

Next issue
in two weeks –
Sat., Jan. 28

The Main Street **WIRE**™

26th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Youth Program's Charlie DeFino Leaves After 15 Years in the Job Programs Will Continue; Funding Efforts Start Now

by Dick Lutz
with Elly Stanton

Charlie DeFino, who has headed the Roosevelt Island Youth Program for 15 years, is leaving Roosevelt Island.

"Labate won. Beck won. Patrick Stewart won. You can tell them they can dance on my grave," DeFino told *The WIRE* late last week. (Mary Beth Labate was, until recently, chair of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating

Corporation [RIOC]; Deborah Beck and Patrick Stewart, both Island residents, are members of that Board.)

DeFino, who has talked of leaving for some time, made a final decision to leave when the Youth Program (RIYP) failed to secure use of the building, most recently occupied by the Lilies Christian School, at the south end of Eastwood. He had plans for a new Youth Center and had secured funding amounting to nearly \$2 million. But a major part of the money was made available by City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, who represented Roosevelt Island until term-limited off the Council. (Jessica Lappin, who was on Miller's staff, was elected to the 5th District Council seat in November and took office this month.) With Miller gone, the funds are in jeopardy and may be gone, as well, though technically they remain in the City budget until summer.

sary financial support."

DeFino's quest for better space for the Youth Program dates back almost to his arrival on the Island. He has often cited a "promise" made by RIOC that the Lilies space – even before it was given to the Lilies Christian School by RIOC President Jerry Blue – would be given to the Youth Center. City funds for the Center have been held in City budgets for a number of years but, under City regulations, could be used only for space on which occupancy was assured for an extended period.

When the current RIOC Board asked for more data to support the Youth Center's request for the Lilies space – "for the 15th time," DeFino said – the Youth Program declined to provide the information, saying in a letter that over the years, it had been provided repeatedly. In a RIOC Board meeting, Kaufman said that RIOC President Herb Berman had told him flatly that the Youth Center would not get the Lilies space. When the RIOC Board considered the matter, members cited the failure to provide the requested information in refusing to consider awarding the space to the Youth Program. DeFino and Kaufman expressed a feeling that the request for data asked for an extreme level of detail; they felt the request was designed to discourage a response, at best.

With DeFino leaving, Youth Program Vice President Steve Kaufman sees an immediate need to line up funding for the coming year – beyond summer – in order to make the Youth Center post attractive to a good candidate. "I've made the calls," he said, indicating that he's already begun to work on the money. The Youth Program is supported with roughly a half-million dollars from the City, and major contributions from RIOC (about \$65,000) and the Island's housing companies (about \$70,000).

"I can't predict the [long-term] future," Kaufman said, "but I want to dispel the impression that if Charlie DeFino goes, the Youth Pro-

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Sheldrake Deal on Westview in Jeopardy Over Missed Payments

Lucido Meets With Tenant Group About Ownership Talks

by Dick Lutz

The Sheldrake Organization has missed two payments in its deal to acquire Westview. Its plan to lead the removal of the building from the Mitchell-Lama program by switching its mortgage to private hands may be at or near its end, according to sources.

Opher Pail, head of the Westview Tenants Committee that has been butting heads with Sheldrake over the privatization and resident-ownership question, told *The WIRE* on Thursday, "I'm very happy about it."

Pail and other committee members met in the City on Wednesday with Charles Lucido, whose company is still the owner of Westview along with a partner foundation.

Lucido responded to questions from *The WIRE* about the matter, saying, "The Sheldrake situation is not irreparably dead, but it looks like it is ending. It's in Sheldrake's hands to revive it." Meantime, he said, the missing of payments due in November and January means that his ownership group is able to discuss a resident-ownership plan with Westview tenants. Pail said, "We are looking forward to meeting with Chuck Lucido very soon again."

The Westview tenant organization had challenged plans to take the building out of Mitchell-Lama by pointing out that the Island master lease, under which New York State controls Roosevelt Island (which is City property), calls for specific proportions of housing affordability in Northtown Phase I (the "WIRE" buildings, consisting of Westview, Island House, Rivercross, and Eastwood) that would be distorted without a specific plan to preserve affordability.

