



The Main Street WIRE

Coldest Winter The season's extended periods of low temperatures have brought ice back to the river for the first time in many years. This was the view from a Tram cabin on Tuesday, just after a tug and tow cut a path.

Assemblymember Seawright, in Her Inauguration Speech, Promises a Bill to Thread the Thicket of Self-Governance

"Is Roosevelt Island in the house?" asked Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, as she spoke at her inauguration event last Sunday. Roosevelt Islanders were there, and they responded enthusiastically. "My office is already drafting legislation to address the governance of Roosevelt Island that takes into account the governor's veto of past legislation while maintaining the principle of increased community representation," Seawright said.

She spoke of trips to Roosevelt Island with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney to "examine leaks on the F line, have lunch at the firehouse, tour the exciting new construction of Cornell Technion,

and stuff the local *WIRE* newspaper with inserts."

"We will continue to fight," Seawright said. She then listed some priorities:

- Affordable housing
- Senior citizen services
- Open space and green space
- Safer bike lanes
- The Dream Act
- An increased minimum wage
- Better quality of life

"We need many reforms in Albany, including campaign finance, ethics, and more transparency and disclosure," she said.

Seawright paid tribute to Julia Richman, an activist for women's rights born 160 years ago, and her

grandmother, born the same year. "Imagine them, smiling today, as I stand before you as the first woman to be elected to the New York State Assembly from the 76th District."

Seawright invited residents of her district to an open house and Women's History Month celebration on Friday, March 20, at 1365 First Avenue (time to be announced).

Extended Delays in Fixing Elevators at Tram Station Serious Hardship for Many

by Briana Warsing

"Yesterday morning was a nightmare." That's a member of the Roosevelt Island Parents Network (RIPN), commenting on the absence of elevator service at the Manhattan Tram station, and the lack of help on the stairs there. The distress appeared to be widely shared.

At 9:35 a.m. Friday, February 13, the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Advisories Alert System notified subscribers that both elevators at the Manhattan Tram Station were "temporarily" out of service. Soon after, the RIPN was buzzing with comments ranging from angry to discouraged.

The problem is not limited to the elevators at the Manhattan Tram station. The subway elevator at 63rd/Lex, which has been out since July 2014, was supposed to be back this month. The MTA has since amended its prediction to the end of May.

On the RIPN network, one parent advised, "Do not ride the Tram if you do not want to carry your stroller." Another warned, "Also, no gate operator on the Roosevelt Island side... on the coldest day of the year."

Later that morning, RIPN Coordinator Eva Bosbach sent an email to RIOC Director of Operations Cy Opperman and Public Safety Director Jack McManus alerting them that families had been having difficulties boarding the Tram on the Island side because no one was opening the gate for stroller access. Then, in Manhattan, there was no one helping on the stairway.

Bosbach requested help from Public Safety, and reminded RIOC of its promise to provide Red Bus service to Manhattan if both elevators were ever out simultaneously.

Later in the day, RIOC responded by providing a shuttle bus for the evening commute between 4:00 and 8:00. Buses picked up outside PS 217 and, in Manhattan, outside Crunch gym on Second Avenue between 58th and 59th Streets. But the service on Friday the 13th was limited to that four-hour period.

Saturday, February 14, brought a new round of complaints. The RIPN member who called the situation "a nightmare" wrote, "The two [Manhattan Station] elevators were out of service. I attempted carrying my kid and stroller, over 70 pounds, [down the stairs] by myself. I got scared and asked RIOC staff for

See **Elevators**, page 12

Briefly...

Struggling with **sleep-training** an infant? You may find a solution tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon at 4:00, when Dr. Micah Resnick speaks to the Roosevelt Island Parents' Network. See *ComingUp*, page 3.

In its fortnightly press release (formerly *The RIOC Column*), RIOC is soliciting Island groups to rent the **Cultural Center**. Email permitting@rioc.nyc.gov or call 212-832-4563. The release also announces dates for Roosevelt Island Day (June 13) and for other events now integrated into *The WIRE's ComingUp* column (page 3, with continuation on page 14).

Pamela Stark Confirmed RIDN Executive Director



confident that under her direction RIDN and its exceptional faculty will continue to serve the Roosevelt Island community with one of the very highest quality child-centered preschool programs in New York City."

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Reem Berro, said, "The board and I are confident that she is the best person for the job given her long history with the school and proven record of exceptional leadership."

Advancing Stark from the interim role followed what the press release described as a "thorough recruitment process" conducted by a committee of current and former RIDN parents, faculty, and alumni."

Stark received her B.A. from St. John's College, her Ed.M. in Early Childhood Special Education from the Bank Street College of Education, and her M.S. from Columbia University's School of Social Work. She served as a consultant to RIDN for 14 years, leading trainings and workshops and advising parents and faculty on a wide range of early childhood developmental and educational issues. She joined the school in 2011 to direct the new Infant-Toddler program at 405 Main Street.

RIDN celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

There's more at
MainStreetWIRE.com

Artist Finds a Medium for Her Whimsy In the Glass of Sweet Shop's Window

by Dick Lutz

Autumn Ashley has the kind of personality that makes you forget everything you've ever heard about the dour nature of the year's third season. Yes, she was born late one fall some 25 years ago, and yes, her mother liked the season, but those may be her only connections with the time of year when light gives way to creeping darkness. She's as bright-eyed and enthusiastic as a gardenful of spring daisies.

What's more, Autumn's art is true to her lively personality, and people walking past Coach Scot's Main Street Sweets have been stopping to admire it – even going inside to thank the artist for the gaiety on the glass. "Youthful and whimsical and happy" are the words she chooses, and though she's describing the intent of her art, she knows how to deliver it.

She's a relatively new Roosevelt Islander, here for just about a year, handy to her work as a Junior Image Editor at Bloomingdale's, where she's worked since last May. While she's lived in Brooklyn, Queens, and out on Long Island, she's also a Texan, though her diminutive frame doesn't shout Texas. She was born in Tennessee, and her family moved to Austin, Texas. There, she studied English and radio-TV-film at the University of Texas, Austin, graduating in 2011.

Autumn pitched the windows idea to proprietor Scot Bobo back in the summer, and she's done a new family of cartoony characters every week since. "I just approached him and said, 'I'm an illustrator and I'd

See **Autumn**, page 12



Letters

To the Editor:

Roosevelt Island is such a lovely place for families, seniors, and the disabled, because getting around is easy and all places are accessible. However, it is almost impossible to get here without the use of mobility help like a car or an elevator. It would be very useful to have a foot-bridge to Manhattan or pedestrian access to the Queensboro bridge. Or a ramp on the Manhattan side of the Tram, even if it takes years of negotiations with the City to get all permits needed to use the park-land, as such ramps have to follow strict requirements and cannot be too steep.

As long as there is no ramp on the other side of the Tram, our goal is to have at least one operating elevator on the Manhattan side at all times when the Tram is running. It is too bad that the elevators were not replaced during the recent major renovation of the Tram cabins and stations. They have broken frequently in the past three winters, often both at the same time. In the past, families and other residents with mobility issues like seniors or the disabled could use the sub-way and the elevator at the 63rd/Lex station as an alternative. Unfortunately, the F-Train is still not servicing Roosevelt Island on many weekends, and the street-level elevator at 63rd/Lex will be out of service until May 31, at least.

On behalf of both the RI Parents Network and the RIRA Island Services Committee, with the help of many parents and after many interactions with RIOC and POMA/Leitner, we have been successful in reaching the following sub-goals:

- The need for a complete replacement of the elevators finally got on RIOC’s agenda and was approved for the 2014/2015 budget. Last summer, the elevator door was replaced and the red lift repaired; since then, both have functioned more reliably.
- Signs have been produced to inform residents when one or both units are out of service, and are mostly being placed on the RI side of the Tram.

