

Islanders Vent Over ConEd’s Gas Line Plans

by Laura Russo

One-lane traffic, noise, overnight construction, and greatly improved natural gas service are on the way -- and soon -- as conEdison undertakes construction seen as necessary for Roosevelt Island’s energy future. Con Edison has received their permits from RIOC and will be starting the work imminently.

This information was shared by representatives from Consolidated Edison (Con Edison) at a July 23 town hall meeting held at Good Shepherd Center. On the agenda was a conversation about upcoming gas upgrades on the Island. The scope of the planned work, mitigation strategies for possible disruptions on Main Street, and plans to ensure resident safety were all addressed.

What’s Being Done

Con Edison’s plan to upgrade the gas system on Roosevelt Island includes replacing existing gas risers, installing a new gas main along Main Street, and connecting new and existing users to the new gas main. Con Edison said the project will improve system reliability, replace aging infrastructure, reduce maintenance work, and increase capacity for new and existing users. Additionally, the replacement gas pipes are designed with new safety features.

Currently, Roosevelt Island receives only one gas feed, from a pipe in Queens. The installation of the new gas main will allow for a second feed, connecting to a pipe in Manhattan. Thomas Femia, Engineering Supervisor for Con Edison, explained that the second feed will increase service reliability. When there’s a maintenance issue, the new feed will help avoid service disruption. He also said that the current pipes are made of steel and that steel rusts; the new pipes are

made of polyethylene and designed to last longer, which will reduce service calls.

Three Phases

The project is tentatively scheduled to roll out in three phases. The first phase will replace the existing gas risers located on Main Street, adjacent to Capobianco Field. (Gas risers are vertical pipes that connect to the supplying pipe.) Phase two will be installing the new gas main along Main Street, and the final phase will be to connect new and existing users. Phase one can begin as early as next week, and phase three is tentatively scheduled for spring 2016.

Phase one, to replace the gas risers, is scheduled to last between two and three months, with most of the work done at night, between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, to avoid disruptions to bus service and to school drop-offs and pick-ups in front of PS/IS 217. Femia clarified that the first week of work, excavating and removing the old risers, will take place during the day from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., because it’s the noisiest portion of the project.

Michael Lombardi, Construction Manager for the project, explained that crews will be working to remove the old risers by disconnecting the pipes, located 140 feet below the street in a tunnel that’s approximately 10 to 12 feet in diameter. The pipes will then be removed in 20-foot sections and replaced by the new polyethylene pipes. Lombardi also said that Con Edison expects that the old pipes will have been treated with a coal-tar-wrapping coating that contains an asbestos-like material. Lombardi said that Con Edison takes every precaution in removing and disposing of this material, and that

See **Con Ed**, page 5



Interest in PS 217 Programs Leads to Space Shortage and Parent Outrage

by Briana Warsing

Interest in PS/IS 217’s Pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) Program, and the school’s Gifted & Talented (G&T) Program, far exceeds available space for the coming school year, and parents of waitlisted children are frustrated at their placements in off-Island schools, some as far away as Chinatown.

Universal Pre-K?

For the 2014-15 academic year, PS/IS 217 was not included in Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Universal Pre-K Program, which provides full-day pre-K for City children. Instead, PS/IS 217 offered two half-day pre-K classes of two and a half hours each, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, each with space for 18 students. Neither class was full this past year.

But things have changed. Full-day pre-K will be offered at PS/IS 217 for the coming school year. Initially, this was for one class of 18 students. However, with

demand for these spaces so great that perhaps as many as 100 children were waitlisted – the New York City Department of Education (DOE) does not publicly share these data, though one parent confirmed that her child’s waitlist number is in the high 80’s – a class was added to accommodate 18 more students. Many children remain on the waitlist.

Island mom Josie Chamla’s daughter, Aimee, is currently 18th on the waitlist. Ms. Chamla says, “It’s always been our intention to have [Aimee] attend school at 217. Instead, my daughter was assigned to a pre-K that is located in the East Village. The commute from our home takes about an hour and 15 minutes each way, and that is with good transfer times between bus/subway/bus, and non-peak-hour traffic. Obviously, this is a non-option for us.” According to Ms. Chamla, 15 other Island children were assigned to the same school.

Islander Activism

Ms. Chamla has been active in an effort to find a solution. “To see if there was really enough interest, I asked people to contact me if they were on the waitlist and would definitely accept a spot. I had 16 people respond definitely, and several others indicated that they would very likely accept a place. I think it’s safe to say that there is a very strong case for another class at 217.” Chamla has sent letters to Ben Kallos’ office, the Department of Early Childhood, the Office of the Chancellor of the DOE, and the Office of Mayor de Blasio.

Parents’ frustration is high as they are faced with either long commutes to off-Island pre-school programs, paying for private pre-school at Roosevelt Island Day Nursery to keep their kids local, or keeping their kids out of school entirely until kindergarten.

Island parent Rhonda Pringle says, “I am fortunate

See **PS/IS 217**, page 4



Islanders Mourn Charleston Victims

by Jennifer Dunning

It was a church like others, though with a long, rich history. The 12 men and women were ordinary human beings who had stayed after services for Bible study that Wednesday night, as they often did. They welcomed the young stranger who joined them, expecting, perhaps, that he was searching for God or a loving extended family like theirs.

But suddenly the young man opened fire. And on June 17, the nation experienced yet another tragic racially motivated killing, this time at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Charleston, S.C. Nine parishioners died. The oldest was Susie Jackson, 87, a choir member, and the youngest Tywanza Sanders, her 26-year-old nephew, who had tried to shield her.

They were remembered by Roosevelt Islanders on June 26 in a memorial at dusk on the Island pier. Residents and passersby prayed, spoke, and sang together. Nine glowing luminaria represented the Charleston victims, each with a photograph and a name: Jackson. Sanders. Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, Emanuel’s pastor and a beloved South Carolina state senator. Cynthia Hurd, a library manager. Ethel Lee Lance, a church sexton. Myra Thompson, a Bible study teacher. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, a pastor and university administrator. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, a pastor, speech therapist, and high school track coach. Daniel Simmons, a pastor.

Organized and conducted by Sherie Helstien, “Remembrance for Those Killed at Emanuel AME Church” was modeled on a Quaker service, with opportunities for all to speak out and be prayerfully silent at will. The memorial began with a prayer by Father Thomas Kallumady, former pastor of Roosevelt Island’s St. Frances Cabrini Church. Father Thomas recalled growing up in India, his school a place where Christian, Muslim, and Hindu children studied together in unselfconscious harmony.

Some 60 men, women, and children of all ages and races listened, mourning those killed in Charleston and wondering at the strength of their survivors. They spoke of racism and color-blindness, of hatred and forgiveness, and of the great need for all to acknowledge and speak to their common humanity.

Every day, the toll of violence against Black Americans grows greater. “How many more?” a button worn by one memorial participant asked simply. In 1999, New York City wept and came to a halt for a moment at the murder of Amadou Diallo. Now, after the initial horror, we are numb as the names roll by: Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Akai Gurley, young Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Freddie Grey, Sandra Bland, and so many others.

