

Next issue:
Saturday,
February 12

The Main Street WIRE™

31st year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Detail from one of Izumi Tokuno's digital photos now on display.

Artist Sees Blue as the Island's Dominant Color

Review by David Stone

Blue Wave, Izumi Tokuno's solo exhibit at the Octagon Gallery, features digital art originating with photographs taken exclusively on Roosevelt Island.

Inviting the participation of visitors, Tokuno asks them to reflect on her images, each of which is dated, and to recall the particular day in their lives. Each individual sees his or her world differently, and each digitally enhanced image records the artist's impression of the moment in which it was taken.

With the exception of a sequential set of images for November 28, 2008, 2009, and 2010, the wave pictures are from the latter half of 2010, with nothing earlier than June 26. Several sequences depict nothing but the intricate details of water, heavily blue, and the color Tokuno finds most dominant here.

The wave photos are similar to those she has previously shown at Gallery RIVAA group shows. They demonstrate her awareness of complexity in nature. What first appears as a simple image of water expands into an independent universe of pressures, viscosities, and flows within flows.

Enhancing the beauty of her compositions, Tokuno has her finished images printed on canvas, giving them a graceful and painterly quality.

Aware of the balances of nature in a place surrounded by water and exposed in most vistas to a broad, unobstructed sky, Tokuno further defines her work by adding moon phases to the dates, providing a framework of time passing, even as much stays unchanged. She sees nature as a steady pulse.

Breaking away from a strict adherence to water filling up her canvases, Tokuno has mounted a grid of 12 smaller moon phase-anchored pictures that look away from the Island and beyond the river.

We see the Manhattan skyline, the Queensboro Bridge, and the familiar stacks soaring skyward from the Ravenswood generating station, but it's in these prints that Tokuno might most clearly demonstrate her artistry. You may have seen these views before, but never like this.

High, thin clouds converge in shades of gray at sunset. They leap like fanciful angels into a morning sky. In a moody, moon-dominated scene, remarkable for the total absence of blue, Tokuno shows viewers how powerfully life-affirming her vibrant colors are by removing them.

Blue Wave has been thoughtfully mounted.

Inner narratives about Tokuno's view of Island life provide a foundation for her publicly expressed message about sharing. In her introduction to the exhibit, Tokuno asks viewers to take out their calendars and find the dates they share with her images. Then, she shows them how intricate a single moment in any one of those days must have been.

The exhibit will run through February 20. The Octagon Gallery is open seven days a week, from 9:00 am to 8:00 p.m.

Photo coverage
The Snow
at nyc10044.com

Briefly...

- Roosevelt Island will host three films in the **ReelAbilities** Film Festival starting Friday, February 4 (ad, page 7), including *Warrior Champions* (right).

- A four-hour suspension of **Tramway** service late in the morning rush on Tuesday, January 18, was attributed to icing on the track ropes. RIOC offers e-mail advisories, accessible through nyc10044.com/z/0k (that's a zero before the k).

- The Residents Association's Communications Committee has launched a **website**, RIROnline.com.



City Eyes Goldwater Site for Possible Applied-Science Center

by Dick Lutz

Roosevelt Island could be chosen as the site for a future institution of applied science, under a Bloomberg administration plan.

A mid-December talk at the New York City offices of Google makes it clear that the Goldwater Hospital property, which will become vacant in about four years as the City realigns its portfolio of health-care properties, is on City government's mind.

The Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Robert K. Steel, named the Goldwater site as one of four or more possible locations for a cooperative project with "a university, applied-science organization, or related institution to develop and operate an applied-science research facility... particularly in fields that lend themselves to commercialization."

Such a facility on the Island would be likely to increase prop-

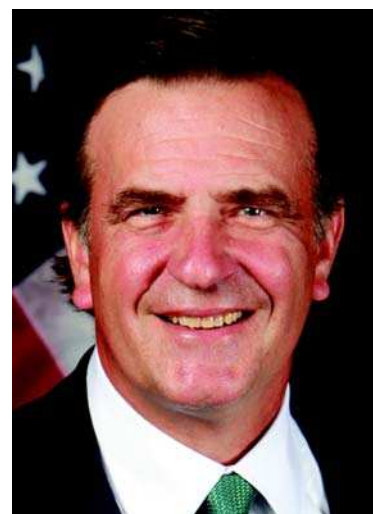
erty values here and, importantly, produce a "reverse commute" rather than adding to morning rush-hour traffic leaving the Island.

Steel said the goal is to make "New York City the leading 21st century city of innovation."

Other locations mentioned by Steel in the December 16 talk (on line with this issue of *The WIRE* at nyc10044.com) were Governor's Island, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and Farm Colony (on Staten Island). Among these sites, Roosevelt Island may offer the most advantages in terms of accessibility, though others have more acreage.

The Bloomberg administration's plan may dovetail nicely with the "win the future" theme of President Obama's State of the Union speech this week.

"At a time of fiscal challenges," said Steel, "we will not lose focus on the investments that position us as a more diverse, more prosper-



Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel

ous, more innovative city in the 21st century and beyond."

Affordable Housing

Steel also discussed affordable housing, saying the City adminis-

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No Longer Your Grandfather's Library, NYPL Branch Now a Multimedia Mecca

by Jim Baehler

When the Royal Library at Alexandria burned to the ground in 48 BC, the world lost forever a treasure trove of manuscripts. The Roosevelt Island Library doesn't hold quite that illustrious a position but, to Island residents who use its services regularly, its value can hardly be measured. The library is open six days a week, with special programs for groups

ranging from infants to adults.