- RIOC accepted our suggestion that, when both the Tram elevator and the red lift are out of service, an immediate Red Bus shuttle to and from Manhattan will be provided until at least one unit is repaired.

Thank you, RIOC!

With the recent breakdown of both elevators starting Friday, February 13, shortly after 9:00 a.m., we appreciate that RIOC provided Red Bus shuttle service from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. that day, and starting

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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; allow extra time for typesetting. 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.

To the Editor:

What, exactly, is happening to our Roosevelt Island Caring Community?

We miss the friendly Trellis Restaurant while they endeavor to update!

The building owner, the building rental agent, and the folks on the second floor in Albany had Kaie jump through a whole series of hoops to get the plans approved.

Then, after finally giving the project a green light, they have found that the plans they approved were faulty.

And now, overbearing people that they are, the Big Boys tell Kaie he has to pay for plans to correct problems that they had missed in their review.

Four decades ago, this Island started off as a Caring Community. With accelerating speed, the powers-that-be have tilted in favor of the folks at the top of the food chain.

How much further will this overbearing attitude go?

David J. Bauer

To the Editor:

This morning, I arrived at the southbound Motorgate stop at 9:43, to catch the Red Bus that was supposed to have left Octagon at 9:45. I was lured out of the comparative warmth of the lobby of 10 River Road into the 20-degree cold by a bus stopping at 40 River Road – only to see it turn into Motorgate.

There were eight snowplows and three northbound buses – but not a single southbound bus showed up until just after 10:00, arriving at the Tram seconds too late for the next departure.

On my return trip from Manhattan, I took the 11:37 Tram, which arrived at 11:42. The bus finally showed up at 11:58.

Why does RIOC bother posting a Red Bus schedule if it has no intention of sticking to it?

Anita Bonita

To RIOC:

I wiped out while running three weeks ago, and severely sprained my wrist and bruised my ribs and knees. It was on the section of sidewalk between Manhattan Park and Octagon. My foot got caught in the uneven pavement, and I went flying forward. (There was no ice in the vicinity.) The sidewalks and perimeter of the Island seem to have taken a beating this winter. I don’t think repairs for them were mentioned in the \$37 million capital spending recently discussed, though perhaps this sort of repair would be covered in the maintenance budget.

Also, though less urgent in my opinion, there are sections of the perimeter that are in bad shape. There’s a section near the fire station where I’ve seen several runners fall. There are sections of the pavement above the steam-tunnel path that are quite uneven and bumpy. Heading south from the fire station toward Southtown, there are also some bad sections. A woman who uses a wheelchair told me that she can no longer travel on that part of the perimeter. I would also think these irregularities could pose problems for the runners in the many races held on Roosevelt Island.

I hope that the sidewalk repairs will be made as soon as possible, and that the perimeter will also be repaired soon!

The RIRA Island Services Committee is currently looking into this issue.

Roberta Kleiman

Letters deadline

for March 14 issue:
Tuesday, March 10, 5:00 p.m.

The Editorial Page

Outrage

New York State, under Governor Andrew Cuomo, is subsidizing a commercial real estate operation. The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, under Cuomo’s appointee Charlene Indelicato, is complicit. Perhaps unwittingly, the RIOC Board of Directors is also complicit.

Drastic corrective action is needed.

Let’s examine the facts.

Four years ago, the RIOC Board turned Main Street storefronts over to developer Hudson/Related (H/R), in an effort to spruce up Island retail. A good-enough motive, but in putting the deal together, RIOC turned over the second floor at 504 Main Street, above what will become the new home of the Island’s branch of the New York Public Library.

That second floor would have been perfect community space – a boon to the library and ideal for Island groups in need of a decent meeting hall.

Along the way, the Island got hit by Sandy, and the space that was occupied rent-free for 30 years by The Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance was damaged. Acting at the speed of frozen tar, RIOC repaired the quarters, but now, just before reopening the space, has made a surprise announcement to MST&DA that, in the future, MST&DA will be paying rent.

Understand: For 30 years, MST&DA has conducted highly valuable programs that have turned Island children into confident youngsters, ready and able to appear before an audience. Quality theatre has happened there. Top-flight exercise classes have been available.

RIOC’s rationale for imposing fees? Other Island groups need space for their activities, and there’s a shortage of such space.

The upshot? To survive, MST&DA

To the Editor:

Just a short note to congratulate you on perhaps the most informative issue of *The WIRE* we’ve had the privilege of perusing in years – answering many questions that many of us have had as to the status of the tragically delayed Trellis reconstruction; the dismal, now almost completely defunct stationery entrepôt; and whether the now-finally-somewhat-cleaned-up delicatessen should give its bedraggled cat a bath, etc.

And a forte bravissimo to sprightly Judith Berdy for her brave, revelatory comment on *WIRE* stories confronting the mysterious, vastly overpaid Hudson/Related corporation with her analysis and report on its shockingly minuscule accomplishments. After two years, we’re still burdened with two more large empty spaces on busy Main Street – forcing us to trek to Manhattan for little hardware items and slivers of stationery. How many years must we wait for their replacement? As long as it took to restore the liquor store?

Why no replacements for that savory fresh-fish store with its odd fish-related Korean imports, or the delightful little bakery across the street from Trellis (whose former operator, I understand, lives here on the Island)?

One unrelated question to RIOC, RIRA, MST&DA, and the rest of the Island’s abacadabra of agencies: When is that beautiful 18th-century structure in the very center of the Island ever going to be turned into the museum it should house? So far, its only distinction has been a sparkling annual giant Christmas tree!

And kudos to the ever-stalwart Matthew Katz for his pungent guest editorial.

Maurice Edwards

will need to crank up a fundraising operation. And cut back its programs.

So, let’s understand what’s happened here: MST&DA will cut valuable programs and raise rent money to pay RIOC-imposed fees, on RIOC’s excuse that there’s a shortage of space for other community groups, while perfectly suitable space is held empty so that a commercial rental operation, Hudson/Related, can attempt to rent it out.

There’s the connection: MST&DA must fundraise to subsidize H/R.

To subsidize H/R *and*, not incidentally, the competing (and reportedly inferior) exercise classes that RIOC has mounted at Sportspark.

MST&DA is not alone in this. Similarly, the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association (RIVAA) must find ways to pay for its Gallery RIVAA space. Like 504, that was turned over to H/R, and H/R gets to impose rent and electricity costs.

All this while other retail spaces remain empty.

Odds are that something similar will happen to another valuable Island non-profit – the Cabrini Thrift Shop, closed so that its space, too, can be offered in the H/R portfolio – again, while other retail storefronts remain empty.

The Cuomo administration, through RIOC, is forcing valued non-profit organizations to fundraise and cut programs to pay suddenly imposed rent – all, effectively, subsidies of Hudson/Related: Valuable non-profit programs are being sacrificed and squeezed to subsidize the activities of a commercial developer.

Is it incidental that RIOC is planning, simultaneously, nearly-doubled capital spending of \$37 million for the coming fiscal year? Is any of that earmarked for turning raw space into something that community groups could use? (No.) And is it incidental that the Public Purpose Funds that have helped Island non-profits appear to be threatened in future years?

The RIOC Board should have resisted these mindless changes, and should now correct them by whatever means is required. The changes make RIOC act like the Triboro Bridge Authority, which does not manage a *community*.