Asked if the ownership group might now start working on a plan for resident ownership of Westview apartments, Lucido said, "That would be the natural route to take – to pursue a resident ownership plan. Westview has the Attorney General's permission to negotiate with the owner, but [before that letter and while Sheldrake was in the lead] I could never enter into

those discussions. In effect, [on Wednesday] I was giving them [the Westview tenant organization] an advance alert that this would be the time for us to talk. They are eager to discuss the possibilities." Lucido said an important next step is to prepare a comprehensive list of all the areas for discussion.

Island House

Meanwhile, Stuart Saft, the attorney representing Island House tenants in negotiations with Sheldrake told a meeting of residents on Wednesday night that, "The negotiations have been going the wrong way. Each time we

have a conversation, the conversation is a little less acceptable to all of us. So as of the moment, we do not have an agreement with Sheldrake."

He continued, "The last thing they attempted to do was weaken the protection we had [already] negotiated for [non-buying] tenants, and I've taken the position that that's unacceptable." He said that protection for renting residents must be negotiated first in such deals, because after a tenant own-

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The Island in Transition

Expected Credit Union Now Appears Less Likely

The Island may not get a new credit union, after all.

USAlliance Federal Credit Union has been attempting to rent the space occupied until September, 2004, by Montauk Credit Union, a \$57 million institution with only eight employees that left the Island after a seven-year effort to make a go of it here. USAlliance has a deposit base of \$500 million.

The hitch is a clause in the lease held by New York National Bank for its space in the Westview building. *The WIRE* asked the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation for the language in the lease, but it was not supplied by press time. Nonetheless, it reads, "Tenant (New York National Bank) acknowledges that Landlord (RIOC) has entered into a lease agreement with the Montauk Credit Union to provide depository and banking services on Roosevelt Island. Landlord agrees that it shall not enter into any lease agreements or permit any facilities owned or controlled by Landlord or affiliates of Landlord to enter into lease agreements, with a bank for a period of ten years unless this Lease is earlier terminated."

Chris Lazowy, a USAlliance spokesman, told *The WIRE* this week, "After we learned of a restrictive lease provision with New York National Bank being imposed by RIOC, we attempted to contact New York National Bank regarding several options, such as a waiver and a release, and even a possible assumption of their lease, in order to mitigate this restrictive lease provision. We have received no official response from them. Without this exclusionary clause being addressed by RIOC and New York National Bank at least in the form of a waiver and release, USAlliance cannot pursue the establishment of a branch office on Roosevelt Island." New York National Bank (\$130 million in assets) has recently been acquired by Yonkers-based Hudson Valley Holding Corporation (which also owns Hudson Valley Bank) and rechartered as a State (rather than National) bank, which may account for its failure to deal, thus far, with the USAlliance letter, which was sent in September. Though asked, RIOC has not provided any explanation for its failure to deal with the matter.

Meanwhile, Chase Bank is expected to open a branch in Southtown, though David Kramer of The Hudson Companies said on Tuesday that

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The new generation of hybrid-power Red Buses have arrived on the Island and will be in service by Valentine's Day, according to Herb Berman's RIOC Column (page 3).

DeFino from page 1

gram goes, too. That's not the case." For now, he said, residents can be confident that "everything will continue. The Youth Center will be open tomorrow as it was yesterday." Nonetheless, he said, "Let's not kid ourselves that this is a good thing. This is a real loss for the community. I say that as a member of the [Youth Center] Board and as a member of the community."

Kaufman added, "Charlie had a goal of building a beautiful Youth Center for the kids, and spent ten years raising the money. That's no small feat. And when he got that done, the building he had been promised didn't exist anymore." Kaufman acknowledged, as did DeFino, that DeFino would not be leaving were he able to build the Youth Center he has worked toward for years.

On Tuesday, DeFino sat down with *The WIRE* for a 35-minute interview that ultimately ran over 95 minutes. A full transcript of the conversation is available on *Website NYC10044*, at nyc10044.com, with this issue of *The WIRE*.

Asked "What went wrong?" DeFino responded, "Everything went wrong," but he wasn't referring to just the loss of the Lilies space. "There wasn't one person or one situation where I wasn't lied to from the beginning when I got here, to the end when I'm leaving."

DeFino described his first year at the Youth Center when, for example, he was confronted with a ten-year IRS audit within his first few days on the job.

More recently, he has come to feel that it's impossible to work with RIOC and its Board of Directors – or at least most members of that Board. "You can't beat RIOC. You're never going to beat RIOC. It's an institution that... It's like talking to someone who's dumb. Dumb. Low IQ. They'll never really totally get it... The Island clamored for years to get control of the [RIOC] Board and they have control of the Board [now]... But do they really have control of the Board? What are the Island residents [who constitute a majority of the RIOC Board] doing for the Island residents?"

