



Brewer Gives State of the Borough

by Sara Maher
Community leaders and borough residents gathered in the New School’s Tischman Auditorium on Sunday, January 31, to hear Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer give her second annual State of the Borough address and community conversation.

Brewer’s opening remarks highlighted her office’s accomplishments in 2015. According to Brewer, the focus in 2015 was on affordable housing, assisting small businesses, and promoting urban gardening in public schools. The Island was influenced by all of these issues in 2015: Island House was the first building in the City to exit the Mitchell-Lama program while retaining affordable units, (Roosevelt Landings and Rivercross had transitioned to market rate previously); residents complained about the emptiness of Main Street as the

grand re-opening of a renovated Trellis was continuously delayed; and PS/IS 217 was one of the top vote-getters in participatory budgeting, receiving \$500,000 to build a “green roof” to use as additional outdoor space and as an environmental programming opportunity.

Brewer presented the services her office offered in 2015, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) and tenant clinics; helping residents connect with benefits, services, and job opportunities; and a budget of \$7.7 million that was used for technology projects in 57 public schools and given to non-profits for use in sustainable long-term projects aimed at police officer-community relationships. Brewer said her office also introduced 32 pieces of legislation, with eight passed into law, including the Fair Chance Act, which made it illegal for most City

employers to ask for the criminal record of job applicants, and a caregiver discrimination bill to prohibit employment discrimination against individuals who are perceived to have a status of caregiver. In September 2015, Brewer announced she was partnering with the Senior Association to bring her Fresh Food for Seniors program to the Island, making bags of fresh, locally-sourced produce available to senior citizens for \$8 per bag.

The goals of 2016 concentrate on Manhattan youth and culture and ways the community can work together to best prepare its future leaders. Brewer has worked to include youth influence in the past, supporting a State law passed in 2014 that lowered the eligibility age of community board membership from 18 to 16. Six applicants under the age of 18 were appointed

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RIVAA Shows Celebrate Black History

by David Stone
Photos by Piaskowski
“Black Lives Matter” pierced the fabric of American culture in the past year, sparking debate and filling newspapers. The subject of race was forced to the mass media forefront by community reaction to a series of violent police confrontations. In *Afrocentric Images*, the Annual Black History Month Exhibition at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street, the political meme is given vivid, positive expression in depth and subtlety within art.



Literally, in aluminum artwork by Alan Mildor, “Black Lives Matter” is a legend printed freehand on two small pieces of cardboard, seemingly taken from a protest sign, held up by a pair of individuals who lean against either side of the center pole in a subway car. The car itself is so well lit, it’s almost blanched, emphasizing the colorful figures in the foreground. With vibrant wit, the casually dressed person on the left obscures his entire head with an American flag while, on the right, his suit and tie wearing partner hides behind a mask of Barack Obama.

It’s a straightforward expression – seen from an angle the mass media, in its hunt for raw conflict, never shows – a declaration of a lively, aware culture amplified on these gallery walls.

Afrocentric Images extends across a broad range of experience, from romance to historic heroism to music, with numerous stops in-between. *Pax Rwanda*, a companion exhibit that features embroidery straight out of Africa, weaves in folk artistry and cultural heritage.

Lorraine Williams, assisted by featured artist Andrew Nichols, earns praise for mounting an exhibit of meaningful range without weak spots. Similarly, Juliana Meehan’s *Pax Rwanda* features beautiful embroidered images so intricately woven as to seem impossible.

These well-paired exhibits opened with a reception on February 6 and will continue to excite visitors until the 28th at RIVAA Gallery, 527 Main Street.

Musical Color

Musical expression enjoys visual representation in this show. Lynvan A. Munlyn’s lively *S.O.B. (Sounds of Brazil)* is New York themed with curvy, dancing bodies secured on a geometric urban grid. It’s strong earth tones repeat with Akassa’s *Natural Song*. Akassa’s musician sits in surreal grid, garbed in loose, traditional attire, with a lapful of musical instruments at his command.

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Stalled Prospects in Main Street Retail

by Alex Marshall

What’s happening on Main Street? Not much, unless you mean ConEd digging up the Z-bricks for a new high-pressure gas line and scaffolding going up on one building after another.

Meanwhile, storefronts stand empty, the same storefronts that have been empty for years, since the stationery store, bakery, seafood store, chiropractor, shoe-repair, hardware store, and thrift shop moved out, or were moved out, in some cases, years ago. A new agent, the global real estate giant Cushman Wakefield, hung out its shingle all along the Street last September; but no takers so far.

RIRA, the Roosevelt Island Residents’ Association, would like to see some action. “Nothing happened last year,” says Anne Kanning, chair of the RIRA Retail Advisory Committee. We need to set some achievable goals and start working towards them.” (In fact one new lease was signed in 2015, CDM Kids, a daycare and nursery, located at 568 Main Street, apparently awaiting certification before going into full operation.)

The ultimate responsibility lies with the State-appointed Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) Board that governs the Island. Before the January 28 Board meeting, RIOC board member Michael Shinozaki pointed out that a great deal has been done to improve the look of Main Street. The dingy old glass fronts along

the arcades are gone, there is new lighting, paintwork and signage, and new Island-shaped benches.

So, if you paint it, will they come? Not so far. Prospective tenants have looked around, some have returned several times, but none have bitten, says Pedram Mahdavi, of Hudson/Related (HR), the holder of the master lease for Main Street stores. What’s stopping tenants flooding in? It’s not the rent: HR believes its expectations are reasonable. It’s not the process: Margie Smith, a Rivercross resident and RIOC Board member, says one of the reasons RIOC went for a master lease was precisely to allow prospective tenants to avoid the bureaucratic hassles of dealing with the State.

So what’s up? How could Main Street support all those stores back then, and why not now? One reason has to be that in the old days stores paid little rent – \$9.00 a square foot in some cases – and some of them none at all. Some were years behind when they were forced out. Under the new regime, Hudson/Related is looking for something more like \$45.00 a square foot, though that’s presumably negotiable.

RIOC and HR both point to the absence of foot traffic as a major turn-off for businesses wanting to come to the Island. There are 14,000 people here, but many Southtown residents don’t make it as far up as Main Street, and many more whisk straight through on the

See **Main Street**, page 10



Blue Dragon to Arrive in April

by Sara Metzidakis

A special visit to Roosevelt Island in 2014 will result in the installation of a sculpture, *Blue Dragon*, on the Island in early April of this year. *Blue Dragon*’s artists, Gustav and Ulla Kraitz, were brought to visit the Island by Islander Elisabeth Halvarsson Stapen in May of 2014. Stapen says of Gustav Kraitz, “He is excited about the Island. It pays that I brought him here.”

