

# The Main Street **WIRE**

**1998  
ELECTION  
EXTRA**

Sunday, November 1, 1998  
Vol. 19, No. 5

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper, in association with Website NYC10044 www.nyc10044.com

## How to vote in the RIRA election

Voting is open to all Island residents over 18, regardless of citizenship or voting registration. Poll workers will have building rosters, but if you have reason to believe you may not be listed, you may demonstrate residency by bringing a bill or other document addressed to you at your Roosevelt Island address.

Instruction in use of the voting machines will be available.

Poll hours are 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at PS/IS 217 on Tuesday. The polling place and hours are the same as for the general election.

The first 800 residents to vote will receive an *I Love the Tram* pin. If worn at Trellis, it's good for a 10% discount all day Tuesday and Wednesday. (After the first 800, voters will receive a coupon, also good for the discount.)



## Maloney, Grannis & Their Challengers in An Informal Debate

Representative Carolyn Maloney and her opponent in Tuesday's election, Republican Stephanie Kupferman (both pictured above), engaged in a brief, informal debate Tuesday night at RIRA Candidates Night. So did Assemblymember Pete Grannis and his challenger, Mark Snyder (photos below). The four were an extra added attraction as candidates for Residents Association offices made brief presentations appealing for the support of their fellow residents.

RIRA President Patrick Stewart is unopposed in his bid for a second term.

The post of First Vice-President is contested. Veteran Common Council members Joan Christianson and Frank Farance are challenging incumbent Ron Schuppert. Five Westview tenants are vying for three spots on the Common Council, and five Rivercross residents seek that building's three Council seats.

A complete list of RIRA candidates appears on page 2.



## Guarded Optimism

# Grannis Sees Real Chance for Island Self-Governance

## Proposed Legislation Is Ballot

## Question in Tuesday's RIRA Election

"It won't be easy." Assemblymember Pete Grannis said that more than once Monday night in discussing his legislation to give Roosevelt Island residents a direct role in management of the Island. Even so, he projected a guarded optimism that the process of democratization of Island rule may be moved forward in the State legislature, and that Island self-governance might even be made attractive to the Governor.

A critical need, said Grannis, is a Republican sponsor in the Republican-controlled State Senate – a sponsor yet to be found. "That's my job," he said, "I must find that Senator" – someone who will champion the legislation and carry it forward.

In the Q&A session that followed opening presentations about the proposed law, Island resident Lee Edelman posed this question to Grannis: "If we can get a Republican sponsor, and the argument is made that the Island deserves self-government because the State is no longer supporting it, first; and second, that it's a question of democracy – given that presentation to the Senate, what is your judgment of the chances of getting it through?"

Grannis responded, "Good. I think the chances are good." He commented that if the bill can be passed in the State Senate, the chances are it will then be signed by the Governor, who works closely with members of his party in the Senate, and rarely vetoes legislation it has passed.

But he emphasized the need for Island support. The legislation is the subject of a ballot question in Tuesday's election for officers of and delegates to the Common Council of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA):

*Shall the present governance of Roosevelt Island, consisting of political appointees, be replaced by a popularly-elected Board of Residents empowered to hire professional management, as proposed in legislation introduced in the New York State Legislature by Assemblymember Pete Grannis?*

Talking about the need for a change, and warning about gradual deterioration, Grannis told the audience in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, "The current administration doesn't care about the infrastructure. There was a time when the City administration didn't care, and put off taking care of the infrastructure – the sewers, the subways, and more – and the cost of recovery has been staggering. It puts a

great deal at risk if you don't care for the capital needs of the Island."

Asked by a resident in Monday night's audience of just over 100 whether the Island's value as a patronage prize or as a source of contracts might be a consideration for the Governor and his party, Grannis said, "If this reaches a point where we're not getting our way and enough hell is raised and enough unpleasantness is brought to bear, it might be worth somebody's while to offload this thorn by turning you loose."

"This is a relatively small operation," Grannis continued. "If you're looking at where jobs can be found, and where people can be rewarded, this is not a rich plum. If it becomes more of a liability than a source of benefit for those [the Governor is] seeking to help, there might be more of a willingness to let go."

