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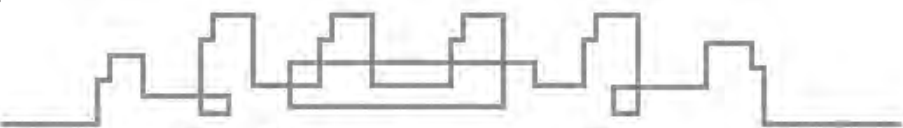
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The Main Street **WIRE**

Thirty-fourth year as Roosevelt Island’s independent community newspaper



A hand went up (foreground) last week as the RIRA Common Council voted on whether to proceed with an expulsion move directed at Frank Farance, who looked on.

Farance Expulsion on Ice For Now; Question: Is It Dead or Alive?

By Dick Lutz

The Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) has dropped, at least for now, consideration of whether to expel Island House representative Frank Farance from the Council. By a 15 to 14 vote, the item was deleted from the Council’s agenda at the start of last week’s meeting. But RIRA President Ellen Polivy says Farance is not off the hook. In an email to *The WIRE*, she wrote, “I want to point out that the expulsion for Frank is not dead. Just extended. They did us a favor. Now we can drag out the process. Please don’t make the same mistake [a blogger] made by reporting that the expulsion failed. It did not. Frank is still in the middle of an expulsion process.”

After the December 4 vote, however, four Common Councilmembers who favored the ouster and had brought the bill of particulars considered at the November meeting, walked out. At least one, Secretary Jeff Prekopa, considers that his resignation.

Asked about it, Prekopa wrote, “In my first year as a RIRA Common Councilmember, I was a Communications Committee co-chair, served briefly as the organization’s secretary, built the organization’s website, organized the 2013 Blood Drive, and lent my support in a number of the organization’s events. There were only a handful of us that were really active in the organization, and we all had two things in common – we all were driven to serve our community, and we were all abused by Frank Farance and his cronies.”

Prekopa continued, “Frank and his minions – Helen Chirivas, Romano Reid, and Trevre Andrews – along with their hapless accomplice

Russell Fields, spent most of their term fabricating issues to discredit the handful of people that actually do the work of the organization. They seem to have no moral compass, and will say anything about anyone if it furthers their own agendas. They undermine the organization’s leadership and damage its relationship with the community. Their ongoing misconduct is sucking the life out of the organization, and it seems like their only objective is to drive away talented and motivated people.

“Except for a few, there’s a general ambivalence among Common Councilmembers that enables Frank and his cabal to operate with impunity. As a result, the Council is sorely lacking in civility, accountability, collaboration, and integrity.

“I believe that expulsion is the only course of action that addresses

Rivercross Privatization Plan Gets Solid Shareholder Endorsement – Mitchell-Lama Departure Set April 1

Rivercross shareholders voted overwhelmingly last week to take the cooperative private. The official tally was 314 apartments in favor, well above the 244 needed for two-thirds approval. Only 35 apartments cast a no vote; only 16 abstained.

The actual formal move out of New York State’s Mitchell-Lama program is expected to occur on April 1. After that, shareholders will be free to sell their apartments at market rates, giving up 45% of their selling profit (the difference between the Mitchell-Lama value and the selling price) as a “flip tax” to be retained by the cooperative corporation. In the plan put forward by the Rivercross board of directors, the flip taxes are to be used to keep the building affordable for residents who choose to remain

as shareholders.

When sold, about half the apartments in the building are expected to fetch a million dollars or more.

Shareholders will be allowed to pass their apartments along to a domestic partner or spouse, a parent, or an adult child without paying the flip tax, which will be collected when the recipient sells. It is not known how many shareholders will give or bequeath their apartments this way.

A substantial initial exodus is expected. Sales of Rivercross apartments have slowed in recent years as shareholders “held on” – even if mostly absent from the building – remaining as owners while awaiting the removal of State control and the 10-to-25-times multiplier in selling prices.

The cooperative now enters a post-Mitchell-Lama period, becoming, for buyers and residents

who stay, like any other New York City cooperative, with one key exception: ground leases will run out in 2068 if, as envisioned in the original 99-year lease between New York City and New York State, the City resumes control of the entire

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Island. (At present, City control is limited to the hospital sites and the Steam Plant.) At least in theory, Island properties could then become worthless if the City does not renew ground leases, or more expensive if high ground-lease payments are demanded.

But 2068 is 55 years away and, for now, Rivercross owners can celebrate both their release from State controls and their increased net
See **Rivercross**, page 23

RIOC Accepts Deal for Cornell: \$1.4 Mil a Year

Cornell and RIOC have a deal. The RIOC Board of Directors adopted it unanimously Thursday night, with little discussion other than plaudits and bouquets to those who had put it all together.

For \$1.4 million a year through 2068, RIOC is surrendering its rights to the property surrounding Goldwater Hospital. That land reverts to New York City and, through the City, to Cornell University as the site for Cornell NYC Tech.

Of the annual \$1.4 million, New York State is supplying \$1 million. RIOC Board member Margie Smith said, “I want to make something clear – New York State came through for us like gangbusters.” The funds will compensate RIOC for costs associated with having Cornell as a user of infrastructure that RIOC must maintain. Without the million, all those costs would ultimately be borne by the Island’s residents.

RIOC Counsel Don Lewis, responding to a comment by Board member
See **Cornell Deal**, page 23

Islander’s Play Wins in National Competition

by Judy Buck

On a raw November afternoon, over tea and cookies at Trellis, a glowing, 19-year-old Roosevelt Islander talks about writing – and winning.

Chloé Hayat – Chloé Hayat Abufaraj Goldmansour – is a winner in the highly competitive Young Playwrights National Playwriting Competition for 2013. How competitive? About 1,500 plays were submitted nationwide, and Hayat was one of seven winners. “Yeah!” she laughs.

Hayat’s winning play, *Electric Blues*, will be professionally produced in the Young Playwrights Reading Series (Section A), on January 13, 2014, at 7:00 p.m., at the Cherry Lane Theatre, 38

Commerce Street (Manhattan). Admission is free. (All winning plays will be performed from January 13-15.)

Founded in 1981 by Stephen Sondheim, Young Playwrights Inc. is the only professional theatre organization in the United States dedicated to identifying, developing, and promoting playwrights age 18 and under.

Hayat emphasizes that *Electric Blues* is a work in progress – “a long one-act” that reveals the psyche of a convicted killer in the weeks, days, and minutes before the electric chair, which looms center stage. The play is dark, surreal, harrowing, and witty, with characters that include the convict, his inner child,

See **Hayat**, page 23





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The Editorial Page

The Cornell Era

While the Cornell NYC Tech campus will not be busy with anything but construction activity for the next two years, Roosevelt Island’s *Cornell Era* really begins **now**. There will be groundbreakings and ribbon-cuttings that City and university people will describe as great beginnings, but for those of us who have had Roosevelt Island mostly to ourselves, there’s no question that something big and important, futuristic and forward-oriented, is on the doorstep.

Coping with much of this will be RIOC’s responsibility, to be sure, and with Thursday’s action, the general outline of a relationship has been etched into the paper that amounts to a contract.

But what of residents? What is our role to be?

From the mid-’70s to the present, there have been varying quantities and qualities of resident leadership, but this community has never been as well-equipped to cope with a challenging future as it is now. For one thing, we have more people than years ago. For another, they possess a variety of significant talents that were not always present in adequate measure. And there seems to be a determination to challenge the future and win the community’s piece of it.

The next few years, even before Cornell opens its doors but extending beyond that, will see such great change that the face and substance of this community will eventually be very different. If there is to be a continuity in our attitudes and our commitments to quality of life in our little (but growing) town, newcomers must be encouraged – no, urged – to contribute their talents, move into leadership roles, and help chart the future we all want.

But not the newcomers alone. Meaningful advances in what we have, and how we maintain what we have, are available within this community already. The present membership of the Residents Association Common Council is proof that there is talent to be tapped. We just need more of it, more consistently available, and more dedicated to keeping Roosevelt Island the best community among the many communities of New York City.

You *will* be welcomed if you volunteer. You’ll find a rewarding role if you stay with it. And you can readily claim a major role in keeping this community alive, well, and kicking hard as the Cornell presence starts to grow.

All these thoughts translate to this: *If you have leadership skills, or ideas, or a willingness to work hard, your community needs you.*

Get involved.

DL

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Krystyn Donnelley and students of Legacy High School; and students from the PS/IS 217 Beacon Program

2013 has been a year of many changes, both on the Island and at RIOC. Since my appointment in April, I have gotten to know many of you. I look forward to continuing to work together toward accomplishing even more in the New Year. This past week, we celebrated the tradition of lighting the tree at Blackwell Plaza, and marked significant steps forward on Island construction projects. The application deadline for Public Purpose Funds is coming up – materials can be found on our website. Also there is a link to download the Public Safety Department Operational Audit Report.

Tree Lighting

RIOC would like to thank everyone who came out and made the 2013 Tree Lighting Ceremony a success. Despite the rainy weather, the community was in good spirits during musical performances by the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, The Child School, the Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance, and Public Safety Officer Deborah Viel. RISA President Dolores Green made the introductions at the ceremony, followed by opening remarks from RIRA President Ellen Polivy. Many thanks as well to those Island businesses and organizations who generously contributed to the event: The Hudson Companies & The Related Companies, Urban American, The Octagon, Gristede’s, Nonno’s

The RIOC Column

I hope everyone is having a terrific holiday season. At Cornell Tech, we have had an enormous amount to celebrate in 2013, including launching the first of our innovative academic programs, engaging more deeply with the community, and hiring terrific faculty and staff.

For me, though, 2014 will be even more exciting, because in addition to all of the great program activity, we will begin the physical development of the new campus on Roosevelt Island. So, as we get close to beginning construction, we want to make you aware of the activities that will be occurring in the coming weeks and months.

We have spent over a year doing detailed planning on our approach to construction, with the goal of minimizing the impact of construction on the community. We are so pleased that we are able to commit to the largest voluntary barging program in New York City. We are beginning to fulfill this commitment by putting a plan in place in which all demolition materials will be removed by barge. In addition, our plan includes many other important construction-related approaches,

The Cornell Column

As I walk down Main Street, I’m reminded of the wonderful feeling of community that we enjoy on our Island at this time of year. Gatherings at the Christmas Tree and Chanukah lightings, holiday sales at RIVAA and the Senior Center, the tree sales on Main Street, and preparations for Kwanzaa all make me consider how wonderful it is to live in our neighborhood. I hope all your holidays are filled with love, good cheer, and lots of the warm Roosevelt Island “Ben Hugs” named for Benjamin Imbrogno, a young Islander who embodied human kindness and left us this year, far too soon. Hugs convey a sense of well-being, trust, and relaxation, so I hope that you’ll pass them around in great abundance, and receive your fair share as well.

Newsworthy

Joyce Short, who has served on our Common Council for many years while also running the Island’s free tennis program for kids, has written a brave and important new book, *Carnal Abuse By Deceit*. It is a “must read!” It’s a sad and powerful account of her life with a psychopath, and a cautionary tale for anyone looking for a relationship. You will recognize her reason for reclaiming her maiden name when you read it. You can buy it on Amazon.com.

Jim Bates, President of the FDR Hope Memorial (in Southpoint Park), has created a new crowdfunding video to raise money to install the sculpture of an active FDR in his wheelchair. Please watch the video and donate at tinyurl.com/FDRsculpture.

RIRA congratulates the 15 new graduates who will

The RIRA Column

Focacceria, Trellis Diner, Fuji East, Coach Scot’s Main Street Sweets, and Roosevelt Island’s Starbucks.

Public Purpose Funds

The deadline to submit an application for Public Purpose Funds is drawing near – all submissions must be dropped off on or before Friday, January 10, 2014 at 11:59 p.m. Applications may be submitted to the RIOC offices (591 Main St.) between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or to the Public Safety Department offices (550 Main St.) between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. Further information and application materials are available online at rioc.ny.gov/grants.htm.



Charlene Indelicato, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation

Construction

Restoration work is proceeding at the Good Shepherd Community Center on the entry doors and narthex area. As there are two entry points that allow access to

See **RIOC Column**, page 26

such as strict oversight of environmental conditions and public reporting on these topics.

Starting very soon, we will begin delivering materials to the site in preparation for the start of construction. In January, we will be installing an 11-foot-high fence around the perimeter of the site, and will be closing the eastern portion of the esplanade to enable the barging. Soon after, we will begin abating and demolishing the interior of the former Goldwater Hospital. We are starting with the removal of interior materials. Following that, the structure will be demolished using large equipment. There will not be any blasting. Demolition will be



Cathy Dove, Vice President
Cornell NYC Tech
cathy.dove@cornell.edu

See **Cornell Column**, page 26

be joining our CERT team. They deserve our utmost gratitude for the training they completed in order to serve our community in a time of peril.

Goals for the New Year

- Working collaboratively with RIOC toward the betterment of the community.
- Advising RIOC, and advocating to ensure that the needs and interests of the residents are met.
- Creating a dialogue with the community’s tenant associations, residents, and various managing agents to address residents’ needs, and encouraging more involvement in RIRA.
- Enhancing a sense of community throughout Roosevelt Island by producing a variety of special events.
- Encouraging volunteerism by creating a link between opportunities and people with an interest in serving.
- Developing internal structures to improve the interpersonal functioning of the Common Council.

Common Council Losses

Jeff Prekopa, our Secretary and Communications Chair, has resigned from the Common Council. Jeff

See **RIRA Column**, page 26



Ellen Polivy, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
RIRApresident@gmail.com

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

COMING UP

submit events to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com

— This Weekend —

Christmas Tree Sales continue, **Fri Dec 13** 6-8pm, and through Sun Dec 22. (See ad, page 15, for further schedule.) Profits benefit the PS/IS 217 PTA.

New Voices / New Sounds, **Fri Dec 13** 7:30pm, Gallery RIVAA. Vocalist Aubrey Johnson with guitarist Cesar Garabini, and harpist Lucia Stavros with violinist Joanna Mattrey.

Hot Chocolate 5K & 10K Runs, **Sun Dec 15**, 9:30am. Info: theteam@nycruns.com.

— The Coming Week —

RI Women’s Health Organization meets, **Wed Dec 18** 6:30pm, 546 Main St., 12th floor. Topic to be announced.

Health Care (Obamacare) Information Session, **Thu Dec 19** 10:30am, Library. Learn how to enroll with the help of trained navigators.

Book Discussion: *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh, **Thu Dec 19** 6:30pm, Library.

Hope Church Preview Service, candle lighting, and community dinner, **Sun Dec 22** 4:30pm, Chapel of the Good Shepherd.*

— Regularly Scheduled Events & Meetings—

See separate listing, page 12.

— Future Weeks —

First date for ordering inexpensive food packages for the coming month from Helping Families Help Themselves, **Wed Jan 1**. See menu at jolinfoodbox.com or call **347-985-7540**.

