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The Main Street **WIRE**

Saturday,
February 8, 2014
34:10



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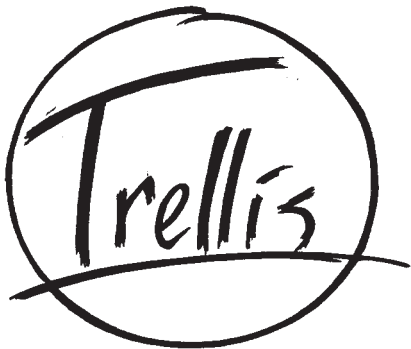
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Newest resident Though a transient, this newcomer was welcomed by Islanders passing Good Shepherd Tuesday morning.

The Main Street WIRE

Saturday,
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Cornell Report Predicts Transportation Crunch From New Southtown Buildings

by Michael Rindler

Over the next four years, the morning-rush crunch at the subway will get worse, according to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared for Cornell University. However, during that period, most new riders will come from the increased population in Southtown – the new Riverwalk buildings – rather than from the opening of the

Cornell NYC Tech campus in 2017. Tramway riders will also feel the impact on weekday mornings.

And by 2038, the Island is likely to require new traffic-control measures in response to road traffic generated by Cornell.

Tramway

The EIS anticipates an increase of 48 Tramway passengers in the 8:00-9:00 a.m. period, estimating

that 39 will be Riverwalk residents, and only 9 will come from Cornell. But the school’s impact may be underestimated, because it doesn’t consider that Cornell students are likely to have internship employment in Manhattan, that spouses of Cornell personnel living on campus may work in Manhattan, and that some children of Cornell personnel will travel to school in Manhattan.

Somewhat more speculatively, looking out to 2038, Tramway ridership in the morning rush is expected to rise by 100, or a total of 852 per hour.

Fortunately, the Tramway has some flexibility. Trip frequency can be increased to 6.5-minute intervals instead of the more relaxed 7.5 minutes between trips, See **Transportation**, page 13

Residents Association President Polivy Resigns

by Dick Lutz

Ellen Polivy, president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) since November 2012, resigned Wednesday night. She made the planned announcement at the end of the meeting of the organization’s Common Council, emphasizing that it was for personal reasons. It came after she raised, once again, expulsion proceedings against Council member Frank Farance.

Polivy has been in a running battle with Farance, a former RIRA president, who challenged an informal accounting of revenue and expenses of the 2013 Cherry Blossom Festival. Farance continued that challenge Wednesday night at the beginning of the meeting, responding to an informal audit report by CPA Geoffrey Kerr, who told the Council he could find no evidence of wrongdoing or malfeasance in

the festival’s financial report.

“Does that look like standard accounting practice to you?” Farance asked Kerr. Kerr responded by reminding Farance that he had asked for the specifics of his concerns, in writing, but Farance had not supplied anything. That seemed to end the matter, at least for that portion of the Council session.

Polivy brought expulsion proceedings against Farance in November, but they have not gone smoothly. (See issues of *The WIRE* online at tinyurl.com/3405wire, tinyurl.com/3406wire, and tinyurl.com/3407wire.)

In addition to being RIRA President, Polivy serves on Community Board 8 and is co-chair of the Roosevelt Island Community Coalition, which negotiated concessions with Cornell NYC Tech. She has recently appeared overwhelmed by the amount of work she has to

See **Polivy**, page 12



With RIRA Vice President Jeffrey Escobar seated next to her, RIRA President Ellen Polivy concludes a speech announcing her resignation.

Fernando Martinez, Former RIOC VP, Guilty in Bid Fraud

Fernando Martinez defrauded the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) while serving as its Vice President of Operations. Last month, he pled guilty to charges brought by the Manhattan District Attorney in Criminal Court. The action against him originated with an investigation by the New York State Inspector General.

The offenses leading to Martinez’s conviction apparently contributed to the departures of RIOC President Leslie Torres (September 2012) and Chief Financial Officer Steve Chironis (August 2013). Chironis has just been replaced [see *RIOC Column*, page 4]; RIOC President Charlene Indelicato has said she does not plan to replace Martinez, but to handle his duties herself with staff help. (Martinez left in November 2012.)

While the charges stemmed from what is commonly called “bid rigging,” the specific charge was a violation of Penal Law Section 175.35, a class E felony, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the Second Degree.

Martinez will serve a six-month jail term in a plea-bargain deal, followed by five years of probation.

The specifics:

- Martinez confessed to using his position as Vice President of Operations at RIOC “to gain access to bids on the Southpoint Cleanup Project. I used that information to underbid the other bids and award the contract to Bright Cleaning Solutions [BCS]. I did so knowing that I had a controlling interest in BCS and stood to profit... I received \$80,617 from BCS during the course of the contract.”

- In May and October of 2009, BSC payroll records were filed with RIOC, “while knowing that [they] contained false information and with the intent to defraud

RIOC.”

- In September, 2010, Martinez “used my position... to gain access to bids on the RIOC Office Renovation Project... to underbid the other bids and award the contract to BCS... I received \$9,390.51 from BCS...”

As part of the plea deal, Martinez has had to return \$90,007.51 to RIOC. He is also required to amend income-tax returns and provide copies to the New York County District Attorney.



February 22, 2008

In proceedings on January 23, Justice Larry Stephen asked Martinez a series of questions to confirm that he was voluntarily changing his plea from not guilty to guilty on the charge of “offering a false instrument” and willingly waiving his right to a trial by jury.

Then, in the traditional allocution that accompanies such pleas, Martinez answered a series of questions put to him by Assistant District Attorney Carey Ng.

Carey Ng: Mr. Martinez, were you previously the Vice President of Operations at the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation?

Fernando Martinez: Yes.

CN: On or about November 13, 2008, you used that position to See **Martinez**, page 10

Steve Marcus Recalls a RIRA Presidency He Describes as Cantankerous, Yet Calm

by Briana Warsing

The WIRE sat down with self-described *cantankerous, caustic, vituperative* former Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) President Steve Marcus, in the warmest place in Rivercross, the Orange Wing couches, for a wide-ranging conversation on the growing pains and (ultimately hopeful) future of RIRA and the Island.

Marcus was president of RIRA from 2004-2006. He explains, “When Matt Katz decided to step down, I said, *I’ll be a caretaker and go for two years.*”

Marcus believes in RIRA. “This is your community. If you have feelings about it, if you have definite opinions and you see ways to improve it, then working for an organization like RIRA is a worthy thing to do. It makes sense. Sure, there are other organizations you can work for. But RIRA is the one organization that encompasses the whole Island and is accepted as the mouthpiece for the residents. It represents us all; there are elections. RIRA can be very effective in many ways.”

As for what those ways are, Marcus explains, “RIRA

can do some valuable things, especially if they narrow the focus to quality-of-life issues. Infrastructure. They should be the watchdogs for infrastructure here. Big policy stuff, they’re always going to get run



over. The governor is going to do what the governor wants, no matter who the governor is, and you know the big real-estate interests are going to do what they want no matter what, but, on some of the smaller issues, RIRA can make their desires known.”

Marcus uses an analogy to depict the relationship between RIRA and RIOC. “My father used to say that he decides the big stuff in the house like what the foreign policy

See **Marcus**, page 14

Continuing a series of chats with former RIRA Presidents

Briefly...

- After eight years as Roosevelt Island’s City Council member, **Jessica Lappin** has a new job as president of the Alliance for Downtown New York and the Downtown Lower Manhattan Association. She commented, in a press release, “The transformation unfolding in Lower Manhattan is inspiring. Few places anywhere can boast of the constellation of game-changing projects.”

- And, as observed in a letter (page 5), former Public Safety Director **Keith Guerra** now works for Urban American, owner-manager of Roosevelt Landings.

- **FDR Four Freedoms State Park** is expanding its core of volunteer greeters for extended spring hours, with some enticements of special workshops, lectures, and receptions. Interested Islanders can contact LDeJesus@fdrrfp.org, and there’s more information at tinyurl.com/FDRgreet.

The Editorial Page

RIRA in Crisis

Ellen Polivy’s resignation from the RIRA presidency need not be a crisis in the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. Vice President Jeffrey Escobar is an outstanding replacement for her as she takes the steps necessary to sail out of stormy seas into the calm necessary to handle other obligations and personal matters without a raucous distraction.

The Residents Association is like electricity. You’ll only notice its absence when you don’t have it. Otherwise, it does not typically inject itself into your daily thoughts. Without it, though, Roosevelt Islanders would lose their last shred of local representative government. You won’t get it from New York State, where Governor Andrew Cuomo has ignored the precedents set before him and has paid no attention to local advisory elections for RIOC Board members. New York City can provide little, because RIOC, a *State* agency, calls the shots here. So, RIRA – *your* association of Island residents – is important as a representative of your needs and those of your fellow residents.

The RIRA crisis now centers on departures – Council members who have felt that RIRA’s potential for positive action has been sabotaged by an excess of particularism on what is, *frankly* (excuse the pun), the small stuff.

