

Next issue:
Saturday,
May 7

The Main Street **WIRE**™

31st year as Roosevelt Island’s Independent Community Newspaper



Next Weekend Cherry Blossom Festival

Next Saturday, the Roosevelt Island Residents Association will kick off a new Island tradition-in-the-making – a *Cherry Blossom Festival*, in cooperation with the Island’s Japanese Association. Income will go to charities supporting those in Japan who have suffered from the triple blow of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear peril.

The core of the festivities will take place on the west promenade between the pier and the Meditation Steps from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., with other events to follow. There’ll be a photo contest, origami instruction, music, and performances by children from the Youth Program. The origami will include the folding of 1,000 paper cranes, a Japanese tradition in observance of special events.

A grove of cherry trees will be planted opposite the subway station, supported by the Youth Program, Roosevelt Landings, RY Management, and RIOC.

The Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association is planning an auction of art from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., with previewing set for 3:30 p.m.

There’ll be food, too. Fuji East is providing sushi rolls and sake. Riverwalk Bar & Grill is assembling a beer-tasting. Starbucks is offering volunteer staffing and a gift basket to be raffled off.

Fujifilm is donating a camera and memory card as the first prize in the photo contest. Contest rules are posted at nyc10044.com/z/31; briefly, pictures must be taken the day of the event and must be submitted as prints by May 14.

Other donating participants include Gristedes, Costco, and the Noguchi Museum store. Toge Kyeshitou of New York has donated original handmade pottery. Event sponsors include Starbucks, ITO EN, Roosevelt Landings, RY Management, Fuji East, Nonno’s Focacceria, and Riverwalk Bar & Grill.

RIOC ‘Defers’ Lease Extension For Trellis as Deal in New Retail Plan Is About to Be Signed

by Dick Lutz

RIOC says Trellis is in default on its lease.

The contention comes just as RIOC is on the eve of concluding a deal for Southtown developers Hudson-Related to manage the Island’s Main Street retail strip, though the dispute has a three-year history in the restaurant’s relationship with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.

It appears in an April 8 letter to Diana Armenakis, the attorney representing the restaurant and its owner of 15 years, Kaie Razaghi. That letter is a response to a March 21 letter from Armenakis, a Rivercross resident, informing RIOC that Trellis intends to execute an option that appears in its current lease – to renew its tenancy for a five-year period.

The RIOC letter, signed by Assistant General Counsel Arthur Eliav, reads, in part, “I am advised that for the past two and a half years, RIOC has been requesting from Trellis a proper certification that Trellis’ ventilation systems is [sic] in good working condition and in compliance with applicable New York City codes... [Y]our client has not provided any adequate proof of its repair.”

Armenakis contends that the appropriate documentation has been provided to RIOC.

The Eliav letter continues, “Tenant’s failure to maintain such systems per the requirements of the lease would constitute a default... and preclude Tenant from exercising its right to an extension. Therefore, RIOC defers consideration of your client’s extension request until such time as Trellis provides proof documenting compliance with its obligations under the Lease.”

Actually, Razaghi had hoped to secure a 15-year extension of his lease for the space at the street level of Island House, and had negotiated one with former RIOC president Steve Shane. On May 7, 2008, a Shane memorandum to the RIOC Board said, “Desirous of making renovations to the premises, Tenant requested RIOC to extend the lease until March 31, 2027. I have negotiated a lease modification and recommend it for Board approval upon the following terms and conditions.”

The memo goes on to specify a rent increase of over 35% from \$50,684.36 per year to \$69,000, with increases in 2017 and 2022, and specifies, “Tenant will make improvements and upgrades to the existing dining area, bar, kitchen, and corridors. Tenant will remove and replace the entire ceiling and storefront, as well as gut and replace the two restrooms.”

According to Shane’s memo, the RIOC Board’s Real Estate Development Advisory Committee met on April 2, 2008, and voted to recommend approval of the lease modification.

But in a 2010 meeting of that committee, Razaghi was informed that RIOC was not satisfied with

See **Trellis**, page 3



Kaie Razaghi of Trellis

Statue of a Very Able FDR, in Wheelchair, Shown for Southpoint



Photo: Linda Heimer

As “an artist who believes in the power of figurative sculpture to represent abstract ideas as well as real people, it is inspiring to sculpt a portrait of a leader who could look at the world as it was and envision it as it could be. FDR never wanted his disability to have a place in his presidency, but he led our nation into some of the most important reforms ever enacted – reforms that allowed us, as a community, to benefit from what the vulnerable members of our community have to offer.”

With these words, sculptor Meredith Bergmann unveiled a model of the FDR Hope Memorial that will greet visitors to Southpoint Park.

In a mission statement, the FDR Hope Memorial Committee describes its purpose in adding this sculpture of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a wheelchair to an area just north of the Louis Kahn-designed Four Freedoms Park: *Roosevelt Island was so named to reflect a commitment to an integrated community where the disabled move freely, live independently, and develop to their fullest potential. The FDR Hope Memorial will educate future generations about FDR and about Roosevelt Island, a vital community of ‘enabled’ residents.*

The life-size sculpture will show FDR greeting a disabled child.

“FDR is a hero to Roosevelt Island not only for his achievements as the President who led this country through the Great Depression and World War II, and not only as a man who did this in spite of severe disability, but also as a man who continued to the end of his life to fight with creativity and humor for increased ability for himself and others,” said Bergmann at the April 9 unveiling at Gallery RIVAA.

