



Mircea Nicolescu's photograph of a double rainbow over the Roosevelt Island Bridge is a candidate for inclusion in *The WIRE's* 2015 Calendar. Well over 100 photos have been submitted, but the door is open through tomorrow (Sunday, September 28). Send your best choice as an email attachment, to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net (horizontal orientation, uncropped, unretouched, unmodified, full resolution).

PTA Sets Fundraising Goal to Pay for Educational Advantages at PS/IS 217

by Jim Baehler
The PS/IS 217 Parent Teacher Association (PTA) wants to raise \$160,000 by October 31, and it's hoping for \$500 per family. The PTA is the primary funder of the school's enrichment programs, which include art, gardening, dance, literature, and drama. According to the school, giving or pledging through a payment plan by October 31 will enable the school to finalize enrichment programs and

professional development planning for this academic year.
Board of Ed
The Board of Education provides little or no funding for enrichment programs, forcing City schools to look elsewhere for such monies. At PS/IS 217, as in a lot of other New York City schools, the PTA assesses need and then finds ways to provide the necessary funds. As school budget cuts have gotten more and more severe, PTAs have

had to step in to contribute more. In fact, PTAs pay for all or part of every enrichment program that schools offer, including the instructors. Upper East Side stalwart PS 6 raised \$4.3 million between 2007 and 2012. For this school year, PS 6 wants to raise \$800,000, and their suggested donation is \$1,200 per child. The West Village's PS 41 is trying to raise \$600,000, and requests a contribution of \$700 per family. Hunter College Elementary School wants \$1,750 per student.

Participation
A big priority is 100% participation. Grant-giving organizations like to know that their money will go to efforts that are fully supported by the affected parents. The Roosevelt Island school suggests \$500 per family, but prefers that every
See PTA, page 10

Rivercross Sales Match Optimistic Expectations

by Briana Warsing
The first Rivercross sales are in the books, and the prices the apartments are fetching have met residents' optimistic projections. In March 2014, the building exited the Mitchell-Lama program, allowing shareholders to sell their apartments at market rate, with 45% of the sale price paid to the building as "flip tax" (more properly called a transfer fee, because it is not a government tax). While the rush of listings that some anticipated has yet to materialize, the first sales have buoyed the prospects of those interested in selling. According to local realtor and Rivercross resident John Sheehan, the relatively slow initial pace of listings is understandable. "I know that several people have been holding off listing their apartments until they see what the established prices are," while noting, "There are several deals in progress and, as people have returned from summer vacations, we expect things to pick up." Sheehan sees the early sales as a positive sign for future sellers: "I think that we can say that the estimates contained in the offering plan are holding up." Suzanne Wolf, Rivercross resident and broker with The Corcoran Group, agrees. "All told, with limited inventory available in the building, I'd say the market here is steady, and we'll see more activity as inventory increases." Wolf advises potential sellers to "be realistic, and to listen to their broker's advice on proper pricing." Listing and sales data published on streeteasy.com show that 10 apartments have been listed, with two sold and four more in contract. Sale prices for the largest apartments have exceeded \$1 million, with sales and asking prices averaging \$762.04/square foot.

Price	Beds	Baths	SqFt	\$/SqFt	Status
\$1,300,000	4	2.5	1,777	\$731.57	In Contract
1,275,000	3	2.5	1,777	717.50	For Sale
1,195,000	2	2	1,300	919.23	Sold
1,049,000	2	2	1,300	806.92	In Contract
985,000	2	2	1,300	757.69	In Contract
775,000	1	1.5	1,000	775.00	For Sale
675,000	1	1.5	950	710.53	For Sale
675,000	1	1.5	950	710.53	In Contract
549,000	1	1	740	741.89	For Sale
540,000	0	1	740	729.73	Sold

By way of comparison, a 757-square-foot one-bedroom, one-bath unit in a full-service pre-war co-op directly across the East River at 68th Street and Second Avenue is currently on the market for \$750,000, with similar monthly maintenance (and a working fireplace, though no indoor pool). Situated in the 10065 zip code (one of the most expensive zip codes in the country, according to *Forbes Magazine*), the asking price of nearly \$1,000 per square foot exceeds the average price per square foot at Rivercross by 30%.

Good Shepherd Plaza Makeover Is Under Way

by Briana Warsing
Change is coming to Good Shepherd Plaza in the form of more benches, more color, more texture, and some creativity. Vicki Feinmel, who heads a Streetscape Committee, explains the impetus behind the change. "This is the middle of the Island. It needs to look good. I wanted it to be prettier." "There are magnificent things all over the City – art everywhere. Why not here? Why must every bench be exactly where it always was, lined up? I wanted something different and nicer – some creativity."

RIOC Seeking Ideas
It started in 2010. RIOC hosted an informal meeting, calling together anyone with an interest in the plaza – and with ideas for it. RIOC showed paver samples to the group. Feinmel says that she asked, "What about benches? What about planters?" She says RIOC promised another meeting after completion of the repaving. But after the repaving was complete in the spring of 2012, Feinmel heard that the benches were to be put back exactly where they had been. "I started asking people what was going on, saying, *I thought we were supposed to have another meeting.*" That week, at a RIOC meeting, Feinmel spoke up. "A few years ago in a meeting about the plaza, we were told that we would meet again to give suggestions. This is a perfect opportunity. Why do we have to have exactly what we had before? This is an opportunity to really think about it and do something nicer and more creative."

Leslie Torres, then RIOC President, responded by asking Dr. Kathie Grimm of the RIOC Real Estate Committee to coordinate with Feinmel after the meeting. According to Feinmel, Grimm advised her, "Get a group together, form a committee. Make sure that the people who face the plaza, meaning this side of Rivercross, this side of Island House, and across the street [are involved]. These are the people it affects. Make sure you reach out to them." Feinmel laughs. "I don't know if she really knew how far I was going

to take this."
The Process
But she followed Grimm's advice. She scheduled a meeting at Gallery RIVAA. Then she made flyers and got in touch with Island House, Rivercross, and Roosevelt Landings managements. She personally distributed fliers in Rivercross, where she lives, and provided copies for the Island House lobby. Roosevelt Landings management notified residents there. She emailed meeting information to everyone who attended the first informal session, as well as RIRA Island Services Committee Chair Aaron Hamburger and Planning Committee Chair Frank Farance, asking them to forward it to their committee members. "People took it very seriously. I got emails from people who couldn't come to the meeting but had concerns or suggestions: *Main Street is so ugly. Let's do something nice where people like to sit.* Most people wanted to keep the plaza open and serene, and didn't want tables." Feinmel took her role as committee founder seriously. "I really felt that whether I agreed or not [with attendees' suggestions], I had to try to meet the majority. It was a great first meeting. From there, the goal was to get a working group of people to commit [to involvement]



Her multi-year planning project coming to fruition behind her, Vicki Feinmel smiled in satisfaction on Wednesday.

from beginning to end." RIOC put out an RFP and got a good response, ultimately deciding on Edgewater, a New Jersey landscaper. "Jan [Salpiel Rafel], the head of the company, met with the working group, just asking us what would we like, what were we interested in – our thoughts. She gave us three plans to start. We said, *We like this on this plan and we like that on that plan.* Everyone was throwing out ideas. Each step took a lot of time."