Put plainly, the acrimonious bickering stimulated by Frank Farance’s excessively overt public questioning of what everybody else regards as *small stuff*, and the feeling of some members that they have thereby been personally attacked (and that they must respond with fight or flight, rather than aloofness) – *that* is the turn-off. Ellen Polivy found it impossible to rise above it with overriding leadership initiatives and brisk meetings, and it became the fatal distraction.

We are confident that Escobar will make a fresh start.

His pressing the reset button on the Common Council should be aided by those who have resigned. They should return for the March 5 meeting (or any interim emergency meeting), prepared to support not just Escobar but also this critically important Island institution.

As for Farance, he appears indisposed to honor the advice of others. But he is smart enough to see the dangers of making an ugly mountain out of what most others see as a molehill best suited to lack of notice. He is smart enough to understand that the RIRA aircraft need not be crashed to save it or its passengers. We hope he’ll back off – perhaps even award himself a brief leave of absence from the RIRA Council. His skills are needed. His laser-like focus on pickable nits is not.

For the record, *The WIRE* categorically rejects the notion that a husband’s service on the RIOC Board precludes a wife’s service on the RIRA Council – or any permutation of these. This Island needs all the talent it can muster, given our crippled governmental status, and some closer coordination between RIOC and RIRA, perhaps even at the family level, is a damned good idea.

Come back, those of you Councilors who have resigned. Godspeed, Jeffrey Escobar.

DL

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

As I write this column, it’s a warm day. The day you read it, who knows, it may be cold and snowing. My point is that sometimes this column must be written in advance of events that will occur before WIRE publication, and therefore it may not really report on things – even important things – that have happened. By the time you read this, the February 5 Cornell NYC Tech Community Forum and the February 5 RIRA Common Council meeting will have occurred. I hope that you attended at least one of those meetings. I hope that they were productive, with questions answered. I hope that those meetings achieved results that will help build this community, but as I write this, there is no way of knowing. Only hope.

Conflicts of Interest

Effective July 1, 2014, the Non-profit Revitalization Act of 2013 mandates that every New York State nonprofit adopt a conflict-of-interest policy to ensure action in the nonprofit’s best interest. Among other things, the act requires that the conflict-of-interest policy include the following: (1) a definition of what constitutes a conflict of interest; (2) procedures for disclosing a conflict of interest; (3) a prohibition against any attempt by the person with the conflict of interest to influence improperly the deliberation or voting on the matter giving rise to such conflict; and (4) a requirement that the existence and resolution of the conflict be documented in the nonprofit’s records, including the minutes of any meeting at which the conflict was discussed or voted upon. RIRA is acting to have an explicit policy adopted as necessary.

The RIRA Column

Ethical Conduct
RIRA’s ad hoc Ethics Committee has reviewed codes of ethical conduct from a variety of organizations, and has come up with a suggested code for RIRA. The core issue is how we treat each other. We will be holding a public-comment meeting on Thursday, February 20, at 7:30 p.m. (location to be determined). If you are interested in attending but are not on the Common Council, email me at RIRAPresident@gmail.com for updates about location and possible date/time changes. The code will be voted on at the March 5 monthly RIRA Common Council meeting.
I believe that, as a non-governing body, we are essentially an advocacy organization. We must first decide what we are going to advocate for, and how we will do it, and then speak with one voice. If we cannot do that cooperatively and considerately, then we become a clamor of competing voices, and no one will know what we stand for as a group, or care to listen to us.



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

Balls in the Air

The Super Bowl is a great example of teamwork. Each player does what he can, when and where it will do the most good, and tries not to go crashing into a team member. On Roosevelt Island, we are all on the same team, since we all want our community to run See **RIRA Column**, page 12

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.

This past week, RIOC welcomed a new member to its staff. Frances Walton, our newly appointed Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Financial Affairs, comes to us with a rich background in public administration, banking, and financial management. For more than 16 years, she served as the Chief Financial and Administrative Officer of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESD). She directed the agency’s financial functions, including banking, investments, cash management, debt insurance, budgeting, accounting, portfolio management, loans and grants, and project finance programs. She was also responsible for the management and direction of their Information Technology, Human Resources, and Administration departments.

Prior to joining ESD, Ms. Walton served as the senior vice president and director of the State of New York Mortgage Agency’s Mortgage Insurance Fund, an agency that promotes rehabilitation of communities by providing mortgage insurance to public and private lenders, as well as assisting first-time homebuyers. She was also a public finance banker for Chemical Securities Inc. and Leberthal & Co. Inc. In addition, Ms. Walton has a decade of experience in finance and management positions at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She is a former executive board member and standing committee member for the Government Finance Officers Association, a current executive board member and the past president of the Council for Development Finance Agencies, a board member and former treasurer of the Municipal Forum of New York, an executive board member and corporate secretary of the Metropolitan College of New York, and a board member of the Northeast Women in Public Finance.

Ms. Walton graduated with an MPA from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. She has since worked for 32 years in the financial sector with public and private New York agencies and firms. We know Ms. Walton’s tenure here will be beneficial to RIOC and to Roosevelt Island as a whole; we are very pleased to have her on staff.

Red Bus Change

Red Bus riders should be aware that service has been changed due to construction at the southern end of the Island. Until further notice, there will be no service to Southpoint Park. Southbound service will terminate at the Transverse Road near the Tramway. RIOC will send out advisories as updates become available. You may sign up for RIOC’s advisory service here: rioc.ny.gov/advisorybody.htm. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Public Purpose Applications

The deadline for submission of materials for the 2014-2015 Public Purpose Funds was January 10.

The RIOC Column

Twelve applications were received by RIOC; the total amount of funds requested is \$239,400. Application materials have been forwarded to the Public Purpose Funds Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, which will review the submissions and conduct interviews with the applicants over the coming months. The RIOC Board will review RIRA’s recommendations for the award of grant money in the spring. The total amount of Public Purpose Funds available for the upcoming grant period is \$100,000.

Snow Removal

Drivers are reminded that, in order to prepare the roads for snow removal during and after winter storms, no-parking advisories are issued for Main Street and the East and West Roadways. Vehicles that do not abide by these regulations may be summonsed, and are subject to being towed at the owners’ expense. During these times, free 24-hour parking is available for Roosevelt Island residents underneath the Helix Ramp and inside the Motorgate Parking Garage (688 Main St.). If you have any questions, please contact the Roosevelt Island Public Safety Department at 212-832-4545 or the Motorgate Garage at 212-832-4585. You may also visit the Motorgate office on the fourth floor of the garage. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter, and thank you for helping us keep the roadways clear and safe for travelers.



Charlene Indelicato, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
charlene.indelicato@rioc.ny.gov

Construction

With the design for repairs to the hurricane-damaged Cultural Center complete, RIOC is moving forward to procure a contractor to carry out the work. The Request for Proposals for the restoration was posted on January 28. A pre-bid meeting for potential bidders was held earlier this week; bids are due February 24.

Sportspark Classes

Sportspark (250 Main Street) continues to offer a variety of free and low-cost indoor classes and programs. Zumba, yoga, and ping pong free play are available three times per week, and the gymnasium opens for free basketball play on Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. The pool is available for Open Swim sessions seven days a week, and several swimming and aerobics classes are offered. For more information about the Sportspark schedule, check online at rioc.ny.gov/Sportspark.htm or call 212-832-4514.

Letters

To the Editor:

This winter, the elevators on the Manhattan side of the Tram kept breaking more and more frequently, often both at the same time. With the weather staying cold, the stairs being slippery, no assistance available for descending the stairs on the Manhattan side, no afternoon help with opening the gate to get to the Tram pre-loading area on the Island side, and no heaters outside the gate, the whole Tram travel experience often became a nightmare for families, bikers, and wheelchair-users.

In addition, F train service is often suspended on weekends; if the Tram elevator is also down, the only workable alternative is a long commute via the Q102 bus to Queens Plaza, which is the closest non-F-train subway station on the Q102 route that has an elevator – hopefully, working. This means that parts of the population cannot leave the Island easily. This is both a quality-of-life and a safety issue.

On behalf of the Roosevelt Island Parents’ Network and the RIRA Island Services Committee, I suggest that RIOCC:

- Expedite replacement of the elevators approved in RIOCC’s 2014-2015 budget. The estimated completion date is now February 2015.
- Provide Red Bus service to and from Manhattan when both elevators are down and the subway is not running, so that residents needing assistance are able to leave the Island easily. We understand it might be difficult to do “on call,” as this combination usually occurs suddenly and on the weekend, but, until the elevators are replaced, Red Bus service could be scheduled for the weekends for which it is known in advance that the F train won’t be running. Alternatively, a phone number could be provided that residents with needs could call for an on-demand car service in such cases.
- Provide additional personnel on the Manhattan side of the Tram to assist residents with needs to get up and down the stairs when both elevators are out of service. We fully understand that RIOCC and POMA employees might not be able to assist residents because of liability coverage for their assignments, but we ask that stationing a Public Safety officer on the Manhattan side be considered.
- At bare minimum, immediately post signs when both elevators are out of service. This is especially important on the Island side of the Tram, so that residents can change their travel plans accordingly, i.e., take the subway instead.
- Consider using funds from Cornell and the State for these solutions. The Tram will definitely be used by Cornell staff and students.

