

Next issue:
Sat., Feb. 7

The Main Street **WIRE**

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Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Tuesday morning, George Reither rode in the same corner of Cabin #1 where he was standing six years ago when the cabin encountered a construction crane in the Tramway's most serious accident to date. Reither rides the Tram regularly now – but first checks to see if there are tall cranes working under the cables.

Six Years Later, He Rides the Tram, But Recalls Its Worst Day – and His Own

George Reither was the most seriously injured among a dozen Tram passengers in the Tram-crane accident six years ago today. His story has never been told. Here, he recounts the accident and sketches his own legal and medical aftermath.

by George Reither

Roosevelt Island, Tuesday, January 24, 1998

This day starts as a normal late-January day – bright sun, little wind, a bit cold.

Before it ends, the course of my life will have been changed.

But I don't yet know that as I set out from my River Road apartment to the nearby bus stop, waiting for the fresh air to wake me up. I'm on my way to the Tram, headed for work at my telecom billing business – to an office suite I've chosen for its proximity to the Manhattan-side Tram station. My workday hasn't yet started, but I have software on my mind. Until midnight last night, I worked on a change in a client's billing format; my bigger project is a system that will bill the outgoing phone calls of the inmates in New Jersey prisons.

Like most of the dozen other passengers who board with me, I am a regular on the Tram, starting this day like so many others with views of the Queensboro Bridge, the barges and ferries on the East River, and an item of idle interest to me – the progress of construction of a building over a subway ventilator shaft adjacent to the Tram station. I position myself to look down from the southeast window, which is at the left rear of Tram Car No. 1 as it heads toward Manhattan. I lean against the window with my arms on the bar as the car lifts from its bay for the 8:52 a.m. trip.

A month before this day, I reached my half-century mark, becoming a 50-year-old. But this is no time of mid-life crisis for me – I have the feeling my business and my life are on track.

But halfway through this trip, I hear a bang and loud grinding sounds. Traveling at rush-hour speed, the cabin has smashed into a construction crane that is where it should not be. Later, we will learn that an operator has removed limit switches that would have kept crane and Tram cabin separated. But now, someone yells, "Hold on!" and the Tram is riding backwards and up to a crazy angle. I grab for the bar with both hands, reaching so violently that my elbow strikes the plexiglass window, which falls away into the river.

The cabin continues to tilt. Passengers are screaming as the floor is tipped out from under them. As the cabin approaches and passes a 45-degree tilt, I find that I cannot hold on, and when I let go, my head hits the upright pole behind me. I fall past it just before the cabin clears the crane and begins swinging wildly. I have no idea what is happening. I cannot tell if the

Tram car is falling. I am being tossed about and I am alarmed and frightened.

Now, as the violent swinging subsides, I find myself on my back near the doors. Things are settling down. Other passengers are righting themselves, and I attempt to get up, but I move only a few inches because I feel sharp pains in my neck, shoulders, head, and back. Involuntarily, I decide to stay just where I am, on my back, clearly hurt, terribly confused, and unable to guess what has happened.

It is just short of 9:00 a.m. Once more moving toward Manhattan, the Tram now stops at Tower No. 2, where mechanics have been at work. They open the hatch in the ceiling, lower the ladder, and come aboard. One of them comes to me, sees my confusion, and says, "Don't move. Everything is all right."

"What the [bleep] happened," I ask him, and he tells me the cabin hit the crane. It dawns on me that when I knocked the window out, the cabin was at its greatest angle, and I might have fallen through the window. I am in pain, and I am rattled as the cabin bumps into its bay at the Manhattan-side Tram station. But I am lucky to be alive.

A passenger comes to me with several pieces of my cell phone. Another returns my glasses and another piece of telephone. Yet another gathers my briefcase and papers. The cabin attendant, Elliot Isaac, asks me if I need an ambulance, and I say that I guess I do. David Deyerle, another attendant who had been selling tokens, comes over to stay with me, and gets something to cover me, because I am feeling extremely cold. My left elbow and ribs are starting

to ache, and fingers on my left hand are growing numb. Whatever adrenalin flooded my system is wearing off, and I am now all the more conscious of my pain.