See Plaza, page 12

Art for Peace



For International Peace Day on September 21, art students of Camille Mouquinho (right) at The Child School / Legacy High School created their sixth annual sidewalk mural, chalked onto the Z-brick outside the school.

The Editorial Page

Participatory Budgeting

On page 6, we report on a New York City Council program that lets inhabitants of certain Council districts, including ours, propose ways to spend some portion of a million dollars, with the ultimate voting extended to everyone 16 and over, including non-citizens. It’s a good idea.

In its way, it’s a simple variation on something Roosevelt Island has had for a while, in the form of a committee of residents making recommendations to the RIOC Board of Directors – always followed so far – on how to spend \$100,000 for good works. It’s the Island’s Public Purpose Fund, and it suffers only from the inadequacy of the stingy \$100,000. \$250,000 would be more like it, and more responsive to the many needs put forward by the Island’s non-profits in response to the annual call for proposals.

And the City’s program, by expanding voting to non-citizens, emulates the Island’s Residents Association (RIRA) election (coming up in November), in which all adults get to vote, regardless of citizenship.

We like the fact that, in extending the vote down to age 16, the City’s program provides an early involvement in citizen participation, and that might be something for RIRA to consider...

Participatory Democracy

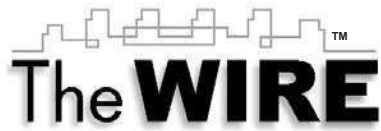
...And we need more participatory democracy here. You’ve heard this before, and it’s worth hammering: Roosevelt Islanders do not get to choose their local city council, which here takes the form of the RIOC Board of Directors. Those folks are chosen by the governor, and the current one, Andrew Cuomo, has been studiously ignoring a precedent set by his two immediate predecessors. Those chief executives followed the ballot-box preferences of Roosevelt Islanders by honoring the results of the first two elections in which Island residents nominated RIOC Board members.

Considering that the Board is our local equivalent of a city council, the public members should be directly elected by Island residents.

The community nominations were a step in the right direction, but the present governor is not even honoring that much, let alone the notion of making additional progress toward democratic home rule here.

The governor should get with the program.

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

Throughout the summer, RIOC has been working hard to make capital improvements and to ensure the safety and beauty of our community. As the weather turns colder toward the end of fall, many construction projects will have to be put on hold until the spring. With this in mind, we are continuing to make preparations for the upcoming season and to get our neighborhood ready for cold weather and snow. Until then, we will enjoy the fall weather and proceed as planned with construction and other projects.

Fall for Arts

The annual Roosevelt Island Fall for Arts Festival will take place on Saturday, October 11, from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at Southpoint Park and on the lawn south of Rivercross. This year’s theme is A Multicultural Renaissance, celebrating the diversity of our

The RIOC Column

unique community in a medieval setting. With participation from various community groups, multicultural musical and theatrical performances, live mural painting, and “make-and-take” art activities for children, this event is a long-time community favorite. Look for a schedule of events to be posted soon on our website (rioc.ny.gov), facebook page (facebook.com/RIOCny), the Main Street kiosks, and other locations Island-wide with more information about the event. We hope to see you at the Festival!

RIOC is currently seeking volunteers and mural artists to participate in this community event. The deadline for submitting a sketch to be considered for a muralist spot at the Festival has been extended through the weekend – all sketches received by Monday, September 29, will be considered. If you’re interested in submitting a mural design or in volunteering at the Festival by helping attendees complete art activities or by distributing art supplies to mural painters, please contact Anna Rankin at Anna.Rankin@rioc.ny.gov. Community service hours can be given for volunteering, and participants will receive a free, exclusive Festival t-shirt. For more information on painting or volunteering, visit our website at rioc.ny.gov and click on our slideshow.

Motorgate Cameras

As previously reported, RIOC has installed a series of security cameras at various locations on Roosevelt Island, including inside the Motorgate Garage.

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.

October 11 Events

On Saturday, October 11, our little Island will again mark the seasonal passing from summer to fall with the annual Fall for Arts Festival. From 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., artists of all ages, children to adults, are invited to come together at Southpoint Park and on the lawn south of 531 Main Street to help in the outdoor painting of enormous 6-by-8-foot murals, to participate in interactive art and music workshops, and to watch performance art – all intended to reflect this year’s theme of *A Multicultural Renaissance*, celebrating the cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic diversity of our community while evoking the magic and artistic sensibilities of an age long gone. It’s truly gratifying to see neighbors, family, and friends come together, put aside any differences, and roll up their sleeves, pick up a paint brush, engage in friendly chatter, and, even if only briefly, allow their artistic selves to come out. Whether you want to participate, volunteer, or just observe, I strongly encourage you and your family to come and enjoy the festivities sometime during that day.

If art is not your thing but planting is, come help iDig2Learn, in collaboration with the Roosevelt Island Garden Club, the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, Gristedes, PS/IS 217, its PTA, and the Roosevelt Island Girl Scouts, from 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 noon on that same Saturday, October 11, to plant Roosevelt Island’s share of nearly five million daffodil bulbs donated by New Yorker 4 Parks to the City of New York. Established in 2001 as a living memorial to September 11, The Daffodil Project has grown in the past 13 years to be the largest City-wide planting, involving more than 100,000 school kids, parks and gardening groups, civic organizations, corporate volunteers, and other New Yorkers. Now, as one of the kickoff events for our Fall for Arts Festival, the Daffodil Project on Roosevelt Island, as hosted by iDig2Learn, will “paint with nature” through the completion of its share of the massive daffodil-bulb planting at the flower bed near Gristedes

The RIRA Column

Currently, the installation and setup of these cameras is in the second phase of implementation. Before the next phase can begin, minor adjustments to the placement, orientation, and other properties of the cameras will take place. The Public Safety Department has also been consulted on prime locations for future cameras and other upgrades. Since their initial installation, these cameras have already proved a valuable asset to the community, and have assisted law enforcement with several investigations and led to the apprehension of criminals. We plan to improve this system on a constant basis and look forward to the next phase of installation.

Credit Cards at Parking Meters

We are pleased to announce that all parking meters on Roosevelt Island will soon be able to accept credit cards as payment. This improvement will increase convenience for residents and visitors alike who park on our streets. Electronic parking meters were installed earlier this year and are available along the length of Main Street and in the public parking lot to the east of the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club near the Tramway Plaza. We are happy to be able to provide this service as an upgrade to the current system.



