

The Main Street WIRE

Saturday,
March 22, 2014
34:13



PSD's McManus Meets With Residents, Notes That Arrests Are Down

by Briana Warsing

Burglaries are up on Roosevelt Island.

Abuse of power, from most reports, is down.

Those were key points last week as Public Safety Director Jack McManus (photo, left) co-hosted a public meeting with the Public Safety Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA).

RIRA President Jeffrey Escobar made opening remarks that framed a larger purpose of that evening's meeting, "As you know, a big focus for RIRA now is going to be making sure we have community involvement with the officials in the community and town hall meetings where we all answer each other's questions and we interact

intelligibly with the differing authorities here on the Island. The only way we can solve the problems on the Island is to have open and frank dialogue."

He admonished those attending, "Respect everyone's opinion and questions. I am sure heated debate is going to be had, but let's use this time that we have here together intelligibly."

Compliments

The chair of the Public Safety Committee, Erin Feely-Nahem, commended the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) and the Public Safety Department (PSD) for progress made. "We've been lucky with the new [RIOC] administration, they respect what RIRA and the Public Safety Committee is doing, seem to really appreciate having dialogue with the community, and are working toward a community-policing style, which is something that we really fought hard for, because what we had seen was maximum enforcement of laws very poorly done, and a lot of abusive behavior [that was] too aggressive for what we feel we need here."

Deputy Inspector Kevin Maloney of the 114th Precinct answered questions during the first half of the meeting, opening by describing his relationship with Director McManus: "We go back and forth with issues as they arrive on the Island, and try to have a two-pronged approach to tackling those issues – crime reduction and crime prevention – and hopefully you've seen some positive results."

Maloney made Islanders aware of a rise in burglaries in Roosevelt Landings. "We've seen several burglaries where people are walking through the halls and they're just trying doors. The entries aren't forced entries. We don't have someone pushing locks or breaking through windows. They're trying open doors as they're walking down the hallway. When they find an open door, they go

See **McManus**, page 6

Enduring If Not Always Endearing, David Kraut Looks Back on His RIRA Presidency, and More

by Briana Warsing

He's a perennial. David Kraut has been serving the Island in some way, shape, or form since 1981. His 20-year anniversary of membership on the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board of Directors is this year. Before his RIOC service, he was a Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) President who ran for that office saying that he would work to become a RIOC Board member. In his "conference room," at Trelis, overlooking Good Shepherd Plaza, he discusses his presidency, his RIOC service, and the future of Roosevelt Island.

Despite being a RIOC Board member, or perhaps because he is a RIOC Board member, Kraut is emphatic about RIRA, "In all my years on the RIOC Board, I have never, not ever, not at any time, 100%, allowed RIOC to interfere in RIRA matters. I've never said a word against RIRA myself, ever; and I've always insisted that RIRA

be heard, even when RIRA was shouting instead of talking, which is very often the case. I gave an interview to *The WIRE* in 1999 and I was asked, *What happens if the Island gets direct representation?* and I said, *You still need a RIRA. You need a Common Council of all the people speaking to the power;* and I feel the same way now. My basic point is that there has to be a RIRA. There has to be a general representative body speaking for the people."

Kraut believes RIRA is more than just a voice of complaint or a voice of need. He has seen RIRA get results for the Island.

Kraut on RICC

An example he shares took place recently. Kraut remembers, "In the Cornell negotiations, what woke Cornell up to the fact that they might have a little problem on their hands was not RIOC. It was RIRA. RIRA people formed themselves into a committee representing Island organizations (the



Roosevelt Island Community Coalition, or RICC). They laid all the groundwork to Cornell saying, *Hey we're here, be clear, you should fear us.* That's when Cornell realized there are people living here. The fact is that the Mayor

(Michael Bloomberg) granted them that sweetheart deal down there, completely overlooking the population of many thousands of people living here who have interests and whose lives are going to be overturned and upturned by this whole Cornell thing. As a result, RIOC entered negotiations with Cornell and with the City and with the State. The people living here had already reminded all those powers that there are people living here and, as a result, it gave RIOC a broader perspective. There's only six or seven of us on that Board. Who knows if we're right about everything or even anything? It gave RIOC an incentive and an understanding about broader issues, which we eventually ended up confronting in negotiations. And that's why I say there must always be a voice for the people. Even if RIOC became completely elected, which I sure hope happens, they would then become, by definition, the power structure and, as a result, you must always have something to fight the power, and speak for the people directly. That's what RIRA does."

Kraut cautions that, "RIRA is powerful or not powerful depending on its leadership and on the energies of the people serving and on their sensibilities. And if a RIRA President or the Common Council is not thinking clearly, then RIRA ends up being marginalized, which I hate to see."

On Cornell

Of Cornell, Kraut's feelings are complex. He declares, "The worst thing that will ever have happened to us is Cornell. It is going to force a change on this rock that is

See **Kraut**, page 10

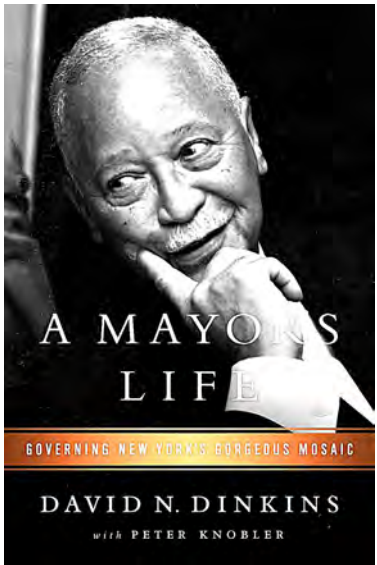
Dinkins Coming for Book-Signing

Former New York City Mayor David Dinkins will sign copies of his new book next Saturday (March 29), 12:30-2:30 p.m., at the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club.

Since taking office back in 1990, NY City's 106th Mayor, David N. Dinkins, has been a frequent presence in our community. He's a devoted tennis enthusiast who often played at the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club, which opened its doors back in the same year. His wife of 60 years, Joyce Burrows Dinkins, would frequently provide him with a list of produce that he'd pick up here before returning home after hotly contested Saturday morning doubles matches. Always gracious and amicable, he'd pose for pictures and shake hands with everyone who approached.

Dinkins walked Main Street with our community to celebrate the opening of Octagon Park, which his efforts supported.

His recently published memoir, *A Mayor's Life – Governing New York's Gorgeous Mosaic*, chronicles much of the behind-the-scenes politics from before and during his term in office. Some of his policies and decisions made a decidedly positive impact on life here on Roosevelt Island. The Beacon program at PS/IS 217 and all the Beacon programs throughout the City are a the direct result of his efforts. They came about as part of his plan to stem an epidemic of crime that was spiraling out of control. His crime-fighting initiative produced the first drop in crime statistics in a 15-year trend. While



Mayor Rudy Giuliani is often credited with the drop in crime, it actually began in 1992, and 1993, during Dinkins's mayoralty. His "Safe Streets, Safe City" campaign increased the police force by 40% over a three-year period and funded the creation of the community use of public school facilities for after-hours programming. He saw expanded policing, as well as safe, character-building activities for New York's children, as essential in any permanent reduction in crime.

When a major Tramway snafu left people hanging mid-air for four hours as rescue crews tripped over each other's feet, the Tram was threatened. Both the State and the City considered closing it down. Dinkins before City Council to support the continuation of the Tramway when both the State and the City considered closing it down.

Along with Rivercross resident Carl Weisbrod, the President of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, Dinkins crafted the plan that built the Billy Jean King National Tennis Center and kept the US Open in New York City. A three-week event, the Open is estimated to produce greater revenue for the City than the Yankees, the Mets, the Knicks, and the Rangers, combined.

As New York's first black Mayor, Dinkins is a role model. Coming from a modest background, he has had the respect of great world leaders, including Nelson Mandela of South Africa.



Norma Martinez got into the St. Patrick's Day spirit this week.

The Editorial Page

Farance, Chirivas, Reid, and The Politics of Destruction

If you played the game *Telephone* as a child (who didn’t?), you know that perfectly sensible things can become transmogrified as they are passed from mouth to ear to mouth to ear.

Something like that has been happening on Roosevelt Island lately. It’s a game *The WIRE* deems unworthy of coverage, because it’s more an eighth-grade attempt to destroy the Roosevelt Island Residents Association than it is anything newsworthy. Yet, there comes a point where such things require comment, if for no other reason than to let readers know we are aware of such shenanigans and are ignoring them quite deliberately.