First Sunday Jazz Salon, **Sun Jan 5** 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation; refreshments.

Microsoft PowerPoint beginners’ class, **Wed Jan 7** 10-11:30am, Library. Pre-requisite, MSWord. Free. Register in person or by calling 212-308-6243.

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

Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8, **Thu Jan 9** 6:30pm, 546 Main St., 12th floor. Presentation by Cornell of plans for the First Academic Building and the Central Utilities Plant.

Bike New York meeting on bicycle education programs to be offered here, **Thu Jan 9** 7:30pm, Manhattan Park Community Room, 4 River Rd. Info: cgoodspeed@bikenewyork.org or 212-870-2075.

Deadline for Public Purpose Funding applications. **Fri Jan 10** 11:59pm. (See *RIOC Column*, page 6.)

The Main Street WIRE— **Sat Jan 11**. **Advertising deadlines:** Display ads, **Thu Jan 2**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Jan 7**; 5,500 copies due **Thu Jan 9**. **Future issues:** Jan 25; Feb 8, 22; Mar 8, 22; Apr 5, 26; May 10, 24; Jun 7, 21; Jul date to be determined; Aug 30;

Sep 13, 27; Oct 11, 25;

Nov 8, 22; Dec 13. **News**

phone, 212-826-9056;

urgent matters, 917-617-0449. Email press releases or feature-story suggestions to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net. **Advertising** (display & classified): **917-587-3278.**

WIRE

There is no charge to list Island-related events in ComingUp. Email information to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net or leave it at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*.

Art Spa with the New York State Reflexology Association, **Sun Jan 12** 1-5pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Learn about reflexology and enjoy a relaxing and rejuvenating session.

Islander Chloe Hayat’s play, *Electric Blues*, **Mon Jan 13** 7pm, Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St., Manhattan. Winning play in national competition. Free.

Welfare Island’s Convalescent Camp, history presentation by Judy Berdy, **Tue Jan 14** 6:30pm, Library.

Book Discussion, *The Passage of Power* by Robert A. Caro, **Thu Jan 16** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Microsoft PowerPoint advanced class, **Tue Jan 21** 10-11:30am, Library. Pre-requisite, beginners’ class (see Jan 7 listing). Free. Register in person or by calling 212-308-6243.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force meeting, **Wed Jan 29** 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St.

First Sunday Jazz Salon, **Sun Feb 2** 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA. \$5 donation; refreshments.

Presentation and Community Discussion anticipating **Cornell construction kick-off**, **Wed Feb 5** 6-8pm, Manhattan Park Community Center., 8 River Rd.

Book Discussion, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman, **Thu Feb 20** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Book Discussion, *And the Mountains Echoed* by Khaled Hosseini, **Thu Mar 20** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Book Discussion, *The Silver Linings Playbook* by Matthew Quick, **Thu Apr 17** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force meeting, **Wed Mon Apr 28** 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St.

Book Discussion, *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander, **Thu May 15** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Book Discussion, *Mom & Me & Mom* by Maya Angelou, **Thu Jun 19** 6:30-8pm, Library.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force meeting, **Mon Jul 28** 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St.

*Editor’s note: *The WIRE* does not normally list religious events in this column, because established congregations have ample means of communicating with their adherents, and interest is often limited to those specific populations. We provide this listing as a matter of community information, since Hope Church is new, without an established congregation.

The Calendar. It’s time. Page 15.

Letters

To the Editor:

In Greek mythology, the gadfly was a stinging insect used by Hera, the wife of Zeus, to plague Io, a maiden who had caught her husband’s eye. Io was tormented incessantly by the gadfly, eventually coming to an unhappy end. Hera also used a gadfly to plague Heracles when he was stealing the cattle of Geryon. Frank Farance has apparently annointed himself as our Island’s gadfly, ever ready to sting and harass those who incur his displeasure. Not content to have alienated many members of RIRA, and facing possible expulsion from that organization, he has now turned his attention to the Rivercross Board of Directors.

Mr. Farance has prepared a detailed document representing his defense in the action against him by RIRA. A synopsis of that document appeared in the last issue of *The WIRE*. The first topic in that defense is the Rivercross privatization plan offered by its Directors, whom Mr. Farance accuses of manipulating the timing of the various privatization votes. In addition, Mr. Farance sees a conflict of interest in the fact that there are members of the RIOC Board who are also residents of Rivercross. Mr. Farance finds fault with the \$50 million mortgage that the Rivercross Board took on, seeing it as a means of forcing the residents to vote in favor of privatization in order to pay off the loan.

Mr. Farance is adamantly opposed to the possibility of Rivercross leaving the Mitchell-Lama program and becoming a standard, market-rate co-op. In the process, he states, “This \$300-million windfall will make Rivercross residents millionaires, based upon cashing out on State-subsidized property that the rest of us Island residents will be paying back.” Since Mr. Farance is not a Rivercross resident and has not examined the privatization plan, he is free to make up any numbers he chooses, and draw whatever conclusions he desires. However, even a cursory glance at the plan would have revealed that, after privatization, each apartment that is sold for the first time will pay a transfer fee to the building of 45%. The imposition of this “flip tax” effectively prevents any Rivercross resident from becoming a millionaire. For that to happen, an apartment would have to sell for close to \$2 million, a happenstance that can occur only in Mr. Farance’s fevered imagination.

Mr. Farance’s other charges against the Rivercross Board are equally at odds with the facts and not worth refuting in detail in this letter. It is sufficient to say that Mr. Farance has managed to be wrong on every detail of his defense that refers to the Rivercross Board or the privatization process.

This brings us to an interesting question. Why is Mr. Farance attacking the Rivercross Board and, by implication, its residents? That attack is completely divorced from any connection with the motion to expel him from membership in RIRA. It seems that when you are a gadfly, you are compelled to bite and annoy whoever comes into your field of vision. The role of gadfly is not a happy one, and Mr. Farance would do well to adopt a more neighborly persona, more fitting to the community spirit that we have here on Roosevelt Island.

Jim Bachler

To the Editor:

Until last April, Manhattan Community Board 8 had five members from Roosevelt Island. With the resignations of Deirdre Breslin and Patrick Stewart, only three Islanders – Ellen Polivy, Jeff Escobar, and I – remain on CB8.

The terms of half of the Community Board’s 50 members are expiring at the end of March 2014. Even though he is leaving the borough presidency at the end of December to become City Comptroller, Scott Stringer is assisting his replacement, incoming Borough President Gail Brewer, in the appointment procedure by taking applications now.

Information about applying, including an application form, is available at tinyurl.com/CBapply. Applications must be submitted by February 1, 2014.

We miss Deirdre’s and Patrick’s voices on CB8, and more members from here would benefit not only the Island, but the entire Community Board.

Larry Parnes

To the Editor:

It is most unfortunate that the humanitarian legacy of President Franklin Roosevelt is not being executed by the administration of the FDR Four Freedoms Memorial Park.

In recent weeks, as well as last winter, the park staff sat huddled in a tiny unheated vehicle while on duty. There is no shelter for them as they stand at the windblown south end of the Island, speak with visitors, and maintain the austere and pristine granite of the site.

The park is never closed due to inclement weather. Countless visitors to the park remark on the situation of the staff when they enter the RIHS Visitor Center.

It is well known that architect Louis Kahn died before completing his plan for the memorial. He may have intended to provide (seating and shade for the public and even) shelter for the park staff. Certainly, there is plenty of space on park property to provide an enclosed heated shelter for the comfort of staff and visitors.

The callous indifference of the influential and wealthy board members of the FDR Four Freedoms Park speaks louder than the desire to maintain the architect’s unknown intent.

Just in case the park administration says that they are a poor not-for-profit, here is a listing of their board: John Dyson, Chairman of Millbrook Capital Management, Inc.; Jack Rosenthal, President-Emeritus of *The New York Times* Company Foundation; Katrina vanden Heuvel, Editor and Publisher of *The Nation*; Warren Hoge, Senior Adviser for External Relations to the International Peace Institute; and William Whitaker, ex officio, Curator of The Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania; Ambassador William J. vanden Heuvel; Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.; Barbara Shattuck Kohn; Carl Weisbrod; Sally Minard; William R. Griffith, Secretary & Treasurer; James Polshak; and Gina Pollara.

Judith Berdy

Additional letters on page 23

To the Editor:

There has been discussion and unwarranted criticism of the activities of the RIRA Social, Cultural & Educational Committee (SC&E) and its subcommittees. As the year ends, we write to clarify the situation so that they may continue to serve the Roosevelt Island community effectively as in the past.

For many years, RIRA’s SC&E Committee and subcommittees have been given the most wonderful opportunity to serve our community by creating and managing events that we hoped would give you wonderful life memories of this amazing and beautiful place that we proudly call home. We have helped our neighbors together, learned how to skate, enjoyed our Island’s natural beauty, sung together, and remembered our lost neighbors together. We have Ben-hugged you from our hearts. Thanks for the memories; we will truly cherish you and each of them. We hope you have felt the joy from us in all that we have done together.

So many people have been involved in our activities and helped us to accomplish the events that we shared; we would like to thank them all from the bottom of our hearts. Your efforts were appreciated more than you will ever know. When everyone does a little, a whole lot gets accomplished.

Two unfounded criticisms are especially rankling:

There is no current conflict of interest in RIRA. There was one in 2009, and it was resolved. (For the supporting documents, contact me at lynnestrong@hotmail.com.)

We have conducted our events with every effort to maintain the utmost integrity. We sincerely apologize if there has been any confusion regarding the events’ financials. The RIRA Treasurer’s report accepting the final account of the 2013 Cherry Blossom Festival is available. (For the supporting documents, contact me at lynnestrong@hotmail.com.)

We included numerous in-kind donations and pro bono services from our supporters as a way to gauge the magnitude of the events’ expenses. Without these contributions, we could not have executed, to the same degree, the events that you have enjoyed. The lavish generosity of these supporters in the community, most of whom required anonymity, is irreplaceable. We have always endeavored to create events that were low-cost or free to the community, and conducted modest fundraising for RIRA and off-Island charitable causes. Some activities have been more successful than others, and we enjoyed the ability to take risks, try new things, and repeat successful events. We are implementing new procedures to address the spurious claims of conflict of interest and financial mismanagement.

This is the only statement on these RIRA-related matters that the SC&E Committee will make. If you have a question on our activities, we will be happy to meet with you individually to discuss it.

Lynne Strong-Shinozaki

Chair, RIRA SC&E Committee

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 email text (or as an attached MSWord or WordPerfect file) to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net or on a disk left at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *THE WIRE*. If you email, expect a confirming response; 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, in the judgment of the editors, merits the required space.



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COMING UP

— Continuing Events & Activities —

ART EXHIBITS

Painted Mountains, paintings by Stafan Umaerus, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St., through **Sun Jan 19**. Gallery hours 9am-9pm daily.

Islander Toshiko Kitano Groner exhibits in holiday show, **Tue-Sat** 11am-6pm, Onishi Gallery, 521 W. 26th St. Info: 212-695-8035 or OnishiProject.com.

In With the New, group show by members and guests of the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, through **Sun Jan 26**, Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm.

Events in the coming week and immediate future are listed on page 7.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open **daily** 6am-10pm.

FDR Four Freedoms Park open **daily** (except Tue) 9am-5pm.

Lighthouse Park open **daily** 7am-9pm.

CLASSES (alphabetical, then Sat-Fri)

Art, taught by members of the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA), **Sat** 11am-2pm, Sportspark. Free

MUSIC

Jazz Salon, **1st Sun** (except Jul-Aug) 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation.

EXERCISE & SPORTS (alphabetical)

Basketball (all ages), **Sat** 2-5pm, Sportspark. Free.

Basketball (adults), **Mon-Thu** 8-10pm, PS/IS 217. Free.

Ping Pong (all ages), **Tue Wed Fri** 6-9pm, Sportspark.

Sportspark extended hours (ages 16-25), **Fri-Sat** 9pm-midnight.

Swimming (all ages; no instructor) — **Sat-Sun** 12-3pm, **Mon-Fri** 6-10am, **Mon Wed Thu Fri** 7:30-10:30pm.

(All **Sportspark swimming** \$5; free for disabled, seniors 60+, and ages 0-3.)

Swimming (18 yrs+) — **Sat-Sun** 4-7pm, **Tue** 7:30-10:30pm, Sportspark.

Swimming — Water Aerobics, **Mon** 12-1pm, **Wed & Fri** 9-10am, Sportspark.

Swimming — Learn to Swim (adults), **Mon** 1-3pm, Sportspark.

Swimming — Master Swim, **Mon & Fri** 7:30-8:30pm, Sportspark.

Yoga (open level), **Sat** 11am-12noon, **Thu** 6-7pm, Sportspark. \$5.*

Yoga with Keren Messer, **Mon** 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. \$17; multi-session rates. Info: KerenMs@gmail.com or 212-614-9181.

Yoga (adults), **Tue** 7-8pm, **Thu** 7:30-8:30pm, PS/IS 217 Beacon. Free.

Yoga (beginners), **Wed** 7-8am, Sportspark. \$5.*

Yoga with Jax Schott, **Wed** 7:30pm, Island Kids, 536 Main St. \$15.

Zumba, **Mon** 6:30-7:30 & 7:30-8:30pm, **Thu** 8:30-9:30pm, **Sat** 10-11am, Sportspark. \$5.

Zumba/Dance/Cardio, **Mon & Wed** 6:30-7:30pm, PS/IS 217. Free.

BIRTH THROUGH TODDLER (listed Sat-Fri)

Swimming classes (age 3-up), **Sat** 3-4pm, Sportspark. \$15 or \$100/10 weeks. Questions/registration, ryansherrill84@gmail.com or 917-261-2771.

Art for Kids with Connie Tanner (ages 3-8), last **Sun** of the month, 10-11:30am, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$10 suggested donation; materials supplied. No reservation required.

Baby & Toddler Swim classes (6-36 mo),

Sun 11am & 11:30am, **Wed** 10:30am & 11am (through Dec 22), Sportspark. \$5.*

Baby Story Time (0-18 mo), **Mon** 10:30am, Library. Advance registration required.

Story Time with Olya (pre-school ages), **Tue & Thu** 9am, Main Street Sweets, 559 Main St. Free.

Toddler Story Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 11am, Library. Registration required. Free.

Island Kids Baby Group (0-14mo), **Thu** 10am, 536 Main St. Info: IslandKidsRI@gmail.com.

Read Aloud (3-6 yrs), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library.

Music with James (4 mo-4 yrs), **Fri** 4:30pm, 475 Main St. lounge. Info: MusicWithJames@aol.com.

OLDER KIDS (Sat-Fri)

Tennis — New York Junior Tennis League (ages 5-18), **Sat-Sun** 6-8am, Racquet Club. Free.

Tennis — Junior Tennis, **Sat & Mon-Fri** after school, Racquet Club. Info 212-935-0250.

Games (5-12 yrs), **Tue** 4pm, Library. Free.