A small eternity passes, but paramedics finally arrive. They put a blanket over me, a hard collar around my neck, and turn me on my side so that they can immobilize me on a board. The board and I are put on a stretcher and we are strapped down. I am carried to the elevator and, in a kind of Keystone Kops routine, an effort is made to get me, the stretcher, and the board into the cab. I would laugh, but I hurt too much. The paramedics finally remove me from the stretcher and stand me up for the ride to street level. The pain of this elevator ride, which seems interminable, is excruciating, but I am soon in an ambulance, warming up during a short ride to New York Hospital.

Doctors order x-rays of my spine, ribs, and left elbow but, finding no visible breaks, they put me in a soft collar, give me pain medication and a prescription for a massive dose of Ibuprofen, tell me that I will get stiff, and that my pain will get worse before it gets better, and tell me to see my physician. After four

See Tram, page 2

Under Ryan, RIOC Gave Top Employees Unauthorized Pay Excess at Least \$155,000 Without Board Approval

by Dick Lutz

Top employees were overpaid by significant amounts during the RIOC administration of Robert H. Ryan, according to figures obtained by *The Main Street WIRE* as part of an ongoing investigation.

Ryan, who was suspended in February of last year and fired in June, received \$28,030 over his published pay rate of \$123,191 in the 2001-02 fiscal period, in a 23% bonus never authorized by the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt

Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). In the 2002-03 period, he received \$16,315 (13%) more than budgeted, but for about half that period, he was on suspension, not in control of RIOC funds. (Ryan later was named New York State Assistant Secretary of State.)

Three other executives, Vice President Robert Antonek, Chief Financial Officer Patrick Siconolfi, and General Counsel Kenneth Leitner also received significantly more than their publicly authorized pay, according to records obtained from RIOC through a filing under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

• Antonek, budgeted at \$110,080, received \$136,217 in 2001-02, and \$123,945 in 2002-03, or about \$40,000 (24%) above levels known to be authorized, over the two-year period. He is no longer with the corporation, having left shortly after Ryan's suspension took effect.

• Siconolfi, also budgeted at \$110,080, took home \$116,550 in 2001-02, and \$124,192 in 2002-03, for a total of \$20,582 more than budgeted. Siconolfi served as Acting President of RIOC during Ryan's suspension, then returned to his Civil Service position at the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal late last year.

• Leitner, who is still with RIOC, was also budgeted at \$110,080, but was paid \$122,449 and \$134,475 in

the two-year period. His 24-month total was \$36,764 more than shown in official RIOC salary listings as of May 22, 2003. The amounts are 11% and 22% above the authorized pay.

• In addition, a Special Counsel paid by RIOC, Barbara Espejo, took home \$123,328 in 2002-03, \$13,248 over her published pay amount. Espejo was, for some time, authorized to "work at home." She was eventually terminated by the Corporation.

These excess payments, which total \$154,940, were never authorized by the RIOC Board of Directors. They may not be all that occurred.

An analysis over time indicates the funds involved were neither deferred compensation appearing as larger payments, nor salary advances.

Neither RIOC nor the RIOC Board has ever provided a full explanation of the reasons for Ryan's suspension and firing, though it is generally believed that unauthorized compensation figured in the decision. Bonus payments for "volunteer" work at the World Trade Center disaster site have been cited as one example, without specific figures, but not every employee who received pay above published levels was involved in the Twin Towers work.

When a *WIRE* reporter, Steve See RIOC, page 2



The 1998 Tram accident was the occasion for this EXTRA edition of *The WIRE*. It is available on line at nyc10044.com/wire/1809/wire1809.html.

In Open Houses, Berman Covers Multiple Issues

RIOC President Herbert E. Berman held additional Open House events last week. Here's what he had to say on several specific issues:

Red Bus route: Berman explained that the developers of Southtown "will not let [residents] exit from the back of the building. That means they would have to go outside and walk all the way around." The developers, he said, "will not provide a path from the back of those two buildings." He added, in response to complaints, "We have a committee that is dealing with the bus route, to find the best bus route."

Tram station elevator: A part must be custom-made, Berman said. "I think they're finally at a point where they've manufactured the part, and it will still take a couple of weeks... When it comes time to renew the [maintenance] contract, this will certainly come into consideration."