Resident RIOC Board member David Kraut responded to this comment, when asked by *The WIRE*. "RIOC's role and effectiveness is certainly debatable and always on the table for criticism. But to say we are dumb or low IQ is the kind of gratuitous insult that we prefer to hear from Island residents and perhaps some elected officials. For an off-Island employee to show up

around here and say stuff like this is just kind of trashy and, worse, ignorant. Charlie's vision of himself was that he was some kind of savior for the community, but he tended to have blinders on in terms of his own constituency and never really saw the Island as a whole. Those of us who live in these buildings and greet each other in the hallways and sleep here at night and exchange information in the laundry rooms and so forth have a much bigger picture of this place than Charlie ever got."

But Kraut evidenced a soft spot for DeFino: "I'll miss him, because he did his basic job extremely well, and I'll even promise here to write him a recommendation sometime even though I – who hired him, supported his agency financially, and even paid his actual salary – have been called 'dumb' by him."

DeFino says he sees some of the problems here as structural: "On the Island, you have something that's very unique. It doesn't exist anywhere else. I can't really go to a [City] Councilman, the Assemblyman, the State Senator, the Borough President, or even the Mayor for help. Because even Mayor Bloomberg will be told by RIOC, 'Stick it. I'll call you when I need something.' Who else is in that kind of situation?" Asked if the political structure is a real handicap, he responded, "Is it handicapping? It's like putting you and me in the saddle on a \$5,000 claim horse and asking him to run a mile [with that weight]. The horse'd be dead out of the gate. It's like trying to win the World Series of Poker and the best hand you get are deuces. It's almost impossible here."

DeFino says, "I wish the Island and I wish the kids well." But he is concerned about the chances for its longer-term survival. "I just hope the people making the decisions going forward make better decisions than I think they're going to make. I really am not confident that the [Youth Center] board members and members of the community including RIOC are going to make those decisions [properly] going forward."

In particular, DeFino has specific ideas about the physical properties a youth center should have – ideas which Kaufman describes as "brilliant." At one point in recent years, the Youth Program negotiated with Charles Lucido, then the sole decision-maker for the corporations that owned Island House, to take over the Day Nursery space at the southwestern end of Island House. But that space was not taken. DeFino described the decision-

making process this way: "I had decided several years ago that RIOC was not going to live up to their agreement [to provide space for a Youth Center]. So when [the Day Nursery] left its space, I saw the opportunity to grab it up. We thought it was a good area. We'd get rid of the so-called 'Youth Center mentality' where it was all minority, because it'd be more of an open space – people could see in. It would have become a more integrated situation. But the major mistake was made by my [Youth Program] board. A board member sat on the deal for close to a year. Chuck Lucido [ultimately] decided he was going to sell [Island House] and, as long as they're negotiating with RIOC, you're never going to get the space."

The Youth Program's attention turned to different space – the former Lilies School, on two floors at the south end of Eastwood – but efforts to secure that space from RIOC failed. Speaking of two residents who serve on the RIOC Board, DeFino said, "Patrick Stewart and Ms. [Deborah] Beck should be ashamed of themselves as [RIOC] Board members. Quote me. They should be ashamed of themselves. Ms. Beck came to us, to Steve Kaufman, and told us she wanted to work with us to get that building. I met with her extensively over a two-week period. [She] was so convincing that she was going to get us [that] building. And she's probably now the most fervent person on the Board against it, outside of Patrick Stewart in his lucid moments."

DeFino is admired by members of the Youth Program Board for his off-Island politicking and his ability to secure funds for the Youth Program and Youth Center. When asked about where his weaknesses lie, or what he might have done differently, he talked about his passion for the job. "When I finally realized 9 or 10 years ago that the deals [for space] weren't done, I became very fervent and I alienated a lot of people by bringing the same point [repeatedly], because there's no historian now... In the beginning, I don't think they understood what was passion and what was arrogance. I think my passion was mistaken for arrogance. And then my passion *did* become arrogance, at some point... I just kept going on and on and, as the years went on, I was really the only one who knew the history. I was the only one who knew that [resident RIOC Board member] David Kraut presided over the meeting that gave away the first Youth Center and now makes believe... He has a letter that Jean Lerman gave that said we [would] get the building, and sits there at a [RIOC Board] meeting and acts like he doesn't know what's going on... Eventually, you keep saying to somebody, 'You know, you promised us the building,' and they've heard it five thousand times and they tell you, 'No, just forget that; let's talk about the new deal.' [My reaction is:] What new deal? There is no new deal."