The thousands of books, DVDs, CDs, and reference

materials are under the supervision of library manager Miranda Murray, whose love for her job shines through on first meeting. She is a native of Southern California and, on a day when the outside temperature in New York City is in the 20s, thinks wistfully of her youth growing up in warm sunshine. She graduated with a B.A. in sociology from the University of California at Santa Barbara, then moved to Austin, Texas, for an advanced degree, Master in Information Sciences, which is gradually replacing the old degree in library science once required for library work.

Seeking adventure, as she put it, Murray came to New York City in 2007 and immediately found work at the George Bruce branch of the New York Public Library in the Bronx. She was soon appointed assistant manager and, when the opening for a manager at the Roosevelt Island branch, she applied and was accepted late last year. A resident of Brooklyn, Murray has an hour commute each way, but doesn't mind it as it gives her a chance to catch up on her reading.

Miranda Murray would like people to know that there is much more to our library than books. There are hundreds of movies on DVD, and hundreds of music CDs with a range of selections to satisfy all tastes. For the visually impaired, there are many audiobooks, and an entire section of large-print books. In addition, the library has foreign language sections with

books in Russian, Spanish, Korean, and French.

"Any item we don't have that is in circulation can be ordered from the main library or one of its branches. It can be done from a home computer by accessing NYPL.org and choosing the appropriate menus," she adds. "Or you can come in and one of our staff will be happy to order an item for you. All you need is a



A computer lab, of course, but that's only the beginning of the library's array of resources and activities.

library card and a PIN number."

Those two items are also all that is needed for one of the latest offerings of the library, e-books. Once again, a visit to NYPL.org will provide a list of books now available for downloading to a Kindle reader or similar device. Instead of having to return a physical copy of a book, an e-book simply vanishes from the reading device after the specified loan period.

For those without computers or Internet access, the library has three desktop computers and 11 laptops. To be guaranteed access to one of these units, Miranda advises getting to the library before 3:00 p.m. on school days. Saturdays are unpredictable, with busy and slow periods that cannot be anticipated. Printers are available to produce black-and-white copies of Internet pages. The cost is 15 cents per page, with the first five pages free for students

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Published by **The Main Street WIRE™**
©2011 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**
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Website NYC10044 – **nyc10044.com**

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Goldwater from page 1

tration is two-thirds of the way “to our target of building and preserving 165,000 affordable units,” a goal he said will be reached before Bloomberg leaves office.

Water & Waterfront

In another aspect of the Bloomberg administration’s plans for its final 1000+ days, Steel said, “Now we will rethink how we use our water and our shores – what we have referred to as our ‘sixth borough.’ ... With more than 500 miles of shoreline, we have more waterfront than any other American city (more than Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, and Portland combined).” But, he said, “New Yorkers remain too disconnected from the water... We are in many ways an inward-facing city, but we plan to make it easier for New Yorkers to make the most of this incredible asset from both a residential and a commercial perspective.” He said the mayor’s Waterfront Vision and Enhancement Strategy will include an “increase [in] the use of waterborne transportation,” a possible encouragement for Islanders who have long wished for water-taxi or ferry service here.

Expressions of interest in City support for creation of an applied-science facility are due in the middle of March.

**Web-savvy? *The WIRE* seeks volunteer maintenance help with *Website NYC10044*.
Call Dick Lutz at 212-826-9056.**

Library from page 1

under age 18. A separate machine provides a copy service for those in need of document reproduction. The cost is 15 cents per page with a copy card, and 20 cents per page without a copy card (available at the front desk).

Miranda Murray is especially enthusiastic about the many specialized databases available through the library. For reference work, there are an on-line encyclopedia and more than 100 years of *The New York Times*. The “Learning Express” provides practice tests to prepare for the GED, standardized tests given by the school system and other organizations, civil service exams, and other types of tests. There is also an extensive collection of scholarly journals available for study.

One of the newest offerings is “Freegal Music,” which allows the downloading of up to three songs per week to any device that accepts digital music. It is a free service, accessed at NYPL.org.

The library has a regular series of weekly programs designed to appeal to all ages. Mondays at 10:30 a.m., Infant Lapsit is an oral reading program for infants from one month to 18 months in age, conducted by various staff members. Teenagers have their own program on Mondays at 4:00 p.m., when a staff member oversees the playing of Uno, a card game much admired by young people. Tuesday mornings at 10:00 sees the Knitting and Crocheting Circle happily at work on their hobby. On Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m., it’s Toddler Story Time, led by staff member Raul Chavez and held at the Island Kids facility. Raul reads from a children’s book and conducts a sing-along with the little ones. It’s teenager time again on Thursdays at 4:00 p.m., when various staff members lead the Anime Club, as the group peruses and discusses Japanese comic books and graphic novels, which have a large following among youths.

The library also offers a series of monthly special programs. Next month’s schedule will begin February 1 at 6:30 p.m. with a Science-fiction Book Discussion led by staff member Justin VanPoelvoorde. On February 11 at 3:30 p.m., Davana Montesdeoca, another staffer, will lead an arts and crafts program for children age five and up. On February 17 at 4:00 p.m., there will be a presentation of *The Peanut Prince* by Urban Stages, a not-for-profit Off-Broadway theatre company. For ages five and up, it examines the life of George Washington Carver and the more than 300 uses he found for the peanut. Also on the 17th, vanPoelvoode will convene the adult Book Discussion group to consider *The Tipping Point – How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell. On the 22nd at 6:30 p.m., he will conduct the Poetry Hour for adults.