MetroCard for the Tramway: "We're hoping that it happens soon. It's all negotiation and it wouldn't serve any purpose for me to go into the details of it publicly, because I really don't want to debate the issues with the Transit Authority in a public forum... It's not a simple thing where you just walk in, insert the MetroCard mechanics, and then expect it to happen. There's a whole slew of issues that have to be resolved... We're meeting on a regular basis... I would hope that soon we will be able to share the benefits of MetroCard with the Island."

Privatization: "All that has happened is that we have received a proposal for extension of the ground lease [for Island House and Westview]. We haven't begun to consider it... That would be our sole involvement..."

See Open House, page 3

A longer version of this report is available on Website NYC10044 at nyc10044.com

Briefly...

At the Tram, a chunk of concrete fell off the Manhattan-side Tramway station Monday, loosened by moisture and cycles of freezing. The area under the station was then taped off to avoid danger to passers-by and passengers leaving the station...

...and workers were installing electrical infrastructure for MetroCard equipment on Tuesday at the Manhattan-side station.

The PTA at PS/IS 217 is seeking donations for the silent auction to be held at its International Dinner on February 12. To make a donation, contact Carol Elbaz at 212-758-5063 or CarolnRaffi@aol.com.

Tram from page 1

hours, I am released.

I dodge news crews waiting to interview victims. I want to get home and go to bed. I find a taxi on York Avenue, and in 15 minutes, I am home. But this episode is not over. The aftermath will inflict more pain over a much longer period of time. I try to fall asleep, but friends are calling. Checking television news, expecting to see reports of the accident, I see that news has been crowded out by reports about the President and a White House intern named Monica Lewinsky.

I don't yet realize that I am about to lose a year of my life to this accident.

For Roosevelt Island, 1998 was the middle of a three-year term, as President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), for Dr. Jerome Blue. He was a lightning rod, making one controversial decision after another. One decision was to eliminate Tramway console operators. After the accident, some suggested safety was ill-served by that move – that a console operator, in the Island station booth, might have seen the accident coming and might have taken preventive action.

For me, that mattered little. It would be nine months before I would venture aboard a Tram again – and on that trip, a sudden emergency stop had me shaking – so additional months passed before I rode again. Month after month, I would be occupied with a time-intensive medical and legal journey.

Along with the general distraction, I found myself starting to become addicted to pain medications and, as I spent only two days a week in the office, my business began to suffer. Today, it has still not recovered to the levels of 1998 and before. In the six years since January 24, 1998, in fact, the telecom industry has changed in tidal waves of technology (broadband transmission), scandal (WorldCom), and business restructuring. My business today bears no resemblance to the business that was interrupted on that winter day in 1998.

The day of the accident, angry, I called the National Transportation Safety Board, only to be told that its jurisdiction is limited to aircraft, ships, and roads. The New York State Department of Transporta-

tion referred me to RIOC, saying it had jurisdiction, and I was reminded of foxes guarding hen-houses.

My injuries had been underdiagnosed. My personal physician sent me to a specialist in physical medicine. My symptoms were getting worse. I now had constant numbness in my left hand and pain in my right forearm and lower back. A nuclear scan showed that I had a fractured elbow; a CAT scan revealed compressions of several disks in my spine; a test for nerve conductivity (EMG) was like torture; I was turned upside down for a spinal tap; I started three months of painful physical therapy that didn't help. Eventually, on May 22, 1998, a surgeon removed all the cervical disks in my spine between C2 and C7, and stabilized my neck with a titanium plate.

After 12 hours of surgery, waking up with a tube down my throat and connected to a ventilator, unable to speak and nearly too weak to write notes to the friends who came to visit, I developed pneumonia.

In the end, I would lose 60% of the mobility in my neck – to the point where my inability to turn has meant giving up driving. I have trouble swallowing. I can't totally extend my left arm. I have a pain-causing stenosis (narrowing) of the lower spine. My thumbs are numb. Painkillers no longer soothe a headache. It hurts to walk from Manhattan Park to Trelis. Longer walks are even more difficult. Standing for any length of time is hard. Around the five-inch scar on my throat, I have no feeling. I sense that my logical processes aren't as nimble as they once were; I must think about some things that used to be routine. I find I lose track of a list of tasks I used to carry in my head.