After many interactions with RIOCC and POMA/Leitner, we are glad that this topic got on the agenda of RIOCC’s meetings and is being worked on more intensively. We are also glad that signs to inform residents about the situation have been produced, and that the elevator replacement has been approved, at least as part of next year’s RIOCC budget. The Island’s community of parents is very grateful for any progress made in this matter. Thank you, RIOCC!

Eva Bosbach

RI Parents’ Network
RIRA Island Services Committee



To the Editor:

Although I want to acknowledge good changes made by RIOCC in the Public Safety Department (PSD), I must also express dissatisfaction with RIOCC’s lack of action on some important matters. RIOCC has failed to pursue and demand accountability. This sends a message that RIOCC is ambivalent about abusive acts by some officers that the Residents Association’s Public Safety Committee (PSC), which I chair, has documented of resident complaints.

If we are to rebuild a damaged department, the foundation of that new department is weakened by the presence of these officers in leadership roles.

Not having been in a leadership role when Keith Guerra was PSD Director, RIOCC President Charlene Indelicato is understandably

reluctant to take ownership of this issue. She is dealing with issues such as Cornell, infrastructure, development, and more that arise daily. She has to confront all the changes coming to the Island during the next period. Finding the time to review employee files, follow up with the State Inspector General, interview officers and RIOCC staff, interview residents, and fully investigate the role that these officers played is a time-consuming task. But, for the PSC, too much time has already passed with no action. Guerra’s top assistants remain in place. The worst serial abuser, Sgt. Raoul Hernandez, is still on the Island and on the job. This is unacceptable to the PSC.

Following the resignations of President Leslie Torres and Vice President of Operations Fernando Martinez, the RIOCC Board scrambled to provide oversight for a department running amok. We provided resident complaints, as requested by the RIOCC Board. We were promised that the RIOCC Board would submit them to the Inspector General for investigation.

The PSC disputes claims that, legally, there is no basis to get rid of these abusive officers. Even more disingenuous is the notion that they have been punished already for past deeds, and new incidents are therefore required. Finally, we especially reject the diversion that the “union” offers them certain

To the Editor:

Last June, community protest over a long-term pattern of Public Safety Department (PSD) abuses, harassment, and cover-ups of unprovoked violent incidents under the leadership of Director Keith Guerra forced his resignation. (See June and August issues of *The WIRE*, online at tinyurl.com/wire3319, tinyurl.com/wire3320, and tinyurl.com/wire3321). Since then, the Residents Association’s Public Safety Committee (PSC) has confirmed a definite improvement in community-PSD relations, and a radical drop in resident and visitor complaints, under the new regime of Director Jack McManus and RIOCC Board President Charlene Indelicato.

During the depths of abuse in the Guerra period, a good number of the worst incidents, as well as attempts at eviction based on false arrests and dropped charges, took place in the Roosevelt Landings (former Eastwood) complex, managed by the Urban American company on the Island. Statistics researched by Frank Farance show a disproportionate number of arrests and incidents in this Section 8 complex, as opposed to at the similarly constituted 2-4 River Road buildings. These incidents and evictions appear to flow from the aggressive use of Trespass Affidavit Program (TAP) by the Urban American management during this period.

It has now come to the attention of the PSC that Guerra has secured a position with Urban American.

Ike Nahem

“protections” that cannot be maneuvered around.

In fact, residents are being stonewalled. This is, in reality, a political problem, and political will is required to resolve it.

PSC committee members challenge all of these rationalizations for inaction. The complaints presented to the RIOCC Board back in April 2013, to be forwarded to the Inspector General, have apparently never been investigated. Nor does it seem that the officers involved in these complaints have been forced to even address the issues, let alone be punished for them. To cite one example, RIOCC refused to consider the Deli video, which, when compared to the officers’ reports received under a Freedom of Information request, demonstrated inconsistencies in the reporting of the events that were the basis of this arrest. Those are punishable actions, and they have never been acknowledged.

When we talk, Charlene Indelicato declines to pass judgment on actions taken before her oversight, expressing concern only for the present and the future. The PSC reiterates that, in general, we see a clear and definite advance in PSD practices and policies under President Indelicato and PSD Director Jack McManus. So far, the present is not a problem. Accountability and justice are, to us, decisive safeguards for the future.

RIOCC has had more than six months to take further action and move to clean up this department. The removal of Guerra was only the first step. We are particularly outraged that Sgt. Hernandez, who participated in the mauling of Anthony Jones and numerous other acts of unprovoked violence, and who has a history that justifies his

Add your
comments
online at
MainStreetWIRE.com

COMING UP

See page 6 for a listing of regularly scheduled meetings and events.

— This Weekend —

No Manhattan-bound subway service, Fri Feb 7 11:15pm-Mon Feb 10 5am.

Snapshots, exhibit of photos by Mircea Nicolescu, closes Sun Mar 2. Gallery hours 9am-9pm daily.

The Melanite Visions, second annual **Black History Month** art exhibit, continues through **Sun Mar 2**, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm, **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm.

Opening reception Sat Feb 8 6-9pm; continues through March 2.



— Regularly Scheduled Events & Meetings—
See separate listing, page 10.

— The Next Two Weeks —

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

RIRA Common Council Ethics Committee meeting, **Thu Feb 20** 7:30pm, 425 Main St. party room. Info: rindlm01@yahoo.com or RIRAPresident@gmail.com.

The Main Street WIRE— **Sat Feb 22. Advertising deadlines:** Display ads, **Wed Feb 12**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Feb 21**; 5,500 copies due **Thu Feb 23. Future issues:** Feb 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.

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*.

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.**

— Future Weeks —

Roosevelt Island Town Hall meeting — Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., with State Senator Jose Serrano, **Mon Feb 24** 6pm, location to be announced.

Women’s Health Organization meets, **Wed Feb 26** 6:30pm, 546 Main St., 12th floor community room.

Public Safety Community Meeting with Public Safety Director Jack McManus, **Wed Feb 26** 7pm, Westview lower community room, 695 Main St., sponsored by the Public Safety Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. Open discussion; public and merchants welcome.

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

Community Board 8 Roosevelt Island Committee meeting, **Mon Mar 3** 6:30pm, 546 Main St. MTA update on Q102; Cornell presents design of its residential building.

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

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

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.

R&R Concerts presents Islander **Roy Eaton**, pianist, performing selections in *A Marriage of Chopin and Joplin*, **Sat May 17** time to be announced, Good Shepherd Center.

Child School/Legacy High School Annual Founder’s Dinner, **Thu May 22** 6pm, Terrace on the Park, 52-11 111th St., Flushing. Info: **212-223-5055**, ext 1007.

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

Senior Center
listings on page 14

termination, remains on the job and in a leadership position.

It has been agreed by our active membership that we will move forward with an educational campaign, centered on the abusive officers, especially Sgt. Hernandez, who is patrolling and supposedly protecting the residents he has abused over the years.

Keith Guerra’s resignation was necessary to begin the transformation of the Public Safety Department into a more community-minded police force. His departure has sent a strong signal that his de facto policies of “zero tolerance-maximum enforcement” and that mindset are coming to an end. But the legacy of the Guerra

era remains in the continued presence of abusive officers Hernandez and Ralph Torrens, and Guerra’s four top subordinates: Deputy Director René Bryan, Captain Estrella Suarez, Lieutenant Gary Yee, and Integrity Officer Wanda Coleman.

Last July, the PSC adopted a resolution that prioritizes removing these officers from their positions. These leaders and officers collaborated in the use of excessive force, frivolous arrests, and unjustified detentions. Guerra never found fault in his officers’ behavior, but the community cannot just ignore these facts. If there is no punishment, where is the accountability that the community has requested?

Over the past five years, in all the petty suspensions issued to his officers, none were because of civilian complaints or unprovoked violence against residents.

Erin Feely-Nahem, Chair
RIRA Public Safety Committee

Letters deadline
for Feb. 22 issue,
Tues., Feb. 18, 5:00 p.m.



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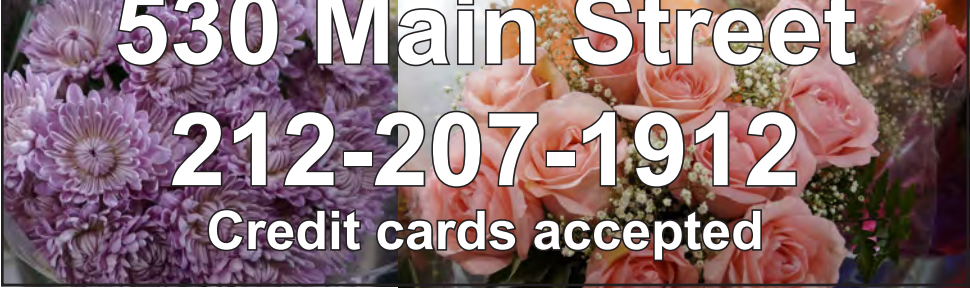
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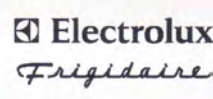
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John Sheehan is a Roosevelt Island pioneer and long-time resident, having lived here since 1976. He resides at 531 Main Street, and has served as president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. John has transacted over \$250 million in sales during a 30-year career as a real estate broker. Jimmy Brett, John's business partner, also has a 30-year career in real estate, successfully marketing, renting, and selling in New York City. Together, John and Jimmy bring more than 60 years of knowledge and experience to every transaction that they are involved in, and are backed by one of the best real estate companies in the city. Contact them for a free private consultation. Their service is just a phone call or email away.