What can be done to confront and heal the murderous rage that seems to have taken over this country? A first step is not so complicated, perhaps. Rev. Olusegun Obed, pastor of the Day-spring Church on Roosevelt Island, urged Islanders to recognize common humanity,

See **Charleston**, page 4



The Editorial Page

PS/IS 217: The Heart of Our Community

As you all know by now, there’s a baby boom on the Island, which has led to an increased interest in PS/IS 217 among Island parents. This is good news. From the late 1970s, soon after it opened, PS/IS 217 was always one of the best schools in District 2. Unfortunately, the building of the new facility in the early 1990s seemed to coincide with the school’s downturn. Now, finally, interest in the school is returning. Parents have seen what else is available, and are remembering the glass building on the water with the huge enclosed yard, and the cafeteria with that view, and the new school library . What the modern building and spacious layout of the school alone offer is a rarity in the City, let alone the school’s programming.

Despite the problems for many families caused by the sudden demand for seats (story, page 1), this refocusing is still wonderful news. All Islanders need to see PS/IS 217 as their own – as a community asset to be proud of, whether you send your kids there or not, whether you have kids or not. It should not be left to the PTA to fight for more space in pre-K, more money for equipment and teacher training, or more Gifted & Talented classes. Lifting up the school helps to unify and lift up our community.

PS/IS 217 sits at the center of our Island in more than just a geographic sense.

The recent fight over the closing of the Island’s post office seems analogous. Many of us, perhaps even most of us, don’t use the post office more than a couple of times a year. Still, its existence represents something else to us, something much more worth fighting for. It’s more than just 10044 as a spot on the map -- it indicates that a true community of people is living on this rock.

And, unlike with a post office, we have some ability to make our school great. A great school leads to a more connected and more secure community. It improves community health.

A school, especially a public school, is also a community anchor. It’s not open just from 9:00 to 3:00. There is an after-school provided by the BEACON program for first graders and older, even if they don’t attend 217. BEACON provides programming for adults, too, such as yoga and basketball. In fact, the school is open most nights until 8:00 or 9:00 for one reason or another, providing some kind of service to the community. And there are parties and movie nights and book sales sponsored by the PTA that are open to the entire community. And the community votes at the school.

The community stood behind PS/IS 217 and collaborated in organizing and getting funding for the school’s “green roof” initiative. But there are more battles to be fought. The response has been lacking from our elected officials over the space crunch for the upcoming school year. And we are still waiting for our “adoption” by Cornell Tech to be finalized and clarified, despite ongoing pressure from the Roosevelt Island Community Coalition and others.

We need the community to continue to devote itself to our children and to our Island through support of our community school.

BW

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of interest to the Roosevelt Island community, and to/from officials. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content, in the judgment of the editors, merits the required space. All letters are subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Letters submitted anonymously will not be published; 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.

Submit by email to MainStreetWIRE@usa.net. 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, and clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief (allow extra time for typesetting). We regret that we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters.

Letters

To the Editor:

My congratulations on the amendment to the RIOC [Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation] statute enabling the continuation of the Public Purpose Fund. The Fund began under then-New York State Housing Commissioner Richard Higgins, by devoting \$2 million of the proceeds of Starrett’s construction of Manhattan Park. It continued with only minor disruptions until after I took office as RIOC President.

When the exhaustion of the \$2-million Public Purpose Fund became imminent, I proposed, with the approval of the Board of Directors, to include \$100,000 in RIOC’s annual budget to be distributed among qualifying Island organizations, based on recommendations by RIRA [Roosevelt Island Residents Association] with specific authorizing resolutions from the RIOC Board. It continued that way until the State ruled [in January] that there was no statutory authority for such disbursement of public funds, regardless of the worthiness and public purpose of the recipients’ programs.

Common sense has prevailed. The public purpose of RIOC to support and maintain a vibrant mixed-income community has been fully established. Kudos to all involved.

Steve Shane

The writer is a former President of RIOC

To RIOC:

Your disregard for the correct operation of the Tram elevator and lift is inexcusable, and a severe lack of respect to all Roosevelt Island residents.

Residents have been demanding a quick solution to this problem for over a year now. You don’t respond to our emails. We attend your meetings and ask for suitable solutions, and nothing is done.

At one point this past winter, the community did not have a feasible way off the Island for over two weeks. The weather was blamed -- that you did not know whether some parts had frozen due to below-freezing temperatures and water drip inside the elevator. Roosevelt Island Parents’ Network representatives physically went to RIOC to complain about both elevators being down. Charlene Indelicato responded, “We cannot guess how cold it will be, and where and which parts of the elevators will freeze.” It is now summer, and I’m sure none of the elevator parts have frozen or melted.

This community is proud to include seniors, disabled, handicapped, war veterans, and families with stroller-age children. This community *needs* the elevators working.

For those of us with strollers, the RIOC bus does not help. In many parents’ experience, the shuttle drivers do not allow us to lift up the front seats, like they do for wheelchairs, to park the strollers and get them out of the aisle, a big help for those of us with double strollers. Some drivers demand that strollers enter and exit through the back door, the one that doesn’t kneel. This should be addressed immediately.

When the lift is working, it can be impossible for people to use because it’s dependent on Tram personnel’s assistance, which can be more than a 10-minute wait. When asked why it takes so long to get their attention, Tram personnel have been known to respond that they cannot leave the turnstiles unattended because residents steal rides.

Remember, we residents pay RIOC’s and Poma’s salaries with our rents and maintenance fees.

It is time for RIOC to get a contract for preventative maintenance for both elevators, not solely corrective maintenance. Why were oil and hydraulic fluid allowed to accumulate in the cylinder and not pumped out when needed? Why did the ice just pile up at the door of the elevator when it could have been moved or melted with warmers? These preventative tasks extend the health of the elevator.

Another excuse RIOC gives is that the elevator is too old to find parts. I am sure there are older

Dear Parents and Community Members,

As some of you already know, Island Kids has submitted an application to the Department of Education to start a full-day, free Universal Pre-K program at Island Kids. The program will offer the same high-quality programming found in NYC Public Schools, and would open an additional 18 spots for children on Roosevelt Island. We are also excited to announce that we’ve partnered with Urban American and Roosevelt Landings to upgrade our current space, and to make this much-needed service a reality by September.

Our application has been accepted for review, and we are waiting for an answer. Unfortunately, the DOE works on its own time schedule, and we are told that we will not get an answer until the second week of August.

We are writing to ask for your help! Please contact the office of Council Member Ben Kallos and reiterate the importance of an additional Pre-K program on Roosevelt Island. In addition, please ask them to help us expedite the review of our application so that we can open the program in a reasonable timeframe.

You can contact Council Member Kallos’ District Office at 212-860-1950 and/or his Legislative Office at 212-788-6865.

Thank you in advance for your help. Please feel free to email us at islandkidsri@gmail.com with any questions. Your support on this issue is invaluable!