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

Octagon Tree Removal

On Thursday, September 24, contractors removed several damaged trees and branches at Octagon Park. Affected trees, which had been damaged by stormy weather, were identified by a qualified professional before they were scheduled for removal or pruning. Routine maintenance and trimming is required for the general upkeep of the Island’s trees and to avoid potential hazards caused by hanging and fallen limbs.

Good Shepherd Streetscape

As you may have noticed, landscaping work has begun west of the Good Shepherd Center. This project See **RIOC Column**, page 3

and the Motorgate Red Bus turnaround. The planting will be a great family-friendly event and an opportunity to engage in some community pride and beautification, bringing together both new and old Island groups, as we plant bulbs this fall to greet our community next spring with cheerful daffodils and to remember loved ones lost in the September 11 tragedy. Free pre-registration for children, families, and the community begins at 10:45 a.m. at the Motorgate Red Bus turnaround near Gristedes. If you are interested in volunteering for the event, or wish to learn more about either iDig2learn or The Daffodil Project on Roosevelt Island, please reach out to Christina Delfico at Dig2Learn@gmail.com. To learn more about the City-wide Daffodil Project, go to New Yorker 4 Parks at ny4p.org and/or The Daffodil Project at ny4p.org/daffodil-project.



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

RIRA Election

Nominations for a position on the RIRA Common Council and/or as an Executive Officer will open on Wednesday, October 1, and close on October 24 at 9 p.m. Nomination forms can be obtained by email from Nominations Committee Chair Aaron Hamburger (ashamburger33@gmail.com), or in hard copy at either our Public Library or at Public Safety (where there will also be a lock box to drop off your completed forms). As we have been saying in this column, running for an office to represent either your building or RIRA itself is the ultimate form of community service. If you are interested in running and/or have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Aaron at ashamburger33@gmail.com or 212-758-2623. And come to our October 1 See **RIRA Column**, page 3

COMING UP

— This Weekend —

No direct subway to Manhattan, Fri Sep 26 11:15pm to **Mon Sep 29** 5am. Service *from* Manhattan will operate. Tram expected to be normal or extended.

Junior Girl Scouts Registration open for girls grades 4-6 now through **Wed Oct 1**. Forms available 2:45-6pm at PS/IS 217 Beacon desk in lobby. First meeting **Fri Oct 10**, 6-7:30pm, PS/IS 217 cafeteria. (See *Briefly*, page 1.) Info: 917-678-6529 or 212-527-2505.

Treasures of New York: Four Freedoms Park, Sat Sep 27 6pm, Channel 21. Also **Sun Sep 28** 9am, 11pm; **Fri Oct 3** 3am; **Sun Oct 12** 11pm; **Fri Oct 17** 3am, **Fri Oct 24** 3am, **Sun Oct 26** 11pm.

Rescheduled: The Uni Project, outdoor reading, originally scheduled for Sat Sep 27 & Sun Sep 28 11am-4pm, Four Freedoms Park, now rescheduled to spring.

— Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events —

See separate listing, page 6.

— The Next Two Weeks —

Guided tour of the City College of New York campus, Tue Sep 30 10:30am, sponsored by Roosevelt Island Historical Society. \$35 for non-members, \$25 for members. To register, email RooseveltIslandHistory@gmail.com. Info: 212-688-4836.

Four Freedoms Park hours change to 9am-5pm, **Oct-Mar**; closed **Tue**. **Registration for RIRA Common Council nominations, Wed Oct 1-Fri Oct 24** 9pm. Forms available by email (ashamburger33@gmail.com) or at the library (524 Main St.) or Public Safety (550 Main St.); completed forms due at Public Safety **Fri Oct 24** 9pm.

Bike New York Picnic, Sat Oct 4 11:30am, Astoria Park, leaving from lower Motorgate Plaza. BYO lunch. Dessert and t-shirt provided. Register by email to CGoodspeed@BikeNewYork.org.

Bike New York class – Adults Learn-to-Ride, Sat Oct 4 10am-12noon, Capobianco Field. Bikes, helmets, instructors provided. To register, visit tinyurl.com/adultLTR.

Ben Hugs Day, Mon Oct 6. Free buttons various places on the Island.

Four Freedoms Democratic Club meets, **Tue Oct 7** 6-9pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St.

City Council Participatory Budgeting session, Tue Oct 7 6-9pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St. Help decide how \$1 million in tax dollars are spent in our Council district.

The Main Street WIRE– Sat Oct 11. Advertising deadlines: Display ads, **Wed Oct 1**; decision date for circulars/inserts, **Tue Oct 7**; 5,500 copies due **Thu Oct 9**. **Future issues:** Oct 25; Nov 8, 22; Dec 13. **2015:** Jan 10, 24; Feb 7, 21; Mar 7, 21; Apr 4, 18; May 2, 16, 30; Jun 13, 27; Aug 1; Sep 1, 15, 29; Sep 12, 26; Oct 10, 24; Nov 7, 21; Dec 12. **News phone, 212-826-9056; urgent matters, 917-617-0449**. Email press releases and feature-story suggestions to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net. **Advertising** (display & classified): **917-587-3278** or msWIREads@gmail.com.

Fall for Arts Festival, Sat Oct 11 11am-4pm, South-point Park and Rivercross lawn. To exhibit, contact Anna.Rankin@rioc.ny.gov by Sep 26.



Senior Center listings are on page 14

— Future Weeks —

Open House New York at Four Freedoms Park, **Sun Oct 12** 9am-5pm (ad, page 5).

The Big Red One at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Oct 14** 6pm, Library.

Let’s Talk About The WIRE session, **Tue Oct 14** 7:30-9:00pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. Discuss the newspaper, MainStreetWIRE.com, and to recruit reporters, writers, proofreaders, website wranglers, videographers, video editors, artists, editorial cartoonists, photographers, deliverers, stuffers, and myriad other volunteer/paid jobs (like an editorial cartoonist and other possibilities). For further information, call **212-826-9056** or email MainStreetWIRE@usa.net.

Bike New York Evening Ride, Thu Oct 16 6:15pm, leaving from the lower-level Motorgate plaza (south of Gristedes at the Bike New York container) for the three-mile Island loop. Bikes and helmets provided. Free t-shirts.

Book Discussion, I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai, **Thu Oct 16** 6:30pm, Library.

Live and Let Die at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Oct 21** 6pm, Library.

Submit RIRA Council nomination forms by **Fri Oct 24** 9pm, at Public Safety (550 Main St.).

Bike New York Pop-Up Bike Shop last day, **Sat Oct 25**, 10am-2pm.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Oct 27**, 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St. Open to public.

Women’s Health Organization (RIWHO) meets – Domestic Violence, **Wed Oct 29** 6:30, 12th floor, 546 Main St.

General Election and Residents Association Election, Tue Nov 4, polls open 6am-9pm. Octagon votes at Coler Hospital; all others at PS/IS 217.

Jaws at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Nov 11** 6pm, Library.

Women’s Health Organization (RIWHO) meets, **Wed Nov 19** 6:30, 12th floor, 546 Main St.