To summarize: Months ago, a deficient financial report on the Cherry Blossom Festival was provided to the RIRA Common Council by one or more Council members who admit to being inept in financial reporting. A member of the Council, Frank Farance, saw a vulnerability and turned it into an open wound, raising questions about not just the report, but the motives and ethics of those who filed it. *The WIRE* printed some of Farance’s letter tirades on the subject, and others responded. But the primary Farance attacks were in email and online, and were pressed so persistently and vehemently that those involved decided, after a time, that being part of the RIRA Common Council was simply not worth the trouble they were getting for their efforts. They resigned. In fact, they were just a few of the people who have called it quits on the RIRA Common Council, seeing that its role in the community was being bent to sour purposes.

We won’t attempt to analyze Farance’s motives, but we will express confidence that there was nothing nefarious in the financial report of which he has made so much. The loss of hard-working volunteer community servants was, on the other hand, notable. *The WIRE* went so far as to suggest, editorially, that Farance give himself and the issue a rest.

In the course of it all, one resignation was that of RIRA President Ellen Polivy. Our view is that Polivy had taken on far too much, with a heavy handful of community-service activities, but it also seems apparent that she would not have resigned had her RIRA presidency not brought Farance into her life as a persistent nag.

Farance has been joined by two other Common Councilors in his gnawing at the Cherry Blossom bone. Helen Chirivas, hiding her identity and shame with a “Cheshire Kitty” *nom de chaos* on a local blog (which seems to thrive on such pseudo-controversy), has suggested that *The WIRE* is a co-conspirator in what she describes openly as “fraud” and “theft” and “lies.” Actually, *The WIRE* is simply avoiding repetition of this libel; it will not join the Farance-Chirivas attempts to destroy reputations or the community service of dedicated volunteers.

Chirivas, we would note, goes unshamed. When Jeffrey Escobar took over as RIRA President, she attacked him for insufficient involvement in RIRA matters, seeing that as grounds to demand that he resign. When he explained that his wife’s breast cancer was at the heart of his decisions on how to use his time, she not only failed to apologize – she simply chose another avenue of attack. Joseph Welch would say, “At long last, woman, have you no sense of decency?”

Of late, Chirivas has gone so far as to call *The WIRE* “racist” for giving the Black History Month art show, *The Melanite Visions*, exactly the coverage requested by curator Lorraine Williams, who

expressed her pleasure and satisfaction with it. Chirivas also labels as “racist” a non-coverage decision regarding Senator Jose Serrano’s February meeting here with District Attorney Cy Vance. We make no apology for our coverage decisions. It’s simple: Limited *WIRE* resources were otherwise deployed.

Chirivas, on the other hand, owes the community an apology for her cavalier use of the “racism” epithet. This diverse community needs neither the fact of racism nor the careless and desperate grasp at such incendiary charges.

(In a 3,830-word rant selectively circulated on Tuesday, Chirivas slings “racism” and “Nazi” along with a wide variety of other libels and errors that would be unprintable without risk of a law suit, even if space were available to reproduce it.)

In fact, the only conspiracy is an open one: Farance, Chirivas, and another miscreant carrying on with their carrying-on. The attitude appears to be that they must destroy the Residents Association in order to remake it in Farance’s negative image. (Farance had his two-year shot in the RIRA presidency, then lost, decisively, when he sought re-election.) They’ve even tagged the vice president who’s become president, Jeffrey Escobar, with being part of some nefarious plot – right after congratulating him for a good debut as chair of RIRA Common Council meetings.

The third member of this troubled trio is Romano Reid, another RIRA Common Councilor, who has eagerly followed Farance and Chirivas into the darkness. Reid extends the original simple questions, about the Cherry Blossom Festival financial report, through Chirivas’s “fraud” and “lies,” and *The WIRE* as a co-conspirator, all the way to censorship – branding distribution of *The WIRE* an “inconvenience” to his neighbors in Roosevelt Landings. Reid claims to represent the residents of the building when, in fact, he heads a microscopic “organization” that seeks to steal away the legitimacy of the Roosevelt Landings Residents Association, which has an elected president (Joyce Short, one of those Common Councilors who took a hike when the cost of Farance’s antics outweighed opportunities to serve the Island through RIRA).

Of course, Reid will fail in his effort to deny direct distribution of *The WIRE* to his neighbors, and his claimed effort is, like most of his loud-but-hollow initiatives, as fully phony as his claim that he represents his neighbors.

But Farance is five times as smart as Reid and Chirivas combined, and it’s likely they will continue to tag along with him down the poison-ivy path, and the aforementioned blog will continue to publish their libels until it and they are stopped by a libel action in a court of law, or by the general humiliation that arises when our community has simply had it with their politics of destruction. Will Farance recognize his responsibility for his followers’ behavior?

Meantime, the damage being done to the Roosevelt Island Residents Association is a crime far worse than anything alleged in their obviously defective slanders. *The WIRE* will survive, standing on its 34-year history and a record of solid journalism. RIRA is not so fortunate, having had its ups and downs over the years as a crucible not just for good representation of the population, but also as a place where the misfits, the miscreants, and the misguided can unload their excess animus.

DL

Letters

To the Editor:

In my over 12 years in public office, I have been known as a coalition builder – someone who works hard to find common ground with my constituents as well as my colleagues in government in order to work together for the betterment of our community.

I believe that in order to achieve this goal it’s important to engage in respectful, positive, and constructive discourse. I believe my approach has yielded results in the work I’ve been able to accomplish on behalf of the communities I represent.

As a person who has sought to encourage constructive community discussion, it pains me deeply to hear of members of my community engaging in discourse that is overtly negative and counterproductive.

I have been made aware of a particularly harsh discussion that has been taking place amongst some Roosevelt Island residents, which has made reference to a past disagreement between Matthew Katz and myself. Mr.Katz and I did disagree in regard to his previous testimony on Senate redistricting. Shortly thereafter, he and I met to discuss those differences in a calm, thoughtful and constructive manner. He apologized for any misunderstanding his testimony may have caused. I took him on his word, and as far as I was concerned the matter was behind us.

When people sit down and talk the way we did, and hash things out in a respectful, thoughtful and courteous manner, you will find that many differences aren’t as great as initially thought. Roosevelt Island is a diverse and inclusive community, filled with smart, engaging, and well-informed residents. All of these positive attributes are weakened significantly if residents engage in hurtful and offensive speech toward one another. While it is not my place to weigh in or take sides on personal debates among Island residents, I can and should encourage residents to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric that only serves to pull people further apart.

Roosevelt Island is in the midst of unprecedented growth and development. Now more than ever it is important that *all* Island residents work together for the betterment of our community.

Make no mistake: Inevitably,

From: Notify NYC

To: Julian Stein

Sent: Sun, Mar 16, 2014 12:00 pm
Notification issued 3/16/14 at 12:00 PM. From 10:00 AM until 12:30 PM on Monday, March 17, a film shoot on the Roosevelt Island Bridge, Manhattan will involve actors dressed as uniformed police officers with blank fire adapted weapons. During this time frame, expect intermittent traffic delays and consider alternate routes.

Julian Stein responds:

Consider alternate routes?

The Editor comments:

Who says government lacks a sense of humor?

Letters deadline
for April 5 issue:
Tuesday, April 1, 5pm

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of local interest to the community, and to/from officials. Requests for a Name Withheld signature will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records; letters submitted anonymously will not be published. Submit letters by email text (or as an attached MSWord or WordPerfect file) to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net or on a disk left at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. If you email, expect a confirming response; if you receive none, resend and call 212-826-9056 to alert us. Alternatives: Typed copy left at 531 Main Street; allow extra time for typesetting. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief. We are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters are subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content, in the judgment of the editors, merits the required space.

we will have disagreements and disputes, but that doesn’t mean we need to be disagreeable or argumentative. We can and will debate and disagree on issues, both big and small, but the discussion should never become personal or insulting. Going forward, it remains my hope that Island residents will work together toward a common goal of improving the quality of life for all members of the Roosevelt Island community.

State Senator Jose M Serrano
29th Senate District



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

“Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.

As residents of our little ship floating in the East River, we are very fortunate to have a vibrant community filled with leaders who care for Roosevelt Island and its residents. Whether involved through local politics and governance, the PTA and our local schools, religious institutions, after-school and child-care programs, the Senior Center, building tenant associations, or other community organizations, Islanders work tirelessly, day in and day out, to better our lives. For many, the call to serve is not a question but a command. For others, it is more of a wandering suggestion. Regardless of whether the call is an irresistible urge or an inquisitive desire, the maze of how to get involved can be a daunting one.