Grannis went on to add, "I'm not even sure how [RIOC President Jerome] Blue got here. I suspect it was a matter of cutting losses somewhere else."

As described by David Bauer, the leader of the Island's Maple Tree Group [MTG], which drafted the legislation, the Grannis bill would "create the Roosevelt Island Community, a replacement for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), responsible for all that RIOC does now. The Community's Board of Directors would be made up of Island residents, elected by Island residents,

and the Board would be charged with hiring (and firing) professional management. The job of running the Island would no longer be a patronage appointment, and the process of managing Island affairs would be opened up. At present, there is a 'smoke and mirrors' approach to budgeting and financial reporting," Bauer said. "In short, the bill would throw out the overhead of State-imposed authoritarianism, would create an open and above-board local government administration controlled by the citizens of the Island, for the citizens of the Island." Bauer continued, "The time to take the next step for the future of our island is

**See Self-Governance, page 2**



Listening as Pete Grannis discussed proposed legislation for Island self-rule was David Bauer, leader of the Maple Tree Group, which produced the original draft of the bill.



A portion of the Town Meeting audience of over 100 at the Chapel.

# Exercise Your Right to Vote on Tuesday

6am-9pm, PS/IS 217. All Island residents over 18 are eligible to vote in the RIRA election, including non-citizens

**Self-Governance** from page 1



Linda Heimer, who chaired the Town Meeting, quoted consultant/author Peter Drucker: "There are risks you cannot afford to take, and there are risks you cannot afford not to take." She said there are risks in self-governance, but suggested the Island cannot afford not to run those risks. Urging residents to vote, she said, "Democracy is not a spectator sport."

now. Vote for representative government for our Island."

Bauer was applauded after this statement, as were all strong statements calling for a yes vote on Tuesday's ballot question.

Ron Vass, heading the Drive for Democracy, an ad hoc group working for passage of the legislation, addressed the Town Meeting, urging a unified stance on it. "The man in charge is not maintaining this Island. I believe in my heart that much of the bookkeeping is dishonest, done behind closed doors, and if this population doesn't get angry right now, we're going to lose all the beautiful things we have on Roosevelt Island. I implore you to listen carefully tonight. Let's work hard on this together."

Vass resigned recently from the Board of Directors of RIOC, and issued a blast at Jerome Blue, calling him a detriment to the Island.

Drawing on his knowledge of Island history and RIOC, Vass said, "It sort of worked for a few years, but we [residents] never had a full voice — only the three or four Board members who were politically appointed. People like myself could be a board member, but had no responsibility to win an election. Nobody had to respond to the people on this island. This board, the way it's structured now, is dwindling [in Island representation] and going downhill. We have lost control altogether."

Comments from Monday night's audience were supportive of the Grannis legislation. A sampling:

- Richard Wade, retired urban planner: "What is the worst part [of the present system]? It's the secrecy. Suddenly you wake up and find that you're going to have a Marriott Hotel [at Southpoint], or an eldercare facility [originally proposed for Octagon Park land], with absolutely no consultation."

- Ken Diebner, a candidate for the RIRA Common Council: "I am tired of paying State and City taxes and getting nothing back."

- MTG member Lawrence Brodsky: "How long will it take to see the outcome? When we knock on doors, people are willing to vote [yes on the RIRA ballot question], but I don't think they're going to wait two years more. They will pack up and move away."



Ron Vass: "If this population doesn't get angry right now, we're going to lose all the beautiful things we have on Roosevelt Island."

Island's problems and its need for self-governance and professional management. The Drive for Democracy, in fact, is collecting names and addresses for a computerized letters campaign to generate

# RIRA Candidates

Candidates marked with the symbol **i** are incumbents.