Nikki Leopold

Executive Director, Island Kids

Letters deadline

for Aug. 29 issue:
Tue., Aug. 25, 5:00 p.m.

elevators in the city than this one. We recently discovered that the RFP for the Tram elevators has not been sent out yet!! We are aware that a new Director of Engineering, John Bust, has been hired and that he needs time to review all the projects. But this community cannot afford more time with no elevators! This has to be fixed ASAP.

My three-year-old daughter asked Indelicato face-to-face to please fix the elevators. Indelicato answered, “I can’t promise you that!” If that is her answer to a kid, adults can not expect anything better from RIOC.

Susana del Campo Perea

More Letters

Page 3

Happy summer, friends and neighbors! The “dog days” are upon us once again, and the RIRA Common Council hopes that the season thus far has been a safe and healthy one, full of outdoor fun, family, and memories. This is truly a magical time on Roosevelt Island, and our little ship in the East River continues to buzz with the excitement and energy that only summer can bring. It started on June 13 with another successful and well-attended Roosevelt Island Day and a presidential campaign kickoff, and has been followed by outdoor Saturday night movies at Firefighters Field, the return of Fourth of July fireworks-viewing on the East River from the Southpoint area, a Food Truck Mania evening near the subway station, and Sunset Summer Salsa dancing and Family Yoga at FDR Memorial Park, to name just a few offerings. There has never been so much to do (or not do) on Roosevelt Island. We hope you continue to explore *and* attend all that the Island has to offer during the waning days of summer.

Life here has, however, not been free of challenges. The Tram elevators at the Manhattan station continue to break down with no permanent solution in place, creating obstacles for our mobility-challenged in getting to Manhattan. Another bike accident near the Roosevelt Island Bridge Helix has us questioning the ability to travel safely along our one street, whether you’re a pedestrian, bicyclist, or motorist. The conditions at our Sportspark’s facilities and operation of its programs continue to be unsatisfactory. The rumble of trucks up and down Main Street has increased noticeably as construction of the Cornell NYC Tech facility has begun in earnest. The unacceptable disposal conditions of commercial trash at our Southtown trash yard continue. The status of Public Purpose Funds, and the process to allocate and release monies to our Island non-profits who rely heavily on such funding, continues to be on pause. Although summer for some means vacation and fun, these (and many more) quality-of-Island-life issues continue to arise and grow. Despite the Common Council’s summer hiatus, your representatives continue to work hard addressing them

The RIRA Column

all, and advocating for our community.

As the Common Council starts looking toward the end of summer and to reconvening in earnest in September, we ask each of you to help us identify the issues and concerns that affect our community – and to suggest viable solutions. Moreover, there are still open Council seats for a few buildings, especially The Octagon and Manhattan Park. Do you have an interest in collectively solving Island issues? If so, I truly hope that you will consider taking one of the seats. Not sure if it’s really for you? Come to our first fall session on September 9 at 8:00 p.m. at the Good Shepherd Center, introduce yourself, ask questions, and become engaged.

Don’t want to sit on the Council? Or your building’s representative roster is full? Consider joining one of the many Council committees: Communication, Government Relations, Housing, Island Services, Planning, Public Safety, and Social, Cultural and Educational Services. They all need your expertise, talent, and time.

If you’re interested in filling a seat, or have questions about how to join a committee or get more involved, please don’t hesitate to reach out to one of your current building representatives, or to me at jeffrey.escobar@gmail.com.

Whether you’re a newbie or a veteran of the Island, young or old, working or retired, the RIRA Common Council welcomes your fresh and innovative ideas, professional expertise, and dedication to preserving our way of life. The only way we, as a community, have a fighting chance of doing that is if each of us has a hand in its future.

Happy summer!



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

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

Letters

To the Editor:

I am writing regarding a rather unpleasant experience, that I encountered at the Island Post Office, where I was treated unjustly by two rude employees of the Post Office. On Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at about 1:30 in the afternoon, I rode my bike, and entered a rather empty Post Office to mail a package. I placed my bicycle in the corner of the Post Office, away from everyone, as I have done for over 20 years.

I was suddenly verbally attacked by Postal worker Emily Boyd and told that I cannot park my bike in the Post Office. To which I replied, “It’s empty and no one is here (other than the person she was assisting) and there was never an issued before.” She became very belligerent and rabid in her approach, and explained that it was the rules of the federal government and the Postmaster General. She added, “I will not service you, unless you remove the bicycle.”

I asked to speak to a supervisor. Wanda Bennett came from a back office and reiterated what Boyd had said. I asked if they knew the word “discretion” and if it could be applied to this situation? I informed them that the post office here is like a small town Post Office in middle America, and that the last two workers; Donnie and Mike, accommodated the residents of the Island and were part of the community. To which Supervisor Bennett and Postal Worker Boyed stated: “Well they are gone and we are here now!” It took them longer to refuse me service than it would have taken them to just accept my \$5.30 to mail my package.

In the end, I was not able to mail my package and left with total

confidence that there is a serious issue that needs to be addressed, at the Roosevelt Island Post Office.

David Nisthaus

To the Editor:

Senator Jose M. Serrano recently inducted late Roosevelt Island resident Dominic Sciallo into the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame. Sciallo spent almost three years in active World War II combat duty, participating in three invasions. He was awarded the Bronze Star for valor, as well as several service medals and individual badges.

Born in East Harlem, Sciallo moved to Roosevelt Island in 1977, where he was one of the founders of the Roosevelt Island Seniors Association (RISA) and served many terms as its president, and remained active in the community until he passed away earlier this year at age 97.

Senator Serrano would like to place a plaque honoring Sciallo in the Senior Center, but when his office called the Senior Center Director, Rema Townsend, she refused.

We feel that the plaque honoring Sciallo and his service to the country that he loved so much belongs in the Senior Center, which he considered his second home. Not allowing this honor to Sciallo is a grave disservice to a man who was admired and respected, and is remembered fondly by all who knew and loved him.

Friends of Dominic Sciallo
Editor’s note: Contacted about this matter, Doryne Isley responded that Roosevelt Landings owner Urban American will be honored to display the plaque honoring Dominic Sciallo in the Senior Center.

To the Editor:

It is relatively easy to have ideas. But the hatching of them is something else. For that, you need to have a Sherie Helstien in your life. Sherie – for the irremediably oblivious among us – is a long-time community activist, and vice president of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association. It was she who organized and presided over the recent Island “Remembrance for Those Killed at Emanuel AME Church” event.

We have all, at one time or another, buttonholed on Main Street or at the back of an already exhausting meeting, told Sherie she is a royal pain in the tuchas. But ask her for help and she makes it all work. This moving and necessary memorial would not have happened without Sherie.

With only a few days’ notice, she contacted speakers, tested props, designed fliers, called Island housing administrators about posting them, and invited Island churches to participate. She did this with a humane vision of reaching out to those who had suffered so badly in Charleston. There’s a very kind and caring heart beating underneath those pumping arms. What would we all do without her?