Book Discussion, My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor, **Thu Nov 20** 6:30pm, Library.

The Cotton Club at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Nov 25** 6pm, Library.

Cornell NYC Tech Town Hall Meeting, Mon Dec 8 6-8pm, Manhattan Park Community Center, 8 River Rd. Open to public.

Coffy at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Dec 9** 6pm, Library.

Women’s Health Organization (RIWHO) meets, **Wed Dec 17** 6:30, 12th floor, 546 Main St.

Book Discussion, Prague Winter by Madeline Albright, **Thu Dec 18** 6:30pm, Library.

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*.

Listings continue at right

Letters

To RIOC:

This concerns the current status of restoration of the Smallpox Hospital (Renwick Ruin). Is this building ever going to be restored? Or are Island residents and tourists forever doomed to see a fence around the building with a sign saying “No Trespassing – Building is Unstable,” and another sign promising “repurposing” but not detailing a management action plan, a specific timetable for restoration work, or an estimated completion date? It would be nice if Island residents and tourists were advised of a management action plan with an estimated completion date, either in this newspaper or via some other form of on-Island communication.

Kent Kurkiewicz

To the Editor:

In case you haven’t noticed yet, there is a lot of work being done west of the Chapel. A group of residents have been working with a landscape architect on streetscaping for Good Shepherd Plaza. I have been so excited to be a part of this RIOC project, and to have had so much input into the process. I want to thank the following: Steve Chironis for getting this project off the ground, the RIOC Board for supporting it, and Kay Hart for helping me throughout. And without Charlene Indelicato, Frances Walton, and Jim Mortimer, this wouldn’t be happening. And, of course, my partners in crime: Judy Berdy, Christina Delfico, Linda Heimer, Matt Katz, Willa Klein, Susan Marcus, Marianne Russem, Tad Sudol, Ali Schwayri, and Victoria Thorson. And special thanks to Margie Smith.

I hope you will all love it as much as I will.

Vicki Feinmel

To the Editor:

One recent morning, I awoke at 3:40 a.m. to a terrible rumbling noise of at least three trucks passing on Main Street. I assume they were heading to the Cornell work site.

While I understand their rush to get to Roosevelt Island as early as possible, perhaps to avoid the morning rush traffic, and the all-accommodating behavior of RIOC toward the mighty Cornell, I think consideration should be given to the residents’ sleep hours. It’s beyond frustrating not being able to sleep with the windows open when the weather is as beautiful as it is now.

I look forward to hearing from RIOC about their policy regarding the heavy-truck traffic hours on Main Street.

M. Menglide

To the Editor:

In August, I was taken out for my birthday. We went to Crescent Grill, a new advertiser in *The WIRE*. It was fabulous. We were picked up by car, had a fixed-price brunch with complimentary yogurt, fruit, and small breads and muffins (all delicious), and the interior design was my kind of place – art all over the walls, and great light fixtures and furnishings.

The owner was as pleasant as can be. He printed out a menu with my name on top, and the service was right on. I recommend it.

Thank you, ladies, for a wonderful birthday.

Vicki Feinmel

Letters Deadline for October 11 issue – Tue., Oct. 7, 5:00 p.m.

The Tote!

Page 14

RIRA Column, from page 2

Common Council meeting at 8:00 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Center to see the body in action.

Participatory Budgeting

In 2011, four New York City Council Members launched a process to give City residents a chance to advocate for how portions of the City’s capital discretionary funds would be allocated and used in their districts. This year, 23 Council Members are participating in this New York City Council Participatory Budgeting, including Ben Kallos, who represents the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island. Our district will be able to seek a share of the \$25 million available. To facilitate Roosevelt Island’s input, Council Member Kallos will be holding a town meeting with residents on Tuesday, October 7, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at the Senior Center (546 Main Street). The community can come together to brainstorm, discuss, and supply ideas about allocations. If you’re passionate about green spaces, Senior Citizen services, or anything else, this is the place to start, and I encourage all Roosevelt Islanders to attend this event. For more information regarding Participatory Budgeting, go to pbnyc.org/content/about-new-york-city-process.

A Christmas Story at **Library Movie Night** (adults), **Tue Dec 25** 6pm, Library.

— 2015 —

Book Discussion, Duty by Robert Gates, **Thu Jan 15** 6:30pm, Library.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Jan 26**, 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St. Open to public.

Book Discussion, Beautiful Mystery by Louise Penny, **Thu Feb 19** 6:30pm, Library.

Book Discussion, Capital in the 21st Century by Thomas Piketty, **Thu Mar 19** 6:30pm, Library.

Book Discussion, Vacationland by Sarah Stonich, **Apr 16** 6:30pm, Library.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Apr 27**, 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St. Open to public.

Book Discussion, Black, White & Jewish by Rebecca Walker, **Thu May 21** 6:30pm, Library.

Book Discussion, Half A Life by V.S. Naipul, **Thu Jun 18** 6:30pm, Library.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Jul 27**, 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St. Open to public.

Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Oct 27**, 6-8pm, 12th floor meeting room, 546 Main St. Open to public.

To the Editor:

A recent op-ed piece in *The New York Times* discussed a very disturbing happening. It is that “the world is awash in plastic.” Every variety of plastic waste floats out to sea. Islands of debris cover as much as 40% of the planet’s ocean surface. The result is the killing of millions of sea creatures – fish and birds. The effects are possibly more deadly than those of climate change.

The plastic bags that Gristedes lavishly dispenses are obviously only a small contributing factor. Nevertheless, it is appalling that the checkout people will put a roll of plastic-wrapped paper towels into double yellow plastic bags before adding this to other similarly plastic-wrapped groceries for the customer to take out.

Activists around the world are lobbying for a ban on bags, bottles, and other plastic food containers. I urge consumers and Gristedes management to be more aware.

Sandra Zwerling

Editor’s note: The canvas (and plastic-free) tote bags, sold as a *WIRE* fundraiser, each hold the equivalent of five two-liter (plastic, unfortunately) bottles of soda. See page 11 or page 14.

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.

RIOC Column, from page 2

marks the first phase of work in a larger development – the renewal and redesign of the Good Shepherd Plaza. This project began several years ago as a joint initiative between RIOC and many active members of the Roosevelt Island community, who provided valuable input on residents’ needs and visions for the space. Once the community design process was completed, RIOC solicited bids from qualified contractors, and selected the best vendor based on standard procurement procedures. The chosen contractor will perform upgrades to the lawn, and areas in and around the Plaza, according to the finalized design. Currently, workers are laying out the areas where new decomposed granite paths and planting beds will be installed behind the Community Center. Most recently, concerns were raised about the health of the 9/11 memorial tree located in the area after a surface root was pruned to make way for construction. This root pruning has not endangered the tree. RIOC takes pride in the care of the Island’s grounds and flora, and as New Yorkers ourselves, we understand how much this memorial means to all of our residents. Contractors are taking every precaution to ensure the continued health and future growth of the memorial tree as they modify the areas around it.



