

Next scheduled issue  
Saturday, June 14

# The Main Street **WIRE**

Roosevelt Island's Community Newspaper

News updates on **Website NYC10044** www.nyc10044.com

**A Grimm Fate** Four city kids (Tyler Cannon, Allie Michels, Laura Genes, Eric Michels) trapped on a "boring" country weekend with only a "boring" book of Grimm's Fairy Tales are put through their paces by an offended witch (Sasha Diamond) and her cast of fellow characters in *Like Totally Grimm*, a children's musical getting its premier production this weekend at The Main Street Theatre (see *ComingUp*, page 3). This is one of three casts performing the show.

## Island's Young Actors Get to Premiere a New Musical Play

by Linda Humphrey

A February snowfall turns the Island white as composer Bob McDowell ducks into the Main Street Theatre and slips behind the piano. Three girls in ponytails sling their down jackets over folding chairs and pick up sheets of music. "The beat is slow and easy," McDowell tells them, snapping his fingers with one hand and hitting the keys with the other as they sing: "Fairy tale endings are more than they seem / Aren't they why we continue to dream / And take them wherever we find them?"

A half-hour later, twenty third-to-seventh graders clutching scripts in green folders scramble onstage. Director Nancy Howe, who runs the Theatre with her husband, Worth Howe, jumps up from behind her desk. "You will all be frozen into positions when the lights come up," she says, lining up the kids. "Draw a picture so you know exactly where you stand. 'Down Right' is toward the audience. That's how you write it."

This is *Like Totally Grimm*, a children's musical staging its first-time production on Roosevelt Island: 65 kids in 3 casts, 17 weeks, 57 rehearsals, 71 pages of lines, and 11 new songs.

### The Premise

*Grimm* is the story of four "tragically hip" kids, stuck on a country vacation without cable or video games, left with only the chirping crickets and a book of Grimm's Fairy Tales. They smirk over the book and soon find themselves trapped in a fairy-tale land where enchanted characters refer to Martha Stewart and Starbuck's,

*Like Totally Grimm*, with music and lyrics by Bob McDowell and book by Bill McMahon, opens this weekend and runs through Monday. (Some shows are sold out.) Tickets for regular seating are \$10, with mat seating available at \$5 for children ten and under.

Three casts will each stage two performances. There are evening performances on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. Reservations and information: 1-212-371-4449.

Red Riding Hood takes the subway, and a medieval princess shops at the Canterbury Mall.

One of the Brothers Grimm shows up as well, chiding the witch for lapsing into a line from the *Wizard of Oz*. As the tales flip-flop from medieval to updated-urban, McDowell's music swings from fourteenth-century troubadour to Annie DiFranco-style folk rock.

See *Play*, page 10

**New Families at Southpoint** Over the past two weeks, at least two broods of goslings have hatched at Southpoint. This fellow was caught by *The WIRE*'s camera while on an outing in the grass at Goldwater Hospital with 14 other newborns and four very protective adults.

## Child School Breaking Ground Friday for New Campus Here

by Anusha Shrivastava

The Child School/Legacy High School is moving back to Roosevelt Island after an absence of over two decades. Groundbreaking ceremonies are scheduled for Friday (June 6), including a public event at 1:00 p.m. in the Westview courtyard.

In its fledgling days in the 1970s, the school had five students who were schooled by its founder and current director, Island House resident Maari de Souza, in a four-bedroom apartment in Eastwood. At its current 33rd Street location, the student population is 190. The move to Roosevelt Island will facilitate growth to 280 students in its Elementary School, a Middle School (opened in 1991), and Legacy High School (1996), which offers a Regent's diploma program, and a non-Regents Academy program. On the Island, the institution will be spread over 26 classrooms housed in the Island's minischools, which are now being renovated. Students come from all five City boroughs plus Long Island, Westchester County, and New Jersey.

Space has been earmarked for science, computer and media laboratories, and a 990-square-foot library. A 4,840-square-foot gymnasium will be constructed separately.

Much of the rehabilitation of the minischools is being funded through an Industrial Development Authority bond issue.

The school was set up in 1973 to help learning-disabled children and their families. Its 280-student population will be supported by a team

### Briefly...

**MetroCard and Tramway**—At its May meeting, the RIOC Board of Directors voted authority for RIOC management to negotiate inclusion of the Tramway in the MetroCard free-transfer system. So far, appointments are being made, but there's no specific progress to report.

**The Icla da Silva Foundation** will hold a membership-recruitment reception Friday evening at 7:00 at the Manhattan Park Theater Club, working to raise awareness of its work in finding bone-marrow donors for leukemia victims. An ad on page 7 heralds the event, as well as the Foundation's current blood drive.

**AVAC**—RIOC received a letter this week from the City Department of Sanitation confirming that it will continue operating the Island's AVAC garbage-removal system. For a while, it appeared it might be a casualty in the City's tightened budget. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Council Speaker Gifford Miller, and others stepped in to rescue the system, in what has become a nearly annual ritual of cut-then-save.

**Engine 261**—But Engine Company 261 was closed, despite a State Supreme Court judge's "recommendation" that it remain open because Community Board 8 (that includes Roosevelt Island) was not adequately notified of the plan to close it. The matter is before a court as *The WIRE* goes to press.

of 100 special educators, therapists, and teaching assistants. The school is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as a non-profit educational institution. Its brochure says it is an "approved non-public school for students classified as learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, and/or speech

impaired."