Sherie also corralled volunteers for other crucial errands, among them Joan Ogden, Ron Davidson, the long-suffering Matthew Katz, Lynne Strong-Shinozaki, Susan Pirard, Ilonka Salisbury, Ahmad Darwish, and the writer of this letter. Linda Heimer and Father Thomas Kallumady took photos of the gathering. The photos will be sent, with *WIRE* Memorial coverage, to Emanuel parishioners. If you would like to add a personal message, email jjjdunning@gmail.com

See **Letters**, page 10

COMING UP

– THIS WEEKEND –

Island Pianist Roy Eaton plays Bryant Park, **Fri Jul 31** 12noon-2:30pm.

Registration open for Mommy & Me Swim Classes for children 6mo-3yrs, **Wed 10:30, Sun 1:30** or 2pm, Aug 9-Sep 27. Info rioc.recdesk.com.

Ephemeral Moments, a show of the works of Island artist Georgette Sinclair, continues **daily 9am-8pm** through Aug 29 at the Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St.

– REGULAR MEETINGS AND EVENTS –

See separate listing, page 8.

– THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS –

Children’s Film, *Annie* (2014, 118 minutes, rated PG) **Tue Aug 4** 3pm at the library. Ages 4-12. Free.

Red Cross emergency preparedness course, **Wed Aug 5** 5-6 at the Senior Center. RSVP: 212-288-4607. Sponsored by Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright and State Senator Jose Serrano.

NYC Public Advocate Letitia James discussion, **Wed Aug 6** 6-8pm, Good Shepherd Center, hosted by State Senator Jose Serrano. Refreshments.

Engineer: A Marble Play Mountain workshop on **Thu Aug 6** 10:30-12 at Four Freedoms. Ages 3+ with parents. Free for members/\$5 for non-members.

Crafts with Kids summer craft project by the Roosevelt Island Parents’ Network, **Fri Aug 7** 5-6pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St. RSVP to eva.bosbach@amu.cz by Monday, Aug 3.

Outdoor Movie, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, **Fri Aug 7** 7pm, Firefighters Field (rain date Fri Aug 14).

MST&DA fall 2015 scholarship registration, **Sat Aug 8** 11-12:30 & **Thu Aug 13** 6:30-8 at the Senior Center. Email info@MSTDA.org for registration paperwork.

Outdoor Movie, *Sat Aug 8* 7pm, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Firefighters Field (rain date Sat Aug 15).

Mobile Legal Help Center for FREE legal assistance, **Mon Aug 10** 12:45-5:45, 174 E 110th St., sponsored by State Senator Jose Serrano. Free; appt required; call 212-828-5829.

Children’s Film, *The Boxtrolls* (2014, 100 minutes, rated PG) **Tue Aug 11** 3pm at the library. Ages 4-12. Free.

Library Movie Night, *Flight* (2012, 138 minutes, rated R) **Tue Aug 11** 6pm at the library. For adults. Free.

Collaborate: Our 3D Urban Panorama workshop on **Thu Aug 13** 10:30-12 at Four Freedoms. Ages 3+ with parents. Free for members/\$5 for non-members.

Summer Reading Celebration with *Tales from Dr. Seuss*, **Thu Aug 20** 3-5pm at the library. Ages 4-8. Free.

Sunset Jazz with Art Baron performs on **Thu Aug 20** 6-8pm at Four Freedoms. Free.

Outdoor Movie, *Casablanca*, **Sat Aug 22** 7pm, Firefighters Field (rain date Sat Aug 22).

Children’s Film, *The Incredibles* (2004, 115 minutes, rated PG) **Tue Aug 25** 3pm at the library. Ages 4-12. Free.

Library Movie Night, *Bad Grandpa* (2013, 90 minutes, rated R) **Tue Aug 25** 6pm at the library. For adults. Free.

Outdoor Movie, *Singin’ in the Rain*, **Fri Aug 28** 7pm at Firefighter’s Field.

The Main Street WIRE – **Sat Aug 29**. Advertising deadlines: Display, Wed Aug 19 (ads accepted after deadline on a space-available basis); decision date for circulars/inserts, Tue Aug 25; 6,000 copies

Continued on page 5

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Allison Pearlman 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

New Resident Hits Broadway

by Laura Russo

George Bernard Shaw said, “You don’t stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing.”

Island resident Lynn Shore takes Shaw’s words and puts them into action with his new original musical, *Happy 50ish*, which began playing at the Beckett Theater on Theater Row July 15.

Described as a “midlife-crisis musical comedy,” *Happy 50ish* tells the story of Bob, who is forced to take stock of his life during a surprise 50th birthday party in his backyard. The action unfolds as Bob reads through a stack of birthday cards and, as a result, comes to terms with his life.



Developing the play was an intensely personal experience for Shore, a veteran performer and voice-over artist. “The show really started out of my own midlife crisis,” he explained. Shore lost two dear friends around the time of his 50th birthday. Those losses, in conjunction with his parents’ early deaths, hit him really hard.

It was in the throes of this depression that he realized, “I just had to get out of this tailspin. As a writer and a singer, I needed to start writing.”

Shore originally conceived *Happy 50ish* as a one-man show. But, after he enlisted the help of his good friend Mark Vogel, a renowned composer and performer, the concept “morphed into a two-man musical play,” he said.

Shore and Vogel worked on the project together for a little over four years, inviting focus groups for feedback and eventually

performing in Orange County and Los Angeles. “The show was doing really great by word-of-mouth; people were bringing their brother, their cousin, their neighbor,” said Shore.

As the production gained momentum on the West Coast, Shore decided to make the move to New York, and started working with Broadway director and choreographer Paul Stancato. With Stancato’s help, Shore and Vogel gave *Happy 50ish* a more authentic New York flavor. Shore “couldn’t be happier with the result. The show has really been taken up a few notches.”

Shore said he finds the East Coast crowd just as interested, and the same grassroots campaign seems to be taking hold here, noting “It’s very different than what people usually say about New York. Everyone here is really willing to talk about the project, everyone is very engaged.”

Shore describes *Happy 50ish* as “90% funny, but with some tears, and yet very sweet, very true, and very honest.” The show features all-live music, there are no recorded tracks, and it’s “a very physical performance,” he said.

In preparation for the arduous six-shows-a-week schedule, running through August 30, Shore said he is working out twice a day, eating right, and taking vitamins.

He and his team have been rehearsing at Main Street Theatre & Dance Alliance, a short commute from his new home on Roosevelt Island. Shore described the rehearsal space there as “beautiful,” and noted that he couldn’t be happier working and living on Roosevelt Island.

Shore and his wife relocated to the Island about two months ago. They weren’t strangers here, having visited close friends over the years. Now, as residents, he and his wife “absolutely love it.” Shore continued, “The views are spectacular, and it’s very easy to live here. It also helps having some of our best friends in the neighborhood.”

Charleston, from page 1

if only by a meeting of the eyes or a smile as we pass our neighbors on Main Street.

“We are all born to belonging,” the activist and writer Mab Segrest wrote in a meditation on the South African term *ubuntu* and its translation, “born to belonging,” in her book of the same name. What makes us human, she writes, is simply our “just and mutual relationship to one another.”

