



The Main Street WIRE

35:05
Saturday, November 8, 2014

RIRA Gets a New Common Council – And, Perhaps, a Needed Fresh Start

news analysis by Dick Lutz

Voters in Tuesday’s Residents Association election seemed to be responding to President Jeff Escobar’s plea for a calmer, more purposeful Common Council.

In his statement of candidacy (*The WIRE*, October 25), he wrote of “Infighting. Internal politics. Organizational power struggles. These are not the foundations of what the Roosevelt Island Residents Association or its Common Council were founded on nor built upon.” The electorate, as a whole, seemed to agree that changes were in order.

In Island House, in particular, incumbent Council members were turned out – relegated to the standby status of alternates, who may be allowed to participate in discussions at Council sessions but cannot vote unless a full member is absent. In that building, it must have helped that the three top choices are well-known Islanders who have each taken on a positive mission for the Island: Adib Mansour, who scored 137 votes, is the spark plug behind the Island’s growing youth soccer program. John Dougherty (118 votes) is closely identified with The Main Street Theatre. And Rossana Ceruzzi (114) has a longstanding track record of compassionate caring for Island animals.

Farance, also well known for his work on Island House privatization and associated with a number of other positive efforts – but also seen as disruptive in Common Council proceedings, especially over the past

two years – scored 72 votes to become the building’s First Alternate. The person most associated in voters’ minds with Farance, Council Secretary Helen Chirivas, was punished, taking just 26 votes. Along with her husband, Treasurer Russell Fields (23 votes), she scored behind two other candidates, Andrew Giacalone and Mihaela Preradovic.

None are shut out from participating in RIRA activities. Alternates are expected to attend all Common Council meetings, in order to be fully informed in the event an absence puts them in a position to vote. Moreover, RIRA committees are open to all Island residents, and many get their

first taste of RIRA in just that way, when they sign on to deal with a specific problem or promote a specific cause.

Officers

President Jeff Escobar succeeds himself. Some 908 voters took the opportunity to pencil in a numbered box on the Scantron voting sheets, even though he was unopposed. Escobar moved up from Vice President earlier this year when Ellen Polivy, elected two years ago, resigned the presidency.

Westview resident Sherie Helstien also succeeds herself as Vice President. After Polivy’s resignation and Escobar’s change of post, the Council accepted her as a new Westview delegate, then made her the new Vice President. She had served as Council Secretary See **RIRA**, page 10

How the votes stacked up – page 10

Beacon and Cornell Team To Turbocharge Island’s After-School Programs

by Briana Warsing

“We’re doing some new things,” says Roosevelt Island’s Beacon Program Director, Kim Massey. “We have a lot of great opportunities because of Cornell coming in. We just have to take advantage of them and make it happen.”

One of those new things is LEGO Robotics. It combines science and mathematics concepts with soft skills, such as creative thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills, to boost 21st-century science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills. All projects follow a design engineering process as used by engineers in various industries. It is hands-on, multidisciplinary, and collaborative.

Cornell is sponsoring this activity, and is also covering all of the attendant competition and robot costs. Says Massey, “We’re really working on the middle school, and Cornell helps us get new programming. They look for programs they think are interesting and try to find ways to help us.”

Another program that Cornell is helping out with is an entrepreneurship program called BizWorld. Finding such an entrepreneurship program was a goal of Massey’s. She says, “It’s important for kids to

know that you can always reinvent yourself. If you can dream it, do it. I want the kids to have that. I *don’t* want them to think, *I can’t do that.*”

Beacon

In the Beacon after-school program, kids meet in the PS/IS 217 cafeteria at 2:45 p.m. After a snack and something to drink, they break into six groups for homework help until 4:00 p.m. The goal is to complete all homework. One-on-one tutoring is available. Middle-school teachers work with the middle-school students on their homework. Beacon counselors, college students, or recent college graduates help the other students with theirs. Massey says, “For the most part, kids go home with their homework done.”

After homework help, activities vary by day and by age group. Perhaps a LEGO Robotics class. Or it might be a Codesters day. Codesters is a learn-to-code program for kids. According to Massey, “They have a really good time learning that.” Students in Codesters learn Python, which is the most popular language for teaching coding, and the programming language used by Google, Instagram, and Pinterest.

A middle-school math teacher leads the class. Massey says, “We See **Education**, page 10

Briefly...

• The **PS/IS 217 PTA** is working hard at raising money for the school. There’s a Thanksgiving Pie Sale in progress (and who *doesn’t* need a Thanksgiving pie?). To get in on the fun (and food), go to tinyurl.com/217pies. Last day to order – Monday, November 17.

Meantime, PS/IS 217’s Direct Fall Appeal raised over \$45,000, with a 42% rate of participation. The Halloween Carnival brought in \$5,000.

And one final reach for funds: Islanders who shop on Amazon.com can enter the shopping site through www.217pta.com, and the school will receive a percent cut on the purchases.

• **Coler Hospital** will get \$181 million in Sandy relief funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. A flood wall will be built to protect critical parts of the building, and a generator will be replaced. The funds also cover electrical work already completed. The funding is part of a \$1.6 billion package obtained by the City for its Health and Hospitals Corporation.

Members of the newly constituted RIRA Common Council posed for a “class photo” at their first meeting Wednesday night, just 23 hours after the polls closed in the election that put them in office.



The Editorial Page

State of The WIRE

On Wednesday night, the RIRA Common Council was presented with a dilemma arising from *The WIRE’s* decision to observe standard journalistic practice with regard to branded columns. The one in question was *The RIRA Column*, which apparently has sometimes appeared on a local blog in addition to appearing here in the publication that requested it and that shepherds it through the publication process.

The issue, as *The WIRE* sees it, is that we subsidize an unfettered opinion and information column for both *altruistic* and *commercial* reasons. *Altruistically*, we want Islanders to have information and it’s good to provide a channel for it.

But *The WIRE* is not a charity. While it does not make a profit, it must pay its bills, like any other newspaper. That’s the role of advertising. Follow this reasoning: A branded column is a special privilege, given in an exchange of value. The writer gets free rein in a guaranteed spot, every issue. In exchange, *The WIRE* gets a column that appears nowhere else. That makes the paper more of a “must” for readers, and enhances the likelihood that readers will see the advertising that pays the bills.

The *commercial* reason, then, is to maintain a break-even financial stucture by attracting more advertisers, and to do that by attracting readers with material available nowhere else.

Without that essential exchange of value – that is, if the column appears elsewhere – a subsidized column becomes a liability rather than an asset. It’s then a press release, and press releases are typically cherry-picked for news, and almost never published as supplied.

For that reason – standard journalistic practice and financial; survival – *The WIRE* will observe the difference between press releases and branded columns, and, in the columns, insist on exclusivity.

But digital media – websites and blogs – are welcome to link to *The WIRE’s* website, MainStreetWIRE.com – because that’s one more chance for readers to see the advertising in the full edition of the paper, or the national advertising that appears around the edges of the site’s home page and news pages. Such linking is standard in the media industries, while any wholesale taking of material requested by and developed for *The WIRE* is something else.

A case can be made that officials like the presidents of RIRA and RIOC should use possible media outlet – that is, speak through press releases, not branded columns. That choice remains available. But we believe they should use both, so we will continue to make space for branded columns available to appropriate organizations when industry standards are observed and the newspaper’s break-even imperative is met.

DL

At the time of this publication, and with your votes this past Tuesday, over 30 of our neighbors will have been seated as officers and building representatives on the Common Council of RIRA, your Roosevelt Island Residents Association. Answering the call to serve the Island and its residents, this new Council, like others in the past, is tasked with being your voice and your representation to RIOC, the City, and the State. It will work to find solutions to problems, old and new, that affect us, and to find ways to strengthen community ties.

Congratulations are in order not only for those who put themselves out there now to run in some highly contested races, but also to those who served in the two-year Common Council term just ended. It was a privilege to serve with the previous Council members, and I welcome both the new members and those who were re-elected or are returning after a hiatus. Thanks, too, to those who stepped up to run this election, to ensure that RIRA and its Common Council will continue.