“There are almost no photographs of FDR in a

See **FDR**, page 10

Last Friday, the new commissioner of the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal, Darryl Towns, visited Roosevelt Island for his first official tour, but not his first visit.

Commissioner Towns was already familiar with Roosevelt Island because of his involvement with the wheelchair basketball league. Still, it was great to have the opportunity to show him all of our beautiful sites and tell him about the great projects and events we have in development.

Commissioner Towns plans to attend the RIOC Board meetings, so you'll have an opportunity to meet him. I'm looking forward to working with the commissioner to make Roosevelt Island a better place to live and work and visit.

Keeping Our Island Safe

On Friday, May 13, RIOC's Public Safety Department (PSD) will host a promotion and commendation ceremony for the Island's 37 uniformed Public Safety officers. The event will mark the conclusion of Police Week, which is observed across the nation to honor law enforcement officials who died in the line of duty during the previous year.

RIOC's Public Safety officers work hard every day to ensure the safety and well-being of Island residents. I hope you can join us at the ceremony to recognize their hard work. The event will be held at the plaza at

591 Main Street at 4:30 p.m.

PSD officers are recognized by the NYPD as Special Patrolmen and are all NYS Certified Peace Officers. They receive training when first hired and ongoing training throughout their careers, including defensive tactics; courtesy, professionalism and respect; CPR and first aid; domestic violence; and much, much more.

Last year, PSD officers responded to over 7,100 calls for service, and filed over 3,700 incident reports during their 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week operation. The officers respond to the same types of calls that are responded to by the NYPD, including but not limited to domestic incidents, criminal trespass, vandalism, and larceny. They are also the first responders to fire-related calls, and have even helped residents put out small apartment fires over the years.

In addition to filing incident reports, PSD officers



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

See **RIOC Column**, page 10

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.

This year, our two great vernal celebrations of rebirth, Passover and Easter, fall within the same week. As I write this, I'm looking forward to my family's Seder, a tradition going back to my earliest memories and that includes three generations of Katzes, Cohns, Turkeys, and Gobelts. In addition, it has been my habit for many years now to join friends at Sunday Easter services of varying denominations to share in that observance, glory in the gorgeous music, and then partake of a rip-roaring brunch at some local watering hole. I wish you, my neighbors, the glad tidings of the season, however you acknowledge them.

This and That

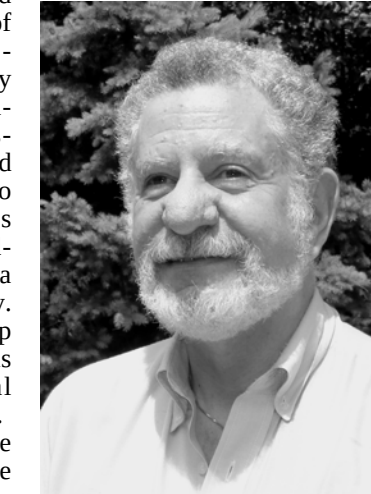
I confess that, since I addressed you last on this page, I've been fighting a wicked cold and have sloughed off some of my RIRA commitments. However, I can report on some actions of both the RIRA and RIOC governing bodies that met on April 6. The RIOC Board of Directors accepted the RIRA Common Council recommendations for allocation of the Public Purpose Funds, as was expected. Brian Lawlor continues as Chairman of the Board, although his relationship with the new Commissioner of DHCR, former Assembly Member Darryl C. Towns, seems to be a work in progress. It is unclear whether Lawlor will continue as Chair, act as surrogate for Towns, or be replaced by him. Stay tuned.

As has been my practice in the past with previous commanding officers of the 114th Precinct, I invited Deputy Inspector Stephen Cirabisi to address the RIRA Common Council at our monthly meeting, and he graciously accepted. He made it clear that Officer Fernandez, whom you have read about in these pages, was promoted within the 114th Precinct, and that his departure from duty on Roosevelt Island had nothing to do with any inquiry by our Public Safety Committee. He also noted that he was unaware of his patrolman's letter to this newspaper; something I found unusual within a quasi-military hierarchy. This should have ended any questions about the appropriateness of our committee's actions but, as you have

read, it didn't. Pity.

RIRA has created a Southern Development Review Committee (SDRC), a subcommittee of our standing Planning Committee. This will provide community participation in considering the development of the Goldwater Hospital site when its patients are moved to other venues in the next few years. RIRA Councilor Denise Shull was elected to chair the subcommittee and has, with the endorsement of the Common Council, drafted and sent a letter of preliminary support to the City Economic Development Commission, to Stanford University, and to other institutions that have considered the site for a research facility. We intend to keep an eye on the status of our hospital neighbors as well.

In addition, we voted to support the initiatives of our Social, Cultural and Educational Services Committee (SC&E) with funding. Chair Lynne Shinozaki reported on the committee's many programs (of which, more below) in my last column and, since then, we have received support from many Island and off-Island organizations, which I will thank individually, post-event, as they continue to proliferate.



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

A small group of Island leaders met on March 23 with Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, and I reported on that event in my March 26 column. One of the issues raised was the deplorable condition of our Roosevelt Island subway station. I can inform you that the Beep has followed through with a letter to the Chairman and CEO of the MTA requesting that the long-standing problems of gushing water behind

See **RIRA Column**, page 8

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

No Weekend Subway from Manhattan, 12:01am Sat thru 5am Mon. Tram and Red Bus will run continuously during this period.

