

The Main Street WIRE

The Main Street Children's Theatre is presenting *Peter Pan* this weekend (and the Teen Theatre presents *How to Succeed* next weekend). See *ComingUp*, page 3, and ads on pages 5 and 8.



Saturday,
May 10, 2014
34:16

RIRA Presidents Series

After Almost 20 Years, Patrick Stewart Has Clear Opinions on Island Matters

by Briana Warsing

Seated at a prime table in Trellis, with customers and staff according him the respect of a longtime resident and elder statesman, Island House resident Patrick Stewart reflects on his political life on the Island and offers up some alternatives for our current governmental structure.

Dapper in a navy blazer and collared shirt, he prefaces his recollections with the disclaimer, "It was way the hell a long time ago." For *The WIRE's* series on past Residents Association presidents, Stewart remembered his two terms in that post, and his time as a RIOC Board member and as a member of Community Board 8.

"My memories of Roosevelt Island and RIRA and RIOC focus on people, starting with Kitty [Berman, now deceased]. If Kitty got on your case, you were done. I got involved in Island House stuff first. Kitty, a marvelous person, got me involved. She could get anyone to do anything. We had a big disagreement about rents, so



she said to me, 'Come to our Island House meetings,' and I said, 'Why, because we don't agree.' 'Do me a favor,' she said, 'just come.' I did. That was the first time I paid attention to Roosevelt Island at all."

Stewart says he still consults for the Island House Task Force, "They will call and ask me to come sometimes. It's a compliment. When

people want to hear what I think, I'll mince no words and I'll tell them." He is against Island House privatization and does not think it will pass. He says, "The state is not keeping their part of the deal, at least in spirit."

RIRA

Soon after joining the Island House Task Force, Stewart was tapped by Berman to represent Island House on the Common Council, "I said, 'I am not a politician, I know nothing about it, I could care less.' She nominated me anyway. A dear woman, Kitty was. I was very fond of her."

Regarding the impetus for taking the next step and running for RIRA President, Stewart remembers, "It was Kitty again." Berman wasn't a fan of the then RIRA President

See *Stewart*, page 12

Islander's Play Focuses On Bombings in London

by Jim Baehler

The 2005 London bombings provide the backdrop for a new play by Islander Jamie Barniker. The play will have a staged reading at Gallery RIVAA next Friday, May 16 (7:30 p.m.) and Saturday, May 17 (2:30 p.m.). See *ComingUp*, page 3.

The drama is an outgrowth of Jamie's senior project at St. Francis College in Brooklyn. In an interview with *The WIRE*, he described how it all came about. "Instead of a senior thesis, I wanted to do a play. I had been involved with acting at the Main Street Theatre for many years, beginning when I was quite young, and out of that experience, I thought a play would be a better project for me than the usual thesis. I had written a previous play, *Twenty Something*, so a new play wasn't completely unknown territory.

"St. Francis College was offering a three-month program of study in London as part of our senior year. I wanted very much to go, but I didn't want to fill out the usual application. Instead, I videotaped a scene from *Twenty Something* and one scene from a play by Molière and that became my application. As it turned out, I was one of only three selected for the program. So, in the fall of 2012, I found myself studying playwriting and acting at the Florida State University School of Theatre in London. I had read about the London bombings when they occurred, and found that I

See *Barniker*, page 14



Special Soccer Match, Special Friends

by Briana Warsing

Sometimes, it is more than a game.

Last Saturday night, under the lights of the Octagon field, a group of Islanders reunited to play for their friend, Patrick Douma.

Organizer Alexandru Sinclair shared this about the game. "It was incredible to see how the Strikers community – old and new, friends, family members, kids, and the Geezers – all came together for Patrick. Our passion for soccer made this happen, but Patrick's fight against cancer was the common thread that brought us all together. There was an incredible sense of community at Octagon field that evening, and Patrick's presence inspired us to victory. I hope that we were able to lift his spirits as well! And the real victory was reaching the financial goal necessary to get him the next round of treatment."

Douma, a childhood member of the Island's Striker soccer team, is fighting cancer. His former teammates came out to show their support, presenting him with a Strikers jersey, offering words of encouragement, and taking the field together for the first time in nearly a decade. Friends, family, and spectators were clearly moved by the display of camaraderie and the feeling of community that the Island is uniquely capable of generating.

David Warren of the opposing team remarked, "It's pretty

RIRA Poised to Pick Up \$10,000 Fee from RIOC

Assuming approval when the RIOC Board of Directors meets next Thursday, the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) is about to get an infusion of \$10,000, following discussions between RIRA Vice President Sherie Helstien and RIOC President Charlene Indelicato.

RIRA's need for cash stems in part from its election, every two years, of Common Councilors who represent the various buildings or building groups on the Island. Avoiding the fuss of paper ballots means renting election machines – the old mechanical kind, at least for now – at a cost of something like \$5,000 each time. Effectively, some of that money – or of the \$7,000-plus that's now in the RIRA treasury – is already earmarked for November's balloting.

The \$10,000 fee, however, is designated as payment for services such as taking over a key job for the RIOC Board, which is the screening, selection, and sizing of Public Purpose Fund grants given to Island non-profits each year. A RIRA committee processes applications, listens to the pleas of potential grantees, and figures out how to divide up a pot of \$100,000 among organizations collectively asking for more than twice that amount. (It's a dirty job, but somebody's gotta do it.) That relieves

the unpaid RIOC Board members, and non-resident RIOC staff that has little direct familiarity with the community's social and cultural requirements, or of the necessity to undertake an extended inquiry into such needs.

In Wednesday night's RIRA Common Council meeting, a few delegates expressed concerns

Inside: Candidates for State Assmby

about the possibility that the funding would come with some obligation, but Helstien said it was fully unfettered and, as a payment for services already rendered, the RIRA Council would be accountable only to itself for use of the money. One member suggested it be treated as a rainy-day fund, after setting aside money for election machines.

The RIOC Board of Directors meets next Thursday (May 15) at 5:30 at the Manhattan Park

Goodbye...



Donnie Dione leaves our local postoffice at month's end. He's retiring after almost 42 years with the Postal Service, 22 of them at the Roosevelt Island branch.

Briefly...

- The Island is buzzing with activity this weekend and next. Now, more than ever, a look at *ComingUp* is a must (pages 3 and 8).
- Want an up-close, in-person preview of the FDR Hope Memorial sculpture destined for Southpoint Park? Sculptor Meredith Bergmann has an open-studio event next weekend (May 17-18). See *ComingUp*, page 3.



amazing that [this group of former Strikers] have not really played together in a decade or so. The bonds formed were so obviously strong, and the friendships really amazing to see. I think we all hope we have a community like that to support us through the toughest of times. I think many of us worry that we

won't. And the love and friendship I saw between Strikers was strong and true. The soccer part pales in comparison."

To organizer Marco Despero, there is power in soccer to unite, "The beautiful game [Soccer] is what brought all of us together in

See *Douma*, page 14

The Editorial Page

A Happenin’ Island

This weekend, we have an opening at Gallery RIVAA. Two different groups of charming youngsters are performing *Peter Pan*. Something wholly new, a pop-up reading room, is coming to Four Freedoms Park. An Island folksinger-songwriter is performing on Sunday. Southpoint Park is blooming. You can take an art class at Sportspark on Saturday. And the action continues into the coming week and beyond. If you want to pay an hour or two of attention to the operations of the Island, you can attend a RIOC Board of Directors meeting on Thursday at 5:30, even though much of the real action will take place in a meeting of the Board’s Operations Advisory Committee, also open to the public, at 5:30 Monday at the RIOC offices, 591 Main Street.

