

Next issue  
in two weeks:  
Sat., Sept. 11

# The Main Street **WIRE**™

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Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



## Parking Survey Shows Few Pay, Many Park Free

In its July 31 issue, *The WIRE* pictured a silver-gray Toyota stored in front of PS217, never ticketed by Public Safety. RIOC would say only that the car was parked there for "law enforcement" purposes. *The WIRE* later learned that, though rarely moved, the car is said to be used by an Assistant District Attorney required to go to crime scenes, and is therefore stored free on the street, even though paid Motorgate parking is equally accessible.

*The WIRE* has sent RIOC a Freedom of Information Law demand for a list of cars, maintained at Public Safety, of cars immunized from ticketing. RIOC has responded, "Due to the time necessary to review such records, you will be notified

in approximately 30 days..."

Meanwhile, long-time resident Geof Kerr volunteered to repeat a parking study he did in June, 2003. His report, which indicates that only 11 out of 97 vehicles pay for parking at any given time, follows.

by Geof Kerr

*The WIRE* pictured an unticketed Toyota parked in front of PS217 in its July 31 issue. By my observation, the car had been parked there, without being moved, for four or five months. After the July 31 *WIRE*, the Toyota was moved to a spot opposite the firehouse. As it happens, that's where the car was parked, unticketed, over a year ago

See **Parking**, page 6

## In Buildings on Privatization Track, Residents Consider Ownership Plans

Renters at Island House and Westview face a critical decision over the next several months: To fight takeover of the buildings by the Shelldrake Organization, or to seek something better through negotiation as that process goes forward.

At both buildings, on dual tracks, committees are preparing for both possibilities. At both buildings, one goal has been adopted – resident ownership rather than com-

mercial privatization as rental buildings. The concern is that privatization – removal from the Mitchell-Lama program – could lead to intolerable rent increases. That's balanced, to some extent, by the certainty that a tenant-sponsored buy-out, in itself, is likely to lead to increased housing expense.

At Island House this month, fund-raising has begun with a flier asking \$50 per apartment – that would produce a \$20,000 fund –

to bring a law firm into the process to guide residents through what has proved to be, in other Mitchell-Lama restructurings in New York City, a complex process.

On Roosevelt Island, there are two additional complicating factors: The Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) will be setting ground-rent rates in any privatization, and for all the Island's Mitchell-Lama buildings, tax abatements are about to end. The uncertain cost of each of those "wild cards" makes financial projections difficult. And there's another factor that will affect any tenant buy-out plan: Just how much profit will satisfy the owners?

Negotiations at Westview have already produced a working number: \$380 per square foot. It's considered too high, but it serves as a starting point for some calculations.

Without considering the wild-card tax and ground-rent matters, such a number, even if cut by nearly a third, could lead to a purchase price in the \$75 million to \$100 million range, presuming a willingness by Shelldrake to take a quick profit and avoid years of legal warfare with potentially troublesome residents. But even in that range, the result could be mortgage maintenance and mortgage costs representing an increase in housing cost of \$100 to \$200 per room per month. (A three-bedroom apartment is considered a six-room unit for such calculations; a

See **Ownership**, page 7

## RI Bridge Getting Stuck, Raising Emergency Questions Anew

The Roosevelt Island Bridge got stuck in a lifted position two weeks ago – more than once – and then again this week, twice, late Thursday afternoon.

One resident described the August 12 event as part of a "perfect storm" in mass transportation: Each route of physical transportation to and from the Island was cut off, at least for a while.

- The Tram was down.
- The bridge was stuck.
- Electrical problems halted F-train service.

Because of the bridge problem, the Island was essentially without the services of the Fire Department (FDNY) for over an hour, and residents had no emergency ambulance access to off-Island hospitals.

While serious for the potential jeopardy, the situation also produced scenes bordering on the ludicrous.

In the August 12 incident, trying to dope out what caused bridge brakes to jam with the span up in the morning, troubleshooters from the City Department of Transportation (DOT) decided to test the bridge just before the 4:00 p.m. shift-change rush-hour for Coler-Goldwater Hospital. During the test, the bridge got stuck again. For an hour and twelve minutes, cars backed up along Main Street all the way back to the Tram station, and



Firefighters came to Roosevelt Island by F train August 12, then waited near the subway station. That will now be standard practice (see story).

north toward the hospital's north campus. On the other side of the bridge, the backup snaked in both directions along Vernon Boulevard. And just before the subway went down, a group of firefighters took the F-train to the Island to stand by – without their emergency vehicles – just in case. Under a new plan to cover just such cases, subway transport for firefighters will be the norm. (See *The RIOC Column*, page 3.)

The event raised questions about responsibility for coordinating the Island's emergency preparedness. Firefighters, who were first directed to reach the Island by Tramway, were unaware that it was out of service. The City DOT undertook testing without first getting FDNY to station firefighting equipment and personnel here.