As I have said in prior *WIREs*, the work of RIRA is done largely through its committees, which meet monthly, sometimes weekly or even daily, to address resident concerns and find ways to better the community. From Housing to Public Safety to Island Services and Planning, there is a RIRA committee working in service of our interests and concerns.

What seems to be forgotten, however, is that *you*, as an Island resident, can – and should – serve on a RIRA committee. Each and every resident of Roosevelt Island, by way of the RIRA Constitution and Bylaws, is a member of RIRA. Any RIRA member can serve on any RIRA committee. You do not need to be an elected Common Councillor. Are you concerned about the loss of affordable housing and housing issues on the Island? The RIRA Housing Committee is calling for you. Do you want to get involved in the planning of infrastructure for the Island as the Cornell campus is being built? The RIRA Planning Committee needs your services. The following is but a small slice of the active RIRA committees that you and your neighbors can and should join:

- *Government Relations Committee*, chaired by Sharon Pope of Rivercross: As the representative of RIRA and the Roosevelt Island community to the various local, state, and federal representatives and agencies having jurisdiction over the Island, the Government Relations Committee ensures the establishment of ongoing relationships with officials and governmental departments.

- *Housing Committee*, chaired by Susan Marcus of Westview: Addressing the issues and concerns of Island residents regarding the management, living conditions, and rental policies of the residential buildings

on the Island, the Housing Committee serves as the liaison for RIRA and the Roosevelt Island community to various building committees and housing task forces.

- *Island Services Committee*, chaired by Aaron Hamburger of the Riverwalk buildings: While supervising and reviewing the delivery of transportation, parks and recreation, sanitation, postal, and commercial services, and common facilities, the Island Services Committee assists individuals and organizations who may experience problems obtaining Island services due them, and seeks to provide solutions on how current Island services can better serve the Roosevelt Island community.

- *Planning Committee*, chaired by Frank Farance of Island House: Tasked with all matters involving future development of the Island, including but not limited to commercial development, housing, vehicular access, transportation, social services, and energy, the Planning Committee monitors and recommends positions on planning matters, as well as recommends and implements policies relating to energy conservation, distribution, and generation.

- *Public Safety Committee*, chaired by Erin Feely-Nahem of Westview: Charged with recommending and implementing RIRA and community positions on all matters related to safety, security, vehicular traffic, and parking on the Island, the Public Safety Committee works with our Public Safety Department and New York Police Department Precinct 114 on behalf of the community to address Island residents’ concerns about law enforcement.

- *Social, Cultural and Educational Services Committee*, chaired by Julie Palermo of Westview: Tasked with creating, or coordinating with, social, cultural, and educational programs and events that promote and improve community bonds on the Island, this committee is also the fund-raising arm of RIRA.

I strongly encourage anyone and everyone who has even a remote interest in serving on any of the above committees (or, for that matter, on a committee that may not have been mentioned) to contact me at

See **RIRA Column**, page 14



Jeffrey Escobar, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
president@riraonline.com

The RIRA Column

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.

Spring has arrived on Roosevelt Island after a particularly severe New York winter. With the warmer weather’s return, several construction projects are moving forward and our staff has begun preparing the parks and fields. The fare on the Red Bus will soon be eliminated, smoothing out Main Street traffic and making traveling on the bus simpler as we begin the season. Down at Sportspark, the final installation of the facility’s temporary heating system is taking place – more information is below.

Red Bus Fare Elimination

As March comes to an end, RIOC would like to remind the community that the Red Bus will be free to ride beginning April 1. The elimination of the fare will help keep traffic on Main Street moving with faster boarding times, encouraging the use of mass transit on the Island. Making the Red Bus free to ride will also reduce operating costs, by eliminating the need to collect fares from the buses. If you have a fare change card, please be advised that March is the last month that these cards will be accepted on the bus. Once the fare is eliminated, refunds for any unused value remaining on the cards will be available at the RIOC Bus Garage (680 Main Street) until April 30.

Temporary Sportspark Closure

For many years, Roosevelt Island’s Steam Plant has supplied steam to Goldwater Hospital, the Sportspark facility, and several other RIOC properties. Due to the closure of Goldwater Hospital, the City’s Health and Hospitals Corporation intends to close the Steam Plant permanently. In preparation for the potential closure of the Plant, RIOC is currently in the process of installing a temporary heating system at Sportspark.

This Monday and Tuesday, March 24–25, the Sportspark pool and gymnasium will be closed in order to finalize the installation of the temporary system. During this two-day closure, contractors will be

installing the boiler and performing the required tie-ins to the existing system. We regret the inconvenience to the community during this time, and thank you for your patience as this necessary work is completed. Please note that this will be the only closure of the facility during this installation process. Sportspark will re-open on Wednesday, March 26 at 6:00 a.m.

Construction Projects

Work is moving forward quickly on the West Pier. The lumber required for the repairs was delivered in the beginning of March, and the installation of the decking is expected to be completed shortly. Damaged wiring has been replaced, and work on the railings is in progress. Repairs are scheduled to be completed by March 31. We are pleased to be able to restore the Pier for the community’s enjoyment.

This spring, the Octagon Tennis Courts will be undergoing resurfacing to repair and improve the playing surface. The courts are currently open for free play, and will be closed as of April 1 when resurfacing commences. The closure is anticipated to last for approximately two months. New 2014 permits will be issued once work is completed. We will continue to notify the community of any changes or developments.

Parks & Fields

RIOC’s Grounds, Facilities and Maintenance staff are hard at work preparing the Island for spring. New clay and grass seed is being applied to the athletic fields to ensure an optimal playing surface when the season

See **RIOC Column**, page 14



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

The RIOC Column

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Spring, RIVAA members group exhibition, Octagon Gallery, **Sat Mar 22** through May 11. Gallery hours 9am-9pm daily.

Islander Roy Eaton performs piano works from Bach to Bill Evans in **My Musical Journey**, **Sun Mar 23** 5pm, Roerich Museum, 319 W 107th St. More information at tinyurl.com/JustOurRoy.

– Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events –

See separate listing, page 4.

– The Next Two Weeks –

Sportspark closed, Mon-Tue Mar 24-25, for installation of temporary heating system. Reopens **Wed Mar 26** 6am.

RIRA Constitution and Bylaws Committee meets, **Wed Mar 26** 7:30pm, Senior Center. Open to public attendance.

Bridge closing for tests, Tue Mar 25 10am-2pm, each 8-12 minutes.

Movies at the Library – All Is Lost, Tue Mar 25 6pm, Library.

Loom in the Noon (ages 5-12), **Wed Mar 26** 3pm, Library.

Roosevelt Island Women’s Health Organization meets, **Wed Mar 26** 6:30pm, 546 Main St., 12th floor. Guest speaker Dr. Jack Resnick, with City Councilmember Ben Kallos; honoring five Island elders. Refreshments.

Former Mayor David Dinkins signs copies of his new book, **Sat Mar 29** 12:30pm, Roosevelt Island Racquet Club. Open to the public.

Monthly Constituent Representative office hours start for City Councilmember Ben Kallos, **Wed Apr 2** 4-7pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St.

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

The Main Street WIRE– **Sat Apr 5**. **Advertising deadlines:** Display ads, **Wed Mar 26**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Apr 1**; 5,500

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*.

copies due **Thu Apr 3**.

Future issues: Apr 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. **2015:** Every 2 weeks starting Sat Jan 10. **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**.

Manhattan Boro President Gale Brewer to be honored at East Side Democratic Club event, **Sun Apr 6** 12:30pm, Nino’s 1354 1st Av at 72nd/73rd. Contribution required. RSVP to kayattlaw@aol.com or 917-952-7413.

– Future Weeks –

History Lecture, Tue Apr 8 6:30pm, Library, presented by Roosevelt Island Historical Society.

Cherry Blossom Walk, Sat Apr 12 11am, from Visitor Center (at Tramway Plaza on RI), sponsored by Historical Society. \$10 donation. Reservations requested at 212-688-4836 or RooseveltIslandHistory@gmail.com. Also see Apr 26.

Community Board 8 meets, **Wed Apr 16** 6:30pm, Good Shepherd Center. Cornell NYC Tech presentation expected.