The Roosevelt Island Library is an extraordinary resource that adds greatly to the social and intellectual life of the Island. Not content with doing what is already being done, Miranda Murray says, “We’re here for the community, and if there are other ways we can be helpful, we’d like to hear from you.”

Letters

To the Editor:

Sue Cina’s discovery that there is a parking discount at Motorgate for Island seniors was a revelation. I quickly filled out the necessary forms at RIOC and took their letter to the Motorgate management. I asked at the Motorgate office why there was no notice about the discount. The clerk pointed to a paper attached to an office window. It said *Don’t feed the pigeons*. The only other notice was about parking changes due to renovation.

It would seem to me that Motorgate has a legal obligation to publish this discount in a prominent way. Since I have been living on the Island as a senior for 16 years, I’m more than curious to know how long this regulation has been in place, and whether Motorgate has a legal obligation to reimburse me and other seniors for the excess fees that we have all been charged.

I’m not elaborating on other Motograte issues, such as lights out for years in stairwells, and failure to maintain proper records regarding City residency to avoid paying parking taxes.

Richard Marshall

To the Editor:

The front page story and your editorial in *The WIRE* of January 15 show that the local resident democracy is having growing pains.

There is a hard lesson that every popularly elected official must learn. Simple though hard, the lesson is that each public official is acting on behalf of the people who voted her/him into office.

In our community, the entire RIRA Common Council and their officers are in office because the residents voted them into office. What those councilors talk about and do is public business. It is not private business. That public business must be conducted in a way that is above reproach. That public business must be open for all the residents to see and understand what is going on.

Any discussion carried on by public officials, and any document coming out of any discussion carried on by those officials, must be available to the residents who are responsible for voting them into office.

The role of the free press is an essential part of any democracy. The free press is entitled to full and complete access to those discussions and those documents. The free press does not have the role of trying to prettify gross errors, of either intent or content, in discussions and documents for which public officials are responsible.

For anyone to suggest otherwise is to willfully undermine the essence of any democratic structure.

David J. Bauer

To the Editor:

Island Cats thanks Public Safety – specifically Sgt. Rivera and Officers Toro, Candelaria, and Clemente – for their help in a recent emergency situation. Their unhesitating kindness and patience were much appreciated.

Jennifer Dunning

More Letters, page 10

To the Editor:

The editorial in the last *WIRE*, *With Freedom Comes...*, presented a well-reasoned and rational claim that public entities, in this instance, the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, should not place themselves in the position of restricting the flow of information to the media. The editorial begins with the statement that “Words have consequences. If they didn’t, there would be little evolutionary value to speech writing and communication in general.”

The editorial goes on to say, “And humans are also able to take responsibility – most of us anyway – for what we say, print, or publish.”

Unfortunately, the editorial strays from the immediate issue – Common Council actions – to encompass wider issues while losing sight of the principles described in the opening.

Consider this statement from the editorial: *When assembled in one place, an ability to communicate combined with a lack of responsibility and a lack of straight thinking can produce unfortunate, even tragic consequences – and that was the lesson to be learned last week not only in Arizona and in the nation, but also here on Roosevelt Island.*

The reference to Arizona obviously referred to the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and others. Apparently, the lesson the editorial would have us learn is that the shooter was impelled to act by communications he received from media sources with no sense of responsibility. This is the party line quickly adopted by liberal media and echoed by Hillary Clinton, who in two separate remarks described the shooter as an “extremist.” Right-wing radio talk hosts and television commentators are blamed for poisoning the airwaves with inflammatory language, which eventually led the shooter to embark on his murderous mission.

President Obama in his moving and eloquent speech in Tucson should have put an end to such unverified accusations. He said, *Scripture tells us that there is evil in the world, and that terrible things happen that defy human understanding... Bad things happen and we have to guard against simple explanations in the aftermath. For the truth is none of us can know exactly what triggered this vicious attack.*

It is now clear that the shooter was seriously deranged, and that attributing his actions to alleged irresponsible utterances in the media is completely unwarranted.

Further on, the editorial makes the following statement: *Those who control access to the media can make mistakes. Fox News is a prime example of handing the megaphone to right-wing maniacs.*

As a regular viewer of *Fox News*, I am at a loss to identify the “right-wing maniacs” the editorial sees. Surely the reference cannot be to Mara Liasson and Juan Williams, who both appear nightly on *Fox News* and are proud to proclaim themselves as liberals. Observing Brit Hume, Charles Krauthammer, Bill Kristol, or Steve Hayes, I fail to find any of the characteristics of

To the Editor:

In case the residents of Roosevelt Island are unaware of this: RIOC made an unconscionable purchase using taxpayers’ money for the occasion of the new Tram press event. RIOC purchased scarves for those in attendance to the tune of \$10,770! This is simply unbelievable and absolutely unacceptable.

While I understand that some of the funding for this may have come from the contractor of the new Tram, mustn’t we ask, “Who paid for the new Tram? Wasn’t it the taxpayers?”

In light of the State reducing the City’s funding by \$1 billion momentarily, how on earth can we justify such a trivial but expensive purchase as \$10,770 in scarves?

What possibly could have been the objective/reasoning in handing out free scarves? More tourism? No way. More State funding? I don’t think so. RIOC’s leaders feeling really nice and gushing about giving a bunch of people gifts? I suppose so.

Benefit for Roosevelt Island residents: Zero!

While I was prepared to give the new top management at RIOC a chance to learn and then show a new level of professionalism and performance, this insane purchase should cause the RIOC Board to call for some resignations.