During this misadventure, I was depressed and angry. I was advised to see a psychiatrist, and I should have. Instead, I saw a lawyer, David Golomb, and in March (still 1998) we filed suit against the Tramway Operators, RIOC, the crane operators, and the crane owners. This led to examinations and interviews with a line-up of the defendants' medical specialists. They had me performing repeated tests like a trained chimp: walking on my heels, bending over, turning my head left, turning it right, stretching my arms...

With my business in the toilet, I

took a position in Reston, Virginia.

On the legal front, the City eventually accepted full responsibility and became the only defendant. It took just short of four years, but Golomb finally negotiated a settlement in the high six figures. In the end, I received a fraction of that amount after my attorney's fees (which he truly earned), reimbursement of my medical insurer, and other expenses.

Eventually, I did see a psychiatrist. The diagnosis was depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome. I resigned the job in Virginia and returned to New York to start therapy, and to take some time off to reassemble the pieces of my life. After a time, I restarted my consulting firm using an office provided by a former client.

But six years later, despite the passage of time, I am not at all the same person I was before this accident. There are those who have a passing familiarity with my case who imagine that the legal settlement left me wealthy. That's simply not the case. I haven't retired, and I'm still working to get my earnings and company revenue back to their pre-accident level.

After six years, I've become a Tram regular again, but I have one firm rule: If a crane is raised near the Tram's path as it often is these days during work on the FDR, I take the subway.

And after six years, I have to wonder about RIOC. I've never had an expression of concern, an apology, or a single word from RIOC. Neither has RIOC recognized all the heroes of that day. Elliott Isaac received well-deserved recognition, but other Tramway employees did not – the mechanics, and David Deyerle.

RIOC from page 1

Marcus, contacted RIOC for an explanation of the excess payments, Director of Finance Bentley Johnson referred him to L. Paul Hart, Deputy Counsel, who reports to Leitner. After repeated phone calls, Hart eventually refused to provide any further information, saying that what had already been provided to *The WIRE* was "self-explanatory." But *The WIRE*'s original FOIL request had also asked for additional detail, which was also refused by RIOC. Sari Dickson, an Assistant Deputy Commissioner of DHCR serving as an aide to current RIOC President Herb Berman, wrote in mid-November that *WIRE* access to the items was being denied under an "intra-agency exception to FOIL," citing a section of the Public Officers law without further explanation.

RIOC's failure to provide a satisfactory explanation for the payments in excess of published salaries raises a question of how many other RIOC employees might have taken home higher pay than is publicly authorized. It also raises the question of whether the RIOC Board had any opportunity to review the pay amounts, either as part of salary authorizations, or as specific additional payments. There is no record of any Board approval of pay variations, either formal or informal. Presuming the Board did not approve additional payments, there are questions of whether a part-time, mostly unpaid Board can adequately supervise a State agency like the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation.

Finally, the Roosevelt Island situation may raise questions about how many other State agencies and authorities may have similar variations in pay that suggest their treasuries are open to abuse by those charged with administering them.

Letters

To RIOC President Herbert E. Berman:

Let me inform you of disturbing facts concerning the transportation system on the Island. These two incidents took place Jan 21, between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m.

This morning, a bus driver (name withheld) refused access to a father with a kid in a stroller. This refusal occurred when the bus was not full. The reason invoked was that it was a "new policy" from RIOC.

• Could you please confirm that it is RIOC policy to refuse Red Bus access to parents with kids under three years old when the outside temperature is averaging 15-20 degrees?

Half an hour later, when exiting the tram on the Manhattan side, an operator (name withheld) refused to operate the lift for my wife and two kids (aged 3 and 18 months) because "the lift is only for people in wheelchairs."

He added that while the proper elevator was still out of order (we have lost count but it might have lasted for over 3 months now), policy was that he did not have to operate the elevator to help out a mother with a kid in a stroller and another toddler in hand.

When my wife made him notice she could not carry a stroller with an infant inside and hold my older son's hand at the same time, he suggested that "she go back home."