Diana Armenakis, a longtime Roosevelt Island resident who grew up in Charleston near Emanuel, remembers the city as being racist, certainly, but unique in its way. “There is a difference that I felt in a lot of African Americans, growing up in Charleston, in the area. There’s a pride in Christianity, a deep abiding faith that I don’t think you find anywhere else. I think the white population is also somewhat different from the rest of South Carolina and the other Southern states, in part because it is a port city with more

contact historically with people from Europe and Asia and also because of its various ethnic communities.” Emanuel’s welcome to the stranger that Wednesday night is “something they would have done,” Mrs. Armenakis said. “They did all the time. There were a lot of whites who were part of the AME Church, which is not usual.” Also unusual, she believes, was the response of the survivors. “It’s beyond my comprehension of forgiveness. It’s a living of Christianity that I don’t think is done by most Christians in this country.”

Roosevelt Island, she said, is something of an oasis. “I think we’re an island of complainers. But we have figured out a way of living together that I think people take for granted. We have such a rich, diverse group of people from different backgrounds, and we pretty much just do it. There are issues. But in terms of getting along, I think it’s amazing, though our unique population will probably get watered down, the bigger it gets.”

“Remembrance for Those Killed at Emanuel AME Church” ended with the singing of “Amazing Grace.” There were affectionate, complicit smiles at the memory of President Barack Obama hesitantly singing the hymn at Rev. Pinckney’s funeral earlier in the day. Church-lady voices soared above the crowd as light dimmed over the East River on the warm and breezy evening. A few people left at that point, but most stayed on, embracing one another and talking quietly, a community like others across the nation reaching out to the community of worshippers at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston and honoring the loved ones they had lost.

Photos of the event will be sent to Emanuel parishioners, with this piece. If you would like to contribute a message to them, please email the text to jjjdunning@gmail.com or leave it at the Rivercross doorstation, addressed to “WIRE-Charleston,” by Friday, August 7.

Thank you.



Henry Tomao

Henry Joseph Tomao of Roosevelt Island died on Saturday, April 11, 2015, at Lenox Hill Hospital. He was born on September 19, 1933, in the Bronx, New York to Concetta and Raffaele Tomao.

Henry served in the United States Army from 1957 to 1960. He was stationed in Fort Smith, Arkansas, as well as in the Far East, including Korea and Japan.

Henry was a businessman. He was the Vice President of Solo Credit Services Corporation for many years in Midtown Manhattan, entrusted with many responsibilities that kept Solo Credit a viable alternative to Dun & Bradstreet.

Henry married his wife, Erika, on May 31, 1962, and they had two children, Curt and Heidy. He enjoyed spending time with his family, and almost always traveled with them. They took numerous vacations to beautiful southern Germany and Austria to visit his wife’s family. Their travels together also included Utah, Idaho and Canada.

Henry and his wife were members of the Roosevelt Island Garden Club, and spent many days tending to their lovely garden and socializing with numerous friends. He will truly be missed by all who knew him.

Henry is survived by his wife Erika, son Curt (daughter-in-law Cheryl), daughter Heidy (son-in-law Jay), and grandson Daniel. He is also survived by his sister Helen Tomao.



PS/IS 217, from page 1

to both live and work on the Island, but my daughter was assigned to PS 111 (53rd between 9th & 10th) for pre-K. I received a call this morning asking if I would take the seat, and I said that I would not. I explained that it is just too far, and, living on the Island, it is better to have her in school on the Island. I do hope another class can be formed. It is not right for resident kids not to have space in their local school.”

The G&T Program

The G&T Program has also been the source of consternation among Island parents. Students are eligible from both District 2 (Roosevelt Island and a large section of Manhattan) and District 30 (which includes Jackson Heights, Long Island City, and Astoria). The rules regarding placement in City G&T programs give preference to siblings (if they meet minimum G&T eligibility) of current G&T students over others who have higher test scores but do not have siblings at the school. Island parents are concerned that the majority of seats will go to off-Island children because of the sibling preference. PTA member Erin Olavesen says, “I can imagine that it is a possibility, considering that [District 30 students] made up more than half of the class this year and more than half in previous years.”

Sibling Policy.

While the sibling preference policy is longstanding and well-reasoned, it has led to some grumbling among Island parents whose children scored well enough on the Citywide test to gain admission to the PS/IS 217 program, but were not offered a space. Anecdotally (because DOE does not provide official data), this includes Island students who scored as high as the 94th percentile on the placement exam. (The cutoff for admission is the 90th percentile.)

District 30

The decision to include District 30 children in the G&T program was made in 2010, when only nine qualifying Island students were interested in registering for kindergarten for the 2010-11 school year. The DOE requires a minimum class size of 18-20 students to fund the G&T teacher. To save the program, the PTA, the school administration, local politicians, and parents got together to find additional students, by inviting District 30’s G&T students.

“There was huge interest in 217 from Queens families at our [school] tours [this spring],” says Olavesen. “I got so much positive feedback from District 30 families in Jackson Heights, Astoria, and Long Island City. The openness of

our Island as a place for their kids to spend their school days was very appealing. Kindergarten classes integrating into our small community with their neighborhood walks and some local field trips make for the ideal kindergarten experience, in my opinion. The outdoor play space, the fact that daily recess was something that was not negotiable, and the small size of the school all caught their attention.” Olavesen’s son was in kindergarten this past school year, and said his G&T class was half Queens kids. She assumes the same to be true of the other kindergarten G&T class. She says, “Without the Queens kids, we wouldn’t have had enough for even one class.”

Of the Queens families, Olavesen explains, “The students from District 30 in Queens have elevated and stabilized the G&T program at our Island school. These families from Queens saw an opportunity in our school at a time when few Islanders were willing to take the leap of faith and invest in it. The families from District 30 are some of the most active on the PTA, and contribute a great deal of time and money to our community school. I am thankful that the program was opened to these families, because their investment in our school increased enrollment in the G&T program and ensured that it would continue.”

Loss of a G&T Class

To complicate matters further, one less G&T class will be offered this coming year. In 2014-15, there were two kindergarten G&T classes with room for 25. However, both classes were under-enrolled, with 14 and 15 students. As a result, the program was scaled back for 2015-16 to one class of 25 students. Olavesen clarifies that the problem isn’t limited to pre-K for G&T. “There are a similar number of families who tested in this year for the first-grade G&T program, with scores as high as 96, but there are no seats for them because of a move from having three grades-1-and-2 bridge classes to having only one G&T class at each grade level. So, the reduction in G&T spots spans into first grade as well.”

Olavesen advises parents, “As someone in the school and working with the PTA and administration, I can assure you that Ms. [Mandana] Beckman [the school principal] and the PTA want the school to grow. Please do not misinterpret the limited G&T classes and pre-K classes as resistance from the administration to growth. I urge you to continue to pursue 217 as your first choice for pre-K and G&T. We need full classes to have the most effective budget.”