If \$10,770 is spent on blinking scarves, what other travesties might we find on the really important issues that remain obscure in the RIOC budget? Perhaps the plan to spend \$1 million to renovate the interior of Blackwell House shouldn’t be the only item of deep scrutiny?

I have been most critical about the insanity of spending \$1.8 million to put astro-turf on the Roosevelt Island soccer field; what a horrendous waste that was! Let’s now decorate the goal posts on the field with RIOC’s Tram scarves!

Hal Worsham

a maniac, i.e., loss of their senses and inability to think rationally. Even Bill O’Reilly, Sean Hannity, and Glenn Beck, while happily pronouncing themselves conservatives, exhibit none of the deranged behavior associated with maniacs. If *Fox News* were populated by right-wing lunatics, it is inconceivable that the network would have the most-watched cable news programs for the past 10 years.

It is true that “Those who control access to media can make mistakes.” It is to be hoped that, in the future, *The WIRE* will avoid editorial mistakes prompted by a left-wing bias. Words do, indeed, have consequences, and those with access to the media have a responsibility not to use them carelessly.

Jim Baehler

Editor’s response: Points taken, particularly with regard to unproved connections between right-wing media and deranged behavior. But when Glenn Beck says, on Fox, *I’m thinking of killing Michael Moore. Is there anything wrong with that?*, he contributes to an atmosphere in which, at best, deranged actions will be associated with Fox and its favorites, and, at worst, some deranged individual might take it as a *fatwah*. The few moderates on that channel should be ashamed to lend the credibility of their collective presence to Beck.

Letters deadline for Feb. 12 issue: Tues., Feb. 8, 5:00 p.m.

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. **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.

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Absolutely Cool, members show, at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St., closes tomorrow (Sun Jan 30). Gallery hours Sat-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed & Fri, 6-9pm.

— Coming Week & Next Weekend —

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Feb 2**, 8pm, Legacy High School gymnasium. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

Table Tennis Tournament registration deadline, **Wed Feb 2**. (Ad, page 12.)

ReelAbilities Film Festival, *Wretches & Jabberers*, **Fri Feb 4**, 7pm, PS217; the quest to change views of autism. (Ad, page 7.)

Table Tennis Tournament, **Sat Feb 5**, Sportspark, 10am-6pm. (Ad, page 12.)

ReelAbilities Film Festival, *Warrior Champions*, **Sat Feb 5**, 7pm, Coler-Goldwater Hospital (south campus), 1 Main St.; Olympic dreams of disabled vets. (Ad, page 7.)



— Continuing —

Blue Wave, exhibit of the art of Izumi Tokuno, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main Street, daily 9am-8pm, through Feb 20. (Photo and review, page 1.)

Open-Rec Basketball, **Sat**, 10am-1pm, 2-6pm, Sportspark. All ages; free. **Renaissance** painting group, **Sat** pm; oil/acrylic with mentor Art Zamora. Call 917-291-8799 for time, location, and fee information.

Swimming at Sportspark, **Mon-Fri** 6-10am, **Mon Wed Fri** 7:30-10:30pm, **Thu** 6-9pm, **Sat-Sun** 12-3pm. **Adults** (18-up) **Tue** 6-9pm, **Sat-Sun** 4-7pm. Adults \$5, children 4-17 \$3, free for seniors 60+ and infants 3 and under. For schedule of classes and activities, see nyc10044.com/z/0j.

Infant Lapsit stories for ages 1-18 months, **Mon**, 10:30am, Library.

Reading Aloud to children, **Mon-Fri**, 3:30-4pm, Library.

Uno for teens, **Mon**, 4pm, Library.

Toastmasters, 2nd and 4th **Mon**, 7:30pm. Info: 212-751-9577.

Knitting & Crocheting Circle, **Tue**, 10am, Library. Adults.

Living Library After-School Program, **Tue, Wed, Thu**, 3-6pm, PS/IS 217 Beacon. Open to all. Information: 347-724-5529.

Island Office Hours for State Senator Jose Serrano and/or staff, **first Tue** of each month, 4-7pm, RIOC offices, 591 Main St.

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

Sci-Fi 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, Island Kids.

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

RIOC's Community Office Hours, **Wed**, 3-5pm, 591 Main St.

Island Office Hours for Assemblymember Micah Kellner and/or staff, **every Thu**, 3-7pm, RIOC offices, 591 Main St.

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

Anime Club for teens, **Thu**, 4pm, Library; Japanese comics/novels.

Robots for Kids ages 6-13, **Thu & Fri**, 6:30-8pm, Youth Program, 506 Main St., 2nd fl. Information: 917-751-2900.

— Future Weeks —

ReelAbilities Film Festival, *Brain Damadj'd, Take II*, **Mon Feb 7**, 6:30pm, Coler-Goldwater Hospital (south campus), 1 Main St.; brain-injured TV director fights to prove he can still perform. (Ad, page 7.)

Arts & Crafts for children age 5 & up, **Fri Feb 11**, 3:30pm, Library.

The Main Street WIRE – **Sat Feb 12**. **Advertising deadlines:** Display ads, **Wed Feb 2**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Feb 8**; 5,500 copies due **Thu Feb 10**. **Additional issues in 2011:** Feb 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.



The Peanut Prince, play for ages 5 & up, **Thu Feb 17**, 4pm.

Book Discussion, *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, **Thu Feb 17**, 6:30pm, Library.