"Our program is structured and extremely academic," says de Souza. She says she does not water down the program just because the students who attend have special needs. "The challenge is to look at an amazing youngster and un-

See *School*, page 9

### Islanders

## School's Founder: Intense, Dedicated, Passionate

Fame and fortune are not what she set out for.

As a little girl growing up in Bombay, she dreamed of becoming a pilot or maybe an Indian classical dancer. She stumbled upon teaching and discovered that she enjoyed it. From then on, making a difference in the lives of a handful of children became Maari de Souza's primary goal. "The children we handle are somebody's babies," she says.

An educational psychologist with a doctorate in Special Education and Psychology from New York University, De Souza talks with a missionary zeal about her school and her work. Her day begins early as she catches the 6:00 a.m. Tram to get to the current downtown location of the school.

By the time she gets back, she says, she is so exhausted that it would be easy to "shovel her away." It is for this reason that she has decided to live by herself (she has lived in Island House since the 70s) and dedicate herself to the school.

Her voice trails off and then rises again as she tries to convey her passion. Her fingers are interlocked and her body is bent forward. Her close-cropped hair frames her tilted head as she speaks. Her description of the children shows she has thought about who they really are for a long, long time. "They are not just children. They are someone's babies."

See *Founder*, page 9

## Octagon Project Gets Another "Green" Award

The Octagon Apartments project received a State grant this month for solar panels. Up to \$250,000 in funds from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will support installation of the photovoltaic panels on the roof of the building.

According to the project's developer, Bruce Becker of Becker and Becker Associates of New Canaan, Connecticut, the panels will be mounted flat on the roof of the building and won't be apparent from the ground. Becker said, "They will reduce electrical demand significantly, especially on sunny summer days when power demand is highest and the electrical grid is most stressed."

Becker said the panels will generate up to 50 kilowatts, enough to power common areas, including lights, mechanical systems, and elevators.

The NYSERDA award is the second "green building" award to the project this year. In February, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation announced a \$6 million tax credit for the building, based on other environmentally-sensitive features, including a geothermal well field, which will use the constant temperature of groundwater to heat and cool the building. It also will employ "super-insulated" windows, walls, and roof, and natural gas-fired microturbines will generate additional electricity and provide hot water for the well field and the building's domestic hot water.

According to a NYSERDA press release, the features will make the building at least 35 percent more energy-efficient than the new State building code requires.

Earlier this year, NYSERDA announced a grant to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation for hybrid buses.

In a related development, at its May meeting the RIOC Board of Directors voted to continue Becker and Becker's site control in the ongoing lead-up to construction.

The Octagon Park Apartments project is opposed by Assemblymember

See *Octagon*, page 8

## A Survey: What Single Change...?

Given your choice, what single change would you select to make the Roosevelt Island of today a better place to live tomorrow?

And, failing that, what's your second choice?

We'd like to hear from you on that, and we'd like to pass on your thoughts to your fellow Islanders for their consideration. In the course of the exercise, the word will also reach the bureaucracy that runs the place.

We have in mind changes that would benefit all residents – or at least a significant segment of residents. (This would rule out new carpeting in your hallway.) But this competition of dreams is open in all other respects. You might have in mind a physical change, or a political one; a change in attitude, or better transportation.

Would you call for a Tramway run by the MTA and providing free transit to greater Manhattan, just as the Staten Island Ferry bridges a water gap for residents of that borough?

Would you ask for a marina, just east of the Strecker Lab, so that you might indulge a lifelong craving to take to the water in good weather?

What priority would you put on park development – turning the Island's open spaces into inviting public spaces open to all?

Would you halt development, declaring the Island fully developed and at its limit? Or would you ask for more – a small population boom to provide merchants with the market and incentive to enhance their goods and services?

Would you call for improved subway service and an end to those morning waits as full trains make only token stops at the Roosevelt Island station?

Or ferry service as an alternative to all the other ways of reaching nearby shores?

Would you ask Representative Carolyn Maloney to round up political support and funds for full development of Southpoint Park as a national urban treasure? Or would you prefer to keep it just as it is?

What's the one change you would select to improve Roosevelt Island for your future and the futures of those yet to come here to make this home?

*The WIRE* has made no secret of its desire for true democracy here – a political change that would take the decision-making for many of these matters out of the hands of gubernatorial appointees. This would entail (we hasten to explain just in case you've been vacationing on Mars for a few years) an elected RIOC Board of Directors empowered to hire professional community management – a change from the pure politics plus patronage that has plagued the Island's last six years. We've editorialized here about the case for resident power in preference to outside dictation, and in our view much in the way of positive change could flow from that single change.

But for many, that falls in the "impossible dream" category, despite halting progress in that general direction in recent years. No matter. The idea is to dream the impossible dreams as a way of achieving the stepping-stone dreams that create lasting positive change.

We'd like to know what *your* particular first-choice dream might be. And just so you don't have to choose between two great possibilities, there's room for your second choice, as well. Let us hear from you.

DL

### To The WIRE:

My nomination for the one single change I'd like to see on Roosevelt Island is...

Send your response (no word limit) to *The WIRE* in one of these ways: By mail to *The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, NYC10044; by e-mail to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com; or by dropping it off at the front desk, addressed to *The WIRE*, at 531 Main Street.