It is a challenge, admittedly. The offense is cumulative over many years of what may have seemed, at the time, to be sensible decisions. But any excuse of “unintended collateral damage” is now bogus. The RIOC Board has the power to rein in a RIOC that has discarded the values that built a great community. If the residents on the RIOC Board can’t do it, they should all resign – or perhaps find a less drastic way to bring New York State and the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation in line with Roosevelt Island values.

DL

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance *Grand Reopening Celebration*
– *A Night to Remember*, **Fri Feb 27** 7:30pm, Cultural Center. \$100 at the door.

Subway disruption: Southbound platform at Lex/63rd closed **Fri Feb 27** 9:45pm to **Mon Mar 2** 5am. Manhattan-bound trains will skip only that station. Service from Lex/63rd to Roosevelt Island is not affected. Service remains normal to other F-line stations going southbound, and to all northbound platforms. **Disruption continues weekends Fri 9:45pm-Mon 5am through Mon Mar 23.**

Bike New York survey continues at tinyurl.com/BNYsurvey.

Sleep: Newborn to Pre-School, Sun Mar 1 4pm, with Dr. Micah Resnick. RSVP to eva.bosbach@amu.cz to register and for location information.

Cancelled: First Sunday Jazz Salon (Returning in April).



– Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events –

See separate listing, page 10.

– The Next Two Weeks –

Cornell Community & Construction Task Force meeting, **Mon Mar 2** 6-8pm, 546 Main St., 12th floor conference room.

Learn to Ride (adults) presented by BikeNY, **Tue Mar 3** 10am-12noon, 1pm-3pm, Sportspark. Free. Register at bike.nyc/education/classes

Science Fiction Book Discussion: *Button, Button: Uncanny Stories* by Richard Matheson, **Tue Mar 3** 6:30pm, Library. Adults. Free.

Subway disruption: Southbound platform at Lex/63rd closed **Fri Mar 6** 9:45pm to **Mon Mar 9** 5am. Manhattan-bound trains will skip only that station. Island-bound service from that station will be normal. Disruption continues weekends only through **Mon Mar 23.**

Islander Bonnie Goodman performs in *The Songs of Jule Styne*, **Fri Mar 6** 7pm and **Sat Mar 14** 5pm, Don't Tell Mama, 343 W. 46th St. Reservations at DontTellMamaNYC.com or 212-757-0788 (after 4pm). \$20 cover plus 2-drink minimum, cash only.

Art, Antiques, and Heirlooms Valuation, Sat Mar 7 12noon-5pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St., presented by the Historical Society. \$20 donation to RIHS for professional evaluation of two items.

Daylight Saving Time begins, Sun Mar 8.

Women in Service During World War II, presented by Roosevelt Island Historical Society and Park Service Ranger Lincoln Hallowell, on Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) at Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, **Tue Mar 10** 6:30pm, Library.

Open Registration for Roosevelt Island Day Nursery, Wed Mar 11 8am-3pm, 4 River Rd. (Ad, page 13.)

St. Patrick's Day Craft for ages 3-12 – Make a leprechaun with construction paper, scissors, and glue. **Thu Mar 12** 3-4pm, Library. Free.

Subway disruption: Southbound platform at Lex/63rd closed **Fri Mar 13** 9:45pm to **Mon Mar 16** 5am. Manhattan-bound trains will skip only that station. Island-bound service from that station will be normal. Disruption continues weekends only through **Mon Mar 23.**

The Main Street WIRE – Sat Mar 14. Advertising deadlines: Display, Wed Mar 4 (advertising accepted after deadline on a space-available basis); decision date for circulars/inserts, Tue Mar 10; 6,000 copies due Thu Mar 12. **Future issues:** Mar 14; Apr 11, 25; May 9, 23; Jun 6, 20; July issue to be announced; Aug 1, 29; Sep 12, 26; Oct 10, 24; Nov 7, 21; Dec 12. News phone 212-826-9056; See **Events**, page 14



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Krystyn Donnelley and students of Legacy High School;
Kim Massey and students from the PS/IS 217 Beacon Program,
Juniors and Cadettes of Girl Scout Troop 3324

It's hard to believe, given the extreme temperatures and winter storms that our little Island has had to endure over the past couple of months, that, as you read this column, it will be the last day of February and only three weeks (specifically, 20 days and counting) until the first day of spring. The opportunity to finally shed the layers of winter clothing, open the windows, and bask in the warmth of the season will be welcomed by many. Living in tight urban spaces in one of the largest cities in the world, we tend to forget how much we rely on the outdoors as an extension of our living spaces. Winters like ours remind us, in the spring, how lucky we are to live on our little Island in the East River, with parks, recreational areas, promenades, and abundant outdoor spaces.

SC&E Events

The coming of spring also brings an opportunity for us to leave the isolation of our apartments and to come together to celebrate our lives together as a community. This past winter, your RIRA Social, Cultural and Educational Services Committee has been hard at work, laying the groundwork for this year's events. With the SC&E Committee's mission this term to celebrate the rich and wonderful diversity of the people who make up our community, not only is the Easter Egg Hunt slated to return for the last weekend in March, but so are the Cherry Blossom Festival in late April and Roosevelt Island Day in June, plus some new events, including a RIRA-sponsored team entry for the Roosevelt Island Relay for Life on June 20, a Festival of Lights and Bollywood Dinner in November, and the return of the RIRA Showcase in December. Each of these events is a unique opportunity for you to get to know your neighbors, enjoy some laughs with friends, learn more about the cultures that comprise our Island residents, and help our Island children build bonds that will last a lifetime. If you're interested in knowing more about these events, have an idea for other events, or want to volunteer some time or talent, please reach out to Lynne Strong-Shinozaki, chair of the SC&E Committee, at lynnestrong@hotmail.com.

Hike for Life

Speaking of spring, the New York Blood Center – a local non-profit with which RIRA often partners – will be holding its Hike for Life on May 2. For a small individual or family fee, whose proceeds will help fund the New York Blood Center's lifesaving

The RIRA Column

mission, you and/or your family can join like-minded participants for a 3-, 5-, 11-, or 32-mile guided hike on the Greenbelt Trail as far as Sunken Meadow State Park. Beginning at Heckscher State Park in Smithtown, you'll be able to hike all or parts of the Trail. For more information, go to nybloodcenter.org/support-us/hikeforlife/ or email the Hike For Life Coordinator at hikegreenbelt32@yahoo.com. (Also look for the RIRA-sponsored New York Blood Center Blood Drive table at the Farmer's Market, starting in May, to sign up to donate blood on Roosevelt Island Day.)

Public Purpose Funds

As highlighted in prior columns, the future of the Public Purpose Funds continues to hang in the balance, as RIOC and similar public benefit corporations digest the January 13, 2015 policy opinion released by the New York State Authorities Budget Office. Many Roosevelt Island applicants for Public Purpose Funds were recently notified that RIOC, in light of the guidance, has put the process on hold until other public benefit corporations have acted or taken a position based on the guidance. As such, RIRA's participation in the Public Purpose Funds recommendation process is also on hold until further notice. Although news of any potential loss of non-profit funding is always disheartening, it is especially detrimental to Island organizations that count on such funding to be able to provide their services. If you or your family participate in or receive services from any of the organizations that rely on Public Purpose Funds, please be sure to lend your support to that organization(s) – by donating money, or providing services, or volunteering time or talent – so that it will not fall by the wayside, as do so many non-profits in the city.

Tram Elevators

Lastly, and with personal emphasis, the current, prolonged Tram elevator breakdowns need to be rectified immediately by RIOC and the other stakeholders. We've recently received many complaints



Jeffrey Escobar, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
jeffrey.escobar@gmail.com

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

The Roosevelt Island Women's Health Organization (RIWHO) was founded by Patricia Stovall and me because we believed that our combined experiences, as survivors of major illnesses, would encourage and inspire others to take a proactive role in their healthcare and lead to personal empowerment. Patricia and I are both licensed social workers as well.