Grandparents' Safety Day, **Tue Feb 22**, 10am-1pm, Senior Center.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Feb 23**, 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Mar 2**, 8pm, location to be announced. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

Book Discussion, *Absurdistan* by Gary Shteyngart, **Thu Mar 17**, 6:30pm, Library.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Apr 6**, 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Apr 6**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

Book Discussion, *Life Is Short But Wide* by J. California Cooper, **Thu Apr 21**, 6:30pm, Library

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed May 4**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed May 18**, 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Winter has barely begun and I've had enough, thank you very much. The unusual snowfalls and the bitter cold have left me longing for spring, Roosevelt Island's best season. My wife, a native Coloradan, loves the snow, but even she takes refuge in the warmth that our two pussycats provide. We think of them as adorable hot water bottles this time of year. You should try one!

RIRA Website

There's a new website in town and it's ours! The RIRA Communications Committee, under the leadership of Ava Dawson and Vini Fortuna, launched the website Wednesday. It will include RIRA information, both current and archived, as well as a calendar of Island events that, we hope, will incorporate data from many sources. This IT-savvy group has plans for a blog, a Twitter page, e-mail capabilities for both Council members and the community, and other forms of electronic communication that, frankly, I don't understand. For the present, you can catch up with RIRA activity by accessing www.riraonline.com. Enjoy!

DHCR

In my November 20, 2010, column, I wrote, "New York's governors appoint both RIOC presidents and DHCR commissioners. Governors like to appoint people they know, or who are beholden to them. What this means regarding Commissioner Lawlor and President Torres remains to be seen. Both came to us with sterling reputations, and have yet to be tested by Island issues. Your guess is as good as mine."

That chicken has come home to roost. Last week, we learned that Brian Lawlor is leaving as DHCR

The RIRA Column

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

Winter has been in full force this year, but it has been simply stunning on Roosevelt Island. Our grounds crew and transportation workers have done an excellent job keeping the Island running smoothly and safely. This season, I have seen that when severe weather is well-managed, you have the privilege of enjoying nature, especially amidst beautiful views such as those on Roosevelt Island.

All this month, we have also been managing a trial period for Red Bus-Tram schedule coordination. With thorough communication and cooperation among our drivers, dispatch, residents, and administration, we will create a system that serves the public's needs efficiently and conveniently.

I appreciate all the residents who have presented their input in recent months, and would like to thank the RIOC employees who have worked so hard to make this Island an example of community responsiveness.

Thank you, everyone, and stay safe.

Projects Under Way

Good Shepherd Chapel Flooring Repair – In the Chapel's multipurpose area and the offices, including the back office, removal of existing tile has been completed, and an RFP has been published soliciting a contractor to install the new flooring finish.

Good Shepherd Chapel HVAC Installation – Work continues on installation of the new HVAC system, which is expected to be completed by the end of April 2011.

Motorgate Parking Garage Refurbishing – Parking spots that were closed during construction have been opened back up for use. On the seventh floor, the steel fence has been removed, and the area is expected to be available for parking approximately two weeks from this Saturday, January 29.

The RIOC Column

Commissioner and Chairman of the RIOC Board of Directors. We had an inkling of the Governor's intentions on January 19, when Gary Connor replaced Lawlor as chair for the RIOC Board meeting. My relationship with Lawlor was too new for me to prognosticate as to his intentions for the Island's development, housing conversions, or retail capabilities, but he seemed knowledgeable about our byzantine politics and receptive to our arguments. What this says about RIOC President Torres' future here, or the nature of the new DHCR Commissioner, will require time and a careful reading of the auguries. Many of us have participated over and over again in educating the top officials who control our destinies about Island history and precedents and, frankly, we're tired of reinventing the wheel. The issues I brought up with Lawlor on December 15 haven't gone away, and I will broach them again with his replacement, as I'm sure the resident Board members will. It would be helpful to work with leadership that doesn't leave just when they have started to understand how this community works. Perhaps, should we ever get a face-to-face with Governor



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

See **RIRA**, page 10

Z-Brick Resetting – Weather permitting, repair of low spots and trip hazards will continue.

Projects in the Pipeline

Tram Service Pause – The Aerial Tramway temporarily suspended service January 18. The Tram crew analyzed the situation, and found that the antennae on the Tramway towers that monitor the tension of the track cables had their insulation breached by the built-up ice. This resulted in an interrupted signal, which prompted the safety mechanism to shut the system down and return the cabins to their stations. The Tram crew has since reinforced the antennae's insulation, and multiple tests have confirmed that the problem will not recur. In case of service changes, Tram riders are notified on the digital screens located at both Tram stations. Service changes are also communicated through the RIOC website (rioc.ny.gov), RIOC's facebook page (facebook.com/RIOCNY), and RIOC email advisories. We encourage everyone to subscribe to RIOC email advisories by following the link on the RIOC homepage (rioc.ny.gov/advisorybody.htm).

Red Bus Schedule Changes – The trial period for RIOC's new coordinated Tram and Bus schedules continues through January. Please consult the RIOC website (rioc.ny.gov), for an up-to-date Red Bus schedule as well as a Tram schedule. Also, please send all suggestions and comments to information@rioc.com or See **RIOC**, page 10



Leslie Torres, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
e-mail: LTorres@RIOC.com

Senior Center

Monday

9:30 Ballroom Dancing
11:00 Tai Chi
1:00 Ballet
3:00 Play Reading
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

Friday

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

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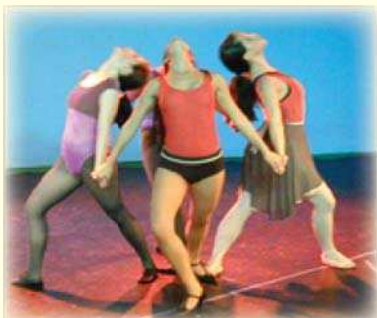
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Gerardine Wurzburg
2010 / USA / 90min /
Documentary

Two men with autism-an accomplished artist and an activist-embark on a global quest to change attitudes about autism and intelligence. Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette travel to Sri Lanka, Japan and Finland, dissecting, challenging, and reshaping public conceptions along the way.