Between issues, get *WIRE* e-mail bulletins:  
Send an "Add Me" to nyc10044@rcn.com

## Letters

### To My Fellow Residents:

At a Tenants & Neighbors (T&N) meeting this week, I learned that the State Legislature appears very likely to renew rent stabilization laws as they now stand. Along with T&N, I feel we must let our legislators know that this is not good enough.

The rent control and rent stabilization laws will expire in two weeks – on Sunday, June 15. We must tell our elected officials that we will consider it a defeat if the laws are merely renewed. Tenants are calling for many changes in the rent laws, the most important of which is to repeal vacancy decontrol amendments which have already converted more than 100,000 affordable rent-regulated apartments into unaffordable market-rate units. A simple renewal – without repeal of vacancy decontrol – will mean that the entire rent regulation system will be phased out in the next ten years or so. Renewing the laws "as is" – in their current weakened form – is what the landlords want.

Roosevelt Island is affected because simple renewal will not provide protection for tenants whose buildings are leaving the Mitchell-Lama system, which Island House and Westview are now eligible to do.

With time running out, I urge residents to call Senator Olga Mendez (1-212-860-0893 or, even better, 1-518-455-3361); at the Albany number, ask for Adrian or Mark. Assemblymember Pete Grannis should also be called (1-212-860-4906 or, better, 1-518-455-5282); at the New York number, speak with Tony Morenzi; in Albany, ask for Peter Newell. Both Grannis and Mendez should be thanked for their past support, but we must put across the message that the rent laws should be strengthened, not simply renewed.

A few calls can make an important difference, but we now need to inundate the legislators with phone calls and e-mails. Don't rely on your neighbors to do the job for you. Please e-mail and call friends to ask that they help, as well. They can locate their legislators by checking the Internet at [www.nypirg.org](http://www.nypirg.org).

You may also want to join a lobbying trip to Albany. I did that on Wednesday, for my second trip this month. It's a learning experience to visit the State Capitol, and because T&N supplies the mental muscle, you need only supply your bodily presence, and listen. Of course, you can also add your thoughts, as well. If you'd like to join a trip in the next two weeks, call T&N at 1-212-608-4320, ext. 306, and tell Chris you're available for a van or car making the trip.

### Letters Policy

*The WIRE* welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer's name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records; anonymous letters are not considered for publication.

Preferred methods of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (ASCII text preferred, or use any word-processing software, but no MSWord files with macros), or PC-standard 3.5" floppy disk left at 531 Main Street addressed to *The WIRE*.

**Alternatives:** Typed, double-spaced copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to 1-212-755-2540 (call ahead to 1-212-826-9055). Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we cannot take telephone dictation of letters.

All letters are subject to acceptance, and to editing for length and clarity. Recommend maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

### To the Editor:

Because of the constant outages and disrepair of our local subway station, I have started a tracking system to monitor the condition of its escalators and elevators. Since I don't use the subway every day, I'm asking any resident or worker who uses the subway and notices a non-working elevator or escalator to make a note of which are out of service, and to let me know by e-mail, or by leaving a note for me at the Rivercross (531 Main St.) doorstation. My e-mail address is [raye.schwartz@worldnet.att.net](mailto:raye.schwartz@worldnet.att.net).

Please use the number which is located on the equipment, rather than a description of where they are located. The elevators are numbered 403 and 404. The escalators are numbered 411 through 420, and those numbers are located near the top or bottom of the escalators, near the floor beneath the handrails. The format to use is:

**Date / time (approximate) / elevator number / escalator number**

I have several contacts whom I'm going to notify on a weekly basis. Based on what we've experienced, I'm sure I can show that frequently there is only 20% uptime in any given week. But, the documentation I can gather will really help prove our point. Thus, I'll keep this up until they get the message that the conditions are totally intolerable and they respond by fixing the problem.

Additionally, I will use this documentation to work through our elected officials to remedy this totally unacceptable situation.

Raye Schwartz

### To the Editor:

I miss Robert Ryan. This is not a joke.

I live on the first floor of Island House over a room with some AVAC-related equipment. (We do not have an AVAC chute in my wing.) In October 2000 I reported a loud noise to management. My apartment was shaking and no one would help me. I finally contacted Robert Ryan in February 2001 and within two days the noise was gone.

In January of this year my apartment started vibrating again. I have contacted Patrick Siconolfi and Mary Beth Labate. I even had Tony Morenzi from Pete Grannis' office call Mr. Siconolfi. My apartment is still shaking. Doryne Isley [of Roosevelt Island Housing Management] is sympathetic but she called me to explain her inability to get action from RIOC.

At this point I need a lawyer. If anyone else has a similar problem or knows a lawyer who understands our system in NYS limbo please contact me via e-mail at [Sinisi2styl@earthlink.net](mailto:Sinisi2styl@earthlink.net), or by telephone at 1-212-759-8478.

Susan Sinisi

### To Patrick Siconolfi:

I was surprised to hear at a recent meeting of Community Board 8 that the Roosevelt Island Office of Public Safety does not possess a single defibrillator, which, when used by a first responder on someone suffering cardiac arrest, could make the difference between life and death for an Island resident or visitor. With the Island's population aging and emergency medical services coming from Queens, your Public Safety Officers are particularly well positioned to fulfill the role of first responders in such situations. I urge you to make immediate arrangements for the acquisition of one or more defibrillators and the training of the Island's Public Safety staff in their use.