Teen Game Night, **Wed** 6pm, Main Street Sweets, 559 Main St.

Girl Scouts (6-13 yrs), **Fri** 6-8pm, PS/IS 217. Info: 212-527-2505.

SENIORS (also see page 26)

Lunch, **Mon-Fri** noon, Senior Center, 546 Main St. \$1.50. Menus outside social worker office.

REGULAR MEETINGS (Sat-Fri)

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

Sci-Fi Discussion Group, **1st Tue** 6:30pm, Library.

114th Precinct Community Meeting, **4th Tue** 7pm, Riccardo's by the Bridge, 2101 24th Av., Astoria.

RIRA Common Council meeting **1st Wed** (except Jul-Aug) 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center.

OFFICE HOURS

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

Constituent Service Hours for Assemblymember Micah Kellner and/or staff, **Mon-Fri** 9:30am-5:30pm, District Office (1365 First Av at 73rd St.). Call 212-860-4906 for appointment.

Constituent Service Hours for State Sen. Jose Serrano and/or staff, **1st Tue** 1-4pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St. Info: 212-828-5829.

OTHER

Knitting & Crocheting Circle (adults), **Thu** 11:30am, Library.

Food Box Orders for Helping Families Help Themselves, ordering period **1st-11th of month**. Menu online at jolinfoodbox.com. Info 347-985-7540; pickup period at 546 Main St. **15th of month**.

*Info: 212-832-4569 or eddie.perez@rioc.ny.gov.

The incredible outpouring of emotion upon the passing of Nelson Mandela has flowed from every nation and people on the planet. It is a grief tempered by jubilation and wonderment at the life of this great and humble man. He touched millions.

I had the unforgettable experience — and the thrill of a lifetime. I met him. We shook hands. We exchanged a few words.

As a teenager affected by this country's civil rights movement, I hated South Africa's apartheid and wanted to do something about it. But in the late '60s and early '70s, as the Vietnam War raged on, the racist apartheid state seemed invulnerable and implacable. In truth, it was entering its last period, as history started to accelerate.

In 1974, the centuries-old Portuguese Empire in Africa collapsed. But on the eve of independence, Angola was invaded by a South African army aiming to install a puppet government. The fledgling government appealed to the Cuban government for help. Cuba dispatched thousands of volunteer soldiers and heavy equipment without telling the Soviet government, which, they knew, would oppose it as provocative to Washington and too risky. When the Cuban army drove the apartheid forces from Angola, it was a political and psychological game changer: The South African invaders were beaten by troops largely of color. A fuse was set alight.

In June 1976 came the student uprising in Soweto. Many hundreds were brutally gunned down. There was revulsion across the world.

From Washington, the Free South Africa movement started to spread. Picket lines appeared in front of the South African embassy, right in the middle of Embassy Row. For non-violent civil disobedience, some were hauled away for a day in the District of Columbia jails. But the protests grew. Each day, a new group would take the lead, mobilize some of their folks, and get arrested. There were hundreds every day. On some special days, there were thousands: Sculptors Against Apartheid, Punk Rockers Against Apartheid, Jewish groups, Muslim groups, churches, atheists, Buddhists, practically every trade union in D.C., college students, and high school students from elite private schools. One particular day, there were even Accountants Against Apartheid, chanting lustily.

We had a movement on our hands. Pretty soon, even politicians got on board.

Campuses and banks were coming under heavy pressure to divest from South Africa. Reagan administration policy of "constructive engagement" began to collapse.

It was amazing, and it was inspiring. It told me that the apartheid state was doomed... and probably sooner rather than later.

A few years later, Fidel Castro's army led a military force including Angolans, South Africans, and Namibians, routing the South African army in the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale [Angola], and forcing a retreat back to South Africa where, now, the African townships were in open mass rebellion.

Then Namibia won its independence. Nelson

Mandela and all the South African political prisoners were freed. The African National Congress and all the banned anti-apartheid organizations were legalized.

And Nelson Mandela was coming to the United States! His first stop was Havana, where he spoke before hundreds of thousands, thanking the Cuban government and people for their crucial part in getting him released from prison, and breaking the back and the morale of the apartheid state.

It was June 1990. As a long-time activist and organizer in the anti-apartheid movement, I was honored with an invitation to the VIP reception area of Washington National Airport.

I was in awe, feeling humble among politicians, diplomats, Secret Service agents, media, and other activists. His flight touched down, taxied, and parked. Mandela, the living legend, appeared. As I approached him, I teared up. My tiny piece of the struggle was a big piece of my life. I caught that amazing smile and thought, *What a burden it must be to have people blubbing all over the place when they meet him. But I guess he's used to it.* I shook his hand and gave him some copies of a pamphlet of his recent speeches that I was helping to distribute. He seemed very pleased.

I managed to blurt out, "It's an honor to meet you." He replied, "Well, it's an honor to meet you." "But I'm nobody special," I said. Mandela looked me in the eye, smiled, and said, "You become someone special when you fight for freedom."

When my wife, Erin, and I first visited free South Africa, friends took us into Soweto, to the memorial to the martyred youth. We also visited Robben Island, off Cape Town, to see the cell where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. South Africa is a ravishingly beautiful land, still far from overcoming the brutal legacy of apartheid. It remains starkly unequal, and there is growing unrest, especially among industrial workers and agricultural laborers. Corruption among the small, emerging layer of newly-rich Africans entering the still-white-dominated business and financial summits has shocked

and disgusted many who still lack running water or decent housing, or are among the 25% who are officially unemployed. Police violence is rampant, as exemplified by the cold-blooded murder of 34 striking platinum miners by police last year.

Nelson Mandela and his generation of revolutionaries, like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Joe Slovo, Ruth First, and so many others, are almost all gone now, but what they fundamentally accomplished by destroying the structures and prerogatives of apartheid was to lay the foundations to advance around questions such as land reform. The destruction of apartheid established the democratic and political space — the rights of working people to move freely, to associate, and to organize in their fight for social justice and social equality.

As long as people fight for freedom, justice, and equality, the ideas and example of Nelson Mandela will live on.

—Ike Nahem

island observer



Ike Nahem was active in the anti-apartheid movement in the United States starting in the late 1960s. He was part of the Free South Africa Movement in Washington, D.C. He has lived on Roosevelt Island with wife Erin and son Andrew since 1999.

(Telephone) Trouble in River City

from Peter Merner

It seems that not everyone on the Island is up to date on what actually occurred during the recent widespread telecommunications outage here. So, here are the facts, according to Verizon spokesman John Bonomo.

The outage occurred on November 7 as a result of Verizon cables being cut by a Hudson/Related contractor working on the property east of the existing Riverwalk buildings.

Both copper lines and FIOS cables were cut, affecting both business and residential customers.

Service was restored gradually, with virtually all customers back in service by November 12.

Bonomo volunteered that both business and residential customers could ask for a rebate of service charges by calling 800-837-4966. Verizon, through its spokesperson, says it is not responsible for business losses attributable to the outage, so it would seem that businesses suffering such losses are going to have a hard time getting reimbursed for them.

A spokesperson for Hudson/Related provided further input

relating to how the cables were cut. It seems that the subcontractor, Monadnock, and Related requested the usual utility identification inputs from both Time-Warner and Verizon, but the inputs received did not include the lines that were cut. Specifically, it was noted that "Monadnock and Hudson/Related complied with all requirements for utility identification prior to the start of the sewer work, and neither is responsible for the repairs to those unmarked lines, nor the business/personal interruption incurred by the users."

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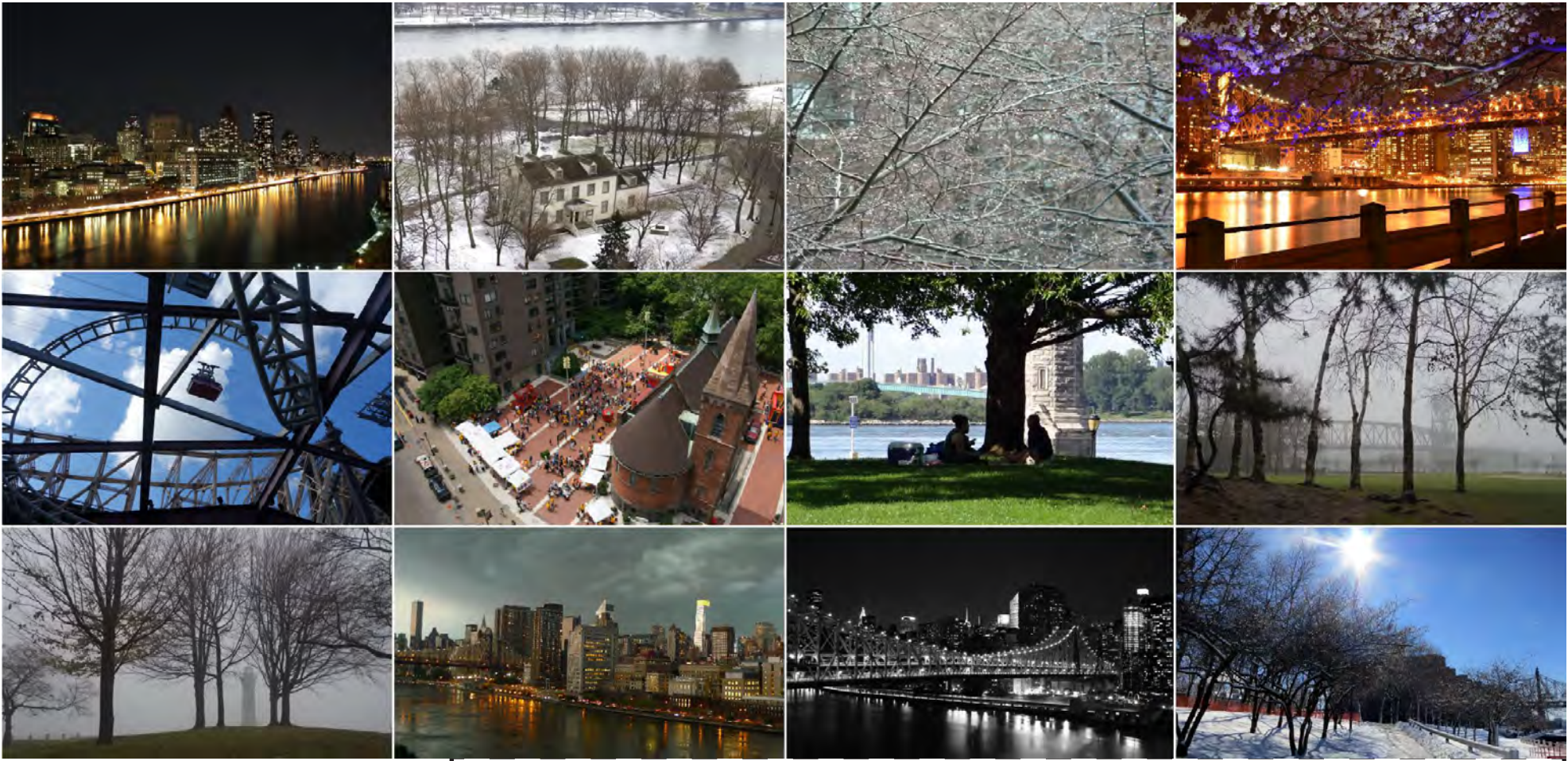
Dear Santa Claws (Rudolph and Reindeer...)

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In a Season of Change, the Island Gets New Clergy

by Jim Baehler

The newly appointed Catholic priest on Roosevelt Island, **Fr. Kevin Malick**, is unusual in a number of ways. First, he is six feet, seven inches tall and never played basketball. Second, his ethnic background is Ukrainian (with some Irish) rather than Italian or all-Irish. Third, he does not claim a call from God that led him to the priesthood. Fourth, even at the young age of 34, he has been told by a bishop not to give any more interviews to the press. (More on that later). Fifth, he came to the priesthood from a concerted study of philosophy, which he maintains to this day.

Fr. Malick is New York-born-and-bred. He was born in Brooklyn, raised on Staten Island, and educated at St. John's University. "I always felt an attraction to the Church. There was a priest on Staten Island, Fr. Michael Riley, who held monthly meetings where we talked about the Church as a vocation. That was the start of the gradual process that led me to becoming a priest."

But it wasn't a smooth process. "When I was halfway through the seminary, I dropped out for 15 months and trained to be an Emergency Medical Technician. I even tried to join the Navy, but I was told that the maximum height allowed on a ship was six feet, five inches, and any naval duty would be confined to shore-based facilities, so that was out. Then I spent one year in a retreat house where I did menial work, prayed a great deal, and sought spiritual guidance from priests in the house. I finally came to the conclusion that the two essential elements of the Church are the Eucharist and the people. I thought, 'I am one of those people,' so I went back to the seminary."

While at St. John's, Kevin won a Gold Key Award for outstanding academic achievement in philosophy. "I just love philosophy. It teaches us how to think and how to express our thoughts. I took as many philosophy courses as

I could." When asked to name the philosophers he admires the most, Kevin named Kierkegaard, Thomas Aquinas, and Socrates. At St. John's, Kevin received a B.A. in theology and an M.A. in divinity, which encompasses general philosophy.

When Pope Benedict came to New York City in 2007, a giant mass was held at Yankee Stadium. Kevin was a newly minted priest, assigned the task of supervising the procedure for administering communion to the 25,000 participants in the upper tier at Yankee Stadium. Afterward, a writer for *The New York Times* asked Fr. Malick how he was able to accomplish his assignment. "I told him I had a loud voice and I was good at yelling at people. Of course, that was the quote that appeared in *The Times*. Bishop Sullivan then instructed me not to give any more interviews to the press. This will be the first interview I have given since then, so we will see what happens next."

Prior to being assigned here, Fr. Malick served as an assistant pastor at churches in Rockland County and Tuckahoe, NY. Then, in 2012, he was severely injured as a passenger in a serious car accident. Among other injuries, he suffered a fractured vertebra. He suffered through extreme pain for many months, hoping to avoid a spinal fusion. "I was taking Percoset five times a day in addition to other pain killers. I couldn't stand for more than five minutes at a time. I was so doped up I couldn't eat and my weight dropped from 230 pounds to 165. I was put in a nursing home for three and a half weeks, and fed five meals a day to build me back up. In the process, I became addicted to Häagen Dazs ice cream."

Part of the recovery process was getting him off the plethora of pain killers that he was taking. "I did it cold turkey. It was eight days of pure hell, with constant nausea and

vomiting." He was then admitted to a retreat house in Newburgh, New York, for four and a half months. "Five days a week, I was involved with an extensive exercise and therapy program. The emphasis was building up the core muscles of my body so that my back would have proper support. Some of the exercises are aimed at the very small muscles in the torso and back that most exercise programs don't focus on. The regimen included yoga and Pilates, and I still follow the program."