• Once again, can you confirm the policy is to keep home parents that are physically unable to carry down the stairs two or more kids with their stroller?

I hope you will confirm to me and to the community (copy to *The WIRE*) that the transportation system is designed to fit everybody's needs, including families with children, and that every possible means is used (especially in hostile weather) to help all residents commute to Manhattan.

I was shocked by the attitudes of two of your employees, and hope that RIOC will correct the so-called policies that led to amazingly senseless attitudes this morning.

Jerome Coullare

To the Editor:

The headline and your report of my conversation with the RIRA Common Council at its meeting on January 7th implies a link between the issue of self government, which the RIRA Common Council discussed and voted on after I left the meeting, and my presentation. There is none. I responded to a question about getting federal funds for the Tram by saying that the RIRA Council should not depend on RIOC to pursue such an opportunity which, in my view, is a long shot. Rather, the RIRA Common Council members who have contacts with Federal officials should go to them directly to determine the feasibility of such an allocation. From the discussion it was clear that at least two RIRA Councilmembers have direct contact with our Congressional representative, Carolyn Maloney, the right person to determine what action can be taken.

Deborah B. Beck

To the Editor:

Just a few days after *The WIRE* published my letter about ground pork meat, I was able to buy this product at Gristede's on Monday night.

Assuming it was not a weird coincidence, I want to thank Gristede's for a prompt response.

Mircea Nicolescu

To the Editor:

On a recent evening, with the wind chill hovering at minus four degrees, I attempted to board a northbound bus at the subway station and, along with a half-dozen others, was closed out and left standing. Time: 7:54 p.m., falling under the definition of "non-rush hour." As we waited for the next half hour, we were not even able to avail ourselves of the benches inside the station since we had already pushed through the turnstiles to try to get on the bus. The alternative of walking (I live at the north end of Manhattan Park) was not feasible for the elderly in our group, including me, in the extreme weather conditions with the footing uncertain due to snow and ice. When the next bus arrived the group that had gathered was just barely accommodated.

Self-evident message to those responsible for our well-being: If the bus schedule is cut in half, twice as many people will be trying to get on.

The new bus "schedule" is not even a schedule. I once was able to anticipate the departure of a bus from the stop in front of the supermarket at seven minutes after the quarter hour and the drivers for the most part could be counted on to scrupulously observe this schedule, and I also could count on the precise time that a bus would arrive at the subway station going north. The new system is, I surmise, supposed to be on the hour and the half hour during non-rush hours. The bus at the supermarket now actually leaves at various times ranging from two or three minutes before the hour to three or four minutes after. My impression is that this is not the drivers' fault. I think they have not actually been given a schedule.

This latest example of the ineptitude and arrogance of RIOC, and the serious personal disruption of my daily routine that has resulted, has pushed me to the edge, and, after seven contented years on the Island, I am looking for housing elsewhere.

George Morrison

Letters deadline for Feb. 7 issue: Feb. 3

After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

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 (E-mail format preferred, or use any wordprocessing software) to put a file on a PC-standard 3.5" floppy disk left at 531 Main Street addressed to *The WIRE*. Alternatives: Typed copy left at 531 Main Street or faxed to 212-755-2540 (call ahead to 212-826-9055). Clearly-handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters are subject to acceptance, and to editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

The Public Safety Blotter for Jan. 1-15 is now available at nyc10044.com/wire/2409/blot2409.html

The WIRE

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RIOC has offered a second round of Open Houses, these held in the early evening, and I hope you availed yourself of the opportunity to meet RIOC President Herb Berman and share your concerns with him. RIOC and the majority of the RIOC Board of Directors are not residents of Roosevelt Island and we all need to do our best to instruct them on Island issues from our perspective.

One of my concerns these days has been the cost of keeping this community safe and well patrolled. About a year ago, the commander of the 114th Precinct in Queens, Deputy Inspector David Barrere, informed us that we would have the services of a C-POP officer, Tom Liuzzo, who would work a 40-hour shift here. I haven't seen Officer Liuzzo in recent months, and have tried to call Inspector Barrere several times without success. His voice mail seems to be on the fritz and the City has not seen fit to provide its police commanders with e-mail.