And on Friday and Saturday, a young playwright will get a reading, also at Gallery RIVAA (story, page 1). Next weekend, Bike New York calls the Island’s pedalers out for a festival of bikery that promises to be the beginning of a grand new tradition here. On the 17th and 18th you can visit Meredith Bergmann’s Long Island City studio and see her progress on FDR, who will eventually be rendered larger than life, in brass, and occupy an honored spot at Southpoint Park. And the venerable and megatalented Roy Eaton will meet Chopin, Joplin, and jazz on the playing field of 88 keys, courtesy of R&R music, to round out about eight days of art, action, athletics, and esthetics. It’s all in *ComingUp*, in two long entries on pages 3 and 10. It’s all happening. Here. On our Island. And in a few weeks, we’ll have the annual Roosevelt Island Day, the annual RIRA blood drive, and more of what these seasons offer us. Be a part of it.

Soccer and Girls

While we’re noting the riches presented in those two listings of Island matters, we must mention the effort to turn soccer into a leadership program for young girls. They tend to fade away from the soccer scene when their male counterparts get stronger and more clever with their feet, so the Youth Program hopes to raise \$6,500 and get a matching grant from the Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation to augment soccer for girls here on the Island – to give a chance for them to develop skills in cooperation and leadership while getting the kind of exercise that will pay off in later life.

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

Now that temperatures are stable, work is moving forward quickly on the Island’s capital projects. RIOC and its partners are also bringing more community events and classes for kids and adults to the Island. Bike New York will be hosting a Spring Kickoff Party next weekend, and registration for the next session of Mommy & Me classes is available now. To stay informed about events, classes, construction, and other Island-specific information, you can sign up for RIOC Advisories at rioc.ny.gov/advisory/body.htm.

Many thanks are due to the artists who painted murals at the 2013 Fall for Arts Festival, whose work is now on display at the Motorgate Gallery (628 Main St.). Thanks as well to all who came out to celebrate, especially to the RIVAA Gallery for curating the show and hosting attendees after the opening.

Parking Rates

Drivers are advised that beginning Monday, May 12, new rates will be in effect for existing short-term parking spaces on Main Street as well as on the East and West Roads. All parking meters will be updated with a rate of \$0.50 per 15 minutes Monday through Saturday. There will be no charge for parking on Sunday. Signs will be posted on parking meters and near all affected parking to advise drivers of time limits and the fare change. New parking rates for non-resident and daily parking

The RIOC Column

at the Motorgate Garage will also be going into effect shortly. Beginning June 1, 2014, rates for daily parking will be \$6.76 for up to one hour, with a maximum of \$20.27 per 24-hour period. Rates for cars owned by non-residents will be changed one month later on July 1. These new rates are posted at the Garage to notify patrons of the facility. If you have any questions about parking in Motorgate, you may call 212-832-4585.

Tram Elevator

The process to design and build two new elevators at the Manhattan Tram Station continues to move forward. A Request for Proposals was issued on April 28, with responses due by May 28. This RFP requires a contractor to design, build, and install two entirely new elevators and elevator shafts. The existing elevator will be replaced, and the red passenger lift currently located at the station will be replaced by a new ADA-compliant elevator. The replacement of the elevators is a high priority for us right now, and we are determined to See **RIOC Column**, page 14



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

Letters

To the Editor:

I totally agree with your excellent editorial on civility, and encourage you to exercise such editorial discretion as you see fit. As anyone who knows me or has read my book, *Why Not Utopia? A Political Platform in Search of a Party* (shameless plug), I have long despaired about our species’ propensity for everything from sheer stupidity to vitriol. Clearly, some of the letters you have published fall into those categories. What really bothers me is that if people on Roosevelt Island, who share reasonably similar economic circumstances and reasonably similar cultural values, can make mountains out of molehills, how on earth we can expect Palestinians/Jews, Ukrainians/Russians, Indians/Pakistanis, secular Afghans/Taliban, developed societies/emerging societies, rich/ poor – not to mention men/women – ever to resolve their disputes civilly? As someone who thinks *The WIRE* makes an invaluable contribution to the quality of life on Roosevelt Island, I will greatly appreciate anything you can do to turn down the volume of *ad hominem* attacks.

Jack Moscou

To RIOC:

Hi, RIOC, are you listening? A year or two ago, I proposed a simple system to cool the Tram cabins in summer: As the Tram pulls into and out of the dock, it would be automatically sprinkled with cool water. As my proposal was received with a deafening silence, I now propose an experiment to test the feasibility of the concept at no cost to RIOC, gratis, *free!* I will pick up any incidental costs. I place a thermometer in each cabin near the operator. I stand in one station and spray the north cabin with a hose as it docks and departs. I bully a friend into doing the same to the cabin at the other station.

We ask the operator to write down a reading every 15 minutes. After two hours, we compare the thermometer readings. If required, we buy the operator a beer when off duty. What do you think, RIOC? Are you game?

Sheldon Brooks

To the Editor:

Now that many Roosevelt Islanders will soon have the ability to sell their apartments, from the seller’s prospective, one of the most important and often overlooked aspects of the real estate deal is deciding who to go to contract with – and to avoid going to contract with a buyer who is unable to consummate the purchase. This can happen for a number of reasons, such as the buyer being unable to sell his home, or having a mortgage application declined. A buyer may ask for a mortgage contingency clause, which will let him get off the hook and ask for return of a down payment. Pre-qualification is important to avoid wasting weeks or months waiting for a mortgage to be in place. This can put your own plans on hold, or stand in the way of your plans to buy a new home. The moral of this story is to look very closely at the qualifications of anyone wishing to purchase your home. There are several ways to gain some assurance that your buyers are qualified. Sometimes the buyers will present some sort of a prequalification letter from a mortgage broker or bank. While a prequalification gives some assurance, nothing beats the buyer receiving a commitment letter from a lending institution. At the very least, you should make sure that you find out what the buyer’s credit score is, and see that they have enough assets and income to close on your sale. It’s probably best to seek the counsel of a knowledgeable mortgage broker and/or real estate professional.

Sy Williams

**Letters deadline
for May 24 issue:
Tuesday, May 20, 5pm**

To the Editor:

I appreciate being included in *The WIRE*’s April 26 article on the Island’s changing real estate scene. Many Islanders are new to selling their homes, just as many buyers are new to the idea of living on Roosevelt Island. As a 37-year resident, I feel I have a good handle on the Island’s many selling points. As a Corcoran Associate, I also have access to a good stream of buyers. After 13 years helping clients market their apartments, including four years involving Island apartments, I can’t emphasize too strongly the importance of making the best first impression – on the web and in person. My pre-real estate experience as a marketing executive with J.P. Stevens and WestPoint Pepperell taught me that it’s important for potential buyers to be able to imagine themselves in the living space. Ideally, they should see a seller’s apartment as a nearly blank canvas on which images of their own home can take shape. A good agent can guide sellers on this, or connect them with a skilled stager who knows how to ensure this effect. Updating a kitchen and bathrooms in “original” condition is helpful. It goes without saying that fresh painting, refinishing floors if needed, decluttering, depersonalizing, and doing a thorough cleaning will all go a long way toward creating that great first impression. Market studies demonstrate repeatedly that these and other refinements, especially when coupled with the pricing/showing/selling experience of a licensed broker, consistently produce sales figures some 15-20% higher, with faster turnaround, than units marketed by their owners. Finally, experienced guidance on initial pricing is a key to making a sale within the first dozen showings, and to avoid wasting the initial wave of interest.

Suzanne Wolf

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 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 and, if you receive none, resend and call 212-826-9056 to alert us. Alternatives: Typed copy left at 531 Main Street (allow extra time for typesetting); clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief. We are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters are subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content, in the judgment of the editors, merits the required space.

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

Main Street Children’s Theatre presents *Peter Pan*, **Fri May 9** 8pm, **Sat May 10** 2pm & 8pm, **Sun May 11** 2pm & 7pm, **Mon May 12** 7pm, Good Shepherd Center. (Ad, page 5.)