RIWHO offers quality lectures on both allopathic (conventional medicine targeted toward a specific illness) and holistic (natural medicine for the entire body) health treatments. We offer tools, such as medicine schedules and symptom charts, to inform doctor visits and to encourage better communication between patients and doctors.

Our goals are wellness awareness and prevention. We have offered free wellness seminars for women 18 years and older since 2012. We offer charts comparing "dirty" and "clean" fruits and vegetables, and our members know how to determine water's pH content. Women learn stress reduction techniques because chronic stress puts your health at risk. Our members participate in meditation, tapping, Reiki, yoga exercises, aromatherapy, and Bach flower remedies. They experience Chakra healing and its association with the endocrine system. Our many seminars cover everything from various cancers, nutrition, and heart attack and stroke prevention to prescription drug abuse and emotional trauma to innovative dental procedures and martial arts safety training.

This past year, RIWHO partnered with Councilmember Kallos' office to bring the Scan Van to the Island. The Scan Van is a traveling medical van equipped with

x-ray machines for breast cancer screenings. Kallos determined the need for these services, especially for women who were uninsured or underinsured. In some cases, women with inadequate coverage were given this service for free via Project Renewal. The women's group was proud to be a part of that event. About 15 women took advantage of the Van, including me.

RIWHO has recently partnered with Cornell Tech, NYP/Weill Cornell Medical Center/Weill Cornell Medical College. Our public relations person, Lynne Shinozaki, Cornell's Jane Swanson, and I collaborated on possible wellness seminars that would benefit the community. Cornell helped to cosponsor our most recent seminar, on neck and back pain. It was a resounding success. About 50 participants came to hear the lecture and ask questions. Cornell will continue to cosponsor future seminars, with topics including stroke, healthy brain aging, allergy relief, sleep apnea, carpal tunnel, and a panel on nutrition.

Although we offer these seminars primarily for women, men are invited to seminars that don't specifically pertain to women's issues. The one time of year that our specific focus on men is June, National Men's Health Month, when we encourage age-appropriate

See **RIWHO**, page 14



Laila Amatullah, co-founder
Women's Health Organization\
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The Community Column features a broadly chosen rotating series of columnists and topics.

RIVAA Selling Late Islander’s Art in Fundraiser

by Ashton Barfield

Gordon Reiss didn’t *plan* to live on Roosevelt Island. In the late 1970s, he co-signed an Island House lease for his newly-ex-wife, so that she and their two daughters could meet the income minimum. Then, when she bolted for Manhattan the following year, he was responsible for the rent. Since the divorce had so impoverished him that he was living in the back of his Brooklyn dental office, he moved into the Roosevelt Island apartment that he was paying for anyway. And, as he did with everything, he enthusiastically made the best of the situation.

When he moved here, he was already an amateur artist, and a participant in The Painting Group, a weekly live-model session in Manhattan co-founded by David Levine, the renowned caricaturist. On Roosevelt Island, he took full advantage of the many outdoor subjects, and joined the first artists’ group here. For several summers, he also went to artist-friendly Monhegan Island, off the coast of Maine, to take a course and to paint its wide variety of landscapes.

He painted as much as he could, wherever he could, indoors and out. Any person or object offered challenges and opportunities. Dental colleagues have said that there was even artistry in his dentistry.

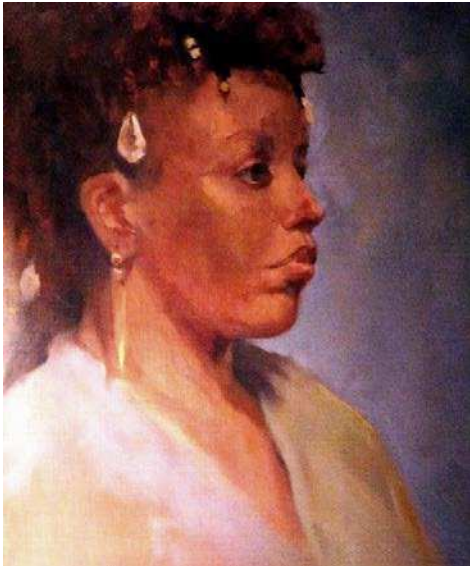
Gordon also got into the politics and mechanics of Roosevelt Island, initially by joining the Westview/Island House Task Force, formed to fight periodic rent and lease outrages. The Task Force is where I met him, and we fell in love. Later, we joined the RIRA Common Council. We cared a lot about this place, and wanted to help protect it and foster its healthy growth.

We had a lot of fun together for five-plus years. We even got married! Unfortunately, he died suddenly, in 1987, at a still-vibrant 57. He left me with many wonderful memories – and many wonderful paintings. I gave some to friends and family over the years, but there were still too many for me to hang, even in rotation.

Then, last year, I realized that if I gave them to the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, they might be sold to help pay for the Gallery’s onerous new rent and electricity costs. And so, a number of the works are currently displayed in the RIVAA windows at 527 Main Street. In a couple of weeks, they’ll be moved inside during the next Gallery exhibit.

I hope that you’ll enjoy seeing them. (People say that Gordon’s work is very accessible – I was always grateful, and relieved, that it was something that I loved without having to try.)

And I hope that some of you will end up owning one, in exchange for a generous donation to RIVAA. He would have been really pleased with *both* sides of that transaction.



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A Little History

Boston Paper Views an East River Island, 1853

There we were – we in a very general historical sense – on page 1 of a Boston-based publication, *Gleason's Pictorial*, which took the opportunity to print an engraving of the Island's prison, then located where Cornell University is starting work on Cornell NYC Tech.

“It has long become an exploded idea that brutality and the utmost severity were alone the proper means of reclaiming the criminal; something else besides the lash is requisite for reformation,” reads the text, in part.

Fundraiser

Roosevelt Island Historical Society Offering Antique Valuation Event

If your Aunt Millie left you a beautiful cut glass vase from the early 1900s, now is the time to find out how valuable it really is.

On Saturday, March 7, representatives of Capo Auctions will provide a professional valuation of art, antiques, porcelain, and glassware, among other items.

Many people hold onto family heirlooms for sentimental reasons. Eventually, the day comes when either no one remembers who Great-Grandfather Max was or it's time to downsize to a smaller apartment. Before you clear these items from your or your parent's home, it's worthwhile to figure out which ones might be worth keeping for their monetary value, in addition to their place in family history.

“The Roosevelt Island Historical Society invites our neighbors to explore their connection to their family's past and obtain a valuation of treasured heirlooms from an auction professional,” says Judith Berdy, President of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society.

An examination and oral valuation of two items, whether furniture, wooden toy, candlestick, or

moustache cup, will be performed for a \$20 donation to the Historical Society.

If you wish to receive a valuation of large or bulky items, such as furniture, you may bring photographs to the event.

The fundraising event will be held on Saturday, March 7, from 12 noon to 5:00 p.m. at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street. Walk-ins are welcome, and no appointment is necessary.

For more information, please contact Judith Berdy at rooseveltislandhistory@gmail.com.

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PENITENTIARY, BLACKWELL'S ISLAND, NEW YORK.