Fr. Malick was assigned to Roosevelt Island on June 16, but there were no accommodations available here, so he lived for a short while in an apartment in Manhattan. "I didn't like that arrangement. A priest needs to live in his parish, so I came back to the Island and slept on a cot in the parish office for a few months. Then I was told that space had been found for me in the priest's house at St. Patrick's Cathedral, and then the diocese office found an apartment for me on Roosevelt Island. That was accomplished on October 3, when I moved into Westview."

When asked about his impressions of Roosevelt Island, Fr. Malick said, "This Island is so different. I don't know of any place like it. There is a nice feeling on

The first two in a Jim Baehler series of profiles of Roosevelt Island's new clergy

the Island, a little like the suburbs. People here are real New Yorkers, tough on the outside but really soft on the inside. There is a sense of goodness and kindness here; people stop and talk to each other on the street all the time."

Fr. Malick's plans and hopes for the future include a curtain for the sanctuary. "When public meetings are held in the church, I think it would be much better if the altar area were shielded from the spectators. I would also like to see new chairs in the auditorium, to make things more comfortable for our parishioners and anyone else using the space."

He's also looking for funds to fix the organ. "It needs tuning and some mechanical repairs. I would also like to recarpet the sanctuary and do a complete makeover of the Thrift Shop. It needs to be more attractive so more people will come in and see what is available."

In addition to his regular parish duties, Fr. Malick has instituted a number of evening meetings to serve his parish. Mondays at 6:15, he leads a session of guided meditation and prayer in the Chapel. Tuesdays at 7:30, he leads a discussion of Scripture passages. Dogma is covered on Wednesdays at 7:30, which involves a study of general theology. And Thursday nights, there's a class for catechism teachers to make sure that they're providing accurate information to the young people in their classes.

Fr. Malik has implemented two new masses: an English mass at 4:15 p.m., and a Spanish mass at 5:30 p.m., both on Saturday. A new website will soon be up and running at francescabrini.org.



by Jim Baehler

There are many roads to finding one's spiritual faith. St. Paul was converted when God spoke to him on the road to Damascus. St. Augustine famously appealed to God, "Give me chastity and continence [self-restraint] but not yet."

Dan Sadlier, the minister of the newly formed Hope Church, didn't receive a direct message from God, and his conversion to the spiritual life has more of St. Augustine in it than St. Paul. Dan, now 36, admits to "heavy drug use and heavy drinking" as a young man. Raised a Catholic, he became interested in the philosophical aspects of Christianity and began to read widely in that field. In the process, he had questions about the Catholic Church for which he found no satisfactory answers.

Dan was raised in the Detroit area and graduated from a local college, Oakland University, intending to go to law school. A girl he knew took him one Sunday to the Kensington Community Church in Troy, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. He remembers, "I heard a gospel message like I had never heard before." He continued to attend services there, and developed a personal affinity for Jesus and the life that He prescribed for all.

At the same time, Dan continued to attend the Catholic Church with his younger brother. In fact, Dan was enlisted to help teach catechism to youngsters in the church. He still feels an attachment to Catholicism. "I have the utmost respect for the Catholic Church. When you begin following Jesus for real, you become a better Catholic, Protestant, or whatever you are."

At the Kensington church, Dan volunteered to work with teenagers and increased his study of religion, sometimes spending six hours a day at his studies. "I was trying to find answers to my questions, and looking for a faith that would provide those answers. Finally I realized that faith means not having all the answers." Examining his life, he realized that his only motivation in becoming a lawyer was just to earn a living. It was about that time that he heard a choir soloist at the Kensington church who was extremely attractive. Dan approached her and learned that her

name was Amanda, and that she was very active in church affairs. Together, they launched a ministry at Oakland University. Dan says, "Amanda is a strong leader and able to communicate well with anyone."

Dan applied for a summer job at the Kensington church but was hired as a full-time youth leader instead. "I did a lot of racial reconciliation between the black inner-city youths and the white congregations in the suburbs," he says. Dan and Amanda's next stop was the Hope Church in Astoria, Queens, where they spent five years. "The Hope church is an Evangelical Covenant Church founded in this country by Swedish immigrants. These days, there are very few Swedish immigrants, and the church has gradually become racially and ethnically mixed with a great many minorities in its membership. There are congregations all over the United States, and some are quite large. The Kensington church has about 14,000 members, with five branches in Detroit and one in Orlando, Florida."

Dan and Amanda will be working together for the Hope Church congregation on Roosevelt Island, but there won't be an official opening until April. Training has begun for leaders who will work with children, the elderly, and the disabled. They will help extend the Gospel message among Islanders. A preview service was held in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd on a recent Sunday afternoon; it drew 60 to 70 attendees. Afterward, they all enjoyed a meal in the church lower level.

Along the way, Dan managed to acquire an M.A. in global leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. "Despite the title," he says, "it is really a degree in theology, and I am now an ordained minister in the Evangelical Covenant Church."

Dan and Amanda have five children, ranging in age from two to ten. They promise a great deal of singing at their services, and the use of video vignettes to enhance their Gospel message. Dan says their essential message is simple, "Jesus is good and is for you and you can find Jesus in your everyday life. You should experience the love of God in every part of your life."



Personal Experience

Making It Big in TV and Film

by **Andrew Gordon**

It all started in July, when my daughter, who is trying to break into TV and the movies, informed us – that’s my wife, Nancy, and me – that some old people were needed for a scene in *The Girl in the Book*, an independent film. She was working in it as a featured extra, and so knew a number of the crew.

We were a little wary. We’d heard the tales of how badly extras or “background” can be treated – basically like human props – but our curiosity and perhaps our egos (*Hey, I could be a star!*) led us to give it a try.

When we arrived at the set, we were placed in “holding,” a room where the extras can wait and not bother stars or crew. On set, it is *verboten* to speak to, or even make eye contact with, the stars or the director, unless they talk to you first, and usually they don’t even acknowledge your presence. After a wait of about two hours (a very short waiting period by the way, as I have subsequently waited as long as eight hours to be used or



abused), we extras were ushered on set. To our surprise, the assistant director walked up to us, saying, “You must be Marissa Gordon’s parents.” We were placed right next to one of the stars, the Swedish actor Michael Nyquist. While other extras had to walk around, we just had to stand there and not look ugly. By the end of the scene, we were hooked.

Since then, Nancy and I have been in a number of television shows and movies, sometimes together, entirely at the whim of casting directors. I have played doctors (including George Washington’s), lawyers, a Mormon bishop, a Catholic priest in the Middle Ages, a con man, aristocrats, a mayor, and Princess Anne’s driver. Nancy has played Queen Victoria, Martha Washington, a hospital patient, a corpse, a reporter, a psychic, a bride, an aristocrat, mothers, and grandmothers. None of the movies we were in, and only some of the TV shows, have been released, so I can’t provide those details, but I have been in scenes with Robert De Niro (a commercial), Zachary Quinto, who plays

Spock in the new *Star Trek* movies, and Simon Helberg of *The Big Bang* TV show (one of the few stars who acknowledges the extras, even consenting to pose for pictures with them).

When you arrive for a day’s shooting, you never know if you will be used or seen on camera, or might be extremely lucky and be featured. If you are in the far background, which I call being an “Arctic extra,” you’ll just be a blur somewhere on the screen. Even if you’re closer, only your torso or the back of your head may be seen. (Nancy claims to be able to identify the back of my head in one or two shows. I am not so sure.)

Since starting in July, Nancy and I have been in over 25 TV shows, movies and commercials. I’ve been featured, which means you can see my face clearly, in two network TV shows. One was the new *Michael J. Fox Show* in an episode titled *Teammates*, which aired recently. Originally, I was an “Arctic extra” in a large party scene, but I kept being moved forward. Halfway through, I was placed next to a couple seated at a table. They turned out to be stand-ins for Fox and his TV wife, Betsy Brandt. Later, I was moved to the front. Then, after about three takes, an assistant director asked me to do an “air guitar.” Had Nancy been present, I would have been embarrassed. But I let my usual shy-guy persona go, and was jumping up and down pretending to be a

rock guitarist. According to a man standing next to me, even Michael J. Fox was impressed. Unfortunately, that performance wound up on the cutting room floor, as it apparently didn’t serve the needs of the scene. But I appear about six times in other parts of the scene, so I was happy – and Nancy was very jealous, so it was a double bonus.

On a recently aired *Person of Interest* episode, *The Perfect Mark*, Nancy and I played people attending a sports memorabilia auction. We were told to sit anywhere and that we would be moved around. She sat first and motioned for me to join her, but a woman sat down next to her. Looking around for an empty seat, I noticed an aisle seat in the first row and sat down next to a nondescript actor. With the main camera set up in the rear, I figured I would not be on camera. But I was left alone as many others were moved around.

Five minutes later, the man next to me stood – he turned out to be a stand-in – and a guest star, the Danish actor Carsten Norgaard, sat down next to me. He introduced



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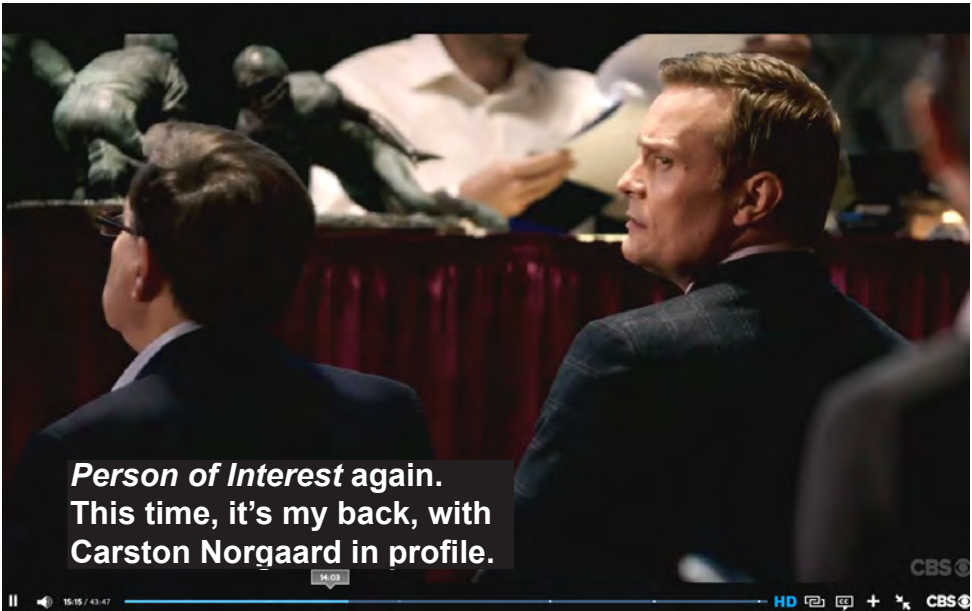
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himself, and we ended up chatting. Shortly before lunch, which usually occurs between 2:30-3:30 p.m. on set, all but one of the roughly 300 extras (100 union members and 200 non-union) were sent back to our holding area to await lunch. I was the one non-union extra asked to remain. The crew built a dais under Norgaard’s and my seats and shot us from behind looking at the two auctioneers. The scene took about 20 minutes to shoot.

Meanwhile, waiting with the other extras, Nancy was getting frantic, wondering where I was. At the end of the scene, the crew, the principals (known as “talent”), and I went back toward holding. A very pretty crew member was sending people to the right for lunch or to the left for holding. (Extras eat last.) I expected her to send me to the left, but she pointed to the right and smiled. (If it turns out that was the highlight of my acting career, so be it.) I was able to get enough food for two, so Nancy and I could eat together. Three hundred other extras had to wait another 10 minutes.

After lunch, we were asked to sit somewhere else, so I moved to another section in the first row. At one point, Nancy was asked to stand up in the back. As it turned out, I was mainly seen from the back with the guest star, but was shot from the front in my second position. She can be seen behind two guest-star villains.

If all this makes you think of quitting your day job for acting, don’t. There are thousands of background actors out there, and the non-union ones like Nancy and I all work for minimum wage for an average of 10 to 14 hours a day. Union actors make more, but you need three waivers to join the union, and those are not easy to get. To get one, you have to do something special that the average extra can’t do – and no, I didn’t get one for my air-guitar playing. So far, Nancy and I have no waivers, although our daughter has three. She is now debating whether or not to join the union. The problem is that the studios prefer to hire non-union people, as they

are much cheaper, so a non-union person may work considerably more often than a union one, even though the latter makes more money per gig. Many who have the three waivers are conflicted about whether to join the union. Most background actors have a second, flexible job that they can leave if they get a gig.

Actors find work a number of ways. If you don’t have an agent, then the casting sites like ActorsAccess.com and CastingNetworks.com, which can each be joined yearly for under \$100, are two of the best places to search for work. ActorsAccess is more for independent TV and movies, where an extra can get a supporting role and speak lines, while CastingNetworks is more for extra roles on major TV series. It would be rare for an extra to speak a line in a TV series, as the show would be forced to pay at a much better rate. So, you can be a featured extra, like I was on a TV show, but it is almost impossible to speak a line. You need an agent for that, and most agents are not looking to represent background talent. So, unless you have a relative in the business, it is extremely difficult to get beyond being an extra in TV series and major motion pictures. The theory is that the actor works the secondary TV shows and independent movies until he/she is noticed, but the actuality is that it is rare to really make it in the business. As they say in real-estate commercials, “You could make \$100,000 a year.” What they don’t tell you is that only one in a thousand or ten thousand actually achieves that.

Nancy and I are retired, and do background work as a hobby because we like the people we meet and the work. We both prefer “real” acting in the less well-known shows to being background in the major series, although we do want to be extras at least once on all the major shows.

Being a known actor is like being a basketball or football star. It doesn’t happen to very many. But, if acting is all you want to do, give it a year or two to see if you can make it. Just don’t



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The Residents Association’s Longest-Serving President Reflects On a Changing Island, Albany’s Indifference, a Future With Cornell NYC Tech, and What It Takes to Run RIRA’s Affairs

Q: You were president of RIRA for... how many years altogether? What was best about it, and what was worst? What do you feel were your personal accomplishments?

A: I was president for a total of eight years: 2000-2002; 2002-2004; 2006-2008; and 2010-2012. I was a member of the Common Council for a total of 13 years, starting in 1997 when my wife, Sherie, and I filled vacant Manhattan Park seats by vote of the Common Council. During my non-presidential years, I chaired or was a member of every standing committee.

The best thing about RIRA was the knowledge that the organization made a difference in the lives of the residents. I got to meet many Island activists, decision-makers, and politicians, many of whom became my friends. By virtue of the RIRA election process, I interacted with a great many of my neighbors, which afforded me the opportunity to appreciate even more the diversity of our population.

The worst thing was having so little power to effect change. For every hard-won victory, there were 10 defeats. However, I learned a hard lesson: Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Some of our successes were unexpected, and therefore sweeter. Running the Common Council meetings was often difficult, much like herding cats. Not surprising, though, the people who tend to join an organization committed to working hard for difficult goals tend to be opinionated folks (like me) who want to be heard. In monthly meetings, getting through a busy agenda within a reasonable amount of time can be difficult unless you exercise constant, often arbitrary, control over the proceedings. Fortunately, my real-world experience at The New York Academy of Sciences prepared me well. Scientists and academics at the top of their fields are even more contentious than Roosevelt Islanders!

