



Eye on the Street: Sewers
Locals weigh in on the ongoing
wastewater debate in Suffolk County
A4



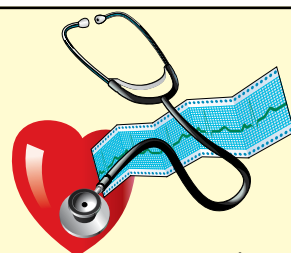
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'NEVER FORGET'
Smithtown honors its 9/11 fallen
— A13

Members of the U.S. armed services reflect during the Town of Smithtown's annual 9/11 memorial service Monday afternoon. Photo by Raymond Janis



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HUNTINGTON

Smithtown school district students return for new school year

Students in the Smithtown Central School District returned for the new school year on Wednesday, Sept. 6.

SCHOOL From kindergarten to middle school to high school, students brought their smiles and their Chromebooks.



SCSD students attend the first day of school Sept. 6.
Photos courtesy SCSD



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Eye on the Street : Residents and visitors generally favor sewers

BY CAROLYN SACKSTEIN
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In downtown Port Jefferson and Port Jefferson Station, people were asked whether they favor expanding local sewer districts. We also asked if their vote this November would hinge upon a candidate's stated position on groundwater pollution or wastewater infrastructure expansions. Some respondents refused to discuss their vote, while others said

they were not single-issue voters, maintaining that their decisions at the ballot box would factor in various issues. Many of those approached for comment declined to speak, saying that they did not feel sufficiently informed about the ongoing wastewater debate in Suffolk County to provide a reasoned response. All but one of the respondents supported reducing groundwater contamination and expanding sewer access. Their comments follow:



**Katherine Cahill,
Belle Terre**

"I think there are pros and cons. I am happy to have the water protected. That is very important to me on Long Island, of course. Then there is the political side: How long is it going to take? What is the traffic congestion going to be like? What are the implications to other areas other than just the groundwater?"

"Overall, I think I am for that, assuming we can get sewers put in that can manage the water that goes into them adequately, and it doesn't just get put into the ocean as raw sewage." Cahill expressed a need for treatment facilities so that clean, treated water is released. She explained that she does not have access to sewers in Belle Terre. "Water management is a very serious issue up there. The water is eroding the cliff, and we live in a protected environment for the birds and the animals up there. So, the fact that it is not being managed adequately is a very big problem here." When asked if she thinks sewers might help, she responded, "I do. There is always a downside. The most important thing is managing what happens once the sewers collect the water. Where does it go? How is it going to be treated? How is it going to affect sea life? We are starting to see dead whales from the impact of the windmills."



**Derrick Hines, Nova
Scotia, Canada**

Hines sailed here with his wife and their labradoodle, Tessa. When we asked how the Maritimes deal with sewage, he replied, "Actually, we have septic plants, which make sure any of the sewage going out into the harbor has been cleaned before it is dumped." When asked if Nova Scotia has any septic tanks or cesspools, Hines said, "Yes, more in the rural areas, where it is too expensive to connect to the sewer systems. [They] have their own septic systems [not a cesspool] where it is pumped out and dealt with afterward."



**Wendy Brame,
South Shore of
Suffolk County**

Brame is a North American Native woman descended from the Shinnecock and Mohican tribes. When asked if protecting groundwater and expanding sewers in Suffolk County would influence her vote, she replied, "Yes. The sewer infrastructure would impact the environment and the well-being of the people who live here in the community. It is important that we have clean water and fresh air, just an overall better quality of life."



**Kathy Ferraro,
Coram**

Ferraro discussed the impact of stormwater on the sanitary system. "When you come here after a bad rainfall, you've got to watch where you walk, it stinks." We asked if she was on a sewer line in Coram. She replied, "Yeah, we have city water, and our sewer is right there on the corner where we live." Ferraro was skeptical of a new sewer system on Route 112 in Port Jeff Station, saying, "To put in a new sewer system, I'm not sure. I'm not too supportive. I think it's going to be a hot mess."



TOWNLINERAIL: WHAT'S PROPOSED

Townline Rail is a proposed alternative to trucking locally generated incinerator ash from the Huntington-Smithtown waste-to-energy facility as well as Construction & Demolition debris off Long Island once the Brookhaven landfill is closed.

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Wastewater infrastructure casts shadow over Suffolk County elections

BY SAMANTHA RUTT
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

As the local election season intensifies, Suffolk County's wastewater infrastructure has now become the defining policy issue, with residents and environmentalists demanding immediate action to address what they consider an environmental crisis.

Water quality of Long Island's coveted waterways is currently suffering as the county's wastewater infrastructure deteriorates rapidly. Much of the system was built decades ago and has not been adequately upgraded to meet the demands of the growing population, critics say.

"Clean water is crucial to the health of our families, the lifeblood of our economy and central to our way of life," said businessman Dave Calone, Democratic candidate for Suffolk County executive running against Town of Brookhaven Supervisor Ed Romaine (R). "Unfortunately, our water quality is at an all-time low, and we need to act now to protect it."