The view which we give of this well-known structure represents the buildings and locality as seen looking southwest. The building in the distance is the hospital, and the city of New York is seen also in the extreme distance. There is a fine garden on the slope, which is seen circling towards the river, and on the borders of the river a fine road extends the entire length of the island. Everything in and about the neighborhood speaks of neatness, and a high state of discipline and cultivation. The Penitentiary is situated opposite the foot of Fifty-fifth Street, on Blackwell's Island, at midway between the eastern and western shores; it is of blue building stone, quarried from the rock of the island. In the front and rear walls of the middle part of the structure, the stone is squared and laid in courses, and some of it quite well hewn; the walls of the building, with this exception, are of rubble masonry. The middle building measures sixty-five by seventy feet, and the wings each fifty by two hundred feet, the entire length being four hundred and sixty-five feet. The middle building is four stories high; a hall in the first and second stories, eight feet

wide, extends from front to rear, and is crossed at right angles by another hall, dividing these stories each into four parts; some of the rooms in these stories are twenty-five by twenty-seven feet. These two stories are occupied by the keeper as his residence. The third story is one open room, sixty by sixty-six feet, furnished with seats, etc., and used as a chapel; a dwarf partition through the middle serves to separate the males and females. The fourth story is also one open room, and is used at present as the hospital for the male convicts. The middle building is fifty-five feet high to the top of the battlements, and the top of the cupola is at an elevation of seventy-seven feet. The two wing buildings contain the convict cells; the males are confined in the northern wing, and the females in the southern. The cells are constructed in a compact manner, forming an isolated structure, twenty by one hundred and sixty-five feet, located centrally within the area of the wing building; the surrounding court or hall separating it from the exterior walls, being thirteen feet wide and twenty-nine feet high; the cells are placed back to back, four tiers high, the floors opening on iron galleries, which extend along the

entire front of the cell structure, and communicate with stone stairs at the end nearest the middle building. There are thirty-two cells in each row in the northern wing, and thirty in the southern, making two hundred and fifty-six and two hundred and forty—in all four hundred and ninety-six cells. The cells in the northern wing measure three and a half by seven feet, and six feet nine inches high. The institution is a credit to the State of New York, and the country generally, conducted as it is in the most thorough and perfect manner, and being officered in the most admirable way, by men who thoroughly understand their business, and who take a pride in its proper discharge. It has long become an exploded idea that brutality and the utmost severity were alone the proper means of reclaiming the criminal; something else besides the lash is requisite for reformation. Gentle but decided and judicious clemency has been adopted in this and many other like institutions throughout the country, and with the most salutary success. No matter how vile the criminal may be, there remains still upon his soul the half-effaced image of God, and we cannot treat him like a brute, who, in the eye of Heaven, is our brother.

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- GET YOUR PICTURE - the Statue of Liberty
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Adventures OFF-Island

compiled by Sara Maher

February is almost over. Stop pretending you care about those pesky resolutions to “expand your mind” and “better yourself.” You know what you like. Find it below.

For the Foodie

The Kids Food Festival is geared toward fighting childhood obesity, but there’s something going on for any taste tester. Featured events include a scavenger hunt, presentations like *Build a Better Breakfast* and *Veggiocation*, and cooking demonstrations for everything from *Party on a Stick* to *Winter Vegetable Rolls*. There will also be inclusive cooking and music classes for children with physical and developmental disabilities, and a costumed character appearance from Dreamworks’ upcoming movie *Home*.

➡ F downtown to 42nd-Bryant Park and walk into the park. Sunday, March 1, 10am-4pm. Admission is free, but cooking classes require a separate ticket. Information and class tickets at kidsfoodfestival.com

For the Björk Fan Base

Björk is coming to the Big Apple. Beginning March 8, MoMA is dedicating three floors to the eclectic work of this Icelandic composer and singer. The exhibition “draws from more than 20 years of the artist’s daring and innovative

projects” and albums, and will showcase her music, music videos, costumes, and unique instruments.

➡ F downtown to 57th St and walk southeast to 11 West 53rd St. March 8 through June 7 during regular museum hours. Entry to the exhibit is included with museum admission, but timed tickets are required for the Songlines portion (available same-day and on-site only starting at 10:30am, no additional charge). Museum hours and admission fees at moma.org/visit

For the Jock

Go big or go home. The 2015 Big East Men’s Basketball Tournament is at Madison Square Garden starting March 11, and it concludes with the championship game on March 14. If you like college basketball, that’s probably all the information you need.

➡ F downtown to 34th-Herald Square and walk one block west to Madison Square Garden at 4 Pennsylvania Plaza. March 11 through 14; game times vary. Tickets from \$15-\$180. Game schedule, tickets, and other information at thegarden.com/bigeast

For the Classy

If you’re more into Broadway than basketball, never fear – Sutton Foster is here! The two-time Tony Award-winning

star of *Little Women* and *Violet* joins the New York Pops for her Carnegie Hall debut in *One Night Only: Sutton Foster*. The event also features special guests Joshua Henry and Megan McGinnis.

➡ F downtown to 57th and walk west to Carnegie Hall at 881 7th Avenue. Friday, March 13 at 8pm. For information on tickets and pricing (read: pricey), call 212-247-7800. Information at carnegiehall.org/calendar

For the Brainy

Don’t like performances of any kind? How about a straight-up lecture? National Geographic comes to NYC with the *National Geographic Live New York Speaker Series*. Upcoming topics include *Extreme Planet* with photographer Carsten Peter (Volcanoes! Ice shafts!), *Stranger in a Strange Land* with National Geographic photojournalist Jodi Cobb (Inspiration! Emotions!), and *Exploring Mars* with NASA mechanical engineer Kobie Boykins (Space! *Space!*).

➡ F downtown to W 4th-Washington Square and walk southeast to the NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts at 566 LaGuardia Place. Through May 6; dates and times vary. Single event tickets start at \$30. Schedule and speaker information at events.nationalgeographic.com/event-series

COMING UP

Continuing Events & Activities

A listing of **repeating** or **regularly held** meetings & events (a listing of other events scheduled for this weekend and in coming weeks appears on page 3)

ART EXHIBITS

Islander Dan Nistor presents a one-artist show, *Characters at Dusk*, Octagon Gallery, 9am-8pm daily, scheduled through Sat Feb 28.

Islander Piaskowski presents a one-artist photo show, *Bloom*, Octagon Gallery. 9am-8pm daily March 11 through Apr 19.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open daily 6am-10pm.

Lighthouse Park open daily 7am-9pm.

Four Freedoms Park daily 9am-5pm. **Closed 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.

We Are New York English conversation groups, Fr 10:30am-12:30pm, through Fri Mar 27, Library.

MUSIC

First Sunday Jazz Salon, **1st Sun** 5-7pm, Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main St. \$10 donation. Cancelled for March; will resume in April.

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 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.

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 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.

(*\$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** 6:30-7:30pm, **Sat** 10-11am, Sportspark. \$5.

BIRTH THROUGH TODDLER (Sat-Fri)

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.

Mommy & Me Swim Classes for children 6 months to 3 years. Spots available for drop-ins **Wed** 10:30 and **Sun** 1:30 or 2:00. Info at rioc.ny.gov.

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.

Read Aloud (3-6 yrs), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library.

OLDER KIDS (listed Sat-Fri)

Tennis – New York Junior Tennis League (ages 5-18), **Sat-Sun** 6-8am, Racquet Club. Free. **Swimming** classes (age 3-up), **Sat** 3-4pm, Sportspark. \$15 or \$100/10 weeks. Questions/registration, ryansherrill84@gmail.com or 917-261-2771.

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.

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

Girl Scouts (6-13 yrs), **Fri** 6-8pm, PS/IS 217. Info: 212-527-2505.

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.

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.

Women’s Health Organization, last **Wed** 6:30pm, 546 Main St, 12th floor conference room.

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** 10am-12noon & 1-4pm, through March; **Wed & Fri** April and after, 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.