As an organization, RIRA has added many things to the lives of residents. In particular, we created the 9/11 memorial behind Good Shepherd, commemorating our lost neighbors and FDNY Special Ops friends. And for 10 years, we produced the remembrance every anniversary. RIRA’s contribution to the Roosevelt Island Day festivities for many years has been the free breakfast and the annual blood drive, which I captained for 10 years after its inception in 2002. RIRA’s committees have enhanced Island life by presenting two insurance fairs to educate residents on their need for apartment insurance, and by offering enjoyable fundraisers culminating in the new Island tradition – the Cherry Blossom Festivals mounted each April for the past three years.

In terms of my own contribution, I can think of two in particular: I started the dialogue with then NYC Transit Authority President Larry Reuter that resulted in our Tram being included in the MetroCard system. Prior to that, the Tram ran in the red, and now it may be the only U.S. public transportation to pay for itself from the fare box. Also, I participated in the Department of Transportation planning to renovate the Roosevelt Island Bridge, and persuaded them to move the starting date from 2012 (as originally proposed) to 2007, resulting in the completion of the work last year.

Q: How has RIRA changed in the years you were involved?

A: This question was suggested by Byron Gaspard, who served as Vice President during my first term as president. RIRA has expanded along with the residential development of the Island, and we had to create a system whereby the Common Council could grow along with the population and represent each new building in proportion to its numbers. Certainly, the demographics of the Council have changed, as the Island’s residents have become younger and more affluent. It is imperative that the Council continue to reflect the diversity of the Island’s population, which I believe to be our chief asset. I can’t say that the Common Council has become more contentious; it always was. What has endured from my first association with the group is the dedication, hard work, and energy of the volunteers who put themselves forward each election cycle to represent their neighbors.

Q: You have some distance from it now – a year plus. Is it something you’d do again?

A: I stepped down from RIRA not because I was disillusioned but because I was tired. With the constant pressure of Island issues, and my intention to participate in every committee as well as other Island activities, the workload was intense. However, that’s what I signed up for – no surprises. I ran for four terms as president, twice as many as any other RIRA leader. By the end, I strongly felt that RIRA needed to

reflect the changing demographic of the Island to include new officers with new ideas. I still do. Also, the organization was becoming too identified with Matthew Katz, and that’s not a healthy situation. It was a marvelous ride and I wouldn’t exchange a moment of it (well, maybe a moment or two!).

Q: What can you say about RIRA that would encourage someone else to seek its presidency?

A: For anyone passionate about the survival of Roosevelt Island as a planned residential community, running RIRA is a fabulous way of effecting positive change. I think it’s important, however, to get some seasoning on the Common Council so as to learn procedure, become conversant with myriad Island issues and players, and learn the leadership skills that will test any president. I had three years on the Council under my belt before I dared run for president. The president of RIRA is the chief executive officer of a 501(c)4

non-profit corporation, and I had to learn how to carry out those duties competently. You must learn when to defer to the Common Council, when to defer to a specific committee, and when it’s best to take on an issue solo.

Q: You were able to give almost full time to it. Is that a necessity?

A: When I first ran for RIRA president in 2000, during a debate with the incumbent president, an audience member asked me how much time I intended to devote to the job. My answer: “As much time as it takes.” This was a glib, off-the-cuff response to a serious question, and little did I know at the time how accurate it would be. I was retired from the Academy when I ran, which allowed me to devote considerable

time to the post. However, for most people, the presidency is an adjunct to employment, family, and other commitments. Each president brings different time constraints, skills, and personality to bear, and this is as it should be. One of the many benefits of having a contested election for the RIRA presidency is that the Island electorate gets to compare the attributes of the candidates and choose the one deemed most competent. It’s called democracy, and we could use some more of it.

One of the skills that a RIRA president must acquire is the capacity to judge one’s own abilities and available time and to delegate, delegate, delegate to the other officers, to the committee chairs, and to the Councilmembers. RIRA is an organization that includes some 30 elected councilors as well as all Island residents, who are automatically members of RIRA. The president is only the first among equals.

Q: You’ve been on the Island, and have been RIRA president, through several RIOC administrations. You had a chance to work with them all. Combining all those experiences, what’s your view of the governance arrangement here, and how RIRA and RIOC could or should work together?

A: Frankly, I can’t think of a worse method of governing a community than a Public Authority, run by appointed presidents who don’t live here. In my 24 years living on Roosevelt Island, there have been eight full-time RIOC presidents and two acting presidents. So, there’s a lack of continuity and RIOC lacks institutional memory.

Furthermore, RIOC currently lacks a Vice President of Operations, a Chief Financial Officer, and also, one of the nine seats of the RIOC Board of Directors is vacant. We have been promised some attention by State government in Albany, but that has not been forthcoming.

A small group of activists, with and through RIRA, has been working for decades to amend the legislation that created RIOC in 1984 to require that the seven non-ex-officio directors all be Island residents, and that the four-year terms stipulated in that legislation be adhered to. This would prevent incumbents from serving life terms, and would subject directors to the elective process wherein residents would decide who should be continued in office and who should be replaced. It’s how municipal government is conducted everywhere else, and it’s called democracy by the ballot box.

We have tried hard to create a good working relationship between RIRA and RIOC and between RIOC and the community. This has certainly improved over the years, but it could be better. Certainly, the presence of six residents on the Board of Directors, five chosen in community elections created by us, has enhanced communication. However, the two elections that RIRA mounted in 2012, to fill expired seats and to fill seats that would expire in early 2013, have been utterly ignored by Governor Cuomo. His predecessors worked with us to improve the democratic process, at least

within the Operating Corporation format, but this governor has been deaf to our importuning and blind to the precedent that we created. That’s a real pity.

The current system means that we are subject to the whims of each elected governor and each appointed RIOC president, much as in a monarchy. We deserve better.

Q: Are you still involved with Island issues? What are you doing now?

A: While I’ve offered advice to the current RIRA officers, I’ve tried to stay out of their hair and not back-seat drive (to mix metaphors).

Many years ago, when the closing of Goldwater Hospital was announced, many of us were concerned as to what might replace it. When Mayor Bloomberg suggested a graduate tech center, starting a competition among academic institutions, I thought this the best alternative in several lousy ones. RIRA participated in vetting the two most likely candidates, Cornell and Stanford Universities, through a subcommittee that we created for the purpose. That committee evolved into the stand-alone Roosevelt Island Community Coalition (RICC), representing 37 Island organizations (and growing) that has negotiated with Cornell on a variety of issues and represented the community through the several levels of the City ULURP (land use) process. I was elected to the RICC Board of Directors representing RIRA, and was just re-elected in my own right. In addition, I’ve been appointed by our Congresswoman, Carolyn Maloney, to represent the Island on the Cornell NYC Tech Construction & Community Task Force that will meet quarterly to guide the project as it develops. We have had a fruitful association with Cornell, agreeing to considerable bargaining of demolition and construction materials on- and off-Island, that will limit the number of diesel trucks using Main Street. With construction already begun on Southtown Building #7, this is critical to limiting noise and pollution on our one narrow street.

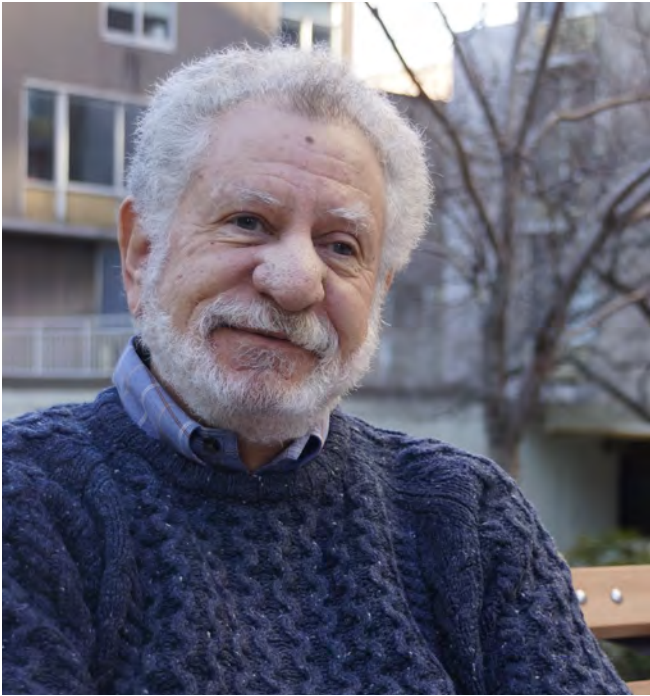
One post-construction issue that concerns me is how Cornell might participate in the financial support of the many services that RIOC provides to this community and that are paid for, in large measure, by the ground rents and payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) that are passed along to tenants through our rents and common charges. Cornell is building on City property, unlike the residential buildings that are on State-controlled land. While they may have no legal obligation to support Island infrastructure, transportation, shopping, parks, cultural activities, and organizations, several thousand Cornell faculty, students, administrators, support staff, and co-locators will utilize these services, and surely there is a moral imperative for them to support them financially. These are issues for discussion prior to the opening of Phase 1 in summer 2017.

Q: What issues do you see impacting Islanders’ lives in the future?

A: While the evolution of the Cornell presence will be the most visible change to off-Islanders, two other issues have always been paramount for me. First, who decides? For many years, the State administered this community virtually without input from the residents. Through impassioned persuasion and arduous labor, we’ve managed to eke out some representation on the RIOC Board by virtue of the majority of Island residents currently serving on it. However, the Board was still appointed by the Governor, albeit through two Island plebiscites that offered our choices in 2008 and 2009. Regrettably, the four-year terms of the current directors have all expired, and Governor Cuomo has ignored the two elections that RIRA mounted in 2012 to fill those seats. We’ve been denied local government by the ballot box, since City government doesn’t administer Roosevelt Island; RIOC does. We must continue to fight for the grassroots democracy enjoyed by the rest of the city.

Second, Roosevelt Island was created as a sanctuary for low- and middle-income New Yorkers, for seniors and for the disabled. That promise is disappearing as the Mitchell-Lama affordable housing system that defined Northtown winds down. When Eastwood (now Roosevelt Landings) left Mitchell-Lama, no provision was made to save the special housing for seniors and the disabled at 546 Main Street. As it disappears, so will the need for the Senior and Disabled Associations and a facet of what made us special. The General Development Plan (GDP), part of the Master Lease between the City and the State, spelled out a ratio of low-income, middle-income, and fair-market housing for both Northtown and Southtown. The Hudson and Related Companies have finessed that requirement, with the result that very little affordable housing exists today in the Riverwalk buildings. Will the GDP be satisfied through the three remaining residential buildings planned? Stay tuned.

Our new mayor has promised to address the affordable housing crisis in this City. He might start by requiring that existing housing, especially on Roosevelt Island, remain affordable, often as required by law. Previous mayors have talked the talk but...you know. I love living here and love my Westview apartment. Whether the privatization negotiations, entering their 10th year, will bear fruit and allow me to stay is anyone’s guess.



Hog Farm to Prison to Hospital to Tech Campus, The Evolving Biography of a Piece of the Island

by Briana Warsing

Goldwater’s last 288 patients were relocated early this month to make way for the property’s next incarnation, as Cornell NYC Tech. The \$2-billion architecturally innovative, open, net-zero-energy campus is still a collection of architects’ renderings, but it can easily be imagined. It will fit into Goldwater’s footprint of chevron shapes.

Now that the hospital is empty of patients and staff, the New York City Economic Development Corporation is decommissioning the hospital – removing it from active status. This entails removing all equipment and furniture, among other steps, and it accounts for the overflowing dumpsters on the east side of the hospital.

The next steps, also expected to be completed this month, are site tests, including hazardous-materials testing inside the structure and geothermal-well tests near the hospital entryway.

January

Next month, a construction barrier will appear around the site so that demolition and various kinds of abatement can begin. The eastern promenade and roadway will be closed.

A barging operation will be set up on the east side of the site, north of Southpoint Park, to handle demolition debris and delivery of certain equipment. Materials to be removed by barge will be placed in sealed containers, and lifted by a moored, barge-based crane onto a second barge for removal. Empty containers will be delivered exclusively by barge.

Demolition in each of the hospital buildings will follow the same pattern. Starting at the north end, interior demolition will come first, removing partitions and walls to expose hazardous materials; those will be removed in a protected environment. Structural demolition of the buildings, utilizing large site-based equipment, will follow. There will be no blasting or implosions.

February-March

Concurrent with abatement and demolition, starting in February or March, preliminary electrical work will be done on the west roadway.

Summer will bring the start of construction for the flagship building of the new university, the First Academic Building (sure to become known, simply, as FAB), to be located on the northwestern part of the space. It will rise eight stories, cover 150,000 square feet, and have a café open to all comers.

The First Academic Building is being designed to generate as much energy from renewable resources as it will use from nonrenewable resources, said Kyu-Jung Whang, Cornell vice president for facilities services, quoted in *The Cornell Chronicle*. It is intended to be “a campus built for the next century.”

Construction of site-wide utilities and roads will also start then.

By December, abatement and demolition of the hospital should be complete.

2015

In 2015, construction will begin on the corporate co-location building, intended to bring industry and academia together. According to *The Cornell Chronicle*, “There will be incubator space, corporate innovation centers for bigger companies, and rotating space for regional companies to spend time in New York City. The building will include flexible, open-floor plans, with common spaces to facilitate interactions between students and companies.” It will also house retail stores and be open to Island residents. It will be located in the southeast part of the phase one space.

Construction on the residential building will also start in 2015.

2017

The first phase of the campus is slated to open for the start of the academic year in 2017. That phase will also include the road circling the campus, a bike lane, and an open green space located in the southern portion of the site.

While the road to the east of the hospital will be closed

because of the barging operation, demolition, and construction, the roadway on the Manhattan side will become two-way to allow Red Bus service to Southpoint Park and Four Freedoms Park, according to Construction and Communication Task Force member Mark Lyon. A turnaround will be created at the end, just north of Southpoint Park. Lyon says, “Cornell has promised to work with RIOCC to offset any crowding on the Red Bus caused by their construction workers, but they think the early arrival of workers will be before the existing capacity is taxed with rush hour.”

Of safety and access at the southern end during these next few years, Jeremy Soffin, of BerlinRosen Public Affairs says, “The site will be fenced off during construction, and there will be 24-hour security provided at the construction sites. Access to the parks at the south end of the Island will be maintained, including lighting for safety at night.”

Information

Islanders will continue to be kept in the loop about the status of the construction. The Construction and Community Task Force is populated in large part by Islanders committed to getting this right. The hope is to enable an open dialogue between Cornell Tech and the community, ensuring that we are informed about the campus and Cornell’s commitments, and that residents remain active in the conversation.