Kraut told *The WIRE* that he has been a strong supporter of the Youth Program, presiding over RIOC's Public Purpose Funds Committee while it directed over \$250,000 to RIYP. "And I have continued to defend him despite his tendency to shoot his mouth off in all directions. As an example, I led the charge to approve over \$60,000 in RIOC funds as an administrative grant essentially to pay Charlie's salary for the year, after which he got upset over the space issue, said something insulting to us who had just approved his salary [funding], and stalked out." Kraut also disputed DeFino's rendering of the

Letters

To the Editor:

Since Eastwood has been taken out of Mitchell-Lama by Jerome Belson and investors, the rules for parking vehicles in the courtyards have been increasingly flaunted. Just inside of 576 Courtyard, behemoth SUVs and regular sedans have been plowing up the earth coming and going as they drive in and park free. Curiously, these vehicles are not seen on the weekends, and there are fewer at night, suggesting that the drivers work in some office here during the day and flee the Island at night. Public Safety apparently has been warned not to ticket or tow them.

If these culprits are allowed to park free and tear up the landscape, then why can't all residents of Eastwood park their cars at no charge in the courtyards? Pave over the little bit of grass that remains, paint white lines for parking spaces. Soon, there will be rusted hulks up on blocks; old refrigerators with flapping doors and white wringer washing machines cluttering up the place. Maybe a junkyard dog to menace residents.

Won't these ugly relics be a tasty sight for prospective tenants interested in paying the high market rents of Eastwood? Better to get rid of those illegally parked cars now rather than encouraging further blight.

Minburn

facts surrounding the Lerman letter. "I did not preside over the meeting. Jean Lerman did, in fact, promise him the Blackwell School building if he would accept the Eastwood space in the interim. I certainly supported this move, as one of my greatest concerns was that the Youth Center get out of its basement environment at the time." Kraut added, "I have not kept the existence of the Lerman letter a secret. In fact, I mentioned it at a RIOC Board meeting a few years ago and made clear my belief that RIOC had in fact promised that space to Charlie. At that time, then-President Robert Ryan pooh-poohed the letter with a sniff and a comment, effectively repudiating the agency's promise. So that part of Charlie's statement is the bunk."

Still on his own shortcomings, DeFino said, "In more recent years, my big failure has been communication skills. It came down to, anger is one thing, passion is one thing, and just total frustration and anger is something else." DeFino said the job made him sick for almost a year and half. "I could barely function," he said. At another point, in talking about leaving the job, he said, "Everything turns to anger eventually. I don't want to work on anger any more. I really don't. Who wants to work being angry?"

Asked if he just "ran out of patience" in waiting for Youth Center space, DeFino shook his head. "Patience would mean something's going to happen and I'm not willing to wait, so that would be overstating [it]." He went on to characterize his current feeling as "hopelessness."

DeFino expressed pride in the services the Youth Program has provided for the young people of Roosevelt Island. He regretted that his programs could do little to reduce the rate of teen-age pregnancy, but added proudly that through programs worked out with his friends and with Eastwood resident Ron Vass and former resident Lou Carbonetti, he has been able to "get jobs and careers" for young parents – an accomplishment that might break the chain of poverty.

"You look at your drop-out rates,

To the Editor:

What is wrong with Roosevelt Island? Are we going to the dogs?

Little by little, this Island is suffering a gradual change, and it's not for the better. It's not due to more construction, it's not about Mitchell-Lama, and it's not about congestion on the subway or Tram. Since we are having more dogs on the Island, our sidewalks are suffering the consequences, not to mention our shoes or wheelchairs.

It was to our dissolution that we were not permitted to have a dog in the apartment the day we signed our first lease. Maybe now things have changed because there are more people owning dogs and they blatantly parade with them up and down on Main Street. I have no problems with that, in fact somewhat I enjoyed looking at them, but to see people being so disrespectful that they are not cleaning after their dogs – it's just plain wrong and it should not be allowed with no exceptions.

I witnessed an old lady who has two little dogs, leaving the poop in the middle of the sidewalk with no care or consequence. Isn't there a law against this? Are there any exceptions on Roosevelt Island? Do senior citizens have any exceptions? If so, someone else should be cleaning after.