With the election behind us, it is now time for the Common Council to roll up its sleeves and get back to the work that it should have been doing for the past two years. The era of internal strife is over. The energy and resources that the recent Council spent on meaningless process, targeted attacks, and internecine politics will be redirected to what Islanders want RIRA to do – deal with community issues and make Roosevelt Island a better place to work, play, and live. I look forward to working with the new Council as its President.

To ensure that the Common Council is always as aware as possible of residents’ concerns, we will be reaching out to the community in a number of ways, seeking everyone’s feedback via a number of ways – we’ll use both current technology and old-fashioned mechanisms to establish ongoing outreach to you and to receive ongoing input from you.

To begin this term, I have a number of initiatives

The RIRA Column



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

that I will be asking the Common Council to focus on.

- Work with Community Board 8, the Department of Transportation, RIOC, and the City Planning Commission to conduct a study and to find transportation and transportation-safety solutions for the Island and the Island roadways for the next five years, including a vision statement on transportation alternatives, improvements to existing systems, and safety enhancements.

- Study the likely impacts of the three remaining towers being built in Southtown, and hold a number of RIRA-led meetings of residents, RIOC, and the project’s stakeholders, to address those impacts and mitigate them.

- Study the environmental and health impacts, to Island residents, of the reinstatement of the East 92nd Street Marine Transfer Station.

- Prepare an advisory statement on the current state of Motorgate and its services to the Island – and the improvements that residents believe are necessary – and address infrastructure problems that pose high community risk.

- Address the question of safety and patrol initiatives for the north end of the Island.

I hope these efforts will prove to be a fraction of the work that the Common Council accomplishes this year.

Other Council members will, of course, put forward their own initiatives.

And we will have the all-important ongoing input from you, the residents, to direct our attention and efforts where they serve you.

The WIRE publishes these columns as a service to the community and to the entities invited to provide them, and does not control or censor their content.

Happy fall! Cornell Tech celebrated some big news on the Island since last we wrote. As our campus on the south end of Roosevelt Island begins to take shape, and we’re less than three years away from opening the first phase, we now have a presence on Main Street: Cornell Tech’s new community space at Gallery RIVAA (Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association), at 527 Main Street.

Every Wednesday and Friday, I am onsite at the gallery from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m., sometimes joined by my Cornell Tech colleagues. We hosted an open house at the gallery in September, and I was thrilled so many residents stopped by. If you haven’t yet, I encourage each of you to visit the gallery to learn about Cornell Tech, check out our campus renderings, chat with me – and, of course, see the amazing works of art on view at the gallery.

Through the new gallery space, Cornell Tech plans to bring its vision and its interplay of technology and creativity to the wider community, as well as to share information about the progress of the academic programs and campus construction. In the future, we also hope to host some programming at the gallery from the larger Cornell University community, including Cornell’s Johnson Museum of Art.

In addition to our presence at Gallery RIVAA, Cornell Tech volunteers had a great time last month at Roosevelt Island’s Fall for Arts Festival, and we also participated in and contributed to the annual Halloween Parade, two wonderful, family-friendly celebrations on the Island. I know we join many Islanders in expressing a huge thanks to RIOC, Urban American, the Roosevelt Island Youth Program, and the many Roosevelt Island residents, businesses, and organizations that make these events possible.

Last month, we also held our quarterly Cornell Tech Community and Construction Tast force meeting, where we provided everyone with an update on our bargaining efforts. As of October 1, we have avoided more than 3,350 truck trips through our use of bargaining, and that number continues to grow every week.

At the task force meeting, we continued the conversation about tree conservation. Based on discussions at our previous task force meeting in July, Cornell Tech and its engineer presented some modified designs, and walked the group through the implications of each configuration as they relate to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic. Some residents expressed concerns

The Cornell Column



Jane Swanson
Cornell Community Liaison
sjs399@cornell.edu

about saving as many trees as possible, something that Cornell Tech is committed to doing. We will continue to keep the task force updated and engaged on these efforts as we work together to strike a balance between tree conservation, safety, and the need to provide robust infrastructure to support the site. Cornell Tech Director of Capital Projects Andrew Winters also unveiled some images of the historic murals we uncovered in Goldwater Hospital. The murals are in the process of being restored at two conservation studios in Manhattan, and will eventually be displayed on our campus.

Updates were also provided on our community and education engagements, including a number of after-school programs at PS/IS 217 that focus on computational literacy.

At our temporary campus at the Google building in Chelsea, an exciting semester is under way. We have more than 100 students in three master’s and Ph.D. programs. The students are hard at work on company projects, with practitioners from local tech companies working on campus with them every week. We also welcomed four new faculty members to campus, all experts in their fields.

Cornell University recently reached an important milestone, the naming of the university’s 13th President: Elizabeth Garrett, current Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Southern California. Ms. Garrett visited Cornell Tech earlier last month, and has already visited Roosevelt Island. As many of you know, Cornell’s current President, David Skorton, was named Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution earlier this year. Ms. Garrett will assume the presidency on July 1, 2015.

To hear more news about Cornell Tech and campus construction, I hope many of you will attend our town hall meeting on Monday, December 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the Manhattan Park Community Center at 8 River Road.

For the latest information on the project, please sign up for construction updates and visit our website at construction.tech.cornell.edu.


Published by **The Main Street WIRE™**
©2014 Unisource2000™ Inc.
531 Main St. #413, NYC10044

News **212-826-9056**
Urgent news **917-617-0449**
Advertising **917-587-3278** or
212-751-8214
Circulation **212-935-7534**
e-mail **MainStreetWIRE@usa.net**
Website NYC10044 – nyc10044.com

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

Where's *The RIOC Column*?

For over 15 years and nearly a half-million words, *The WIRE* has subsidized publication of *The RIOC Column*, providing a cost-free direct channel of communication from the President of RIOC to every Roosevelt Island resident. But *The WIRE* is an independent publication produced by residents for residents – not a public relations vehicle for RIOC or any other entity.

Columns are special. They are not subject to editorial judgment, they are branded to be identified as such, and they appear in guaranteed space regardless of their news value and their sometimes self-praising public relations content. As such, they are an *exchange of value*: The writer gets to say whatever s/he wishes. The newspaper gets exclusive content that makes the publication more valuable to readers, and, therefore, more valuable to advertisers – the sole source of funding in the case of *The WIRE*.

But RIOC has now decided to eliminate that essential exchange of value by turning the column into a general press release – specifically, by providing it simultaneously to one blogger who wants to publish it as though it was prepared for his use or for general release, rather than at *The WIRE*'s request for *The WIRE*.

General press releases are different from columns. While they are sometimes used for important announcements, just as often they are self-serving write-ups intended to make their issuer look good. Such press releases, particularly from government agencies like RIOC, are often ignored by the press. When they are considered, a reporter is usually assigned to verify the “facts” presented, to gather opposing viewpoints, to eliminate self-congratulatory language, and to write a factual and balanced presentation of the information. In any case, press releases don't qualify as branded columns.

RIOC's columns have varied over the years, from valuable discussions of RIOC policy to useless rehashes of Island history copied from the *WIRE* website. But *The WIRE* has continued to offer the column space, confident that readers recognize the difference between wheat and chaff. It has been a service – both to the community and to the State agency that makes all the important decisions about how the Island is run.

Now, however, the essential exchange of value has been tipped to greatly reduce the column's value to *The WIRE* – by turning it into a general press release. (In the interest of peace and continuity, *The WIRE* offered significant concessions to RIOC; these were refused.)

To be clear, bloggers have always been welcome to link to the columns and other *WIRE* content on *The WIRE*'s website, MainStreetWIRE.com. Linking is a standard in the media industries.