A plan has now been adopted for future periods of frequent bridge lifts: Firefighting equipment will be stationed on the Island, but in the event of a fire during a bridge failure, personnel will get to the Island via public transportation (see *RIOC President's Column*, page 3). That happened this week, during

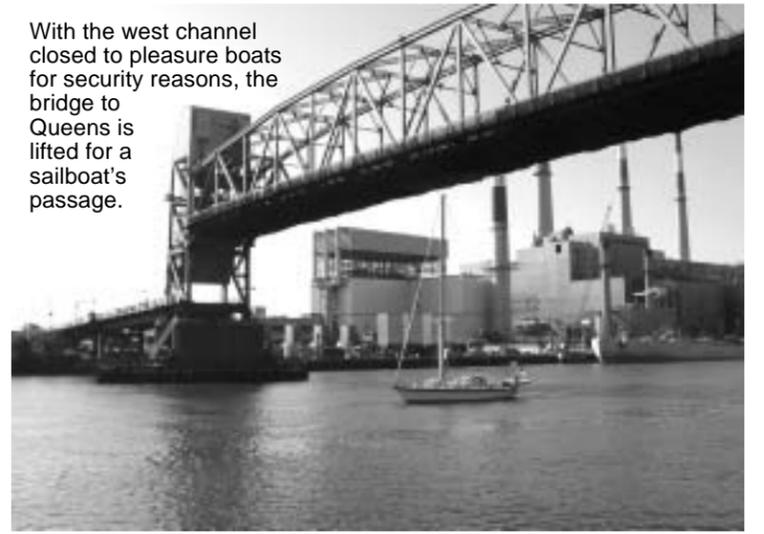
Thursday's outages.

DOT now stations an electrician at the bridge 24/7. In Thursday's first incident, during a routine opening which also happened to coincide with the hospital shift change, one end of the bridge went up too fast, triggering an automatic shutdown. Adjustments were made, the bridge lowered, and vehicle traffic resumed at about 4:30. The bridge then got stuck again shortly after 5:00, backing cars up the length of Main Street.

Coincidentally, the mid-August transportation cut-off occurred almost exactly a year after the Black-out of 2003, which also raised questions about just how much responsibility the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC) has for making sure Roosevelt Island's emergency needs are covered and coordinated. In general, RIOC has suggested that others bear most of the responsibility, not just for actual emergency coverage, but also for coordination. RIOC President Herb Berman, asked how a heart attack might have been handled during the transportation outage,

See **Bridge**, page 6

With the west channel closed to pleasure boats for security reasons, the bridge to Queens is lifted for a sailboat's passage.



## After 1,211 Books, Party! It's Read, White and Blue

by Mary Camper-Titsingh

Participants in the Roosevelt Island Branch Library's Summer Reading Club were treated very generously by our local merchants last week, when 130 attended a wrap-up celebration in the amphitheater behind 524 Main Street.

Participation was up this year. There were 232 in the reading club, three times as many as last year. Many proud parents and siblings were present as certificates of achievement were awarded at the Read, White and Blue party.

See **Readers**, page 6



## Briefly...

The RIOC Board of Directors is scheduled to meet Monday at 4:00 to give final approval to the **Octagon Apartments** plan. A multi-employer pension trust is to become the owner and developer of record for the Becker and Becker design. The Board's August 16 meeting, which was expected to vote the approval, was canceled without explanation.

**Temporary tennis courts** are to be built in Southtown while an underground parking structure for the Octagon Apartments tenants is built at the site of the present courts. When the garage is finished, the courts are to be rebuilt above it.

Going to be in the City next week? There's a useful **Guide to the City** available on-line at <http://www.nycouncil.info/rnc/>.

**Plans for Southpoint Park** will be presented in daytime and evening meetings scheduled for Tuesday, September 14. Three concepts are outlined at [www.markmorrison.com/roosevelt/concepts/concepts\\_files/frame.html](http://www.markmorrison.com/roosevelt/concepts/concepts_files/frame.html), and will be the subject of coverage in the September 11 issue of *The WIRE*.

**The Residents Association Constitution** was the subject of a special Common Council meeting August 11. Work continues on its revision.

# Letters

**To the Editor:**

I write this letter to *The WIRE* as formal notice to the community that once again Matthew Katz is planning to run roughshod over the procedures outlined in the RIRA Constitution to properly amend this Constitution.

On June 30, Mr. Katz withdrew his first version of this entirely rewritten RIRA Constitution, evidently convinced by your attendance at the Town Meeting that his vision for RIRA would never get past the Community.

Many residents who had been unaware that the Constitution was to undergo revision were ready in June to participate in the process. Many had prior experience with RIRA Constitutional amendment and a solid knowledge of the history of RIRA.

Rather than send the Constitution back to Committee where it properly belonged, Mr. Katz chose to allow Steve Marcus, his First Vice President, to re-write the Constitution on his own. No meetings were held. Instead, over the summer, long, tedious e-mail flew back and forth, forcing all participation to be in writing.

Raye Schwartz, one of the only two non-Council Members who were allowed to participate, has a binder five inches thick with that e-mail.