— Coming Week & Next Weekend —

Registration starts for Roosevelt Island Day Nursery's full-day infant and toddler programs, **Wed Apr 27**, at the Day Nursery, 4 River Road. Information: **212-935-3747** or ridn.org. (Ad, page 12.)
Deadline to donate art for Saturday's Gallery RIVAA auction to benefit the Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, **Wed Apr 27**, 9pm. (Ad, page 9.)
Computer Orientation – Internet, **Thu Apr 28**, 10:30am, Library. Free. Limit of 10 students; sign up in advance at the NYPL branch.
Cat Adoption Table, **Sat Apr 30**, 10am-2pm, Farmer's Market, sponsored by Island Cats. Information – Rl.cats@yahoo.com.
Cherry Blossom Festival, **Sat Apr 30**, 1:00-3:00pm. Japanese music and food in solidarity with earthquake/tsunami victims. (Story, page 1, and RIRA Column continuation, page 8.)
Art Auction to benefit Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, **Sat Apr 30**, 4-6pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. (Ad, page 9.)
Cherry Blossom Walk, **Sun May 1**, 11am, starting at the visitor kiosk at the Tram station. Sponsored by the Historical Society and led by Judy Berdy. \$5 donation.

— Continuing —

Exhibition of Works on Paper by Annette R. Hochberg, through **Sun May 29**, 9am-8pm daily, The Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St.
Wheelchair Basketball, **Sat**, 10am-1pm, Sportspark.
Blanket of Ash and Lapilli, an exhibition of art by Ioan Popoiu, Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours Sat-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed & Fri 6-9pm. Continues through May 22. (Review, page 6.)
Open-Rec Basketball, **Sat**, 2-6pm, Sportspark. All ages; free.
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. Schedule of classes and activities at nyc10044.com/z/0j.
Infant Lapsit, stories for ages 0-18 months, **Mon**, 10:30am, Library.
UNO for teens, **Mon**, 4pm, Library.
Toastmasters, 2nd and 4th **Mon**, 7:30pm. Info: **212-751-9577**.
Knitting & Crochet Group, **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**.
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.
Toddler Story Time (ages 18-36 months), **Wed**, 11am, Library.
RIOC's Community Office Hours, **Wed**, 3-5pm, 591 Main St.
Constituent Service Hours for State Senator Jose Serrano and/or staff, **1st Wed** of each month, 4-7pm, RIOC offices, 591 Main St.
Island Office Hours for Assemblymember Micah Kellner and/or staff, **every Thu**, 3-7pm, RIOC offices, 591 Main St.
Game On @ Roosevelt Island for ages 13-18. **Thu**, 4pm, Library; Japanese comics/novels.
Robots for Kids ages 6-13, **Thu**, 6:30-8pm, Youth Program, 506 Main St., 2nd fl. Information: **917-751-2900**.

— Future Weeks —

Gaelic for Beginners, **Wed May 4**, 4pm, Library. Ages 13-18.
Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed May 4**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.
Fiddler on the Roof, Jr., **Fri May 6**, 8pm, **Sat May 7**, 2pm & 8pm, **Sun May 8**, 7pm, Main Street Theatre. (Ad, page 7.)
The Main Street WIRE – Sat May 7. Advertising deadlines: Display ads, **Wed Apr 27**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue May 3**; 5,500 copies due **Thu May 5**. **Additional issues in 2011:** May 21; Jun 4, 18; Jul 2; Aug 27; Sep 10, 24; Oct 8, 22; Nov 5, 19; Dec 10. Dates for 2012 listed online in the WIRE archive on Website NYC10044.com at nyc10044.com/ z/0r. **News phone**, 212-826-9056; **urgent matters**, 917-617-0449. Press releases by e-mail to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net. **Advertising** (display and classified): 917-587-3278.

Gaelic for Beginners, **Wed May 11**, 4pm, Library. Ages 13-18.
Public Safety Department Promotion & Commendation Ceremony, **Fri May 13**, 4:30pm, plaza at 591 Main St.
Health and Fitness Day, **Sat May 14**.
GMC Rocks Rosey, **Sat May 14**, 1-6pm, Riverwalk Commons. Performance of a rock band from the Gowanus Music Club. Free. Information at nyc10044.com/z/20 and nyc10044.com/z/21.
School Tour at PS/IS 217, **Wed May 18**, 8:45am. RSVP to **212-980-0294** or rademaker@schools.nyc.gov. Additional tour June 1, 8:45am. (Ad, page 4.)
Irish Folk-Dancing, **Wed May 18**, 4pm, Library. Ages 13-18.
RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed May 18**, 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.
Child School / Legacy High School Founder's Award Benefit Dinner, a tribute to Maari de Souza, **Thu May 19**, 6pm, Downtown Association, 60 Pine St., Manhattan. Details to be provided later.
Book Discussion, *Tales* by H.P. Lovecraft, **Thu May 19**, 6:30pm, Library
R&R Concert, *Provocative Masterworks*, **Thu May 19**, 7:30pm, Good Shepherd Center. Ralph Allen, violin; Jonah Chung, viola; Iris Jortner, cello; Jean Schneider, piano. Program to be announced.
Once on This Island, Jr., **Fri-Mon May 20-23**, Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance. (Ad, page 7.)