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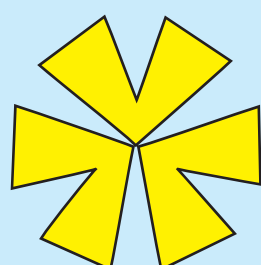
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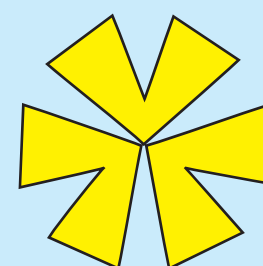
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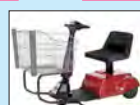


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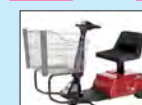
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COMING UP

A listing of repeating meetings & events

See page 5 for events this weekend and in coming weeks.

– Continuing Events & Activities –

ART EXHIBITS

Snapshots, exhibit of photos by Mircea Nicolescu, closes Sun Mar 2. Gallery hours 9am-9pm daily.

The Melanite Visions, second annual **Black History Month** art exhibit, continues through **Sun Mar 2**, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm, **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm. **Opening reception Sat Feb 8** 6-9pm. (Item, page 8.)

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.

Yoga (open-level), **Mon & Thu** 6:15-7:15pm, **Sat** 11:15am-12:15pm, Sportspark. \$5. Mats available.

Yoga with Keren Messer, **Mon & Tue** 8-9pm. \$17; multi-session rates. Location and other info: KerenMsR@gmail.com or 212-614-9181.

Yoga with Jax Schott, **Wed** 7:30-8:40pm, Island Kids, 536 Main St. \$15.

Yoga (open-level) with Lauren Blankstein, **Thu** 7:30-8:30pm, PS/IS 217 Beacon. Free.

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 (through Mar 2), Sportspark. \$5. Info: eva.bosbach@amu.cz.

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.

Beacon After-School Program for 1st-8th-graders, **Mon-Fri** 3-6pm, PS/IS 217. Free. Info: 212-527-2505 or RooseveltIslandYouthProgram.com.

Open Gym for high school students, **Mon & Wed** 6-8pm, PS/IS 217.

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 14)

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.

Book Discussion, **3rd Thu** 6:30-8pm, Library.

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, **2nd Mon** 4-7pm, 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**.

A Few Tips for Organizations That Want to Grow With the Island

by Janet L. Falk

In my role as Executive Director of Roosevelt Island Community Literary Associates (RICLA) since April 2009, I have had the opportunity to meet with, observe, and advise at least a dozen nonprofit Island organizations on their communications, marketing, and promotional activities.

Here are five observations that will help these and other Island groups grow and build for the future.

1. **Deadlines matter.** RICLA, RIOC, City Councilmembers, and others set submission deadlines so that they can review grants with the full attention they deserve.

Newspapers and blogs set publication deadlines so that they can edit articles and include ads in their final layout.

Missing a deadline means losing out on money and visibility. It also erodes credibility.

If you check *The WIRE’s* publication schedule and see that your event will take place well before or well after an issue, consider emailing the editor to ask that a reporter be sent to a rehearsal for a preview to be published in an earlier issue.

Tip: Set a soft deadline a week before the actual deadline, to give your organization the impetus to submit information and materials early.

2. **Designate a volunteer** to manage communications and use *all* available publicity and advertising platforms. This person will make a list of outlets and:

- Submit event listings to *The WIRE*, the RIRA Calendar, and the *RooseveltIslander* blog as soon as information is available.

- Suggest a potential article in *The WIRE* and the blog.

- Consider asking Trellis for the donated companion quarter-page *WIRE* ad available to nonprofit groups.

- Contact RIOC for free ads on the Red Bus.

- For those groups with some money to spend, consider these inexpensive suggestions:

- Print and post oversize posters and signs on kiosks.

- Budget for paid advertising in *The WIRE* and other available media.

- Create postcards or business cards at Vistaprint.com or another low-cost vendor.

- Consider a flyer. Each semester, Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance prints a brochure and inserts it in *The WIRE*. R&R Concerts puts a sticky note announcing its next concert on the front page of *The WIRE*. Learn from others’ successes.

- Finally, there are online calendars for events in New York City, plus newspaper and magazine

listings, if your organization wishes to reach an off-Island audience.

Tip: With so many free resources and low-cost suppliers, there is no excuse for an organization to miss out on publicity for an event. Look at your group’s schedule and plan ahead.

3. **Use email.** Collect email addresses whenever possible, and use proper email etiquette when contacting your subscribers. There are several easy-to-use email newsletter programs that are *free* or low-cost. When your supporters, members, and neighbors receive this professional-looking newsletter, they become more engaged. If you must use standard email distribution, at least respect the privacy of your subscribers by using BCC (blind copy) to shield their email addresses from the other recipients. Don’t list them openly. That gets them on spam lists.

Tip: MailChimp.com offers a simple and flexible system. I use it for my own Public Relations business and will gladly give you, free, a quick demonstration.

4. **Ask How did you hear about us?** When your group pays for an ad, or gets an article in an off-Island venue, it’s vital to learn whether that investment is delivering or not. The Roosevelt Island Historical Society annually sponsors two walking tours in the spring. These have been listed in *The New York Times* Weekend Calendar. On one tour, 90% of the attendees had read about it there. That means that if the tour had not been listed there, very few people would have attended.

Tip: Based on the feedback of the attendees, reconsider your promotional priorities. Change an ad, reorganize a flyer, or try something new.

5. **Photograph your events.** Recruit someone talented with a camera to document what your organization is doing. Selectively, supply a photo with your press release. If it’s relevant, it may help call attention to your story, or make your story more attractive to an editor.

Tip: Be serious about photography. Use a quality digital camera, not a smartphone, and pay attention to lighting (or use flash).

6. **Bonus: Ask for help.** There are several community-minded marketing and public relations professionals on the Island who might review your idea or your draft over a cup of coffee.

Islander Janet Falk, Ph.D., is a public relations and marketing communications professional who has helped a dozen Island organizations promote their programs and activities.

Martinez, from page 3
gain access to bid information, so as to underbid those other bids and award that project for the Southpoint clean-up project to Bright Cleaning Solutions?

FM: Yes.

CN: And you did so knowing that you would profit by doing so?

FM: Yes.

CN: And again, on September 20, 2010, you did so, using the information you gained from your position, to underbid other contractors for the office renovation project at the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation?

FM: Yes.

CN: And you did so acting in concert with Javier Ramos?

FM: Yes.

CN: And you did so knowing that you would profit from doing so?

FM: Yes.

CN: In fact, that money was paid to your consulting company by Bright Cleaning Solutions, correct?

FM: Yes.

CN: Is it also true that on October 1, 2010, and October 1, 2011, acting in concert with Javier Ramos, you caused to be filed certified payroll records of Bright Cleaning Solutions with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation?

FM: Yes.

CN: And you did so with the intent to defraud the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation?

FM: Yes.

Organizations Seek Public Purpose Grants Totaling \$239,400

Island organizations have submitted requests for some \$239,000 in the current round of Public Purpose funding. The requests will go to the Roosevelt Island Residents Association, where a committee will interview the applicants, then make recommendations on distribution of the \$100,000 available.\The applications list includes:

Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association	\$ 39,500
Roosevelt Island Day Nursery	35,000
Parent Teacher Association PS/IS 217 Inc.	32,000
Roosevelt Island Theatre Corporation (MST&DA)	27,250
Roosevelt Island Historical Society	25,000
Life Frames, Inc.	19,900
Island Kids, Inc.	15,000
Roosevelt Island Seniors Association	15,000
R & R Concerts Inc.	11,250
Roosevelt Island Disabled Association Inc.	9,000
Roosevelt Island Women’s Health Organization	7,500
Island Cats, Inc.	3,000
Total Amount Requested	\$239,400

CN: And you have read the allocution as outlined in paragraph five of the written plea agreement; is that correct?

FM: Yes.

CN: And you agree all the statements contained therein are true?

FM: Yes.

The judge then asks Ng if he is satisfied with the plea, and Ng says he is. A moment both banal and dramatic followed. The clerk of the court asks, “Fernando Martinez, do you now wish to enter a plea of guilty to the sole count of

the Superior Court Information, offering a false instrument for filing in the first degree, in violation of Penal Law 175.35, to cover and satisfy Superior Court Information 166 of 2014; is that your plea?”

Speaking for the last time, Martinez answers, “Yes.”

Assistant D.A. Ng then says to the court, “The understanding of the promised sentence will be six months jail, probation split,” and the judge agrees.

They settle on Thursday, February 20, for formal sentencing.

New Episcopal Priest Comes With Varied Exposure to “Real World”

by Jim Baehler

So you want to become an Episcopal priest? Is roller derby also in your plans?