**President**

Patrick Stewart **i**

**First Vice-President**

Joan Christianson  
Frank Farance  
Ronald Schuppert **i**

**Common Council**

**2 River Road (1)**

Kathie Niederhoffer

**4 River Road (1)**

Alivie (Pat) Rivera

**10-40 River Road (8)**

Jeremy Burns

Sherie Helstien **i**

Matthew Katz **i**

Tom Shaker

Harry Small **i**

Allyson Legitas Tanis

**546 Main Street (2)**

Joan Matula **i**

Mary Lou Risley

**Eastwood (8)**

Gwen Almo-Duvar **i**

Joan Christianson **i**

Vicki Feinmel **i**

Byron Gaspard **i**

Walter Hill **i**

James Kaufman **i**

Joyce Mincheff

**Island House (4)**

Judith Berdy **i**

Joan Brooks **i**

Graham Cannon

Frank Farance **i**

**Rivercross (3)**

Malcolm Cohen **i**

Linda Heimer

Jeff Hochman **i**

Ron Schuppert

Al Weinstein **i**

**Westview (3)**

Deirdre Breslin **i**

Ken Diebner

Rhoda Jacklin

Joseph Palermo **i**

Zakieh Wazani **i**

awareness in the State Assembly and Senate and urge favorable consideration of the Grannis bill. That campaign will swing into high gear after the election if there is a substantially favorable yes vote.

# Halloween Transformation



mask by  
Jose Baca  
1998

# Letters

**To the Editor:**

Regarding Public Safety personnel, I should like to offer this one instance of a positive incident. On September 17, I observed a fairly new Peace Officer, Davis, perform his job above and beyond the call of duty.

A woman in a car with Virginia plates wanted to back into a spot. The move required her to back up approximately four car lengths. She asked permission of Officer Davis to back into the spot. In a matter of seconds, he had not only given her permission to park, but he very proactively checked for traffic around her and directed her safely into the spot. He performed that simple professional act efficiently and with a smile on his face. Like in days of yore, I was again proud to call myself a Roosevelt Islander.

**Bernard D. Schwartz**

Last week's *WIRE* carried a letter from a 15-year resident who reported an encounter at Southpoint with Public Safety officers in which she was, according to her account, manhandled, handcuffed, detained without being allowed a phone call, refused access to counsel, and given summonses for trespassing and disorderly conduct.

In a letter, *The WIRE* asked Public Safety Chief Jim Fry for a reaction to the allegations regarding his officers' conduct. The following response was received Thursday from Dr. Jerome Blue, President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.

Although we stepped up efforts to develop Southpoint for public use which has been discussed at various community forums, it is well known that much of this site has been abandoned for nearly 40 years; our goal, however, is to quickly make Southpoint accessible for more than just the annual 4th of July celebration which is one of the many reasons I am recommending the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center project; until this site is developed we need to continue to restrict access for safety reasons, and we appreciate the vast majority of the public's ongoing understanding.



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Don't be left out... Everybody will be in it...

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Do it to advertise your business

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Cards will run slightly reduced to 3.3w x 1.8h. The word **retired** will be added, if you specify. You may write additional information on your card, if appropriate to indicate the nature of your work.

**Deadline: Fri., Nov. 13 (publication date Nov. 21)**

**Send it in now while you're thinking about it, and show your support for *The WIRE***

If you prefer not to publish a business card but would like to support *The WIRE*, contribute \$20 and have your name on a list that will accompany the business cards. **Thank you for supporting *The Main Street WIRE*.**

Effectiveness • Commitment • Leadership

## Re-Elect Assemblymember Pete Grannis

A Committed and Effective Ally in the Community...

- A full time legislator with an active district office.
- Champion of tenants' rights and property tax relief for co-op and condo owners.
- Successfully worked for more police on the streets and improved bus and subway service.
- Avid opponent of inappropriate development and rowdy bars.
- Vigorous defender of the character and quality of life in our neighborhoods and parks.

### And a Vocal Advocate for Roosevelt Island

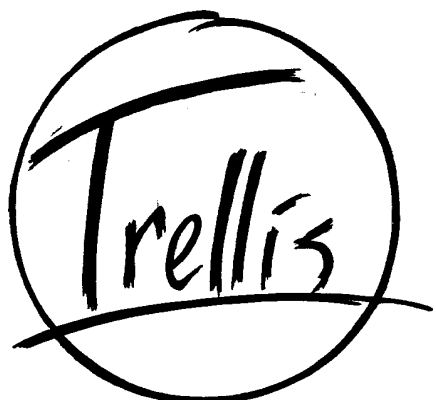
- Secured funds to make the Island's Library the newest branch of NY Public Library.
- Secured funds for repair of Good Shepherd Chapel.
- Battled to prevent reduction in operating hours of Tramway and elimination of student passes.
- Fighting to protect designated open spaces from inappropriate development.
- Introduced Roosevelt Island Self-Governance Act to shift control of RIOC from Governor to local residents.
- Won support for grants to RI Disabled Association, Youth Program, Seniors Association and PS/IS 217 Parents' Association.