On February 5, there will be a town hall-type meeting where the Construction and Communication Task Force will host a wider discussion with the Roosevelt Island community regarding the construction kick-off and the occupancy of the site. This meeting will be at the Manhattan Park Community Center from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Committee member Larry Parnes says it will probably consist of a presentation by the committee comprising various points like timing, barging, construction, and what the future campus will offer, followed by questions and comments from the community.

Parnes says that the community will be “happily surprised when they see this stuff.” He says he is “impressed and encouraged by how far they’ve come and that they’ve come through with their commitment on barging.”

A construction website is now live: construction.tech.cornell.edu. It will provide a view of what’s happening behind the construction barriers, and include project documents and summaries of task force meetings.

The Past

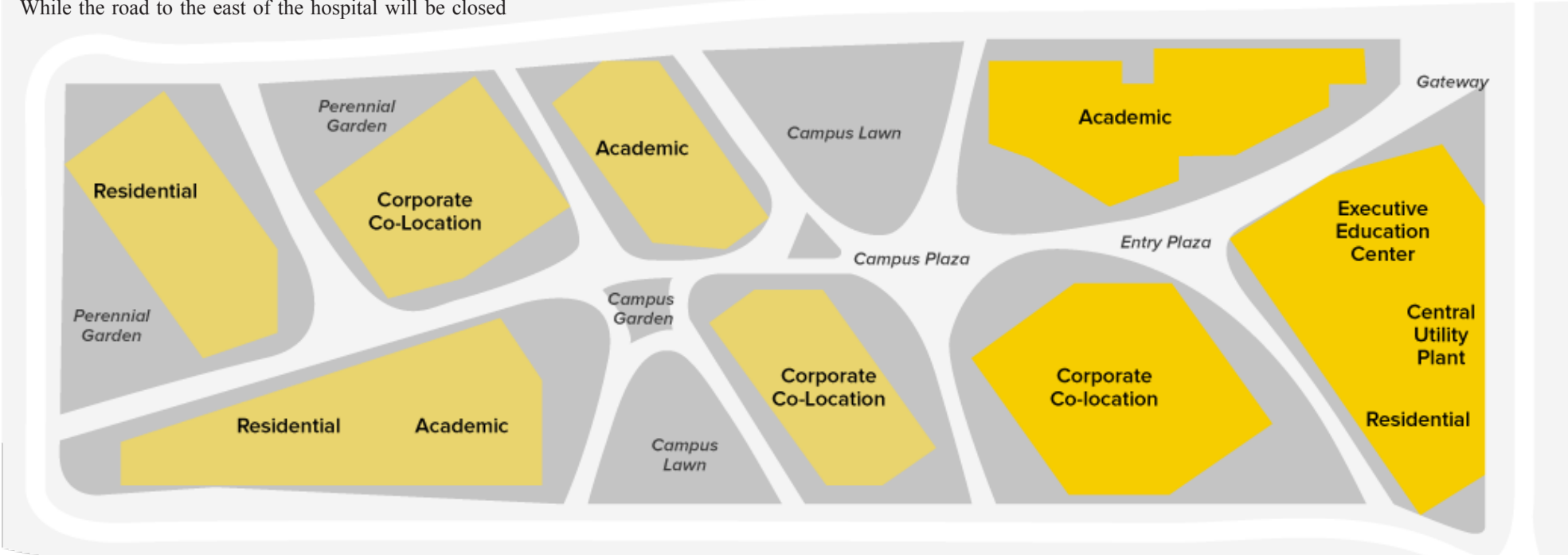
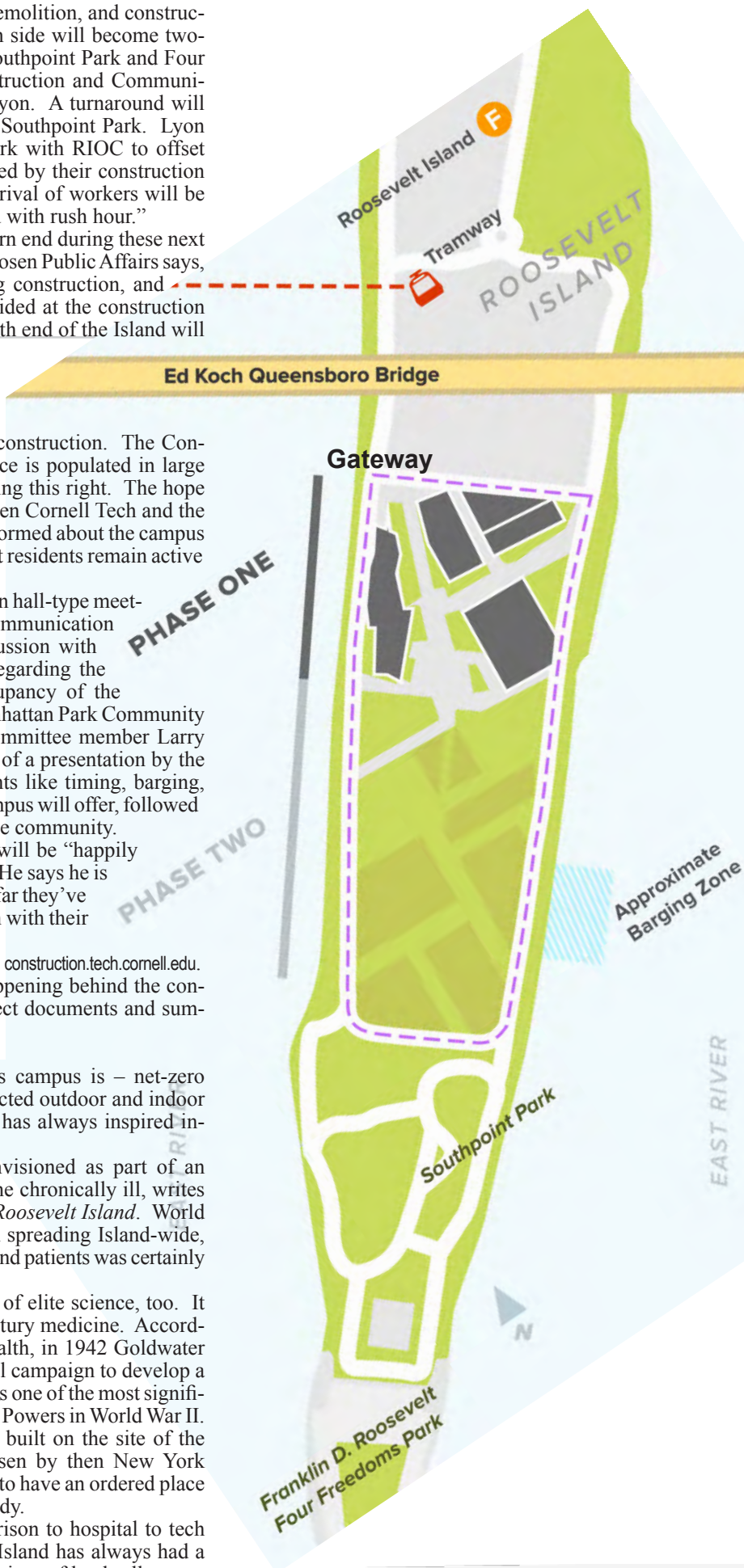
As novel as the concept for this campus is – net-zero energy, LEED platinum, interconnected outdoor and indoor spaces – this narrow sliver of land has always inspired innovation.

Goldwater Hospital was first envisioned as part of an Island-wide hospital park serving the chronically ill, writes Islander Judith Berdy in her book, *Roosevelt Island*. World War II prevented that concept from spreading Island-wide, but what it offered to wheelchair-bound patients was certainly uncommon.

Goldwater Hospital had its share of elite science, too. It holds a significant place in 20th century medicine. According to the National Institutes of Health, in 1942 Goldwater became the focal point for a national campaign to develop a new treatment for malaria, which was one of the most significant medical problems for the Allied Powers in World War II.

Meanwhile, Goldwater had been built on the site of the Blackwell Island penitentiary, chosen by then New York Governor Philip Hone for criminals to have an ordered place to reconsider their actions, says Berdy.

From colonial-era hog farm to prison to hospital to tech center, the south end of Roosevelt Island has always had a unique role. The biography of this piece of land rolls on.



Farance, from page 3

the people who brought this action...,” but she was shortly interrupted by Riverwalk delegate Aaron Hamburger, who objected that her comments were inappropriate. Sharon (Nneka) Pope (Rivercross) disagreed with Hamburger, but commented that it might have been appropriate for Polivy to encourage those departing to remain. By then, however, they had left, and further comments by Polivy were cut off by a general hubbub among Councilmembers.

Roosevelt Landings representative Joyce Short (formerly Joyce Mincheff), who also walked out after the Farance item was taken off the agenda, wrote, “I left, very simply, because I will not sit at the table of an organization that fails to stop the bullying of its members toward other members. I have yet to resign, although I’m thinking seriously about doing so.

“In an organization,” Short continued, “the appropriate step to take, when you feel there is something wrong, is to go to the person who is responsible and try to work things out. Frank does not do that. Instead, he has appointed himself the Gossip Maven of RIRA. It’s as if he sits on his balcony with his feet propped up on the railing plopping ‘press’ bombs out onto everyone passing by when he deems they have ‘slipped’ on his portion of the sidewalk. If it’s a slow day, he’ll spread marbles out there to insure some action.

“While he claims he doesn’t threaten people, telling someone that if they don’t react to his insulting behavior within a specific time frame, he’ll report them to the Attorney General, the Inspector General, or any other government entity he chooses, is grotesque.

“Frank covers up his misbehavior under the guise of ‘freedom of speech’ and ‘doing what’s best for the community.’ Rather, it seems clear to me that his only intent is to bask in the image of his brilliance. He deprives others of common courtesy and subjects them to trial by public opinion whether his suspicions are valid or not. That’s not ‘freedom of speech,’ it’s defamation of character, and if the members of the Common Council can’t figure that out, I’d be embarrassed to be counted among them.”

Ilonka Salisbury, who on November 6 had offered the first comments after the Bill of Particulars was presented, says she is not considering a resignation. “I am as committed to the Common Council as always! However, this last Common Council meeting removed any positive words I might have added to the evening’s meeting, therefore, I decided to remove myself and return next month and start over. Ellen has my full support as I strive to maintain a positive attitude amidst a very difficult situation.” In a later email, she added, “I want to see what happens going forward – the entire situation with FF is extremely perplexing and I am taking this time to step back and review once again. [But] I will say that I do not by any means support FF’s abusive behavior under the guise that he is supporting the community.”

Councilmember Erin Feely-Nahem issued a lengthy statement against expulsion of Farance, while noting, “My position has nothing in common with any defense of Farance’s behavior... I have had enough negative first-hand experience with [it] to last a lifetime.” She goes on to opine that the Bill of Particulars offers no concrete acts that merit expulsion. “Disruptive behavior does warrant some rule changes,” she says, citing “clear rules on ad hominem attacks” and “space limits for online discussions. But you can’t expel someone for being rude, impugning motives, and for constant use of insinuation...” She sees Farance as being “never more isolated [than now] in the Common Council and the community as a whole,” and calls him “his own worst enemy.”

Feely-Nahem (whose full statement is online with this issue of *The WIRE* at tinyurl.com/EFN3407) adds, “He can claim, for now, to be the representative of Island House,” but she suggests that “Those who strongly oppose Frank should work to defeat him in the next Island House election. There are excellent candidates... who are outraged [and] prepared to take him on.”

Whatever lay behind the recent moves to unseat Farance, it appears that Internet behavior is seen as one component. “People say things in emails and message boards that they would never say face to face,” commented one Councilmember. “Things can quickly get out of control.”

Southtown representative David Evans told *The WIRE* after the Council meeting, “The Council was at risk of implosion. Whichever way it went, a vote would have meant losing a large number of Councilmembers.” During the debate, several members stressed the need for “respectful behavior” and to work together as Island residents on behalf of the whole community.

The Council approved a suggestion by Evans, who is chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, that a small group, under President Ellen Polivy, prepare a code of conduct for Councilmembers and bring a draft to the Council’s January meeting. Farance welcomed the move. He told *The WIRE* that he favors a code of conduct that includes measures to ensure fiduciary responsibility and protect whistleblowers.

Farance Reaction

Asked by *The WIRE* for further comment on the attempt to expel him, Farance made several points:

- “The [November 6] vote on the Bill of Particulars did not gain the majority of Council membership [as opposed to a majority of those present and voting].” Farance added, “Upon discovery that the vote was short, RIRA President Ellen Polivy attempted to cast a vote three weeks after the meeting... but several pointed out her action was not permitted.”

- “Russ Fields, the RIRA Treasurer... described the Cherry Blossom Festival Financial Report... as misleading, invalid...” (Farance’s questioning of the festival’s financial

report, described by Lynne Shinozaki as “especially rankling,” was one irritant that led to the Bill of Particulars against him. She comments on this in a letter that appears on page 7).

- Farance charges that RIRA Secretary and Communications Committee Chair Prekopa “has held secret Communication Committee meetings [which are not permitted in RIRA],” and that RIRA Vice President Jeff Escobar “has been unresponsive to questions about his supervision [of RIRA’s external communications].”

- Farance charges that “Prekopa resigned as Secretary [and] an hour later we discovered the RIRA website was taken down [or partially taken down].”

- Farance says the expulsion matter is now dead because the organization’s constitution requires that the second portion of an expulsion proceeding must be conducted a month after approval of the Bill of Particulars, while maintaining that, in any case, the Bill of Particulars was not approved by the required majority. Farance notes, however, that Aaron Hamburger, who (along with Farance) often advises on parliamentary issues in RIRA meetings, disagrees, saying that the matter can be pursued anytime before the end of the current Common Council term in November 2014.

Farance concludes, “We’ve wasted more than a year on unproductive RIRA meetings, but Ms. Polivy seems as strong as ever to continue the expulsion efforts. I wish we were focused upon productive tasks... The residents of Island House who elected me still strongly support me...”

A Constitutional Question

Even before last week’s Council meeting started, there was an email debate about the propriety and merits of proceeding with the Farance matter – and about whether, in the November meeting, the Bill of Particulars had received adequate support. It began on a private Common Council website, but became public when Councilor Trevre Andrews copied it to *The WIRE*.

Excerpts (typos and all):

Trevre Andrews: *...those supporting even going through the process of expelling a member are wasting all of our time... I am not going to sit through a meeting where we go around the room and complain about each other... I request a straw poll via email on removing this item completely from the agenda [so that] we can... get on with real business... If the votes aren’t in by meeting time then I will move to table the expulsion proceedings before the agenda is approved... I will be bring [sic] my letter of resignation in case things go the other way. Referring to an earlier comment from RIRA President Ellen Polivy, Andrews also wrote, *What you reference from Roberts [Rules of Order] and [former RIRA President Matthew] Katz doesn’t overrule the wording in the constitution which is very clear (i.e. 2/3 of the CC, not 2/3 of quorum [present and voting]).**

[Aaron Hamburger points out, however, that the RIRA constitution defines voting in another section as being a portion of the members “present and voting,” with both abstentions and non-votes discounted.]