Given RIOC's decision to replace a qualifying column with a general press release, *The WIRE* will now apply standard journalistic practice in the handling of those press releases. Instead of guaranteed publication, we will be selective, eliminating puffery and avoiding the recent redundant recitations of events already available in *ComingUp* listings. When press

releases contain information of value to residents, we'll have balanced reportage or a simple summary of key points. The branded *RIOC Column*, as such, will disappear.

Nonetheless, *The WIRE*'s offer – guaranteed cost-free publication of the RIOC President's words, not subject to editorial judgment or contradiction within the column, in exchange for an exclusive rendering of that material – remains open. *The WIRE* has no desire to control the information RIOC puts out in its general press releases. But we will observe industry practice with regard to columns, which, to be columns, must be exclusive treatments of the content, prepared specifically and exclusively for the newspaper.

We believe RIOC has a responsibility to communicate with every resident – not just those who happen to visit a blog. (*The WIRE* is distributed, free, to every apartment on Roosevelt Island.) We applaud RIOC's recent efforts to increase clarity and accuracy in its online postings and broadcast emails, but recognize, as RIOC should, that only a very limited subset of residents receive them.

We believe RIOC does a disservice to itself and Island residents by turning down *The WIRE*'s offer of the exchange of value involved in having a regular appearance in guaranteed space. But, recognizing the need to maintain the viability of the community's newspaper as an advertising medium (and therefore its barely-break-even financial viability), we will now observe standard journalistic practice with regard to the exclusivity of columns and treatment of press releases.

DL

At the invitation of *The WIRE*, RIOC provided this response:

Going forward, RIOC will continue to provide the president's column to *The WIRE* in the same format in which it has been provided in the past. While we understand that the editor now feels he must regard this communication as a press release, we are sorry to see this longstanding relationship come to an end. As requested, we have asked that other outlets wait to publish the report until after *The WIRE* has been issued and we have received confirmation that this request will be honored. We regret that an agreement could not be reached at this time and would be happy to contribute to Roosevelt Island's community newspaper in the future.

Highlights of news in RIOC's press release this week:

- RIOC is upgrading its local community and emergency alert system from e-mail-only to allow selection of alerts by phone, email, and/or text message, as well as a capability for restricting messages to specific topic areas. The new system goes live Monday, November 17. Sign up at rioc.ny.gov.
- RIOC also invites residents to its Sportspark programs, which are listed in *ComingUp* on pages 3 and 6. There's more information at rioc.recdesk.com or by email to Eddie.Perez@rioc.ny.gov.
- RIOC is soliciting suggestions for further expansion of Sportspark programs, which can be sent to information@rioc.ny.gov.

The
RIOC
Column

Reader comment welcome:

Charlene.Indelicato@rioc.ny.gov
MainStreetWIRE@usa.net

Senior Center
listings – page 6

The
WIRE

Letters

To the Editor:

What is the primary mission of RIOC? Is it not to serve the needs of the Roosevelt Island community? The recent lowering of the average water temperature in the Sportspark pool from 83-84 to 81-82 does not serve the needs of the average Roosevelt Island user, or outside groups. Over the past few years, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of Island families, babies, children, young Marlins, seniors, and casual swimmers at Sportspark pool. In fairness to all, including the faster lap swimmers and older Marlins, for years the water temperature was kept at an average of 83-84. This seemed to serve the average user, throwing out the extremes (such as a woman who requested 70 degrees, which is below the Olympic average of 75-82 degrees).

To serve the needs of the majority, we have no choice but to disregard extremes on both the hot and cold ends. I recently asked RIOC

To the Editor:

It is outrageous that nobody on the RIOC Board has had the common decency, much less the common sense, to place a bench across the street from the closed turnaround at Gristedes that has had so much construction recently – outrageous that the elderly and the infirm have to stand and wait for a bus, simply because no bench has been placed there.

Ed Hussey

to verify the numbers, supporting the sentiment of the community members that I have spoken with, and restore the average temperature to 83-84 degrees.

Thus far, they have not commented. I ask that RIOC fulfill its mission, and serve the needs of the majority of Sportspark pool users, and restore the average to 83-84 degrees.

Roberta Kleiman

To the Editor:

As an Island pioneer, reading the article *Subway Service Here Reaches the Quarter-Century Mark* (October 25) stirred up many memories.

Those who use the Roosevelt Island Station have probably noticed water dripping down the subway platform walls for several years. One would think that RIOC and/or RIRA would have been on top of this. But they seem to have tunnel vision, and focus only on Cornell Tech and pettiness. As more work is being done on the Second Avenue system and the LIRR connections, water can sometimes be seen cascading down those walls. Surely, this is neither healthy nor safe!

So, is our under-the-river station at risk of being totally flooded? Is our sliver of land in the East River in danger of being sunk? Shouldn't the newly elected RIRA Common Council be proactive and put this at the top of its agenda, while current MTA construction/expansion

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Relay for Life meet & greet, **Sat Nov 8** 9am, Farmer's Market. Seeking volunteers for third annual Roosevelt Island event.

– Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events –

See separate listing, page 6.

– The Next Two Weeks –

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

Hands-Only CPR Training, **Tue Nov 11**, 8pm, 12th-floor Conference Room, 546 Main St. Continues second Tue of every month through 2015.

Historical Society Field Trip to the Fisher Landau Center for Art, Long Island City, **Thu Nov 13** 11:30am. Members \$25, others \$35. Reservations via RooseveltIslandHistory@gmail.com or 212-688-4826.

Women's Movie Group presents **Makers: Women who Make America**, **Thu Nov 13** 7pm, party room, 425 Main St. \$7 donation. RSVP to RlwomenMovie@gmail.com; bring healthy snacks or drinks for six.

RI Community Coalition meeting and board election, **Thu Nov 13** 7pm, 12th-floor conference room, Senior Center, 546 Main St. Cornell update. **Mammograms** for women over 40 (all insurance plans accepted; free for those eligible), **Sat Nov 15** starting 9am, om the ScanVan on Main Street at Good Shepherd Plaza. Appointment required. Call 800-564-6868. Sponsored by City Councilmember Ben Kallos.

Islander Bonnie Goodman appears in *Seven*, **Sat Nov 15** 3pm, Don't Tell Mama, 343 W. 46th St. \$20 + two-drink minimum. Reservations: 212-757-0788. Also **Sat Nov 22**.

Constituent service hours for City Councilmember Ben Kallos, **Wed Nov 19** 4-7pm, Senior Center. (Note change from 1st to 4th Wed)

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

Community Conversation about the new Roosevelt Island Library, **Thu Nov 20** 6-8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Update, share ideas. Sponsored by Councilmember Ben Kallos.

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

The Main Street WIRE– **Sat Nov 22**. Advertising deadlines: Display ads, Wed Nov 12; decision date for circulars/inserts, Tue Nov 18; 5,500 copies due Thu Nov 20. Holiday issue: Dec 13. 2015: Jan 10, 24; Feb 7, 21; Mar 7, 21; Apr 4, 18; May 2, 16, 30; Jun 13, 27; Aug 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.

Nepalese Costumes by Basana Chhetri, exhibit at Octagon Gallery, **Sat Nov 22**. 9am-8pm daily. Through Fri Nov 28.

Opening Reception for *Snow*, winter show of Gallery RIVAA members, **Sat Nov 22** 6-9pm, Gallery RIVAA. Exhibit runs through Jan 18.

– Future Weeks –

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

Opening Reception for *Rivival* by Basana Chhetri, a show of Nepalese costumes, **Wed Nov 26**, 5-8pm (see Nov 22 listing above).

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.

A Christmas Story at Library Movie Night (adults), **Tue Dec 23** 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, Gallery RIVAA, 527 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.

To RIOC:

Is there any chance that Roosevelt Island could get a pedestrian/cycling bridge to Manhattan, such as the one between Randall's Island and 102nd Street? This would surely alleviate some of the traffic congestion here due to the Island's increasing population. Also, it

would make the commute more efficient and cost-effective for some, who would no longer have to rely on the shoddy “service” provided by the MTA.