It is my understanding that the cost of these devices is relatively modest and that the training needed for their operation is neither complicated nor time-consuming. In this matter the old adage, "It's better to be safe than sorry," clearly applies.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Pete Grannis  
Member of Assembly

Finally, this Sunday (June 1), there will be a rally in Union Square to call for stronger rent laws. It's sponsored by T&N and the Met Council on Housing, and it's a way to express your solidarity with your New York neighbors.

Sherie Helstien

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After deadline, letters will be considered on a space-available basis



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## RIVAA's Challenges

Gallery RIVAA will hold a reception next Saturday for its newest exhibition, *Challenges in Black and White*. The event is scheduled for 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.,



and it marks the beginning of the Gallery's second year. Thirty artists are exhibiting in the new show, with works in photography, painting, and sculpture.

The gallery, which is located in the Rivercross building at 527 Main Street, maintains hours Wednesday and Friday, 6:00-9:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On its website, at

www.rivaa.com, the Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association lists readings, lectures, and other events taking place at the gallery.



## MST/Teen's Simon

The Main Street Theatre is active both this weekend (see page 1) and next weekend, when its teen group will stage *Just for Laughs - An evening of Neil Simon Comedy*, with performances Friday through Sunday (see listing in *Coming Up*, right).

Did you know that last Wednesday was a national holiday? Last Sunday's *Times* ran a story on the Great American Grump Out. I take great umbrage at the premise that we grouches are some sort of stain on the national character and should be shunned. As a dues-paying (though part-time) member of the Curmudgeon Club, I reserve the right to believe that the water glass is neither half full nor half empty, but is simply contaminated with polluted water. I am supported in this point of view by Wellesley College professor of psychology, Julie K. Norem, who wrote *The Positive Power of Negative Thinking*. Norem said most curmudgeons are what she calls "defensive pessimists," people who prepare themselves for unpleasant outcomes. Between 25 and 30 percent of Americans are defensive pessimists (in France, it's closer to 50%!) and Prof. Norem posits that we defensive pessimists do everything better if we are allowed to worry anxiously beforehand. I spent over twenty years working as a meeting planner, worrying over every last detail of every program, and I can report that *agita* aided my efficiency enormously.

*Why do I bring up this quirk of my personality, I hear you ask?* Good question; one that takes us back to the RIOC Board of Directors meeting on May 15. Many of us expected to learn the fate of the RIOC presidency at this meeting. The RIOC Board had placed Robert Ryan on paid leave last February 4 and renewed the leave 60 days later for an additional 30 days, pending some adjudication of his case by the New York State Inspector General. The agenda item to determine Ryan's fate was removed from the May 15 RIOC agenda, and no mention of Ryan, Acting President Siconolfi, or the future of RIOC was made despite the fact that 100 days had passed since Ryan left. I had heard rumors that a new, full-time RIOC president was being vetted by the "second floor," a euphemism for the Governor's office, and yet, no one at the Board meeting had anything to say. After the meeting adjourned and the "town meeting" portion was over, I learned from RIOC Board Chair, DHCR Deputy Commissioner Mary Beth Labate, that she had administratively extended Ryan's leave. I was then led to assume that the IG had rendered no verdict and that Siconolfi would continue as Acting President.

This turn of events was more than sufficient to sound my anxiety alarms and lead me to assume the worst. It seemed that, not only was the Roosevelt Island community "out of the loop," but so was the RIOC Board of Directors! However, those in authority assured me that everything was all right and that it would all work out in the end. Professional curmudgeons hate to be patronized and, for us, being told, "everything will be okay" is the equivalent of a red terrorist alert.

Imagine my surprise when I read in this newspaper the very next day that former City Councilmember,

Herbert Berman, was the man being vetted. A Democrat and 26-year veteran of City politics before being term-limited out of office, Berman had supported Pataki in his last run for Governor. Once again, political patronage will determine who runs Roosevelt Island. I will never forget President Ryan's first address to the RIRA Common Council three and a half years ago, when he stated that he wasn't a community manager, not a lawyer nor an accountant, not an architect nor an engineer, and as such, we would need to give him a year's honeymoon to learn the job. As it turned out, even 3½ years was insufficient for the task.

Mr. Berman may be wise in the ways of City politics and he may have the best interests of our Island at heart. I hope he does and I hope he extends himself to this community in the way the current Acting President is doing. But the bottom line is that he is neither trained nor experienced in the job of managing a community, any community, and he will require "o.j.t." (on-the-job training) just as his predecessors have.

I've been carrying around a help-wanted ad from the Sunday *Times* of several weeks ago. It seeks to fill the post of City Manager for the City of East Providence, Rhode Island. This community has an operating budget of about ten times that of RIOC with a staff more than six times RIOC's size. The job requires an MPA (Master of Public Administration) degree or an MBA in a related field and three years experience. To attract this professional, the City of East Providence is willing to pay \$27,000 to \$37,000 less than the RIOC presidency (which currently pays \$125,000 and requires no training or experience) pays.

And yet, President Siconolfi is telling me not to worry without telling me why this is so. All will be well. Yet, every fiber in my being is telling me that the water glass is corrupted beyond repair. Whether Berman is a positive force or not, as a gubernatorial appointee he will never be working for us. If Siconolfi continues here on staff, and I and many others hope he will, he will be obliged to defer to "the Governor's man," as has been the case since RIOC was created in 1984.