After looking at a catalog of ancient ceramics, the Kraitzes were determined to reproduce the color and glazed surface of ancient Chinese pieces that they found so inspiring. They experimented with ancient Chinese firing techniques. There were no manuals or books of advice, so they attempted various firing techniques based on pictures of the kilns in Chinese paintings. Over time, they succeeded in reviving the Chinese firing practice. They have shown their work in China. Stapen says, “They have made a few dragon sculptures. One was sold to a museum and they planned to sell *Blue Dragon* to another.” It is valued at \$200,000.00

See **Blue Dragon**, page 9

Briefly...

• Survey Sweepstakes

The Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) invites all Island residents to complete a survey: www.RIRAonline.com/survey. All responses will be entered in a sweepstakes. Three winners will receive a \$10 gift card from Main Street Sweets, Piccolo Trattoria, or Starbucks. One entry per adult.

The survey takes less than three minutes to complete. Printed ballots are available at the Public

Safety Office (550 Main Street) and the Public Library (524 Main Street). and can be placed in the ballot box at Public Safety. Based on responses, RIRA will set priorities for advocacy and resolution.

• A 1985 Cornell graduate, Robert F. Smith, gave \$50 million to the school to support African-American and female engineering students. He is Chair and CEO of Vista Equity Partners.

The Editorial Page

Grading Main Street Retail

It has now been more than six years since the 54-page “Main Street Retail Study” was released in October, 2009. The study contained six specific goals that would, ostensibly, lay the groundwork for the revitalization of Main Street.

So how has the “master plan” worked out so far? Here are the goals and the grades:

1. Bring in a master leaseholder to handle the marketing and leasing of retail space.

This part of the plan was intended to allow potential tenants to avoid the red tape of working with RIOC (always a good thing), and to put the leasing function in the hands of those with expertise in marketing commercial real estate (what a concept). Mission accomplished; as of fall 2015, Cushman & Wakefield now handle this function.

But, try googling “Roosevelt Island commercial space.” No Cushman & Wakefield results. Okay, now try looking for Roosevelt Island on the Cushman & Wakefield website. Nothing there either!

While RIOC did find someone to handle the master lease, marketing, beyond signs on Main Street, is not happening.

Grade: D

2. Revitalize the Roosevelt Island Chamber of Commerce. Let’s be generous...

Grade: Incomplete

3. Fix up the “streetscape.”

Mission accomplished, sort of. The changes to the Roosevelt Landings facade happened, and they are something of an improvement. But there’s more to do. Obviously, the benches need turning around and there many other suggestions the Main Street Retail Committee has, but nobody seems to listen.

Grade: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

4. Get rid of those icky, low-end, non-profits that are taking up such in-demand real estate!

Grade: A+ Who cares that the Thrift Store performed a valuable community service? And that the community has been speaking up about this loss ever since.

5. Revitalize Good Shepherd Plaza.

Grade: A- thanks to exhaustive resident efforts, led by Vicki Feinmel. But we are dinging you half a grade for killing the 9/11 tree. (What? It’s not dead!?)

6. Create a “Gateway to Main Street.”

Grade: Is this a thing? If so there would need to be some signage, perhaps when you get off the Tram. A large map of the Island with eateries and other places of interest clearly pointed out perhaps?

So after six years, the groundwork has been laid. Responding to community complaints, here we have focused on the negative. Next issue we will look at what *has* been accomplished. **BW**

Letters

To the Editor:

I read the story about the miscommunication between RIOC and Island organizations regarding the closure of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd for floor refinishing. The biting and vindictive comments make me wonder why anyone would work serving some members of our community because they seem always prepared to bash every action our administration takes.

They did not mention that the work is done, the floor is sound, and one third of it is completely new. The floor had been deteriorating for years and finally it is rebuilt and restored.

In the last years, RIOC has had the rose window restored, the building brickwork re-pointed and the air conditioning system moved from the bell tower – central heat and air conditioning now functions there. A wonderful slate roof now enhances the beauty of the building, and the exterior entrance,

steps, rails, and narthex have all been restored and rebuilt.

The above were done in coordination with historic preservation experts who made sure the exterior of the building was professionally restored and done by contractors familiar with working on landmark structures. The interior of the building is not a landmark. (Only a few buildings have designated landmark interiors such as Grand Central Terminal.)

I agree that the communications could have been much better, and we should go back to old-fashioned phone calls, person-to-person, to advise on emergency arrangements.

Come into the Chapel and admire the new floors. Hopefully new chairs and carpeting will soon be on the list.

Thanks to the staff who “busted their butts” to get the Chapel back for last Sunday’s services.

Judith Berdy

RIRA for services rendered. As a result, RIOC stiffed RIRA for two years of committee labor and the support of Island organizations was curtailed. Nevertheless, RIRA decided to continue allocating the Public Purpose Fund without compensation.

By virtue of the legislation written by the RIRA Government Relations Committee and passed in Albany with the support of our Assembly Member Seawright and State Senator Serrano, that service has been restored – a year late.

These grants allowed many of our organizations to focus on their missions and not on finding the funds that allow them to function. It was a direct boon to a community of social organizations and augured a new relationship between RIOC and residents. The current controversies regarding

our public spaces and RIOC’s stewardship of them are indications of how this relationship continues to deteriorate and, especially, how our expectations of advocacy from the resident Board members have fallen short. I’ve asked them to hold annual or semi-annual town meetings to hear from their “constituents,” as neighbors talking to neighbors, and been rebuffed.

Shame on them.

I feel that the past efforts of a small group of Islanders, dedicated to a more democratic form of local government here, have been for naught.

Matthew Katz

Letters deadline

for March 5 issue:
Tuesday, March 1, 5:00 p.m.

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.

Tigger Ogden, Pet Therapy Cat

by Jennifer Dunning

Tigger Ogden, a trained Pet Therapy cat and Island Cats rescue, died peacefully of old age on January 25. He was known and loved by many Roosevelt Islanders. Two of his biggest fans, his owner Joan Ogden, and Margaret Lopes, Supervising Children’s Counselor at Coler Hospital and facilitator of the hospital’s Pet Therapy Program, remember him here.

Joan Ogden writes: I do not know when or where you were born, Tigger, but you came into my life on May 14, 2006, on Mother’s Day. You had been found abandoned outdoors one winter day in the Island’s community gardens, declawed. Two adoptions were unsuccessful. One family returned you because you “talked” too much and wanted too much affection. You weren’t much to look at and seemed like an ordinary cat. Soon you showed me you were anything but ordinary. At first I thought you were a slow learner, but you were just stubborn. I was the slow one. Everyone who met you saw how special you were, to the point I was strongly encouraged to enter you into the Pet Therapy Program at Bide-A-Wee. Several months later I enrolled us, me for training and you for testing to see how you would handle people with physical and mental disabilities and things like being shouted at and handled roughly. Not only did you pass with a perfect score but you outscored me.