Local officials, residents and environmentalists have voiced concerns over the issue. Adrienne Esposito, executive director of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, said, "Suffolk County Legislators have an ethical and moral obligation to protect our drinking and coastal water resources."

County Water Quality Restoration Act

The Suffolk County Water Quality Restoration Act, a plan to restore the county's water quality, includes two bills that would create a fund to restore clean water by connecting homes and businesses to sewers and finance clean water septic system replacements.

"The need for an overall plan for wastewater infrastructure has been well-recognized for more than 60 years," said Peter Scully, deputy county executive for administration.

Earlier this year, Scully had spearheaded a proposed 1/8 penny sales tax initiative to finance wastewater infrastructure. This proposal was rejected by the county Legislature in July, setting the stage for a contentious election season over this issue [See story, "Suffolk County Legislature recesses, blocks referendum on wastewater fund," July 27, TBR News Media].

"Tragically, the Legislature doesn't consider this a priority and has refused to let the public vote on this plan," Esposito said. "Letting the public vote on a clean water referendum is good policy and good for democracy. It is deeply disturbing that the legislators support neither of those objectives."

Impact on elections

The Republican vote to recess has met with fierce opposition from county Democrats, who are using the wastewater controversy to highlight differences in platforms.

"Republicans did not vote to put the referendum on the ballot," said Keith Davies, Suffolk County Democratic Committee campaign manager. "It is clear that Republicans chose not to trust voters to make their own decisions. In our opinion, it was the wrong decision."

Responding to these charges, county Legislator Stephanie Bontempi (R-Centerport), who is defending her 18th Legislative District seat against pediatrician Eve Meltzer-Krief (D-Centerport), indicated that her caucus is avoiding a rush to judgment.

"Rushing to pass legislation that is flawed and that will raise our taxes is simply irresponsible and not what our residents deserve," Bontempi said. "Holding off with a referendum for a couple of months will certainly not lead to the end of Long Island, like some fearmongers like to claim."

Many of the county's wastewater treatment plants, pipelines and pumping stations are well past their intended lifespans, representing a growing risk for sewage leaks, overflows and contamination of local waterways and bays.

Meltzer-Krief warned that this could have devastating consequences for the region and its fragile ecosystems, including its renowned coastal areas and marine life.

"The quality of our waterways and bays here in Suffolk County is currently the poorest it has ever been," she said. "The main cause is nitrogen runoff from outdated cesspools and septic systems which flows into our waters and triggers potentially toxic

algal blooms which deprive marine life of the oxygen they need to survive."

Research from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency indicates that nitrogen from sewage is suffocating Long Island's bays and harbors, contaminating drinking water and causing fish kills and algal blooms.

"Thankfully, scientists know how to reverse this troubling and urgent environmental concern and clean our waters," Meltzer-Krief said.

But, she added, "It is the responsibility of our county legislators to follow the science and protect our children from the toxins in the water by securing funding for the recommended clean water infrastructure."

While local officials and environmental organizations have been sounding the alarm for years over aging infrastructure, progress has been slow and funding for these projects has often fallen short of what is required.

Restoring clean, healthy water requires drastically reducing nitrogen pollution from its primary source — Suffolk County's approximately 360,000 nitrogen-polluting cesspools and septic systems.

"Once the legislation has been amended to properly address our wastewater infrastructure, the voters will be able to decide," Bontempi said. "The Republican majority at the Suffolk County Legislature wants clean water, too."

Suffolk County elections will take place Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Suffolk Republicans cannot wash hands of clean water issue

With November elections rapidly approaching, both sides of the political aisle are tense.

All 18 seats on the Suffolk County Legislature are up for election, and with the end of County Executive Steve Bellone's

PERSPECTIVE (D) tenure, the county executive seat will be open for the first time since 2011. Unfortunately, the political desperation to take unilateral control over Suffolk County has led to dirty tricks and unethical behavior.

In late June, the Republican majority in Suffolk County was given the option to vote on a measure which, if passed, would have placed a clean water referendum on the ballot in November. The referendum would give voters the option to approve a negligible sales tax increase — 12 cents for every \$100 dollars in spending — and critically, gain access to available state and federal funding.

This was particularly important as voters in 2022 overwhelmingly approved a \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act to protect

the environment [See story, "NYS offers possibilities of \$4.2B bond act for Suffolk County, urges public input," Aug. 31, TBR News Media], with almost 64% of Suffolk County residents voting to pass the funding. Passing a referendum would allow Suffolk County to access some of these funds.

Clean water infrastructure would greatly improve our drinking water and protect our beaches and natural spaces. In addition, the funding would create new jobs for Suffolk County.

The Republican majority, led by Presiding Officer Kevin McCaffrey (R-Lindenhurst), refused to allow residents to vote on approving the referendum. Despite the efforts of labor unions in their efforts to create jobs for working-class individuals, as well as pleading by environmentalists and advocates, the county Legislature tabled the resolution [See story, "Suffolk County Legislature recesses, blocks referendum on wastewater fund," July 27, TBR News Media].