Not one Council Member other than myself chose to participate, with the exception of a single e-mail from Marge Smith. Almost one quarter of the Council does not have e-mail, so these Councilors were unaware of any of this.

When Mr. Marcus decided he was ready, a date was set for a Special Common Council Meeting at which the revisions could be proposed, as required by the Constitution.

What followed had all the elements of a Three Stooges movie. Printed copies of the revised Constitution were not provided. Councilors were directed to bring their own copies of the e-mailed documents to the meeting. Mr. Katz specifically directed them to bring one set, although Mr. Marcus continued revising and redistributed another. I made a simple request to Mr. Katz and Mr. Marcus that they correct their conflicting directions and they chose not to do so. The non-e-mail Councilors were finally

**To the Editor:**

A few days ago I received a flier under my door about the activities of the Island House committee regarding the future of our building.

It was written there that they met with a guy living in Island House and discussed this guy's intention of possibly buying Island House. Looks like he's not interested.

My big question is how come somebody potentially interested in buying this apartment complex (so we can assume he's a multimillionaire) actually lives in Island House (theoretically a middle income housing building)?

My next question would be how many more multi-millionaires live in our building?

**Mircea Nicolescu**

given hard copies of the documents on Monday, but no agendas. Only my own calls to them made them aware of the meeting.

At 4:15 p.m. on the night of the meeting, another set of changes arrived. Ninety percent of the changes in this document were changes I had earlier explained to Mr. Marcus as necessary, but he would not accept them from me. Given the unimpeachable source of this document, he had to accept them now. The revisions involved technical language problems and took up much unnecessary meeting time.

Less than half the Council showed up and, given the confusion, Raye Schwartz offered Mr. Katz a perfectly reasonable and easy way around his difficulty... to extend the meeting to allow a final document to be proposed. In the discussion that followed, Mr. Marcus even suggested a self-imposed deadline of August 15. Mr. Katz, however, moved on and never asked for a motion, so no vote was taken, and he then adjourned the meeting at the end of the night, and the meeting was not extended.

On the evening of August 20, five days past his own deadline, Mr. Marcus re-sent the set of revisions made at the meeting. There were a number of serious errors. I then asked both Mr. Marcus and Mr. Katz to confirm that this document must now be proposed at the upcoming September Common Council meeting for a vote of the Council in October. As of this

**To the Editor:**

The train to Roosevelt Island was out yesterday (August 12) at approximately 7:00 p.m., from the 63/Lex stop. It was awfully inconvenient for many people to either have to cab it (which I did) or try to get the various Queens buses (which are not that frequent to Roosevelt Island). Could Mr. Berman please institute the Red Bus shuttle service every time the Tram is down? This should apply for all Tram outages, scheduled or unscheduled. Also, the other day I noticed a Red Bus dwelling at the Tram station, though the Tram is currently out. Could he please instruct the bus drivers to skip the Tram station stop when there are no passengers to pick up?

Also, I know I am not the only person who feels a rooftop tennis court at the Octagon is wrong. Could this please be deleted from the Octagon proposal? Octagon is even closer to Motorgate than Southtown, and Southtown has no garage.

Finally, could Mr. Berman please let us know what is the timetable for more moderate-cost housing to be built on Roosevelt Island, or does RIOCC intend to turn the remaining open portions into an oasis only for the rich? Housing here should be built according to the proportion of rich to moderate-income people in NYC. Most New Yorkers are of moderate income, so most of the new housing being built should be affordable for them. Needless to say, due to their numbers and inability to utilize the tax loopholes/sophisticated tax shelters, etc., used by the rich to avoid paying much of their taxes, the moderate-income people in New York City are also contributing the majority of tax revenue which, through tax breaks, even for a private development, partially enables the new housing to be built.

**Name Withheld**

*WIRE* deadline (August 24), they have not done so. Instead Mr. Katz accuses me of trying to "throw a monkey wrench" into the works, although he and Mr. Marcus, and only he and Mr. Marcus, were in complete control of the meeting.

Because they refuse to do so, I write this letter as formal notice to the community to pay attention to what happens now at the Council Meeting coming up on September 8. If Mr. Katz instructs the Council to vote on these amendments he will be repeating the same illegality that he committed in May. Given the outrageous nature of his proposed changes then, little public focus was given to issues of procedure. You can learn more at my website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~karenstewart/> or contact me at [knycc@mail.com](mailto:knycc@mail.com).

I am hoping this letter will force Mr. Katz to play by the Constitution's own rules.

**Karen Stewart**

Ms. Iris Weinsahl  
Commissioner, Department of Transportation  
40 Worth Street  
New York, NY 10013

**Dear Commissioner Weinsahl:**

I am writing to you regarding the technical difficulties the Department of Transportation experienced on August 12 and August 13 on the Roosevelt Island Bridge. As I am sure you are aware, these mishaps caused the residents of Roosevelt Island to be stranded, without proper emergency protection, for over an hour.