The traditional route to the Episcopal priesthood is to be born into an Episcopal family, then attend an Episcopal prep school such as Groton, and an Episcopal college such as Trinity in Connecticut. Then a stint at the Berkeley Divinity School at Yale University and you are all set. However, every now and then a man follows a different route to becoming an Episcopal priest. Such a young man was Gerardo Ramirez, newly appointed head of the Protestant congregation on Roosevelt Island. It would be hard to find a less traditional path to the Episcopal Church than that trod by Fr. Ramirez.

First of all, his surname is not Jefferson or Washington or Roosevelt, or any of the other prominent names associated with the Episcopal Church. His father escaped from Cuba toward the end of the reign of Fulgencio Batista, anticipating that Fidel Castro would soon take over and that his reign would be even worse. Not long after arriving in the U.S., he met and married an Anglo woman. In due course, Gerardo was born, and reared as a Christian Scientist, the faith of his mother. The family lived in a studio apartment in Greenwich Village before moving to Brooklyn for roomier accommodations. Gerardo graduated from Stuyvesant High School and then attended Brooklyn College.

While in college, he became interested in theatre and began performing in college productions. He starred in such shows as *How He Lied to Her Husband*, a one-act play by George Bernard Shaw that became the basis for *Candida*. He had another starring role, in Bertolt Brecht’s *The Good Woman of Szechwan*. He earned money acting in commercials and appearing in print ads. He graduated with a degree in theatre and TV production.

Instead of working as a waiter like many aspiring actors, Ramirez decided to pursue another of his interests. He says, “At an early age, I learned to roller skate, which I did as often as I could. I became quite a fast skater. I decided to try and become a roller derby competitor. By then, roller derby had pretty much run its course in New York, so I relocated to California, where it was still popular. I soon realized that California was not for me. I just didn’t like it out there. For one thing, I have never owned a car, and in Los Angeles that is a problem. I missed New York, and returned to stay in the city I love.”

Back in New York, Gerardo continued to pursue his acting career, studying with Uta Hagen, Herbert Berghof, and Elizabeth Dillon. “I appeared on television in *Another World*, *The Doctors*, *Corner Bar*, *To Tell the Truth*, and *Ann In Blue*, a pilot with Penny Fuller. I also appeared in three movies made in New York, *Badge 373*, *Bananas*, and *Believe in Me*. In the theatre, I did a lot of work with the Roundabout Theatre, the Cape May Playhouse, the Forestburgh Summer Theatre, the Gallery Players, and the Poor People’s Theatre.”

While acting in summer stock in Cape May, Ramirez and some of the younger cast and crew members decided to attend a different church every Sunday. When he went



found the experience much to his liking. “The priest and his wife were so friendly toward us. When I took Communion, I felt very much at home, right away. The priest gave me a number of books to read about Christianity and the Episcopal Church, and I studied them very carefully.”

Returning to New York City after the summer in Cape May, Ramirez began attending services at St. Bartholomew’s Church on Park Avenue. Feeling more and more at home in the Episcopal atmosphere, he decided to join the Church. “I was baptized and confirmed on the same day, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Eventually, I decided to become an Episcopal priest, and in 1986 I graduated from General Theological Seminary with a master’s degree in divinity.”

Putting his acting career and his shot at the roller derby behind him, Ramirez began his religious duties at St. Mary’s Church in Carle Place, in Nassau County. Assignments followed as a chaplain at Roosevelt Hospital and various churches in the Bronx and Staten Island. “The assignment I liked best was as a Protestant Chaplain at Coler Hospital, from 1987 until 2001. I was so impressed with the service provided by the medical staff. They really cared about their patients, and worked so hard to make their lives better. One thing I liked about working there was that, unlike some of the churches I served in, I did not have to wait for people in trouble to approach me. I could make the first approach to a patient or staff member, and provide a helpful counseling atmosphere. I worked closely with Fr. Oliver Chapin and Sr. Regina Palamera, and I have the utmost respect for them.”

[Long-time residents of Roosevelt Island will remember both Chapin and Palamera, and all that they contributed to the congenial atmosphere here on the Island.]

Ramirez goes on to say, “I worked 20 hours each week at Coler, conducting Sunday liturgies, Holy Communion, and morning prayers. I did bedside visits and offered Communion to those who found it difficult to attend the church services. In addition, I conducted weekly Bible classes.”

For almost a year while at Coler, Ramirez was also the director of the homeless shelter at St. Bartholomew’s Church. “We had beds for 10 people, most of whom were

Still Without a Worship Home Here, Muslims Carry On, a Bit Discouraged

by Jim Baehler

There are approximately 200 families on Roosevelt Island looking for a home – not for themselves, but to allow the practice of their faith. They are members of the Islamic Society of Roosevelt Island, whose president is Dr. Hassan Ghomrawi. *The WIRE* recently sat down with him, to learn more about him and the search for a meeting place for the members of his society.

Dr. Hassan, as he prefers to be called, is 36 and married, with three young daughters. He has lived on the Island for six years, and is pleased to have found a home here for himself and his family. “I was born in Lebanon and studied at the American University in Beirut,” he says. “I earned a B.S. in biology there, and a master’s degree in public health. I came to the U.S. in 2001 and enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota.”

Dr. Hassan enjoyed his time in Minneapolis and has nothing but good things to say about that city, even professing not to have minded the Minnesota winters. “At Minnesota, I earned a doctorate in health services research. My focus was on how patients interact with the health care system. Right now, I am an Assistant Professor at Weill Cornell Medical Center. I’m doing research on the outcomes of orthopedic surgeries.”

Much of Dr. Hassan’s time in recent years has been taken up with the search for a meeting place on Roosevelt Island where Muslims can meet and pray together. “Our religion requires us to pray five times each day, either individually or in a group. On Fridays, when we celebrate together, we have to go into Manhattan or Queens to find

a mosque for our weekly prayers. This obviously works a hardship on our members, especially those with children. A related problem is that, without our own meeting space, we are unable to hire an imam to serve as the religious leader of our group.”

At present, Dr. Hassan and his group are involved in three main activities. First is celebrating Ramadan, a yearly month-long event that requires fasting during daylight hours. The date of Ramadan is determined by a lunar calendar, and cycles through the months of the Christian year as the moon goes through its cycles. The lower-level meeting space in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd has been available to the Islamic Society during Ramadan.

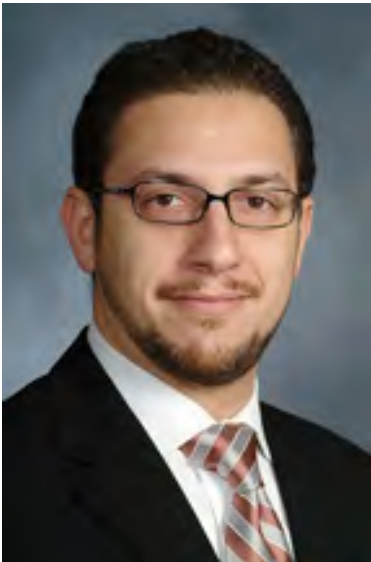
The second activity involves the end of Ramadan and is known as Eid, which is a one-day holiday without fasting.

The third activity occurs two lunar months and 10 days after Ramadan. It is the Hajj, a three-day event that recalls the Biblical story of Abraham and the order by God to sacrifice his son. Abraham is prepared to do this, but an angel

Two more in a series on the Island’s religious leaders

of God stops him and honors Abraham for his obedience to God. For Muslims, this is a time to renew their vows of obedience to God and to live a better life.

Dr. Hassan says, “In addition to our religious duties, we conduct a weekend program for children to provide them with Islamic instruction and lessons in Arabic. We were able to use the Child School for this but, this year, that space



is no longer available to us. We would also like to engage in activities that involve other community organizations, with the hope of becoming more a part of life here on Roosevelt Island.”

In past years, Dr. Hassan had thought they were close to an agreement with RIOC about various locations for the 20,000 square feet of space they need. Each site was eventually removed from consideration by RIOC. At present, the best hope for Dr. Hassan and his group is space in the Cultural Center that is in the process

of being renovated after damage caused by Superstorm Sandy. At best, that space will not be ready for at least another year, and there is no guarantee that a portion of it will be assigned to the Muslims. Dr. Hassan is somewhat discouraged by the lack of progress in finding a suitable site, but keeps hoping that somehow their prayers will be answered and they will find a home of their own.



This week’s weather wasn’t all snowmen, sledding, and snowball fights. Here’s what happens when uncleared snow melts, then freezes. Two Islanders in a conversation block the safe route on packed snow, while glare ice becomes a hazardous part of the morning commute for others.

elderly and afraid of the City shelters, where many of them had been robbed. At St. Bart’s, we provided a safe environment and a locker for their possessions. Anyone who misbehaved was not allowed to return. In the morning, each person in the shelter would leave and go to the Moravian Church at Lexington Avenue and 27th Street, where they could shower and have breakfast. Some of the people in the shelter had jobs they could go to during the

day. They would save their money until they had enough for a deposit on an apartment.”

Ramirez is divorced, and has one son and one granddaughter. “I am so pleased to be coming back to Roosevelt Island. It is like a homecoming for me. My primary goal for the congregation is to maintain continuity of the work of the former priest, Lewis Johnson. He accomplished so much, both for the Church and for the Island. In a

new parish, sometimes things are in turmoil and it is hard to get started, but that is not the case here. I also want to make sure that the Diocese knows we’re here, so I will see that we attend all Diocesan events. We have a very small parish, and I want to do all I can to see it grow and prosper, and have people experience the joy of serving God. Our motto is to have Fund Raising and Fun Raising.”