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Coler Goldwater Hospital
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Craig & Brent Renaud
2009 / China / USA /
80min / Documentary

Four Iraq War veterans turn the nightmares of war into Olympic dreams. After losing limbs and suffering paralysis fighting for their country in Iraq, they have set out to do what many thought impossible... but will they make the cut?

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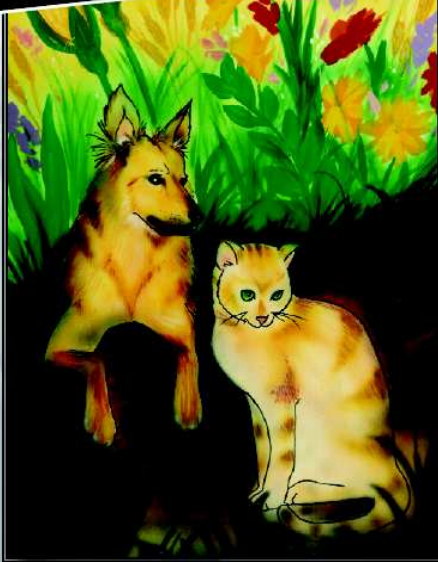
Monday, Feb. 7, 6:30pm
Coler Goldwater Hospital
1 Main Street
Paul Nadler
2006 / Canada / 50min /
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sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-desh.

Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His
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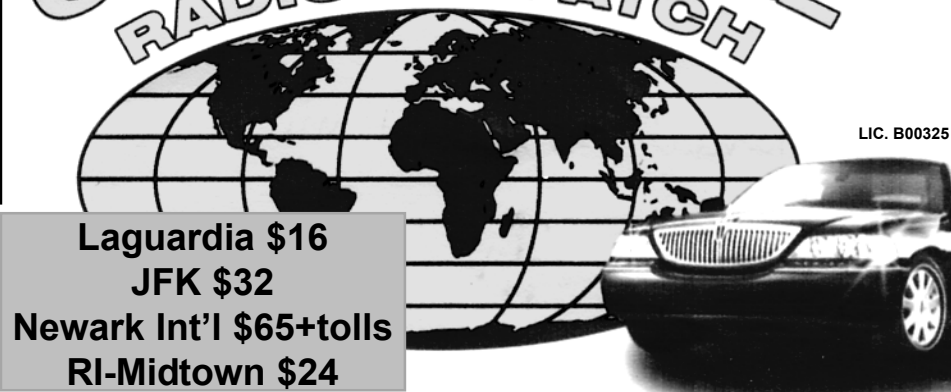
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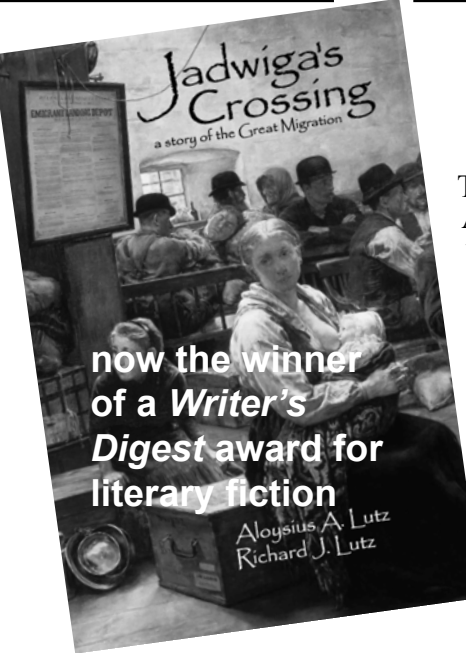


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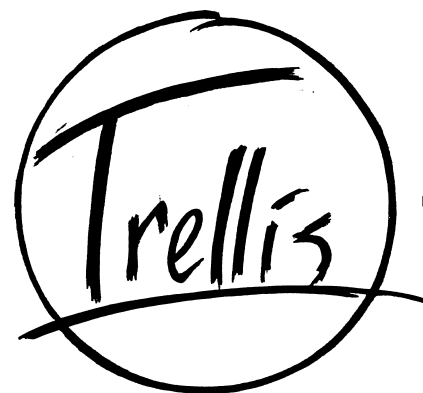
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Deadline for February 26 issue: Tuesday, February 22

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Letters from page 2

To the Editor:

Have we on Roosevelt Island devolved so far that intolerance peeps out through the communistically secular “correctness” of calling our Blackwell Christmas tree the “Holiday Tree”?