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Architectural Tour
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of the Park

Our seasonal hours for October - March: 9am - 5pm.

For details and the full events calendar, please visit www.fdrfourfreedomspark.org/events.
The Park is free and open to the public. Open 6 days a week, closed Tuesdays.
Free public tours are offered at 11am on Saturdays and Sundays.



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Registration

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COMING UP

— Continuing Events & Activities —
A listing of **repeating** meetings & events
(A listing of other events scheduled for this weekend and in coming weeks starts on page 3.)

ART EXHIBITS

Approach to a Portrait exhibition of painting, sculpture, and photography by RIVAA member artists, Gallery RIVAA. **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm. Through Oct 19.
Bonnie Sherk’s *A Living Library* on Roosevelt Island exhibits in *Vegetation as a Political Agent, Parco Arte Viviente, Centro Arte Contemporanea*, Turin, Italy. Through November 2. Info: alivinglibrary.org.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open **daily** 6am-10pm.
Lighthouse Park open **daily** 7am-9pm.
FDR Four Freedoms Park open **daily** 9am-7pm; **Oct-Mar** hours 9am-5pm. **Closed** every **Tue**.

CLASSES

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

First Sunday Jazz Salon, 1st Sun (except Jul-Aug) 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$5 donation.
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.
Bike New York Pop-up Bike Shop, Sat 10am-2pm, under helix, through Oct 25, except Oct 11 (Columbus Day).
Bike New York classes continue through winter; schedule at BikeNewYork.org.
Pilates with Karen, Tue & Thu 7:15pm; **Wed** 8:45am, 10am; **Fri** 9am, 10am; **Sat** 10am. Info 212-750-6223.
Tai Chi classes, every **Wed** in **Sep** 4pm, Four Freedoms Park. Grand Master Jean Philippe Cisse teaches Taichung Chuan (Korean Tai Chi). Ages 15-up. Free. Info: tinyurl.com/KoreanTCfdr. (Ad, page 5.)
Pilates, Wed & Fri 6:30-7:30pm, PS/IS217. Free.
Ping Pong (all ages), **Tue Wed Fri** 6-9pm, Sportspark. Free.
RI Moms on the Move walk and exercise program, **Fri** 11am, Visitor Kiosk in Tramway Plaza. Free. To confirm time: Eva.Bosbach@gmail.com.
Sportspark extended hours (ages 16-25), **Fri-Sat** 9pm-midnight. Weight-lifting and basketball. Free. *Note: ID and proof of Island residency are now required.*
Swimming* (all ages; no instructor) – **Sat-Sun** 12-3pm, **Mon-Fri** 6-10am, **Mon Wed Thu Fri** 7:30-10:30pm, Sportspark.
Swimming* (18 yrs+) – **Sat-Sun** 4-7pm, **Tue** 7:30-10:30pm, Sportspark.
Swimming* – Water Aerobics, **Sun** 12-1pm, **Wed & Fri** 9-10am, Sportspark.
Swimming* – Master class, **Mon & Fri** 7:30-8:30pm, Sportspark. Through Sep 29.
(*All Sportspark swimming \$5; free for disabled, seniors 60+, and ages 0-3.)
Yoga (Hatha/Vinaya), **Mon** 10am, Four Freedoms Park.** Lauren Blankstein / Keren Messer.
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 (Prana Vinyasa Flow) for kids, **Thu** 5pm, Four Freedom Park.** Jax Schott.
Yoga (open-level) with Lauren Blankstein, **Thu** 7:30-8:30pm, PS/IS 217 Beacon. Free.
Yoga, Fri 6pm, Four Freedoms Park.** Keren Messer / Lauren Blankstein.
Yoga, Sat 9:45am, Four Freedoms Park.** Jax Schott.
Zumba, Mon 6:30-7:30 and 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*)

Mommy & Me Swim Classes (0-3yrs), **Sun** 11-11:30am through Sep 21, **Wed** 10:30-11am, through Sep 17.
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** 10:30-11:30am, 536 Main St. Info: IslandKidsRI@gmail.com.
Bi-Ligual Birdies: Mandarin (0-5 years), **Thu** 11am, Library.
Read Aloud (3-6 yrs), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library.

OLDER KIDS (*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.
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 grades 1-8, **Mon-Fri** 3-6pm, PS/IS 217. Free. Info: 212-527-2505 or tinyurl.com/RIyouth
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.
Crafts, Thu 11am & 3pm, Library
Reading Aloud (children), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library.
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.
Computer Basics for Seniors, Fri 10:30am, Library

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 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 State Senator Jose Serrano and/or staff, **Tue**, alternating between Senior Center, 4-7pm (Oct 7, 21), and Library, 3-6pm (Oct 14, 28). Info: 212-828-5829.
Conversations with Cornell Tech Staff at Gallery RIVAA, **Wed & Fri** 10am-12noon & 1-4pm, 527 Main St.
Constituent Service Hours for City Councilmember Ben Kallos, **1st Wed** 4-7pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St.

OTHER

Clinic on Housing Law, 1st & 3rd Mon 3-6pm, district office of City Councilmember Ben Kallos, 244 E. 93rd St. RSVP and questions to 212-860-1950 or RSVP@BenKallos.com.
Knitting & Crocheting Circle (adults), **Thu** 11:30am, Library. Info: nypl.org.
Food Box Orders from 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**.
Events, regular and otherwise? *List 'em!* **MainStreetWIRE@usa.net**

Community Getting a Shot at a Bite of the New York City Budget

Want to help write a \$1-million piece of New York City’s budget?

There’s a Participatory Budgeting session coming up Tuesday, October 7 – a meeting in which Roosevelt Islanders will have the opportunity to propose civic projects that, in their view, will make good use of those funds. It’s 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the Senior Center, 546 Main Street.

It’s an initiative of the City Council. Twenty-three Council Districts, including Ben Kallos’ District 5 (which includes Roosevelt Island), will participate, each budgeting about \$1 million.

It’s a year-long process, and it won’t end on October 7. After the meetings, neighborhood concerns and proposed solutions will be translated into specific budgetary requests. Then the entire district will vote, deciding at the ballot box which projects will be funded.

Online at pbnyc.org, there is more about the process, quoting City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito: “Participatory budgeting is a gateway to greater civic participation and leadership in our communities, encouraging collaboration between residents and local elected officials to find creative solutions to neighborhood needs.” She noted that districts participating have more than doubled from last year.

Voting in participatory budgeting is open to all residents 16 years of age and older, removing traditional obstacles to full civic participation such as youth, income status, English-language proficiency, and citizenship status.

How Would You Spend

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Improve a park? Make a street safer?
Buy a school new technology?

65 Years Together... And Still Happily Counting



Former Roosevelt Islanders Marge and George Rubin celebrated their 65th anniversary last weekend in Medford Leas, New Jersey. During their time on the Island, George was *WIRE* Circulation Manager, and Marge was a contributing photographer.