Subway Diversion – No direct service from Manhattan to the Island **Fri May 9** 9:45pm to **Mon May 12** 5am.

Mommy and Me Water Safety Classes – online registration now open at rioc.recdesk.com, call 212-832-4569, or email EddiePerez@rioc.ny.gov. Classes set for **Sun** and **Wed** mornings, May 18-July 9.

The Uni Project pop-up portable reading room comes to Four Freedoms Park, **Sat-Sun May 10-11** 12noon-5pm.

Opening Reception for *Moment in Time*, a solo exhibition by Ioan Popoiu, **Sat May 10** 6-9pm, Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm. Through Jun 15.

Islander Emily Mure, folksinger-songwriter, performs in *New Voices, New Sounds*, **Sun May 11** 4-6pm, Gallery RIVAA. \$8 donation. Info: tinyurl.com/RIVAA0511.



— Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events —

See separate listing, page 10.

— The Next Two Weeks —

RIOC Board Operations Advisory Committee meets, **Mon May 12** 5:30pm, RIOC office, 591 Main St. Items include Fourth of July Fireworks, various contracts (including elevator service). Open to public.

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

RIOC Board of Directors meets, **Thu May 15** 5:30pm, Manhattan Park Community Center, 8 River Rd. Items include funds to RIRA. Open to public. Public comment period at 5:30 precedes start of meeting.

Women’s Movie Group presents *Watermarks*, **Thu May 15** 7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Reunion of Jewish women in their 80’s, recalling Nazi invasion of 1933. Donation \$7. RSVP RlwomenMovie@gmail.com.



Application Deadline for Youth Program Summer Camp, Fri May 16. (See story, page 10.)

Main Street Teen Theatre presents *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, **Fri-Sun May 16-18.** (Ad, page 8.)



Mind the Gap, staged reading of a new play by Islander James Barniker, produced by Amy Ambrosino and directed by Nancy Howe, **Fri May 16** 7:30pm and **Sat May 17** 2:30PM, Gallery RIVAA. Free. (Story, page 1.)

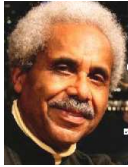
Matchmaker 5K Run/Walk to benefit the Icla da Silva Foundation, **Sat May 17** 9am (registration) to 12noon, Firefighters Field. Information: thematchmaker5k.org.

Bike New York Spring Kick-Off Party, Sat May 17, 11am-4pm, Capobianco Field basketball court (north of 580 Main St.). Learn-to-Ride for Kids, bike mechanic pop-up shop, face-painting, prizes, food, bike decoration. (Story, page 10.)

Meredith Bergmann, creator of the Island’s **FDR Hope Memorial** sculpture (see story online at MainStreetWIRE.com or at tinyurl.com/BergmannLIC) participates in the **Long Island City Arts Open** festival (LICartsOpen.org) with an open studio, **Sat-Sun May 17-18** 12noon-6pm, 538 47th Rd., Long Island City. Free.

R&R Concerts presents Islander **Roy Eaton**, pianist, performing selections in *Chopin Meets Joplin Meets Jazz*, **Sat May 17** 7:30pm, Good Shepherd Center. Free.

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.



— Future Weeks —

Deadline for Girls’ Soccer Team Contributions to get a \$6,500 matching grant from the Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation, **Fri May 23.** See dsg.cm/0067 for details. (Story, page 10; ad, page 13.)

The Main Street WIRE– **Sat May 24.** Advertising deadlines: Display ads, **Wed May 14**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue May 20**; 5,500 copies due **Thu May 22.** Future issues: 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.



13th Annual RIRA Blood Drive, Sat signup starting **May 31**, through **Jun 21**, at Farmer’s Market. (See RIRA Column, this page, for details.)

First Sunday Jazz Salon, Sun Jun 1 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation; refreshments.

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

Sunset Garden Party at Four Freedoms Park, Tue Jun 10 5-8pm. Music by Peter Duchin Orchestra. \$250-up. Info: tinyurl.com/FDRssg061014.

Bike New York Painting Party, Sat Jun 14 time to be announced. To sign up, contact cgoodspeed@bikenewyork.org. More details to come.

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

Roosevelt Island Day and Blood Drive, Sat Jun 21.

Summer Movie Series shows *Frozen* **Sat Jun 28** sundown, Southpoint Park. **Summer Movie Series** shows *The Dark World*, **Fri Jul 11** sundown, Southpoint Park.

Summer Movie Series shows *The Avengers*, **Sat Jul 12** sundown, Southpoint Park.

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.

Flowers are blooming, the sun is rising earlier and setting later, kids abound in our playgrounds and all other available outdoor spaces, neighbors whom we have not seen for months without layers of jackets and scarves are now leisurely strolling around, and a general buzz of excitement and happiness is in the air. It’s finally springtime on our little ship in the East River, and Roosevelt Island is coming alive again.

As we throw off the doldrums of winter and recharge ourselves with the warmth of spring and, eventually, summer, each and every one of us should use this time also to renew the fabric of our community and the ties that bind us to one another and to this Island. Many of you have heeded my call to be more active in RIRA, to lend your talents, passions, and expertise, and to join one or more of RIRA’s many committees. Still interested in joining a committee or otherwise becoming more involved? I invite you to contact me at president@riraonline.com for information on how best to maximize your talents and involvement in RIRA and its many works. Moreover, this fall, the election for seats to the RIRA Common Council will be held, and the spring and summer offer a perfect opportunity for reaching out to past and present Common Council members and officers to explore whether representing your district, your community, is for you. Feel free to contact me or your present RIRA representatives for more information.

Another way to participate in renewing the fabric of our community is to be a donor in the 13th annual RIRA Blood Drive, which benefits the New York Blood Center. RIRA volunteers will be manning a donor sign-up table at the Farmer’s Market for four consecutive Saturdays beginning May 31, to sign up any and all who wish to participate. The Blood Drive will culminate with the actual donations on June 21, during the annual Roosevelt Island Day festivities. If you are able, please sign up to donate. You could save a life. And, as an incentive to those who may need a little persuasion to give, Scott Bobo of our own Main Street Sweets Shop has very kindly offered, with the presentation of your donor pledge card, a “two-scoops for the price of one” offer.

The renewal of our community continues on June 21 when the RIRA Common Council, through its Social, Cultural and Educational Services Committee chaired by Julie Palermo, will be hosting RIRA’s annual breakfast on Roosevelt Island Day. In addition to attending and visiting the many booths and activities

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.

As the Cornell Tech population continues to grow – we’ll have approximately 100 students on our temporary campus this fall – we are establishing ways to become an active part of the Roosevelt Island community. I hope that Islanders are beginning to see more and more of us around town, doing community service projects, meeting with community organizations, and just talking to Islanders about our campus.

I was pleased to be part of a team of Cornell Tech participants in the Relay for Life event at The Octagon on April 26. Relay for Life is the signature fundraising event for the American Cancer Society, and our team of Cornell Tech students, administrators, and faculty (and even two Cornell Tech children) walked the track for this worthy cause. Our next community service opportunity will be Roosevelt Island Day on June 21, so please look for all of the people in Cornell Tech t-shirts along with our Cornell family partners, Weill Cornell Medical College and Cornell Cooperative Extension. There will be interesting demonstrations, a raffle, and helpful information for you and your family, so don’t miss it!