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

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney’s Spring Gala, Thu Apr 24 time to be announced. Campaign fundraiser. Champagne and conversation at the Water Club. Info: 212-531-2858 or darren@dynamicstrg.com.

Main Street Theatre’s Music Tehatre Studio production, **Working, Fri-Sun Apr 25-27**.

Cherry Blossom Walk, Sat Apr 26 11am, from Visitor Center (at Tramway Plaza on RI), sponsored by Historical Society. \$10. Reservations requested at 212-688-4836 or RooseveltIslandHistory@gmail.com.

American Cancer Society Relay for Life, Sat Apr 26 time to be announced. For information on how to join a team or put a team together, contact Patty Fallone at pfallonecra@yahoo.com.

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

Pre-Mothers Day Fundraiser Spa Day, Sun May 4, sponsored by Women’s Health Organization. More info to come.

First Sunday Jazz Salon, Sun May 4 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation; refreshments.

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

Main Street Children’s Theatre presents *Peter Pan*, **Fri-Mon May 9-12**.

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

Main Street Teen Theatre presents *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, **Fri-Mon May 16-18**.

Bike New York Spring Kick-Off Party, Sat May 17, 11am-4pm, Capobianco Field (north of 580 Main St.). Learn-to-Ride for Kids, bike mechanic pop-up shop, face-painting, prizes, food, bike decoration.

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.

Sunset Garden Party, Tue Jun 10, 5-8pm, Four Freedoms Park. Info: www.FourFreedomsPark.org.

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

Roosevelt Island Day and Blood Drive, Sat Jun 21.

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

COMING UP

— Continuing Events & Activities —
A listing of repeating meetings & events
(See page 3 for events this weekend and in coming weeks.)

ART EXHIBITS

Vernissage XIII, RIVAA members annual group exhibition, through May 4. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm, **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm.
Spring, RIVAA members group exhibition, opens **Sat Mar 22**. Runs through **Sun May 11**.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open **daily** 6am-10pm.
FDR Four Freedoms Park open **daily** (except Tue) 9am-5pm (9am-7pm starting **Apr 1**).
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 Apr 6 and Jul-Aug) 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation. Resumes May 4.

Drum lessons for 5th-9th-graders, **Tue & Thu** 3:30-5:30pm, Youth Center, 506 Main St. Info: Call **212-527-2505** or email info@RooseveltIslandYouthProgram.com.

Piano lessons for 5th-9th-graders, **Wed & Fri** 3:30-5:30pm, Youth Center, 506 Main St. Info: Call **212-527-2505** or email info@RooseveltIslandYouthProgram.com.

EXERCISE & SPORTS (alphabetical)

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

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

Pilates with Karen, **Tue & Thu** 7:15pm; **Wed** 8:45am, 10am; **Fri** 9am, 10am; **Sat** 10am. Info 212-750-6223.

Pilates, **Wed & Fri** 6:30-7:30pm, PS/IS217.

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, **Sun** 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. (Replaced with Pilates until new instructor is found.)

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**, 10-11:30am, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$10 suggested donation; materials supplied. No reservation required.

Baby & Toddler Swim classes (6-36 mo), **Sun** 11am & 11:30am, **Wed** 10:30 & 11:00 (starts Mar 16, ends wk of May 4), Sportspark. Drop-in rate \$7. Info: Edditt.Perez@rioc.ny.gov or 212-832-4569. Pre-registration rate \$5/class.

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

Baby Playtime (0-18 mo), **Mon** 11am, Library.

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.

Toddler Play Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 11:30am, Library.

Island Kids Baby Group (0-14 mo), **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.

Teen Time (ages 13-18), **Mon-Fri** 3pm, Library.

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

Reading Aloud (children), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library.

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

Board 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.

Constituent Service Hours for City Councilmember Ben Kallos, **1st Wed** 4-7pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St. (Starts April 2.)

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**.

Rev. Lewis C. Johnson

Events are scheduled today (Saturday, March 22) to mark the passing of the Rev. Lewis C. Johnson, former vicar of the Church of the Shepherd here on Roosevelt Island, who died on March 7 at Calvary Hospital in New York City, after a long illness.



Rev. Lew Johnson, with his family — the Rev. Thea Crites and son Peter Johnson.

completed his education at the Blanton-Peale Institute in 1989 and began a concurrent psycho-analytic practice. From 2000 to 2005, he ministered as an assisting priest at St. Michael's Church in New York City, and then, from 2005 to 2013, as Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd on Roosevelt Island.

A Requiem Eucharist will be held today (Saturday, March 22) at 3:00 p.m., in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine. Immediately following the service will be a reception at St. Michael's Church, located at 225 West 99th Street near Amsterdam Avenue. Condolences may be sent to his family, the Rev. Thea Crites and his son Peter Johnson, at hithea2012@gmail.com. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Fr. Johnson's name to City Harvest, at www.cityharvest.org or 646-412-0643.

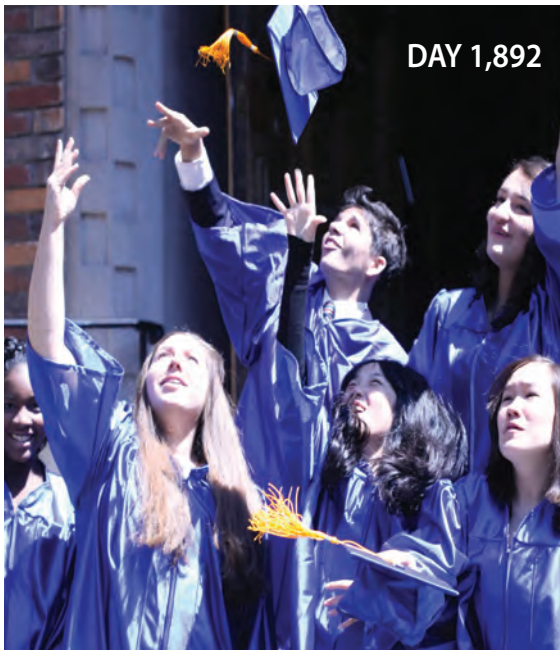


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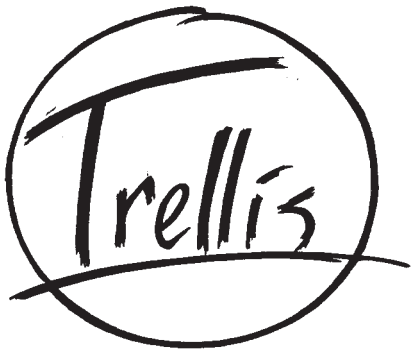
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McManus, from page 1
in and remove handheld electronics from these apartments. What we've seen recently is that there have been people home who didn't lock their doors and were inside their residences. So these people find an open door, they don't know what's on the other side, they go into the residence, and actually a person inside the residence that lives there runs into the perpetrator. It hasn't escalated to the point where anybody's gotten hurt, but it's a concern for us. I want to say we're in the double digits now, since November of last year when we first saw it."

Maloney noted that there was a burglary arrest recently, but said that the problem, not yet resolved, is being addressed in various ways. "We're doing a crime-prevention effort on the Island where we're going to go to that building and let the residents know how to protect themselves, let them know what's going on first of all. If you see someone you don't recognize or if you see someone that does live there who's trying these locks, you can call us, let us know, and hopefully we can hold the person committing these crimes accountable."

In response to a query about what NYPD is doing about the problem, Maloney responded, "We've increased our visibility in those buildings, our vertical patrols, along with the Public Safety guys." He continued, "A lot of the stuff is preventable if you secure your door. Lock your door."

Regarding crime on the Island, Public Safety Director McManus was quick to voice a qualification. "The uptick in crime we have right now is restricted to burglaries. Violent crime is not up on the Island."

McManus' portion of the meeting opened with comments about complaints. Ike Nahem acknowledged that, "The Public Safety Committee [members] are getting radically reduced complaints in terms of abuse under [former Director] Guerra. We have hardly been getting any complaints about abusive behavior by Public Safety officers. And there has been an improvement to the point where concrete questions of public safety can be dealt with without overwhelmingly the obstacle being the behavior of the Public Safety officers."

McManus affirmed this, "Complaints are down tremendously. They're down 85% when I look



at the nine months prior to when I got here and that would be keeping to the prior nine months. And who makes that happen? All of us, in different ways. All of us make that happen."