You became a favorite with young and old; from exam-stressed students at the Juilliard School and three City Universities, to elderly patients at the

Greenwich Nursing Home and Coler Hospital. In fact, you had more relatives than me: Jewish and German grandmothers, uncles, aunts, and so many friends all over the place. You liked to visit with the senior across the hall. And you once tried to warn me, leading me out into the hall, that another senior needed help.

From giving out Halloween candy (while in costume), to visiting seniors in other buildings, you were incredible. I watched how you would flirt with the women and then hang out with the men. Dog people said you had the spirit of a dog.

You were anything but ordinary, Tigger. You were a gentleman and a scholar. You are missed and loved.

Margaret Lopes remembers Tigger’s work at Coler Hospital, where he calmed and cuddled with patients for seven years. “Tigger was an extraordinary animal. He had such a gentle soul. He would get really connected to the residents who are very sick. He crawled up and lay down right next to them. You could basically put him anywhere and he would just lie there and give comfort.

The limit for Pet Therapy animals is a 20-minute window, more or less, depending on the animals. However, Tigger used to go for two hours and more at a time and had absolutely no problem. He actually enjoyed his job. Extraordinary is the only word that comes to my mind. He was so special, and he was also extremely special with other animals. He was a one-of-a-kind creation and there will be no other like him, ever again. I’m so sad.

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Allison Pearlman and students of Legacy High School;
Angelo Sacino, Kaitlyn Abdul, and students from the PS/IS 217 Beacon Program,
Juniors and Cadettes of Girl Scout Troop 3324

Valentine's Day weekends for the past two years were both forecast to be snowy and cold. This Valentine's Day weekend is forecast to be the coldest this winter. As with all weather forecasts, one must take predicted conditions in stride; but as New Yorkers, and especially as Roosevelt Islanders floating in our little ship down the East River, we should never underestimate what Mother Nature may blow our way. Understanding how cold temperatures affect vulnerable members of our community in different ways, I implore you to check in on your infirm, immobile, and needy neighbors. Lend a helping hand as they seek comfort and warmth.

RIRA Polling Initiative: The Survey

Have you taken The Survey yet? If not, join your Island neighbors, family, and friends who have, and go to www.riraonline.com/survey now, answer a few questions regarding Island life and community concerns, and have your voice heard by your RIRA Common Council! With just a few clicks, you can shape the term of the current and next Com-

mon Council, voice directly to RIOC and your elected officials what Island issues matter to you the most, and help determine the programming and advocacy platforms which affect your life on the Island.

Don't have online access or prefer to respond through traditional pen and paper? Head to either our Roosevelt Island Public Library or the Public Safety Department, pick up and complete the survey and submit your responses. Common Council volunteers will also be available at the Roosevelt Island Public Library to assist in completing the online survey during the times and dates posted at the library. Also, keep your eyes peeled for when your Common Council Representative will be on hand in your building to assist in The Survey. We strongly encourage all of you to participate, go to www.riraonline.com/survey and let your voice be heard! Have questions regarding The Survey or need assistance participating? Have other polling questions that were not raised but you believe should be asked of the Community, whether during the next round of polling or at a community-wide meeting? Email the Polling Initiative's Chair, Adib Mansour, at RIRAdib@earthlink.net and let your voice be heard!

RIRA Planning Committee Update

The RIRA Planning Committee is now chaired by David Lawson (lawsondd@aol.com) of Westview, and they have set an aggressive agenda and timetable for the remainder of this term. For those unfamiliar with the work of the RIRA Planning Committee, it is the entity of the Common Council explicitly tasked with all matters involving future development of the Island – including but not limited to commercial development,

housing, vehicular access, transportation, social service and energy – as well as monitoring and recommending positions on community planning matters, policies relating to energy, conservation, distribution and generation.

For the balance of this term, the Planning Committee has their eyes set on (1) developing, in conjunction with RIOC and the City, an Island-wide emergency plan; (2) enhancing the current transportation plan on the Island, including the planned ferry system, safety of bike circulation on roadways, and bike/pedestrian safety on the promenade, and identifying dangerous pedestrian/bike sections of the Island's roadways; (3) accessing the long-term impact and change in demographics the arrival of Cornell Tech NYC will have on the Island's infrastructure and support; and (4) environmental protection of Island residents, including air quality monitoring and the maintenance/upgrade of the existing AVAC system. Are you



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

interested in getting involved or have suggestions on how the Planning Committee might tackle such issues? Send the Common Council an email at contact@riraonline.com or reach out to David Lawson, Chair of the Planning Committee at lawsondd@aol.com.

Composting Initiative Partnership

The Roosevelt Island Composting Initiative, in cooperation with the NYC Compost Project and BIG-Reuse, report that in the first ten weeks of the composting program, Roosevelt Islanders have made a total of 576 organic kitchen scraps and organic waste drop-offs at the Roosevelt Island Saturday Markets under the Helix, totaling over 3,924 lbs. That's close to two tons of waste that would otherwise have ended up in landfills! It will now be diverted to be recycled, composted, and used to rebuild Island and city gardens, thanks to Roosevelt Islanders.

But we are not done yet! Continue to bring your kitchen scraps and organic waste to be composted at the Saturday Market, supported by RIRA, the Roosevelt Island Garden Club, the PS/IS 217 PTA, iDig2Learn, the RI Girl Scouts, and 45 other Island residents as we look to reduce, reuse and recycle. And keep your eye out as the initiative grows! Want to find out more about how you can join the movement? Send the Common

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

Swimming is a complex sport that develops qualities that benefit both kids and adults. The Roosevelt Island Marlins Swim Team offers community members an affordable opportunity to swim and compete in an organized and structured environment. For over a decade, the Marlins have been serving both long-term residents and new families arriving to the Island from all over the world. Our Island is a tight-knit community and a family-oriented place, and we are proud that thousands of Island residents have learned to swim with us in our amazing and friendly environment.

The Marlins are supervised by Roosevelt Island Swimming, Inc., a non-profit community-based organization run by parent volunteers. Over the past

11 years, this small but very dedicated group of Island parents managed to create and sustain a high-quality, yet affordable, Learn-to-Swim

program and our very successful competitive swim team. With more pool time available for training this season, we were able to grow the program, and saw record enrollment in both our Learn-to-Swim program and the swim team in 2015. Between our summer classes and the regular season, we served over 250 kids and adults ages 18 months to over 50 years.

The Marlins are proud to represent Roosevelt Island wherever we travel, striving to make our community visible to the world. We are not simply chasing faster times and swim-meet records; from the start, the Marlins defined our mission as building not just strong bodies, but strong minds and well-rounded and adjusted personalities. The discipline of swimming practices impacts on all other aspects of our athletes'

lives. Our Learn-to-Swim and swim team swimmers excel in school, time management, setting goals, and working hard to achieve them.