At The Octagon, the Gentle Touch of Georgette Sinclair

review by David Stone

Artists and writers always get the same advice. They hear it from the moment they announce their plans: *Carry a notebook to keep track of your ideas.*

Reflecting on her new solo exhibit of 32 pastels at the Octagon Gallery, Georgette Sinclair explains, “I always carry a sketchbook. I got into the habit of doing a quick watercolor sketch or a values study using non chroma ink pens to help with the composition, and also to establish what is the darkest dark, the lightest light, and the mid values in the composition.”

She opens a bound book filled from cover to cover with color sketches that will later become fully-realized pastel compositions, fitted for mats and framed. “The idea of having a show of small paintings began when I started to accumulate too many little paintings from my traveling.”

Each painting has a story that makes it more meaningful for her.

“One morning, I had an early appointment. At 7:00 a.m., I rushed to the Tram via the east side of the Island. When I turned my head, I witnessed an amazing sunrise light that reflected off the smoke stacks of [TransCanada Ravenswood] on the East River and created an unforgettable view. This is how *Sunrise Over East River* was born.” It’s a haunting vision that captures the uncertain moment when physical structures start to take form as first light forces them out of the darkness. Fiery red spreading behind

still-black buildings with a hint of blue in the river below is almost too beautiful to be real – at least in the relatively harsh confines of New York City.

“In Tuscany, Italy, at the end of October,” Sinclair says, gesturing at *Apples of Tuscany*, another painting in her show, “the changing colors over the vineyards in the morning light were breathtaking. Somebody just asked me, about [the painting], ‘What makes [those apples] different from our apples?’” Mood and light, it turns out. “I found them one morning near the vineyards, on the ground in a spectacular light. I try to capture the mood of the moment and want to freeze it forever, as a sublime experience that nature reveals to us. I call them ‘ephemeral moments’ that touch my soul and mind.”

Apples of Tuscany has a quality that recalls classic still life paintings from centuries ago. The difference is that Sinclair’s predecessors set their pictures up like lab experiments, everything in place before starting to paint with oils. She instead uses pure pigments, pastels, applied while still inspired by a discovered image. The immediacy and vibrancy of inspiration in the ephemera of conception come together on the finished surface.

Not stopping there, Sinclair went on to produce a second painting in the same location, of grapes left behind from the harvest. *Forgotten On the Vine, Tuscany*, is a wistful reminder of a passing season, vivid in pastels.

An under-appreciated factor in the work of great artists in every field is the craftsmanship that allows them to make their ideas real to others. “The beauty about pastels,” Sinclair explains, “is that you can apply them in layers over layers and still keep the transparency. In some places, you can still see some of the underpainting that is in harmony with the rest of the local colors, creating a special effect and setting the mood of the painting.”

Here, she is talking about *The Pond, VT*, an exceptionally complex picture that surprises with how much she managed to get inside a single small frame – a fallen tree, sunlight slanting from waterside into a green-tinted pond, foreground grasses being lost in receding light. “I had to deal with a lot of shades of green. I used the complementary color, red, in three values – dark, mid, and light – to establish my foundation for the painting. On top of that I added a few touches of local color, and that was enough information for me to be able to work later to finish the painting.” Painting an ephemeral moment means appreciating, but also thinking through the artistry on the fly.

Summing up the cumulative influences of life and art, Sinclair quotes one of her mentors, Elizabeth Mowry. “What many artists and poets have in common is an excruciating sensitivity to their surroundings.” Art lovers should be happy that Georgette Sinclair has distilled that “excruciating sensitivity” and shares her passion in



unforgettable pastels.

Ephemeral Moments will remain on exhibit at the Octagon Gallery, in the lobby at 888 Main Street, through August 29. The gallery is open seven days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You’ll find it well worth a stroll (or a free Red Bus ride) on one of our remaining summer days.

Con Ed, from page 1

all pertinent safety protocols will be in place during this process, including air-quality monitoring.

Femia and Lombardi noted that phase one, replacing the existing gas risers, is the most vital part of the project, and they expect to have the work completed no later than November 1 to address any increase in demand before the start of the heating season.

Phase two of the project, installing the new gas main, is slated to begin in August in front of the FDNY building and move south along Main Street. Work on phase two is tentatively scheduled to last three to four months, concurrently with the riser replacement.

John Romano, the Project Manager, explained that because it is critical to replace the existing gas risers, and because Con Edison has received numerous requests for new service, Con Edison was prompted to integrate both projects into the current plan to lessen the construction time and to avoid a second planned disruption to the Island.

Romano responded that he “was not at liberty to answer at this time” when asked who had made requests for service connections to gas. He did note that Con Edison has received numerous cogeneration requests. He also reiterated that Con Edison was sensitive to the concerns of residents regarding the impact of the project in light of the current facade work on Main Street, saying that accommodations have been built into the plan for both PS/IS 217 and the other construction work currently being done. He noted that “having an open dialogue” with the community was essential to the success of the project.

Safety

Safety at the worksite was a concern for residents, especially in the area near PS/IS 217. Lombardi explained that each day, once crews are finished working on a particular section, the excavation site will be filled and covered with steel plates. At no time will there be any open construction areas on Main Street. Additionally, full-time inspectors will be on location at all times, and all work will be inspected daily.

Femia noted that phase three of the project, to begin in spring 2016, when the new gas lines will be connected to new and existing customers, will be the least invasive, with work done one to two days at a time, and will include changing gas meters and regulators. Romano said that although phase three will be less invasive, it will be just as important as phases one and two. He reiterated that it is vital for Con Edison to have the capacity to serve their customers through the winter, and to energize the new gas main in the spring. “[Con Edison is] working to meet the objectives of everyone, with commitments to various stakeholders in the spring, and [we] are trying to balance the needs of everyone.”

RIOC’s Role

Moderator Caroline Kretz, Director for Manhattan Public Affairs for Con Edison acknowledged Con Edison’s partnership with RIOC, and RIOC’s role in the planning process. She said, “[RIOC remained] at the table with us, keeping our

feet to the fire, every step of the way: [planning], design, to the first shovel in the ground and beyond. RIOC has been an advocate for residents.” Kretz assured those in attendance that with RIOC’s help, every possible effort will be made to keep disruptions on Main Street to a minimum. Kretz noted how different Roosevelt Island is from other areas of Manhattan, and the importance of being mindful of the Island’s unique setting.

Traffic and parking

Lombardi explained that once work on phase two begins, the active construction site will move daily. He said Con Edison expects to work in 100-foot zones, and to complete between 100 feet and 300 feet each day. Lombardi acknowledged that Roosevelt Islanders will lose a parking lane in the active construction zones, but Con Edison expects that parking disruptions will be kept to a minimum because of the planned movement. In addition, Romano explained that Con Edison construction crews would be traveling to work sites in company vehicles and would not take up additional street parking spaces with personal vehicles.