We also continue to keep the Island up to speed on how our academic program and construction projects are evolving. On April 28, the latest quarterly meeting of the Construction and Community Task Force was held. We were joined on the Island by Adam Schwartz, Director of the Jacobs Technion-Cornell Innovation Institute. The Jacobs Institute is the part of Cornell Tech that is a partnership between the two universities, which will offer dual degrees from Cornell and Technion beginning this fall. Adam joined the Institute from the Technion earlier this year, where he is a professor in the department of electrical engineering. He shared our vision for the Institute as a place for experimentation and innovation, and answered questions from Islanders in attendance. Diane Levitt, Cornell Tech’s new Director for K12 Education, will present

The RIRA Column

of Roosevelt Island Day, be sure to come by the RIRA table, say hello to your neighbors, and have a bagel, juice, and coffee on us!

Speaking of renewal, and investing in our community, many thanks must be given to those in the TV and film industry who come to our Island and, understanding the inconvenience to Island residents that their presence sometimes causes, continue to donate time, services, and funds to the Island and its community organizations, including RIRA.

Lastly, as the bright days of spring will turn to the dog days of summer, we were delighted to hear that the City’s annual Fourth of July celebration will be returning to the East River. For many, many years, watching the fireworks was a tradition here on Roosevelt Island, with the area south of the Queensboro Bridge as prime space for our community to come together and celebrate as one. The news of the return of the show to the East River brings hope that this Roosevelt Island tradition will also return. But the Island south of the Queensboro Bridge is now a much, much different place than it once was when the fireworks were last over the East River, when there were grassy knolls where families and friends could come together on blankets to view the show. RIRA and I can only hope that both RIOC and the foundation that operates the FDR Four Freedoms Park will recognize the significance of the return of the fireworks to the East River, and capitalize on providing an opportunity for this little Island to come together once again during the summer and create the memories for our children that so many on the Island have enjoyed.

Happy Spring!

P.S. To all those who are mothers in our little community, whether a mother, grandmother, aunt, or sister to someone, whether that someone be a pet or son or daughter, grandson or granddaughter, niece or nephew, or brother or sister, a heartfelt and much deserved Happy Mother’s Day from the Common Council to each of you. May this day be one of rest, gentle reflection, and appreciation.



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

at our next task force meeting on July 28.

Under the leadership of Jane Swanson, Cornell Tech’s Assistant Director of government and community relations, we are also working closely with Cornell Cooperative Extension’s New York City Programs to bring exciting programming to the Island. CUCE-NYC has already been holding free health and nutrition courses at the Senior Center, complete with food preparation demonstrations. This program has been brought back twice by popular demand.

Looking just beyond the Island, we are also partnering with Queens organizations to ensure that our campus – and Roosevelt Island – will truly become the center of a vibrant City-wide tech sector. In April, we met with leadership of the Queens Chamber of Commerce, Queens Economic Development Corporation, and the Coalition for Queens to discuss how we can work together to encourage more tech companies to locate in Queens, in addition to the industry growth that we expect to occur directly on the Cornell Tech campus. To that end, at the last task force meeting, the group chose to add a representative from the Queens Borough President’s Office to further integrate Queens into the process.

Finally, as many of you may have noticed, the demolition project on the site is well under way. The barging is going very well. Thus far, we have removed about 1,000 tons of debris from the site – 100% of which has left by barge! Please continue to sign up for construction updates, and visit our website at construction.tech.cornell.edu for the latest information on the project.



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

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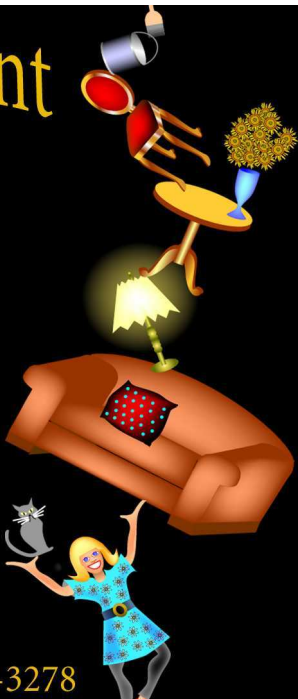
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A Musical Based on the Play by
SIR J. M. BARRIE
Lyrics By
CAROLYN LEIGH
Additional Lyrics By
BETTY COMDEN and ADOLPH GREEN
Music By
MORRIS (MOOSE) CHARLAP
Additional Music By
JULE STYNE
Originally directed, choreographed
and adapted by
JEROME ROBBINS

Friday Evening
Saturday Matinee
Sunday Evening

Delilah Belmont
Adrian Chabla
Bryan Cusick
Haesu Dawkins
Renee Dickey
Noah Johnston
Elena Jordan
Kelsey Long
Marcus Lopez
Dylan Marfey
Kiran Narine
Nemanja Prokic
Juliette Sakmar
Jacob Tannen
Jake Towey
Darnell Wilkins-
Payne

Director/Musical Director
Choreographer
NOEL CAREY

Assistant Directors
AYA HAYASHI
NATHANIEL TAYLOR-LEACH

Saturday Evening
Sunday Matinee
Monday Evening

Anika Amin
Delilah Belmont
Georgia Bobo
Emilia Brown
Bryan Cusick
Haesu Dawkins
Lola Gimenez
Sally Goldberg
Loulé Long
Dylan Marfey
Kiran Narine
Nemanja Prokic
Olivia Schaefer
Jacob Tannen
Isabel Torkornoo
Jake Towey
Darnell Wilkins-
Payne

Fri. **May 9** 8:00 pm
Sat. **May 10** 2:00 pm & 8:00 pm
Sun. **May 11** 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm
Mon. **May 12** 7:00 pm

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Sterling Nyx
Michael Tang
Wilson Wong



Director
Nathaniel Taylor-Leach

Asistant Director
Aya Esther Hayashi

Music Director
Noel Carey

Choreography
Nathaniel Taylor-Leach
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12 and 14



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COMING UP

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

ART EXHIBITS

Spring. RIVAA members group exhibition, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St. **Daily** 9am-9pm. Extended through Sun Jun 1.
Moment in Time, a solo exhibition by Ioan Popoiu, Gallery RIVAA, through Jun 15. **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open **daily** 6am-10pm.
FDR Four Freedoms Park open **daily** 9am-7pm.
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. 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 **May 18**, ends wk of Jul 6), Sportspark. (Make-up classes week of Jul 13.) Drop-in rate \$7. Info: Eddie.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.

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 18)

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 Senator 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.

OTHER

Knitting & Crocheting Circle (adults), **Thu** 11:30am, Library. Info: nypl.org.
Food Box Orders for Helping Families Help Themselves, ordering period **1st-11th of month**. Menu online at joinfoodbox.com. Info 347-985-7540; pickup period at 546 Main St. **15th of month**.

Events, regular and otherwise?

Send your organization’s information to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net.

Youth Program Wants to Win Grant for Girls Soccer Team

Marking its 35th anniversary, the Roosevelt Island Youth Program is kicking off a fund-raising effort to start a Girls’ Soccer Team.

If the goal of \$6,500 is met, it will be matched through the Sports Matter program of the Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation.

According to Adib Mansour, who has run the Island’s youth soccer program in the past and is now expanding his contribution to the Youth Program, a soccer team specifically for girls is intended to overcome the reluctance of the Island’s young females to participate in the Senior division of the program.

Mansour, who is tackling the project with the help of Coaches Across America, says the reluctance arises for a number of reasons, including boys becoming more powerful and aggressive at the Senior level, peer pressure, and overall social pressure that makes young women hesitant to compete with young men.

“All our interactions with the girls have told us that if they have specialized skill training and are allowed to form age-appropriate teams, they will be able to improve their level of play and become friends with more of their female peers. This will allow them to participate at a higher skill-level and

become more game-savvy, which will help to keep them playing in our other divisions.” In August, Coaches Across America will supply an experienced female coach to help out.

The project’s acronym, GIRLS, stands for *Great Inspiration Role Model’s Leadership through Soccer*. “It is our attempt to promote female leadership, healthy habits, and social well-being through soccer,” says Mansour.