The Tote!

page 14

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ELIGIBILITY & DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION:

- Children must be born in 2010
- Families must live on Roosevelt Island
- Proof of income (one of the following: pay stubs, 2013 tax return, letter from employer, unemployment history sheet, social security/SSI or public assistance/food stamps benefits letter)
- Proof of address
- Child's birth certificate
- Proof of medical insurance coverage
- Child's immunization records
- Proof of child's disability, if any (speech, language or visual impairment or learning disability)

To register, visit our program or learn more about eligibility,
contact Wilmary Jimenez at 212 218-0406, or wjimenez@lenoxhill.org.

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PTA, from page 1
family give what it can; even a \$5 or \$10 donation will help the school obtain large grants. The PTA is organized as a non-profit under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code, which means that donations are tax-deductible, and may be eligible for matching grants from employers that have such programs. The Roosevelt Island school also gets money from the General Purpose Fund administered by RIOC. Charitable organizations

that support school activities provide some grants, but the principal source of funding is contributions from parents with children enrolled at PS/IS 217.

The PTA
The Co-Presidents of the PS/IS 217 PTA are Natalia Starkova and Olga Shchuchinov. Neither is new to the PTA. In fact, Shchuchinov has served as President or Co-President for the past six years. Starkova was treasurer and website manager.

They're responsible for designing the fund-raising effort at our school. They started this school year's push at the end of last school year, with a presentation at the New Families' Orientation. In the school's packed cafeteria, they explained where the \$500 per family goes. Additionally, they passed around folders to every family listing upcoming activities, ways to volunteer, and the basis for the projected PTA expenses.

The PTA hosted a picnic on the Saturday before school started, and a welcome breakfast at Al Lewis Playground on the first day of school.

Fundraising
It's not all about soliciting contributions; the PTA raises money in other ways. The school is hosting the Scholastic Book Fair October 6 through 10. This year's fair will have a medieval theme. The school hosts Halloween Carnivals, Thanksgiving Pie Sales, Pizza Parties, Movie Nights, Concerts, Valentine's Day Parties, Auctions, International Dinners – many of which are open to the community at large. Many of these activities are advertised on the kiosks. Otherwise, families can sign up to be on the PTA email list, or like the PTA on Facebook, or follow it on Twitter.

Volunteers Sought
Co-Presidents Starkova and Shchuchinov encourage parents to donate their time, too. "Money isn't everything. We need new people with new ideas to join the PTA. Like most people who have been doing something for a while, we can get into a rut. We welcome newcomers who bring a fresh way of looking at things, and have new ideas on how to solve our problems and reach our goals."

Parents are encouraged to sign up as classroom aides, their schedules permitting. "We have children here from 96 different countries, some of whom have little or no facility with English, and properly trained teacher aides can make a big difference. We are extremely fortunate in having Daniel Hirsch as our English as a Second Language instructor. He is fluent in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and a number of other languages, and it is

so gratifying to see him put an apprehensive child at ease by speaking in that child's native language."

A parent who is interested in becoming a teacher's aide will undergo a background check, and will need to complete a training program of one or two days.

Enrichment
Some of the programs wholly or partially financed by the PTA include:

- Ballroom Dancing for grades 5 through 8.
- The Third Grade Band, in which parents pay for the instruments but the PTA covers funding for parents who cannot afford to pay. The PTA also finances music books and the maintenance and repair of the instruments.

- All grades participate in the school's gardening program, A Living Library, at various Island locations. The PTA's Shchuchinov reports, "The children just love it. They are so fascinated to see things grow and to learn how that happens."

- Yoga and Movement Classes for grades K-2; the instructors are from the Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance.

- Fourth graders participate in Gold Opera, where the class creates and performs its own original opera.

- Shakespeare in Schools is a 7th-grade program. The students analyze plays, act out scenes, and learn about the world of Shakespeare.

A full listing of enrichment programs sponsored by the PTA is on its website at www.217pta.com.

Contributing
Islanders wishing to contribute to the PTA can write a check to PS/IS 217 PTA and submit it at the school office. Alternatively, a donation can be made online at www.217pta.com.

Changing of the Guard at the Saturday Market



Israel Wengerd (left) has returned to the Farmer's Market from nearly four years on mission in Africa to relieve his brother David, who has operated the market during that time. David now goes on mission to Bangladesh.

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John Sheehan is a Roosevelt Island pioneer, a past president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) and has lived in Rivercross since 1978. In John's 30-year career as a real estate broker he has transacted over \$250 million in sales. 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 us for a complementary private consultation.

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Plaza, from page 1

As the process went on, decisions were not easy. “We would have choices of benches,” Feinmel recalls. “Do you know what it’s like [to build consensus] among 15 or 16 people? There were some rough meetings. It was a hard process.” She says she strove to keep moving forward. “If we made a decision on something, I wasn’t going back to revisit it. I knew I would get blasted no matter what I did. As long as RIOC was still supporting me, I just did what I had to do.” Re-counting one specific concern, she adds, “People can’t come in at the end of a process. It’s not fair and the project would never get done.”

Feinmel and company’s approach at the beginning was, “If we could do anything, what would we love?” as the starting point. She says the reality was different. “Additional lighting was a fantasy for all of us and for Steve [Chironis, then RIOC CFO]. Lighting on the church would be fantastic. But my thought is, *There’s always phase two and phase three.*”

Another item on Feinmel’s wish list is an outdoor sculpture gallery in the southeast portion of what will be the planting bed. [See schematic.] “Victoria [Thorson], who was on the committee, does outdoor sculpture. She has offered to place one of hers in the area. Then we came up with this idea that sculptors would place their work there for six months or a year, then we’d get another sculpture. That’s also something for the second phase.”

In the future, Feinmel hopes to landscape the square grassy area behind the planting beds, but not this time. The square is part of Island House property, and Island House opted out, even though RIOC asked for no money for the

improvements.

Dodgeball Area

Then there’s what Feinmel calls the dodgeball area, just in front of R-Y Management at 551 Main Street. She says, “People are very sensitive about that area, so we didn’t go there.”

Feinmel says the group used their observations of how the space is currently used as inspiration for how to make it better. As an example, she points out that there are always people hanging out by the bell. Now, there will be an L-shaped bench there. Regarding the planter at the head of the rise between Rivercross and the planting beds, Feinmel says, “We see people sitting there all the time looking at the water or playing with the kids. We are going to have something around that.” It will be landscaped and surrounded by benches. Feinmel points to the lone bench in front of Rivercross and says, “Where that bench is now, there is going to be a stone bench. Along the chapel, there will stone benches, a lot of color, and trees in the planters.”

Schedule

“The landscapers say two, two-and-a-half months. They’re doing everything now. By spring, everything will be in bloom.”