Polivy, from page 3
handle. (In addition, her mother died last month, though she did not mention that until the end of the meeting.) She apologized for failing to include January 8 meeting minutes in the agenda package sent to Councilors, although the temporary secretary (Joyce Short) had supplied them shortly after the meeting.

The contentious nature of relationships on the Common Council was reflected in a motion by Aaron Hamburger to shut down CCTalk, an internet conferencing tool that allowed Council members to exchange messages. Hamburger said it was being abused. Another member said that the sheer bulk of material destroys its usefulness. Short said, “There’s a difference between debate and baiting. People who are attacked feel they need to defend themselves. When they defend themselves or someone else, they’re getting 20 paragraphs, not even factually or grammatically correct. It’s cyberbullying – the use of the internet to defame and hurt. For us in this organization to maintain it is inappropriate.”

Farance said, “I’d like to point out that the Council reflector has been in use since 1997. [Originally,

Harry Small presented the idea. What you experience now is no different from what it was in 1997. The key thing is that, if you don’t want to read it, don’t read it. If you get rid of it, you’re going to have to use email addresses on a list. The conversation will continue. It just won’t be continued fairly; some addresses will be wrong or missing. That’s the worst outcome. If you don’t like it, just don’t read it.”

Trevre Andrews agreed with Farance. “You can vote it down now, [but then] I’m just going to send things by email.” Chirivas added, “We will be robbed of our voice if we shut down CCTalk.” Another member said, “I think it’s up to adults to police themselves,” said another member.

Twelve voted to shut down the facility. Nine voted to keep it alive. “We can restart it later,” said Polivy, who abstained in the voting.

“It troubles me,” said David Evans later in the meeting, “that the first entry on our website is negative [having to do with Farance’s possible expulsion]. It should be positive – a warm welcome to those who come to the website.”

When the meeting approached the agenda’s end and its remaining

items – expulsion and the President’s Report – near 11:00 p.m., Polivy called for an executive session, saying, “We need to not embarrass people.” In attempting to take a vote about executive session, Polivy tried to avoid discussion but members insisted. “I’m vehemently opposed to going into executive session,” said Sharon Pope, pointing out that all the previous discussion on Farance had been in public meetings, with the press present. “We are a residents’ association,” she added. “All our matters should be open to the public. I am not convinced that it is the fault of the media,” referring to earlier appearances of details of the expulsion matter in local media.

“I think it’s moot to take the media out of this,” said Erin Feely-Nahem. “It’s not because the media is portraying it.” Another Council member commented, “It has been in the media from the start,” suggesting that it was late in the game to take the matter into a private session.

Ultimately, seven members of the Council voted to go into executive session but 12 voted against, and proceedings continued with the press present. By then, however, the dozen residents in the audience had been shooed from the room by a Public Safety officer, at Polivy’s request.

Lynne Shinozaki presented a request to postpone the Farance expulsion matter “indefinitely.” She said, “I have been utterly discouraged with this organization. I don’t even know how to respond to what people have said. I don’t think that we can continue the way we have been going.”

Polivy explained to the Council, “Indefinite postponement means that the motion [for expulsion] is still alive, but postponed.” Short pointed out that, in the January Council meeting, a motion was passed requiring a decision in the February meeting, and she threatened to resign if the expulsion proceedings were postponed. When the motion did pass, she said, “I’m out,” and left the meeting.

Polivy then announced her resignation. Next, Octagon representative Nicole Walden announced her own resignation. Lynne Shinozaki

Ellen Polivy’s Statement

This past month, I had a death in the family. My mother was 90 years old. Her funeral lasted over an hour and a half because so many people wanted to speak. It could have gone on far longer, but we had to leave the room. I was struck with how many people had been personally and privately touched so deeply by her caring. Each speaker had a different story but a common theme. They each felt acknowledged, special, and unique because of years of interactions. This is an impact of a life well lived, whether by a frail 90-year-old woman or a 20-year-old young man who freely gave out hugs and a listening ear. Most of us thrive on this kind of humanity.

I want to publicly thank all the people who supported my family and me during the last past few weeks. We really appreciated all the love and attention. This is what makes a wonderful community.

For a year and four months, I have given my all to this community as the President of RIRA. With the help of many on the Council, I have tried to set up the conditions that encourage love and support of the people around us, experiences that make for a happy living environment. I have forged good working relationships with RIOC staff and the Board, and have been able to quietly and without fanfare get things done.

For personal reasons, my available time just got tighter. Regretably, I am unable to continue in my present role as RIRA President. I am therefore resigning immediately.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve the community as RIRA President. I plan to continue my other work in the community. I thank my fellow RIRA members for their commitment and hard work, and I will do whatever I can to help in the future.

then said, “I am also resigning, because I cannot participate in an organization that does this to people.” Julie Palermo said, “I really can’t be a part of this anymore. I’m very disappointed.”

Riverwalk representative Aaron Hamburger attempted to dissuade them. “What you don’t realize,” he said, “is that this issue was destroying the organization. By quitting, you have let Frank win.”

Erin Feely-Nahem said, “I am not going to resign because the Public Safety Committee must continue what it has been doing. It wouldn’t be fair to my constituency. It bothers me. Yes, my stress level is up, but you know what, [what bothers me] means nothing. This isn’t a legitimate reason [to resign] when the community needs you.”

Sharon Pope said, “I hope that we will refuse to accept the resignation of everyone who has said they want to resign. I would also hope that people recognize that it’s not just about the function of RIRA [Council meetings]. Each of us have separate constituencies. I agree with everything Erin said.

Ultimately, it is more difficult to work things out. I hope those who have decided to resign will rethink this and come back, and make the contribution that they are capable of. I’m asking each of you to reach out to these individuals [many had already left] to tell them, ‘We need your contribution. You were elected.’”

Anne Kanninen proposed to Polivy that she reconsider her own resignation. Polivy said her current situation makes that impossible. (In resigning, she had mentioned her mother’s death.)

“I have to resign,” Polivy responded. “It would be irresponsible for me to continue, given my personal situation right now. I can’t take this anymore. I’m resigning because I don’t have the time to put into it. I can’t do it.” Speaking of the others who resigned, Polivy said, “I hope you will reach out to them and urge them to stay.”

Without any formal closing, the meeting dissolved at that point, as the remaining Council members packed their belongings to leave.

Jeffrey Escobar’s Statement

RIRA President Ellen Polivy has resigned for personal reasons that prevent her from continuing her service. On behalf of the Common Council, I extend many thanks and much appreciation for her past work and for her continuing work on behalf of the community, as well as respect for her reasons in choosing to step down.

As RIRA Vice President, it is my constitutional responsibility to assume the duties of the presidency. I have asked the remaining members of the Council to come together and continue its work, and for its committees to continue to meet. RIRA’s committee activity is the lifeblood of its service to the community, and public members should continue to attend their committee meetings.

I will shortly be meeting informally with the Council members to discuss their concerns and to lay the groundwork for moving RIRA forward. As with all of our meetings, the community is welcome to attend. Eight months remain in the current Council terms, with only five regular monthly meetings. It will be up to the members how much is accomplished during this period.

It is truly a dark time for both RIRA and the community it represents. The Council is only now beginning to assess the impact of the departures of President Polivy and other Council members. A rough road lies ahead. Each member had a role in what has occurred, and which surely contributed to President Polivy’s departure. I have implored that Council members show respect and civility toward each other going forward.

RIRA Column, from page 4

smoothly and to support our residents. I like to treat members of RIOC as our teammates. With this attitude, we all work together to get the ball to the goal.

Planning Committee

One example of balls in the air is the idea, and planning, of an air-monitoring project on Main Street. On our internal RIRA blog, we began talking about Cornell and their agreement to do air monitoring only on their construction site. We understand that Cornell is worried about being blamed for pollution that might not be caused by them, and therefore want monitoring equipment only on their site. However, we had a lively conversation on our blog about general air-quality concerns on the Island, and the amount of pollution generated from the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, the electric plant across the East Channel from Roosevelt Island, and other construction around the City. Therefore, I suggested that we start an ad hoc committee to study this. The ball was picked up by Howard Polivy, a RIOC Board member, who thought this was an interesting concept. He did some research and discovered that Queens College is doing an air-quality study. He threw the ball to me. I passed it along to Helen Chirivas, a Common Council member who had expressed interest in the issue. She researched a little more and tossed the ball to Council member Frank Farance, who called Queens College, and decided to take this idea into the Planning Committee, of which he is Chair. Now he is in discussion with Queens College about getting air-quality equipment on Roosevelt Island and having us be part of their City-wide study. But first, money needs to be raised for the equipment. Let’s see where this goes from here. The ball is still in the air.

Island Services

This RIRA committee has been advocating to fix the Tram elevator. The elevator upgrade will take about a year, and, in the meantime, RIOC plans to expedite the repair of breakdowns and is trying to avoid the freezing problem that has been causing it to break in the first place.