More **ComingUp** on page 3

Senior Center

Monday 9:30 Ballroom Dancing 11:00 Tai Chi 2:00 Dance & Drama 5:30 Yoga with Nurit (note earlier time)	Wednesday 9:30 Yoga Stretch 10:20 Shoppers' Bus 10:30 Computers 10:30 Spanish	Friday 9:30 Yoga Stretch 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)
Tuesday 9:30 Chinese Massage 10:20 Shoppers' Bus 11:00 Blood Pressure 2:00 Paint & Sculpt 7:30 Games (RISA)	Thursday 9:30 Stronger Bones 10:45 Ping Pong 12:30 Movie	Special Events Safety Workshop presented by the Department of Transportation, Wed Apr 27 , 10:45am
Home-delivered meals – 212-744-5022, ext. 1203		

Attention – Island Organizations & Businesses:
The WIRE is currently updating the Island CONTACTS LIST, preparing for a reprinting. Please check your listing at nyc10044.com/contacts.htm and supply any corrections or changes (or additions) to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net. Thanks.

COMING UP

from page 2

RIRA Networking Breakfast, Sat May 21, 9am-12noon, residential lobbies.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Jun 1,** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

***The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged),* Fri-Sun Jun 3-5,** Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance. (Ad, page 7.)

Sunday Concert Series – Ann Panagulias, Soprano, Sun Jun 5, 2:30pm, Good Shepherd Center. French and American songs, with pianist Richard Pearson Thomas. Free. Donations support the food program.

Roosevelt Island Day, Sat Jun 11.

Blood Drive, Sat Jun 11, as part of Roosevelt Island Day.

Book Discussion, *Love is a Dog from Hell* by Charles Bukowski, **Thu Jun 16,** 6:30pm, Library.

R&R Concert, Sat Jun 25, 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Ralph Allen, violin; Iris Jortner, cello; Jean Schneider, piano. Program to be announced.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Jun 29,** 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

R&R Concert, Fri Jul 1, 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Ralph Allen, violin; Iris Jortner, cello; Jean Schneider, piano. Program and additional players to be announced.

Book Discussion, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* by Hunter S. Thompson, **Thu Jul 21,** 6:30pm, Library.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Aug 3,** 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Book Discussion, *The Collected Stories of Chester Himes* by Chester Himes, **Thu Aug 18,** 6:30pm, Library.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Sep 7,** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Sep 21,** 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Oct 5,** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

RIRA Networking Breakfast, Sat Oct 15, residential lobbies.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Nov 2,** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Nov 9,** 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

Roosevelt Island Residents Association Common Council meets, **Wed Dec 7,** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Public session at beginning for resident comments/announcements.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, **Wed Dec 14,** 5:30pm; location to be announced. Public comment period, starting at 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

To the Editor:

On April 14 at about 11:00 a.m., both transit vending machines at the Tram on the Roosevelt Island side would not take a debit or credit card. I was lucky to have enough cash to buy a one-fare card. Since they no longer have a booth attendant on the Roosevelt Island side, what is one to do?

Also, since the Red Bus makes the stop at the Tram to drop off passengers, why can't the Red Bus also wait and pick up at the same place? This would eliminate people having to walk down during inclement weather to where the Red Bus currently stops.

Rosemary Dringus

Trellis

from page 1

the documentation he had presented regarding the maintenance of the restaurant's venting system.

Razaghi says that he presented an architect's plans for renovation of the property to Shane, who then exhibited enthusiasm and showed it to a number of RIOC staffers. Razaghi says he thought he had a firm deal and that he could rely on RIOC's authorized negotiator.

But within days, the RIOC Board fired Shane, calling his departure in thTrinakis says, of Shane's negotiation, "Please also note that the board authorization referenced in your letter merely authorized the Corporation to negotiate and in no way constituted an agreement or other obligation of the Corporation to extend the lease."

The WIRE asked RIOC for additional comment; President Leslie Torres was away for the balance of the week, and Vice President for Finance Steve Chironis said that, because it's a legal matter, there would be no comment. By press time, the chair of the RIOC Board's real estate committee had failed to respond to several questions sent in an e-mail.

The situation is complicated, to some extent, by the RIOC Board's current move toward having Southtown developers Hudson-Related take over the leasing of Main Street retail properties. In July of 2010, that was the reason given to Razaghi for a delay in consideration of his request for an extension. RIOC's acting president, Steven Chironis, wrote, "RIOC is currently working on an initiative to address all of its commercial real estate along the Main Street corridor... At such time when

RIOC sets in place a comprehensive policy... your request will be reviewed within the framework of the policy. Until then, RIOC will not be entering into any new lease extensions."

Armenakis, who made *The WIRE* aware of the current state of negotiations regarding the RIOC lease, suggests that Chironis's 2010 letter and Eliav's 2011 letter demonstrate a conflict within RIOC, raising a question about the Corporation's motives in denying the lease extension negotiated by Shane.

"Not only has the venting system been maintained," she said, "but every three months they come in and change filters and do remedial work if necessary. In addition, Kaie spent \$75,000 making corrections to the system. Those were submitted to the RIOC Board in its December meeting." The attorney's letter is inconsistent with the history of this matter."

She continued, "When Kaie acquired the lease for Trellis in 1996,

To the Editor:

So much discussion about the Red Bus... Every few years, another individual or committee decides to look into the situation and fix it. As a resident of 25+ years, I have seen these well-intended attempts come and go, usually concluding with a similar or worse situation. Now we have an expert, formerly a big-shot at MTA and a scheduler of NYC buses.

I was thinking about our latest fixer-upper as I waited in the rain this past Friday for 25 minutes for an M15 to take me to the Tram!