Another big concern expressed by residents regarding possible traffic issues was addressed by Lombardi, who explained that, where possible, two traffic lanes will be kept open, but it may not always be possible because of the street’s layout and varying widths, especially in the area around the FDNY building. He reiterated that because of the planned movement of active construction sites in conjunction with the work being done at night, this disruption would also be kept to the minimum possible, and that Con Edison would have two flagmen on hand to direct cars and pedestrians safely through the area.

Noise

While Con Edison has scheduled construction from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to mitigate the parking and traffic disruptions, residents expressed concern about the nightly noise. In response, Con Edison’s plan includes noise barriers and panels to dull the sounds of construction, noise protection panels under road plates to avoid loud rumbling, and alternatives to backing-up alarms for construction equipment and vehicles.

At the outset, Kretz faced criticism from those in attendance because of the short notice for the meeting. Residents accused Con Edison of a lack of engagement with the community. Kretz acknowledged that Con Edison was aware of the short notice of the meeting, and explained that the project hadn’t received preliminary approval until July 17, and Con Edison wanted to begin engaging with the community as soon as possible.

Kretz assured attendees that this meeting is “not the only bite of the apple for the community to speak to Con Edison about this work.” She also said that once the project starts, residents can expect weekly updates on the project, and any changes in the construction plan, permits, and scheduling. Kretz said that Con Edison was still figuring out what form such distributions would take to best engage residents, and

COMING UP

due Thu Aug 27. Future issues: 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.

Outdoor Movie, Sat Aug 29 7pm, Firefighters Field (rain date Fri Jul 10).

— **FUTURE WEEKS** —

Cornell Tech Town Meeting, Sep (date & time to be announced).

RIRA Common Council meets, Wed Sep 9 (instead of Sep 2) 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Meeting begins with public session, in which residents and others may address the Council.

RIOC Board of Directors meets, Thu Sep 10 5:30pm.

The NYC Be the Match Walk+Run, Sat Sep 19 at Firefighter Field. Tot Trot at 9:45; 5K at 10; 1Kbat 10:05. Info and registration at bethematchfoundation.org or call Sara Brooks Hart at 612-294-7749.

Fall for Arts Festival, Sat Oct 3.

RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed Oct 7 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Meeting begins with public session, in which residents and others may address the Council.

Columbus Day, Mon Oct 12.

RIOC Board of Directors meets, Thu Oct 22 5:30pm. Public comment period, starting 5:30, precedes formal meeting.

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.

Daylight Saving Time ends, Sun Nov 1.

Election Day, Tue Nov 3.

RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed Nov 4 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Meeting begins with public session, in which residents and others may address the Council.

Thanksgiving, Thu Nov 26.

Tree Lighting Ceremony, Wed Dec 2.

RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed Dec 2 8pm, Good Shepherd Center. Meeting begins with public session, in which residents and others may address the Council.

was open to suggestions.

Kertz concluded the meeting by noting that Con Edison will be sending communications to residents to address all concerns, and will be as specific as possible in detailing the construction plans and any changes or updates.



JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE PARK IN AUGUST!



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 10:30AM - 12PM
ENGINEER: A MARBLE PLAY MOUNTAIN
In this workshop, kids and their families will imagine and engineer their own “mini-playscape” at a marble’s scale, using recycled and found objects. At the end, we will test out our creations in the “Marble Play Mountain Challenge!”
Ages 3+.
FREE for Members/\$5 for non-members.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 10:30AM - 12PM
COLLABORATE: OUR 3D URBAN PANORAMA
What buildings can we see on the NYC skyline from Four Freedoms Park? What structures and public spaces would we include in our own ideal city? Families will collaborate to build a 3-D cityscape, transforming recycled materials into model buildings.
Ages 3+.
FREE for Members/\$5 for non-members.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 6PM - 8PM
SUNSET JAZZ
Renowned jazz musician, Art Baron, will regale Park visitors with the sounds of the Harlem Renaissance and the jazz-age. Bring a blanket and join us on the lawn!
FREE

For details and the full events calendar, please visit www.fdrfourfreedomspark.org/upcoming
The Park is free and open to the public, 9am -7pm. Open 6 days a week, closed Tuesdays.



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Adventures OFF-Island

curated by Sara Maher

Let’s be honest. At this point, you’re a little summer-ed out. You shower three times a day and your sunburn has a sunburn, but you just have to squeeze in one more (hot, humid) day at the beach. Wind down the endless summer with these easy, breezy events.

Mosquito Beats

Bummed that the Central Park Bandshell can’t be reached by F? The Prospect Park Bandshell is just a train ride away! “Celebrate Brooklyn” has organized a series of summer concerts, and many are completely free. The rest of the summer season includes performances by Taylor Mac, Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeroes, Willie Nelson & Family with Old Crow Medicine Show, and several dance companies. Bring your picnic basket (and some bug spray!).

➡ *F downtown to 15 St-Prospect Park and walk north on Prospect Park West before entering the park at 11th St. Concerts through Aug 12; times vary. Free-\$48.* bricartsmedia.org/performing-arts/celebrate-brooklyn

Sand In Your Shorts

You know your art is beautiful, but, honestly, do *you* even want to look at it forever? Enter the “Coney Island Sand Sculpting Contest” to get artist’s pride without the studio

fee. The contest is open to amateurs and semi-professionals, and there are cash prizes for the winners. Even if you don’t fancy yourself the next Michelangelo, this year’s special 25th anniversary celebration will surely be sand-filled fun for the entire family.

➡ *F downtown to Coney Island and walk toward the roller coasters; contest will be set up along the boardwalk. Sat Aug 15; sculpting starts first thing in the morning and continues throughout the day. Free to register or watch.* wearebcs.org/bcs/news_events/coneyislandsandsculpting

Sun Glasses

Inspired by medieval hand-painted Books of Hours, American artist Spencer Finch applied colored films to the windows of the Morgan Library’s four-story Gilbert Court, creating a color “calendar” based on the movement of the sun. After you’ve recovered from that color trip, fall down the rabbit hole with “Alice: 150 Years of Wonderland,” featuring the original manuscript of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

➡ *F downtown to 34th St and walk northeast to the Morgan Library at 225 Madison Ave. “A Certain Slant of Light” runs through Aug 23; “Alice” runs through Oct 11. Tue-Thu 10:30-5, Fri 10:30-9, Sat 10-6, Sun 11-6. \$18 for adults and \$12 for children, students, and seniors; admission is free Fri*

7-9pm. themorgan.org.

Partying Hard

Are you an accordion fan? You could be after this event. The “Accordion Bands Festival” includes six accordion bands from Eastern Europe, Colombia, France, Ireland, Argentina, and New Orleans. This isn’t your typical pum-pety-squeeze fare—bands include Krewe de la Rue, with a “punchy dance hall mix of Cajun and Creole music,” and Slavic Soul Party, promising “throbbing funk grooves” and “Gypsy accordion wizardry.”

➡ *F downtown to 42nd-Bryant Park; all events are in the park. Fri Aug 28, 4:30-10. Free.* bryantpark.org/plan-your-visit/accordion.html

But Books Are Always Good

We love words! The “Bryant Park Word for Word” series showcases authors of all types reading from their works, including comic artist John Romita Jr., weatherman Al Roker, and KIND founder Daniel Lubetzky. Other events include writing workshops, book clubs, film talks, story time and music performances for kids, and spelling bees.