Anyway, I relied on my fallback position and called Officer Bobby Lamonica, who with Paul Chatham comprises the one-one-four Community Affairs office. When I asked him whether we were still covered by foot patrol, his answer was, "Yes and no." Tom Liuzzo is still on the roster as the Roosevelt Island C-POP officer. However, because of budget cuts, the 114th Precinct is under strength

and, because of this lack of personnel, our guy is likely to be grabbed for standard patrol in western Queens virtually every day. Our only coverage by the NYPD, other than their responses to 911 and 311 calls, is the "Sector Nora" squad car that we share with the rest of Astoria.

When you bring up the paucity of NYPD coverage on the Island and the potential for a sub-precinct or mini-station to be located here, the response is invariably, "This will never happen." The rationale is that "index crime" statistics are too low here and besides, we have Public Safety to cover our street-patrol needs.

Now this would be a far more compelling argument if the Public Safety Department costs were covered by the same New York City taxes that pay for our NYC police services (or the lack thereof). But they are not. Each residential building is charged for the services of the Public Safety Department according to a variety of complicated agreements and contracts. Regardless of the process, can you guess who, ultimately, pays the freight for Public Safety? Right, we do.

Up until a few weeks ago, when the Westview rent hearings were on the immediate horizon, I had never really considered how much I, personally, was paying for this service. Based on the DHCR rent budget/projections for the next two years, security is expected to cost about \$350,000 per year in Westview. When you divide this number by the 361 units in my building and by twelve months, the figure you obtain is \$80.80 per apartment monthly. Island House, with an average of \$385,000 over the next two years and 400 apartments, has a very similar per-unit cost of \$80.20 per month per apartment. That's a staggering amount when you consider that our neighbors in New York City neighborhoods like Astoria, Yorkville, Mill Basin, Parkchester or New Dorp get the same police service we get, essentially street patrols, but by NYPD, for the price of their City taxes. Eastwood is somewhat less, with \$486,000 projected over the next two years, and a \$40.38/month/apartment fee, based on 1,003 apartments. The Public Safety revenue projection for Manhattan Park, where the financial agreements are completely different, is \$207,000, which translates to about \$17.25/unit/month.

What are we getting that the other denizens of the Big Apple aren't and that would justify this addition to our rents? Well, I've seen a letter, a codicil to the 1995 agreements between RIOC and RIHMC, in which RIOC Special Counsel Barbara Espejo defines the nature of the payment agreements and specifies that, "...as long as there is a coordinated central force patrolling all the buildings on the Island, the impact of any budget cuts from the State will not result in reduced payments from the housing companies."

Now I've only been living in Westview for 32 months, but in that time I've never seen a Public Safety Officer above the first floor. I've certainly had no evidence of a "building patrol." This term can only be defined as a regular police beat conducted within the hallways of my building and "the other buildings on the Island." Were these patrols to happen, perhaps a case could be made for the additional costs we all pay for additional security. But, as far as I can tell, we receive street patrols like any other New Yorker and pay for them twice.

Since last spring, several Island groups concerned with Island security have been asking for a comprehensive de-

The two Open Houses we held earlier this month in the early evening at RIOC offices were well attended and provided spirited talk and thoughtful suggestions.

Some of the ideas for improving the Island will be implemented as soon as we can, but like the rest of New York City, the recent cold snap and last week's ice-storm threw a wrench into many of our immediate plans. No doubt, most of you have heard or witnessed last weekend's bout of bad luck from the sprinklers going off at Blackwell House to the broken water main at Firefighters' Field to the flood at Motorgate and the façade problems on the Manhattan Tram building and flying manhole covers. We have been busy.

RIOC's ground crew did good work under difficult circumstances but the weather always wins. I hope that, after we address these immediate infrastructure problems, we can proceed with the suggestions many of you made at the Open Houses to improve and beautify the Island.

I want to say that I am well aware of the frustration, which I share, that many of you are experiencing while the Tram elevator on the Manhattan side has been out of service. I assure you that we are working on getting it back to work as fast as possible. But parts have to be machine-made and this takes time. As many of you know, the building shifted and affected the elevator which, when it was designed, was for temporary use pending completion of the 63rd Street subway. The Tram's planners didn't foresee that the Tram was to become a permanent, iconic part of the City's skyline.