Soccer is a runaway hit on Roosevelt Island. There’s a program for youth aged 5 to 15, split into three seasons – a competitive recreational league (300 participants and 60 volunteers), an indoor winter program (90 players, 12 volunteers), and a spring intramural program (120 youth, 16 volunteers).

“This past year, our Minors (ages 7-8) and Juniors (9-10) divisions were made up of 42% girls,” says Mansour, identifying the number as 18% higher than past years. “But past history has shown that only 10% of those girls will continue to play in our older Senior division. We hope that having girls play in both our co-ed program and on all-girl teams will solve this problem.”

To contribute, go online to dsg.com/0067 or contact the Youth Center.

Bike New York Starts Intense Island Program Next Weekend

Bike New York wants you to bike New York. And to learn how to do it confidently in the City.

The organization is holding a Spring Kickoff Party on the Island next weekend – Saturday, May 17, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Capobianco Field basketball court (between Roosevelt Landings and the traffic helix). It’s free, described by Bike New York as a “family-friendly community event that will celebrate the start of the bicycling season.” (The rain date is Sunday, May 18.)

Theft Protection

At the event, Islanders can get their bikes tagged against theft or loss. MyAssetTag.com will provide a free bike registration service – a system that has found success on college campuses. Residents enter bike-return information into a secure system. When the Public Safety Department finds a stray bike, a quick scan of the QR code on the sticker can provide a happy reunion with the owner.

Activities

The party plan for Saturday includes a Learn-to-Ride class for kids, a pop-up bike shop, ice cream from Main Street Sweets, face-painting, bike-decorating, a bike tour around the Island, and – as the man said – “much, much more.”

Caitlin Goodspeed, who serves Roosevelt Island as Bike New York’s Outreach Manager, is also looking for suggestions for off-Island summer rides – mini-adventures with pit stops along the way. She says rides will vary in length and difficulty, “but we’ll make sure to organize something for everyone.” She adds, “If you have an idea for a fun route, send it to me at CGoodspeed@bikenewyork.org.

The organization also plans an every-weekend pop-up bike shop to help with basic repairs and tune-ups – all of it free. The basketball court at Capobianco Field will be its weekend headquarters.

For beginner adults, Bike New York will have Learn-to-Ride classes every Tuesday at Sportspark. For those who don’t yet own a bicycle, one will be provided for the session.

The complete class schedule is online at www.BikeNewYork.org.



Youth Program Reformatting Summer Camp: Arts & Sports

The Island’s youth campers are about to get a new concept, according to the Roosevelt Island Youth Program. To mark RIYP’s 35th anniversary, this year’s camp will pay tribute to world cultures with a choice of two areas:

- **WorldCup/Sports:** The program will cover different sports from different cultures, such as Korean hacky-sack, basketball shootout competition, soccer tournaments, bicycling, yoga, and more.

- **LivingArt/Performance & Visual Arts:** This will emphasize performing and visual arts – with art history, in which campers will discuss and learn about famous paintings from the masters from the Renaissance to modern art – as well as dance and vocals, comedy improvisation, cooking, and more.

All the campers will join in common activities such as swimming and reading clubs. Every Thursday, they’ll take trips around the City based on their electives. For example, the arts campers will take trips to consulates, cultural centers, museums, and exhibits. The sports campers will attend baseball games and visit sports-related exhibits.

The Summer Camp program includes breakfast, lunch, and healthy snacks. Counselors are trained, and instructors are specialists in their fields, according to program organizer Adib Mansour. All students must complete an application by May 16 before being registered as enrolled. The staff will review application forms with the parent or guardian and participant, to ensure that they understand the contents thoroughly, and that the forms are filled out completely and signed in the appropriate places.

Application packets are available now, and include consent forms, evaluation forms, a health record, and current physical exam.

There is already a waiting list for kindergarten, first, and second grades.

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program, founded in 1979, has programs in all six of the City’s Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Core Service Areas, including academic enhancement, life skills, career awareness and school-to-work transition, civic engagement and community building, recreation, health and fitness, and culture and art).



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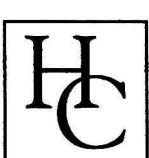


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Stewart, from page 1
(Nneka, now Sharon, Pope), and thought Stewart could do a better job.

In that role, “My main job was getting rid of [then RIOC President Dr. Jerome] Blue. That was my agenda. And we may have had a hand in getting rid of him. Democracy, quite frankly, was my other goal. We were not only not represented anywhere; all of the people [in government] whose policies affected the Island, who did pretty good jobs in their own places, did not do so here.

“I thought we needed representation – enough clout to be heard. If you’re on the Upper East Side, the Governor is going to listen to you. If you’re on Roosevelt Island, hell, no, they could care less. I did – and still do – think that every American should have his voice, and that voice should be heard all the way to the top. It’s not real-world stuff, unfortunately. But that’s how I feel.”

Stewart waxes nostalgic about the old days. “RIRA in those days was a different place. It was a lot better. It was a different community to begin with. People were more community-oriented in those days than they are now. There are fewer people who raise hell than there used to be. Very few people anymore will speak up. A lot of us are damned tired of it, because it ain’t going to change. I like RIRA. I liked the job as President. I thought I could win some influence beyond where the good people were. I liked the job on RIRA because I had something to do. I got press, which I liked because it made me think I might get listened to.”

He continues, “RIRA was a good experience for me because the core of the community was there – powerless, but *there*. As good as our State and City representatives were, and so on, they were influenced by politics. They did their damndest, they tried.”

One politician Stewart mentions by name is Jessica Lappin. “I love her. I didn’t like her at first. I said to her, ‘I am not sure you’re going to do us any good.’ She said, ‘You can be sure of one thing, I will try.’ That’s why she’s really good. Look back on her record. She’s got some very plausible things she’s done. And she’s damn good-looking to boot, not that that means anything.”

After his second term as RIRA President, Stewart ran again but lost to Matthew Katz. At the time, there was a lot of rancor between the two, and Stewart did not agree with how Katz ran his campaign, notably how much money he spent on it. He said, “Before, everyone had stuck closely to what we were allowed to spend.” That being said, Stewart is quick to distinguish between how much money Katz may have spent on his campaign and his capabilities.

Of Katz, Stewart says, “Matt Katz, whom I like, is a politician and he did a hell of a job. He knows to whom to go, how to do it, and he keeps the peace. All things considered, Matt did a pretty good job – better than I would have, under the circumstances.”

Stewart is optimistic about RIRA now that it is in President Jeffrey Escobar’s hands. He says, “RIRA is much better now. Escobar is also a CB8 member. He’s a lawyer, he’s soft-spoken, and he gets things done. His ideas, and so on, are right. He gets things right on the Community Board, too.”

Of current RIRA danger, Stewart warns, “Frank Farance – that’s what’s happening to RIRA. I hope that [President Escobar] will change it and handle Frank and his flunkies. I’ve never gotten along with [Farance] at all. The only thing I like about him are his twins. He has red-headed twins and they’re adorable, and he’s very diligent in their care.”

Concurrent with Stewart’s run for RIRA President was his membership on Community Board 8. “There I am, running for President, and somebody thought I should go for the Community Board. I checked with my wife and she said, ‘It’ll do you good.’ I still have resentment [about that],” he says, laughing. “When I was asked to join CB8, I thought, *Oh, no, another one*. And I believe that’s why I got on there. I had gotten a lot of press and I was very contentious, and I guess the Community Board liked it. We had good public representatives.”

CB8

Membership on Community Board 8 turned out to be a good thing for Stewart. He recalls, “The Community Board was probably the best job I ever had in my life. It’s composed of 50 people from 59th Street to 110th Street, from the museums to the river. I think if there were not a Community Board, we’d be in a lot of trouble. There are a lot of lawyers in this, for good and bad – mostly good. [CB8] gets into housing, street cleaning... every damn thing that happens in the area. They don’t have any political bent. If a person is political, they keep it to themselves. So there are really no powerful interests, so to speak, over there. I may have been the first Roosevelt Islander to be on that committee.”