While McCaffrey made various excuses for his refusal to allow



By Skyler Johnson

Suffolk County to vote on the issue, the true reason was clear: The Republican majority knew that if the referendum was on the ballot, Democratic voters would be driven to the polls in November to approve it.

The blowback was immediate. People of all political parties voiced their disapproval for the Legislature's blatantly political action. Despite this, McCaffrey let the deadline to

approve the referendum pass.

As residents continued to grow angry, McCaffrey decided to make an attempt to suppress arguments being made by Democratic candidates. Last week, he called a special meeting of the Legislature to approve a December special election for the referendum — a special election which would now cost taxpayers over \$2 million to hold.

However, the special meeting of the Legislature was abruptly canceled. While McCaffrey sought to cleanse the record of his heinous political malpractice, he forgot to consider one key problem: The dissent of his own caucus.

The Republican majority refused to vote positively on the issue. With all six Democrats pledging support for the referendum, McCaffrey could not persuade even three members of his 11-seat majority to vote "yes," and the special meeting was canceled.

Suffolk County residents now bear the consequences of these political games. Tens of thousands of homes throughout the county are without adequate septic systems.

Without this funding, these systems will continue to leach toxins into our water — water that we cook with, our kids bathe in and our pets drink.

The failure by Republican leadership to come up with a plan to address Suffolk's infamously poor drinking water quality is inexcusable. The Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting our drinking water, estimates that those served by the Suffolk County Water Authority are ingesting numerous separate contaminants.

In a county with the highest breast cancer rates in the state — rates significantly higher than the rest of the nation — we cannot afford McCaffrey and his Republican majority's dirty games.

McCaffrey cannot wash his hands of this issue. It is his responsibility to address his majority's failure of government. If he refuses to do so, voters must take this neglect of duty into account when they cast their ballots on Nov. 7.

Skyler Johnson is the chair of the Suffolk County Young Democrats.

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POLICE
BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Pedestrian injured in Lake Ronkonkoma

Suffolk County Police Fourth Squad detectives are investigating a motor vehicle crash that seriously injured a pedestrian in Lake Ronkonkoma on Sept. 6.

Daphne Vaders was walking southbound on Hawkins Avenue when she was struck by a southbound 2019 Jeep Renegade that was attempting to turn right on Express Drive North at 6:14 a.m. Vaders, 52, of Ronkonkoma, was transported to Stony Brook University Hospital for treatment of serious injuries. The driver of the Jeep, Gary Wagner, 73, of Lake Ronkonkoma, was not injured.

The Jeep was impounded for a safety check. Detectives are asking anyone with information on the crash to call 631-854-8452.

Chiropractor endangered welfare of child

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on Sept. 12 that Ronald Bernardini, 65, of Smithtown, a chiropractor at a Lake Ronkonkoma medical office, pleaded guilty to Endangering the Welfare of a Child, after inappropriately touching a 16-year-old female patient during a chiropractic examination.

As part of his plea, Bernardini was required to surrender his license to practice as a chiropractor. An order of protection was also filed against Bernardini, in favor of the minor female victim.



Ronald Bernardini

Patchogue man pleads guilty to burglaries

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on Sept. 8 that Christopher Volpe, 44, of Patchogue, pleaded guilty to Burglary in the Third Degree for leading and being a part of a trio that burglarized five Suffolk County Dunkin' Donuts franchises in East Setauket, St. James, Smithtown, Holbrook and Farmingville in 2023 and 2023 along with Michael Gruber, 54, of Medford and Kristen Osmolia, 52, of Holbrook.



Christopher Volpe

Visit www.tbrnewsmedia.com/police for more press releases from the Suffolk County Police.

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers offers a **cash reward** for information that leads to an arrest. Anyone with information about these incidents can contact Suffolk County Crime Stoppers to submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-800-220-TIPS.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this woman? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for petit larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public's help to identify and locate the woman who allegedly stole health and beauty products, clothing, and vitamins from Target, located at 265 Pond Path in South Setauket, on Sept. 4 at approximately 3 p.m. The stolen merchandise has a value of approximately \$330.

Selden motorcyclist killed

Suffolk County Police Seventh Squad detectives are investigating a motorcycle crash that killed a Selden man on Sept. 9 in Manorville.

Henry L. Zdenek Jr. was riding a 2005 Harley-Davidson motorcycle southbound on Clancy Road, near Hampton Vista Drive, when he crossed into the northbound lanes in an attempt to pass other motorcycles at 10:28 a.m. Zdenek swerved back into the southbound lane to avoid oncoming traffic and struck a 2004 Harley-Davidson being ridden by Rosalind Zayas.

Zdenek, 59, of Selden, was transported via ambulance to Peconic Bay Medical Center in Riverhead where he was pronounced dead. Zayas, 62, of Central Islip, was taken to the same hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

Anyone with information on the crash is asked to call 631-852-8752.

— COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

Local hospitals see increased accidental pediatric pot consumption

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Children are getting into their parents' supplies of edible marijuana, leading to an increase in illnesses and emergency room visits.

Stony Brook Pediatric Hospital treated 14 children in 2022 and 13 in 2021 — up from

HEALTH about one or two a year before 2020.

"In the last two years, we've seen very high numbers," said Dr. Candice Foy, a pediatric hospitalist at Stony Brook Children's Hospital.

The accidental consumption of marijuana among children has increased throughout the country. A study published in the journal "Pediatrics" indicates that calls to poison control centers for children five and under for the consumption of edibles containing tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC — the main ingredient in the cannabis plant — rose to 3,054 in 2021 from 207 in 2017, with over 95 percent of the children finding gummies in their homes.

Amid an increase in adult use of edible gummies containing marijuana, children of a wide range of ages have mistaken them for candy, leading to symptoms that trigger medical concerns from their parents.

Children with THC in their system can have low blood pressure, high heart rates, lethargy and sleep



These images reveal the striking similarities between real candy and edible products containing THC. Photos from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services

for prolonged periods, Foy said.

One child required a machine to help breathe.

Dr. Jennifer Goebel, emergency room doctor at Huntington Hospital, said the hospital recently saw children who were dizzy and not acting appropriately.

When pediatric patients accidentally consume pot edibles, doctors also need to consider what else they might have in their system,

Goebel added.

Significant exposure can "lead to severe hyperactive behaviors, slowed breathing and even coma," Dr. Gregson Pigott, Suffolk County Health Commissioner, explained in an email.

The health effects of marijuana can last 24 to 36 hours in children. The response may vary based on the amount ingested, the size of the child and metabolic factors, Pigott added.

Unlike naloxone, which health

care providers can administer to counteract the effect of narcotics, doctors don't have the same resources available with accidental marijuana ingestion.

Doctors opt for supportive care. A nauseous child could receive anti-nausea medication, while a child sleeping and not eating or drinking can receive intravenous fluids.

Typically, doctors observe children who consume marijuana for several hours, often releasing them to return home once the symptoms subside.

Hospitals are required to call child protective services during such an incident. Investigators usually find that such consumption is incidental, as parents sometimes leave their edibles in the wrong location.

"A lot of times, CPS will go in there" and, after checking the home, "will close the investigation," Foy said.

Doctors and local officials urged people who consume such edibles themselves either not to keep them in the house or to put them in places far from other candy or food, such as in an inaccessible spot in the back of a closet.

"The Department's Office of Public Information has issued warnings about keeping edible gummies out of the reach of children through its social media channels," Pigott explained in an email. "In addition, the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports and our partners in prevention promote safe keeping of all THC products, including edibles,

out of reach and in secure child safe storage," such as a lock box.

Goebel cautioned that children are adept at getting to products that appeal to them, mainly if the packaging makes them look like candy.

Many of the pot-related medical issues are "accidental," Goebel said.

Hospitals have seen a range of children with marijuana symptoms, from as young as one year old to 11, with the vast majority falling between two and four years old, Foy said.

"I don't think it's something that a lot of people think about the same way they think about protecting their children from bleach and other chemicals commonly found" in the home, she said. It's important to "get the message out" and ensure "people are talking about this."

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services Office of Health Education offers curriculum and teacher training to public and private schools at no cost. The lessons address behaviors that lead to morbidity and mortality in the young, including intentional and unintentional injuries, such as injury caused by children ingesting edible gummies or other edible-infused products, Pigott wrote.

"During parent workshops, we show the similarity between real food items and the THC-containing items that look like the food item to highlight how deceptive and easy it is to mistakenly ingest cannabis-laden products," he added.



From left, Dr. Gregson Pigott, commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services; Dr. Candice Foy, a pediatric hospitalist at Stony Brook Children's Hospital; and Dr. Jennifer Goebel, emergency room doctor at Huntington Hospital. Left file photo; center from Stony Brook Medicine/Jeanne Neville; and right file photo from Northwell Health

LEGALS

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NOTICE OF BUDGET VOTE
AND ELECTION OF
THE SMITHTOWN SPECIAL
LIBRARY DISTRICT
TOWN OF SMITHTOWN,
SUFFOLK COUNTY,
NEW YORK

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the resident qualified voters of the Smithtown Special Library District (Town of Smithtown) that a Library Budget Vote and Trustee Election will be held at the below-designated polling places on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 9:30 AM, prevailing time, to vote upon the following propositions:

1. To adopt the Annual Budget of the Smithtown Special Library District for the calendar year commencing January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024 in the amount of \$17,292,960.00 (which includes the annual financing costs of a capital improvement bond previously approved by the electorate) with the requisite portion thereof to be raised by a levy upon the taxable property of the Library District.

2. To elect four members of the Board of Trustees of the Smithtown Special Library District. Two seats will possess a three-year term commencing on January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2026. Two seats will possess terms of October 11, 2023 through December 31, 2024.