I've been told that the RIOC Board favors Siconolfi's continued leadership, and that the Board has final say on RIOC hires. I don't believe that, you don't believe that, and the Board doesn't believe that. The second floor proposes and the rubber-stamp RIOC Board of Directors disposes. This isn't even the Board containing a majority of Island residents promised us in last September's new law. Currently, only three members live here.

Until the residents elect a Board representing "we, the People," and until that Board gets to hire someone like the guy East Providence is looking for, we shall continue to be told, "Now that I have the job, you must give me time to learn it." Why? Don't we rate the same caliber of leadership in New York as they require in Rhode Island? My anxiety is acting up something fierce and, until democracy rears its messy, politically unpredictable head on Roosevelt Island, I reserve the right to grouse. And so should you.

## The RIRA Column



**Matthew Katz**  
Residents Association President  
e-mail: matthewkatz@rcn.com

Editor's note: The President of RIOC has a standing invitation to provide a companion *RIOC Column* for publication here.

# COMING UP

— This Weekend —

**Like Totally Grimm**, The Main Street Theatre's premiere production of a new children's musical, at the Main Street Theatre, **Fri., May 30 through Mon., June 2**; Performances nightly at 7:30 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2:00. Tickets: **1-212-371-4449**.

**Blood Drive Sign-up** at the Farmer's Market, **Sat., May 31**, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., sponsored by the Icla da Silva Foundation.

— The Coming Week —

**RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed., June 4**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

**Groundbreaking Ceremony** for the Child School's new Roosevelt Island campus, Westview courtyard, **Fri., June 6**, 1:00 p.m., to be followed by entertainment and tours. Open; additional information at [www.thechildschool.org](http://www.thechildschool.org).



**Annual Membership Drive Reception** for the Icla da Silva Foundation, 7:00 p.m., **Fri., June 6**, Manhattan Park Theater Club. Food, drinks, raffles, auction, and a presentation on the Icla da Silva Foundation — its history and activities. For information, call Airam da Silva at **1-212-593-1807** or Fay Vass at **1-212-755-4089**.



**Just for Laughs - An evening of Neil Simon** presented by The Main Street Teen Theatre, **Fri., June 6**, and **Sat., June 7**, at 8:00 p.m.; **Sun., June 8**, at 2:00 and 7:00. \$10 (seniors, \$8). Reservations: **1-212-371-4449**.

**Blood Drive Sign-up** at the Farmer's Market, **Sat., June 7**, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., sponsored by the Icla da Silva Foundation.

**Opening Reception for Challenges in Black and White**, exhibit at Gallery RIVAA, **Sat., June 7**, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Free. Gallery hours thereafter: Wednesday and Friday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



— Future Events —

**RIOC Board Meeting, Thur., June 12**, 9:30 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

**Author Talk: Andrea Simon** on *Bashert, a Granddaughter's Holocaust Quest*, **Thur., June 12**, 7:00 p.m., Library. Free.

**Roosevelt Island Day, Sat., June 14**, starting 9:00 a.m. in Good Shepherd Plaza.

**Blood Drive** at the Senior Center, **Sat., June 14**, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Donors can make an appointment by calling **1-212-593-1807**, or e-mail [Airam@icla.org](mailto:Airam@icla.org).

**The Main Street WIRE** — next scheduled issue, **Sat., June 14**. **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, **Fri., June 6**; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, **Tue., June 10**; fliers due **Thur., June 12**. **Future issues:** June 28; July 26; August 23; September 6, 20; October 11, 25; November 8, 22 (Thanksgiving issue); December 13 (holiday issue). **Phone/fax** for news, **1-212-826-9055/755-2540**; phone/fax for display and classified advertising placement and information, **1-212-751-8214/755-2540**. To list your organization's Island events here, e-mail information to [ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com](mailto:ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com), or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to [MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com](mailto:MainStreetWIRE@rcn.com) or leave copy at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide a telephone number for possible follow-up.

**Pastoral Installation of Fr. Joseph Miqueli**, mass and dinner, **Sun., June 15**, 3:00 p.m. Reservations required; call **1-212-832-6778**.

**Author Talk: Chang-rae Lee** on *Native Speaker*, **Thur., June 19**, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free.

**RIRA Common Council meeting, Wed., Sept. 3**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open to the public; public comments invited near start of meeting.

**RIOC Board Meeting, Thur., Sept. 11**, 5:30 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

## Senior Center

**Monday**  
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**  
12:30, "Oldies" Movies  
1:00, **Tai Chi**  
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)

1:00, **Bridge Class**  
7:00, **Games** (RISA)  
**Saturday**  
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

**Tuesday**  
10-11, **Dance & Relax**  
10-11, **Latchhook Class**  
6:30, **Yoga Class**  
7:30, **Games** (RISA)

**Wednesday**  
9:15, **Stay Well**  
10:30, **Beading Class**  
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)

**Thursday**  
10:00, **Tai Chi**  
10:30, **Creative Arts**  
12:30, **Movie**  
3:00, **Computer Class** (advance registration required)  
7:00, **Dance Class** (Advanced)

**Friday**  
9:30, **Yoga Stretch**

### Special Events

**June 2-5, Wildwood Trip**. For information, call **1-212-750-3952**.  
**Mon., June 9**, 11-12:30, **MetroCard Bus**  
**Tue., June 10**, all day, **Executive Board Election**  
**Sat., June 14**, time to be announced, **Flag Day Celebration**  
**Tue., June 17**, 11:00, **The Seniors Go to Harlem**  
**Wed., June 18**, **Atlantic City Trip**  
**Thur., June 26**, 7:00 p.m., **Initiation of Officers**  
**Fri., June 27**, 12:30, **Birthday Party**  
**Mon., June 30**, last day of classes at the Senior Center