The Public Safety officers around the Island should be more careful, and pay attention when there are dogs around. When anyone is caught breaking the law, they must pay a fine. And if they want to avoid the fine, they should pick up after or train their dogs to poop inside their own apartments.

Tenants should also pay attention and immediately say something or bring notice, not only to the dog owner, but also to the nearest officers. This should be controlled or stopped before it gets out of hand because, who knows, inadvertently one might be stepping on something one does not like.

Gustavo Alori

your drug addiction, your unruly teens, your families that would have left" Roosevelt Island were it not for the Youth Center's programs... "A lot of families on this Island [are] barely getting by, but they stay because they want their children to be in a safe environment. We have helped to maintain that. It would have been completely non-existent here" without the Youth Center, DeFino asserted. Speaking of the value he feels his programs have added to the Island, DeFino added, "I think every housing company on this Island has not realized the effect we have had on their ability to privatize."

Letters Policy

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

Preferred method of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file), 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, but allow extra time before deadline for typesetting. 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.

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Letters received after deadline are considered on a space-available basis.

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The new year brings changes and new opportunities for Roosevelt Island, and nowhere are those changes more prominent than in our commitment to enhancing the environment on our Island and beyond.

The most visible changes will be the fleet of four new Red Buses that will soon be circulating around the Island carrying residents and visitors. The new buses are state-of-the-art hybrids, powered by a combination of electricity and gasoline that will dramatically reduce fuel costs

The RIOC Column

and the pollution produced by traditional combustion engines. The interior configuration will make the new buses fully handicapped-accessible, and modern fare boxes will reject slugs and foreign coins.

The buses are a major investment for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, with the bulk of the cost covered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and Manhattan Park. They are also in keeping with the State's commitment to lowering energy usage and cleaning up the environment, as outlined last week by Governor Pataki in his State of the State message.

The buses have already arrived, and our drivers and mechanics are training on their new systems. We expect the buses – which will still cost 25 cents a ride – to make their street debut in time for Valentines Day next month, so if anyone wants to get married on one of our inaugural buses, now is a good time to call us.

The new buses will also have routes extended to The Octagon, the soon-to-be-occupied 500-unit rental buildings that have themselves been recognized by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department of Environmental Protection for state-of-the-art "green" construction standards.

With the restored historic Octagon Tower as an anchor, two 14-story buildings are designed to be 35 percent more energy-efficient than State standards. The buildings' environmentally friendly aspects range from the building materials themselves to high-efficiency boilers, to EnergyStar appliances. Tenants should find their utility bills more than 20 percent lower as a result of the "green" standards.



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

In addition, the largest array of rooftop solar cells in any residential building in the City is designed to provide 50 kilowatts of electricity, enough to provide power for The Octagon's common areas.

The environmental consciousness extends even to the marketing plan by the developer, Becker and Becker, which is using hybrid Prius cars to transport prospective tenants to and from the buildings.

The first tenants – our new neighbors – were scheduled to begin looking at apartments this week. Occupancy is expected to begin in April. Final restoration of the Octagon Tower is scheduled for May and the entire project is slated for completion by June.

In the buses, and in The Octagon, we remain committed to the principle that environmental progress is not only good public policy, but good business as well.

So Happy New Year. The future is now.

As we commence the New Year, it might be worthwhile to review what went right and wrong in our neighborhood in the last year, in the hopes that we can do better in 2006.

On the upside, Eastwood residents struck a deal with their building owner. While some folks were moved into smaller apartments, at least all are assured that they can continue to remain in their homes without the fear of dramatic rent increases. This deal was the result of hard work and a willingness to negotiate on both sides. If only the new owners of Island House and Westview can approach the negotiations with their tenants in the same spirit, then this could be a very good year.

RIOC can help by offering reasonable ground rents as well, as an incentive for a deal that keeps some shred of affordable housing on the Island.

RIOC made a fair effort in beginning to patch dangerous maintenance areas that were allowed to deteriorate over past years. RIOC finally replaced the elevators at the south end of Motorgate. But, alas, there are no plans currently to replace the north-end elevators, due to a disagreement with their co-owners at Manhattan Park. We should remind RIOC frequently that while part of the upkeep of Motorgate is the responsibility of Manhattan Park, RIOC has overall responsibility for maintaining every part of this Island, so they need to enforce whatever agreement they have in place to be sure that the people who need that northern elevator get equal service. However, on the upside, they did mention initiatives in their last operations meeting to repair cracks in that structure and to add security cameras. They also indicated that the first phases to stabilize and then refurbish Blackwell House will commence this spring. And they have ordered City-standard lights to



Steve Marcus, President Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
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replace the ones along the promenade. With some luck, this might be the first summer in about eight years where we'll be able to take an evening stroll to the Lighthouse in something other than total darkness.