Senior Center

Monday

10:00 **Zumba**

11:00 **Computers**

5:00 **Brain & Body Stretch**

Tuesday

10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**

10:30 **Building Strength**

11:00 **Blood Pressure**

1:00 **Paint & Sculpt**

Wednesday

9:00-1:00 **Free Tax Help** (open to all)

9:30 **Yoga Stretch**

10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**

10:30 **Salsa with Luis**

10:45 **Spanish**

11:00 **Social Media for Seniors:**

Facebook, Instagram, Photos, more

10:45 **Spanish**

1:00 **Bridge**

1:30 **Scrabble**

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

Thursday

9:15 **Chair Pilates**

10:30 **Zumba**

12:30 **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**

12:00 **Korean Exercise**

2:00 **Art with John**

2:00 **Pokemo**

7:00 **Games** (RISA)

Special Events

Black History Month Observance, **Sat**

Feb 28 5pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St.

Free. Entertainment and refreshments.

Flea Market, **Sat Mar 21** 10am-4pm.

Vendors wanted; \$20/table. See Pilar

10am-12noon.

February 16, 2015
 The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
 Governor of New York State
 NYS State Capital Building
 Albany, NY 12224

Re: Possible Act of Retaliation by the Roosevelt Operating Corporation (RIOC)
 Against State Employee Othniel Maragh

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I want to bring to your attention a situation that I believe may be a blatant act of retaliation against State employee Othniel Maragh. I am reaching out to you directly because I feel that for the past six months I have exhausted all other possible avenues to address this situation; mainly bringing my concerns to RIOC Management, the RIOC Board, and Commissioner Towns, which have resulted in a non-response.

Mr. Maragh, a college educated African American who has worked at RIOC for the past 8 years filed a claim of racial discrimination against RIOC on September 3, 2014. At that time no one met with Mr. Maragh from RIOC to discuss his claim and to inform him of his rights against retaliation other than informing him to read the employee manual and giving him the phone number of the local NYSDOL representative.

On the morning of September 29, 2014 approximately 7:00am, Mr. Maragh received a phone call from Ms. Charlene Indelicato, President of RIOC, and informed him that he had been put on administrative leave with pay for making alleged threats to fellow employees. At that time he was given no specifics as to who, what and where these alleged threats were made other than that he would be given this information soon. As of today, 168 days later, Mr. Maragh has still not been given this information! I know of two such related incidents as my 5½ years as VP/CFO of RIOC whereby employees made threats or improper advances towards fellow employees. In both cases, Human Resources immediately met with both these individuals, incident reports were prepared and signed by the employees. Why wasn't the same procedure followed in Mr. Maragh's case? In addition, in both cases, these individuals were sent to expensive outside professional counseling. I also want to add, both employees were male Caucasians.

On November 17, 2014, at the request from RIOC, Mr. Maragh met with Jack McManus, the Director of Public Safety of RIOC in order for RIOC to gather information from him. Mr. Maragh audio taped the meeting with RIOC permission. During that meeting it was revealed that six employees allegedly were harassed or threatened by Mr. Maragh which led to RIOC placing him on administrative leave, however again no specifics were given to him. Please note that the same six employees each played a prominent role in Mr. Maragh's original claim of discrimination which was filed 23 days prior to his placement on administrative leave. In addition, each employee was allocated a salary adjustment in the RIOC Budget approved for 2015-2016 which was submitted to the RIOC Audit Committee on October 15th, 16 days after Mr. Maragh's placement on administrative leave. Salary adjustments as I know them are used to compensate employees for increase in responsibilities and promotions. Also, out of a total of 128 employees only six full-time employees were given a salary adjustment, the same six employees who had been allegedly threatened or harassed by Mr. Maragh. Is it just a mere coincidence or is there a connection between the salary adjustments and Mr. Maragh's administrative leave?

In addition, the NYSDOL (DOL) is investigating Mr. Maragh's claim. As part of their investigation, Mr. Maragh stated that many fellow employees have secretly supported him and were glad that someone finally had the courage to bring to the State's attention of what has been happening at RIOC. DOL requested the names of the employees who supported him which Mr. Maragh was initially reluctant to give fearing that they would also be subjected to retaliation. Mr. Maragh was given assurance that the names would be held in confidence, withheld from RIOC management and that the individuals would be called at home. Well this is not what happened. DOL called each person at work, leaving messages with their supervisors, being that most of the employees worked out in the field. Needless to say, all employees must have feared losing their jobs knowing that their supervisors knew they were talking to DOL. Is this how the State should conduct a confidential investigation involving current State employees?

In addition, Mr. Maragh was told by several current employees that a part-time employee with whose son Mr. Maragh had an incident while refereeing the Young Adult Basketball league is apparently now coming forward saying that she was harassed by Mr. Maragh. If true, why didn't she file a complaint at the time of the incident prior to Mr. Maragh being put on administrative leave? Why didn't Jack McManus mention her during the November 17th meeting in which Mr. Maragh was allowed to audio tape? He even was told that a supervisor personally drove her to the RIOC office in order for her to be interviewed by DOL. Is RIOC actively soliciting claims against Mr. Maragh after its decision of placing him on administrative leave to justify their actions?

I have the utmost respect for what you have accomplished as Governor. You have brought financial sanity to the State without bearing the cost on the middle class. You have champion individual rights, such as you stated in your "State of the State" address for "transgender" citizens. Individual rights are what set apart our great Country from most other nations, rights that our forefathers risked everything for! However, rights are worthless if the State will condone the trampling of them by a State Agency.

Respectfully submitted with my utmost respect,



Steven Chironis
 Former Vice President/CFO of RIOC

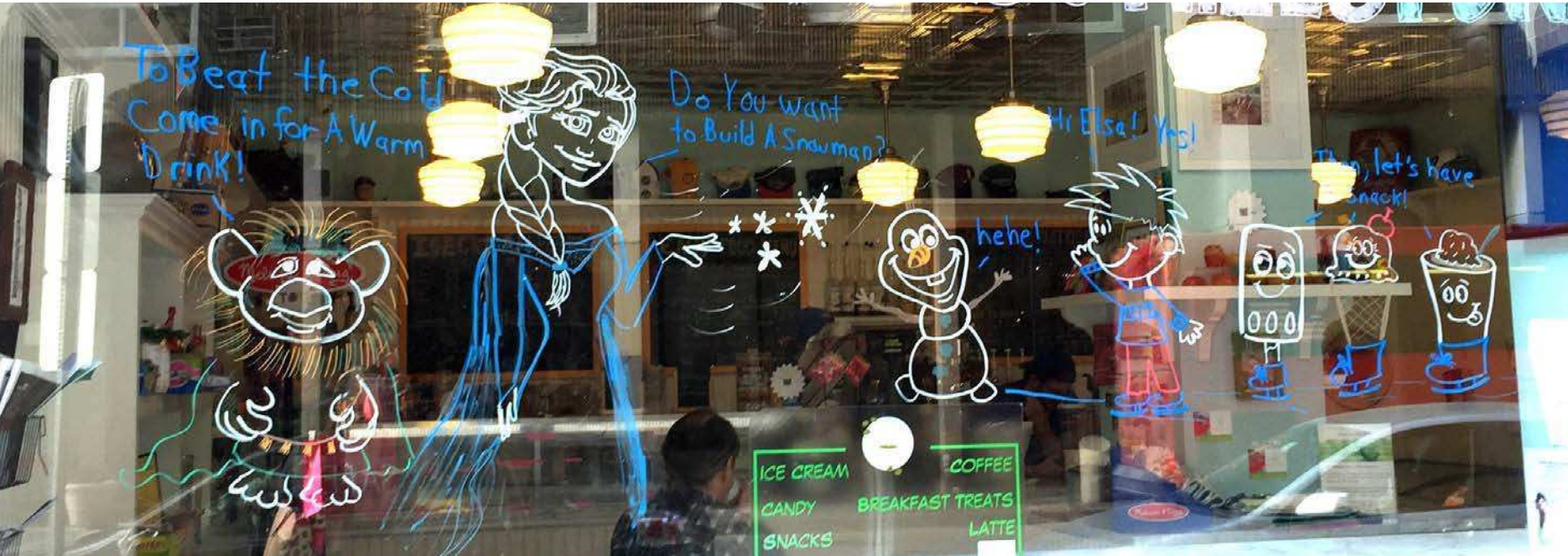
Autumn, from page 1
be interested in doing your window,’ and he said, ‘I think that’d be a great idea.’ So I started doing it every Saturday, and now, it’s every Sunday for about an hour or so.” The work is hard to photograph because of the inevitable reflections and lights in the background. In person, it’s easier to focus on the art and ignore the background, even while being tempted by the built-in pitch for hot cocoa or a toasted muffin. As *The WIRE* goes to press, the current illustration includes the Oscar statuette.