Island Services Committee Chair Aaron Hamburger and Planning Committee Chair Frank Farance have been talking with Cy Opperman, RIOC’s Transportation General Manager, about certain Red-Bus-related issues. On April 1, the Red Bus fare will be eliminated, and the street-parking fees will double to make up for the lost revenue.

Mortgage Seminar

In anticipation of several buildings going private, the Housing Committee thought that some residents might be interested in what it takes to get a mortgage and whether they would qualify. The committee arranged with Amalgamated Bank to hold a residential-mortgage seminar, scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the bank (619 Main Street). If you are thinking of buying an apartment or house, be sure to come and get all your questions answered.

Experts List Outreach

The experts list, an initiative of RIRA’s Government Relations Committee, is a panel of residents who have attained the highest levels in their chosen fields and have agreed to make themselves available pro bono, mostly to help address specific ad hoc questions and issues. I hope that, by compiling such a list, it will become easier for the community to seek answers and to develop collaborative strategies with other interested parties, such as RIOC and our elected officials, who might want to run questions and ideas by specialists in fields about generally accepted principles. We need people with a little time and energy to volunteer their expertise on issues that they really care about. It could be you. We need people with expertise in engineering, architecture, and information systems. We need organizers, artists, designers, technicians, educators, attorneys, psychologists, social workers, and scientists. We hope, by developing a panel of experts and interested volunteers ready to step in for particular issues and interests, that we can speed the process of aiding and helping to build our community. You would amplify and

improve RIRA’s and perhaps RIOC’s ability to develop plans and responses to evolving issues.

Some concerns that we face are land use and facility development. For example, the Motorgate arcade is a large space that could be put to good use. Another example might be to propose utilization of the old Tram cars. Uses evolve, and there are fields and parks to be considered. Finally, without regard to specific projects, it would be wonderful if your expertise could help develop an overall strategic plan to carry Roosevelt Island forward in the 21st century.

Youth mentoring may be an important component, and an opportunity for all sorts of people in the community to spend a little time working with their neighbors, and maybe aiding someone in need of occasional help and some information.

You can help in your fields of interest, and provide services in the community. For example, during the year of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure for Cornell, we needed engineers, scientists, and construction experts to read various chapters of an 800-page draft environmental impact study and give their comments. We were fortunate to have the benefit of some engineers, scientists, and attorneys, and a city planner, to read the relevant sections. But we could have used more. People move in and out of volunteer work, and we want an easy way to reach experts as we need them. If you are willing to periodically give us the benefit of your knowledge, please email me at RIRApresident@gmail.com with the subject line *Experts List*. You could also attend meetings of one or more of RIRA’s ongoing committees. We will be asking RIOC and our elected officials how they could use occasional expert input, and will develop a template for each expert to complete. But first, we need more members on our Government Relations Committee (GRC). If you would like to help us develop the questionnaire for this experts list, please join GRC.

Thank you for your time, and thank you again for the opportunity to serve you and the community.

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1:00 Paint & Sculpt
6:00 Nutrition Workshop (restarts 1/21)

Wednesday
9:00-1:00 Tax Help
9:30 Yoga Stretch
10:20 Shoppers' Bus
10:30 Salsa
10:45 Spanish
12:00 Bridge
1:30 Scrabble
6:00-8:00 Computer Lab

Thursday
9:15 Pilates with Ivette
10:30 Zumba
10:45 Ping Pong
12:00 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
12:00 Korean Exercise
1:00 Korean Games
2:00 Art with John
2:00 Pokeno with Dolores
7:00 Games (RISA)

Special Events

MetroCard Bus, Mon Feb 10, 11-12:30
Identity Theft Lecture, Thu Feb 13, 11:30
Valentine's Day Party, Fri Feb 14, 6pm.
Refreshments. \$5.
Closed Mon Feb 17 (Presidents' Day)
Dolores Green's 75th Birthday Party Bash,
Sat Feb 22, 7pm to ???, Manhattan Park.
Dress to impress. RSVP in back office.

Transportation, from page 3
providing an additional crossing or two per hour. Ferry service might take some of the load, too, if instituted and successful over the long term. [See *The WIRE*'s January 11 article by Briana Warsing, available online at tinyurl.com/Ferry3408.]

The EIS, prepared by Allee, King, Rosen and Fleming (AKRF), does not deal with increases in weekend use of the Tram, the subway, or roadways and parking. But the opening of FDR Four Freedoms State Park 18 months ago has produced a weekend increase, and, if subway service suspensions continue, the Tram will see greater pressure on those weekends.

Subway

The F line doesn't have the flexibility of the Tramway. MTA officials have said repeatedly that the tunnel that feeds F trains to Roosevelt Island is at maximum capacity.

At present, there are times when, even with morning-rush service running normally, some Manhattan-bound Islanders are unable to board until one or more trains have passed. The EIS prepared for Cornell estimates that there will be an additional 111 Manhattan-bound subway passengers every 15 minutes – about 450 per hour. (Again, the bulk of this increase is seen as coming from the 1,000 new residents anticipated in Southtown buildings 7, 8, and 9.)

But during the eight months in 2010 when the Tramway was out of service for renovation, the subway accommodated some 750 additional passengers in the peak period. For those who pick the right boarding time and the right waiting point on the platform, and who are a bit more aggressive in pushing aboard a car, the impact may be minimal – with the more serious problems likely to come in 2038.

On the other hand, greatly increased construction of new housing in Queens (with zoning approval for more to come) is sure to have an impact on subway train ridership headed to Manhattan via Roosevelt Island.

Parking

Cornell plans a 250-car garage in the first

phase of construction. The EIS anticipates that this will accommodate the campus's needs for residents and employees. Cornell has said that about 75 parking spaces will also be available for visitors.

But no additional parking spaces are planned to accompany the completion of Southtown 7, 8, and 9. That could put pressure on those 75 Cornell-area spaces, and they could also be impacted by visitors to Four Freedoms Park. As for the spaces presently on the West Road near the Riverwalk buildings, those will be rationed, to some extent, by a doubling of parking fees – part of a RIOC move to make the Red Bus service free starting April 1 of this year.

Traffic

Traffic will increase on Main Street. Goldwater contributed to a morning flow of 140 trips, and the EIS says that will go to 160 in 2018. A slight decrease in afternoon peak traffic (216 to 210) is expected, but midday trips will more than triple, from 51 to 167, according to EIS projections.

After Cornell completes phase 2 of its buildout in 2038, the EIS predicts a large increase in Main Street traffic – some 375

morning trips, and 457 in the afternoon peak. These numbers translate into traffic jams that could extend off-Island to Vernon Blvd. near the Roosevelt Island Bridge, and special traffic controls will be required at the bottom of the helix where traffic turns onto Main Street and at the intersection near Blackwell House.

But that's 2038 – a quarter-century in the future.

More immediately, Islanders are likely to notice gradual change as Southtown building 7 begins accepting residents in 2015, then more as Cornell shifts its academic program from temporary quarters in Manhattan to the new campus south of the Queenboro Bridge.

[This article is adapted from a report prepared for the Roosevelt Island Community Coalition. The full report is available at MainStreetWIRE.com with this issue of *The WIRE*, along with the 1,300-page final EIS, which is at tinyurl.com/CornellEIS.]

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Marcus, from page 3

ought to be and how much taxation we should have, and his wife decides the smaller stuff like whether we should buy a new house or a new car or whatever. So RIOC decides the big stuff, but RIRA certainly has a role.”

RIRA’s inability to collaborate or even communicate effectively with RIOC was a constant source of frustration to Marcus during his presidency. “I was the lead guy to be dealing with [RIOC President Herb] Berman. And we had a couple of cordial meetings, and then, things sort of fell apart. He didn’t want to meet anymore, he didn’t follow up on doing or saying stuff that he had promised. In the end, I didn’t have much of a dialogue with him so I used to just blast him in the paper, in my column.”

Marcus describes his *WIRE* columns as “extremely vituperative,” then goes on to reflect. “In the past year, I’ve gone over some of my columns. I’m retired now and I can do that and I really get a kick out of reading them. They’re fairly bitter but I think they’re funny. In fact, in the last column, before Matt Katz took over again, I explained that people had told me to calm down.” (For a link to Marcus’ favorite columns, see MainStreetWIRE.com.)

Margie Smith, a member of the RIOC Board, was Marcus’ Vice President. “Margie is one of the most incredible people on the Island. I used to send her all my columns and she would tone down some of it. And that was very helpful. The last column, I said, *Look, I tried to have a dialogue, the dialogue failed. The best thing I could do is just shout about the inadequacies of RIOC and how poorly we’re being served by them and maybe embarrass them into improving.*”

Marcus enjoyed his time as RIRA President for many reasons, personal challenges for growth being a large part of the experience. He says, “The process was very interesting to me. I wanted to see how I could manage meetings, how I could deal with people. I’m a pretty caustic person and known to be pretty cantankerous, grumpy, and so forth. But I was careful. When you’re in a venue like RIRA, you have many different types of people. Some of them can be very sensitive, so you have to be very careful, and I think I was. And I kind of enjoyed it. The meetings were pretty long. They’re always long. Ideally, if you’re really running a tight ship, you’d have shorter meetings. I wasn’t able to do that. But nobody else has, either. Besides that, I thought that the meetings were cordial and useful, and I thought that the quality of the discussions was good, the people worked hard, and we did a very nice job, and I was very pleased with that.”