Four new buses, approved for purchase in 2001, have finally arrived. They use fuel-saving hybrid technology and, when they go into service in the next few weeks, they will be warmly appreciated.

And let's not forget the new garbage cans and planters. RIOC approved \$80,000 for these amenities last spring. Before they put in the order however, they may want to refer to an article in *The New York Times* of January 9 about a series of letters from New Yorkers to Mike Bloomberg with suggestions on what the City ought to do in the upcoming year.

Here's one excerpt:

"NYC has 25,000 wire-mesh litter baskets," responded John J. Doherty, sanitation commissioner. "these baskets generally cost \$100 each and are easy to service..." We also have had Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) purchase high-end litter baskets that are enclosed and have only a small opening on the top that prevents misuse. These baskets, costing anywhere from \$400 to \$700, are maintained by the BID but are serviced by Sanitation.

In spite of these numbers, RIOC has somehow managed to find trash cans costing \$2,000 each. While I think we all applaud doing whatever is necessary to keep our streets litter-free, why in the world would RIOC spend \$80,250 for 40 trash cans? Maybe our garbage won't stink, but this deal sure does.

Also, residents should keep an eye out for the responses to the RFIP's that were issued in September. Bidding closed on November 30 so we should hear something soon about who bid on what and see what the future holds for more development on the Island. This is basically a plan that will wreck the Island. In a last minute fire sale before a new administration is elected, RIOC proposes to sell off the area east of Coler Hospital, Motorgate garage, all the commercial property on Main Street, the area occupied by the power plant, Sportspark and the tennis facility, and part of the northern section of Southpoint Park. They have put this plan in motion without even a single minute of public discussion, and without the input of at least three of the Board Members with whom I have spoken. RIOC's stated position is that there's nothing final here. They only asked developers for an "expression of interest". Let's take them at their word and let's take it one step further. If they want developers who don't live here to "express their interest", let's assume they also want the residents to "express theirs". Let RIOC know we don't want to lose any more parkland. Contact your state legislators, Senator Jose Serrano and Assemblyman Pete Grannis and tell them that we want a plan we can live with, before the Island gets hacked up and sold to whatever cronies the Governor owes a favor to.

This column, as well as a majority of residents, has frequently been critical of the way RIOC fails to manage our Public Safety Department, but that is not the fault of the officers who serve us, the majority of whom are diligent and courteous. Particular and heartfelt thanks to Public Safety Officer Raphael Payne, who responded immediately to a frantic call from a resident with an unconscious infant who had stopped breathing. Officer Payne raced across a courtyard and up four flights of steps, cleared the baby's breathing passage and administered mouth to mouth resuscitation until the baby coughed and began breathing again. This is public service at its highest and noblest order.

Sadly, another great public servant – Charles DeFino – is leaving his post as Director of the Roosevelt Island

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

An Evening of Rumi Poetry, with Music and Film, including a film shot on Roosevelt Island, **today (Sat., Jan. 14)**, 4:00 p.m., Gallery RIVAA. Suggested donation, \$5.▷



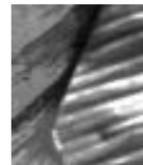
– The Coming Week –

Tram running hourly **Tue., Jan. 17** and **Wed., Jan. 18**, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Community Board 8 full Board meeting, **Wed., Jan. 18**, 6:30 p.m., Memorial Sloan Kettering auditorium, 430 East 67th Street. Includes discussion of plans for a Lifespire residential alternative for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled persons at 40 River Road. For information, see cb8m.com, e-mail info@cb8m.com, or call **212-758-4340**.

Book Discussion Group, **Thur., Jan. 19**, 6:30 p.m., at the Library. *Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

◁**Opening Reception for Double Take**, a one-artist show by Esther Piaskowski Cohen, **Sat., Jan. 21**, 6-9 p.m., Gallery RIVAA. Gallery hours 6-9 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.



– Future Events –

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Jan. 28, 2006**.