Cynthia Ahn: *If I may second, I would agree tabling the expulsion motion! ... It is healthy that we are able to express each everyone opinions, but enough is enough... two month of RIRA meetings on this matter is waste of our time... if we expel Frank because of a few members are uncomfortable what Frank said... [t]hat alone can face very bad image of RIRA. It’ll really damage Ellen’s readership [sic] of RIRA permanently... Hope our meetings are more positive and productive in the future.*

Jeff Prekopa: *While it’s unfortunate that these proceedings take as much time as they do, hiding our heads in the sand will not make these problems go away. A huge amount of the Council leadership’s time this term has been wasted doing damage control on the problems Frank has created, and expulsion is the only option to put his nonsense to rest once and for all. The Council voted 20-2 to proceed with this process, and it would be irresponsible not to see it through.*

Andrews: *The council had the power to decide if they want to table this with a simple majority. I disagree that the previous vote was valid as it would take a majority of the entire Common Council.*

Eva Bosbach: *[To Jeff Prekopa:] [I]f this was as clear as you write we would all agree by now and be happy to put this procedural question behind us and proceed to the actual vote tonight... the section “Expulsion for Misconduct”, which seems to be the essential one for tonight, it says “Upon review [of the defense of the charged person], if a Two-Thirds vote of the Council Members concur, the person shall be removed’. If a resident asks me on the street how I understand the term “Council Members”, I will respond that those are the people who got elected to represent their buildings at the RIRA CC. I would probably show that person the list of CC members on the left side of one of our Agenda sheets. I would personally never think of “Council Members” being only the people present at a certain meeting. Am I not a CC Member if I cannot make the meeting tonight? ... [W]e might need to vote... if we want such important decisions*



like a potential expulsion of a CC member to be taken by 2/3 of all or of just the present Council Members... Should the result be that a 2/3 of the entire CC is needed... we might also need to establish a procedure for collecting the votes in such cases... via e-mail... To me, it looks almost impossible to get such a high number of members together at any meeting for any actual vote.

Prekopa: *“Important” decisions are provided for by a 2/3 versus ½ threshold, nothing more. According to the Constitution, either decision is based on the “votes cast at a duly convened meeting at which a quorum is present”. The quorum requirement insures that votes aren’t taken in a nearly empty room... [T]here is a system of alternates in place to cover for Council Members that can’t attend. There is no provision for email or call-in votes to be part of [a] vote.*

Helen Chirivas: *That is your interpretation and your interpretation only, Mr. Prekopa... The report of the October CC meeting, which our President, Ms. Polivy, actually wrote, states: “Motion to change rules of order... [f]ailed to get the 2/3 of the full 39 council members on the CC. (Needed 24 yes votes)”... “does not pass because to have an amendment to the bylaws requires 2/3 vote of the entire CC.” ... [Y]ou cannot go back and invalidate a unanimous vote of the CC... simply because the report is now inconvenient for President Polivy.*

Later, Chirivas commented on the composition of the Council subset bringing the bill of particulars against Farance: *[U]nsurprisingly, the accusers – the Communications Cttee – along with their staunchest supporters, such as Joe Strong, the son of Lynne Shinozaki, comprised half of those who voted Yes on 6 November. The remaining votes were actually evenly divided between the Abstain Votes (10) + the No Votes (2), and the remaining Yes Votes (10). In any Court of Law... the accusers would not form half the jury! The accusers do not “have an open mind” and are “fanatically committed” to their “unjust cause”, that of stifling democracy. It is no wonder that the 6 November vote appeared lopsided – it was indeed “loaded” by the “faction” of Ellen: Lynne, the Communications Cttee, and their friends... The 6 November vote count [to approve the bill of particulars against Farance] is manipulated to exclude CC members not in attendance, per Ellen’s “new” interpretation of the [RIRA] C[onstitution]; although, a month earlier, Ellen had maintained that 2/3 of the total membership is required for important votes such as Bylaws changes and expulsions... [T]he vote count is manipulated in November to suit the interests of Ellen and her faction; everyone sees through this; and in doing so, and in embarking upon the entire misguided episode of political suppression, Ellen has brought shame and dishonor upon RIRA.*

Nicole Walden: *Helen, It’s very serious thing to suggest that Ellen is being willfully unethical, by intentionally biasing her interpretation of the constitution... She already responded to your charge, and provided the reason for any difference between her past and present interpretation. She stated in no unclear terms that she had previously deferred to Trevre’s interpretation. Now, having taken it upon herself to double check constitution and bylaws (i.e. doing the responsible thing), she found the constitution/bylaws to indicate something different than Trevre’s past interpretation. Hence, she is no longer deferring to his interpretation, because she’s no longer assuming he was correct, and is instead referring directly to the text, and other experts... I suggest you conduct yourself more prudently in the future... [I]t is time to lay this accusation to rest and respect your colleagues and executive officer.*

Andrews: *Don’t drag me into it. I told Ellen what the bylaws and constitution said... and she made the right decision on that vote. In any case I am not responsible for what Ellen decides... Frankly this is the whiniest... discussion I have ever heard from a bunch of New Yorkers. You are running a community group – life goes on whether you do it poorly or not and no one is getting defamed by anything said on these petty emails or discussions. Step back and look what RIRA is doing tonight and by any measure it would be consider complete hypocrisy and a total waste of time.*

Chirivas: *I call on everyone to remain calm and respect the law, our own law – the RIRA Constitution and Bylaws, and the law of the land, the US Constitution, which, as we all know and uphold, extends Federal protection to us all, whistleblowers or not, under the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly – the key provisions of our governing law without which our democracy could not exist.*

Hayat, from page 3
the warden, a shape-shifting nun, the convict’s suffering mother – and stage directions that are themselves a character. A critique from Young Playwrights says, “This play has great characters, imaginative images... fearless perspective... it is clear that you are a gifted writer.” Hayat shakes her head. “I actually hated *Electric Blues* at first. Maybe part of my process is to hate what I write, initially.”

In early January, Young Playwrights will hold an urban retreat. “We’ll go to plays all week!” Hayat exclaims, “meet people connected to off-Broadway, plus rehearsals and editing time.”

She never met Sondheim, but admires Young Playwrights Board President (and student mentor) David Henry Hwang, the author of *Chinglish* and the Tony Award-winning *M. Butterfly*. “He’s really good, really nice. I love his work, and he’s very supportive of young writers.”

But what brings a cheerful, high-energy 19-year old to death row? The immediate spark was reading *Dead Man Walking*, Sister Helen Prejean’s 1993 memoir from which the movie was made. In truth, however, Hayat has opposed the death penalty since childhood. Her eyes flash: “I’ve always been interested in things that were not so light. I read *Oliver Twist* when I was 10, and that’s the first time I got angry about the death penalty. I was mad that they killed Dodger. Still am. I somehow put myself in his shoes.”

Letters from page 7

To the Editor:

It is no secret, on this wonderful Island, that some turbulence exists within the Roosevelt Island Residents Association’s (RIRA) Common Council. The Council is the body elected by Islanders to work on an agenda of programs and problem-solving aimed at contributing to the quality of life in the community.

The recent effort to expel a member of the Council has raised a number of questions as to how we operate moving forward. It should be pointed out that, under the Association’s constitution, should the difficult task of expelling a councilor ever succeed, s/he would retain certain rights [as a resident and RIRA member]. These include membership on RIRA committees, attendance at Council meetings (except the rarely used executive sessions), and freedom to express views independent of the Council.

From my humble perspective, the broad concern of councilors should be the survival of the organization. As such, I prepared a short briefing, initially for internal use but now public, titled *How Handling the Matter of Expulsion Has Created a Risk of Implosion*. Yes, we had some councilors depart the “expulsion meeting” on December 4 for their own reasons, and some have resigned or might resign as a result of the issue. But, to be clear, this is not about the apparent prescience of that briefing. It is about how we move forward as a 501(c) community organization to fix what might be broken, so to better honor our obligations per the RIRA constitution, its preamble, and stated purpose.

Our leadership team is graced by Ellen Polivy, who stepped to the plate as RIRA president, and by a wonderful Islander, Jeffrey Escobar, as vice president. Councilors, let’s support them!

I saw prior councilors, who had served with merit, in the audience

Is this the empathy of an actress? “Yes. I attended (Roosevelt Island’s) Main Street Theatre forever, and attended the Professional Performing Arts High School on West 48th Street, where I was a drama major. We had playwriting classes there. But it was only when I took intensive courses with Young Playwrights that I knew almost immediately that this was what I wanted to do.

“It was largely my background in acting that led me,” she adds. “I create characters first, then put the story around them. Playwriting is just that. These people are all around you. You get their force, with full-blown feelings.” Hayat admires Tracy Letts, who is both a Tony Award-winning actor (*Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*) and a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright (*August: Osage County*.) “Incredible,” says Hayat. “He’s an amazing actor, doing what I want to do one day.”

Roosevelt Island-born-and-bred, Chloé Hayat springs from a “theater-centered family. My mom took me to my first Broadway show. I think it was *The Sound of Music*; that could be false memory, but I think it’s right.” She laughs: “And my dad is Bluebeard.” (That’s Adib Mansour, whose business is Bluebeard Creative. He’s instantly recognizable for his bright blue beard.) “He acted a lot in his younger days. I have so much support from them.” Hayat also has a little brother. “He’s not little

at the December 4 meeting, and I hope they might return one day. I saw long-standing current councilors, exceptionally talented and dedicated, leave the meeting early and that pained me. I hug more people due to the efforts of one of them, and grimace at any thought of losing the Cherry Blossom Festival, the Easter egg affair for our children, and more. I begrudge the thought of possibly losing the RIRA website in the absence of a whiz at creating such a tool beneficial to the organization.

At the end of the day, we councilors must ask ourselves, “Why can’t we all get along?,” and then answer that question substantively so as to move forward. Otherwise, we could be faced with a better understanding of the noun *prescience* – knowledge of actions or events before they occur. But don’t worry, I would not dare say, *I told you so*.

Dave Evans

To the Editor:

This is a personal thanks to Judy Berdy.

The last issue of *The WIRE* carried a story about Gil Seltzer, who helped to build the Convalescent Camp here when it was called Welfare Island. When Gil, whom I know personally, told me the story of the camp, I was amazed at this hidden aspect of Island history.

Naturally, I asked Judy Berdy about it, and she not only knew the whole story, but generously shared her information with me.

The WIRE acknowledged Judy’s contribution, but I want to add my own. It would have taken me many hours to locate and print articles from the *New York Times* archives, and Judy’s collection was a tremendous advantage.

Judy Berdy will present the full history of the Convalescent Camp on Tuesday, January 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Library. See you there!

Judy Buck

anymore. He’s 15 and a foot taller than I am. Our interests sort of combine. We have fun, we teach each other things.” There is also a boyfriend – smart, handsome, and Island-born.

Currently a student at SUNY Purchase, Hayat beams when she describes her life there. “I love my SUNY program! I like knowing that my teachers are very successful. I’m really attached to Sylvan Oswald, the head of the playwriting program. I trust him. I know he’ll lead me in the right direction. He really cares about his students’ well-being, and I know he’ll help me after I graduate.”

In addition to playwriting, however, Hayat is required to take a screenwriting course – which is “so opposite” from playwriting. “Playwriting is what I love, but screenwriting is more what I need to do if I want to make money.” Quoting a teacher, she recites: “Playwriting is a novel; screenwriting is a map.” She takes a beat. “I’ve stopped trying to be a playwright in the screenwriting class.” There are, of course, some great screenwriters. “Quentin Tarantino is very theatrical; he’s really cool.” Hayat grins: “But that’s not in the cards. I learned stage makeup this summer, another good way to make money as a playwright. And another way to create character.”

As for fun, “Last spring, we had a Zombie Prom. It’s a SUNY Purchase thing. I was a 50’s housewife zombie. Beehive hairdo, earrings. I painted myself entirely green with an oozing slit in the throat. Crazy! So much fun!”

And her work continues. “I’m adapting the Eagles’ song, *Hotel California*, into a screenplay. It’s a horror story about extravagance in America, a psychological thriller. My brother and I cooked up this idea together.”

Asked to name favorite writers, Hayat cites, among others, Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Edward Albee, and Wallace Shawn. “I knew Shawn from his roles in children’s movies, then found out that he’s a “playwright, a brilliant, like, crazy genius, and the author of an essay on human cruelty that I used in my work.” Hayat continues, “And I love so many of the female playwrights now. My favorite of all time is Suzan-Lori Parks, very contemporary, very experimental; she’s awesome.” (Parks is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and MacArthur “genius” award recipient.)

As for winning, Hayat is forthright. “I lost last year, and I was heartbroken. And now I’m too old to enter Young Playwrights again! Now I have to keep entering

Rivercross, from page 3

worth, which will jump on April 1.

Both Island House and Westview are also taking steps toward privatization. (Eastwood morphed into Roosevelt Landings when it privatized several years ago.) In the case of Island House and Westview, which are rental buildings, the windfall goes primarily to landlords. If the Island House model also applies (as expected) to Westview, all of those tenants will have an option to buy or to remain as renters. In the Island House plan, buyers will be able to sell immediately for up to twice their cost – a number that increases the longer they remain as residents.

In the Rivercross plan, shareholders concerned about possible unexpected increases in monthly maintenance charges will be able to opt out of ownership, selling their



competitions!”

In her bio for the Young Playwrights performance playbill, Hayat dedicates *Electric Blues* to her grandmother, who unexpectedly turned up in her play as “Mama.” “I don’t know Southern culture very well, but chose Oklahoma as the setting anyway. But my

grandmother from Missouri used all of these Southern expressions that were perfect for the character. When I finished, I realized, yeah, she is completely ‘Mama,’ she had been there all along. It was a great feeling to know that I had won with the help of my grandmother.”

Cornell Deal, from page 23

David Kraut, said that the State has further agreed to an arrangement under which all 55 years of the State support money will come to RIOC before the end of 2018. In effect, the State money is a limited renewal of a State subsidy that was eliminated in the 1990s.

Cornell will pay RIOC the rest – \$400,000 a year. That amount will be revised upward every 10 years, but only 2% each time. (RIOC will also get a one-time payment of \$70,000 for legal fees from the New York City Economic Development Corporation.)

All in all, the plan takes RIOC and the Island out to 2068, the termination date of the lease under which New York State controls Roosevelt Island, which is City property.

The deal was about what was expected, but it did have to be formalized – with authorization for RIOC President Charlene Indelicato to amend the Island’s General Development Plan with the City, acceptance of an environmental quality finding, and other key details.