It is my understanding that the bridge got stuck after being raised during a DOT test. My office had not been notified of any tests that would be executed on the Roosevelt Island Bridge. Why are such tests being performed? Also, for how long will they be performed? I would appreciate the DOT providing my office with a schedule of these tests. Finally, how do you inform the community that these tests are going to take place so that alternative travel plans can be made?

Furthermore, it is policy for the Department of Transportation to notify the Fire Department in advance of closing the Roosevelt Island Bridge so they can place personnel and equipment on the Island in case of emergency. No such notification took place. This is an extremely important situation, and I hope in the future the Fire Department is properly notified so that any fire emergency can be prevented.

In May 2004, Community Board 8 passed a resolution urging the Department of Transportation to

**To the Editor:**

Go get 'em! I love the idea of "outing" the untouchables on Roosevelt Island by way of publishing that "privileged-only" parking list. I'll be waiting for it with bated breath.

By the way, I work for New York State Criminal Court and I can tell you that there is no Assistant District Attorney (ADA) "assigned" to Roosevelt Island or to any other specific neighborhood. ADA's are not assigned to blocks, but to boroughs. Roosevelt Island is handled by any and all of the ADAs working out of 100 Centre Street, or Manhattan Criminal Court. And that particular ADA who enjoys RIOCC'S parking largesse may live here, but she could be working anywhere else in New York City.

Maybe she gets free parking for other reasons - like she's somebody's very good friend. (It happens.)

**Patricia Duarte**

begin urgent repairs and painting on the Roosevelt Island Bridge no later than 2008 - plans the DOT initiated in 2000. A final plan was completed by the DOT, however the project was put off until 2012. Attached is a copy of the Community Board's resolution. Please reconsider this plan and begin these essential repairs as soon as possible.

Your immediate attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

**Gifford Miller**  
Speaker, City Council  
Cc: FDNY Commissioner  
Nicholas Scoppetta  
[August 16]

Mr. Herbert Berman  
President, Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation  
591 Main Street  
Roosevelt Island, NY 10044

**Dear President Berman:**

I am writing to you regarding the technical difficulties that occurred with the Roosevelt Island Bridge on August 12 and August 13. As I am sure you are aware, these mishaps caused the residents of Roosevelt Island to be stranded, without proper emergency protection, for over an hour.

It is my understanding that the bridge got stuck after being raised during a test conducted by the Department of Transportation. Was RIOCC aware that these tests were going to take place? What steps did RIOCC take to notify the Island residents that the bridge would not be operational so people could make other travel arrangements?

My office was informed that emergency personnel were not stationed on Roosevelt Island during these tests, as procedure mandates. Although it is the Department of Transportation's duty to inform the Fire Department when tests are to be conducted on the Roosevelt Island Bridge, it is RIOCC's responsibility to ensure the safety of the Island's residents. Was RIOCC aware that the Fire Department had not been notified? How is RIOCC going to ascertain this information in the future? This is an extremely important situation, and I ask RIOCC to make sure that this situation does not repeat itself.

Your immediate attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

**Gifford Miller**  
Speaker, City Council  
[August 20]

**A gentle reminder to a few recent letter-writers:**

**The WIRE does not publish letters without knowing the writer's identity. See Letters Policy, below.**



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**Letters deadline for Sept. 11 issue: Tuesday, Sept. 7**

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

**The Public Safety Blotter**

for August 1-16 is posted on *Website NYC10044* at <http://nyc10044.com/wire/2422/blot2422a.html>. At press time, the blotter for the last half of August had not yet been received. When ready, it will be posted at <http://nyc10044.com/wire/2422/blot/2422b.html>.

**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; *letters submitted anonymously are not considered for publication.*

**Preferred form of submission:** E-mail to [Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com](mailto:Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com) (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file created using any common wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files containing macros), or on a PC-standard 3.5" disk left at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. **Alternatives:** Typed copy left at 531 Main Street. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. **Letters are subject to acceptance and to possible editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

## COMING UP

### — This Weekend —

**Gallery RIVAA Show of Roosevelt Island Artists**, now through tomorrow, at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street. Open Sat., Sun., 11-5; Wed., Fri., 6-9. (Opening for new show Sept. 11.)

**Cuartetango**, string quartet and show with tango poetry, songs, and dance, featuring Islander Leonardo Suarez Paz, **Sun., Aug. 29**, 8:30 p.m., Danny's Skylight Room Cabaret, 346 West 46th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues). \$20.

### — The Coming Week —

**RIOC Board Meeting, Mon., Aug. 30**, 4:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd; final action on Octagon Apartments plan expected.

**Southpoint Park Closed, Mon., Aug. 30-Thur., Sept. 2**, due to elevated security. *Reopens Fri., Sept. 3.*

**Revised hours begin** at Montauk Credit Union as it nears the October 1 date to close its Island branch. Through September, open only Thursday, 8:30-12 noon.

### — Future Events —

**Residents Association Common Council Meeting, Wed., Sept. 8**, 8:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Open. An opportunity for members of the public to speak is available early near the start of the meeting.