She likes Roosevelt Island. “I fell in love with it,” she says. There were three years of visiting (a boyfriend) before the year of living here. “It’s just absolutely beautiful, and peaceful – kind of like a resort – but a neighborhood vibe, which I really like. You start to recognize people, and they’ll say hello to you on the street, and if you run into them in a store. You don’t really expect to find that in New York City. There’s the park at each end...”

She brightens and interrupts herself. “And in the summer, it’s 10 degrees cooler!”

Autumn clearly has ambition that extends into a future beyond entertaining Islanders with her window art. She’d like to publish children’s books, and spends “almost every lunch break” at Barnes & Noble looking at children’s books, checking out the art. “That’s pretty much what I do in my spare time.” She finds it hard to name a favorite artist-author, but likes Mo Willems’ pigeon series, typified by *The Pigeon Needs a Bath* or *The Pigeon Has Feelings, Too!* She speaks of using technology to make publishing easier – a possibility for people who, without that boost, might never get into print.

For now, her work appears on Instagram at pony_3 and, soon, on a website, Autumn-Illustration.squarespace.com.



Elevators, from page 1
help but they wouldn’t. Finally, I had to carry the heavy stroller down using the stairs.”

Of her experience riding the Tram on February 14, Josie Chamla said, “They were turning a man in a wheelchair away when I caught the Tram this afternoon, and I think the Tram operator said that there was no Red Bus shuttle until Tuesday.” Upon arrival on the Manhattan side, she observed “an elderly lady with a heavy limp who did not know that the elevators were not running.” Chamla adds, “This situation is completely unacceptable for the elderly and disabled, and very inconvenient for parents with young children in strollers who are extremely limited in transport options with the 63rd St subway station elevators also out.”

By Monday (February 16), RIOC sent out another advisory, this time alerting subscribers that Red Bus service would be provided to those with limited mobility, but that it wouldn’t start until the following day. The advisory informed passengers that the shuttle would leave Manhattan every 30 minutes between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m., and depart from the Island Tram Station every 30 minutes from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The advisory also stated there would be no weekend service or holiday service. Bosbach sent the group an email stating, “If you had difficulty because the shuttle was not provided during

the weekend and today, please email RIOC and let them know.”

Even the weekday service wasn’t seamless. “Two Public Safety officers told me to wait at the regular Tram Red Bus stop to go to Manhattan,” wrote one RIPN member. “The bus to Manhattan did come, but it just U-turned in front of 405 [Main Street] and went back to Manhattan without picking us up. The Tram operator says no one has told him where this bus will stop on the Island side.”

Susana Gardete Hartmann has continued to take the Tram. “I have been commuting every day to the Upper East Side with my children sitting in a double stroller,” she said. “Since the elevators are out of service, the situation has been really bad. Luckily, I have my husband to carry the stroller up and down. This is a very stressful and crazy situation, since now we have to coordinate our work schedules to take the Tram at the same time (morning and afternoon).”

Hartmann says that she’s witnessed a lot of people who have it tougher than she does. “Other mothers have to commute by themselves with two or three children every day, and they are carrying one of them in the stroller down the stairs. The saddest part is that no one is willing to help them because people have to rush to work or are too busy with their lives.” Hartmann doesn’t take the

bus, saying that it “takes forever to reach the destination.”

Bosbach affirms, “Our goal for the Tram is at least one operating elevator on the Manhattan side at all times when the Tram is running.” This is not a new problem. By Bosbach’s count, it’s the third winter in a row that this has been a problem. The website DNA.info published a story on this problem last January (2014). Senator Jose Serrano wrote a letter to RIOC then, asking for immediate elevator replacement. *The WIRE* published two reports: one on MainStreetWIRE.com in January and another in August, when the news broke that the subway elevator would be down.

“Roosevelt Island is such a lovely place for families, seniors, and the disabled, because getting around is so easy and all places are accessible,” says Bosbach. [But] “it is almost impossible to get off Roosevelt Island [when you are wheelchair- or stroller-dependent] without help like a car or an elevator.” (Letter, page 2.)

RIOC’s Role

Replacement of the elevators was part of RIOC’s 2014-15 budget. Unfortunately, there were no responses to the Request for Proposals by the July 21 due date. At a RIOC Operations Advisory Committee meeting on February 9, RIOC President Charlene

Indelicato said that the Tram elevator replacement project will not be complete for at least a year – and that’s assuming that everything goes smoothly. She explained that a larger footprint is now required at the Manhattan Tram Plaza and, to get the necessary space, approvals from various City agencies will be needed.

Of possible solutions, Bosbach says, “We would love to have a footbridge to Manhattan, pedestrian access to the Queensboro bridge, or a ramp on the Manhattan side of the Tram.” She believes the ramp would be worth doing “even if it takes years of negotiations with the City to get all requisite permits to use the parkland [in the Plaza area], as such ramps have to follow strict requirements and cannot be too steep.”

One RIPN parent believes that a footbridge to Manhattan would be the perfect solution. She says RIOC will still make money on the Tram, “Tourists will always want to take the Tram, as will a large portion of the current riders. A bridge, however, would provide an option, and a welcome one, to many families with kids, to bikers, and to those who just want some exercise. The footbridge from Manhattan to Randall’s Island is a lovely example. I ran it every morning when we lived on the Upper East Side.”

She concludes, “This is possible!”



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 - Wednesday, March 11 – Open registration to the community
- All registrations must be accompanied by a deposit to secure a place for your child. Registration will take place at the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery located at 4 River Road from 8 am–3 pm. Financial Aid is available to those who qualify. April 20 is the deadline to apply for Financial Aid.
- Open Houses and Tours at both sites:
Sunday, March 22, 10 am–12 pm, Tuesday, March 24, 9 am–10 am, Thursday, March 26, 6:30 pm–7:30 pm
- For more information check our website www.ridn.org or call 212-593-0750 or email business@ridn.org

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Events, from page 3
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.
Opening reception for **Piakowski One-Artist Photo Show**, *Bloom*, **Sat Mar 14** 6-8pm, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St.
Island pianist **Roy Eaton** performs *Chopin Meets Joplin Meets Jazz*, **Sun Mar 15** 2pm, Unity Church of Christianity, 14 E. Mineola Av., Valley Stream, NY. Donation \$25.