Within RIRA, there was accord and tranquility when Marcus was president, but dissension and turbulence preceded his run. Marcus takes the long view when discussing current RIRA troubles. “There’s been a lot of backbiting lately, which is very sad. But it’s cyclical. It will go away. It was pretty contentious in the years before I was president – in large part, because of me. I had an axe to grind. I went in with certain people who were like-minded and there were basically two groups of people and we didn’t get along. It was my group and the group in power. It was contentious, and then I can say the two years I was president, it was not at all contentious.”

Marcus points to a meeting at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd as the conclusion of the discord preceding his term, “This particular meeting was just before I was elected in 2004. At that point, we were voting to change the constitution so that only people elected to RIRA could vote. Before that, the constitution had all of these provisions for other people to vote. If you were in RIOC, you could vote. If you were from a group called RICO (Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations), you could vote. RICO had five votes, and they used to use them to vote against whether RIRA should sue over Southtown [development] or not. Meanwhile, RICO was pretty much a defunct organization by 2000 or 2001 when we were making those decisions. We rewrote the constitution. Run, get elected, and then vote. That was a big deal. In order to formally change the constitution, you have to call a public meeting; and if 100 people show up at the public meeting, they can vote on whether the changes to the constitution are okay or not. If 100 people don’t show up, there’s no quorum

and the Common Council decides. The proposed changes were totally benign. Some of the RICO folks and the Stewarts – Katz had beaten Patrick Stewart for the presidency in 2002, and maybe he was bitter about it – put leaflets under people’s doors that said if these changes to the constitution pass, you’re going to lose your apartment. So you had about 80 or 90 angry people showing up at the church for the meeting. This hit us completely out of the blue. We had seen the leaflets two or three days before and we quickly printed our own that said, *This is all bull, nobody’s throwing you out of your apartment. All we’re doing is making a few changes, you only vote if you’re elected and some other internal RIRA stuff.* In the end, we had these 80 or 90 people and we were all scared... We had worked really hard and we had a nice set of changes for the constitution that we had all agreed upon. Nobody ever complained, not even the Stewarts, and they used to sit in those meetings. We thought, *Who’s going to show up, nobody, pro forma, five people maybe.* In the end, you have these 80 [people] and Matt’s counting and then there’s 90. And he counts again and there’s 95. The meeting is supposed to be at 8:00 and it’s 10 after and Matt says, *No quorum, we’re done.* The group stayed there, and 10 minutes later there were 115 people but Matt had left. You should have seen the letters in *The WIRE* afterward. That was the last gasp of all of this insanity. Then we had the elections. A lot of people ran. We had a nice turnout. I was very pleased with RIRA at the time.”

Marcus muses, “To look back on it now, it was an absolute tempest in a teapot.” Marcus decided not to run for another term [as president] because “it was too much work. I stayed in RIRA through Frank Farance’s presidency. Frank ran good sessions. Frank was fine as the president.”

Marcus’ most relevant signature achievement? “I think I got them [RIOC] to improve the way they shovel the snow. For example, the area in front of the Rivercross lawn was very poorly shoveled the first winter that I was the president. I’d walk there, people would be slipping and sliding, I’d get to work and I’d call them [RIOC], then I’d call them again, and I’d call them again. When I came home, if it still wasn’t shoveled, I’d call them the next day. In the end, they got a little better with that. I think they even ran a shovel in front of the subway, which they should always do anyway because the MTA won’t. We have neighbors who broke their arms. It’s not a joke. So, *shovel* for god’s sake. You got damn shovels there, so shovel, do something. So I got them to shovel. And that was about it.”

Marcus had also had some success when it came to the Island’s lighting. “We tried to get them to fix the lights. I walked for years and years from the subway to Rivercross and there would be one or two overhead lights, maybe. And there was all of this finger-pointing, and it went on for ages. Mark Ponton pretty much made that his life when he became a RIOC Board member. He was the first decent Board member who actually cared about what the residents were going through, and he made lighting a priority and got people to change the light bulbs.

“Herb Berman put in this alien landing strip; they’re called bollard lights – the 15 or 20 or 30 lights that are right past the traffic circle [on the West Road] – the ones that blind you when you’re driving. They’re not on the street, they’re in the sidewalk and it looks like a landing strip for UFOs, you can see it from outer space. What was he thinking? *There’s no lighting here, so let’s put 30 of them in a 20-foot distance. Let’s just overkill this tiny area and leave everything else dark?* [At the urging of residents, RIOC eventually dimmed

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the bollard lights along the west roadway by scuffing their reflectors.]

Public Safety was a personal vexation for Marcus. “Public Safety was another one I always thought was a complete joke. We really tried to get a defibrillator. That’s one other thing I got done. For a while, they had people who were trained to use it. Not around the clock because that’s way too much to ask. In the two-year period that I was president, there was a baby or a very young child who stopped breathing. One of the PSD employees who had training saved his life. Okay, we’re spending \$3,000, we’re basically wasting 3,000 bucks, but if he’s going to save a life, then it’s worth it. If that’s all you do is save a life every three or four years, then you’re earning your money. So let’s make sure everyone can do that [use the defibrillator]. The other stuff they do, they’re completely useless at. PSD was really my pet peeve.”

Buying Christmas lights is an investment Marcus believes RIRA should make. “We always had the great Christmas tree debate, how much money should we give toward the Christmas lights outside, and whether it should be called holiday lights or Christmas lights. I said, *I’m a Jew, this is Christmas, you want to say ‘Christmas,’ fine. But I’m a Jew – buy the lights! Have a little sechel [common sense].* They rent lights every year and spend \$1,000. To this day, they’re still renting them every year. The lights cost \$2,000-3,000 to buy. *You’ll pay it off in two or three years,* I said, *and then we won’t have to vote year in and year out.*”

As RIRA president, Marcus was able to use some of the skills from his 35-year career in finance. “I’m organized. I’m logical. I’m reasonably outgoing. I find people very interesting. I’m a decent listener. I’m seldom sure that I’m right. So I like to listen to other people. Maybe I’ll change my mind.”

Marcus has always been a big proponent of saving the Island’s open spaces. He joined RIRA in the first place to fight Southtown development. “The thing I like most about Roosevelt Island is that it’s not Chelsea. It’s not all paved over. When I raised my two kids here, you’d send them out of the building, they’d say *I’m going to play ball* or *I am going to soccer practice*, and I’d say, *Okay, see you later.* You didn’t have to worry about them. I very much hope that some open spaces still remain here in the future, and kids can still walk outside. I think this is statistically the safest place in New York. For my money, this is the best place in New York, and Rivercross is the best building in New York.”

As for the future of Roosevelt Island, Marcus thinks for a minute. “I think affordable housing is going to remain an issue here. A lot of people say Cornell is going to take over the Island. I don’t believe it, really. I am interested to see how long Coler stays. I am interested to see what the City is going to do with that. They could do a lot of damage.”

Philadelphian Steve Marcus and his Israeli-born wife, Nurit, moved to the Island on December 31, 1982. They moved from a four-story walkup on the Upper East Side because Nurit was five months pregnant. “We were looking in Jersey. We had our place all picked out and we kept visiting it, looking at it, and they’d say, *You’re here again?* But we couldn’t pull the trigger. We had a very good friend whose sister lived here and he said, *What about Roosevelt Island?* We had been here once before and we went again, and it was like a no-brainer. We saw a place in Island House, we saw a place in Westview, and it took us about three days to sign a lease. We moved to Island House in 1982 and to Rivercross in 1990.”

Marcus’ advice for today’s RIRA Common Council is, “Enjoy the people you work with, respect them. Keep the community in mind, which I think they do. You know, I always tried to run the meetings with some humor, because I found them interesting, even though they were sometimes a little long. But, you know, I tried to keep the humor and good spirits because everybody is doing this because they want to. This is their release. Nobody is holding a gun to anybody’s head to show up at these meetings. You’re doing it because you want to do some good and you want to enjoy yourself to boot.”



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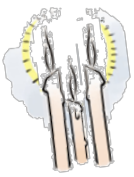
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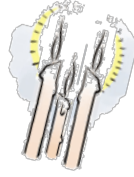
B"H



Friday, February 7 at 5:02 pm

Friday, February 14 at 5:11 pm

Friday, February 21 at 5:19 pm



Blessing: Boruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom
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Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-desh.

Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the uni-
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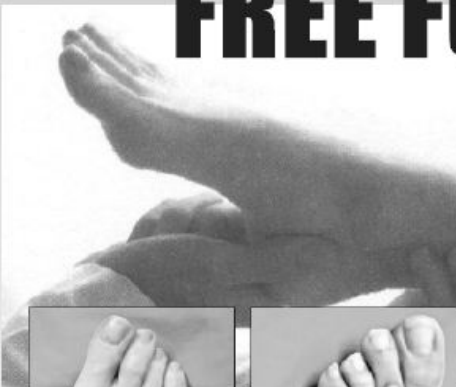
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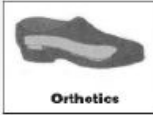
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