**Parks Committee of Community Board 8** will review planning for Southpoint Park (Roosevelt Island) and Tram Plaza (Manhattan), **Thur., Sept. 9**, 7:00-9:00 p.m., New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, conference room #1. For information: **212-758-4340**.

**The Main Street WIRE** — next issue **Sat., Sept. 11**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an "Add Me" message to [Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com](mailto:Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com).) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, **Fri., Sept. 3**; decision on inserts for *The Bag*, **Tue., Sept. 7**; inserts due **Thur., Sept. 9**. **Future issues:** Sept. 25; Oct. 16, 30 (pre-election issue); Nov. 6 (post-election issue), Nov. 20 (Thanksgiving issue); Dec. 4, 18 (two December holiday issues). **In 2005:** Jan. 8, 22; Feb. 5, 19; Mar. 5, 19; Apr. 2, 18, 30; May 14; June 4,

18; July 2, 30; Aug. 27; Sept. 10, 24; Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17. **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](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 questions; there is no charge for such listings.

**Landscape and Beyond**, opening party for new show at Gallery RIVAA, **Sat., Sept. 11**, 6-9 p.m. Hours: Sat., Sun., 11-5; Wed., Fri., 6-9.

**Primary Election Day, Tue., Sept. 14.**

**Presentation of Southpoint Park Concept Designs** by the Trust for Public Land, **Tue., Sept. 14**, 2:00-4:00 p.m. and 7:30-9:30 p.m. (attend either meeting), Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Public participation encouraged.

**Salsa Dance** with music by Los Calientes, **Sat., Sept. 18**, 8:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m. \$20. Tickets and information: **212-826-5646**.

**La Leche League** for breastfeeding mothers, **Tue., Sept. 21**, 1:00 p.m., 20 River Road #5P. Free. (First meeting on Roosevelt Island.) For information: **212-832-1188**.

**Roosevelt Island Committee of Community Board 8** meets, **Tue., Sept. 21**, 7:30-9:00 p.m., Westview Community Room. Topics on agenda include police protection and related issues.

## Senior Center

Monday	Thursday
10-11, <b>Latchhook Class</b>	10:00, <b>Tai Chi</b>
10-11:30, <b>English as 2nd Language</b>	10:30, <b>Creative Arts</b>
10:30, <b>Blood Pressure Screening</b>	12:30, <b>Movie</b>
12:30, <b>"Oldies" Movies</b>	1:00, <b>Drawing with Pastels</b>
1:00, <b>Tai Chi</b>	7:00, <b>Dance</b>
7:00, <b>Dance Class (Beginners)</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:30, <b>Yoga</b>
10:00, <b>Computers</b>	10:30, <b>Computers</b>
10-11, <b>Dance &amp; Relax</b>	1:00, <b>Bridge</b>
1:00, <b>Bingo</b>	6:00, <b>Dance &amp; Relax</b>
6:00, <b>Yoga Class</b>	7:00, <b>Games (RISA)</b>
7:30, <b>Games (RISA)</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	7:30, <b>Bingo (RISA)</b>
9:15, <b>Stay Well</b>	
10:00, <b>Spanish Class</b>	
10:30, <b>Shoppers' Bus</b>	
12:30, <b>Sculpting</b>	
7:00, <b>Pokeno (RISA)</b>	

**Special Events**  
**Tue., Sept. 14**, 7:00, RISA General Meeting  
**Thur., Sept. 23**, Health Fair

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

Summers are never long enough for me. Yeah, I know the sun's bad for you. So, why does it feel so good? I've absorbed copious baseball (go, Mets and Cyclones!), have picnicked on the lawn, and I am reluctant to let that (spurious but delicious) summer feeling of somnolence go. Such is life.

Looking at my last column in the July 31 issue of *The Main Street WIRE*, I feel that we have dodged a bullet. I spent four 'graphs discussing the July 9 contingency planning meeting held under the auspices of RIOC. Little did I know that, just one month later, the assurances given there by the Department of Transportation and our Public Safety Department would be

## The RIRA Column

put to the test. On August 12 we suffered a multiple transportation outage with the Roosevelt Island Bridge getting stuck with the roadway lifted (three times in two days) while the Tram was out of service for scheduled maintenance. Later that afternoon, we lost subway service as well.

The good news is that neither serious illness, accident, fire, nor crime occurred on Roosevelt Island during this period of uncertainty. The bad news is that fire, police, and EMS personnel and materiel, promised us at all Bridge tests, were not on the scene. RIOC President Herb Berman has refuted the statement by DOT that the 3:45 p.m. malfunction was a test, stating that the breakdown occurred during operational use of the lift mechanism. It seems to me that any interdiction of the bridge roadway should be accompanied by the presence of emergency vehicles on Roosevelt Island. More good news came from a *Newsday* article on August 14 that stated a full-time engine company would be stationed on Roosevelt Island through the Republican National Convention. I would remind all concerned that the west channel is also closed during the United Nations General Assembly this fall and that notification of emergency service providers and provision for another bridge failure must be considered during that period.