Thirty-three years ago, under the auspices of the Garden Club, I planted trees, bushes, and flowers in what was then a lunar-like front lawn at Blackwell House. Among these was a five-foot-tall perfect little fat Serbian Spruce that was gotten from a Long Island nursery and driven back in a rented van, arriving past twilight – a small green dumpling atop a huge, heavy, burlap-wrapped rootball. That first night, it had to sit fully exposed, tucked next to the locked iron-fence enclosure alongside Blackwell House. After worrying all night that someone would spot such a valuable in their headlights and bundle it off, at dawn Garden Club stalwarts Dr. Ali Schwayri, Vinnie Russo, and I (mostly they) rolled what seemed to weigh a ton over to the extensive hole just dug; thus began the fond dream that when the small fat one grew up, each December we could say, “Eat your heart out, Rock Center!” (At least correct honesty is practiced there through its world-famous name, “The Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree” – same applying to the one at the Capitol!)

Let those of different faiths have their own respective parties displaying their own respective icons, or unselfconsciously and harmlessly join in our all-are-welcome fun – the more the merrier! You don’t have to believe in a certain way to enjoy a great party. If you’re invited to a dance, you don’t usually expect the participants to be all of one faith, do you? While we truly do embrace ecumenism, let’s not climb on the coke wagon to do so!

Shame on you, Roosevelt Island, for gutlessly sliding into the intractable mold of hyper-homogeneity. Guess I misjudged you. Perhaps instead I should have chosen a boxbush. Hope you all had a Happy Hanukkuh and a Merry Christmas – or would you prefer “Fall Candle Festival” and “December 25 Winter Holiday”?!
Barbara Potts

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To the Editor:

Over There, City of Tomorrow, a *Talk of the Town* piece by Ben McGrath in the January 17, 2011, *New Yorker*, paints an unflattering glimpse of Roosevelt Island. Using dismissive statements from long-gone planners and architects of the Island, Mr. McGrath relies mainly on revealing quotes from Rosina Abramson, a RIOC executive who recently retired.

He apparently took a ride around the Island with her and carefully copied her carping comments for descriptive quotes in the piece. She described one building near Motorgate as the “last Section 8 building in America.” and the portico along the east side of Main Street (Roosevelt Landings) as a “huge wind tunnel” that, she said, was intended to provide shelter for seniors.

The couple stopped at the “garbage factory” (AVAC), which Ms. Abramson asserted was “the coolest thing.” She observed that the Z-bricks were sinking in the streets because there was too much traffic, which makes replacing of the bricks an on-going task. She predicted future streets without Z-bricks, because the “number of people... who know how to work with Z-bricks is diminishing.”

Driving farther south on the Island, they came upon a mound of rubble that turned out to be the ongoing construction of the FDR memorial and noted another eyesore – the tennis bubble under the Queensboro Bridge. With a quick putdown of the Sportspark (whose swimming pool is seven feet short of the international standard), she said, “so you can’t use it for competitive sports.” The piece abruptly cuts off.

While *Talk of the Town* pieces usually have an edgy tone, sometimes even humorously perverse, few project such a deliberate prejudicial impression as does this one about Roosevelt Island. A word of advice to anyone invited for a ride with Mr. McGrath: Go mute.

Ronn Mullins

The Island on the Web

compiled by Rick O’Conor

Roosevelt Islander – Delayed Ambulance for Sick Child – tinyurl.com/5uzejh9
Roosevelt Islander – PSD Arrests Man with Handgun – tinyurl.com/64ar43q
RIOC – January RIOC Board Audiocast – tinyurl.com/6gqrxen
RIOC – President Leslie Torres Reports – tinyurl.com/29kvbgc
RIOC – December RIOC Board Minutes – tinyurl.com/6gjuwy8
RIOC – December Public Safety Blotter – tinyurl.com/6x49ycg
RIOC – Public Safety in the News – tinyurl.com/yfcnqlm
Jonathan Kalkin Tweet – Free WiFi for Island Parks – tinyurl.com/6x8sdaf
NY Daily News – Child School Wants Equestrian Facility – tinyurl.com/68z5qkt
David Brooks NY Times – Engineering School for Island – tinyurl.com/4tur7b4
Smart Planet – Verdant Power’s Tidal Energy Project – tinyurl.com/4bhystm
NY Times – Island DJs Andrew & Andrew – tinyurl.com/278hx9k
You Tube – High Speed Tram Trip – tinyurl.com/4r9f9a6
You Tube – Parkour Free Running Demonstration – tinyurl.com/6zadlko
You Tube – Escalator Ride at Island Subway Station – tinyurl.com/62tft2t
You Tube – PS/IS 217 Winter Concert Choir – tinyurl.com/6l3e7r2
You Tube – Tour of Creepy Hospital Basement – tinyurl.com/6b2p9cf
Hospital Stay – Renwick Ruin – tinyurl.com/67hkn7x
You Tube – Smallpox Hospital – tinyurl.com/67z5dkb
You Tube – BBQ at Community Garden – tinyurl.com/5rz459c

RIRA from page 3

Cuomo, we can tell him that directly.

Housing Privatization

The long slog undertaken by Rivercross, Island House, and Westview to leave the Mitchell-Lama system while protecting affordable housing for residents continues. Island House and Westview tenant groups have acted while a sword of Damocles has hung over our heads in that, for the last 10 years, our building owners could have left the protections of the Mitchell-Lama system and taken our buildings to fair-market rents at any time. Congratulations to Rivercross on the RIOC endorsement of their ground-lease extension. Rivercrocians already are owners, as their building is a Mitchell-Lama coop, but this is one more step away from New York State control. We’ve learned that the Island House Building Committee has an agreement with the Empire State Development Corporation that brings those residents closer to the goal of affordable apartment purchases and rentals, and I wish them well.