A highlight of the 2015-2016 season was seeing our youngest swimmers in the Future Stars group compete for the very first time. This new division bridges the gap between our Learn-to-Swim program and the competitive team, allowing swimmers as young as six years old to build their competitive skills. The Juniors and Seniors had an outstanding season, reaching their best times and winning many close races. The older swimmers provide



Roosevelt Island Marlins
Board of Directors
rimarlinsteam@gmail.com

great leadership and guidance for our new 8 & Under division recruits, many of whom are their younger siblings. Many of our Seniors, who started as Beginners five to eight years ago, now attend specialized high schools and successfully complete both academic and athletic workloads. Organized swimming helped them build self-confidence and improve their time management and social skills. Daily workouts at the pool do not simply teach Island children swim strokes or prepare our swimmers for competitions, but also allow them to socialize in a fun, safe, and supportive environment with their peers, learning important lessons that help them succeed at school and in life. Our graduates have attended MIT, SUNY at Buffalo, SUNY at Stony Brook, Columbia, Colgate, CUNY, and many more undergraduate programs.

Over 40 Marlins athletes have competed against the strongest teams in the metropolitan area and won

multiple gold, silver, and bronze medals this season. Our team placed among the ten strongest teams of the 105 in the Metropolitan Area (including NYC, Long Island, and Westchester.) We now have swimmers in the top ten in our Metro Area, top 15 in the entire Eastern Zone (East Coast of the U.S. from Maine to Virginia), and top 50 nationally. We are proud of Jasper Bruskotter, Ines Chomnalez, Milos Ciric, Freddy Coronel, Lisa and Matteo Coullare, Isabel Coutinho, Malamati Drougos, Emir Emre, Victor Gazdciu, Mira Goodman, Katarina and Milica Grozdanic, Nicholas Gusita, Aiden Hightower, Payton Hightower, Elena Jordan, Lara Jordan, Ethan Li, Kelsey Long, Strahinja Maslo, Charline Mazanek, Denys Mialkovskyi, Erika Nazarova, Jonna Norberg, Malte Norberg, Shimaa Omar, Grigory Pashkov, Matija Prokic, Natalie Reinhart, Ian Remor, Patrick Ren, Andrea Ritziu, Bogdan Sadikovic, Sophia Shchuchinov, Timur Shchuchinov, Michael Shumikhin, Maksim Tesovic, Tamara Tesovic, Stephan Vesselov, Nader Yamout, and Andrew Zubac for their accomplishments this season.

Ten-year-old Sophia Shchuchinov was the first Islander to become a Junior Olympics Champion, getting the gold medal in the 2015 Long Course Junior Olympics for 100-meter breast stroke. She went on to represent the Metro Area at the Eastern Zone All Star Championship in Richmond, Virginia. She competed with the fastest age group swimmers, both in individual events and relay races, placing as high as seventh in the Zone.

Twelve Marlins swimmers will represent Roosevelt Island in the Metro 2016 Junior Olympics Championship this March: Milos Ciric, Emir Emre, Victor Gazdciu,

COMING UP

- THIS WEEKEND -

MST&DA last day to register for Spring Semester, Sat Feb 13 at the Cultural Center, 9-11am or online at mstda.org. Scholarship applications also available.

Registration now open for Master Swim Feb-March session. Classes Mon, Wed, Fri 7:30-8:30pm at Sportspark. Register online (rioc.recdesk.com/recdeskportal/ProgramRegistration), by email (Eddie.Perez@rioc.ny.gov), or by phone (212-832-4569). Residents \$60/session or \$7 per drop-in.

Crafts with Kids: Valentine's, Sat Feb 13 10-11am, Senior Center. Sponsored by Roosevelt Island Parents Network. RSVP to eva.bosbach@gmail.com

– REGULAR MEETINGS EVENTS –
See page 4.

- THE NEXT THREE WEEKS -

Bicycling Basics, Tue Feb 16 10am-1pm, Sportspark Gym. Free. Register at bike.nyc/education/classes/bicycling-basics

Constituent Hours and Free Tax Preparation Assistance, Wed Feb 17 11am-2pm at the Senior Association (546 Main, ground floor.) Tax & finance presentation 12pm. Free.

MST&DA Spring Session begins, week of Feb 22. (See ad, page 6.)

RI Day Nursery Open House, Wed Feb 24 6:30-8 pm and **Sat Feb 27**, 10:30 am-12 pm (See ad, page 7.)

Learn to Ride: Adults, Tue Mar 1 10am-12pm, Sportspark Gym. Register at bike.nyc/education/classes/learn-to-ride-adults

The Main Street WIRE – Sat Mar 5. Advertising deadlines: Display, Wed Feb 24 decision date for circulars/inserts, Tue Mar 1; 6,000 copies due Thu Mar 3. Also: Mar 19; Apr 9, 23; May 14, 28; Jun 11, 25; Jul issue date to be announced; Aug 27; Sep 10, 24; Oct 8, 22; Nov 5, 19; Dec 10. News phone, 917-842-7638; 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.

- FUTURE WEEKS -

RI Day Nursery Open Enrollment begins Mar 8. (See ad, page 7.)

RIHS lecture, The SS Columbia and the Return of the Hudson River Day Liner, Tue Mar 8 6:30pm, Library. Free.

Crafts with Kids: Easter, Sat Mar 19 10-11am, Senior Center. Sponsored by Roosevelt Island Parents Network. RSVP to eva.bosbach@gmail.com

Spring Concert, Laudamus Children's Chorus, Sun Mar 20 7pm at the Good Shepherd Center. Free. laudamusnyc.org

RIHS lecture, Women in Health, Tue Apr 12 6:30pm at the library. Free.