But the past was not ignored. Nahem said, "Now, having said that, we do have a problem with the legacy. [The Public Safety Committee] feel[s] that we've been very patient, first of all in letting Director McManus get the job, get settled in, get acclimated, but this is something that we are very dissatisfied about and it has to be addressed."

Nahem added, "These things are like festering sores, you know. They're not really part of the past, they're part of the present because the guys are still here."

Director McManus vehemently stated, "I don't tolerate abuse of any kind, whether it's verbal, physical, or otherwise."

"There's clearly hurt in some of the people sitting in the room right now. For me, it's a balance, moving forward while recognizing what happened before I got here. I don't dismiss that and say, *I wasn't here, it doesn't matter*. It does matter. I'll find out and I'll have better answers."

In line with the Public Safety Audit, which was completed in December, McManus said that his next areas of focus will be officer training and working with Island youth.

"I think we need to work more with the younger people on the Island, and I am in the process of establishing a second youth officer to be able to do that. We are involved in coaching sports now with young kids between 9-13 years old."

Training

About training, he said, "Training is a huge issue. Training in theory and in practice started when I walked in the door. I won't tolerate any abuses. I think the folks that work for me know that. I came in and I realized – rather, I was told immediately about – the fractured relationship between Public Safety and the community. At the same



time, I had a force with very low morale, so, the way I was taught by my parents, it starts with the way you treat folks. I am not a desk guy, so I am interacting with folks every day, and often times I have an officer with me, and I think they have a pretty good feel for the way I talk to people, and I like to think that has carried over. So, I'm

really the head trainer, though there is more formalized training coming. The first group will consist of escalation of force, laws of arrest, de-escalation, and others things that I think are very critical."

New Hires

PSD has hired six new entry-level officers starting soon.

On finding the right people for those jobs, McManus said, "I tell them personally, right out flat, *This isn't NYPD Blue. If you're looking for action-related activity, you're in the wrong place. If you enjoy speaking to people and helping folks, you're in the right place.*"

McManus closed the meeting on a personal note. He said, "I like it here a lot. My children might say [that I like it] too much. I always want to know what we're not doing that you'd like to see us do, and what we're doing that you don't want us to be doing."

"There's a way to go, and I think that, together, we can continue to improve this."



Deputy Inspector Kevin Maloney, who runs NYPD's 114th Precinct, warned of an ongoing series of try-the-door, walk in, burglaries, mostly in Roosevelt Landings.



Erin Feely-Nahem, who arranged the session with McManus and Maloney, chairs the Public Safety Committee of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA).



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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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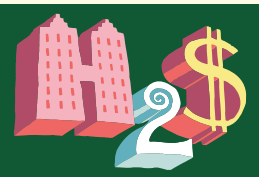
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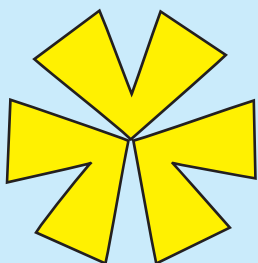
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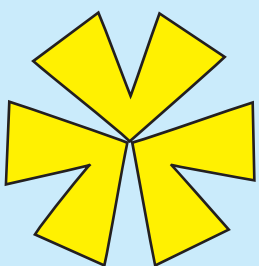
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As the Island has evolved, so has David Kraut (or maybe it's the other way 'round). All these photos were taken in the last 17 years.

Kraut, from page 1

unthinkable, unimaginable in terms of effect. I don't mean that in terms of horror show, but that it will be a vast, unpredictable, unintended-consequences kind of a thing. And I'm not talking about the construction per se. People are very worried about construction vehicles and things like that. In fact, I remember a public discussion a year or two ago and someone said, *Well, David, it's going to be a 30-year project*, and I pointed out that this [the development of the Island thus far] was a 30-year project. Southtown was in the Master Plan, as was Manhattan Park. Octagon was an addition. So the basic Island habitation structure has been 30 years or more so, and, just about the time we complete this, here's another 30 years. There have been construction vehicles up and down this street for 30 years.

"Someone pointed out that there's going to be a truck every six minutes. Well, that seems like a parade, doesn't it? Well, it's not. A truck goes by. Life goes on. A little while later, another truck goes by. This has been going on for 30 years – certainly since Southtown."

Kraut is not happy that, because of Cornell, we are no longer financially independent, "We have enough money to run the place now," he says, adding that, "Whether we'll have enough to run the place after Cornell is built, we may not. Street maintenance, extra buses cost a lot of money. So now we're taking money from the State again. To make [the Cornell deal] happen, the State is once again subsidizing RIOCI. And boy, I hate that. Part of my legacy was getting us off the State dole. Now, I'm a liberal Democrat, but I was rather pleased that we were self-financing, but Cornell refused to pay us enough money to subsidize their costs to us, so the State had to come and chip in again, and I am not fond of that notion, not a bit."

Kraut moved here with wife Martha, son Jonathan, and daughter Lauren in 1979. He explains, "We heard about Roosevelt Island when Martha was an undergrad at Pratt [Pratt Institute]. That was when they were building this place, and design people from all over came to look at it. It seemed like a great idea to us. We moved into a three-bedroom first. My mother-in-law lived with us for a while, that's when we got into the four-bedroom. Then she passed, Martha passed, the kids grew up and moved out, so I moved into the two-bedroom apartment that was directly over the four-bedroom I had lived in, all in the 540 back corridor. So, for 35 years I've lived within 150 feet of where I am right now."

Kraut's Service

Kraut began his Island service within a few years of arriving. "When my son was in first grade, in 1981 or 1982, I was asked to serve on the Little League board. In those days it was a regular standard Little League. Little League is a really official kind of a thing. So I served on that board for six or seven years." Next up was the Youth Center board, where Kraut worked with Frank Briseno. "That was some of the best work I've ever done on the Island," Kraut remembers. "Not me personally, but that board," he clarifies. "I left that after three years, but it took a lot of hard work. By that time it was 1990 or so, and it was time for me to run for RIRA for my building, which was then called Eastwood."

Kraut had some RIRA experience before 1990. He first attended a RIRA meeting about the filming of *Nighthawks*. "I attended a general meeting in Good Shepherd. People were screaming at each other, including the then-president, Lou Carbonetti, and the previous president, Doug Banik. And I got angry. I said, *I can't imagine what's going on here, presidents yelling at presidents, people screaming. Is this how things get done around here? This is absurd and ridiculous*. The meeting was taped. It wasn't a meeting; the mob scene was taped. And afterward, somebody said [about me], *I don't know who that guy is but he seems to know what he's doing*. So, when it came time to actually write the first official RIRA constitution, I served on that committee. I don't remember the dates. And that constitution no longer pertains. I didn't give good service there. It was a long, hard slog that I wasn't really prepared for, with smarter and better people than I who stayed the course and, after two years of meetings, they came up with a constitution. I think David

Lustig was president by then."

After serving as Common Council member for Eastwood, Kraut ran for president of RIRA, because, as he explains it, "Sandra Neis was the president at that point, and I thought, *Hey, I could do as good a job as Sandra*. I don't know if that proved to be true or not, but I thought I could, so I ran. And I was elected president. In those days, the heavy faction was people like Lou Carbonetti and Ronnie Vass, and some of the other original old-timers, and they thought I needed a balanced ticket, so they suggested Nneka (now Sharon) Pope as my vice president. The reason I didn't run again was that my wife was killed in the summer of 1994. Well, they call it malpractice, but a doctor killed her is what it boils down to. I just don't mince words. And by November, I wasn't really ready to continue with RIRA, so Nneka became president, followed by Patrick Stewart."

Kraut feels that he accomplished what he set out to as RIRA President. "In any case, I had run for the RIRA presidency on one issue only – that the President of RIRA should serve on the RIOCI Board of Directors. That took some doing because, of course, the governor decides who is on that board. But we hammered and pushed and pried. There's a nice cartoon in *The WIRE* that shows Mario Cuomo and me standing on Roosevelt Island and he's shoving me off with a whip, saying, *Do you have an appointment, Mr. Kraut?* Of course, he meant appointment to the Board. I kept with that one [goal] because to be president of RIRA is an all-encompassing, all-involving job. Anybody who's ever been in the job, certainly in the past 20 years, knows that it's a full-time job, pretty much, whereas being on the RIOCI Board is not. In terms of time consumption, there's a difference. Also, it became clear to me that the action was in RIOCI."