AND FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that voting at such Budget Vote/Election will be by paper ballots; the polls will be open between the hours of 9:30 AM and 9:00 PM, prevailing time, on October 10, 2023.

AND FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that voting shall take place in person at the following four (4) polling places:

1. Smithtown Main Building Library patrons who are qualified voters residing: within zip code 11780; within zip code 11788 who reside SOUTH of Route 347, Nesconset Highway; within zip code 11787 who live EAST of Blydenburgh County Park, Caleb Smith State Park and Route 25A (St. Johnland

Road) and SOUTH of Landing Road (NOTE: homeowners who reside in the area serviced by the Emma S. Clark Memorial Library CANNOT vote in this election) will vote at the Smithtown Main Building, located at One North Country Road, Smithtown, NY.

2. Kings Park Branch Library patrons who are qualified voters residing: within zip code 11754 or 11768; and within zip code 11787 who reside NORTH of Route 25, Old Northport Road and Landing Road, WEST of Route 25A (St. Johnland Road) and EAST of Plymouth Boulevard will vote at the Kings Park Branch, located at One Church Street, Kings Park, NY.

3. Commack Branch Library patrons who are qualified voters residing: within zip code 11725; within zip code 11788 who reside SOUTH of Veterans Memorial Highway; and within zip code 11787 who live WEST of Blydenburgh County Park, Caleb Smith State Park and Plymouth Boulevard will vote at the Commack Branch, located at 3 Indian Head Road, Commack, NY.

4. Nesconset Branch Library patrons who are qualified voters residing: within zip code 11767; who live SOUTH of Route 25 from the Smithtown-Brookhaven border to Southern Boulevard; EAST of Southern Blvd. from Route 25 to Route 347, Nesconset Highway; SOUTH of Route 347, Nesconset Highway from Southern Boulevard to the Smithtown Greenbelt Town Park; EAST of the Smithtown Greenbelt Town Park from Route 347 Nesconset Highway to the Smithtown-Islip border (residents in the area serviced by the Sachem School and Library Districts CANNOT vote in this election) will vote at the Nesconset Branch, located at 148 Smithtown Boulevard, Nesconset, NY.

AND FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that every qualified voter of the Town of Smithtown who resides within the Smithtown Special Library District and is otherwise qualified to vote at a General Town Election shall be qualified to vote at

the October 10, 2023 Budget Vote and Board of Trustees election.

AND FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that applications for absentee ballots are available at each library building within the Smithtown Special Library District during regular business hours and may be printed from the Library's website www.smithlib.org. Such application must be received by the Clerk of the Election at least seven (7) days prior to the October 10, 2023 vote/election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter; or the last business day before the vote/election if the ballot is to be personally delivered to the voter. Qualified voters may obtain an absentee ballot at the Community Relations Department in the Nesconset Building, located at 148 Smithtown Boulevard, Nesconset, NY, on days the Library is open to the public between the hours of 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM (except Saturday, Sunday and holidays) commencing September 14, 2023. A list of all persons to whom absentee ballots have been issued will be posted in the Administration Office in the Nesconset Building on each of the five (5) days prior to the October 10, 2023 vote/election between the hours of 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM, except Saturday, Sunday and holidays. No absentee ballot shall be canvassed unless received by the Clerk of the Election no later than 5:00 PM on the day of the vote/election.

AND FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that military voters who are qualified voters of the Smithtown Special Library District must apply for a military ballot by submitting an application which is obtainable from the Clerk of the Election. Completed applications for a military ballot must be returned by mail or in person, and received by the Election Clerk not later than twenty-five (25) days before the date of the Vote/Election (October 10, 2023). Military voters may designate a preference to receive a ballot application and/or the military ballot by mail, facsimile transmission or electronic mail. Ballots

for military voters shall be mailed or otherwise distributed in accordance with the preferred method of transmission, as soon as practicable, but not later than twenty-five (25) days before the date of the Vote/Election (September 15, 2023). Irrespective of the preferred method of transmission, military ballots must be returned by mail or in person to the Office of the Clerk of the Election no later than 5:00 PM (Prevailing Time) on the day of the vote/election in order to be counted.

By order of the Board of Trustees of the Smithtown Special Library District,

9/7/2023
Lauren Gunderson
Clerk of the Election
Smithtown Special Library District

165820 9/14 2x ts

AVISO DE VOTACIÓN PRESUPUESTARIA Y ELECCIÓN DE EL DISTRITO DE BIBLIOTECAS ESPECIALES DE SMITHTOWN PUEBLO DE SMITHTOWN (CONDADO DE SUFFOLK, NUEVA YORK)

POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA a los votantes calificados residentes del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown (Ciudad de Smithtown) que se llevará a cabo una Votación del Presupuesto de la Biblioteca y una Elección de Fideicomisarios en los lugares de votación designados a continuación el martes 10 de octubre de 2023 a las 9:30 AM, hora prevaleciente, para votar sobre las siguientes propuestas:

1. Adoptar el Presupuesto Anual del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown para el año calendario que comienza el 1 de enero de 2024 y finaliza el 31 de diciembre de 2024 por un monto de \$ 17,292,960.00 (que incluye los costos anuales de financiamiento de un bono de mejora de capital previamente aprobado por el electorado) con la parte requerida que se recaudará mediante un gravamen sobre la propiedad imponible del

Distrito de Bibliotecas.