My weekday commute using the F and 6 trains has been very painful and frustrating, with delayed, stalled, and/or over-crowded trains. In fact, the only mode of MetroCard mass transit that I use that I could call dependable is the Tram, and that is probably because it is run by RIOC and not by the dreaded MTA.

Essie D. Owens

Kent Kurkiewicz

Additional letter on page 14
Letters Deadline for Nov. 22 issue – Tue., Nov. 18, 5:00 p.m.



ROSE
ASSOCIATES

A hand-drawn map of a room layout on a piece of paper. The map is divided into several colored regions: a large purple area on the left, a green area on the right, and a blue area at the top. The purple area contains several wavy lines representing bushes or trees, with a small circle labeled 'O' and the word 'Office' written vertically. The green area contains a wavy line representing a bush, with the label '# Bathroom' written next to it. The blue area contains a wavy line representing a bush. A large, irregular shape in the center is labeled 'EXIT' with a red star. The bottom of the map is labeled 'M' and 'W' with wavy lines representing bushes. The map is drawn with black ink and colored markers.

Serving Roosevelt Island families since 1979

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COMING UP

— Continuing Events & Activities —

A listing of **repeating** or **continuing** meetings & events

(A listing of other events scheduled for this weekend and in coming weeks starts on page 3.)

ART EXHIBITS

Symmetry of Thought and Being, group exhibition, Octagon Gallery, through Nov 16, **daily** 10am-8pm.

The Diary, one-person exhibition of Christian Paraschiv, Gallery RIVAA, through Nov 16. Gallery hours **Tue & Thu** 1-5pm, **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm, **Sat & Sun** 11am-5pm.

Snow, RIVAA members winter show, **Tue Nov 11-Sun Jan 18**. Gallery hours **Wed & Fri** 6-9pm, **Sat-Sun** 11am-5pm.

PARKS

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

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

FDR Four Freedoms Park open **daily**; hours 9am-5pm. **Closed** every **Tue**. Free guided tours **Sat** 11am, 3pm; **Sun** 11am.

CLASSES

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

Hands-Only CPR Training, **1st Wed** 10:45am, Senior Center, 546 Main St.; **2nd Tue** 8pm, 546 Main St 12th-floor conference room; **3rd Thu** 5pm, Child School, 587 Main St.; **4th Sun** 5:45pm, Good Shepherd Center, 543 Main.

MUSIC

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

EXERCISE & SPORTS *(alphabetical)*

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

Basketball (adults), **Mon-Thu** 7:30-9:30pm, PS/IS 217. Free.

Bike New York Pop-up Bike Shop, **Sat** 10am-2pm, under helix, ends today for season.

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.

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

Yoga (Vinyassa-flow) with Keren Messer, **Mon** 7:45pm, **Fri** 10am, Good Shepherd Center. Info: KerenMsr@gmail.com.

Yoga (Hatha) with Keren Messer, **Tue** 6:30pm, Good Shepherd Center.

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** 6:30-7:30pm, **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 and 11:30-12noon, Sportspark.

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 *(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.

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

Lunch, **Mon-Fri** noon, Senior Center, 546 Main St. \$1.50. Menus outside social worker’s office. Also see listing below.

REGULAR MEETINGS *(listed 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 and Library, 3-6pm (Oct 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, **4th 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**.

Adventures OFF-Island

compiled by Sara Maher

There’s a chill in the air, but don’t hibernate until you’ve had a little fall fun (and maybe a feast!).

Read some Poe-try

If you’re still in the Halloween spirit, check out *Evermore: The Persistence of Poe* at The Grolier Club. The historic club, one of the first organizations in America to display books as art, has brought together a rare, in-depth look at Poe’s life and works, including the only known manuscript copy of his poem *The Conqueror Worm*.

► Downtown F to Lex/63rd, then walk southwest to 47 East 60th St. Through November 22, Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm. Free admission. grolierclub.org/

Take a Historic Hike

It’s getting frosty fast, but fall is a great time to go for a walk – and learn a little something about your city. Big Onion Walking Tours has a diverse roster of tours you can take, covering the city from DUMBO and Vinegar Hill to the Jewish Lower East Side to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the day after Thanksgiving, they offer their Annual Post-Thanksgiving Multi-Ethnic Eating Tour, combining the history of the Lower East Side with several sampling stops.

► Starting location and time varies based on tour. For the Annual Post-Thanksgiving Multi-Ethnic Eating Tour, take the F to Delancey St. Tours offered daily. Tours are generally \$25 for adults and \$20 for students, seniors and members of the Brooklyn Historical Society. bigonion.com/

Start a New Tradition

Looking for a little pre-Thanksgiving stomach stretch? Smorgasburg gathers 100 food and drink vendors from across the region, and puts them all in one delicious place. Stock up on oysters, pickles, bite-size cheesecakes, or a variety of home goods, and enjoy one last pre-winter picnic on the river.

► F to Jay St-Metro Tech and walk west to 304 Furman St. (Brooklyn Bridge Pier 5). Sundays through November 23, 11am-6pm. Free admission. www.smorgasburg.com/

Or Enjoy Some Old Ones

It wouldn’t be a New York Thanksgiving without the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, now in its 88th year. If you love big-name acts, giant balloons, and even larger crowds, bundle up and find a spot along the 2.5-mile route.

► F to 57th St., 47-50th Sts-Rockefeller Center, 42nd St.-Bryant Park, or 34th St.-Herald Square, then find a spot along Sixth Ave. Thursday, November 27. Parade starts at 9am, but won’t reach Sixth Ave. until about 10:30. Free to watch. tinyurl.com/TgParade

And Then There’s Arlo

Another New York Thanksgiving tradition is Arlo Guthrie’s Annual Thanksgiving Concert at Carnegie Hall. Guthrie and his family have been performing at the Hall for over 40 years, and they return this year for an evening of songs and stories.

► F to 57th St. and walk west to 881 Seventh Ave. Saturday, November 29 at 8pm. Tickets range from \$12.50-\$70 each. carnegiehall.org/

Senior Center

Monday

10:00 **Zumba**

11:00 **Computers**

5:00 **Brain & Body**

Stretch

Tuesday

(closed 11/11 – Veteran’s Day)

10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**

10:30 **Building Strength**

11:00 **Blood Pressure**

1:00 **Paint & Sculpt**

Wednesday

9:30 **Yoga Stretch**

10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**

10:30 **Salsa**

10:45 **CPR Training** (1st Wed, monthly)

11:00 **Social Media for Seniors:** Facebook, Instagram, photos, more

10:45 **Spanish**

12:00 **Bridge**

1:30 **Scrabble**

6:00-8:00 **Computer Lab**

Thursday

(closed 11/27 – Thanksgiving)

9:15 **Chair Pilates**

10:30 **Zumba**

10:45 **Ping Pong**

12:00 **Movie**

1:00-2:30 **Theatre tickets**

at discount prices; see Rema or Annie

3:00 **Computer Basics** (Library)

Friday

9:00 **Building Strength**

10:30 **Computers**

10:30 **Tai Chi**

10:30 **Poetry/Dance**

1:00 **Korean Games**

2:00 **Art with John**

2:00 **Pokeno**

7:00 **Games** (RISA)

Special Events

MetroCard Bus, Mon Nov 10, 11am-12:30pm, at 546 Main St.