About current RIRA meetings, Kraut says, "There's still yelling. My last RIRA meeting was during Nneka Pope's term, and I haven't seen any reason to go back since. This is something that some of my fellow [RIOCI] Board members don't agree with me on. RIOCI should just stay the hell away from RIRA. RIRA should decide what they want, hammer things out in and among themselves, and then go to their friendly local RIOCI Board member and say, *Look, here is what we've decided we need very much*. Then, we work together. A RIOCI Board member should not be influencing the RIRA decision process in any way whatsoever. The purpose of RIRA, when I was on RIRA, was to talk to the power and that was RIOCI and the City and the State."

Kraut clarifies, "We [RIOCI] are a governing branch. People expect us to respond immediately to their needs. Even though six of us are residents, unless we hold regular office hours, like I do at the bar here [Trellis], people don't know they can come to us, and they need a representative body."

Kraut's RIOCI service has benefited RIRA, he says, "One of the best things I did on RIOCI was to get the Public Purpose Funds institutionalized. As that original money vanished, no one could find actual specific funds, and we got buried in our general accounting. The idea of giving \$100,000 a year in Public Purpose Funds and putting RIRA in charge of it has gone very well since then. There was dissension in RIRA recently about the disposition of the funds, and RIOCI took the position that it is not our business. This is going on seven or eight years now, and it's worked out really well. Internal RIRA dissension is not our problem unless RIRA votes for a rifle range in the chapel plaza. We'll turn that down, probably," Kraut says, half seriously.

Kraut elucidates, "That's an example of RIRA empowered to bring a decision and they bring it to us to ratify it. That seems cool to me. The relationship [between RIRA and RIOCI] fluctuates, and that's part of a right relationship. As I had to educate Matt Katz at one point, there are three political powers in American life; the power of vote, the power over purse, and the power over jobs – and that's how American politics works. RIRA has power of vote because they have elections every two years in which 1,200 or 1,500 people participate. RIRA has the power to represent the people.

Whether it's acknowledged by law or not has nothing to do with it. You get 1,200 voters every two years, you are allowed to say you represent the people. RIRA has no jobs; RIOCI has the jobs on this rock. But to give RIRA a little say-so over the public purse is empowering to RIRA, and it means they have an influence over a whole lot of Island activities. Anyone who applies for Public Purpose Funds has to go through RIRA and make their case. It's an important power. It's a very small part of the public purse but it's something."

Thoughts on RIRA

Kraut isn't all too worried about what's been going on in RIRA lately. He says he's seen worse. "*Listen to me. This is very important*, says the old guy," he says, smiling, "When I was at that meeting around *Nighthawks*, you had current and ex-presidents screaming at each other. People in the audience were calling (then RIRA president) Lou Carbonetti a pimp, because he had talked the film company out of \$10,000 or \$20,000 for the Island, and [they were] saying, *He's selling us*. I have seen much louder screaming than what's going on now. I remember when Pat Stewart was in his last term. Apparently, he had some issues with newcomers on the Common Council who didn't like what he was doing. So they demanded a new constitution, which they wrote. They ran against Stewart and beat him using scurrilous campaign tricks, which didn't really matter; it was time for him to go. I imagine if I were still RIRA president, or had remained in the job for two or four more years, I would have acted just as crazy as some of these people."

He just isn't at all worried about RIRA going anywhere, "Every time I look around at everything that's going on here, I see about 100 families involved in everything. There's always been a core group who have interests in the Island beyond their own immediate needs, and they're willing to



serve. And as long as that exists, there will be a RIRA."

As for the current RIRA battles he adds, "I'm always remembering things. They call me the institutional memory. Well, like remembering the big fights about *Nighthawks* in the chapel or remembering the big fights between the Katz faction and the Stewart faction. I was not quite as concerned about the Polivy-Farance battles. It's happened before. It will happen again. That's what institutional memory does for you."

About RIRA's future and its new president, Jeffrey Escobar, Kraut says, "People now seem to be ready to let a strong hand take the reins, and I wish them well. I hope that he has the strength of character to make it continue to be good, and it's not just that people are a little tired of the chaos they've caused and are ready to calm down and give that a chance. So we'll see, but I wish him well. I've wished every president of RIRA well.

"Some have done better than others," adding, "For Matt Katz, whom I think of as mayor for life – president for life – things had been on a very even keel for 15 years, even though there were a couple of interregna when Steve Marcus took over for a couple of years. Steve Marcus was the only RIRA president who made Frank Farance look good. And then the Frank Farance presidency, where Frank – despite his

RIOC Board, David Kraut Looks Waaay Back



well-meaningness and his brilliance – his basic personality and his way of getting things done grated people the wrong way and still does. That’s got nothing to do with the rightness or the wrongness of his cause or anybody else’s. Some of the interregna presidents just couldn’t do the job. Ellen Polivy overextended herself.”

On Himself

Kraut is forthcoming with what he terms his biggest failure as RIRA President, “In 1992-1993, Manhattan Park had been built recently, and [it] was getting populated. The biggest problem we faced was to integrate Manhattan Park. The core of the Island and the RIRA constituency remains in these four buildings [Westview, Island House, Rivercross, Roosevelt Landings] and these four buildings and the people who live in them have never been particularly welcoming to the people who live north of Gristedes or south of 501. The people living there are very well aware of that and sensitive to it. I am glad that they [Manhattan Park] have always sent [RIRA] very active people. Manhattan Park has at least one [RIOC] Board member [Michael Shinozaki], and that’s very cool. I should have insisted [during my RIRA term, 1992-1994] that the people in the core constituency do a better job of reaching out. Why didn’t we ever have a RIRA meeting up there in Manhattan Park so the Manhattan Park people could come and sit down and watch what we do? That just occurred to me a minute ago. It’s a little late for that thought, isn’t it? As I say, I consider that my biggest failure. The Octagon building may as well be Mars. By the time Southtown was built, maybe we wised up a little bit. I am seeing a little more integration with Southtown, but not quite enough. One thing I like about Southtown very much, and I don’t know if this is going on in Manhattan Park or not, is there’s a baby constituency in Southtown. It’s quite brilliant.”

Kraut relates to the baby constituency, and he believes it bodes well for local government because it forces member involvement or contact with various kinds of groups. He says, “When we first came here, a lot of us were young families with young children, or we had them here. The curve kind of went down a little bit, but in the past X years, my goodness. Maybe there should be a law that RIRA presidents and RIOC Board members should have children. Without children, this is just philosophy. Without children, you have no future. You die and you’re dead. In my case, it was Little League, the Youth Center, the school. I served on the committee that chose Dorothy Bowser to be principal. These are all child-related issues.”

On Roosevelt Landings

Kraut has always lived in Roosevelt Landings (formerly Eastwood, the E in the phrase *WIRE buildings*, meaning the Island’s first four residential structures), and has some thoughts on his building. “I am the RIOC Board member from Roosevelt Landings, which [RIOC] people forget. I consider Trellis to be my office, and I am always available if anyone wants to talk to me. But even here [in Trellis], people always assume that I’m from one of these three buildings,” Kraut explains, gesturing north and south on the west side of Main Street. “If that is so, then perhaps our demographics are not quite so integrated as we think they are. I live in a hallway full of children, full of noise, and full of people from all over. It’s the basic Roosevelt Island living-together plan, which is one of the foundational concepts of the rock, and it’s another reason I think I stay in touch a little better. Also, I had children who were always active in Island events. Constituencies form and reform around the school, around the Main Street Theatre, around the Garden Club – my wife was president of [that club] for a couple of years. You’ve got to be really involved with the community if you’re going to understand the community and the changes in the community and adapt to them. That seems like basic politics 101, but not everybody understands it.”

On RIOC

Kraut, like some RIRA presidents before him, had a seat at the RIOC Board table, as a non-voting member. The issue preventing more recent presidents from sitting on the board was a shift in RIOC leadership, “I had been sitting at Board meetings since 1992. And so had all my predecessors.

[RIOC President 1996-1999 Dr. Jerome] Blue wouldn’t let that happen anymore.”

There was a community effort to change that, called the Maple Tree Group (MTG). Dr. Blue’s administration of Island affairs was a major catalyst for the inception of the group, which advocated for self-governance legislation. (MTG efforts led to an increase in the number of residents on the RIOC Board via two community nominating elections, but true self-governance legislation has still not been passed.) Kraut agrees with the premise but doesn’t think MTG went far enough. He opines, “One of the signal failures of the MTG group’s whole effort to get residents seated on the Board by vote was that nobody in the MTG group ran for those positions in any of those elections. [Margie Smith did, and is a Board member.] They said we’ve already done our work. Well, they did nothing.”