Feinmel says that the streetscape group had a high level of interest and talent. “I sat down with Christina Delfico and Willa [Klein], and they would say, *What about this and what about that?* We wanted different layers and colors of plantings. We really want it to be beautiful. Tad [Sudol] and Victoria [Thorson] are art people. Judy Berdy [President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society] is involved. Matt [Katz, former RIRA President] was involved, as

well as others. We had a bunch of compromises as time went on. But that’s okay. And I would always talk to Ali Schwayri [President of the Roosevelt Island Tree Board] and ask for his thoughts. Once we got a solid plan, I wanted him to check it out.

“It’s going to be gorgeous. There are going to be shrubs and many different kinds of grasses, like in Southtown, and a variety of plants. That we were able to have so much input was terrific. It was great. I think it was unusual.

“The thing that we forget is that if we were part of the City, we would have no say in anything. Who picks their [neighborhood] garbage can in the City? I’ve lived here since 1984, so I forget how it is in other places. I think that because [the Island] is State-run, when you’re dealing with government, they’re just in slow motion. And because we can’t just do what one person wants, we have to make sure it’s right for the majority.

“It takes time. You could hit your head against the wall.”

Taking Charge

“My feeling is, you may disagree, but if the committee votes and you don’t like [the result], you have to let it go. On Roosevelt Island, you get people arguing to the death – putting others in a bad position. *Are we supposed to listen to this person or that person?* My feeling is that *the majority rules. Let go of your own feeling and go with the majority.*

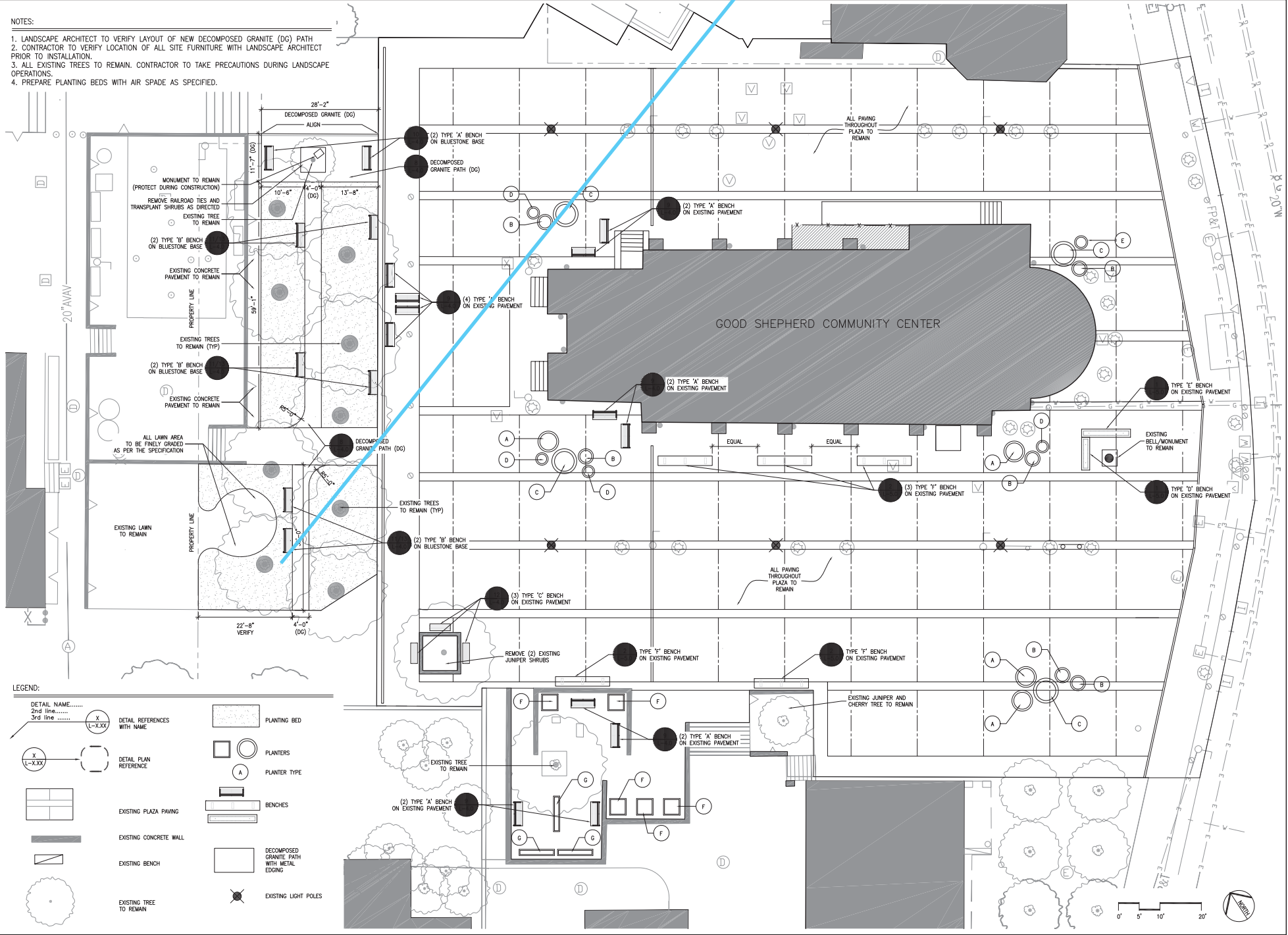
“I wanted to pull my hair out at times; it was frustrating, but now I am thrilled. It is amazing to be part of this. And, of course, there are going to be people that don’t like certain things. *Why didn’t you do this? Why didn’t you that?* Well,



you weren’t in my shoes, and compromises had to be made.”

Looking ahead, Feinmel is not just optimistic. She’s enthusiastic.

“It’s going to be fantastic. It’s going to look absolutely beautiful. And then, of course, it has to be maintained.”



RIVAA Artists Contemplate an *Approach to a Portrait*

review by David Stone

Esther Piaskowski Cohen’s color photograph, *Arline*, waits at the front door, greeting visitors to Gallery RIVAA’s latest group show, *Approach To A Portrait*. It marks a spiritual theme for this exhibit.

In Cohen’s photograph, a woman stands under a sunflower-designed umbrella, looking upward and ahead. Behind her is a large mural that surrounds her with art. The alert figure beneath the umbrella is RIVAA founder Arline Jacoby. The picture is an admiring salute to the person most often credited with making our community an “Island of art.”

The photograph’s significance expanded when, in a tribute during the opening reception, Ms. Jacoby was surprised with a cake to recognize her recently celebrated 90th birthday and to thank her for her contributions to the association.

(Cornell’s Assistant Director of Government and Community Relations, Jane Swanson, also introduced the university’s promising partnership with the gallery. Read on for details.)

The wide variety of art now on the walls at the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association’s gallery once again reminds visitors of the depth of experience and talent its members bring to the community. But even before you get inside, Izumi Tokuno’s lyrical study in blue, *Leath 2010*, a photograph on canvas, fuels the appetite for what’s ahead.