In a *WIRE* e-mail bulletin I was quoted saying, "The confluence of events should be a wake-up call for DOT, RIOC, and all of us thinking about Roosevelt Island contingency planning... [T]he potential for an event like this makes the need for docking facilities, pending for 30 years and more, even more acute. We should all be concerned about the possible response to a medical, fire, or police emergency during a situation of this type." I've learned that the Coast Guard has no record of certifying a working dock on Roosevelt Island nor has the NYC Department of Buildings issued a permit for one, suggesting that whatever decaying facilities for boats remain here are undocumented. Whether you believe the old east channel dock is adequate for delivery of emergency services or not (I don't, some do) the point is that we've been handed another wake-up call to supplement last August's Blackout.

I am happy to announce that the Tram is back in service. The staff there worked hard to ensure that all of the necessary maintenance work was completed on time. I want to take this opportunity to thank them and all of the Island residents who were so patient during this necessary outage.

The Tram's being back in service is particularly helpful now that the Roosevelt Island Bridge is being raised and lowered up to several times a day. Based on a request by the Coast Guard, the Department of Transportation is manning the bridge around the clock to allow shipping traffic to be rerouted down the east channel. Several requests have been made to limit the number of times that the bridge needs to be opened each day, but so far all of those requests have been denied.

As many of you are aware, there are two other parts to this issue. The first is that the bridge was stuck in the upright position twice last week. DOT personnel worked to repair the problem after

the first outage, and replaced the part that they thought was malfunctioning. A subsequent opening occurred without any problems, but the next opening saw the bridge get stuck again. From what we have been told, the DOT needed to perform some work before lowering it, which led to the long delay. We have been assured that there will be trained personnel on duty to lower the bridge manually and/or perform all necessary repairs between now and the time when the bridge will no longer have to be raised and lowered so frequently.

The second part of the issue involves having emergency services personnel on the Island when the bridge is in the up position. DOT always notifies the various emergency services divisions that the bridge is going up. During testing this is not a problem, and the FDNY stations a truck and ambulance on the Island. The logistics become more difficult when the bridge is being raised and lowered several times a day.

Based on the incidents of last week, and repeated requests, the FDNY agreed to leave an unstaffed pumper and ladder on the Island in case there is a need when the bridge is raised. There will also be an unstaffed ambulance on the Island during this time period. The personnel can get to the Island via other means if there is a need.

RIOC will continue to lobby for proper emergency services coverage for the Island. We share the concerns of the

I've urged Herb to call the next contingency planning meeting as soon as possible in an effort to comply with the monthly schedule envisioned, and to re-invite the DOT representatives. The understandings to insure that DOT, RIOC, Public Safety, the FDNY, and police are all informed when Tram service is curtailed and when the Roosevelt Island Bridge lift is in use must be put in place as part of any cohesive plan for future emergencies. Gifford Miller has sent letters to both Iris Weinshall, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, and to Herb Berman, asking both to insure better communication in the future. President Berman told me that a September meeting is anticipated depending on the availability of City and State Emergency Management personnel.

RIOC resident Board member Patrick Stewart has brought to my attention the possibility of initiating a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) on Roosevelt Island that would provide 25 hours of emergency training to Island residents. I hope Mr. Stewart, who heads the RIOC Operations and Public Safety Committees, will bring his proposal to the next Common Council meeting and that he will lead the effort to establish such a unit here.

The bottom line here is that our fifty-year-old lifeline to Queens is not scheduled for renovations to begin until 2012. Perhaps this near miss will convince DOT to move up their repairs.

And finally: this fall brings another RIRA election season. The Common Council will authorize Election and Nominating Committees to run the election and solicit candidates for each election district. It seems to me that the only way

RIRA members will comprehend the implications of the constitution and bylaws, old and new, is by applying them as Common Council members. I urge you to consider running for office. RIRA needs committed, thoughtful, energetic volunteers to maintain its programs and think up new ones. I urge you to vote in the November 2 elections. Last spring I wrote a Public Purpose Fund grant application for the money to provide election machines and services and I have learned that the RIOC Public Purpose Fund Committee will recommend to the full RIOC Board that this sum be provided for that purpose. Having helped produce an election in 2002 without those machines, which required ten times the volunteer labor to accomplish, I hope that the RIOC Board of Directors will approve the funds. Stay tuned.



**Matthew Katz**, President  
 Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.  
 e-mail: [MatthewKatz@rcn.com](mailto:MatthewKatz@rcn.com)

residents and will make repeated contact with the agencies involved to ensure that the needs of the Island are being met. The bridge and the emergency services agencies are not within the control of RIOC, but we will continue to contact the appropriate agencies to make sure that our unique needs are met.

Besides the opening and closing of the bridge, Roosevelt Island will be affected in another way as the convention approaches. The Police Department specifically requested that Southpoint be closed for the duration of the convention, from August 30 through September 2. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause and anticipate that the area can be reopened on September 3.