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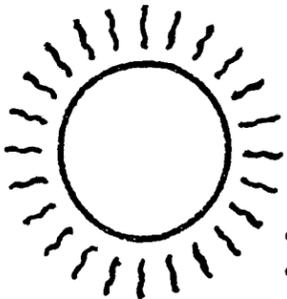
June 6-8 • Friday and Saturday, 8:00 PM • Sunday, 2:00 and 7:00 PM

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When you need the best, call us. We are proud to serve Roosevelt Island. ***When it really counts, you can count on us.***

Thank you,  
John Agosta  
President

***When it really counts, count on Olympic!***

---

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### Upcoming Special Events...

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No reservations necessary

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July 14-18, 8:30AM-3PM

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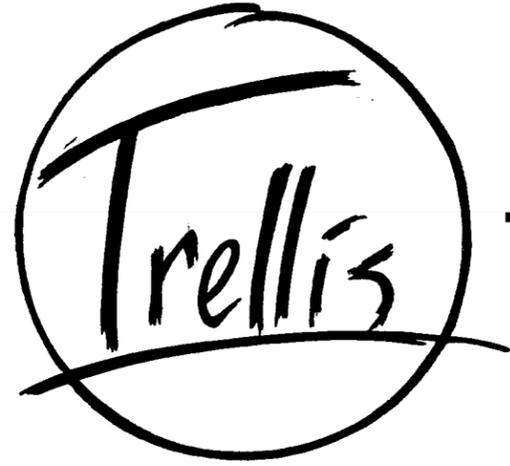
##### Youth Theater History Camp for aged 12-15

July 21-25, 9AM-3PM

Role-playing • Improvisation  
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Using historic artifacts

**Call 1-212-838-6878**

or visit [www.mountvernonhotelmuseum.org](http://www.mountvernonhotelmuseum.org) for more information.



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# *Your business card* and The Main Street **WIRE** *Fourth of July 2003*

It's your opportunity to support your community newspaper with a small contribution and to record your presence at this time and place in Roosevelt Island history. Join your neighbors by adding your card to the July 4 business card pages. The June 28/July 4 issue is scheduled to be distributed to the thousands attending the Fourth of July Fireworks at Southpoint, as well as the normal distribution to every residential door on the Island.

Send your card with a \$35 check, payable to *The WIRE*, to:  
***The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044**

Don't wait for the deadline (June 17)... Get it done now while it's on your mind.

No card? With your copy, we can create a simple message card for you.  
Or support *The WIRE* without publishing your card. Make a \$20 contribution, and we'll include you among supporters listed in the issue.

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Check here if you would like your e-mail address added to *The WIRE's* between-issues e-mail bulletin service.

Mail to:  
*The WIRE*  
531 Main St. #413  
Roosevelt Island  
New York, NY 10044

Or drop off at the Rivercross desk, at 531 Main Street. **Thank you!**



# Save a Life... Donate Blood



The Icla da Silva Foundation and The New York Blood Center urge all Roosevelt Island residents to donate blood.

New blood donor guidelines eliminated 25% of our community's blood supply, formerly imported from Europe. But local demand has not decreased and, in fact, is on the rise.

Close to 2,000 men, women and children, including cancer, transplant and surgery patients, trauma victims, newborn babies and many more in our community need blood transfusions each day.

But you can make a difference. Donate now to increase our local blood supply and close the gap.

**DATE:** June 14, 2003

**TIME:** 9:00am - 5:00pm

**PLACE:** RI Senior Center  
546 Main Street



**New York**  
BloodCenter

Brooklyn/Staten Island *Blood Services*  
Hudson Valley *Blood Services*  
Long Island *Blood Services*  
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[www.nybloodcenter.org](http://www.nybloodcenter.org)

Sign up today by contacting

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Helping Children with Leukemia

Phone: (212) 593-1807 E-mail: [Info@icla.org](mailto:Info@icla.org)

Sign up online: <http://www.icla.org/signup>



## You are Invited!

**THE ICCLA DA SILVA FOUNDATION**

*Annual Membership Drive Reception*

- What** | The Officers and Directors of The Icla da Silva Foundation cordially invite you to attend The Icla da Silva Foundation's Annual Membership Drive Reception to raise awareness and funds for the Foundation.
- Who** | Over 100 guests from Roosevelt Island and around the city join forces to help children with leukemia.
- When** | June 6, 2003  
7:00pm - 10:00pm
- Where** | Manhattan Park Theater  
8 River Road  
Roosevelt Island, NY 10044
- More** | Enjoy Great Food, Drinks, Music, Auction, Raffle and learn more about the wonderful work of The Icla da Silva Foundation.  
Suggested Contribution: \$25.00 (Annual Membership)



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It's time to register for 2003-04



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## Classified

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Deadline for June 14 issue: June 6

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### Octagon from page 1

Pete Grannis, who represents the Island. He says it violates the open-spaces provisions of legislation Governor George Pataki signed into law last September.

The Octagon Park project is to consist of 500 apartments, 100 of which are to be "affordable" (with 25 of those reserved for Roosevelt Island residents). It includes restoration of the Octagon tower, the only remaining part of New York City's historic "Pauper Lunatic Asylum" designed by Alexander Jackson Davis. Construction is slated to start late this summer, with new residents moving in late in 2004.