Each time this issue is reignited, someone suggests making the ride free, in order to allow easy and fast access through both the front and rear doors. All agree that this would speed up the process, but somehow it's never included in the latest new-and-improved plan. Would any tenant have a problem with an additional five-buck monthly increase in rent (amount can be negotiated) so we can go back to "free" Red Bus service?

Aaron C. Hymson

To the Editor:

The FDR Hope Memorial Committee wants to thank all who made our unveiling of its sculpture design a great success – Gallery RIVVA and RIVAA members for making their gallery available, Nonno's Pizzeria and Riverwalk Bar and Grill for supplying refreshments, and *The WIRE* and Roosevelt Islander for articles about this event.

We also want to thank all who came to the unveiling, and we look forward to the time when Roosevelt Island will have a world-class memorial of an enabled FDR seen in a wheelchair.

Jim Bates

he inherited a system that was built at the time Island House was built and, over the years, he has maintained it. But there's very little room to rebuild the venting system completely without a complete renovation of the restaurant."

Recalling a lawsuit by an Island House resident, she added, "This matter was litigated extensively over several years. With RIOC's blessing, [a resident wanted] to force Kaie to reconstruct the system." (In that case, a settlement

was reached on the eve of trial.) "Trellis is not required to install a new system, but only to

maintain the existing system, which he's done regularly over the years. And documentation has been submitted to the Board showing how the system was maintained and by whom. Nowhere in the lease is the tenant required to overhaul the system."

Armenakis contends that the agreement between Shane and Razaghi was submitted to the RIOC Board shortly before Shane was terminated. The Chironis letter mentioning the plan for a master lessor for the retail spaces came after that.

"It's hard to tell whether this is a case of benign neglect or malevolent indifference to the rights of a long-standing tenant," said Armenakis. "At this point, it's clear that it is RIOC's plan to seize the restaurant and make it part of this real-estate plan, leaving Trellis with no recourse but to commence legal proceedings seeking a declaratory judgment and extension of the lease."

Speaking on his own behalf,

To the Editor:

From: John Fraher

Read [this sequence of e-mails]. Things on the Island are being run without regard to how the residents feel. Is the RIOC Board hiding from their boo-boo of firing Steve Shane?

From: RIOC Advisories

Subject: RIOC Tram
[uncorrected, as received]
Monday, April 11, 2011, 5:57 PM

Due to the North Cabin having difficulties the rush hour tram schedule will be effected, a limited amount of passenger will permitted per trip until further notice.

s/ **RIOC Advisories Group**

From: John Fraher

4/12/2011 8:21 AM

Dear Ms. Torres,

I am appalled that this notice is causing many residents of our Island serious grief! The problem needs to be explained in detail. People have approached me asking if [the Tram is] safe? You are the President, the Mayor, the City Manager of Roosevelt Island and you personally have failed to address residents concerns on any and all issues.

Most all of your predecessors were active in responding to e-mails, phone calls. Herb Berman and Steve Shane were both highly visible, returned all communications personally and were often seen out and about on the Island during the workday.

I do expect a response from you!

John Fraher

From: Fernando Martinez

Subject: Re: RIOC Tram
To: John Fraher
Wed., Apr. 13, 2011, 5:44 PM
Mr. Fraher,

First and foremost, the Tram is perfectly safe. On Monday, the Tram experienced a minor mechanical issue that was quickly identified and remedied. Finally, we will [work] on improving the message in the RIOC Advisories.

Fernando Martinez

Vice President, Operations, RIOC

Letters deadline for May 7 issue: Tue., May 3, 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.

Razaghi points out that, in his 15 years running Trellis, he has co-operated with every community request for support or donations. He says he's spent considerable money on architectural plans to comply with the terms he negotiated with Shane, but faced a delay during the tight-money times of 2008-2009. He has since acquired a home-equity loan on his residence to fund the improvements he has planned. But he points out that a significant investment in the restaurant space is impractical without assurance that he will own the business beyond the end of the year remaining on his present lease.


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Spectacular Color in Ioan Popoiu’s Exhibit at Gallery RIVAA

Review by David Stone

Sometimes, the most irresistibly beautiful artwork hides mysteries, travails, passions – even courage. Great art can be an expression of obstacles overcome or determined ideals.

“In 1984,” explains painter Ioan Popoiu, “My family and I were given permission to leave.” The country they left was Communist-controlled Romania, but before winning that permission, they endured “five years of government intimidations, culminating in my 45-day hunger strike.”

His citizenship revoked and a refugee, Popoiu never relinquished the influences that inspired him while growing up in Vrancea, “a community of local farmers, wine makers, and some of the most beautiful rolling hills.”

His homeland and his art are much intertwined and reflected in his exhibit, *Blanket of Ash and Lapilli*, which opened on April 16 at Gallery RIVAA and will run through May 22.

This show has two themes – an unbroken expression of Romanian folk-art values, and impassioned environmental concerns. You can see both vividly in his title piece, *Blanket of Ash and Lapilli*. In this acrylic, vivid shades of blue dominate the center with fiery reds poking through and lining the borders, but soon after being caught by the beauty of this mix, a viewer sees that the powerful blues are being rinsed out, leaving discolored patches and eroding what appear to be cellular membranes.

In 2005, the Metropolitan Museum mounted an exhibit recognizing the influence of textile designs on legendary French artist Henri Matisse. Popoiu, it turns out, was much influenced by the textiles of his own Maramures region, “the richly colored, hand-woven silk borangic [floss silk] and cotton” as well as by “very old ceramics and wooden carvings.”