I am happy to say that there is also good news to report this month. The three plans developed for Southpoint by the landscape architects will be posted on the Island in early September. There will also be a public meeting where all residents and other interested parties can comment on the plans. For a first look at the plans, you can go on line to [www.markmorrison.com/roosevelt/pdf/concepts.pdf](http://www.markmorrison.com/roosevelt/pdf/concepts.pdf). This is a very exciting project and I look forward to seeing the final results.

There is more news to report regarding recreational areas on the Island. As many of you are aware, the tennis courts are being temporarily relocated during the construction of the Octagon project. The Hudson and Related Companies have agreed to have the temporary courts built on the site of what will be Southtown buildings 7, 8, and 9. We look forward to working with the Island's tennis players and Becker and Becker Associates (the developers of Octagon), to have acceptable temporary courts in place as soon as possible.

I hope that this summer has been a good one for everybody. I appreciate everybody's good wishes during my kidney stone episode and am happy to say that I think that it is finally behind me. I wish everybody a happy end of the summer. Enjoy the Labor Day weekend!



**Herbert E. Berman**, President  
 Roosevelt Island Operating Corp.  
 e-mail: [HBerman@rioc.com](mailto:HBerman@rioc.com)

## The RIOC Column



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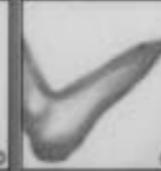
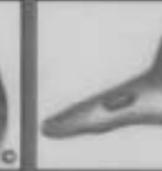
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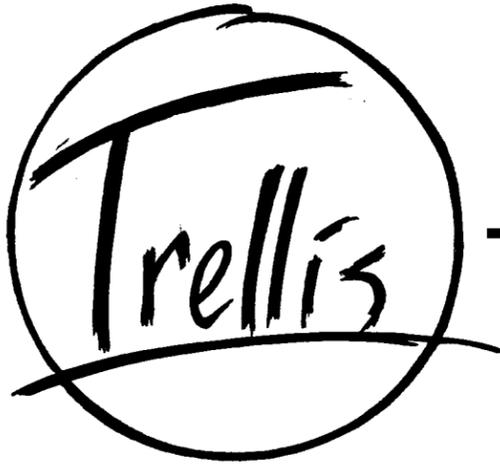
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## Bridge from page 1

responded by e-mail, "Firstly, we obtained two defibrillators and a number of Public Safety officers [are] trained in [their] use. Also, I am advised that EMS and other emergency services are notified before the bridge is lifted." RIOC Board member Patrick Stewart upbraided current RIRA President Matthew Katz for a comment quoted in a *WIRE* e-mail bulletin in which Katz decried the lack of a "working dock" on the Island. Stewart pointed to the disused oil dock on the east shore of the Island under the Queensboro Bridge as a possible point of access for emergency vessels, suggesting it is "working" in at least the sense that a vessel can be boarded there when absolutely necessary. Another member of the RIRA Common Council urged fellow representatives to the Council not to be distracted, by the quibble over the meaning of "working," from the issue of emergency coordination and coverage raised in Katz's e-mail to Berman.

The bridge is being lifted because the Coast Guard, in a security measure, is banning pleasure-boat passage through the west channel. (Their speedy craft, equipped with guns, can also be seen escorting commercial vessels in the west channel.) Tall-masted sailboats must use the east channel, passing under the Roosevelt Island Bridge.

### August 12 Specifics

**Bridge:** After the bridge got stuck during a morning lift, in what was at first thought to be an electrical problem, the bridge also got stuck open from 3:50 to 5:02 p.m. After that, DOT stopped traffic an additional six times for troubleshooting and tests, for three to seven minutes each time. (Source: DOT.)

**Subway:** At 6:16 p.m., Con Ed experienced a power failure at Elmhurst. The F train returned to service at 7:19 p.m.; other affected lines resumed trips at 7:58 p.m. (Source: MTA.)

Vehicles lined Main Street back to the Tramway during the August 12 bridge outage.

## Harvest Season



Nicholas Ortiz shows off his super-tomatoes in the community garden.

## Readers from page 1

In the reading program, children can read any books they wish, but Librarian Petra Kolokotronis also supplies a list of suggested books. For those interested, copies of that reading list are still available at the library.

This year the total number of books read by children was an impressive 1211, including 46 read by First-Prize-Winner Joel Talbot, who received a Pokemon clock donated by the Video Store. The 41 Young Adult Summer Reading Club participants read a total of 73 books. Roseanna Lopez, who read 12 of those books, won the Young Adult prize, a lovely picture frame donated by the Card and Gift shop. Staff member Jennifer Kanode also had gift books for many other readers. Ten year-old Elizabeth Shingenge, who read 20 books, said she loved the mysteries best. Her little brothers Gino, 6, and Erastus, 5, read *ABC&123*, and *Max and Ruby*, respectively.

The celebration began with "Magic with Matt." Fatima Sacko and Michal Gomes, ages 9 and 6, were among Matthew Holtzclaw's assistants. They accomplished many amazing card tricks and stunts like turning two clown noses into 8 noses.