# JOLSON'S

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Gift wrapping available  
All major credit cards accepted

# Roosevelt Island Day

## 2003

When: Saturday, June 14, 2003  
Where: Good Shepherd Plaza  
Time: 9:00am on

**Fun for all - all day long!**

- ★ Island wide beautification, rides, clowns, puppet show
- ★ You will also have the opportunity to donate blood and test for asthma
- ★ Live performance  
**Charlie Thomas Drifters Tribute Show**  
6:00PM - at the Good Shepherd Plaza  
If it rains it will take place at the PS/IS 217 Beacon Auditorium



*The 7th Annual Roosevelt Island Day is sponsored by:*  
Roosevelt Island Housing Management Corp.  
Roosevelt Island Youth Program

*Contributors:*  
Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.  
Roosevelt Island Residents Association  
Roosevelt Island Senior Association

### School from page 1

derstand how he thinks and respect that thinking even though it is different from ours.”

She says she believes that even though the task is difficult and can be frustrating, it is the school's stated goal for each child “to perform to his/her maximum potential.”

Island resident Byron Gaspard, whose son, Byron, Jr., transferred to the Child School in second or third grade, is enthusiastic about the school, and about its move to Roosevelt Island. “It's an excellent institution to deal with children with academic, emotional, physical special needs,” Gaspard says. “The class sizes are very small, with a maximum of 12 in a class, with two teachers – a teacher and an assistant teacher. It's more hands-on. They are able, because of the small class size, to give more attention to the kids who might be a little slower than others. They're able to build the kids up until they're ready for a

regular curriculum. My son BJ is now on a regular curriculum in Legacy High School, which is a Regents high school.”

Admissions materials from the school point to its small classes as a key to success: “Our small class size assures a unique, individual program for each child, and guarantees intensive caring for the child and parents.” In a welcome statement, de Souza writes, “...we focus on awakening children to the fact that learning is a wondrous, enjoyable activity, and that the unfamiliar presents an exciting frontier. We work tirelessly to stimulate a desire for learning in our students. Our approach... encompasses the total child.” Parents are warned: “The experience is intense and demanding – for our children, their families, and our staff.”

Currently, the Elementary Program has nine classes for students from kindergarten through sixth grade. The Middle School Prep Program, initiated in 1991, has stu-

dents aged 12 through 14 years. Its stated goal is to maximize each student's opportunity to complete a standard high school diploma program or determine an area of career training on which s/he should focus.

The Legacy High School, established in 1996, was the first government-funded non-public high school in Manhattan offering a Regents level diploma to students with significant emotional and learning difficulties. Currently, 144 students are enrolled in 12 classes, grades 9 through 12.

De Souza says she moved the school off the Island as it expanded, but had always wanted to move it back because she feels children need to be in open spaces. “They need grass and trees,” she says. “Ideally, schools should be out in the country.”

The best alternative to a country location was Roosevelt Island, where now De Souza faces the challenge of integrating the students into the community. “A lot of fine-tuning will be required as they begin to live in a community with its own issues.”

She says the task seems daunting, yet exciting.

### Founder from page 1

There is a difference. A mother has held this baby and has dreams for it.”

De Souza says she tries to help these dreams come true, but quickly changes tack lest she come across as a mere catalyst for these dreams. She says she does not handle parents with kid gloves. “My job is to prepare these children for the real world. I tell the parents that I will not return their children to them. I will not return the children to their family as they came into my school. I will make them resilient because I

### Another Website, This One from Columbia Journalism Students, Takes a Look at Roosevelt Island



**New Website** Journalism students at Columbia University have produced a website focused on New York's “other” islands, including Roosevelt Island, drawing on materials from *Website NYC10044* (<http://nyc10044.com>) and their original production work. It includes brief profiles of several Island residents, a photo tour of landmarks, short animations, and brief treatments of current issues. It's at <http://nyc24.jrn.columbia.edu/2003/islands/zone4/roosevelt-index.html>, part of a continuing series called *NYC24*. Other websites with material on Roosevelt Island are listed on *Website NYC10044* (click on “Island Links”).



The Island's minischools, unused since construction of PS/IS 217, and deteriorating for many years, are being renovated for The Child School. This photo, about a month old, was taken in the Westview minischool.

am putting them out in the world.”

She gives full credit to her staff and the parents for supporting her to make the children stronger and the school's program a success. “They are just wonderful,” she says. “It takes a lot of patience to handle these children and they all work together to

make it happen.”

She says she has not identified any goal for herself but, as she expounds her philosophy, it is apparent her life is consumed by her school – and her children.

“Each child is a vision for me,” she says. “I am so lucky I get to do what I do.”

**To sign up for *The WIRE's* between-issues e-mail news bulletins, send an “Add me” message to [nyc10044@rcn.com](mailto:nyc10044@rcn.com).**

**Play** from page 1

"It's definitely a fractured fairy tale!" says playwright Bill McMahon. "These kids look at the Grimm stories and think, 'this has nothing to do with our lives.' That's when the witch appears and puts each one of them into their own fairy tale. They have to figure out the moral, or they don't get to go home."

As the kids grapple with the enchanted characters – a pit bull in sunglasses, a dim-witted king, and a junk-food-munching computer geek among them, they learn that fairy-tale morals still matter. "It's about reconnecting with innocence and imagination," McMahon explains. "We have kids nowadays who are so scarily mature and who are, on one level, almost over-entertained."