Stewart, who is now 81, left CB8 only recently. Explaining, he says, “I am getting old and my memory isn’t what I’d like it to be.”

According to Stewart, the RIOC Board was a different story entirely. “The RIOC Board, for the most part, is 100% politics. That was horrendous. Everybody is watching their back. How you got on that was by government appointment. I don’t know the reason I got put on the RIOC Board but I think it was because I was creating so much trouble that the politicians thought, *Let’s get him off the street. If we make him a member of the Board, maybe he’ll end up thinking like us*. Well, I didn’t. It was hard on my stomach, I must say. You know who’s the lackey and who’s not. It’s hard on your gut to figure out who’s working together.”

Blue

About Dr. Jerome Blue, the RIOC president at the time, Stewart says, “As for Jerry Blue, poor guy, he was his own worst enemy. He was just in the wrong job. He just didn’t know what to do. I felt bad for him. He didn’t have the foggiest idea about a place like Roosevelt Island.” But, Stewart maintains, that is one of the problems with Roosevelt Island. He uses an Army saying, “You screw up and you go up,” to explain why he believes such unsuitable people are often tapped for RIOC President. He says that, “Low-end politicians do not and will not advocate on behalf of Roosevelt Island.”

Despite having the RIOC office on the Island, which should have helped, Stewart says, “If you knocked on the door, nobody gave a damn. Jerry Blue locked me out! He was a political appointee, as most RIOC [personnel] are. There are very few who are not political.”

Of RIOC presidents, Stewart generalizes, “They are the lowest, the most subservient, owe the most debt to somebody. There have been a couple of good ones. But what are they to do? They are political appointees. You are restricted in what you can do and can’t do. You’re dependent on the State for money. And anyway, it ends up being what the governor wants, not what we [Island residents] want. The whole damn thing is a great charade. Politics is. When I think back on it, I wonder, *Why the hell did you do that? Would there possibly have been a better way to do it?*”

David Kraut is someone on the RIOC Board that Stewart admires. He says, “I think the way Kraut deals with it is pretty good. He has sufficient ego and he deserves it. Kraut will die on that Board.”

As for how RIOC and RIRA should work together, Stewart says, “The State thinks, *Let’s keep RIOC and RIRA apart*. When you’re on the RIOC Board, 99-100% of the people are friends of Albany. The only one I can think of who was not that way is Kraut. Kraut’s a piece of work. I am very fond of him. He is a damned good politician. He really is. And he is honest as the day is long. Unlike me, he knows when to keep his mouth shut. That’s probably why he’s been there so long. David is contentious as hell. His attitude is, *I know this; I’m telling you, now you know it*, which I like. He is probably my best friend from a Board point of view.”

Stewart liked former RIOC President Steve Shane, too. “Supposedly it was the Board that put him out. It was the first time a Board had done that. [Shane] did whatever he wanted to. The Board didn’t like that. He was of the people, really, so I got along with him right away. I didn’t know or care about politics. I didn’t know who was beholden to whom. Steve did what he thought was the right thing, and he did it for and on behalf of the people. It’s damn sad. This Island got much better under him. When he was fired, I couldn’t believe it. I said to myself, *What do you expect, the guy’s doing a good job, you get rid of him*. I really loved him, still do. Someone in one of the meetings asked him how he got to be President of RIOC. He said, ‘There was an ad in the paper and I applied.’ I think it probably was true. Everything he said, I believed.

“When I think about all of that stuff, I try to be calm.”

As for his own political leanings, Stewart confesses, “I came in pure as can be, politically.” He explains, “In my political life, which isn’t political at all, I started out as a Roosevelt Democrat. Then I switched over to the Republicans. Not Republicans like we have now. Now I’m Independent, and have been for some time.”

He attributes this to his background, explaining, “When I think about it, I had the best schooling anyone could have. I had powerful grandfathers who did the right thing and not the moneymaking thing. I’ve seen the worst and I’ve seen the best, with not a lot of pull on me to do either one.”

Military Background

Stewart grew up wanting to be a soldier, and went to Virginia Military Institute. “I had a time in the military. I was a legacy to Yale. My brother went to University of Virginia. My mother wanted both of us to go to Yale. I really wanted to be a soldier. So, my poor mother was very upset that neither one of her boys would go to Yale. But she was the kind of person who would say, *You know why I want you to go to Yale and I know why you don’t, so I am not going to take it to bed with me and neither should you*.”

He wanted to be a soldier because, “There are a lot of really extraordinary people who are soldiers. You’ll never know about them and probably never heard of them. There

is something about the military and the organization and the honor involved that struck me as a good thing.”

When it comes to a military background in politics, the result is mixed, Stewart says. “Military is good background for [politics]. It’s also bad background for it, because you’re not a politician. As an accountable person, you say what you think and that’s that, which doesn’t lend itself to politics.”

Four Freedoms Park

Stewart has strong opinions about Four Freedoms Park. He calls it, “Another charade, bunch of baloney.” Stewart says President Franklin Roosevelt said, “I do not want a memorial to me. Period. Anyone who builds a memorial to me, I don’t want it to be bigger than the size of a desk.”

He recalls the conflict on the Island regarding the park. “You should have seen the battles going on then. They were well intentioned, but Roosevelt was the reason I was a Democrat, and he was a good friend of my grandfather’s. Calling the Island *Roosevelt Island* was appropriate, and I am sure he would have been happy with that. But the ‘Friends of President Roosevelt’ are no more friends of his than I am. We had a committee for the park and they did all of the real work for it. And then along come these dopes who no more represented Roosevelt than I did. The idea was, *This is a park primarily for children, next for disabled*. That’s what [the Island committee] wanted. So these engineer guys followed that to a tee and designed a great park. And along come these dopes and there were people who were obviously for it and [others] obviously not for it. If you’re going to have to do it [develop that space], kids are at the top. And again, I don’t know and don’t care where the money came from. Mr. Roosevelt would not be happy, for damn sure. And, by the way, there is a desk with him behind it, and it’s at a Post Office in D.C.”

Governmental Structure

Stewart has struggled in his relationship with the Island. He sums it up by example. “Eastwood – that’s the State of New York, right there. It was put into place to help people in need. When [Eastwood went private], it was a real blow to the spirit of Roosevelt Island. Only [David] Kraut and I voted against it. I thought to myself, aside from money, it makes no sense to do it.” He thinks the biggest future issue the Island will face is [lack of] affordable housing.

“This place is not legal,” he says. “The reason it’s not legal is that we are run by the State of New York. I don’t know of any community except Washington [D.C.] that is run that way. Therefore, you have a conflict in that situation. As I said, I was probably put on the RIOC Board to shut me up. I hadn’t formed these opinions yet, but I was starting to form them, and I was very vocal.

“We are a little community run by the State of New York, pure and simple. Think about it: We have two different police precincts; one is in Manhattan; one is in Queens. How is that? The idea of having a little community being run by a State? That’s not right. It’s not constitutional. So, Roosevelt Island ends up being involved in something that the governor wants, not what we want. And then there are all of the lackeys that are involved in that political milieu. So, I started to feel like a prisoner here. I saw a lot of stuff going on that just wasn’t right.

“I’ve been blessed with knowing some of the best people I’ve ever met, and some of the worst, right here. And that’s because we don’t have a democracy.”

Islanders

Judy Berdy is one of the people Stewart sees as good for the Island. “Judy Berdy is by nature difficult, and that is what I like about her.” He cites her achievement in getting the Visitor Kiosk on the Island’s Tramway Plaza as the kind of stuff that Berdy gets done. “Most people would say, *What the hell do we need that kiosk for?* [But] psychologically, it’s a good thing. Judy is a good thing.”