### A Progressive, Independent Leader in Albany

- Advocate for women, guarding freedom of choice and unrestricted health care access.
- In forefront of fight for NYC's fair share of state monies for public education, smaller classes, vital school repairs and new classrooms.
- Champion of programs and protection for children, seniors and families.
- Leader of battle on major health and automobile insurance reforms.
- Author of precedent-setting laws protecting consumers from health insurers and HMOs.
- Honored for leadership on environmental and animal rights issues.
- Sponsor of landmark laws to protect victims of domestic violence.
- Catalyst for reforming state's election and lobbying laws.
- Took on tobacco companies with legislation targeting teenage smoking.

Preferred by non-partisan Citizens Union • Endorsing Pete Grannis: National Women's Political Caucus • NY League of Conservation Voters • NARAL/NY • United Federation of Teachers • Pride Agenda • NYS Nurses Assn • Nat'l Education Assn • AFL-CIO/NYS • Nat'l Assn of Social Workers • Gay & Lesbian Independent Democrats • Police Conference of NY • PEF • DC 37-AFSCME • NOW/NYS 100% Voting Record

**Vote November 3 • Assemblymember Pete Grannis**



**10%**

**Your vote Tuesday in the RIRA election is worth 10% off, all day Tuesday and Wednesday, at Trellis.**

Just come in wearing the *I Love the Tram* pin you'll be given when you vote, and we'll take 10% off your check (no limit).

On Election Day, when the community joins together in an action as old as democracy, Trellis is part of the community.

**See you at Trellis**

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*Better and better every day.  
At the heart of the community,  
next to the historic Chapel of the Good Shepherd*

### To my friends on Roosevelt Island:

On November 3<sup>rd</sup> you will find my name on the ballot for State Assembly. I hope you will support me for this seat because I know I can help Roosevelt Island maintain its own unique place in our city.

Because I am a Republican, I will be able to work closely with the governor to not only help restore the Roosevelt Island budget but also:

- make Roosevelt Island a more self governing place and;
  - keep North Park preserved for recreation and out of the hands of developers.
- In addition, I will make every effort to:
- see that the Second Avenue Subway is completed;
  - strengthen punishments for rape and other crimes against women;
  - re-open a public high school on the east side.

Lastly, I am pro-choice, pro-tenant and dedicated to improving life in our community. I hope to do this in the time allowed to me as I truly believe in term limits.

Thanks you for your help.

**Mark H. Snyder**



P.S. The Citizens Union said this about me: "clearly new talent...and appears to have the commitment to serve this district intelligently and with vision."

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## ***Put Your Business Card in the Thanksgiving WIRE***

*Do it to promote your business or service, or just to support your community newspaper – see page 2*

### **Re-elect Rep. Carolyn Maloney**

Carolyn passed the Breast Cancer Early Detection Act to increase the mammograms Medicare will cover, making annual ones possible.

*Carolyn passed legislation to improve child support enforcement.*

Carolyn fought to preserve funding to prevent violence against women.

*Carolyn sponsored legislation to increase the availability of affordable quality child care.*

Carolyn worked to get New York City \$450 million to put 1,000 more cops on our streets.

*Carolyn won funds for drug treatment, job training and anti-gang efforts.*



**VOTE DEMOCRATIC—ROW A**

### **Make Your Vote Count Make a Real Difference for the Future**

**Help the Greens Become An Official Party by  
Getting 50,000 Votes for Governor**

## **Al Lewis for Governor**

### **Jack Resnick, M.D.**

Board-Certified  
Specialist in Adult Medicine  
(Internal Medicine)

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