Crafts with Kids: Spring, Sat Apr 16 10-11am, Senior Center. Sponsored by Roosevelt Island Parents Network. RSVP to eva.bosbach@gmail.com

Katarina Grozdanic, Elena Jordan, Kelsey Long, Strahinja Maslo, Denys Mialkovskyi, Matija Prokic, Sophia Shchuchinov, Maksim Tesovic, and Andrew Zubac. A record number of our athletes achieved Eastern Zone qualifying times this season. There was tremendous parental support this year at the meets, practices, and team events, including movie nights, dances, and parties. Our amazing families traveled with their swimmers and filled the stands at every pool we competed at. The season concluded with an end-of-year dinner filled with great food and music, an award ceremony for the 2015 Team Challenge winners, and a video show. Team members with the best attendance received well-deserved Dedication Awards. This was a wonderful way to encourage and reward swimmers who manage to balance their athletic achievements and academic successes. On behalf of all Marlins families, we thank our hardworking Learn-to-Swim instructors (Tyrone Hung, Andrea Gasic, Doris Gasic, Sylvia Guzikowski, Ana Naumovska, Jana Lausevic, Elizabeth Yako, and Hugo Genes) and our dedicated coaches (Michael Gavrilchin, Krzysztof Szkoda, and Igor Shoukhardin) for a great swimming season. We credit our experienced coaching staff and committed parents with the teams' continuing growth and success and look forward to another great year at the pool. Visit our website at rimarlins.com to learn more about our programs, register for the Learn-to-Swim program, or schedule a tryout for the competitive team. You can also shop our online store and purchase Marlins-branded T-shirts, hoodies, and swimwear to support our team.

multiple gold, silver, and bronze medals this season. Our team placed among the ten strongest teams of the 105 in the Metropolitan Area (including NYC, Long Island, and Westchester.) We now have swimmers in the top ten in our Metro Area, top 15 in the entire Eastern Zone (East Coast of the U.S. from Maine to Virginia), and top 50 nationally. We are proud of Jasper Bruskotter, Ines Chomnalez, Milos Ciric, Freddy Coronel, Lisa and Matteo Coullare, Isabel Coutinho, Malamati Drougos, Emir Emre, Victor Gazdciu, Mira Goodman, Katarina and Milica Grozdanic, Nicholas Gusita, Aiden Hightower, Payton Hightower, Elena Jordan, Lara Jordan, Ethan Li, Kelsey Long, Strahinja Maslo, Charline Mazanek, Denys Mialkovskyi, Erika Nazarova, Jonna Norberg, Malte Norberg, Shimaa Omar, Grigory Pashkov, Matija Prokic, Natalie Reinhart, Ian Remor, Patrick Ren, Andrea Ritziu, Bogdan Sadikovic, Sophia Shchuchinov, Timur Shchuchinov, Michael Shumikhin, Maksim Tesovic, Tamara Tesovic, Stephan Vesselov, Nader Yamout, and Andrew Zubac for their accomplishments this season.

Ten-year-old Sophia Shchuchinov was the first Islander to become a Junior Olympics Champion, getting the gold medal in the 2015 Long Course Junior Olympics for 100-meter breast stroke. She went on to represent the Metro Area at the Eastern Zone All Star Championship in Richmond, Virginia. She competed with the fastest age group swimmers, both in individual events and relay races, placing as high as seventh in the Zone. Twelve Marlins swimmers will represent Roosevelt Island in the Metro 2016 Junior Olympics Championship this March: Milos Ciric, Emir Emre, Victor Gazdciu,

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Adventures Of F F-Island

curated by Sara Maher

Many countries still associate Valentine’s Day with an actual saint, but the United States isn’t one of them. There’s a way to spoil any sweetheart (or yourself) in one of these activities.

Share A Moment (With SO Many People)

Forget the fancy restaurants and theater tickets – apparently there is “no better place to say ‘I love you’ than Times Square.” If you and your person fancy getting cozy with thousands of other couples (or if you just really, really love watching weddings), Love in Times Square is the place for you this Sunday. Registration has already closed for Surprise Proposals and Weddings in the Square, but you can still crowd onto the red steps of Duffy Square to participate in a mass vow renewal and check out this year’s “heart art” installation, Heart of Hearts (it doubles as a six-room kissing booth – swanky!). There are also special Valentine’s weekend offers from nearby establishments, including Le Bernardin, Dos Caminos, Sephora, and M&M’s World, so you can spend the entire day in the Square.

➡F downtown to 47-50th Sts-Rockefeller Center and walk west on 47th to 7th Ave. Sun Feb 14. Surprise Proposals and Weddings in the Square: all day, free to watch. Vow renewal: 6pm in Duffy Square, free but registration required. Info, registration, and details about special offers at timesquarenyc.org/events/valentines-day

Blood and Chocolate

Prefer deep frights over bright lights? Try a Bloody Valentine’s Weekend at Blood Manor. Cling to your “boo” through 5,000 square feet of rooms and corridors “designed to maximize one’s fears.” If you make it out alive, treat yourselves to a shopping spree at Jacques Torres Chocolate (they do a killer hot cocoa).

➡Blood Manor: F downtown to W 4th St and walk southwest to 163 Varick St. Fri Feb 12-Sat Feb 13 1-11pm and Sun Feb 14 6-10pm. \$33.50 each. Not recommended for children under age 14; children under age 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Note: this attraction is meant to be very scary, but you will not be touched by any actors. White or expensive clothing is not recommended. bloodmanor.com Jacques Torres: from Blood Manor, walk northwest to 350 Hudson St. mrchocolate.com

Excuse to Sit in a Dark Theatre

If you can’t quite make it through Blood Manor (no judgment), find the nearest emergency exit and head to the IFC Center. You can try a lower dose of terror with a late-night showing of *The Shining*, or catch up on obscure Oscar noms – it’s showing all documentary, animated, and live action shorts; France’s Best Foreign Language Film nominee, *Mustang*; and *45 Years*, with Best Actress nominee Charlotte Rampling. If you’re still stuck in the lovey-dovey spirit, there’s a midnight showing of *Sixteen Candles* on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

➡F downtown to W 4th St and exit the station toward 3rd St; the theater is at the intersection of Ave of the Americas and 3rd St. Tickets \$14 adults, \$10 kids and seniors. Showtimes at ifccenter.com

Just Love How You Look

If your one true love is fashion, this year’s New York Fashion Week conveniently runs right over V-day. Start your day like a walk on the runway with free makeup touch-ups and mini manicures from PRIV, then head to one of these unique open-to-the-public shows: SmartGlamour’s Body Positive show includes women’s styles for sizes XXS-6X, and FTL Moda’s The Revolution Continues show features models with Down syndrome and prosthetics.

➡PRIV: different Triumph Hotel location every day; F train spots include Hotel Chandler on Fri Feb 12, 10am-2pm; The Iroquois on Tue Feb 16, 10am-2pm; and Washington Jefferson Hotel on Thu Feb 18, 10am-2pm. Free. triumphhotels.com/specials/new-york-fashion-week-2016. Body Positive: F downtown to 14th St and walk west to The Alchemical Studios (104 W 14th St.) Fri Feb 19, 7:30pm; followed by champagne toast at Grape & Vine. Show and toast free with RSVP by emailing smartglamour@gmail.com. Info at facebook.com/events/509667385882263. The Revolution Continues: F downtown to 2nd Av and walk southeast to the Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts (172 Norfolk St.) Mon Feb 15, red carpet 5:30pm, show 6:30pm. Free. ftlmoda.com/ftl-moda-fw2016/ftl-moda-runway-shows

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

Afrocentric Images at Gallery RIVAA, **through Feb 28**. Gallery open Tue, Thu 6-8pm and Sat-Sun 12-4pm.