Westview appears to be lagging behind its sister buildings. The losing Article 78 lawsuit prevented the Westview Taskforce, Inc., from negotiating with the owners or with DHCR for the past two years and has, in my estimation, been an impediment to any significant discussions. As you read this, Westview is undergoing biennial elections for its Board of Directors. As a Westview tenant, I truly hope that our new leadership will find a formula that will allow the process to continue, and will inform and include the corporate membership (i.e., the 361 Westview leaseholders) in that process.

Child School/Legacy High School

The Child School and Legacy High School, our neighbors who took over the mini-schools scattered around Northtown, have a new executive director, Salvatore Ferrera. I expect to meet with him next week

under the auspices of the RIRA Social, Cultural, and Educational Services Committee and its chair, Lynne Shinozaki. I’ve gotten to know some of the Legacy High School students, who volunteer every other Friday to help put out this newspaper, and they’re great kids. Sal has informed RIRA that he intends that the school become more involved in community life and, to that end, will offer some of the Child/Legacy infrastructure for Island use. We are told that this will include their gymnasium in the Eastwood complex, and that we may have access until 10:00 p.m. I’m very grateful for this opportunity, and Lynne and I will determine the extent of their kind offer. Stay tuned.

Garbage

During my previous terms of office, I’ve taken advantage of this column to gripe about what is for me a major *bête noire*: garbage on our streets and in our gutters. Why, I’ve asked, do we have so much rubbish on our sidewalks when, years ago, RIOC invested in 40 red custom trash receptacles at two thousand bucks a pop that line our streets and promenades? Our streets are cleaned regularly, but there is no way RIOC can keep up with the relentless daily deposit of refuse. Sure, parents can monitor their kids’ behavior, but this is not just a kid problem. And so, once again, I’d like to offer a modest proposal:

What if every resident, every merchant, every Island worker picked up just one piece of trash – a newspaper, a Frito bag, a tissue – when walking on Main Street? My wife Sherie and I have been doing this for years, but it’s just a drop in the bucket unless the idea takes off. Imagine if 50 Islanders, a hundred, 500, took one piece of “shmutz” off Main Street on each foray outside. We could have the cleanest streets in New York – another distinction between us and the rest of the Big Apple. Will you take the challenge?

RIOC from page 3

RI311@rioc.com, to help us work together as a community to create the best possible transportation system.

Events, Recreation, & Community

Field Permits for Spring – Applications are now being accepted for Roosevelt Island field use for the spring season beginning April, so get yours in early. Roosevelt Island residents receive steep discounts. Relevant forms and information can be found on the RIOC website’s “Doing Business With Us” tab.

Graffiti Removal – On Saturday, January 15, at 8:39 p.m., Public Safety apprehended three individuals in possession of paint and markers who claimed responsibility for 25% of the graffiti in the Motorgate parking garage. This result can be attributed to increased Public Safety patrols of the Motorgate area in response to resident reports. The individuals were charged with criminal mischief, graffiti, and possession of graffiti instruments. With the help of the Public Safety Department, the grounds crew will continue to remove all graffiti Island-wide. We encourage everyone to report any incidents of graffiti directly to Public Safety at **212-832-4545** to ensure immediate removal.

Grandparents Safety Day – On Tuesday, February 22, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Public Safety is co-sponsoring Grandparents Safety Day along with Safe Kids NYC. The event will take place at the Senior Center, 546 Main Street.

Roosevelt Island Film Gallery at Sportspark – The Roosevelt Island Film Gallery is located in the east and west lobbies of Sportspark, and it consists of film posters for movies shot on or depicting the Island. Approximately 50 posters are currently displayed, including a 1935 movie, *Blackwell’s Island*, that starred John Garfield. Anyone who can name a movie or television show that should be added to the showcase should please email Michael Smith at msmith@rioc.com.

Sportspark Table Tennis Tournament – On Sunday, February 5, we will have our first table tennis qualifying tournament at Sportspark. There will be beginner, intermediate, and advanced categories, and the format is round-robin. The results from this tournament will decide the players to advance and compete in the finals – the tournament at the upcoming Health and Fitness Day – for which trophies will be awarded [ad, page 12].

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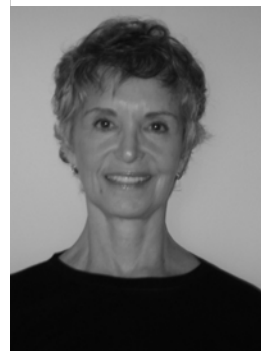
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DASH

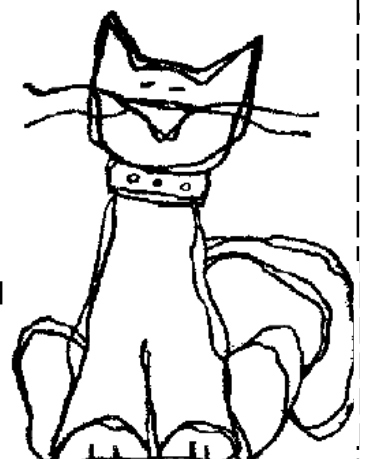
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ROOSEVELT ISLAND
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February 5 at
Sportspark
(250 Main Street)
From 10am to 6pm



DETAILS:

Complete round-robin play in separate categories of beginner, intermediate, and advanced

Top twelve qualifiers from each category will be eligible to play in the finals at Health and Fitness Day on May 14. All qualifiers will receive a certificate of achievement, and winners on May 14 will receive trophies!

REGISTRATION INFO:

Contact George Braithwaite at Chiefghb@yahoo.com with your Name, Address, Phone Number, and Email.

Registration Deadline is February 2!

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