Vladimir DeJesus’s two charcoal and pencil portraits, *Fun with Svetlana*, are straightforward, deftly exposing subtleties of character and mood, for example, while Galina Petrov’s photo tapestry, *Red Winter*, energizes the frame with intense colors, drama, and motion, creating an image many leagues apart from traditional portraiture. Yet, both artists’ works are complete and effective in their own terms.

Answering the demands of portraiture, Laura Hussey’s *Foteini* draws us closer than usual by offering a pensive young woman, fully realized, in a spare setting that lets her subject come to life without distraction.

Known to local art lovers for his elaborate abstracts on mystical themes, Valeriu Boborelu steps into the act with *Toward Compassion*, a mixed media presentation of 12 pictures grouped together. From abstract to figurative, his community of individuals represents a full range of spiritual presence.

One of the most satisfying innovations in this exhibit comes from Anthony Moran with his *Jazz Musicians*. His approach takes the realism of a photograph, a jazz combo making music, and releases it vividly with water color abstractions as an overlay. The visual effect suggests the vibrant flow of their music.

Another artist whose work hasn’t been seen at RIVAA recently rings in with *Late August Model*. Rebecca Musgrave’s water color returns to the gallery her careful architecture of image-making. Her model looks away from us, emotions vibrating from the focus of his eyes and his introspective expression. Nearby, Rachel Garrick’s four oil portraits features *Lady in a Straw Hat*, an inventive play on layers of light and color that turns the lady’s hat into a swirling abstraction.

Toshiko Kitano Groner steps out from her familiar, color-rich still lifes to create *Blue and Standing in Blue*, oils in which blue is of the haunting midnight variety, her two women lost in depression. In contrast, Constance Tanner’s vivid *Playing Jacks* is a composition about design in action. Her headless player anchors the image in solid black surrounded by colors that drip from abstract to geometric.

Along with her photograph of Ms. Jacoby, Esther Piaskowski Cohen plays with art history in her *Campbell’s Soup Girl I & II*. The girl is discovered in front of Andy Warhol’s famous painting. She has decided to participate, her skirt a designer take-off on the artist’s iconic soup cans.

Visitors get a pleasant surprise when abstract expressionist Ioan Popoiu appears with two atypically realistic portraits. One is the expressive *Grandfather*, a simple drawing that gathers a long lifetime of experience in a single expression, one turned cautiously toward the future. His second portrait, *Beatrice*, is warmer but also more complicated. A girl’s sweet smile must come through an overlay of what looks like abstract graffiti, adding hectic vitality to a traditional pose.

An ambitious display of self-portraiture is photographer Piotr Olsewski’s *Piotr Life*, a set of thoughtfully selected images, each mounted in box frames to emphasize a unique reflection of character. Dramatically, the far-right frame suggests a troubling conflict with an imprisoning hinged door threatening to close on its subject.

Also demonstrating marked inventiveness in presenting ideas about photography as fine art is a three-piece set, *Remnants of the Girl Series*, by Olya Turcihin. Turcihin frames pictures captured from murals, chosen for the presence of young women who seem either lost or in the act of vanishing. The effect is haunting and beautiful in the way she has cropped her photographs to emphasize artistry alone with content.

Setting aside her popular landscapes for this show, pastelist Georgette Sinclair reveals her seldom exhibited gift for portraiture, inspired by her daughter and granddaughter. In *Really*, Sinclair captures the rumpled, doubtful look of a child who suspects she’s being teased, while, in *Light and Dark*, we get the lovely classical profile of a woman intently focused on an undisclosed object.

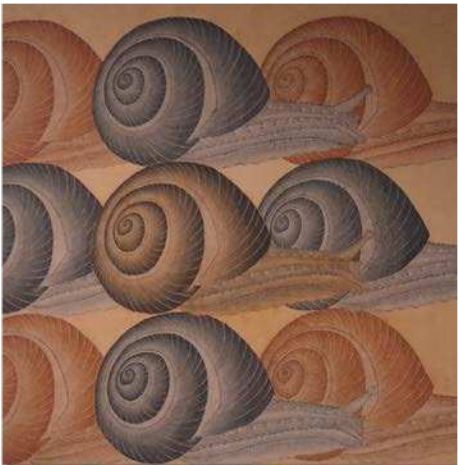
Alexander Movshovich shows his gift for finding poetry in his subjects. Both *Reflected in Music* and *From the Past: Manhattan* are black-and-white photographic observations of beauty, images with lasting qualities caught in the photographer’s lens at an ideal moment.

Last but far from least are Arline Jacoby’s own contributions to this exhibit. At 90, her creativity continues without apparent restraint. In her oil, *Let Us All Live In Peace*, for example, she repeats a favorite theme with a haunting congestion of tortured apparitions that appeal to the viewer for relief. Jacoby’s passions seem to burn with as much heat as they ever have.

Swanson offered a short enthusiastic speech about Cornell’s partnership with RIVAA. She and others from Cornell’s team will staff the gallery on Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (closing during the noon hour), to emphasize a vision of an interplay between art and technology and discuss campus construction and academic programs.

Swanson added an important note about expanding the partnership to include the Herbert F. Johnson Museum, the highly respected art institution on the university’s Ithaca campus. If realized, this would be a significant step forward in realizing the hopes of the gallery’s founders.

Approach To A Portrait will be on display at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street, through October 19. Hours are Wednesday and Friday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday from 11:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m., as well as during the hours staffed by Cornell.



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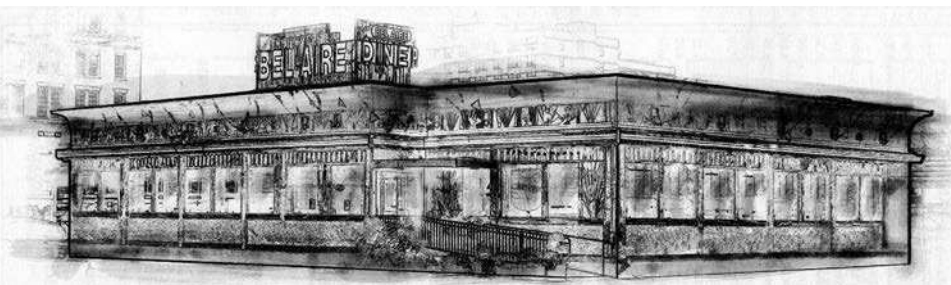
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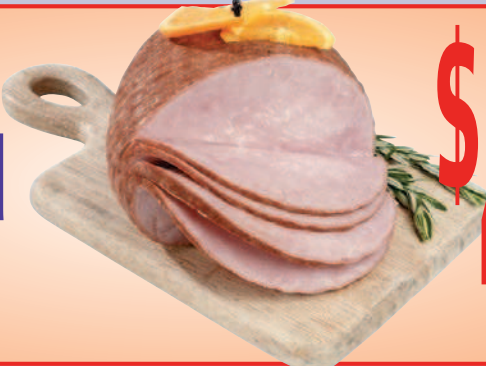
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