Of his wife, Karen Stewart, Patrick Stewart says, “Karen was a ‘pioneer.’ She was one of the first tenants of the Island. She’s very unlike me. She’s stubborn as hell, she’s sort of an absolute person. She’s a damn good friend. She is anti-political, except she likes Frank [Farance]. So we don’t talk about that. I said to her, ‘I can’t imagine you liking that guy. I am not going to say anything more about this.’ And she said, ‘I would appreciate that very much.’ So, it’s been a standoff. You don’t get that kind of stimulation from anyone that’s not like her. Believe it or not, she’s kind of shy, she works from the back room. She wrote all of my [RIRA President’s] columns for *The WIRE*, for example.”

Fixing Things

As for how to streamline Island governance, he suggests, “First off, the City should own and operate the Island, not the State. I think we should be part of Manhattan, for no other reason than Manhattan is listened to more closely than Queens. We absolutely need a citizen-representative situation. [As things are] now, we have a dictatorship. My ideal is a community built for the reasons this place was actually built – mixed income, places for kids, parks.

“The money has been misspent for bloody ever. This is the most inefficient thing that could happen in one’s imagination. Sell [the Island] to a big realtor and have him sign an agreement about how he’ll run it, but you’ll never find that person. So now we have real estate people, we have the State; we have the City, and that is not the way to do it. What I’d like to see is how it was when it first began. It kept up with society and had better and more services then.”

Thinking on it further, he suggests, “Maybe the best thing to have here is a benevolent king.”

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Cornell’s Jacobs Institute to Be “A Sandbox for New Things”

by Briana Warsing

The vision for the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Cornell-Technion Innovation Institute (The Jacobs Institute) was officially unveiled on Tuesday at Google’s New York headquarters, where Cornell-Tech has located temporarily. A panel described plans and objectives.

“On graduation day, students should be able to launch a product into the world,” said Mor Naaman, whose Associate Professorship is in Connective Media. The idea is to provide solutions to societal needs and, while doing so, to have an impact on the New York City economy.

The Jacobs Institute is to be a home for experimentation at Cornell Tech – unique in that it is part of Cornell-Tech when it is beneficial, explained Adam Schwartz, Director of the Institute, who is also the Julius M. and Bernice Naiman Professor in Electrical Engineering at Technion in Israel. He illustrated the relationship between Cornell-Technion and The Jacobs Institute using a Venn diagram.

The Jacobs Institute is to be separate from Cornell Tech at times in its different intellectual property model. Schwartz calls The Jacobs Institute a “sandbox for new things.” Naaman underscored that by explaining that they are “reinventing graduate education so graduates can immediately do something.”

Instead of traditional degree programs, the Institute has ‘hubs’ – currently, three:

- The Runway Postdoctoral Program, launched in February of this year. It provides recent Ph.D.’s with the opportunity to draw on their research knowledge to launch new ventures.
 - An M.S. degree in Information Systems in Connective Media is next up, starting in the fall of this year. This program is designed to educate students in understanding the psychological, social, and business forces at play in today’s connected media, along with the background technology. Funda Kivran-Swaine, Ph.D., who has the title of Researcher, Connective Media, Jacobs Institute, explained the goal: “Innovation in the areas of human and social aspects, the psychology and sociology of what people do online.” She is studying public expressions of loneliness on Twitter, asking, *What does loneliness feel like in the age of connectiveness?*
 - The M.S. of Information Systems in Healthier Life has an expected launch date of 2015.
- Deborah Estrin, Professor of Computer Science at Cornell Tech and a Professor of Public Health at Weill Cornell Medical College, explained that this hub “is not about hospitals but about individuals, and creating a community using connective media, the most horizontal of our verticals.” Students will be challenged to create better healthcare information systems, mobile healthcare applications, and medical devices.

The panelists extolled the benefits of being located in New York City. “New York City means everything to us,” Naaman said. “Because we are ideas rather than disciplines, industry involvement helps.” There are many skills brought to the school by consultant guests from Twitter, Etsy, Facebook, *The New York Times*, and Hearst. “This is to help us design programs and decide what we should teach,” Naaman said.

New York was described as the right place for The Jacobs Institute because “for any topic, there are many people here who care [about it]. It’s a critical mass to test. New York is the capital of many industries, such as health, fashion, finance, and media. We can invent the future a little bit with New York City as our lab,” says Naaman.

Clearly, Roosevelt Island and New York’s Google headquarters do not share the same attributes. But Naaman is confident about Cornell-Technion’s impending move to the Island, remarking that, “Roosevelt Island will give us the best of both worlds. We will have some peace and quiet if we need it.”

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Four Democrats Start Campaigns for Kellner’s Assembly Seat

by David Stone

Four candidates hoping to replace Micah Kellner, the retiring State Assemblymember for the 76th District, staked out their positions at a forum hosted by the East Side Democratic Club last week. The District, which covers, roughly, Manhattan east of Third Avenue from 92nd Street to 61st Street, includes all of Roosevelt Island.

Kellner, who has been a regular visitor on Roosevelt Island and is well-versed on local issues, is not running for re-election. Embroiled in a public feud with powerful Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, he told *The WIRE* that he has no firm plans other than to “finish my term,” which runs through 2014.

Hoping to become the Democratic nominee in the June 24 primary are Gus Christensen, David Menegon, Ed Hartzog, and Rebecca Seawright. The topics most frequently discussed were the proposed East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station, affordable housing, marijuana legalization, and, thanks at least partly to local activist Matthew Katz, Roosevelt Island.

Katz, whose public service includes four terms as Roosevelt Island Residents Association president, volunteered his expertise on Island issues in the question-and-answer periods that followed each presentation. So determined was he to make sure his questions were understood in context that he went on at enough length that he was reminded by the event’s moderator that only questions, not speeches, were allowed.

Rebecca Seawright, a former assistant district attorney and administrative law judge, first up at the podium, needed no prompting about her interest in Roosevelt Island. A flyer that she made available before the forum was clear in its second bullet point: “Supports Roosevelt Island’s self-governance, affordability and quality of life,” it read.

In her speech, she took that further. “If elected, I will be a voice in Albany for Roosevelt Island’s self-governance,” she declared.

“Voters should control RIOC’s Board,” she continued. Strict 10-minute limits on speeches precluded detailed policy positions by any of the candidates, but she made a firm point that “Cornell should be one-hundred percent responsible” for any impact that campus construction has on the community.

Katz, after detailing a history that has led to an affordable housing crisis on Roosevelt Island, asked Seawright what her position was. “I would call an immediate task force to find out how to preserve Roosevelt Island,” she told him.

David Menegon, a marketing executive with Xerox Corporation, delivered a speech with little specific reference to Roosevelt Island, nor is the community mentioned on his website or in his campaign material. His general concerns about affordable housing resonated with Islanders.



Christensen



Hartzog



Menegon



Seawright

Katz, however, brought the community’s interests to his attention by outlining concerns he had raised unsuccessfully during the Cornell land-use review about air quality. The university, Katz explained, “will monitor air quality at the construction site, but they won’t agree to do it along Main Street, in our canyon where all the diesel trucks will be passing.” Menegon’s response was prompt and unequivocal: “Oh, it has to be monitored.”

Among the contenders, Gus Christensen has brought national attention to his candidacy. A recent *Esquire* magazine article about him is titled *Wall Street Banker Gus Christensen Thinks He Can Kill Inequality in New York City. So He’s Quitting His Job To Do It*. In fact, Christensen left his lucrative position as managing director at Evercore Partners to run for the assembly seat.

