s, a Coney Island fixture since 1916, was founded by Polish immigrant Nathan Handwerker, whose hotdog recipe came from his wife, Ida.

In the one-block walk to the

beach, one sees the worn, slightly tawdry and partially abandoned look of Coney Island. It seems like a scene from a future Mel Gibson movie: *Mad Max 4: End of the Line*.

From the famous Riegelmann boardwalk, one can see that the beach itself is surprisingly uncrowded. In years and decades past, the crowd frequently came up to the boardwalk, but now only the third of the beach near the water is occupied. Lifeguards sit in chairs every 100 yards or so from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the summer. Police patrol in off-road vehicles. Surprisingly clean restrooms are located every several hundred yards. Children’s play areas, with a plastic palm shooting water straight up, also are relatively close together. Faded though it is, Coney Island seems to be well-managed.

Adjoining the beach is the Paul Auletto Steeple Chase Pier, which reaches out several hundred feet into the water. Pedestrians and fishermen share the pier and, from the end, one has a great view of the beach and the now-defunct Parachute Jump to the north of the boardwalk. Yasmeen Rahman, a park security officer for the City of New York Parks and Recreation Department, says, “The ride has been closed

since 1968 because of too many accidents,” but because it is now a landmark, it had to be repaired recently at a cost of more than \$800,000. It’s a lonely reminder of Coney Island’s faded glory.

Rahman says, “Going west on the boardwalk beyond the old bathhouse is mostly a ‘dead zone’ with the exception of Ringling Brothers Circus, which is located there till September 6,” and the ice skating rink. “All there is,” she laments, “is the private community of Sea Gate.”

A walkway just to the east of the Parachute Jump goes to the ballpark housing the Brooklyn Cyclones, one of the best Triple A teams in the country. Unlike the beach area, the ballpark appears almost new, with bronze statuary of Jackie Robinson and Pee-wee Reese. Only the huge bronze commemorative plaques to the firefighters and police who lost their lives on 9/11 compromise the bright, upscale mood of the place. It is clear that patriotism and remembrance are very important here.

Returning to the boardwalk and walking east, one finds the amusement rides of Luna Park, including a carousel and roller coaster. There are five thrill rides for the teenagers, 11 family-friendly rides, and three kiddie rides. Individual rides cost from three to five dollars each, but one can purchase four-hour unlimited-ride bracelets for \$26-30 and six-hour ones for \$30-34.

All the foods that one would expect on the boardwalk are there: hamburgers, hotdogs, ice cream, corn on the cob, and cotton candy, as well as clams and knishes. But at the Chinese Snack Bar, one also finds items such as soy juice, tea eggs, and lychee fruit.

Moving on, one hears a barker: “Shoot the freak! Shoot the freak with a paintball gun. He doesn’t mind. He likes it.” Between two buildings is a barren scene remind-



ing one of either a Beckett absurdist play or, if a generation younger, a scene from a post-apocalyptic Terminator movie. There are large rocks midway back, surrounded by sand and desolation. The barker shouts

are in Russian and English. Prices are moderate to expensive. Most guests choose to eat outside under an awning because of the view and the weather. At the next table, two young, good-looking Russian women, dressed as if they are mod-



again, “Shoot the freak! Shoot the freak! A live human target! What are you waiting for?” Finally, a teenage boy takes up the challenge. Who else would?

Proceeding eastward on the boardwalk and looking left and down about 15 feet, there’s a band playing 1960’s surfer music. Further on is the New York Aquarium. A young man on the boardwalk is passing out \$4-off coupons to entice the beachgoers to the aquarium.

Approaching Asher Levy Park on the left, one begins to hear Russian and then more Russian. The handball courts are full. A big sign touts the Coney Island Boardwalk Restoration Project. For now, that appears to involve replacement of boards in the boardwalk.

Approaching Brighton Beach, one sees large numbers of elderly Russians sitting on benches facing the ocean, enjoying the sun, the sailboats, and the motorboats racing by. One comes so close to shore that a lifeguard jumps off his chair and blows his whistle at it.

At Brighton Beach, there are several restaurants on the boardwalk, including two Tatianas. The second Tatiana was recommended by Park Ranger Rahman as the best beachfront restaurant there. A three-star restaurant, Tatiana has a commanding view of the ocean and beachgoers. A waiter approaches speaking Russian, and only after being told in Russian that one does not speak Russian does he query in English. The menus

els, have the elderly waiter’s rapt attention. A long banter in Russian ensues.

After lunch, the beach calls. Down by the water, people of all ages are walking along the water’s edge, putting their feet and other body parts in, and speaking in Russian, English, and Spanish. When not walking, wading, or swimming, everyone is sunbathing and/or eating. Vendors walk by, selling Italian ices, corn on the cob, fresh mango, beer, and even kites. One enterprising young man is hawking beer in Russian and English, calling out “If you don’t drink beer, you’re going to die!” Several Russians respond with a laugh, waving their dollars at him to snag some brewskis.



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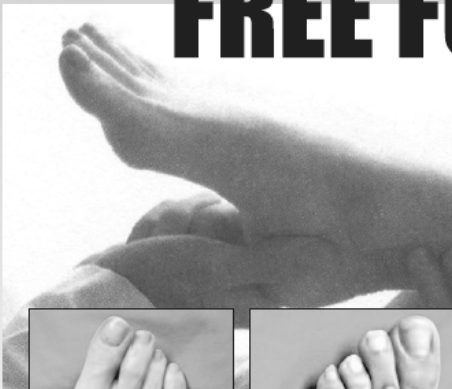
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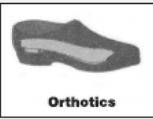
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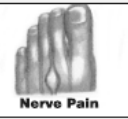
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Water Aerobics

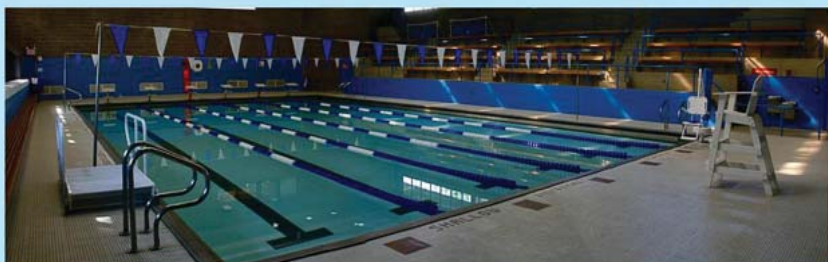
Wednesday and Friday
9am to 10am
Sunday noon to 1pm

Adult Learn to Swim

Sunday 1pm to 2pm
Sunday 2pm to 3pm

Master Swim

Monday and Friday
7:30pm to 8:30pm



Now available in Long Island City, Queens

NYCRx is a New York City-based non-profit organization, founded by NYC's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, that has partnered with health centers and hospitals in the New York City area to make safe and effective medications available at the lowest possible cost to all New Yorkers.

Participating Providers in Queens

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36-11 21st Street – 718-482-7772

Metrocare Pharmacy
21-12 36th Avenue – 718-606-0068

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The Farmers Market

every Saturday morning, under the ramp at Motorgate