A good example is *Amazon Dampness*, an acrylic composition of powerful blue organic images casting greenish shadows into a receding field of yellow. The painting is as much about colorful design as about subjective expression, wonderful to look at independent of any meaning.

Popoiu is an expressionist whose commitment to abstraction is nearly total. Nothing looks like the subject viewers would expect from the titles or, for that matter, like anything else consistently. Something might seem vaguely like a structure in nature – a spider web, for example, or a section of microscopic cells. More likely, these are structural elements injected to keep the image in place.

“This form of expression is metamorphic and fluid, similar to natural elements, such as wind, water, fire, and air,” the painter explains. In other words, the solidity of reality is an illusion. He intends to capture it in a powerful state of flux.

In *Flakes on the Archipiélago de Colon*, Popoiu demonstrates the power of a limited palette by letting blotches of white, like giant snowflakes, offset a cauldron of red being overridden by sheathes of yellow. The pink background agrees with the most powerful influences.

Forbidden is probably Popoiu’s most accessible painting. Intense blue-black threads, congealing perhaps to a solid mass, stream above a highly obscured field of reds and yellows. But that’s not all. A forbidding shield of pale hues threads downward across the conflict, threatening to obscure everything.

Popoiu’s aesthetic recognizes, even invites, the primary forces that are at the heart of abstract expressionism. “My work,” he says in his artist’s statement, “is an expression of my personal life journey and struggles of a refugee.” He adds, “The structure, transparency, and opacity are obtained by the overlapping of multiple layers of pigment.”

This is best demonstrated in *Cabo de Hornos Dissolves*, an intricate expression of many colors and currents, each claiming its own space with nothing more than occasional awareness of other influences nearby. Straight lines, splotches, tangles, and webs do their colorful work solo, the occasional collision failing to slow the processes working themselves out.

The title of this exhibit, *Blanket of Ash and Lapilli*, suggests Popoiu’s concerns about “how the footprints of development and progress scar the skin of the Earth.” His environmentalist ambitions were formed in his childhood in Romania, where “Every day in the summertime was a great adventure. A different cherry tree would be raided by my cousins and me.”

Warriors of Extinction is a blunt statement about nature fading, red-dominated colors failing as they coalesce into sluggish pools. This builds toward an organic major structure fed by fibrous threads in what seems foreign space. Similarly, *Erasing the Blood of Deforestation* features a format with reduced distinctions as “the environmental impact of humankind” destroys diversity.

Rebelling as a youthful artist whose shows were “controlled by what the government deemed not provocative or ‘revolutionary,’” Popoiu educated himself by visiting the American and French embassies for information about the art scene outside Romania. “I dreamed of coming to New York City, dreamed about the artistic community here. How lucky and culturally educated these New Yorkers must be!”

His dreams, of course, were realized after much sacrifice. He settled on Roosevelt Island and joined Gallery RIVAA to eventually become the organization’s vice-president, enjoying the fruits of the metropolitan art scene and contributing his own unique creativity.

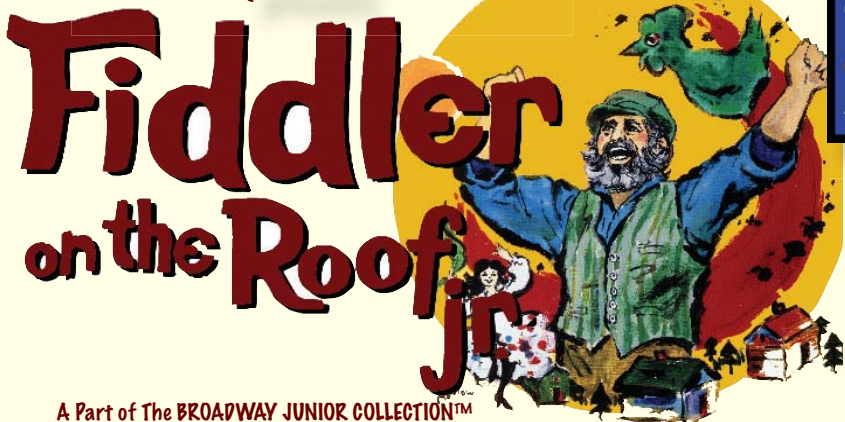
It’s no surprise, then, that the most joyous painting in this exceptional show is *Disney in the Square*, a painting in which the dominant blues are the blues used by Matisse to declare the pleasures of pure color. Threads of black and yellow dance around the central theme against a background of pure white.



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Translation:

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

Blessing for Passover:

Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner shel Yom Tov.

Translation:

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RIRA Column from page 2

a locked door on the Manhattan-bound platform, as well as the broken street-level door, be addressed forthwith. I reminded Scott that the interior ceiling netting, intended to prevent infiltration by pigeons has, instead, provided them with additional perching and nesting opportunities, creating an unsightly and unhealthful situation. His office has promised to follow up.

I welcomed the new bus czar, Cy Opperman, in my last column, mentioning that we intend to combine his technical expertise with our years of Island experience to tweak a slowly improving transportation web. That meeting is scheduled for next Monday, and will include the chairs of our Island Services and Planning Committees. My thanks to all of you who responded to our transportation website with your observations, complaints, and ideas.

FDR Hope Memorial

Did you attend the unveiling of the statue that will grace the site set aside for the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association? It was a wonderful evening highlighted by the presentation of Meredith Bergmann's sculpture design. Inspired by a composite of the few photographs ever taken of President Roosevelt in a wheelchair, it includes a representation of a young girl on crutches. FDR was instrumental in creating a haven for polio victims, many of them children, at Warm

Springs, Georgia. Artwork of this caliber doesn't come cheap, neighbors, and when RIDA begins raising funds, I hope you will be generous.