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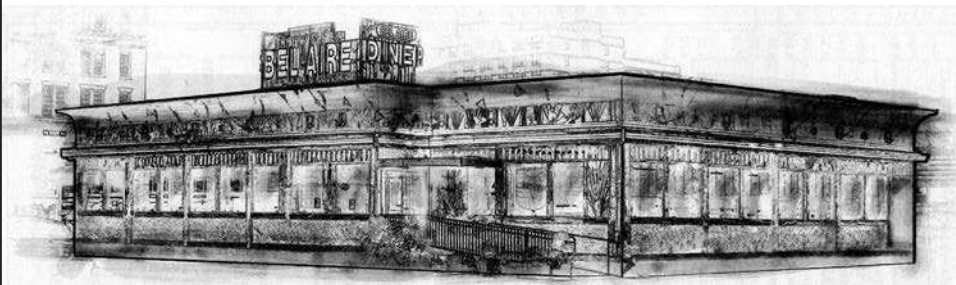
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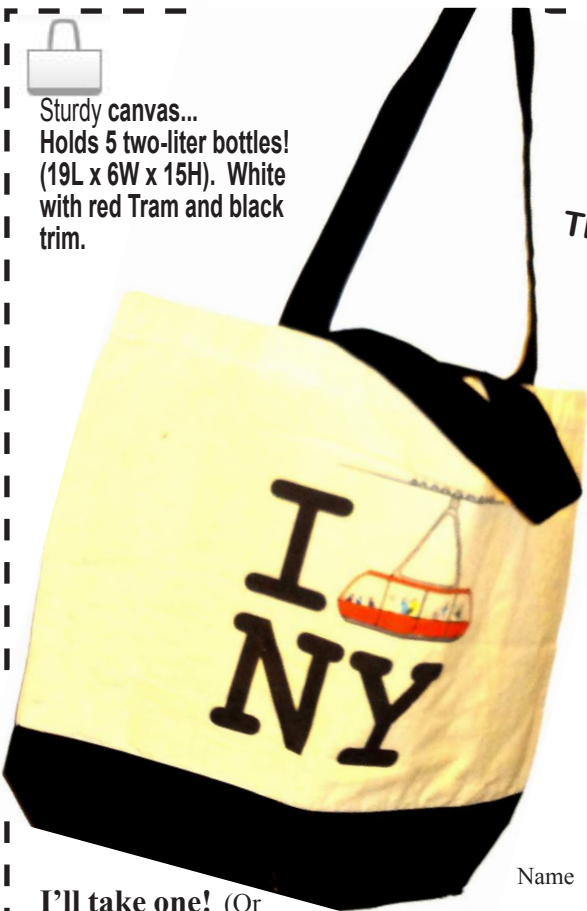
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Photos by Diane Braxton, Karine Wong, and MainStreetWIRE.com. More on MainStreetWIRE.com.

Turned Out for the Annual Halloween Parade!

A large crowd of people, many in costumes, participating in a Halloween parade on a city street. A red pickup truck is visible in the background, and a person in a yellow safety vest is in the foreground. The scene is festive and crowded, with people of various ages and ethnicities. Some are wearing costumes like a witch, a superhero, and a person with a large purple wig. A red pickup truck is driving down the street, and a person in a yellow safety vest is walking towards the camera. The background shows trees and buildings, suggesting an urban setting.

RIRA Council’s Debut Disciplined and Lively

The first meeting of the new Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association breezed through a series of concerns, major and minor, in just over two hours on Wednesday night, under the firm hand of Jeffrey Escobar, who ran unopposed for the job and freely imposed time limits on members’ discourse. The agenda was largely routine, interrupted only briefly by the taking of a traditional “class picture” (page 1).

The Council spent the most time on a resolution presented by the Council’s Communications Committee, headed by Janet Falk. The measure would have required the organization’s president and others to issue all communications to the community through any and all media seeking them. It followed a decision by *The Main Street WIRE* to enforce standard media practice with regard to branded columns, such as *The RIRA Column*, *The RIOC Column*, and *The Cornell Column*. *WIRE* publisher Dick Lutz explained, briefly, during the

public session that began the meeting, that this would turn guaranteed publication of a branded column into a general press release, which would no longer be guaranteed publication in reserved space. (There’s a related discussion regarding *The RIOC Column* on page 3.)

Blogger Rick O’Conor also spoke at the start of the meeting, insisting that the contents of the branded columns should be made available for his blog, calling *The WIRE*’s decision “blackmail.”

About half the Councilmembers spoke on the issue, after which a 15-to-8 vote (with 4 abstentions) rejected the resolution. Highlights:

Ilonka Salisbury: “I feel the need that we should have access wherever we are looking for our news. However, I feel *The WIRE* has been consistent and considerate in its value, and [dependable]. I feel a blog has more of a sense of personal helter-skelter, and is therefore more of a reference point as opposed to credibility of what is going on, on the Island. I think we

have to be very careful... that our credibility [not] be damaged...”

Stevie White: “A press release and a column [are] two different things. If *The WIRE* requests a column from the president, he is within his right to agree.”

Joyce Mincheff: “A press release is not the same as writing a column that provides carte blanche to the writer to have it printed exactly as it was spoken.”

Eva Bosbach: “I hear from [members of the Parents Network] that they are using different media channels to inform themselves. Some only read *The WIRE*, some only read the blog. We should keep the main goal in perspective – that our purpose is to inform as many residents as possible through as many channels as possible.”

Aaron Hamburger: “This

motion is about... having the blog get the president’s column in advance... We should not insert ourselves in a bona fide journalistic dispute [between the operators]. There are two sides; it’s a question of journalistic standards, and it’s not our role to decide that.”

Susana del Campo Perea: “It’s important to keep all media, because today is two, tomorrow it may be three or four... [Our communications have] to be put out there for all the residents.”

John Dougherty: “There’s nothing preventing RIRA from making an exclusive arrangement with *The WIRE* or any other organization. What this resolution would do is tie the hands of RIRA, so that such arrangements could not be made. It restricts the ability to communicate rather than enhancing it.”

Adib Mansour: “I don’t think we should restrict it because some people read digital and some read print and some people read both.”

Erin Feely-Nahem: “I don’t understand what the problem is with the blog being able to [use] the link once it’s published.”

Mickey Rindler: “When the blog requests it, they should get it, period... Times have changed. We have to get with the program. It is necessary for us to give our information to all media outlets.”

Sherie Helstien: “*The RIRA Column* [name] belongs to *The WIRE*. It’s subject to an agreement between the RIRA President and *The WIRE*. It does not belong to us. This is a dispute between *The WIRE* and the blog.”

The discussion, in which some participants spoke more than once, was recorded as video. It will be available next week via MainStreetWIRE.com.

RIRA, from page 1

during the four two-year presidential terms of her husband, Matthew Katz. With 545 votes, Helstien scored higher than her three opponents combined: Helen Chirivas (199 votes), Sharon (Nneka) Pope (181), and M.K. Pathak (86).

In most of the Island’s buildings, there were fewer candidates for delegate posts than the number of seats assigned to each building by the RIRA constitution. Riverwalk representative Aaron Hamburger, who has taken on the job of recruiting candidates, has quietly attributed it to a diminished Council reputation arising from the infighting Escobar wrote that he wants to end.

There was a contest in Rivercross, where one delegate, Anne Kanninen, was returned to her seat with 86 votes. Ellen Polivy, returning to RIRA activities after taking a battering during her presidential term, scored the highest vote count, with 160. Ashton Barfield had 156. Ethel Romm, with 78 votes, moves down to First Alternate, and Sharon Pope (67 votes) is Second Alternate.

In Westview, the only other contested building, Erin Feely-Nahem (82 votes) continues on the Council, perhaps rewarded for leading a determined fight to demilitarize Public Safety by ousting former Director Keith Guerra. Helstien, who scored 71 votes, came in second in the delegate race, but will serve as Vice President instead. Behind her were Julie Palermo (52) and Susan Marcus (42).

As reported on MainStreetWIRE.com Sunday night, there was a last-minute attempt to question the organization of Tuesday’s election, when Farance objected to Helstien’s having served as Election Committee Chair until resigning to run for the vice presidency. (Chairing the Election Committee while running for President or Vice President is forbidden in the RIRA constitution.) Farance had persuaded four others to reject an email vote making Steven White the replacement chair, and to call for an emergency Council meeting. Lacking a quorum, the session fizzled when only Farance (appointed by an out-of-town Escobar to chair the session), Chirivas, and Fields showed up, along with White, Helstien, and Kanninen.