Winter Treasures #2 at the Octagon Gallery, **through Mar 6**. Gallery open daily 9am-8pm.

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 RI Visual Art Association, **Sat** 11am-2pm, Sportspark. Free. **We Are New York English Class**, every **Fri** 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.

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

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

Rhythmic Gymnastics Classes, **Mon** 4-6pm for beginners, **Thu** 4-6 intermediate, Sportspark. Information: RogueRhythmics@yahoo.com or 917-331-2044.

RI Moms on the Move walk and exercise program, **Mon 9:30am**, Visitor Kiosk in Tramway Plaza. Free. To confirm day and 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.)

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

Yoga (open-level), **Mon & Thu** 6:15-7:15pm, **Sat** 10-11am, 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 (*listed Sat-Fri*)

Parent and Me Swim Class, **Sun** 11am & **Wed** 10:30am, Sportspark. \$5 for pre-registered Island families.

Baby Story Time (0-18 mo), **Mon** 10:30am, Library. No registration required.

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

Music with James, every **Tue** 4pm at the Cultural Center (548 Main St.) Ages 4mo-4yr. \$15/child. musicwithjames.com

Toddler Story Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 10:15 & 11:15am, Library. No registration required.

Toddler Play Time (18-36 mo), **Wed** 10:45 & 11:45am, 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*)

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, grades 1-8, **Mon-Fri** 3-6pm, PS/IS 217. Free. Info: 212-527-2505.

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.

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.

Computer Basics for Seniors, every **Fri** 10:30am at the Library.

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.

Coloring for Adults, every **Tue** 12pm, Library. Materials provided.

114th Precinct Community Meeting, **4th Tue** 7pm, Riccardo’, 2101 24th Av., Astoria.

RIRA Common Council meeting **1st Wed** (except Jul-Aug) 8pm, Good Shepherd Center.

Women’s Health Organization, **last Wed** except Nov and Dec, when meeting is on third Wed, 6:30pm, 546 Main St, 12th floor conference room.

Knitting and Crochet Group, every **Thu** 11:30am. Library.

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:

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, **1st Wed** 3-6pm, Senior Center or Library Info: 212 288-4607.

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

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

OTHER

Organics Recycling every **Sat** at the Farmer’s Market under the Helix from 9:30am-3:30pm.

Residents can drop off kitchen scraps to be made into compost for local parks and gardens.

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.

Events, regular and otherwise?

List ’em! MainStreetWIRE@usa.net

List early, so that other organizations can avoid conflicts.

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Have you always wondered how great actors do it? Join our Adult Acting Class and learn Method Acting from the best.

Register in-person at the Cultural Center, 548 Main Street Sat. 2/13 9-11 am or online at mstda.org

Free Theatre Tech Workshop!

Learn about scenery, lighting, sound, and movement from a seasoned pro.

Four Monday sessions starting March 7, 6:30-8:00 pm. Contact info@mstda.org

Stylized Basic Dance Movement Workshop for adults!

This introductory workshop uses basic exercise steps to choreograph different fusions of Jazz, Ballet, African, Latin, East Indian, Hip Hop and Interpretive dance.

Students will engage in a wide range of movements and rhythms. Open to all levels!

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Wed. March 9, 16, 23, & 30 7:00-8:00 pm

Contact info@mstda.org

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RIVAA, from page 1

Not far away, I found a favorite, jazz trumpeter Roy Hargrove inventively represented on a foil print. *Roy Hargrove at the Highline* artfully matches metals while showing the musician’s cool command of his instrument. In Andrew Nichol’s *Melody*, another unnamed horn player, who looks awfully like an uncharacteristically at ease Miles Davis, launches visual expressions of sound that resemble patches of fabric floating upward from his instrument.

Suggesting music visually is no easy thing, and these artists do it creatively.

In a pair of inspirational posters on canvas, Gregory Whishum brings black history and pride into frames. The first, *Great African American Women*, offers a grid of women’s faces, centered with Michelle Obama. The First Lady is surrounded by twenty accomplished women, from Harriet Tubman to Josephine Baker to Condoleezza Rice, demonstrating the breadth of their contributions to our culture. It’s easy to imagine this poster on a teenager’s wall.

Whishum’s second poster, *From Slavery to Presidency*, features a laid back President Obama among a sea of historical images from history, suggesting an exceptional man arriving in the present from a stream of cultural evolution.



Aziza: *Roy Hargrove at the Highline*



Gregory Whishum: *Great African American Women*

Pax Rwanda

With embroidered artwork, *Pax Rwanda* returns us to Africa. The dominant earth tones fit right in and, except for their vivid folk art style, are indistinguishable from the larger, main exhibit.

Pax Rwanda delivers the designs of Savane Rutongo-Kibuye, embroidered into reality by a team of artisans from her workshop.

“Their embroidery technique involves loading threads of three different colors on one needle to achieve subtle blends of color. Only rarely does any one area of an embroidery consist of a single color. In this way, the artisans strive to create with needle and thread what the painter produces with brush and paint,” according to its website.

Curator Juliana Meehan elaborates, “Each finished work takes three or four months to complete.”

The precision and artistry of the work is seen best in *The Sorghum Market*, where fields, piles of grain, people and baskets intermingle in a busy marketplace. The colors are rich and eye-catching, the composition elaborately satisfying.

Among other examples from *Pax Rwanda*, *The Milk Blessing* illustrates the daily activities from “The Land of a Thousand Hills.”

More of this work can be found at: rutongoembroideries.com.

Sentiment and Myth

Andrew Nichols shows his gift for more accessible, intimate art in *Just the Two of Us*, an acrylic on canvas, an expressionist’s portrait of a couple enjoying the quietude of being together, seated on a wall with a dreamlike field of infinity before them. Less abstract but equally exciting is Nichols’s *Summertime*. A patchy display of colors describes a young woman in a floppy brimmed hat as she sips from a straw dipped into a green chalice that



Pax Rwanda: *Milk Blessing*



Aziza and her mother at the opening



Alan Mildor: *Black Lives Matter*

Brewer, from page 1

to community boards in 2015. This year, Brewer is establishing a Council of Young Leaders of Manhattan, open to youth ages 14-18 who live, work, go to school in, or belong to an organization in Manhattan (this includes young residents of Roosevelt Island) and want to learn how local government works. The application form (link at the end of this article) says the Council “will meet periodically to address policy and budget concerns affecting Manhattan’s young people” and work “closely with local elected officials and City agencies” by drafting resolutions, serving on committees, and giving presentations.