Meanwhile, my staff and I continue to work on the budget for RIOC's next fiscal year, where we are seeking ways to address our shortfall while at the same time planning for future infrastructure upgrades, maintenance, and improvements.

The existing-condition survey for Blackwell House has been completed and will be sent to RIOC in the next few weeks. The survey is the first step in renovating the exterior of the house. There are no areas of the house which are in imminent danger of failure or collapse. We still do not have a date to begin work, however.

RIOC is looking to make possible modifications to the bus route around Southtown, the Tram, and subway station. We have met with the Southtown developer and discussed perhaps making West Service Drive a one-way street. We continue to weigh routes.

Finally, the photogrammetry work for the Smallpox Hospital has been completed and plans will be submitted to RIOC next month. The work details the condition of the building as of mid-January. When the building is stabilized, the photogrammetry will be used to show the placement of all stones as well as details of architectural significance.

scription of Public Safety's duties, similar to the one compiled by former department head Peter Norwood in the mid-90s. So far, RIOC has had no response to the Norwood Mission Statement and the RIOC Board committee convened to address Islanders' concerns about security has yet to consider the nature of the department's responsibilities.

I think there are questions more fundamental than how many squad cars are needed to patrol the Island or whether the Motorgate patrols are adequate. What are we paying for and is it worth it? And if not, what do we do about it? These questions have been left hanging for far too long. If enough of us insist on an accounting for the fees that come directly out of our pockets, perhaps there will be answers that can lead to more efficient and cost-effective security for Roosevelt Island.

Open Houses from page 1

While we are not involved in the process, we've made it clear to anybody who's inquired of us that there has to be a plan; if the people who live in these buildings choose to privatize, then they have to provide for the people who can't afford to privatize. But what our official role is, it's almost nonexistent in that process, other than the fact that we will insist on adherence to a fair standard. But that doesn't mean that anybody has to listen to us."

Dogs in Southtown: "That's a contract that was entered into considerably before I came here. My understanding is that there is no prohibition against dogs. I've instructed our Public Safety Officers to make certain that, if anybody's walking a dog, that the dog is on a leash, that whoever has a dog, they pick up after the dog [and] if there's any viola-

The RIOC Column



Herbert E. Berman, President Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. e-mail: hberman@rioc.com

The RIRA Column



Matthew Katz, President Roosevelt Island Residents Assn. e-mail: matthewkatz@rcn.com

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Exhibit Opening, *Visions With Paper*, Sat., Jan. 24, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street; Gallery open 11-5 both Saturday and Sunday.

– The Coming Week –

***Visions With Paper* exhibit at Gallery RIVAA;** hours Wednesday 1-5, Saturday and Sunday 11-5.

– Future Events –

Residents Association Common Council meeting, Wed., Feb. 4, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public access near beginning of session.

The Main Street WIRE – next issue **Sat., Feb. 7.** (To receive e-mail bulletins in the meantime, send an "Add Me" message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., Jan. 30; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., Feb. 2; fliers due Thur., Feb. 5. **Future issues:** Feb. 21; Mar. 6, 20; Apr. 3, 17; May 1, 15, 29; June 12; July 3 (Fourth of July issue), 31; Aug. 28; Sept. 11, 25; Oct. 16, 30 (pre-election issue); Nov. 6 (post-election issue), 20 (Thanksgiving issue); Dec. 4, 18 (holiday issues), then twice a month starting in January, 2005. (Schedule subject to adjustment.) **Phone/fax** for news, **212-826-9055/755-2540;** urgent matters **917-617-0449.** phone/fax for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214/755-2540.** **To list your organization's Island event in this column,** e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions; there is no charge.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave copy at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide telephone numbers for possible follow-up.

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, Mon., Feb. 9, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577 / 212-935-1254.**

PTA International Dinner, Thur., Feb. 12, 6:00 p.m. (open to PS/IS 217 parents), with *Silent Auction* of donated goods and services (viewing of items starts 5:30 p.m.).