(To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Jan. 19; decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Tue., Jan. 24; they are due Thur., Jan. 26. **Future issues:**

Feb. 11, Mar. 4, Mar. 18, Apr. 8, Apr. 22, May 6, May 20, June 3, June 17, July 1, July 29, Aug. 26, Sept. 9, Sept. 23, Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, Dec. 16. **News**

phone, 212-826-9055; urgent matters **917-617-0449**. Phone for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**. To list your organization's Island-related event in this column, e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions. There is no charge for such listings.

Be a Star Music and Talent Show, **Sun., Jan. 29**, 3:00-6:00 p.m., a fundraiser for the Eastwood Building Committee Legal Fund.

Medicare Part D Seminar on Roosevelt Island, **Tue., Jan. 31**, 7:00 p.m., conducted by Ellen Polivy. To register, e-mail your name, address, and phone number to ELPolivy@gmail.com or call **212-362-2076**. Free.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed., Feb. 1**, 8:00 p.m., Good Shepherd Community Center. Meetings begin with an opportunity for members of the public to make presentations to the Council.

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

Senior Center

Monday

9:30, **Yoga**
10-11:30, **English as 2nd Language**
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
1:00, **Tai Chi**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)

Tuesday

10:00, **Chinese Massage**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
2:00, **Painting and Sculpting**
7:30, **Games (RISA)**
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Heart Health Care**
10:30, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

Thursday

10:00, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**

Friday

9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events

Mon., Jan. 16, 6:00, Martin Luther King celebration
Wed., Jan. 18, Atlantic City trip

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Youth Program. Charlie took over a moribund organization in the early '90s and built an impressive array of scholastic, athletic and recreational programs that have benefited our kids immensely. Charlie has extraordinary skills as a fundraiser, and has wonderful vision for creative and successful programs. Like many of you, I am indebted to Charlie for the years of indelible memories my family has had as participants and spectators in the Youth Center's many programs. We wish him all the best in his new position, thank him for his many years of service, and hope he'll come back to visit often.

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Housing from page 1

ership plan is worked out, incentives decrease for the owner to discuss such protections.

Saft told an audience of about 60 Island House tenants, "We know that the closing of the acquisition of the property [by Sheldrake] was put off until after the end of the year, and has been put off again. We don't feel it's necessary to chase after Sheldrake in order to make a deal if the deal is not an acceptable one. They know that we have alternative courses of action and we know there are alternative courses. The [tenant's] board and I have negotiated in good faith, but we still don't have something we feel is acceptable to bring back to the tenants. We're just not there yet."

Charles Lucido, who also heads the consortium that owns Island House, told *The WIRE* that Sheldrake's failure to meet payment schedules for Westview does not affect Island House directly, though "the situ-

ations are similar." He said his arrangements with Sheldrake involve separate contracts – a separate set of terms for each building.

Saft presented few specifics in the Island House meeting. In fact, he ended his formal presentation by saying, "I think I've been sufficiently vague for one evening." He had explained that, in a public forum, he didn't want to reveal anything that might adversely affect negotiations. He said that on the tenants' behalf, he is holding off on assisting Sheldrake in any discussions with the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (the Board of which must approve any extension of a ground lease for buildings on the Island). "If you were a pessimist or paranoid you might think that it's possible that part of the negotiation had to do with getting our cooperation in negotiations with various State agencies, but that was not something we were prepared to do until we had a signed agreement that was acceptable to the tenants."

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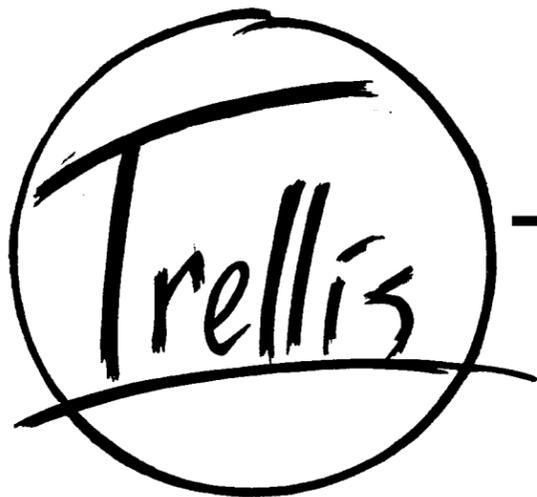
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The Island Arts Music Center was founded by Director of RIVER MUSIC, Robin Russell, trained at Juilliard and Harvard (B.A. in Music). With over 20 years teaching experience with private students, he has been on the faculty of the Turtle Bay Music School,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



2006

It's another year in which we intend to provide Roosevelt Islanders and their guests with a warm and pleasant place to get together, be it for a meal, just dessert, or coffee. We can also provide take-out and delivery, of course, if you prefer to curl up at home for a long conversation.