2. Elegir a cuatro miembros de la Junta de Síndicos del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown. Dos escaños tendrán un mandato de tres años que comenzará el 1 de enero de 2024 y finalizará el 31 de diciembre de 2026. Dos asientos tendrán términos del 11 de octubre de 2023 al 31 de diciembre de 2024.

Y POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA ADICIONALMENTE, que la votación en dicha Votación / Elección del Presupuesto será por boletas de papel; las urnas estarán abiertas entre las 9:30 AM y las 9:00 PM, hora prevaleciente, el 10 de octubre de 2023.

Y POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA ADICIONALMENTE, que la votación se llevará a cabo en persona en los siguientes cuatro (4) lugares de votación:

1. Los usuarios de la Biblioteca del Edificio Principal de Smithtown que son votantes calificados que residen: dentro del código postal 11780; dentro del código postal 11788 que residen AL SUR de la Ruta 347, Nesconset Highway; dentro del código postal 11787 que viven AL ESTE de Blydenburgh County Park, Caleb Smith State Park y Route 25A (St. Johnland Road) y SOUTH of Landing Road (NOTA: los propietarios que residen en el área atendida por la Biblioteca Emma S. Clark Memorial NO PUEDEN votar en esta elección) votarán en el Smithtown Main Building, ubicado en One North Country Road, Smithtown, Nueva York.

2. Usuarios de Kings Park Branch Library que son votantes calificados que residen: dentro del código postal 11754 o 11768; y dentro del código postal 11787 que residen AL NORTE de la Ruta 25, Old Northport Road y Landing Road, AL OESTE de la Ruta 25A (St. Johnland Road) y al ESTE de Plymouth Boulevard votarán en Kings Park Branch, ubicada en One Church Street, Kings Park, NY.

3. Usuarios de Commack Branch Library que son votantes calificados que residen: dentro del código postal 11725; dentro del

código postal 11788 que residen AL SUR de Veterans Memorial Highway; y dentro del código postal 11787 que viven AL OESTE de Blydenburgh County Park, Caleb Smith State Park y Plymouth Boulevard votarán en Commack Branch, ubicada en 3 Indian Head Road, Commack, NY.

4. Usuarios de Nesconset Branch Library que son votantes calificados que residen: dentro del código postal 11767; que viven AL SUR de la Ruta 25 desde la frontera Smithtown-Brookhaven hasta Southern Boulevard; AL ESTE de Southern Blvd. desde la Ruta 25 hasta la Ruta 347, Nesconset Highway; SUR de la Ruta 347, Nesconset Highway desde Southern Boulevard hasta Smithtown Greenbelt Town Park; AL ESTE del Smithtown Greenbelt Town Park desde la Ruta 347 Nesconset Highway hasta la frontera Smithtown-Isip (los residentes en el área atendida por los Distritos Escolar y Bibliotecario de Sachem NO PUEDEN votar en esta elección) votarán en la sucursal de Nesconset, ubicada en 148 Smithtown Boulevard, Nesconset, NY.

Y POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA ADICIONALMENTE que cada votante calificado de la Ciudad de Smithtown que resida dentro del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown y esté calificado para votar en una Elección General de la Ciudad estará calificado para votar en la Votación del Presupuesto y la Elección de la Junta de Fideicomisarios del 10 de octubre de 2023.

Y POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA ADICIONALMENTE que las solicitudes de boletas de voto en ausencia están disponibles en cada edificio de la biblioteca dentro del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown durante el horario comercial regular y pueden imprimirse desde el sitio web de la Biblioteca www.smithlib.org. Dicha solicitud debe ser recibida por el Secretario de la Elección al menos siete (7) días antes de la votación / elección del 10 de octubre



Photo by Katja Fuhlert from Pixabay

FDA approves new COVID-19 booster from Pfizer and Moderna

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a new COVID-19 booster, which will protect against the virus’s circulating strain.

With hospitalizations and cases rising in Suffolk County and nationwide, single booster shots from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna should be available soon.

Local doctors recommended that people at the highest risk consider getting the shot.

That includes those with other medical issues, such as a 45-year-old smoker or a 65-year-old with diabetes.

Health care providers generally believe people who recently had COVID have at least three months of protection, although no definitive rule exists.

“If you had it in August, you probably don’t need to get a booster now,” said Dr. Sharon Nachman, chief of the division of pediatric infectious diseases at Stony Brook Children’s Hospital. “If you had it in January and you’re high risk, you should get it now.”