Book Discussion – *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by J.W. Johnson, Thur., Feb. 19, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Toastmasters Public Speaking Group, Mon., Feb. 23, 8:00 p.m. Visitors welcome. Information: **212-751-9577 / 212-935-1254.**

Senior Center

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Monday
10-11, Latchhook Class
10-11:30, English as 2nd Language
10:30, Blood Pressure Screen
12:30, "Oldies" Movies
1:00, Tai Chi
7:00, Dance Class (Beginners)</p> <p>Tuesday
Time to be announced, Tax Help for Seniors, starting February 3
10:00, Computers
10-11, Dance & Relax
1:00, Bingo
6:00, Yoga Class (resumes Feb. 10; now on hiatus)
7:30, Games (RISA)</p> <p>Wednesday
9:15, Stay Well
10:00, Spanish Class
10:30, Shoppers' Bus
12:30, Sculpting
7:00, Pokeno (RISA)</p> | <p>Thursday
10:00, Tai Chi
10:30, Creative Arts
12:30, Movie
7:00, Dance</p> <p>Friday
Pool Tournament (time flexible)
9:30, Yoga Stretch
7:00, Games (RISA)</p> <p>Saturday
7:30, Bingo (RISA)</p> <p>Special Events
Sat., Feb. 7, Korean New Year's Party
Mon., Feb. 9, 11:00 a.m., MetroCard Bus
Thur., Feb. 12, 10:30, Health Care – Wills
Sat., Feb. 14, Valentine's Day Bash
Mon., Feb. 16, Senior Center closed
Sat., Feb. 28, Black History Month Celebration</p> |
|--|---|

Home-delivered meals available: 212-744-5022, ext. 1203

tion, not to hesitate to summons people for failure to pick up after the dog... I'm not going to be tolerant of bad neighbors... We can't really do anything about what is, except to enforce what the law is and try to be respectful of it. If, in fact, there is future development that is unfettered by contract, we can take that into consideration, and at that time, dependent on how people feel, we'll see what the story is. We can look at it. I can't promise you that will be an issue that will survive, but we'll certainly look at that."

Street lighting: "If lights on any part of the Island are out, let us know and tomorrow morning we'll send out a crew. We try to be very, very cautious and careful. You can call us at **212-832-4540.**"

Pigeon droppings: "We have from time to time sent out crews to deal with that problem at Motorgate and other parts of the Island, and we'll get to that (Manhattan Tram station) also."

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Saturday, February 7
10am

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- College preparatory & co-ed
- College counseling program beginning in 9th Grade
- Family conferences
- Gymnasium and playground
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*Roosevelt Island's
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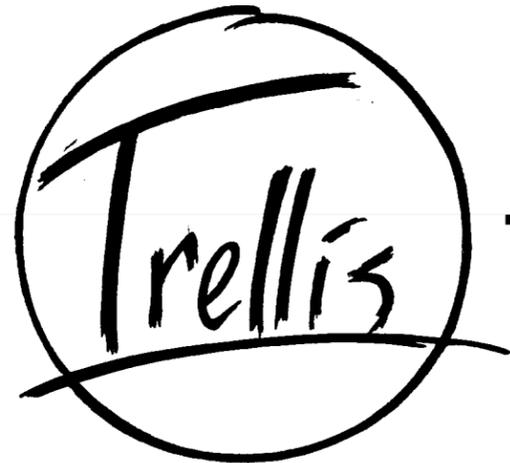
Enrollment open now

Offering instruction in a wide variety of instruments, the Island Arts Music Center is open to students of all ages and musical backgrounds.

Located in the Main St. Cultural Center,
(548 Main St.)
Classes are offered Weekdays and Saturdays

For Information, call 212-929-8343
Or, visit the Main St. Cultural Center,
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The Island Arts Music Center was founded by Director of RIVER MUSIC, Robin Russell, trained at Juilliard and Harvard (B.A. in Music). With over 20 years teaching experience with private students, he has been on the faculty of the Turtle Bay Music School, and the Diller-Quaile School of Music.



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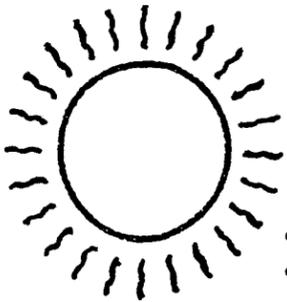


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