The new Council held its first meeting Wednesday night.

RIRA Election

Tuesday’s Tally: 1,005 Islanders Voted

Turnout in Tuesday’s election for the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) was not a record number, but at 1,005 voters, it was substantial, particularly for a mid-term year when not as many voters are streaming into PS/IS 217 to cast their votes. A few votes were never cast when there was an early-morning delay opening the safe at Public Safety, where the ballots were stored.

Traditional lever-action voting machines were not used this year. Instead, a system more like that used in the the general election was employed, with voters darkening numbers on a ballot form. After all votes were in, the forms were fed through a Scantron machine that read them and compiled the results automatically.

Below, winners are designated with an asterisk (*).

President Jeff Escobar *	908	Manhattan Park (8) Lynne Shinozaki * 93 Steven White * 77 Ilonka Salisbury * 74	Riverwalk (9) Eva Bosbach * 83 Aaron Hamburger * 80 David Evans * 73 Susan Pirard * 70 Melissa Wade * 69 Mickey Rindler * 67 Janet Falk * 66
Vice President Sherie Helstien * Helen Chirivas Sharon (Nneka) Pope M.K. Pathak	545 199 181 86	2 River Road (1) no candidates	
Common Council (42 seats)		4 River Road (1) Jim Bates * 10	546 Main Street (2) Susana del Campo Perea * 13
Island House (3) Adib Mansour * John Dougherty * Rossana Ceruzzi * Frank Farance Andrew Giacalone Mihaela Preradovic Helen Chirivas Russell Fields	137 118 114 72 70 42 26 23	The Octagon (5) Anthony Longo * 29 Isaac Humphrie * 28 Andrea Jones * 27	Roosevelt Landings (7) Joyce Short * 75 Cynthia Ahn * 67 Linda Maynard-Hall * 58 Shirley Coley * 52 Maria Newkirk * 44
		Rivercross (3) Ellen Polivy * 160 Ashton Barfield * 156 Anne Kanninen * 86 Ethel Romm 78 Sharon (Nneka) Pope 67	Westview (3) Erin Feely-Nahem * 82 (Sherie Helstien) 71 Julia Palermo * 52 Susan Marcus * 42 David Marcuson 33 M.K. Pathak 26

There’s more at *MainStreetWIRE.com*

Education, from page 1

are really working with the school so we’re all on the same page. It makes everything that much better.”

After that, there is one more hour, and time for one more activity. Depending on the day and age, it could be arts and crafts, drama, or Mighty Milers.

Mighty Milers is a running program. According to their umbrella group, the New York Road Runners Club, Mighty Milers helps kids build their self-esteem and learn to make and reach personal goals. Massey says the program keeps track of miles, and sends them incentives – medals and t-shirts, for example – based on how many miles they’ve run. Mighty Milers also holds races around the city. Beacon fourth- through eighth-graders participate.

Soccer for Success is for grades one through four, sponsored by the United States Soccer Federation. It covers health and nutrition, leadership skills, and soccer basics. Massey says, “New York City has so many awesome programs” available for Beacon participants.

Another program that excites Massey is a partnership among Beacon, PS/IS 217, and Queens’ Museum of the Moving Image. Together, they are designing a program in film-making and video production.

The goal is to keep the activities interesting. Explains Counselor Emily Aviles, who has been with Beacon for two years, “We change it up between fall and spring. Otherwise, the kids get bored. The older ones are harder to entertain. We have to keep them active and interested.”

Massey estimates the after-school enrollment at about 125 kids. It’s all free.

Roosevelt Island Beacon also sponsors a summer camp, and recreational league soccer that spans Kinderkickers to higher grades. There are also baseball, basketball, and indoor

soccer. For adults, there are evening basketball and yoga, with Pilates starting in January.

Organization

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) administers Beacon programs throughout the five boroughs, providing children aged six and up with structured after-school enrichment activities. There are 80 Beacon programs in the City, in which principals and other school personnel work closely with the community-based organizations that manage each Beacon.

The Beacon program has been around since 1991. The goal of its designers was to integrate youth and community development. In 1991, DYCD Commissioner Richard Murphy, Fund for the City of New York Vice President Michelle Cahill, and then-New York City Mayor David Dinkins conceptualized and led the implementation of the Beacon model in 10 neighborhoods. Simultaneously, Cahill created the Youth Development Institute, a program of the Fund for the City of New York. It provides support and technical assistance to the Beacons. The Island’s Beacon first received funding in 1998.

The Roosevelt Island Youth Program has programs that fit all six of DYCD’s Core Service Areas – academic enhancement; life skills; career awareness and school-to-work transition; civic engagement and community-building; recreation, health, and fitness; and culture and art.

Younger Children

For parents seeking after-school care for younger children, Island Kids offers after-school care for kindergartners. They are picked up at PS 217 and escorted to the Island Kids space at 536 Main Street. The children get a snack, then homework help, then an enrichment activity. They follow the public school schedule, so when PS217 kids have half-days, Island

Kids takes them for the extended day.

Depending on the day, they do sports, history, art, or science enrichment. There are nature walks when the weather is nice, collecting leaves, pine cones, sticks, and bark to use in art projects. One such project was decorating pumpkins for the recent Fall for Arts Festival. They also spend time on the playgrounds and Capobianco Field. Director Nikki Leopold describes the program as very structured. She says that, at 14 participants this year, the program has grown with the Island. “There are a lot more families on the Island these days. We expect to keep growing. It’s very exciting.”

Island Kids allows families to register on a monthly basis, but full-year registrants get priority for available slots. The program costs \$5,500 for the year, or \$600 monthly.

The Day Nursery

Parents of Pre-K students also have after-school opportunities. The Roosevelt Island Day Nursery’s (RIDN) River Road location offers a program for its alumni, with a pickup from PS/IS 217. Currently, there is one after-school class with a maximum enrollment of 15. Full-year enrollment is standard, but Executive Director Pamela Stark says, “We have some flexibility. Talk to us.” The program runs between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m., and is a mixed-age group for students between three and five years of age. Stark cites the mixed-age group as the reason that the after-school session is restricted to alumni, saying, “They have familiarity with mixed-age.”

RIDN after-school is housed in a large room with different stations. There is a space for dramatic play, a “cozy corner” for the kids to decompress, and an art space. Weather permitting, after-school kids also go outside every day as well. There’s yoga once a week, and movement classes. The general vibe is family-like.



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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 complimentary private consultation.

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When Smallpox Was the Killer, the Island Had a Starring Role

by Laura Russo

The recent arrival of Ebola in New York harkens back to a time on Roosevelt Island when smallpox – then among the world's deadliest diseases – plagued the city.

Amid increasing industrialization and immigration, more than 6,000 people died of smallpox in New York City between 1852 and 1875 alone. As public health officials battled each outbreak, the word *quarantine* became part of the popular vernacular, just as it has today thanks to Ebola.

The Smallpox Hospital, now a haunting ruin, was designed by James Renwick, Jr. (St. Patrick's

Cathedral), and built specifically to treat smallpox patients. It opened in 1856 on the extreme south end of what was then known as Blackwell's Island, long before subway tunnel spoil was added to create the land now occupied by Four Freedoms Park. The hospital put the Island at the forefront of an effort to confine and combat the disease. Equipped with 100 beds, the institution cared for both the indigent and those able to pay for their care. Through the practice of quarantine, it played an important role in combating the spread of the disease.

While vaccination against

smallpox was readily available even in the mid-19th century, the combination of a highly contagious disease and a crowded city teeming with newly arrived immigrants kept public health officials on edge.

Each diagnosed case was perceived as a potential outbreak, even without the broad media coverage that Ebola is receiving today.

"Both viruses can be spread by direct contact with bodily fluids or through respiratory droplets," explained Dr. Joanne Pierro of North Shore Long Island Jewish / Staten Island University Hospital. In the 1800s, squalid conditions and crowding in the City made for

easy transmission. It was an ideal breeding ground for smallpox.