Assuring that RIRA presidents are elected or appointed to the RIOC Board was not a legacy of Kraut’s presidency. In fact, since Kraut, only Patrick Stewart has served on the Board. Explains Kraut, “Pat Stewart fought himself onto the RIOC Board just like I did. His first term was immensely successful. Give him credit for getting Jerry Blue kicked off the rock. Pat led Island residents on a march down Third Avenue to a State office building. Pat is kind of a moderate Republican, and moderate Republicans usually don’t lead marches, but he did. Next thing you knew, we had a new RIOC president [Robert Ryan]. By that time, Pat was in conflict with newer people [Matthew Katz] who had come to the Island and they did not see themselves as, *I’ve been here since Year One, I didn’t step off the first Viking longboat to settle in Island House*, so there was a change. It’s the hardest thing in the world: When you’re out of power, you overthrow the establishment, and once you’re there, you become the establishment, and that’s not my rules or RIRA rules, that’s God’s rules. That’s how it works. And you often don’t realize how out of touch you are.”

The Island is represented by six members out of the nine on the current RIOC Board. Currently, we have David Kraut from Roosevelt Landings, Margie Smith, Howard Polivy and Katherine Grimm from Rivercross, Michael Shinozaki from Manhattan Park, and Fay Christian, who moved to Rivercross after being nominated in a community election.

The RIRA president is not one of them. Kraut elaborates, “When Steve Shane was in the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) before the Pataki administration, the Board was essentially a rubber stamp for the president. And there were Board members from the Island at the time. Ronnie Vass was on the Board, Bill Warren was on the Board, and me. But their appointments were political, and everybody voted the way they were ‘supposed’ to vote. Steve [Shane] was instrumental in getting residents appointed to the Board through the public election process that somebody [MTG] ran. Two things about that: First of all, the election of members of the community to be nominated to the Board was a promise that was kept, but not a law. It was kind of a one-time thing. A new governor came in [Andrew Cuomo], in the mold of his father [Mario Cuomo], a very hands-on governor, and he hasn’t necessarily followed people’s recommendations here.

“The other thing was that all three [RIOC] presidents under Pataki were relatively weak, Blue and Ryan and Herb Berman, whom I loved, but was a bit of a placeholder, which allowed the Board to become more active and emphatic. In fact, the whole coming-into-being of the Southtown project was due to a couple of Board members who were real-estate guys. They’re the ones who made Southtown happen. There’s nothing the president had much to do with. As a result, the Board had generally become more active. More prominent and more preeminent, and Islanders were elected to the Board. Mike Shinozaki had an appointment before he came back and got [nominated by election]. So, there had been community members on the Board in some sense or another for a long time. What Steve [Shane] didn’t understand was that the Board had become a Board while his back was turned – while he was gone for 12 years [after leaving DHCR]. And so, he fought with his Board. Little things,

but symbolic little things, for example, whenever there was a committee meeting, he put himself at the head of the table unless I was chair of that meeting and I would say, *I’m sitting here; that’s where the committee chair sits*.

“The president and other members of staff are reporting to and discussing with the committee. It’s the committee’s meeting. He never understood that. He publicly snapped at one board member, and I know he was tired that night, but, even those of us who supported him, and I supported him unreservedly, realized, *He doesn’t know what’s going on. He thinks he is in sole charge of Roosevelt Island and he’s got a Board around him who think, Actually, you’re staff*. The president’s very powerful. A wise board just lets the staff do their jobs. That’s me, I’m kind of a do-your-job kind of guy. But he didn’t get it. That’s an example of [how], when change is happening, you have to be very alert to change.”

Kraut clarifies the relationship between RIOC and RIRA in this way: “Remember that RIOC has the charter to develop, manage, operate the Island. I mean build, clean, manage. Basically, the job is to shovel the snow, rake the leaves, mow the grass, take out the garbage. That’s what RIOC does around here and we do it pretty well. Then come community issues followed by construction issues. If we’re not doing a good enough job at it, RIRA should let us know...”

“Meanwhile, people in RIRA keep coming up with clever ideas like the Cherry Blossom Festival and things like that, and [they] should seek support from RIOC, which they’ll have this year.” [Actually, RIRA has not yet made a decision on mounting the event this year.]

Legacy

Kraut’s service to the Island has been primarily in RIOC. He lists a few of his successes.

“There’s the David Kraut Memorial Traffic Circle [Kraut’s little joke]. When they first designed Southtown, they eliminated the turnaround. I said, *You can’t do this. Do you understand if you do this people will be turning around in your driveways? You think people are going to be driving all the way to the Tram and back just to turn around? They’ll be U-turning on Main Street, which is such a narrow street*. They found a way to put that amoeba-, peanut-, liver-shaped thing there as a turnaround. They mis-designed it, but later it was reshaped and that only happened because of me. That’s my legacy. Well, that, and insisting that they build the new athletic field [Firefighters Field], not after the project [Southtown] was completed, but first. They did away with that dirt field we had at the Nurses Residence [the old soccer field], and I said, *You’ve got to build that field first. Kids need a place to play*. I think they realized pretty quickly that if they built the sports field before they built the buildings, it’s an amenity for people moving in.

“And so, you’re talking about what I did? I made a traffic circle.”

In RIRA, Kraut feels his influence was more limited, “The only thing I did particularly well at RIRA was make sure meetings were run properly, minutes were taken, notifications were made properly, and people were polite to each other, but that had no lasting effect.” After some thought, he remembers there was more to it than that, and he reminisces, “The first dog on the Island was owned by a blind man who lived in Eastwood. The dog was a service dog. The pledge was he had to take care of the dog and clean up after the dog. With that argument, there was no basis to not rent to him. The dog pooped daily in back of 540. I had my picture taken wearing plastic gloves in back of 540, and I am saying *If this crap doesn’t get cleaned up, I am going to throw it on [RIOC staffer] Barry Cafes’s desk*. I got the first dog dirt that we had cleaned up as RIRA president. I was threatening to dump dog dirt in the RIOC office.”

Kraut is proud of the work that the RIOC Board does. “People say, *Look at all the problems. What do you mean you’re good at it?* I say, *Look at the plaza, which is completely clean, and kids playing, coming back and forth, people just living here in a clean environment with a lot of grass and trees, and if the RIOC Board in general had anything to do with that – again not just me, as a group – then, dammit, I’m*

Gallery RIVAA Mounts Vernissage XIII

review by David Stone

Every spring, the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association’s contributing artists exhibit their most recent work at *Vernissage*. This year’s exhibit is RIVAA’s thirteenth. It bristles with new art and fresh ideas.

Valeriu Boborelu, the group’s veteran abstract expressionist, introduces a brighter palette. In *Magenta* and *Yellow Beings*, his objects burn the canvas with intense reds set against yellow, blue, and green energies. His efforts to continue describing ineffable entities with increasing clarity glow with inspiration in three new works.

Maintaining the Vernissage theme with more conventional expression, Mircea Nicolescu’s photographs catch the simple pleasure of everyday activity as he captures private gestures in public settings. Some will make you smile. All bring a nod of recognition.

Adding a selection of exciting oils on canvas for the first time is Monika Stø, a Norwegian with a color-rich style dependent on the flux and flow of vibrant energies. Stø finds an abstract element in people that swells lyrically beyond physical form. In *Cold Morning*, a woman’s face warms a corner of the canvas with deepening blue hues, extending a theme in which her subjects emerge off-center, more subtle and less direct.

As if subtlety itself were a value worth celebrating with irony, abstract expressionist Ioan Popoiu introduces a big set of acrylic paintings on paper, and not just paper, but paper peeled off a sketch pad. His 16 vibrant, diverse statements dance among each other like a community reaching for cohesion. Once in a while, a face tries to emerge from the dance of colors, reminding viewers that all art is human, however abstract.

“I try to create, using modern technology, a new kind of expression of the spiritual,” declares sculptor Viorica Colapacci. Her electrified *Expanding Star* dominates a corner of the gallery as it produces an aura of intense light within a physical frame that glows outward in diminishing waves of photons. Her installation freezes quantum reality to make a point.

In *Vernissage XIII*, veteran RIVAA artists have brought new ideas to work that has long been appreciated. Never predictable, Tad Sudol steps out with *Muses – Quadriptych*, a study of four nudes drawn with conte crayon on paper. Eschewing color, Sudol’s black on tan brings a relaxed appreciation of female form.