— Future Weeks —

St. Patrick’s Day, **Tue Mar 17**.
Bicycling Basics presented by BikeNY, **Tue Mar 17** 10am-12noon, 1pm-3pm, Sportspark. Free. Register at bike.nyc/education/classes
Movie Night at the Library, *The Man with the Golden Gun (James Bond film)*, **Tue Mar 17** 6pm, Library. Free.
Book Discussion, *Capital in the 21st Century* by Thomas Piketty, **Thu Mar 19** 6:30pm, Library.
Open House and Women’s History Month observance, **Fri Mar 20**, time to be announced later, at the community office of Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, 1365 First Avenue, Manhattan.
Subway disruption: Southbound platform at Lex/63rd closed **Fri Mar 20** 9:45pm to **Mon Mar 23** 5am. Manhattan-bound trains will skip only that station. Island-bound service from that station will be normal. Disruption continues weekends only through **Mon Mar 23**.
Bicycle Commuting presented by BikeNY, **Wed Mar 25** 7-:30pm, Sportspark. Free.
Islander Gerald Starlight performs a *Spring Concert* on the shakuhachi, **Sat Mar 28** 3pm, Jefferson Market Library, 425 Sixth Av. Free. Info: tinyurl.com/GS032815 or 212-243-4334.
Learn to Ride (adults) presented by BikeNY, **Tue Mar 31** 10am-12noon, 1pm-3pm, Sportspark. Free. Register at bike.nyc/education/classes
Motorgate Gallery opens, **Fri Apr 10**.
Book Discussion, *Vacationland* by Sarah Stonich, **Thu Apr 16** 6:30pm, Library.
Earth Day, **Wed Apr 22**.
Cornell Construction & Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Apr 27** 6-8pm, Gallery RIVAA. Open to the public.
Mothers’ Day, **Mon May 10**.
Child School/Legacy High School annual **Founder’s Dinner**, **Thu May 21**, 6pm, Terrace on the Park, 52-11 111th St., Flushing NY 11368; ticket price to be announced at a future date.
Book Discussion, *Black, White & Jewish* by Rebecca Walker, **Thu May 21** 6:30pm, Library.
Memorial Day, **Mon May 25**.
Bike New York Spring Kickoff Party, **Sat May 30**.
Roosevelt Island Day, **Sat Jun 13**.
Flag Day, **Sun Jun 14**.
Book Discussion, *Half a Life* by V.S. Naipaul, **Thu Jun 18** 6:30pm, Library.
Outdoor Movie, **Sat Jun 27**.
Independence Day, **Sat Jul 4**.
Outdoor Movie, **Sun Jul 12**.
Outdoor Movie, **Sun July 26**.
Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Jul 27** 6-8pm, Gallery RIVAA. Open to the public.
Outdoor Movie, **Fri Aug 14**.
Outdoor Movie, **Sat Aug 15**.
Outdoor Movie, **Sat Aug 29**.
Fall for Arts Festival, **Sat Oct 3**.
Columbus Day, **Mon Oct 12**.
Halloween Parade, **Sat Oct 24**.
Cornell Construction & Community Task Force quarterly meeting, **Mon Oct 26** 6-8pm, 546 Main St. 12th floor. Open to the public.
Outdoor Movie, **Sat Aug 29**.
Halloween, **Sat Oct 31**.
Daylight Savings Time ends, **Sun Nov 1**.
Election Day, **Tue Nov 3**.
Thanksgiving, **Thu Nov 26**.
Tree Lighting Ceremony, **Wed Dec 2**.

— 2016 —

Martin Luther King Day, **Mon Jan 18**.

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RIRA Column, from page 3
from Island residents, voicing frustration and anger about the length of time it’s taking to complete the repairs, and the inadequate substitute services for those who must rely on the Tram. The failure to fix the elevators on an expedited basis has affected all segments of the Island’s population, particularly mothers of small children, the elderly, and the mobility-disadvantaged. The shuttle bus service, available only for those with limited mobility and only on weekdays, is grossly deficient. RIRA’s Island Services Committee continues to field resident complaints about the shutdowns and the substitute service, to inform RIOC of the community’s exasperation, and to push for the elevators’ repair as soon as possible. We also encourage you to continue expressing your concerns directly to RIOC via Erica.Spencer-EL@rioc.ny.gov, as well as to the office of our new State Assembly Member, Rebecca Seawright, at SeawrightR@assembly.state.ny.us.

Letters, from page 2
again on Tuesday for the weekdays. But many residents with mobility issues could not get on and off the Island easily during the long weekend, as there was no Red Bus shuttle service on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday (and again no service this past weekend), despite RIOC promising that the shuttle would run whenever both units were out of service.
Another problem arose on the Manhattan side of the Tram whenever a resident with mobility issues would get off the Tram and need assistance to get down the stairs. This assistance was not available.
There were also problems with the Red Bus shuttle itself. It should have run every 30 minutes, but parents reported that it was running less frequently, with one frustrated mom waiting with her baby getting cold in the stroller for over 45 minutes. This *could* have happened on the coldest day of the year, with a lot of snow accumulated at the

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NOTARY PUBLIC – 212-935-7534.

RIWHO, from page 3
screenings for things such as prostate cancer, high blood pressure, stroke and heart attack prevention, and diabetes.
We aren’t always so serious. As a pre-Mother’s Day celebration, we held a Spa Day that included massages, saunas, steam rooms, pool, and a “swag bag” containing a natural scrub and loofah, scented oil, a face mask, and refreshments. One lucky woman was randomly selected to receive Swarovski crystal earrings. For some, it was their first spa experience, and they found it most enjoyable.

We also recognize women who are important role models for younger women in the community. In March 2014, we celebrated National Women’s Recognition Month by selecting five women over the age of 85 and honoring them with congratulatory letters, certificates, plaques, and a proclamation from Councilmember Kallos. Last year’s honorees were Naomi Silverman, Clarissa McCauley, Rosalind Fernandez, Ina Shinnery, and Ethel Romm. These women have served the community by volunteering at Coler Hospital, feeding the homeless at Good Shepherd Chapel, coordinating Island poetry and music groups, and volunteering with the Red Cross and March of Dimes. They also served as President of the Historical Society, board members of RICLA and on the RIRA Common Council, teachers of Bible classes, and as the founder of Toastmasters. They have truly been inspirational leaders in the community, as well as to their families and friends. On the day of the celebration, their combined ages totaled 451 years – that’s a lot of history!

RIWHO also participated in Family Day, which allowed us to showcase the organization by distributing packets containing our mission statement, purpose, and contact information. The packets also contained information on heart health, breast cancer awareness, pancreatic cancer, domestic violence, dental care, ovarian cancer, nutrition, and weight maintenance. We also held a raffle. That was a great deal of fun.

We have used raffles for fundraising since the inception of the organization. We hold the raffles at our seminars. Initially, our main concern was establishing non-profit status, so the majority of the money went for obtaining this status. Now we use the money to host our free seminars and to provide refreshments.

RIWHO is now a recognized non-profit and can accept tax-deductible contributions. If you are interested in donating or becoming a part of the team, contact me at one of our seminars, held the last Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. (Seminars are at 546 Main St., 12th floor.) Healthy refreshments are provided.

shuttle stop, so that strollers and wheelchairs had to be carried over it in order to board the bus. No sign was posted on the Manhattan side at the bus stop location (until Tuesday). Another parent reported that the bus on the Island side did not even stop for her to get on at the Tram stop, which we later learned was due to unclear instructions to the drivers as to what the Red Bus shuttle stops should be.

Finally, the repairs of the elevators take a very long time. Both units are still out of service as of today [Tuesday], 11 (!) days later. This is a scandal for a community of well over 10,000 residents. It makes the daily commute for those who rely on elevators very difficult. We understood that there was a new service contract between RIOC and

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Eva Bosbach
RI Parents’ Network
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