In putting the deal together, Cornell has made some promises, many as the result of pressure from the Roosevelt Island Community Coalition (RICC), which was formed for the purpose:

- Community meetings, a construction website, and other informational efforts.
- Air monitoring, with results posted on the construction website.
- Barging during demolition and construction for a 40% reduction of Cornell’s road traffic.
- Support for Red Bus operations if construction workers impact rush-hour periods.
- Payment for upper-deck snow removal at Motorgate if construction-worker parking requires winter use.
- A campus security service.
- Efforts to discourage road traffic once the campus is operating.

Papers related to the transaction reveal that the New York State Energy Research and Development Administration is preparing a study for an upgrade of the community’s AVAC waste-removal system. Thus far, however, Cornell is planning to use garbage trucks for waste removal.

A separate article on page 21 deals with the timeline of Cornell’s construction.

apartments to the cooperative at the Mitchell-Lama price, in exchange for rent rates that will increase no more than the City’s Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) allowance, with an annual increase-limit of seven percent, even if the RGB number is higher. Few are expected to take that option, given the potential for long-awaited windfalls allowed by shedding Mitchell-Lama controls.

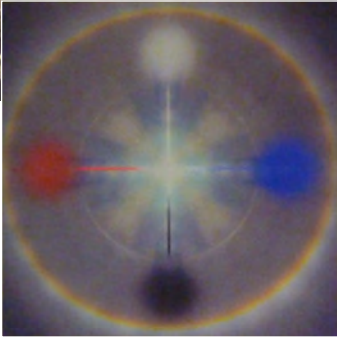
That plan will also restructure voting in the building, which will be by shares rather than the previous one-apartment, one-vote method. Voting power will thereby shift by about 10% from apartments of two bedrooms and under to the larger apartments in the building. That provision is said to ensure that both interest and tax costs can be “passed through” to shareholders as a tax deduction.

Board elections will also change. Each year, three board members will be elected to serve three-year terms, and the board count will rise from eight to nine. (Until now, all eight members were re-elected annually.) New York State will no longer be represented on the board.

Once all four WIRE (Westview, Island House, Rivercross, Eastwood) buildings have privatized, Roosevelt Island’s Mitchell-Lama affordable-housing era will essentially have drawn to a close. Subsidized tenants in Roosevelt Landings (the former Eastwood) will keep those supports until they are no longer residents. In 2-4 River Road, Section 8 apartments will remain for now.

Privatization will close out both the internal and external waiting lists for Rivercross apartments.

RIVAA Exhibits *In With the New*



Art review by David Stone

In a brightly optimistic show that opened last weekend, artists from the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) present a peek into 2014 with a nod to the past. The gallery is located on the street level at 527 Main Street.

If the artists' message is correct, the future is not only worth looking forward to, but also increasingly abstract.

Rachel Garrick's acrylic painting *Morning Sun*, for example, is fiery as it forces its way into a field of true blue skies over a brown field that looks like enriched soil ready for planting. Its passion is a full, not a tentative, spring.

Toshiko Kitano Groner welcomes viewers with a return to her colorist style in four small, visually appealing oils of flowers in harmonic squares. The most beautiful is the blossoming *Roses*, violet effusions in an earthy green vase.

Taking a radical turn is photographer Alexander Movshovich, whose *Trapped* reflects concerns about human bondage and, possibly, the horrors of sex trafficking in language that respects community values without surrendering impact.

Joy of Freedom, Deepti Skula's energized oil, dwells on an empty cage as birds race away into a golden landscape. It's a classic expression that dodges clichés as it focuses on the pleasures of opportunity ahead.

Piotr Olszewski's untitled photo captures an oceanic scene framed by a raw, littered shore and a fog-shrouded urban landscape. It's the flip side of this show's mainstream optimism.

In four paintings of abstract flourishes concentrated on different color combinations, Valeriu Boborelu again takes ownership of a prominent corner of the space. Led by his thematic *Yellow-Green Meditation*, Boborelu takes viewers into interior spaces where spiritual expression is ineffable in words and suggested with thick brushstrokes.

Also in an abstract mood, Edel Stuehmke's minimalist *Composition* is a construction of fields and circuitry with its own internal logic.

In this collection of mostly abstract expressions, Laura Hussey's large oil, *Platanos*, arrives with a glow of softened realism. Against a lightly colored Mediterranean background, Hussey's full-bodied women are resolved with anticipation as they look away uncertainly from an ancient courtyard.

Esther Piaskowski has recently exhibited her skilled hand in a range of expressions that go from observed realism to detached abstraction. Here, in a set of four *Interior Landscapes*, she joins the trend to abstraction. Her photographs explore the complexities of microscopic chaos forming a foundation for the more formal reality we deal with every day. She takes no position, except one of wonder at what intimate examination exposes.

The acrylic painting *Blue* is another subtly realized picture from abstract expressionist Ioan Popoiu. His large abstracts are built on vertical relationships as adjacent fields accent contrasts between very different dynamics. Popoiu is never overt, yet his statements are about the vital differences he observes in the world.

Always vital, often playful, RIVAA Gallery founder Arline Jacoby presents *Color Wheel Collage*, a collection of nine squares posed in a march across the wall. This work, as well as any classroom, explains how colors combine, accent, and intersect in making each distinctive and vibrant.

Georgette Sinclair's five pastels warm a winter evening with soft focused realizations from nature. *Family of Trees* is defined by a denuded cluster in a meadow, possibly all that's left after a fire pushed back the forest. They stand determined and tall in a rolling meadow with a light snow cover.

Photography is often thought of as a straightforward recording of facts, but in *Deconstructed Square*, Olya Turcihin shows us that a thoughtfully developed print can celebrate the same abstract characteristics as a painting. Similarly, Turcihin's *Relative Gravity* is a beautiful abstraction about the visual tricks our minds must figure out in a rough, urban environment.

Tipping Point, Victoria Thorson's wood and steel sculpture, joins the abstract parade with a jaunty stroke of yellow and blue. With optimism, her construction seems to be meeting headwinds and standing firm against them.

Finally, Anne-Marie Dannenberg gives a thematic accent to this show with her digital print, *In Open Space*. Its two contrasting images are balanced between realism and abstraction as real objects – jet trails, leaves – form patterns in which the viewer is invited to get a message or to simply enjoy the magic of the visual image.

In With The New continues at Gallery RIVAA through January 26. Gallery hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Wednesday and Friday, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.; and Saturday-Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Season's Greetings from the crew that brings you *The WIRE*



Of course, the *whole* crew is not in this photo, taken during stuffing of the November 23 issue. These are the stuffers who were present to collate, count, and box that issue for delivery Island-wide. Others who help with stuffing and delivery are listed at the bottom of page 6. Join in! Call 212-935-7534.

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(and even ye not-so-faithful)

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December 24	5.00 pm
	12.00 Midnight
December 25	11.15 am



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Healthy and Happy
New Year!*



Georges Weill

received his doctorate in physics from Université de Paris. After working as an electrical engineer in telecommunications, he decided to move to the United States. He earned a Ph.D. in mathematics at UCLA in 1960. Georges dedicated the rest of his life to academia, doing research at both Harvard and Yale until 1964, then teaching as a professor at NYU Polytechnic in Brooklyn for 30 years. In 1995, after being awarded the status of Professor Emeritus in Mathematics at NYU Polytechnic, he taught Clifford Algebra at Cooper Union as an adjunct professor for another 13 years.

In 1993, four years after the birth of his son, Charles Edmond Weill, Georges moved into Westview with his wife, Joanne Marie Pamperin. He loved reading, cooking, and all forms of magic and prestidigitation. He was an energetic man who, until the last year of his life, would regularly go on “safaris,” adventuring for hours throughout Manhattan and Queens collecting only the freshest ingredients for his recipes. In his spare time, he volunteered at the International Center in Manhattan, and attended playing-card magic seminars hosted by Fantasma and Tannen. Georges will be remembered as a gentle, kind, and charming man with a wonderful sense of hospitality.

Georges Gustave Weill was born in Strasbourg, France, on April 9, 1926. In 1950, he graduated with honors from École Polytechnique, France’s top engineering university, and in 1955

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unClassified deadline for January 11 issue: Tuesday, January 7

unClassified deadline for January 25 issue: Tuesday, January 21

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10:30 **Building Strength** (not Tue 11/26)
11:00 **Blood Pressure**
1:00 **Paint & Sculpt**
6:00 **Nutrition Workshop**
Wednesday
9:30 **Yoga Stretch**
10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**
10:30 **Salsa**
10:45 **Spanish**
12:00 **Bridge**
1:30 **Scrabble**
Thursday (No lunch or classes 11/28)
10:30 **Zumba**
10:45 **Ping Pong**
12:30 **Movie**
1:00-2:30 **Theatre tickets** at discount prices; see Rema or Annie
Friday
9:00 **Building Strength**
10:30 **Computers**
10:30 **ESL**
10:30 **Tai Chi**
1:00 **Korean Games**
2:00 **Art with John**
2:00 **Pokeno with Dolores**
7:00 **Games** (RISA)

Special Events

Nutrition Lecture (rescheduled), **Mon Dec 16**, 6-8pm. Free.
A Night of Joy, **Tue Dec 17**, 7pm, \$3 dinner served. See Pilar.
RISA Holiday Party, **Sat Dec 21**, 6pm. \$10. See Pilar.

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RIRA Column, from page 6

tackled the job of web design for RIRA, and succeeded where everyone before him had failed. He was an extraordinary, focused, diligent worker and an excellent web designer. He set up a state-of-the-art, interactive website that is increasing the visibility of the Council in a meaningful way. Because of his continued commitment to our community, he has agreed to continue to improve our website. His departure is directly the result of the Council’s inability to stop Frank Farance from defaming his colleagues and making derogatory public comments. Over the years, the Council has lost many responsible workers for the same reason, and again, a number of current Council representatives are considering stepping down.

For instance, since Lynne Shinozaki took over the Social, Cultural & Educational Committee, RIRA’s community activities have greatly expanded. Lynne created our Easter Egg Hunts, Cherry Blossom Festivals, skating in the school, and the RIRA Showcase. She has brought us concerts, dancers, and additional events, and has more planned for this year. She embodies integrity and community spirit. For her to come under attack by the unwarranted rumors that Frank Farance has spread about her conduct is heartbreaking.

No one should be rewarded for unsavory behavior by basking in the limelight it creates, so I do not intend to give Frank Farance more than 30 seconds. His behavior has been a problem for many years. He has had second, third, fourth, and more chances. In fact, he was censured by the Council during the last term for the same behavior that he is currently exhibiting. It was hoped that the censure would raise his awareness, but it did not seem to affect him at all. Rather, he is like the defiant child who is impervious to punishment. The Bill of Particulars to remove him from the Council was not resolved in the last meeting because his supporters, along with others who preferred avoidance over confrontation, voted to remove the matter from the agenda rather than deal with it at the meeting. It is unfortunate because Mr. Farance cannot be cleared of the charges until the Council does its job to hear and decide on the matter. Until it is decided, the issue is simply in limbo.

We have lost many good Councilmembers over the years who decided that the incorrigible behavior they faced was intolerable. Mr. Farance has set a new level for offensive conduct, and the losses we could sustain by his continuing unabated would be too great.

Improvements

To their credit, a number of Councilmembers have begun a discourse on improving communication and interactions both within the Council and with the community. Erin Feeley-Nahem, Romano Reid, Sharon Pope, Micky Rindler, and Nicole Walden are among the people who have spoken up with positive ideas for change. The Council is reviewing any and all constructive suggestions. We expect to come out of this crisis stronger and more resilient. But ultimately, whether the Council improves or limps along with contention will be up to the Council to decide, or the community to say “enough is enough”. Bullying behavior is just destructive everywhere.

Meanwhile, if you have any good jokes or hilarious YouTube videos, I could use a good belly laugh. Send your suggestions to me at RIRApresident@gmail.com.

As this is the last RIRA column you’ll read this year, I send you the wish that your New Year be filled with health and happiness.

Cornell Column, from page 6

done by the end of 2014.

This is an exciting time, and we know that Islanders will have questions and will want to keep informed on the progress of the work. We have put together a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that the project is fully transparent and that you’re kept up to date throughout.

The central clearinghouse for all information related to construction is the new website that Cornell Tech has created for the project, construction.tech.cornell.edu/. On the website, you can find the latest information, and sign up for bi-weekly email blasts that will contain updates of our progress, milestones, and a general two-week look-ahead at what will be occurring on the future campus site.

There will also be regular opportunities to hear about the construction in person. The first of many community meetings on our construction activities will be held on Wednesday, February 5, from 6-8 p.m. at the Manhattan Park Community Center. At this forum, we will bring together all of our construction partners to provide a full briefing on our plans and to answer any questions that you may have.

We have also created a Construction and Community Task Force with members who include Christina Delfico, Jonathan Kalkin, Matthew Katz, Mark Lyon, Larry Parnes, and Ellen Polivy. Also, every City, State, and Federal local elected official has staff representation on this committee. We look forward to meeting with this group of Island leaders on a very regular basis.

On behalf of the entire Cornell team, my best wishes to you and your family for a happy and safe holiday season. Thank you for your continued support of Cornell Tech, and I look forward to the opportunity when we can invite you onto campus!

RIOC Column, from page 6

the Community Center, continued use of the facility will not be affected by construction; at least one entrance will be available during each phase of construction.

The contract for repairs to the footbridges leading to the Lighthouse has been awarded. The contractor met with RIOC engineers this week for a kickoff meeting prior to the commencement of construction. Work is expected to be completed in 60 days, at which point the fenced-off areas of the park will be reopened to the public.

Beginning Monday (December 16), construction at Motorgate will move from Section 5B South to Section 6B North. The re-striping and lighting upgrades in Section 6B North are expected to be completed January 3, 2014, at which time work will advance to Section 6C South. We thank you for your cooperation during this necessary construction.

Repair work at the West Pier is also in progress and proceeding according to schedule. The damage from Hurricane Sandy will be repaired over the next three months.

PSD Audit Report

The Public Safety Department Operational Audit Report is now available for download on the RIOC website at rioc.ny.gov/PSDReport.htm. Both the Board of Directors and RIOC staff believe that this report will serve as a valuable tool in the reorganization of the Public Safety Department. Many of the recommendations given by the consultants have already been implemented, and others are in the process of being put into practice. We all look forward to working with the community to accomplish our mutual goal of ensuring a safe and secure environment for our residents.

Contacting RIOC

Questions, comments, or concerns? RIOC wants to hear from you. If you would like to contact us, you can send an email to information@rioc.ny.gov or call the office at 212-832-4540. You can also contact us through RIOC’s Facebook page, [facebook.com/RIOCNY](https://www.facebook.com/RIOCNY). Feel free to send us a Facebook message, or use the contact form on the page to get in touch. You can also visit our Facebook page for event photos, news, announcements, and more.

Happy Holidays from all of us here at RIOC – from our family to yours, we wish you a warm, safe, and joyful holiday season and a happy New Year!

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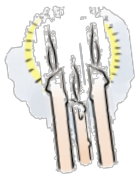
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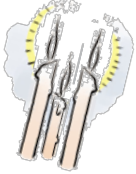
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Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.

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