Cherry Blossom Festival

This is the last WIRE prior to RIRA's First Annual Cherry Blossom Festival on April 30. Many of the details may be found in today's news pages, so I'll just touch on the highlights. When the idea began percolating through our Social, Cultural and Educational Services (SC&E) Committee, the plan was to celebrate our glorious trees and to raise a little cash for the always-strapped RIRA treasury – and that may be the full extent of future festivals. For this year, that objective soon morphed into a grander scheme, a Celebration of Hope that would acknowledge the earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster in Japan, and offer some funds for the relief of the survivors. As now configured, 100% of the funds raised will go for that purpose.

The response from every sector has been overwhelming. Our friend and City Councilmember Jessica Lappin has authorized two City Council proclamations, to be presented to Ambassador Shigeyuki Hiroki, Consul General of Japan in New York, and Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America, who, we

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hope, will join us in a day of remembrance, hope, and solidarity.

Lynne Shinozaki is working with the Japanese Association of Roosevelt Island to include traditional Japanese music, food, origami (we hope to produce a thousand paper cranes that day), karate, and a traditional tea ceremony during the afternoon. Later, the cranes will be displayed at PS/IS 217 for the school kids to enjoy.

Our partner in this venture, RIOCC, has graciously agreed to subsidize a beautiful bronze plaque, to be mounted on a rock near the grove of cherry trees on the West Promenade pier just north of the subway station. Thanks to Judy Berdy for the plaque contact. The Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) will judge a photo contest, and Fujifilm has donated 50 disposable cameras for pre-registered kids, who may register free-of-charge, first-come-first-served, with others welcome to register for a \$5 fee. Fuji has donated one of the prizes as well, a digital camera. While the outdoor program is scheduled from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., we continue with an auction (to include a piece from the Noguchi Museum) at Gallery RIVAA at 4:00 p.m.

Confused? Me, too. There is such a concentration of good things, it takes my breath away. However, be not afeared, friends. As you wander through the various venues, you will see Islanders sporting red and black obis, the traditional Japanese sashes, and these are your guides to all events. Until then, consult our website, www.riraonline.com, for breaking news. Admission is free, of course.

To be a success, we will require two things: The first is flowering cherry trees, and we hope Mother Nature will be kind. Our trees already are in full bloom in some parts of the Island, and so, we will be thankful for what we get. The second is you. We hope you will make it your business to attend, to support your neighbors who are laboring long and hard to invent this celebration, and to support the Japanese people by making a generous donation (cash only, please) for their relief. We're Roosevelt Islanders, and this is what we do.

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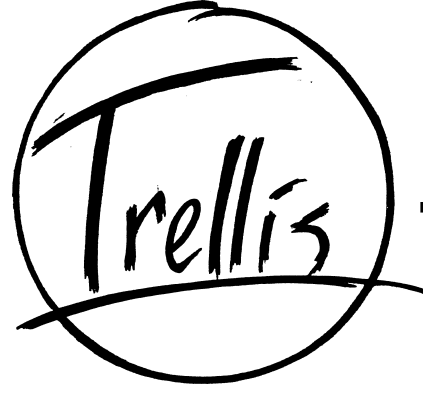
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FDR from page 1

wheelchair,” Bergmann continued. “It’s as if he did not admit the extent of his disability – that he was a paraplegic, that he would never be able to walk again – to himself, let alone the public. People knew that he had polio and had been paralyzed, but thought he had recovered. No press photos were ever published of FDR as a disabled man.

“We have only two photographs, taken by family members.”

Showing a photo taken on the porch of FDR’s cottage in Hyde Park (see *The WIRE*, April 9), Bergmann noted that it shows the president with his dog, Fala, and the caretaker’s daughter.

“FDR loved children and helped thousands of them by establishing a center for the treatment of polio at Warm Springs, Georgia. He invented therapies and new ways of charting the progress of each muscle, but what he always emphasized in the treatments (and himself inspired) was joyful play, and pleasure in the water, in life, and in each other.

“He inspired hope.”

Bergmann sculpted the Boston Women’s Memorial, which includes Abigail Adams, poet Phillis Wheatley, and activist Lucy Stone. She said she “became vividly aware of, and fascinated with, the inspirational power of historical figures” when doing research for that memorial, completed in 2003.

She added that, “Almost immediately after the unveiling, people began leaving gifts for the statues,” and said, “It’s been suggested that the FDR Hope Memorial include a place to deposit Roosevelt dimes as a source for ongoing fundraising.”

Speaking of FDR, Bergmann said, “It’s clear that FDR was able to focus our attention away from his withered legs and up into

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his head, face, and grin. He sat with more energy than surrounding men stood. That’s a wonderful challenge for a sculptor.”

Bergmann quoted FDR: “‘If they are to put up any memorial to me, I should like it to consist of a block about the size of this desk.’ It was from his desk that FDR’s vision became history, and I’m going to use the desktop as surface on which we can tell the history and vision of Roosevelt Island.”

Bergmann concluded, “Visitors in wheelchairs can fit comfortably alongside the benches... and there will be many photo opportunities.”