"Patients with either virus are only contagious once symptoms begin," Dr. Pierro said of Ebola and smallpox.

While there is controversy surrounding today's Ebola quarantine practices, the current complaints are a far cry from those voiced by families of smallpox patients in the 19th century.

Many patients were taken advantage of financially, or defrauded, during the city's smallpox scourge. An April 18, 1872, headline in *The New York Times* blared, "Small-Pox Horrors: How Patients are Treated

in the Blackwell's Island Hospital."

The Times presented a lengthy list of instances in which families of smallpox victims were subjected to fraud and charged exorbitant fees by undertakers, funeral directors, boat crews, and others. The "testimony from intelligent and honest citizens in regards to it needs no comment, and presents a fearful picture for the public to contemplate," the story said.

Amid a climate of corruption, quarantine remained the sole course of treatment for smallpox patients in the late-19th century.

"In the days of few medical options, quarantining people in a hospital such as [the Smallpox Hospital] was the only solution," said Judy Berdy, President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, who provided material for this report. "Sadly," she said, "it was the only place to put people, since the medical science of the day could [do little to] treat these diseases."

Improved sanitary conditions and public health practices, better housing, and the slowing of immigration helped curb the spread of smallpox. In 1930, the *Times* reported that "smallpox is almost unknown," thanks to a combination of vaccination and preventative medicine.

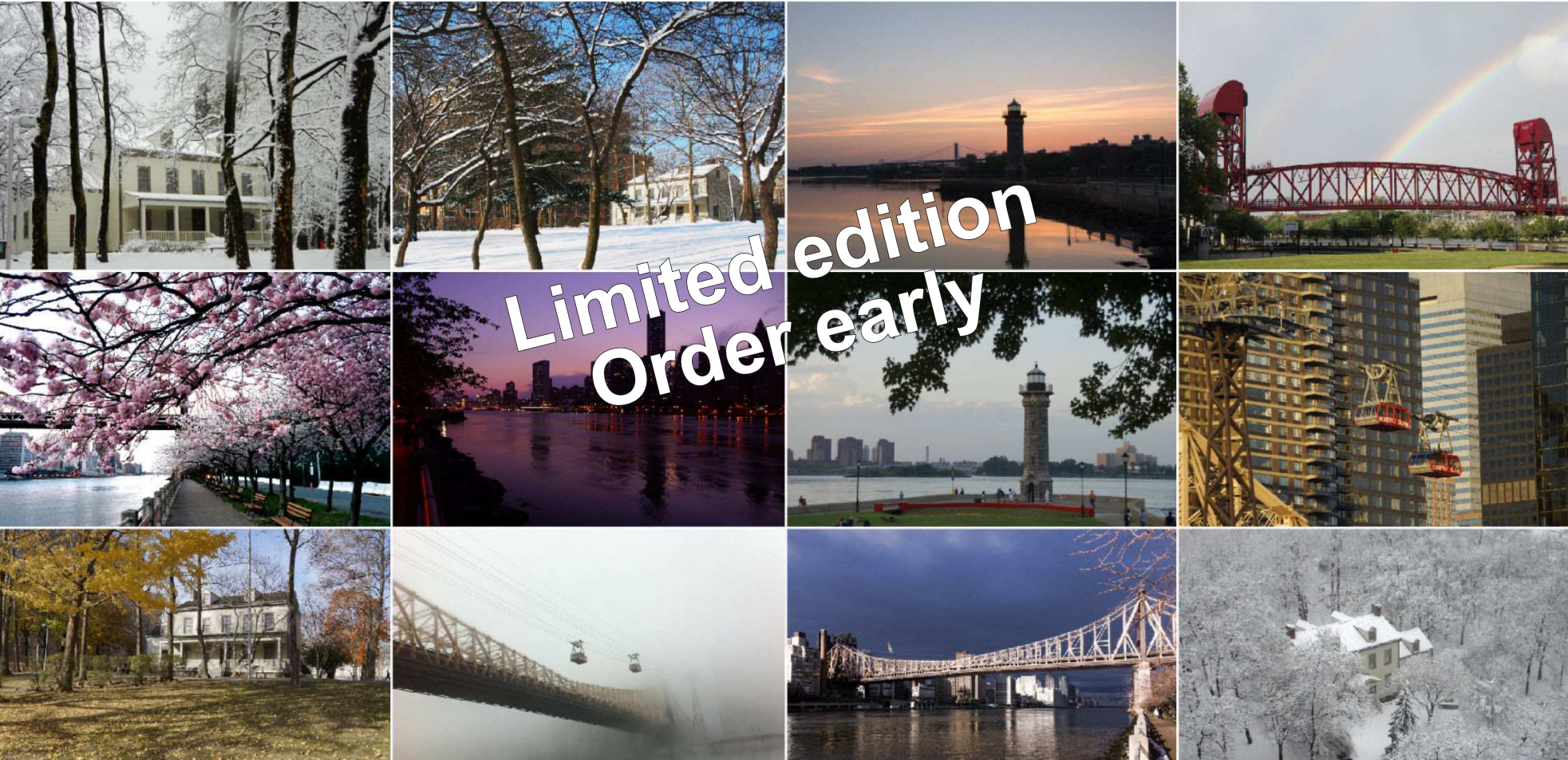
By 1875, smallpox no longer demanded its own hospital, and the Renwick building became the Maternity and Charity Hospital Training School, although Roosevelt Island would be the site of renewed smallpox outbreaks in 1894 and 1899.

Eventually, "through worldwide vaccination efforts, smallpox was eradicated," said Dr. Pierro, "and we hope that, one day, [Ebola's eradication] will be added to their list of similarities."



Photo by Sara Lynn Michener, from *The Main Street WIRE's 2013 Roosevelt Island Calendar*.
(See page 14 for the 2015 calendar, now available.)

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M&D Deli Staying Open While Renovating

by Briana Warsing
M&D Deli is getting a much-needed facelift – a renovation to be completed before the new year. There's a new co-owner, too. Yaser Awawdeh can still number the days – 45 and counting – that he has been Kelly Khalil's partner in the store.
Khalil has been on the Island much longer. He also can count his time here down to the exact moment. He and his late partner, who passed away 12 years ago, "took over on May 10, 1983 [after the previous owner passed away]. I didn't know *anything* about Roosevelt Island. Now, I know *everything* about Roosevelt Island."
It has always been a family business. Khalil's late partner was his brother-in-law. He and Awawdeh are cousins. Both of their sons work there – Sal Khalil and Amman Awawdeh.
Despite the signs outside the deli that say *Pardon Our Appearance During Construction, Today's Pain, Tomorrow's Gain*, it might not be apparent from the outside that there's a renovation under way. But inside, subtle differences are already visible. The wall behind the counter has new cherry paneling, and so does the nook housing the produce and the ice cream in the

front of the store.
The panel hanging from the ceiling above the counter is gone, lending an airier feel to the space.
All the freezers and shelving have been moved from the corner where the ice cream used to be displayed. That area will be part of an expanded kitchen, which the owners agree is necessary for the new menu that they will soon be offering. "[What we had] is not enough [space] to cook," says Awawdeh.
They sought professional help for their menu, and had a consultant who specializes in delis give them recommendations. In their conversation with *The WIRE*, all they'd say about the new menu is that there will be a lot more cooked food. Their consultant said store-made fried chicken and salad bar are mandatory. But the information stops at that – no more about the new menu.
Awawdeh explains, "Breakfast is the busiest time" for the deli, and the new oven they are getting will alleviate some of the morning lines. And there will be an expanded breakfast menu.
The floor no longer has tiling. From the perspective of someone who hasn't been there in a while, simple wear and tear could be the culprit. The store has been open continuously since 1976, and it has not ever been renovated. Awawdeh says of the old look, "That was the old-fashioned way. We change it." Khalil explains, "We're going to fix the whole place. We're changing all of this. The floors, the ceilings, the lighting, the fridges."
The regulars don't care what the tiles look like. As Awawdeh fills a

customer's order, she tells him, "I can't live without your coffee. I have three coffeemakers upstairs. Even that new one, the Keurig, and I can't drink any of it." He hands over a large – light and sweet.
Unlike Trellis, the Deli is remaining open throughout renovation. There are improvements they don't need to be closed to make. Awawdeh's son Amman is making a lot of them. He is often seen outside the store, blue baseball cap on backward, pushing a loaded handtruck

into the store, then coming inside to stock.
One of Awawdeh's points has been simply keeping the shelves stocked and responding to customers' suggestions or requests for new products. He says, "Before, we didn't have anything." He points down an aisle across from the counter as an example of the new way. All the shelves are full, and the cans and boxes are all facing out.
Part of the problem was that Khalil was running the business

alone and he's tired. He says, "I'm retiring. I'm very sick. I'm 78 – almost 78 and a half – and I've worked very hard." Awawdeh smiles a big smile and says, "I'm taking over the management of the business."
Khalil is wistful when he talks about the kids on the Island that he has seen grown up. "They were little children and now they're big. They know me and I know them."
"I'll be coming around. I'll be here two hours a day, perhaps."