Nachman added that no study has indicated the age at which patients should get a booster shot.

People should consult their physicians

to determine how their underlying health can affect the decision to get an updated vaccine.

“That gets back to the doctor-patient relationship,” Nachman said.

People who are 70 years old and planning a cruise that stops in several ports might want to get a shot at least two weeks before they travel because “the last thing you want happening is to be hospitalized in a foreign country,” Nachman said.

Nachman suggested that this vaccine, like the others that people have taken, won’t prevent illnesses but will keep people from shedding the virus and can reduce the symptoms and duration of an infection.

The FDA approval of the current vaccine is welcome news because it is a “good match” for the current strain, Nachman indicated.

It’s difficult to predict how much protection the current vaccine will provide for whatever strain might be circulating in February.

When a higher percentage of the population receives the vaccine, the likelihood of new variants declines, she added.

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LEGALS *con't from pg. 8*

de 2023 si la boleta se enviará por correo al votante; o el último día hábil antes de la votación/elección si la boleta debe ser entregada personalmente al votante. Los votantes calificados pueden obtener una boleta de voto en ausencia en el Departamento de Relaciones Comunitarias en Nesconset Búuiling, ubicado en 148 Smithtown Boulevard, Nesconset, NY, los días en que la Biblioteca está abierta al público entre las 9:30 a.m. y las 5:00 p.m. (excepto sábados, domingos y días festivos) a partir del 14 de septiembre de 2023. Se publicará una lista de todas las personas a quienes se han emitido boletas de voto en ausencia en la Oficina de Administración en el Edificio Nesconset en cada uno de los cinco (5) días anteriores a la votación/elección del 10 de octubre de 2023 entre las 9:30 AM y las 5:00 PM, excepto sábados, domingos y días festivos. No se realizará ningún escrutinio de boleta de voto en ausencia a menos que sea recibida por el Secretario de la Elección a más tardar a las 5:00 PM del día de la votación / elección.

Y POR LA PRESENTE SE NOTIFICA QUE los votantes militares que son votantes calificados del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown deben solicitar una boleta militar presentando una solicitud que se puede obtener del Secretario de la Elección. Las solicitudes completas para una boleta militar deben devolverse por correo o en persona, y ser recibidas por el Secretario Electoral a más tardar veinticinco (25) días antes de la fecha de la Votación / Elección (10 de octubre de 2023). Los votantes militares pueden designar una preferencia para recibir una solicitud de boleta y/o la boleta militar por correo, transmisión por fax o correo electrónico. Las boletas para votantes militares se enviarán por correo o se distribuirán de otra manera de acuerdo con el método preferido de transmisión, tan pronto como sea posible, pero a más tardar veinticinco (25) días antes de la fecha de la Votación / Elección (15 de septiembre de 2023). Independientemente del método preferido de transmisión, las boletas militares deben devolverse por correo o en persona a la Oficina del Secretario de la Elección a más tardar a las 5:00 PM (hora prevaleciente) del día de la votación / elección para ser contadas. Por orden de la Junta de Síndicos del Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown, Smithtown, NY.

9/7/2023
Lauren Gunderson
Secretario de la Elección
Distrito Especial de Bibliotecas de Smithtown

165830 9/14 2x ts

Hurricane Lee, a case study for future monster storms

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

City planners all along the eastern seaboard, meteorologists and people living in flood plains are all hoping the current projections for Hurricane Lee prove correct.

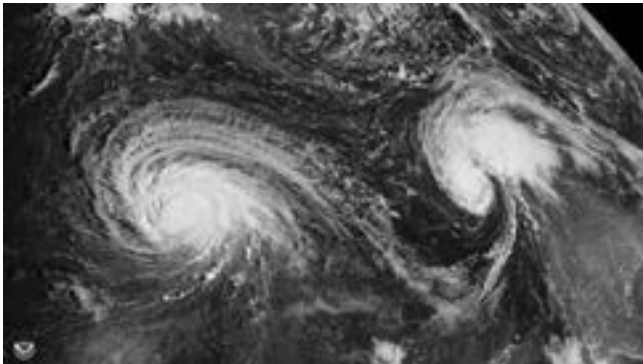
As of earlier this week, the hurricane, which became the fastest system to transition from a tropical storm into a Category 5 hurricane, was not expected to make direct landfall.

That, however, may only be a temporary reprieve, as the conditions that made such a rapid intensification of this monster storm, which, at one point, had wind speeds of 165 miles per hour, continue to exist during the rest of this hurricane season and will likely continue in future years.

Earlier this summer, a sensor off the coast of Florida recorded an ocean temperature of 101.1 degrees Fahrenheit, the highest ever recorded. That creates conditions that threaten marine life and provides the energy that fuels the growth and intensity of hurricanes.

“We know that the warmer the sea surface temperatures are that a storm interacts with, the increased likelihood that a storm will undergo rapid intensification,” said Kevin Reed, associate professor at the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University. As the Earth continues to warm, Reed added, he expects those conditions to persist.