He had plenty to say about Roosevelt Island. “The people of Roosevelt Island,” he began, “need a greater say in its governance. RIOC should not be operating with a Board whose terms have expired. The Island needs better transportation links now, such as ferry service and improved bus links with Queens. We need to fight to keep the Island an affordable bastion for the middle class, both by preserving the affordable units that still exist and by making sure that new development is subject to inclusionary zoning mandates.”

Time ran out, and he later told *The WIRE* in a follow-up, “We need to work closely with Cornell-Technion to manage the growth of their new campus to benefit the entire community.”

The Q&A following Christensen’s speech was dominated

by severe criticism – some allegations unrelated to Roosevelt Island – leaving Katz unable to make a fresh point in the few minutes allocated. His raised hand went unacknowledged.

But the next speaker, Ed Hartzog, answered Katz’s question about “democracy” as it concerns local residents having a strong say in how the Island is governed and by whom. Hartzog reflected on the conflict Islanders have long wrestled with. “It’s vexing because of the City/State situation,” he said in the limited time the Q&A allowed. “The City owns the land, but the State runs it.

“It’s apparent RIOC is not listening to the concerns of the community and that needs to change,” the candidate later commented in response to a request for elaboration from *The WIRE*. “The residents of Roosevelt Island should have their voices heard on big-policy issues like the incoming Cornell University campus, which I have watched closely from my seat on Community Board 8, and will continue to ensure that they are held accountable to the community.”

One of these four will be chosen as the Democratic candidate for the 76th District Assembly seat in the primary election on Tuesday, June 24. On the major issues as well as Roosevelt Island specifically, their positions varied little, and the race itself may come down to which is best able to convince voters that s/he can carry through on promises when in Albany. One audience member may have best painted what’s to come for whoever gets elected when she described widespread dysfunction in a State government where “all the important decisions are made by just three men,” Assemblymembers not being among them.

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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**
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10:45 **Ping Pong**
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Douma, from page 1

the first place as kids, and what made this event possible, many years later, to help a friend in much need.”

The contest between the (now adult) Strikers and an established, off-Island, travelling soccer club, the Geezers, was surprisingly spirited. The off-and-on drizzle lent an almost surreal backdrop to the proceedings as the Island side, after jumping out to a quick 2-0 first-half lead, fought off a determined second-half Geezer comeback for a 3-1 victory.

Of the day, organizer Craig Ellis said, “From the kind gift from the young Strikers to the win of the old strikers, the true spirit of fair play that the Geezers brought and everyone else, family, friends, coaches, parents and kids that showed up and contributed to getting Pat to Mexico – thank you all. This day will forever be in my memories!”

The current incarnation of the Strikers, our under-14 traveling soccer team coached by James Herlihy, who won a game the following morning 6-2, presented Douma with a jersey. Said Coach Herlihy, “The Striker Benefit game was awesome; it showed the present Strikers the vast soccer history started so many years ago. Giving Patrick one of our Jerseys was our way of saying thank you and to link the past and present Strikers. We are honored to be part of such a great soccer community and to continue the tradition of travel soccer on Roosevelt Island.”

The current incarnation of the Strikers, our under-14 travelling soccer team, who won their game the following morning 6-2, coached by James Herlihy, presented Douma with a jersey. They arrived dressed in their Striker reds and watched their forebears from the sidelines, providing community, kinship, and continuity. And while the final score hardly seemed to matter, there was no doubt that the Strikers wanted to win for their friend.

On Saturday night, it was more than just a game.

RIOC Column, from page 2

deliver a system that will serve both residents and visitors smoothly and efficiently. To that end, we will evaluate all proposals carefully and select the best contractor for the job. We will continue to do all we can to lessen the impact on the community throughout the process.

Octagon Tennis Courts

Last Monday, contractors were pouring concrete at the Octagon Tennis Courts to create new supports for the tennis-net posts. The concrete requires two to three weeks to cure properly, during which time no work can be performed on the site. This period of time was planned out in the original construction schedule, and will not delay the reopening of the courts. Contractors will resume work once the concrete has cured completely, keeping the project on schedule to reopen at the end of June.

Bike NY Kickoff

Next Saturday, May 17, the Bike New York Spring Kickoff Party will take place from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Capobianco Field basketball court on Roosevelt Island. We hope that you will join in at this family-friendly community celebration of Bike Month and the start of the bicycling season on Roosevelt Island. Activities will include a Learn-to-Ride Kids class, pop-up bike shop, free bicycle raffle, face-painting, bike-decorating, a ride around the Island, and more. This event is free and open to the public. For more information on this event or to learn more about what Bike New York is bringing to Roosevelt Island, please contact cgoodspeed@bikenewyork.org.

Mommy & Me

Following a successful eight weeks of Mommy & Me Water Safety classes, we are pleased to open registration for the May – June session of classes. Classes will take place on Sunday and Wednesday mornings from the week of May 18 until the week of July 13. Classes are \$5/class for residents who pre-register, and \$7/class for residents who drop in. Spaces are limited to 13 children per class on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit our Parks and Recreation website at rioc.recdesk.com for more information, to register, or to look at our full calendar of classes and programs. If you have any questions or if you prefer to register in person, please email Eddie.Perez@rioc.ny.gov or call (212) 832-4569.

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Barniker, from page 1

~~Was getting to center~~ from school via the same tube stations that had been bombed. I began studying the stations carefully to get a feel for the physical presence of the bombing sites. Out of that exploration, I decided to do a play about the bombings. I imagined myself as one of the terrorists, and tried to visualize the personal trauma that would motivate him.”

Jamie did not immediately begin writing the play. “I returned to the United States with the bones of it in my head. I thought, *I’m going to give you something that everyone fears and is based on reality*.” He determined that the structure of the play would have a young girl seated downstage whose internal monologue sets the scene for the action. In the background, the terrorists discuss the reasons for the attacks and plan the operation. In order to make the drama as realistic as possible, Jamie consulted the extensive data available on the internet, including the two official accounts of the police investigations. The four terrorists were all British citizens, and all had been born in England except for one who was born in Jamaica and came to England with his parents at age five. All four died in the explosions they detonated, three on tube trains and one on a double-decker bus.

“I wanted the play to be about the terrorists and what could have led them to give up their own lives for the satisfaction of killing others. The play is titled *Mind the Gap*, which is a frequent warning in tube stations about the space between the platform and the train. The title also refers to the gap that separates the mental processes of the terrorists from those of society in general.”

“I submitted the play to Lynn Jackson, the head of the communications department at St. Francis College. She told me that when she finished reading it, she bawled her eyes out.”

As with most young dramatists, Jamie had the assistance of more experienced theatre people in putting the finishing touches to the play. A retired English teacher, Marjorie Harris, whom Jamie met in a playwriting class at the Main Street Theatre, helped by editing the dialogue. Also, Jamie enlisted the support of Amy Ambrosino as a producer for his work. Her producing credits run for page after page, including her work with *The Putnam County Spelling Bee* on Broadway, the *George Carlin Concert*, and too many others to list.

Jamie called on Nancy and Worth Howe, who remembered him from his days with the Main Street Theatre. They now live in southern California, but Worth gave generously of his time to review the script and help to shape and focus the action, and Nancy has returned to Roosevelt Island to direct the play. “A staged reading is part of the normal process of developing a play,” she said. “Every play goes through the same process. Everyone involved in a play needs to hear how it sounds before it is actually produced. At a staged reading, there are no sets, just the actors performing the play. Afterward, we need feedback from the audience.”

There is no charge to attend the staged reading of *Mind the Gap*, and refreshments will be available at a modest cost.

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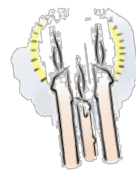
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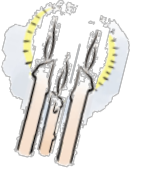
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Friday, May 9 at 7:41 pm

Friday, May 16 at 7:48 pm

Friday, May 23 at 7:55 pm



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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 uni-
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commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.

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