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Church of Good Shepherd Vicar Gets Formal Installation

The Rev. Lewis C. Johnson will be formally installed as Vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd in February. The ceremony will be performed by the Bishop of the the Episcopal Diocese of New York, the Right Reverend Mark S. Sisk, on Sunday, February 12, at 4:00 p.m.

Fr. Johnson, who has been at the Church of the Good Shepherd since June, is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and the Blanton-Peale Graduate Institute, a center for psychoanalytic training in Manhattan. He has served parishes in the City while maintaining a private practice as a psychotherapist for over 20 years. He also serves as a field consultant for the diocese, providing self-study and conflict resolution for churches. He resides in Riverdale. His wife, Dorothea Crites, is also a psychotherapist, and a minister in the United Methodist Church. They have a nine-year-old son, Peter.

The Church of the Good Shepherd is an ecumenical mission of the Episcopal Church, which has maintained a presence on the Island since the 19th Century, when the Chapel of the Good Shepherd was erected to serve residents of what was then named Welfare Island.



Gerald M. Lieber

Gerald M. Lieber, who, as Roosevelt Island Operating Corp's chief of engineering for 14 years, was involved in developing and maintaining several key elements of the Island, died suddenly in his Island apartment on December 16. He had suffered from several medical conditions for some time. A longtime resident of Rivercross, he was 69.

Mr. Lieber was a member of the RIOC staff from 1984 until his retirement in 1998. Among the many projects, those that drew his greatest attention were the seawall, the Tram and the Meditation Steps.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Lieber had worked with General Dynamics and General Electric on space- and defense-related projects including the Atlas, Saturn V, and Titan rocket programs, and the Minuteman missile system. Subsequently he helped direct construction of the Altoona, Pennsylvania, hospital, and remained as director of engineering.

He was born in Brooklyn, attended Brooklyn Technical High School and received a Mechanical Engineering degree from the CCNY School of Engineering.

He was a Mason and, for many years, an active member of the Model Plane Flying Club. He also was an active volunteer with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, New York City Ballet, and Tickets-To-Go for Hospital Audiences.

He is survived by his children, David, Sondra, and Alexander; four grandchildren, Abraham, Shira, Amanda, and Emma; and a sister, Rhoda Friedman. His wife, Sheila, died in 1995.

Mr. Lieber was interred with graveside services in Knollwood Cemetery in Brooklyn on December 18.



Eleanor Lindauer

Eleanor Lindauer died on December 27 at age 87. She had lived at 580 Main Street from 1978 to 2000.

She was a retired speech therapist in the school system, as well as radio actress in her teens. She loved theater and travel, and was always on the go. She retired to Connecticut to be closer to her children.

She is survived by her son, Fred Lindauer, and Ann Dressler, her daughter. Condolences can be sent to Ann Dressler, 27 Whitney Lane, Glastonbury, CT. 06033.



Credit Union from page 1

"nothing's been finalized, including Chase" for the commercial spaces on the plaza in Southtown.

Lazowy added: "We have done everything in our power to provide credit union service to the residents of Roosevelt Island, but it seems nothing has worked. Therefore, unless substantial changes can be made to assist us in this endeavor, we must render this project closed. We would like to thank everyone who assisted us in this attempt, and wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year."



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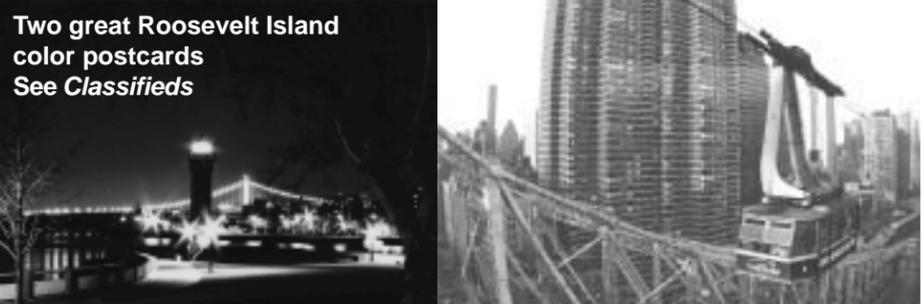
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