On a foggy morning in January, Esther Piaskowski carried her camera to the tip of Roosevelt Island where, in Four Freedoms Park, she found a universe that existed once and will never return. Her four images are the essence of photographic art, of geometric rows of trees and stacks of buildings turned poetic and ephemeral in the rising river mists. Everything is softened, quieter, than it will be again.

Pastelist Georgette Sinclair adds an unusual note of humor to her artwork in *Waiting For The Guy To Go Away*. Sinclair’s pictures are always pauses that relax viewers with discovered natural compositions that bring out a solitary beauty. Here, though, her idyllic scene in Central Park is disturbed by a man who stays, oblivious to her painterly interest in his exiting. Also, working from photographs and sketches made over a string of frigid nights, Sinclair has created a quintessential Roosevelt Island scene for this winter, *Blackwell House* in an embrace of fresh snow.

One of RIVAA’s brightest new lights is Deepti Shukla, an artist who draws on the traditional styles and traditions of India. For *Vernissage XIII*, Shukla displays the broad range of her skills, offering an abstract, softened image of the Hindu god Ganesha, the patron of arts and sciences (among other attributes). Nearby, a set of coordinated tiles, *Home Decor II*, instantly captures your eye. Shukla creates her intricate designs with acrylics on canvas.

A gifted colorist, Toshiko Kitano Groner contributes a beautiful group of still lifes, but also steps ahead with pastels. In a streetscape, *Hotel Chelsea*, she gives us a sentimental image of this memorable residence for quirky characters, showing us how it separates itself from the grime of the streets. She pairs it with *On The Way To Paris*, a poetic observation from the French countryside.

Photographer Alexander Movshovich continues the trend with three related pictures that use the play of black and white to emphasize texture and composition in natural settings. With *In Motion*, he breaks the linear pattern of waves and shore to expose a small bird finding its way through a much larger universe.

Izumi Tokuno returns to the gallery with a pair of her Zen-like sea scenes. As always, her prints capture the endless, changing complexity that comes with the play of water and sun in the ocean.

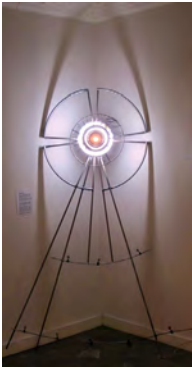
In her sunny *Happy Time*, Rachel Garrick sparkles with a Matisse-like array of colors that swirl in the company of a dancing figure whose blond hair is swept by a gentle wind across her face. This expressionist watercolor is alive with motion expressed with warmth and contentment.

Laura Hussey is an ambitious creator of large oils on canvas. In *Ayle (Garden)*, she takes us to the Mediterranean, where three women, one partly off the canvas, populate a kind of barefoot dream, their space framed by gentle mountains and deepening blue sky. In spite of its true-to-life size on the canvas, the garden feels apart, a robust dream of peace and awakening.

The black-and-white photographs of Antraniq Ghariban are a kind of visual poetry – with balance, abstraction, and symbolism all offering a commentary that encourages viewers to participate. In *USSR*, Ghariban expresses the former Soviet Union as an abandoned railcar in a perpetual midnight.

RIVAA chose well when the gallery decided to open with Radu Serban’s *iPhone Man*, a sea of rich colors that give a routine city scene more vibrancy that it has in itself. Artistically, Serban injects a warmth and grace to the composition of a man and his cellphone, isolated in an urban space of abandoned chairs and disinterested passers-by. Mounted at the entrance, it ushers visitors into a space filled with visual treats, surprises, and thoughtful gestures.

Vernissage XIII opened with a packed crowd at Gallery RIVAA on March 15. It will remain open for public viewing through Sunday, May 4, with many of the artworks available for sale. The Gallery is on the street level at 527 Main Street. It’s open from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, and 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.



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Over its 13 years, the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association has drawn more and more off-Islanders to its openings. Here, and bottom left below, part of the crowd attending the Vernissage XIII opening.



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A second group of graduates have gone through Cornell University Cooperative Education’s free course on Nutrition. It’s intended for participants of all ages from toddler through all adult ages. The idea? Make food a celebration – fun, healthy, and active.



Front row, left to right: Tashu Chodron, Jeanette Browne, Mary Coleman, Nancy Brown, Marilyn Atkins*, Virginia Granato. Back row, left to right: Barbara Parker*, Natalie Melikyan, Claire Blake, Diane Lindeman, Gloria Narduzzo, Richard Moreno (Community Educator, Cornell University Comprehensive Extension) Brenda Vaughn, Ronnye Halpern. *RISA Board members, along with Wendy Hersh, who was not present for the photo.

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NOTARY PUBLIC – 212-935-7534.

MAIN STREET THEATRE & DANCE ALLIANCE – Ongoing registration for dance and theatre classes. **212-371-4449**. Unique or period clothing & furniture gladly accepted.

RIOC Column, from page 3 starts on April 1. The Octagon Soccer Field will also be re-striped. The parks and fields are undergoing a general cleanup – grassy areas are being reseeded, plant beds will be fertilized, irrigation systems will be tested and inspected, and any debris left over from the winter will be removed.

Sportspark Classes
During the winter, many residents kept warm and stayed active with fitness and swimming classes at Sportspark. Yoga, Zumba, and Mommy & Me classes, along with free basketball and ping pong play, are a fun way to keep in shape all year round. Visit our Parks & Recreation website at rioc.recdesk.com to see a list of available programs and a class calendar. If you would like to see more programming or different classes, or if you have any questions about what is offered at the gym or pool, we welcome your feedback. You may contact us at eddie.perez@rioc.ny.gov.

In addition to the instructed classes, the Sportspark Pool is open daily for two Open Swim sessions, one in the morning and one in the evening. You can drop in to any session (resident drop-in rates are \$5), and pool memberships are available for those who would like to make swimming a part of their weekly routine. Swimming is a great low-impact exercise that improves strength and flexibility while being easy on joints. Both individual and family memberships are available. For more information on rates and the Open Swim schedule, you can visit rioc.recdesk.com, email eddie.perez@rioc.ny.gov, or call Sportspark at 212-832-4569.

RIRA Column, from page 3
president@riraonline.com, and I will connect you directly with the aforementioned chairs, who will be more than happy to recruit you to join and participate in the work of the committees. By participating in a RIRA committee, not only will you become more engaged in the Island community, and have the opportunity to really get to know your neighbors on our tiny ship in the East River, but you will also be providing an important service to the Island and to everyone who lives here.

RIRA, the Common Council, its committees, and its work are not mine or yours, but ours, as a community. Moreover, RIRA, the Common Council, and its committees cannot do this work without volunteers, like you, who understand that when a community is doing well as a whole, all of its individuals

ERRANDS: Organizing, special projects, personal assistance. You run your life, I'll run your errands. Call Vicki Feinmel, **212-223-1108** vfeinmel@verizon.net.

FOR SALE – Panasonic 25" TV & VCR. Asking \$50. Will throw in classic movie tapes. Call Matt **212-935-7534**.

Senior Center

Monday
10:00 Zumba
11:00 Computers
5:00 Brain & Body Stretch
Tuesday
10:20 Shoppers' Bus
10:30 Building Strength
11:00 Blood Pressure
1:00 Paint & Sculpt
6:00 Nutrition Workshop
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
Flea Market, Sat Mar 29, 10am-4pm. Vendors \$20/table. See Pilar Mon-Fri 10am-12noon. **New Membership Cards** starting April 1, \$12. See Rema.
Atlantic City Trip, Sat Apr 12 – Showboat Casino. See BubU or Pilar; pay \$35, receive \$20. Reservation with payment; bus leaves 9:30 a.m.

are better off. Like any investment, your return depends on how much you put in. Put a little in, and join a RIRA committee.
If you want more information or have a community concern or question that you would like to discuss, or an event for which you seek RIRA's help, please reach out via email at president@riraonline.com.

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Roosevelt Island Jewish Community

Passover Seders

Monday April 14
and
Tuesday April 15



More info to follow or contact us
212-652-5660 Nechama@RIJewish.org

SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING

Friday, March 21 at 6:43 pm
Friday, March 28 at 6:50 pm
Friday, April 4 at 6:58 pm



Blessing: Boruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sheer Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-desh.
Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.

www.RIJewish.org

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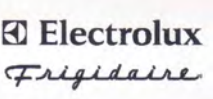
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