The Island on the Web

compiled by Rick O’Conor

Roosevelt Islander – Stanford Wants Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2w
Roosevelt Islander – FDR Hope Memorial Wheelchair Statue – nyc10044.com/z/2x
Second Avenue Sagas – How Roosevelt Island Got the F Train – nyc10044.com/z/2r
RIRA Online – Cherry Blossom Festival – nyc10044.com/z/2c
FDR Hope Memorial – We Are Enabled – nyc10044.com/z/23
You Tube – FDR Hope Memorial Unveiled – nyc10044.com/z/2d
NY 1 – FDR Wheelchair Memorial for Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2i
Curbed – FDR Hope Memorial Unveiled – nyc10044.com/z/2j
NY Post – Roosevelt Island Statue of Disabled FDR – nyc10044.com/z/2k
Wall Street Journal – Stanford Eyes Roosevelt Island Campus – nyc10044.com/z/2h
Stanford News – Stanford President on Roosevelt Island Proposal – nyc10044.com/z/25
Business Insider – Stanford’s Proposed Roosevelt Island Campus – nyc10044.com/z/2f
You Tube – Video of Stanford’s Roosevelt Island Proposal – nyc10044.com/z/2f
Boiler Station – Purdue Also Interested in Roosevelt Island Campus – nyc10044.com/z/2l
Jongmin Kim blog – New Red Bus App – nyc10044.com/z/2q
See Click Fix – Meditation Steps in Disrepair – nyc10044.com/z/2z
RIOC – April RIOC Board of Directors Meeting Webcast – nyc10044.com/z/29
RIOC – RIOC Operations Committee audio webcast – nyc10044.com/z/26
RIOC – RIOC Real Estate Advisory Committee audio webcast – nyc10044.com/z/27
RIOC – RIOC Governance Committee audio webcast – nyc10044.com/z/28
RIOC – March Public Safety Blotter – nyc10044.com/z/2a
RIOC – March Public Safety Statistics – nyc10044.com/z/2b
NY Post – No Sheriff on Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2e
NY Times – Ping Pong With Roosevelt Island Chief – nyc10044.com/z/2m
NY Times – Underground Nuclear Reactor Proposed for RI in 1960’s – nyc10044.com/z/2p
Mashable – Smarter Wireless Roosevelt Island Parking – nyc10044.com/z/2n
NY Post – Outdoor Ping Pong Tables Coming to Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2o
Just Verb It – Outdoor Photography on Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2s
Roosevelt Island School G & T Class Blog – PS/IS 217 Volunteer Day – nyc10044.com/z/30
You Tube – Where I Go – Roosevelt Island – nyc10044.com/z/2t
You Tube – Roosevelt Island Tram Poem – nyc10044.com/z/2u
You Tube – Roosevelt Island Ice Cream Truck – nyc10044.com/z/2v
Roosevelt Island Listings – RI Jobs and Business Networking Group – nyc10044.com/z/2y

RIOC Column from page 2

keep the Island safe by enforcing the laws. They have the authority to issue summonses for parking violations, moving violations, and penal law and criminal penal law violations. They also possess the authority to process arrests through the NYPD booking system.

When an NYPD investigation is required, PSD works closely with the NYPD officers to aid them in the investigation. Similarly, PSD works with other law enforcement agencies.

PSD officers, with the assistance of the NYPD, help make Roosevelt Island one of the safest neighborhoods in the City. Between 2009 and 2010, crime decreased by 18 percent. This year, the downward trend is continuing. Between January 1 and April 1 of 2011, there were 10 felonies, compared with 16 during the same period the previous year. Misdemeanors are also down, from 40 in the first three months of 2010 to 32 in the first three months of this year. I wanted to share with you some recent examples of the exemplary work conducted by the members of PSD.

Fighting Graffiti: As you know, we have a graffiti problem on the Island. PSD has been focused on identifying the perpetrators. Recently, through increased surveillance and extra patrols, PSD arrested two individuals who were responsible for over 100 tags here. These individuals, who are not Island residents, were rearrested by the NYPD for other tags off-Island.

Reducing Burglaries: PSD arrested a man responsible for burglarizing two apartments. In both cases, the apartment doors were left open by the residents. The burglar walked down halls turning door knobs. When he

found an unlocked door, he opened it and yelled a name. If the resident answered, he apologized and said he had the wrong apartment. If he didn’t get a response, he would steal valuables near the door, including cell phones, iPods, iPads, Kindles, and more. Following his arrest, PSD issued a memo to residents reminding them that while the Island is safe, we still need to take certain precautions, including locking our doors and reporting suspicious incidents to the PSD.

PSD is led by Director Keith Guerra, a 20-year veteran of the NYPD and Greenburgh Police Department. He is a NYS Certified Police Instructor, and has received training from the FBI, Federal Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, and others. Deputy Director René Bryan and Captain Estrella Suarez assist Director Guerra in running the department.

PSD has been proactive in providing the Roosevelt Island community with outreach summits on crime prevention and on youth and gangs. They have also sponsored programs in bicycle safety, car-seat safety, Halloween safety, and safety for seniors. They truly appreciate the community’s support, and believe in their slogan, “Together we can make a difference.”

You can learn more about the PSD by visiting www.rioc.com.

Next time you see a PSD officer, introduce yourself. They look forward to meeting members of the community and getting to know you better. If you have any questions, or want to report an incident, you can always reach PSD at **212-832-4545**.

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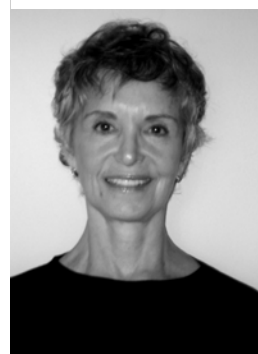
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