There was much excitement and anticipation as Library Staff members Lateshe Lee

and Kariria Martinez called out the names of Summer Reading Club members and handed out the prizes – huge blue Reading Club bags filled with goodies such as crayons, erasers, paintboxes, finger puppets, posters, stickers, and animal inflatables.

A long row of children and adults lined up at the refreshment tables, presided over by Staff member Sabrina Jesram and Friend of the Library Dagmar Allen, to feast on fried chicken chunks from Trellis, slices from the Pizzeria, pork fried rice from the Chinese restaurant, plus potato chips, soft drinks, and Capri Sun fruit punch bought with donations from the Deli and Fish Store. The Library provided three very large sheet cakes, decorated in the theme of read, white and blue that said, "Congratulations to all Participants – Summer 2004."

Several young boys, including Brandon Chen, Jin Young Lee and Savas O., helped Library Staff member Mohinder Jaipaul clean up the amphitheater at the end of the highly successful Summer Reading Club celebration.

The Island Branch Library, at 524 Main Street, is open Monday and Wednesday, 12-8; Thursday, 11-6; Friday, 1-6; Saturday, 10-5. It's closed Tuesday and Sunday.

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## Parking from page 1

when I did a survey of Island parking.

By June of last year I had become seriously concerned and upset by the parking congestion on Roosevelt Island. It was near impossible, at almost any time of day or night, to find a place to stop and unload a car. I invested a day (Friday, June 20) in a parking survey that showed only 12 cars paying for parking – out of 119 on the street.

This year, I did the survey on Tuesday, August 17. Not much has changed.

Between 11:30 and 2:00, there were 97 vehicles parked on Main Street and River Road. Only 11 displayed valid short-term parking permits – the ones purchased by inserting quarters in one of the machines at the curb. Eighty-six vehicles were parked for free.

- 12 of the vehicles parking freely in 2004 were similarly parked in 2003, including Toyota DA5-89S. Of those 12, 5 were parked on River Road and appear to be management related.

- A full 22 displayed a dashboard handicapped identification, but 3 of these were clearly fraudulent (license plate number blanked out, for example). Of the rest, several have been observed being used by able-bodied people

- 10 displayed handicapped ID hanging from rear-view mirrors, but those are valid only for specially designated parking places, such as those in supermarket parking lots. They are not valid for general street parking, but the cars were unticketed.

- 8 were commercial vehicles apparently going about their business.

- 7 were parked on Main Street north of River Road and were mostly observed to belong to RIOC and Manhattan Park employees. (Why pay the \$71 it costs an employee to park in Motorgate if the street is available free?)

- 6 had various forms of apparently semi-official ID which seemed, on close inspection, to be of dubious validity. They included an undated ID for Corona Volunteer EMS.

- One car was ticketed, and it was being towed. (Last year there were no tickets.)

- In both 2004 and 2003, a survey of the north end of Motorgate indicated that it was less than 50% occupied, so the availability of parking space would not seem to be an issue.

Personally, I liked it in the old days, when the street was not continually clogged with traffic. You could stop and unload, but did not dare to even think about stopping on the east side of the street. It appears to me that we now seem to have an environment of patronage and favoritism in which anything goes and, while the original planning ideal of all Island-bound traffic terminating at the Motorgate plaza (see Historical Marker # 11, across the street from Motorgate) may not be practical, it would be nice to minimize the amount of on-Island traffic, and have the rules apply equally to all, rather than their applicability depending upon whom you know.

Perhaps, if the volume of traffic were reduced, we could save Main Street from the asphalt fate which its present state of neglect would suggest that it is destined. And the last thing we need is additional on-Island parking, as planned for the proposed development at Octagon, which will pour cars onto the Island, and leave Motorgate half empty.

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### Ownership from page 1

one-bedroom apartment is calculated at 3.5 rooms.) Thus, at current mortgage rates, after a down-payment and in addition to a personal mortgage, a two-bedroom apartment (calculated as 4.5 rooms) could face an additional monthly cost of \$450 to \$900. Before residents would be asked to make a decision on a buy-out deal, the cost of ground rent and increased taxes would have to be worked out and factored in.

These numbers suggest that housing-cost increases are in the future for residents of

both Island House and Westview – even without considering any increase in taxes, and any increase in ground rent. In each case, that would be in addition to down-payment costs and any personal held mortgage on individual apartments.

Progress toward a Sheldrake purchase, now considered a firmly contracted precursor to any tenant-sponsored buy-out, is likely to take time. Tenant committees appear ready to resist any change of ownership unless clear terms for tenant-sponsored buy-outs are firmly understood before the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) approves a transaction.

The RIOCR Board of Directors pledged, in agreeing to work with the owners of the two buildings on the ground-rent question, to attempt to find ways to protect residents unable to meet increased costs. The numbers generated in buy-out calculations suggest that, even without considering ground rent and taxes, that will be a considerable challenge.

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### Tramway Gets Refurbished Motor



During the scheduled Tramway maintenance that ended Monday, workers received the system's 900-horsepower motor after refurbishment work at General Electric, then winched it into the building through a back door at the Tram station, and into place to pull the haul cables.



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