After her opening remarks, Brewer moderated a Represent NYC panel with “four New Yorkers whose work has a major ... cultural, social, economic, [and] artistic impact” on the city: Khary Lazarre-White, co-founder of The Brotherhood/SisterSol; Marc Murphy, executive chef, restaurateur, and board member of both the Food Council of City Harvest and Food and Finance High School’s industry advisory board; Francisco J. Núñez, founder and artistic director of the Young People’s Chorus of New York City; and Sumie Okazaki, Professor of Counseling Psychology at New York University’s Steinhardt School and Coalition for Asian-American Children and Families policy fellow.

The panel answered questions about the current situation of youth in New York City, with a focus on income and educational inequality and how it affects their future education and careers. Lazarre-White said some of the main concerns of young people were creating better schools that leave them feeling prepared for higher education; food justice; and prison and criminal justice reform. “What’s important to them is an opportunity ... to build stable lives,” said Lazarre-White.

Okazaki added that immigrant families have to overcome differences in language and culture as well as income. “[In] the Asian-American community there’s a lot of barriers, both structural and cultural, to feeling like they are a part of the city, especially in school settings ... there’s simply not enough language access, not enough translation and interpretation services for parents who really want to be a part of their kids’ education.” She said that as a result of this, many Asian-American teenagers try to navigate the college application process on their own. “The kids also don’t get equal access to school guidance counseling,” she said, but said they have noticed the inequality and taken action. “The kids have been advocating alongside City Council members with City leaders to try and bring more equitable guidance services to all kids, not just Asian-American kids.”

Brewer then turned the discussion to police-community relations, saying that what came out of the forums with police officers she hosted was the “need for respect between both parties.” She linked this to the uptick in bullying in schools and on social media, asking, “what can we do as a City to encourage everyone ... to show more tolerance and respect for each other?”

Lazarre-White advocated for adding morals and ethics lessons to the core curriculum of City schools. “We say we want young people to learn these things, but where is the space for them to learn it? ... We have a responsibility, as a society, to put that front and center.” Regarding policing, he said there are “structural issues within NYPD that have to be reformed ... this is about a police department where too many members do not realize that they have to respect all citizens.”

Okazaki agreed that bullying could be addressed through education. “It’s very, very

difficult work to understand structural racism and structural classism and all those things that keep us from genuinely connecting to each other ... [but] some of the bullying is simple ignorance that can be eliminated with some more targeted education ... [and] learning about each other’s cultures and religions in a way that is respectful.”

Núñez said it was important for adults to make children and young adults speak to each other and work to find “a common thread.” “Conversation starts to bring down the barriers between them and figure out that it’s OK to build trust among others.” He said that because of bullying, many kids felt “very oppressed” and without a sense of belonging, so it was the responsibility of adults to “make them feel like there is a place for them, even if they are different.”

The conversation moved to the state of small business in the City. Murphy said there were obstacles for smaller businesses, such as the Commercial Rent Tax, an additional tax charged to commercial properties south of 96th Street that pay more than \$250,000 in gross rent annually. Murphy wanted to see an adjustment to this tax, such as exempting businesses that generate under a certain level of revenue annually. “I moved to this city [about 27 years ago] and there were all these bodegas and all these great little places and they are disappearing ... I think small beautiful restaurants are part of our culture.” He added, “people are not going to come to New York to go to Starbucks ... they can just stay home and do that.”

Brewer then went back to City youth and the importance of the arts in their education, asking, “do you think young people need more of the arts, and ... how should they be structured together?” Lazarre-White said “the arts are absolutely key” in the lives of

young people. “It’s helping young people to identify who they are, to find their voice. It pushes them to explore other parts of who they are.” He said that the fact that so many City schools didn’t have a quality art program, especially schools in poor and working class communities, was “an abomination.”

Brewer ended by asking each panelist to give one “big idea” for the City of New York. Núñez said he would like a performing arts center for use solely by young people, explaining that youth arts programs could not afford time at Carnegie Hall, but young performers still “need to have an artistically excellent space where they can be heard.” Okazaki wanted to see public schools used as a space “not just for students, but for families and communities” so there wouldn’t be such a “divide between the community and the education.” Murphy thought everyone who was interested in the food industry should be able to get enough training to enter the business and find a good job. Lazarre-White stated that New York City was “the most progressive city in our country,” and should “take front and center [in] training the future leaders of this nation,” with ethics being a core component of youth education.

After the panel, Deputy Borough Presidents Aldrin R. Bonilla and Matthew S. Washington presented ways Manhattan residents can get more involved in the borough. Washington encouraged organizations to apply for funding and individuals to attend Brewer’s public events and sign up for her e-newsletter.

A full recording of the State of the Borough address can be watched online at mnn.org/video/watch-manhattan-state-borough-2016. Learn more about Gale A. Brewer or City policies, sign up for updates, and apply for the Council of Young Leaders of Manhattan (deadline is Friday, March 4) at manhattanbp.nyc.gov.

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Blue Dragon, from page 1

Stapen says it is the artists' appreciation of the beauty of Roosevelt Island that prompted them to offer it as a gift instead.

Other Work

Stapen knew the artist couple from her capacity as Senior Cultural Affairs Officer for the Consulate General of Sweden. While at the United Nations in 1997, the Consul General asked the artists to create a monument to the memory of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from extermination by the Nazis.

Wallenberg was arrested by the Russians on January 17, 1945, and never heard from again. Gustav Kraitz was also apprehended by the Soviets – a mere two days after Wallenberg. Although Kraitz did not meet Wallenberg personally, Wallenberg's influence on him was profound and Kraitz and his wife, Ulla, agreed to create a monument in memory of Wallenberg. On November 9, 1998, the Hope Monument was unveiled on a traffic island at First Avenue and East 47th Street, in front of the United Nations.

The artists' sculptures are shown all over the world. In NYC, in addition to the sculpture in front of the UN, the Museum of Art and Design commissioned two benches from the Kraitzes which are in place just outside the museum at Columbus Circle.

Gustav

Gustav Kraitz was born in Hungary in 1926. He entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest after winning first prize in a painting competition. The academy closed down during the chaos of World War II, and shortly thereafter he was arrested and sent to the Soviet coal mines for five years. He tried to escape three times but was apprehended on each occasion and nearly beaten to death. When he was freed, he re-entered the Academy of Fine Arts and focused on sculpture.

He wanted to leave Hungary, and, in 1956, during the Hungarian Uprising, he finally did. After leaving Budapest, he reached the border.

There, he met an old professor who provided a letter of introduction to a friend in Stockholm, Sweden. He got a job in Stockholm working for the City Museum.

His dedication and focus remains to this day. According to Stapen, the Hope Monument was refurbished in May 2014. A damaged pillar was replaced with stone from the same quarry in Sweden as the original and brought here, to New York City, for the work.