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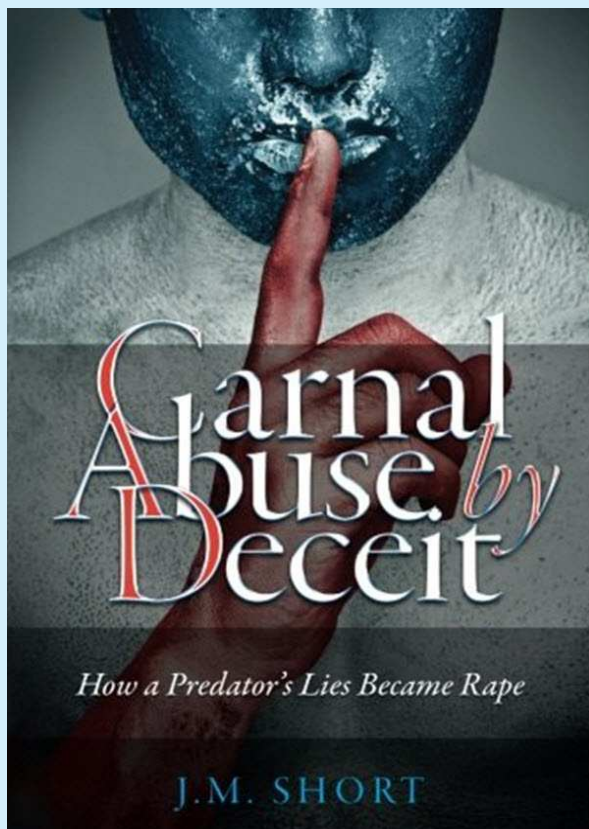
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	Goals	Points	Rank
Minors			
Jorge/Eddie	5	7	3
Alan/Lee	5	9	2
Nicola/Marco	5	4	4
Dan/Miguel	12	19	1
Sophomores			
Luca/Lee	4	5	5
Sabrina/Marc	10	12	2
John/Alan	8	14	1
Andrey/Tony	13	9	3
Carlos/Manuel	8	6	4
Johanne/Cristian	13	9	3
Juniors			
Scott/John	28	18	1
Jeff/Wallie	14	10	2
Johan/Richard	12	7	4
John/John	16	8	3
Stephane/Julien	23	18	1
Moses/Joachim	8	0	5
Seniors			
Jack/Daniel	19	6	4
Tarek/Bryan	28	12	2
Jesse/Romance	37	15	1
Boris/Hector	27	9	3

Today's Games (Sat., Nov. 8)	
Minors	
9:30am – Dan/Miguel vs Alan/Lee	
9:30am – Nicola/Marco vs Jorge/Eddie	
Sophomores	
10:30am – Luca/Lee vs Carlos/Manuel	
10:30am – Johanne/Cristian vs Sabrina/Marc	
11:30am – John/Alan vs Andrey/Tony	
Juniors	
11:30am – Scott/John vs Stephane/Julien	
12:45pm – Moses/Joachim vs Jeff/Wallie	
12:45pm – Johan/Richard vs John/John	
Seniors	
2:00pm – Tarek/Bryan vs Jesse/Romance	
2:00pm – Boris/Hector vs Jack/Daniel	

JUNIOR TENNIS

Two Roosevelt Island teens won coveted Jacob Javitz scholarships through the New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL) this year. The \$5,000 awards went to Ayan Ahmed and Isadora Braune, pictured below with their proud fathers and coach Joyce M. Short.

Ayan will use his scholarship toward tuition at Brooklyn College, where he is enrolled in the School of Pharmacy. Isadora is following in the footsteps of her sister and brothers by attending Cornell University.

This isn't the first instance in which Isadora's siblings served as role models to illuminate her path. All four are avid tennis players, and all four competed for and won coveted spots on NYJTL's Advanced Tournament Team.

Ayan has participated in NYJTL programming for several years. He has won citywide intra-site tournaments, and has introduced hundreds of NYJTL kids to tennis in his role as a senior intern for the League.

The new season for NYJTL programming begins today (November 8) at the Roosevelt Island Racquet Club. The League meets

every Saturday and Sunday morning from 6:00 to 8:00 between November 8 and the end of March. Breakfast is served in the lounge immediately after play.

All community programming for the League is completely free of charge, and open to all children aged 5-18.

Participation in NYJTL programming not only provides character and skills development for all our children, but also significant educational support. For instance, this winter, 20 NYJTL kids will be treated to a free Princeton Review program for SAT prep. The program is available for high school juniors who participate in NYJTL activities.

Registering your child for the early-morning winter session is easy. Just show up with sneakers and a smile to take advantage of a program that builds a lifetime of character, one point at a time!

NYJTL is supported through the generosity of the City Council and our City Councilmember, Ben Kallos, as well as the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation. For further information, see www.nyjtl.org, or call the League office at 718-786-7110.



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Letters

To the Editor:

I was a poll captain for nine hours at the RIRA election on Tuesday and, if you voted, there is a good chance you saw me running around and getting in the way. These Resident Association elections are a massive operation, requiring months of planning and dozens of volunteers to pull off. Whether you were thrilled with the outcome, as I was, or disappointed, the folks who brought you this impeccable election should be thanked.

I must start with my wife, the overwhelming victor for RIRA Vice President, and Chair of the Election Committee until she stepped down upon declaring her candidacy. Months ago, she researched the new technology that was used at our election, provided the hard- and software required, assembled the core group that produced this extravaganza, and then, turned the committee over to Stevie White so that she could campaign like crazy. As for Stevie, hereafter known as Stevie Wonder, he took over the technical issues, tested the Scantron scanner that tallied the votes, and saw us through a myriad of the boo-boos and glitches that always plague new technology and new methods. He was truly awesome, a term I use sparingly.

Following a difficult term in RIRA,

Nominations Chair Aaron Hamburger nevertheless convinced 41 of our neighbors to run for seats on the Common Council, and I commend him for his persuasiveness. Each two-year RIRA term is defined by the people who win office, and the Class of 2014 looks to be a dandy. Special thanks must go to Ashton Barfield, institutional memory for all election arcana and poll-worker guru. She was responsible for rounding up the people – covering 10 election districts over this 15-hour period – who signed you in, explained the new system, and ensured that you voted only once.

And, finally, my hat's off to the dozens of poll workers, covering 150 time slots at the tables, who volunteered, often at inconvenient hours, to ensure that Roosevelt Islanders got to express their choices for the RIRA Common Council that represents community interests and issues to the world. Volunteerism is the essential core of what RIRA is about, and Islanders, both Council members and regular RIRA members (i.e., residents like me), stepped up to the plate once again to assert our right to democracy at the ballot box. We did it again, neighbors, and now, I need a rest.

Matthew Katz

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

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