McMahon and McDowell pioneered the Main Street Theatre's first original children's musical, last year's *Alphagirls*. For McMahon, a prize-winning playwright hailed by *Backstage* as "a strong new Off-Broadway voice" in 1999, it was also a first foray into children's theater. A finalist for the 2003 Richard Rodgers Award, *Alphagirls* took shape as the MST kids read through the script together, marking out parts that seemed false to them.

"The early version had only nine characters," McMahon recalls. "Nancy was saying, 'I've got a lot of kids, we need more parts!'" (One year, she added more kids, of all nationalities, to *The Sound of Music*.)

"I ended up writing a piece with parts for twenty-one children," McMahon says. "I've never directed that much traffic on a page before! Every now and then Nancy would call me and ask, 'Where do they exit?' and I would say, 'I don't know, you tell me!'"

"By *Grimm*, I had more of a clue," he adds. "I had fewer notes [comments] from the kids, so hopefully that means I'm getting better at it."

During rehearsals, McMahon let the kids scratch out lines and pencil in Harry Potter. At Nancy's suggestion, he tossed out one of his three Martha Stewart jokes.

Laced with plenty of the "edgy and out-there" humor of *Alphagirls*, the script is "multi-layered," says Nancy, "with adults understanding it on a deeper level than kids." At times, McMahon's tales turn dark. A boy learns that he will turn to stone. Another is chained to a computer alongside creepy web-surfing geeks.

"This is kind of a tough show – there are some things in it that aren't what you usually see in kids' theater," says McDowell, a veteran of more than 20 MST musicals whose credits include Off-Broadway shows *Swingtime Canteen* and *Oats: A Serial*. "It's not silly stuff. Nancy has always been very open to letting us try things and going out on a limb with this." McDowell, in fact, conjured up the fairy-tale theme and the title. "I let Bill think he's in charge," he says.

"When Bob first came up with the idea of fairy tales, I sort of jerked back and said, we're going to be compared to *Into The Woods* no matter what we do," McMahon says. "I complained left and right. But he persisted because he wanted to try something different musically. *Alphagirls* had been a pop-flavored score. He chose three of the stories. I chose only 'Red Riding Hood,' and he was resistant to that one because he'd done a couple of cabarets of 'Red Riding Hood!'"

**Putting It Together**

On this February afternoon, the kids are rehearsing scenes from McMahon's take on "Red Riding Hood," a gritty New York-style "Red's Hood" in which Red must hop the subway to Grandma's apartment.

"You guys represent the bad, scary things in life," Nancy tells a clutch of kids who surround Red. "Come up with your own scary sound – it can't be funny! Freeze in a nasty, sinister position. We want the audience to gasp!"

The "scary characters" exit the stage and try the scene again, running toward Red. "You're not coming in at the right time – you're too early, she tells them. "How do you turn on stage? You turn toward the audience."

When a boy reads a line about the Bates

# Putting Grimm Together

...65 kids, 3 casts, 17 weeks, 57 rehearsals, 71 pages of lines, 11 new songs...



From composer Bob McDowell and playwright Bill McMahon...



...through blocking and marking up playbooks...



...and learning the finale...



...to a dress rehearsal in full costumes...



...and it's the magic of theater, as imagined characters come off the pages and out of a wolf's stew-pot, and a witch casts a spell to make modern-day kids learn the lessons of Grimm's tales – complete with morals set to music.



## SPORTSWIRE

by Seth Kaufman

**Baseball** The standings in the Youth Program's Little League, as of May 28, are:

Minors		Majors	
Green	4-1-1	Red	5-0-3
Red	3-3	Green	4-2-3
Royal	3-3-1	Royal	3-2-3
Silver	1-4	Silver	0-8-1

**Minors:** In action Tuesday, May 27, Red defeated Royal by a 7-6 score to move into a second-place tie with Royal. Justus Burgos led the attack for Red, with help from Ryan ChonoDeAbreu, Kevin Molina, and Kaitlyn Abdul. For Royal, the hitting stars were Daniel Ruiz (with a home run), Erik Ortiz, Javon Perry, Jamal Perry, and Evan Espinoza.

**Majors:** In action Wednesday, May 28, Green moved into second place by defeating Silver 12-8. Eyosyus Tadesse and Sean Suarez led the attack for Green, while Joshua Hart, with a home run, was the hitting star for Silver. In games played the week of May 19, Green and Red played a 4-4 tie, leaving Red undefeated and in first place, and Royal defeated Silver by an 18-9 score. Adrian Gordon of Royal had the outstanding game of that week, pitching Royal to the victory while striking out 7 batters and going 5 for 5 at bat. Thomas Herlihy, who went 4 for 5, and Samuel Johns, who went 3 for 4, also paced the Royal attack in its victory over Silver.

The Public Safety Blotter for May 1-18 is now available on Website NYC10044 at www.nyc10044.com

your party shoes," Nancy tells them. One actress asks if she can do homework in the dressing room between her scenes. Carla Blumberg climbs into the sound-and-lighting booth and slips headphones over her ears. Worth flips on the fog machine.

As the rehearsal stretches into its fourth hour, the kids break into the finale song. "Invariably I'm thrilled with what Bob comes up with," says McMahon, watching from the audience seats. "And it's kind of exciting to have actually inspired something like this."

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