Stapen says Kraitz is present at all installations or repairs of his work, and he worked overnight to ensure this repair was a success. Stapen says she remained there too, for most of the night, because she serves as his interpreter. "He needs to have somebody who knows how to translate English into Swedish. I have been around so long that he trusts me."

Gustav and Ulla

In 1960, Kraitz met Ulla Stenkvist when both were featured in an art show in

Stockholm. She was a painter, and they started working together soon after. The couple married in 1961 and have been collaborating ever since. Despite the personal tragedies they have faced in their 55 years together - Ulla was ill for a long time with an aneurism and their first child died unexpectedly when she was nine - they describe their work as optimistic and hopeful.

The Island

During Kraitz' time in New York, Stapen brought him here to the Island. She laughs as she recalls how he enjoyed the Tram. Stapen introduced him to Tad Sudol, President of the Roosevelt Island Visual Arts Association (RIVVA), and when the group walked up to Southpoint Park, cherry blossoms covered the ground. "Right then [Gustav Kraitz] offered to donate a sculpture to Roosevelt Island," Stapen recounts. "He loved the beauty of the Island."

The artists returned to New York in October of 2015, accompanied by Goran Christenson, Director of the Malmo Museum located in Southern Sweden, who usually accompanies them. After seeing the exact place where the sculpture will be placed, the artists signed all legal documents concerning *Blue Dragon* now, and in the future, should the estate need to approve any move or repair.

The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOCC) has given the green light to the installation of the piece in early April when the artists will be back. The formal unveiling ceremony is scheduled for April 26. Stapen is in charge of organizing the Swedish guests and press. In the meantime, the *Blue Dragon* sits at a Swedish dock packaged and ready to sail. It will be brought to Elizabeth, New Jersey first, and then transported by truck from there. It is noteworthy that the cost of shipping the two-ton sculpture from Sweden to New Jersey is less expensive than the cost of bringing it here from New Jersey. The *Blue Dragon* will sit at the entrance of South Point Park.

Stapen herself has lived at the Octagon for over four years.

While visiting a friend on the Island in 2011, she decided to look at a few apartments. She walked into the Octagon and felt at home so didn't even look at the others. She moved in in September, 2011. She has been involved in the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) as a representative of the Octagon and is associated with RIVAA, especially the gallery at the Octagon. "I brought three artists here to show, as guests of RIVAA, at the Octagon Gallery.

Stapen is sorry that *Blue Dragon* will conclude her work with the Kraitzes. Gustav turns 90 in March and has to limit his traveling. The Kraitzes are now busy creating a cultural center in Bastad, Sweden where their work will be displayed. Stapen says, "It has been such a pleasure to work with Gustav."



Tad Sudol, Lynne Shinozaki, Victoria Thorston, Ulla and Gustav Kraitz, Susanne Rosenthal, Elisabeth Stapen, Jane Swanson and Goran Christiansen at Gallery RIVAA, October 28th, 2015



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Main Street, from page 1

Octagon Express. Tourists (40,000 in 2013) pour off the Tram to visit Four Freedoms Park, and pour right back on again once they’ve seen it.

Maybe all these visitors and even some residents simply don’t know what’s here. Main Street Sweets and Eats, Island Wines and Spirits, the newly renovated and renamed Bread & Butter Deli, a Subway franchise and the Wholesome Factory pizza and grocery, for example, all arrived under the master lease.

So why not tell people all about Main Street? Plans for signage to draw people to Main Street from the Tram, the subway and other Island buildings have been discussed for years, but nothing has come of it. Right now, RIOC chief executive Charlene Indelicato points out, Main Street is such a mess that there’s nowhere to put signs. But what about at the subway and the Tram? Pedram Mahdavi of HR says that they sent proposals to RIOC over a year ago. Why no action? “We couldn’t agree on what sort of signs to have,” was RIOC’s response.

Could innovation be in the cards? Breaking up the big spaces so that smaller stores can move in? Lower rents? More help with building out? Not so far. The RIOC Board’s response to residents’ dissatisfaction is an implicit “Wait and see.”

RIOC seems to believe that the

game-changer will be Cornell, whose new Roosevelt Island campus is scheduled to open in 2017. Starting next year, there will be as many as 600 new people on the Island, at least some of the time. Eventually there will be 20,500. But “eventually” is 2043.

To get things moving, RIRA’s Kanninen says she wants Island residents to become more involved in the process. “I would like the Main Street decision makers – Hudson/Related, Cushman Wakefield, the WIRE buildings, and RIOC to have quarterly meetings with the Retail Advisory Committee,” she says. “We would save a lot of time and effort. Being on the same page would avoid a lot of problems.”

Residents may be unhappy, but it’s fair to point out that delay isn’t costing RIOC anything. HR is paying RIOC more than \$900,000 a year to lease all the available space. So far most of it is in the loss column. So Hudson/Related has some skin in the game. Cushman Wakefield gets paid only for signed leases, so presumably they’re motivated too: the RIOC board, under its present composition – appointed by the Governor, not elected by residents – apparently not so much.

And the Z-bricks on Main Street? For 40 years they’ve added their unique charm to the Island. But RIOC’s budget allocates \$600,000 to replace them with asphalt.

RIRA, from page 3

Council an email at contact@riraonline.com.

Uptick in Complaints re Pet Waste

As the last of the snow of the last blizzard has melted, I would be remiss not to mention the number of recent complaints and calls to RIRA, RIOC, 311 and the City of the failure by dog owners to curb their pets and pick up after them during the last snow storm. Although required by City law and finable up to \$200 for failing to do so, a number of residents continually choose not to pick up their dog’s feces, causing unsanitary and unsightly conditions, which expose both children and adults, young, old and infirm, to a number of diseases, bacteria,

and environmental hazards that only uncollected waste can cause.

As a dog owner, I can sympathize. I understand – especially when the temperatures freeze, snow is on the ground, or rains fall. It is not an option for any dog owner, however, not to pick up after one’s dogs. Notwithstanding seeking from RIOC, and individual buildings, the installation of more waste dispensers and receptacles in and around highly trafficked and used areas, as well as signage reminding of the local laws requiring pick-up, it is up to each and every one of us – pet owner and non-pet owners alike – to seek community

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Please see ComingUp, page 3, for other advertising deadlines

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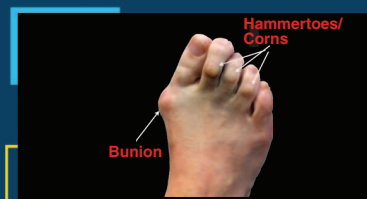
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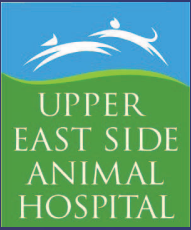
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