➡ *F downtown to 42nd-Bryant Park; all events are in the park. Events through Sep 29; times vary. Free. Full list of events at* bryantpark.org/plan-your-visit/wordforword.html

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

Ephemeral Moments, works of Island artist Georgette Sinclair, Octagon Gallery, 888 Main St., daily 9am-9pm through August 29.

PARKS

Southpoint Park open daily 6am-10pm.

Lighthouse Park open daily 7am-9pm.

Four Freedoms Park daily 9am-7pm. **Closed Tue.** Free guided tours **Sat** 11am, 3pm; **Sun** 11am.

CLASSES

Art, taught by members of the RI Visual Art Association, **Sat** 11am-2pm, Sportspark. Free. **Living Library** literacy/arts/ecology/science program for ages 4-14, **Tue & Thu** 2-4pm Jul 7-Sep 3, 504 Main St. Limited to 25 families (caregivers included). Call for availability: 212-308-6243.

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.

Family Art Workshop, Thursdays to Aug 13 10:30am-2pm, Four Freedoms Park. Ages 3-up. \$5/child; members free. (Ad, page 4.)

We are New York English Class, every **Fri Aug 7-Oct 28** 10:30-12:30 at the library.

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 Summer Ride Series, **alt Thu** through Oct 1: Aug 6, 20; Sep 3, 17; Oct 1. Meet at container under helix ramp. Info: 212-870-2080, ext. 2.

Pilates with Karen, **Wed** 8:30am. Info 212-750-6223.

Ping Pong (all ages), **Tue Wed Fri** 6-9pm, Sportspark. \$5.

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 Wed Fri** 7:30-8:30pm, Sportspark.

(*\$5; free for disabled, seniors 60+, and ages 0-3.)

Tai Chi (all ages & levels), **Mon** 10:15am. Members, free; others, donation suggested, Four Freedoms Park, **Aug 31-Sep 28**.

Tennis for Kids, see **Older Kids** entries, below.

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.

Yoga at Four Freedoms Park, 1-hour classes, through **Sep 5**. Info: FDRFourFreedomsPark.org.

Adult Vinyassa (all levels), **Wed** 10:15am; **Kids & family**, **Thu** 4:15pm, **Hatha** (all levels), **Fri** 6pm; **Adult** core (all levels), **Sat** 10am. Members free; others, \$5 donation suggested. Bring your mat.

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. No registration required.

Baby Playtime (0-18 mo), **Mon** 11am, Library. No registration required.

Mommy & Me Swim Classes for children 6 mo. to 3 yrs Aug 9-Sep 27 **Wed** 10:30 and **Sun** 1:30 or 2:00. Info at rioc.ny.gov.

Toddler Story Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 11am, Library. No registration required.

Toddler Play Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 11:30am, Library. No registration required.

Island Kids Baby Group (0-14 mo.), **Thu** 10:30-11:30am, 536 Main St. Info: IslandKidsRI@gmail.com.

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.

Tennis – Junior Tennis, **Sat & Mon-Fri** after school, Racquet Club. Info 212-935-0250.

Tennis – New York Junior Tennis & Learning program, **Mon-Fri** 3-6pm (ages 8-18); **Tue** 5-6pm & **Thu** 3-4pm for ages 5-7 (with parent/guardian), Octagon Park Courts. No pre-registration, sneakers required. Info: tc@nyjtl.org or 718-786-7110.

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.

Little Dragon Tang Soo Do (Korean martial art), ages 12 & under & caregiver, **Mon** 4:15pm (Jun 8-Jul 13, Aug 10-31), Four Freedoms Park. Members free; others, donation suggested.

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

Living Library literacy/arts/ecology/science program for ages 4-14, **Tue & Thu** 2-4pm Jul 7-Sep 3, at the garden behind 504 Main St. Limited to 25 families (caregivers included). Info: 212-308-6243. Register at the Island library.

Board Games (5-12 yrs), **Tue** 4pm, Library. Free.

Teen Game Night, **Wed** 6pm, Main Street Sweets, 559 Main St.

Family Art Workshop, Thursdays Jul 23-Aug 13 10:30am-2pm, Four Freedoms Park. Ages 3-up. \$5/child; members free. (Ad, page 6.)

Anime Club (teens), **Thu** 4-5pm, Library. No registration required.

Kids & Family Yoga (ages 4-7 & caregivers), see Exercise & Sports.

Reading Aloud (children), **Fri** 3:30pm, Library. No registration required.

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 additional listings, this page.

REGULAR MEETINGS (listed Sat-Fri)

Toastmasters (public speaking), **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, 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. Info: 212-832-4540.

Conversations with Cornell Tech Staff at Gallery RIVAA, **Wed & Fri** 10am-12noon & 1-4pm, 527 Main St.

Constituent Service Hours:

Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, **1st Wed** 4-7pm, Library.

City Councilmember Ben Kallos, **4th Wed** 2-5pm, Senior Center, 546 Main St.

State Senator Jose Serrano, **Wed** 4-7pm, Senior Center or 3-6pm, Library. Info: 212-828-5829.

OTHER

Clinic on Housing Law, **1st & 3rd Mon** 3-6pm, district office of City Councilmember Ben Kallos, 244 E. 93rd St. Reservations and questions: 212-860-1950 or RSVP@BenKallos.com.

Free Legal Clinic, **1st Mon**, sponsored by Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright. For appointment call 212-288-4607.

Policy Night, **2nd Tue** 6:30pm, Kallos office (see above), 244 E. 93rd St.; help formulate policy.

Knitting & Crocheting Circle (adults), **Thu** 11:30am, Library. Info: nypl.org.

First Fridays with Kallos, 8-10am, district office (see above); questions and issues.

Food Box Orders from Helping Families Help Themselves, ordering 1st-11th of month. Menu online at jolinfoodbox.com. Info 347-985-7540; pickup 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

9:30 **Yoga**

10:20 **Shoppers’ Bus**

10:30 **Salsa with Luis**

10:45 **Spanish**

11:00 **Seniors & Social Media**

12:00 **Bridge**

1:30 **Scrabble**

Thursday

9:25 **Chair Pilates**

10:30 **Zumba**

12:00 **Movie**

1:00 **Art with John**

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

prices; see Rema or Annie

Friday

9:00 **Building Strength**

10:30 **Computers**

10:30 **Tai Chi**

12:00 **Korean Exercise**

2:00 **Pokeno**

Special Events

Citizen Preparedness Corps program, **Wed** Aug 5, 5-6pm. RSVP 212-288-4607.

Flea Market, **Sat** Aug 8, 10am-4pm. Vendors see Pilar M-F 10am-12noon.

MetroCard Bus, **Mon** Aug 10 11am-12:30pm on Main Street at 546.

RISA Membership Drive continues every **Wed** 10am-12noon. \$15.



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