The exact timing of when a storm will intensify “remains a significant challenge to the weather community,” Reed added. “These types of events continually remind us that we have some way to go in forecasting the intensity of storms, even over a couple of days’ time scale.”



Hurricane Lee, left, and Hurricane Margot churn over the Atlantic. Satellite photo from NOAA

While most of the models predict the storm will head north before tracking toward a potentially dangerous landfall, Reed added that “there remains a possibility that the storm could take a track that interacts with New York or New England” and that the hurricane is still multiple days away from the region.

At this point, Reed believes such a landfall is not impossible but is unlikely.

Even without a landfall nearby, forecasters warn that the storm could produce dangerous rip currents and rough waters around the middle Atlantic states toward the latter part of this week.

NOAA forecast

One of the first things Reed does each morning and the last thing he does in the evening is check the National Hurricane

Center site, among others.

A month ago, the hurricane season, which runs from June 1 through Nov. 30, was relatively quiet.

At that point, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association updated its seasonal projection to suggest that the hurricane season would be above normal.

“Here we are, in the thick of things,” with multiple storms out there and high activity levels, Reed said. “It’s important to keep an eye on those storms. All it takes is one to make landfall in our region to have a lasting impact.”

Hurricane Lee is the fourth hurricane of the season and the 14th named storm, six ahead as of Sept. 9 of the average over the last 30 years, according to the National Hurricane Center data.

A Category 1 storm, Hurricane Margot, is moving northward in the Atlantic, where it is not expected to make landfall. Another two disturbances may also combine and form a tropical storm. If they do, the disturbance would be named Nigel.

Reed is currently working on a few projects in which he hopes to use climate information to help inform potential impacts of future storms in the local area and coastal regions.

He is looking back retrospectively at various storms to determine how those hurricanes might differ in a warmer world. Those projects, he said, are still in the early stages.

Well aware of the potential for strong storms to hit the area, Reed has looked at a flood map around his house to know where flood waters would go amid different conditions.

He has also talked with his family about what they would do during a storm and where they would get information in the event of an evacuation from New York.

“I try to practice what I preach,” Reed said.

LIPA and PSEGLI wrestle for control over Long Island’s electrical grid

BY RAYMOND JANIS
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Long Island’s two primary utility companies are in a tug-of-war over the region’s electric future.

A management contract between the New York State-owned Long Island Power Authority and the investor-owned utility company PSEG Long Island expires in December 2025, prompting uncertainty over the future management of the regional grid.

The Legislative Commission on the Future of the Long Island Power Authority is a bipartisan panel of state legislators from Long Island, formed in 2022 to make recommendations to the state Legislature for future reorganization.

Conflict erupted during the commission’s public hearing at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in Hauppauge Tuesday, Sept. 12, during which LIPA and PSEGLI reps offered disparate visions.

Municipalization proposal

The legislative commission is

considering implementing a full-scale municipalization of utility power on Long Island, empowering LIPA to provide electric service independently without contracting with a third-party vendor, such as PSEGLI.

During the hearing, Tom Falcone, LIPA’s CEO, addressed the commission, noting the complications of overlapping responsibilities between the separate management hierarchies of LIPA and PSEGLI.

“There is not one best governance model ... but there are governance models that could result in duplicative roles and responsibilities or unnecessary conflict,” he said. “Multiple overlapping bodies with similar responsibilities can frustrate customers with a lack of clarity and accountability, much like our hybrid management structure between LIPA and PSEG.”

Falcone advised that consolidating management positions within LIPA would enable the state to reduce total management personnel by roughly 13 senior positions.

Falcone added that municipalization would deliver greater accountability from the electric service provider,

empowering the LIPA Board to replace senior officials who fail to perform.

“The board can fire me,” the LIPA CEO indicated. “I can’t fire PSEG,” adding, “If PSEG is not delivering, we litigate and we hold back money.”

Checks and balances

But PSEGLI refused to go down without a fight, countering Falcone’s assessment of the existing dynamic between the two utilities.

Christopher Hahn, vice president of external affairs at PSEGLI, advocated for the existing public-private partnership between LIPA and PSEGLI.

“There’s real, built-in accountability to the public-private partnership,” he said. “It is something that has been working for Long Islanders and will continue to work for Long Islanders.”

Hahn maintained that the public-private partnership gives Long Island “the best of both worlds,” maximizing the potential for each utility company while creating checks and balances between LIPA and PSEGLI.

“Having a municipally owned grid gives us the benefit of that low [interest] bonding and, of course, access to



Photo by Andrew Martin from Pixabay

[Federal Emergency Management Agency] funds in the event that we have storms,” he said. “And then having the private company and being held accountable.”

He added that accountability for PSEGLI is built into its contract structure, which is only 40% guaranteed. He maintained that PSEGLI continues to rank highly in reliability and customer satisfaction.

“Those are things that came here because of the public-private partnership, because of the push-pull

between PSEG and LIPA,” he said.

Conversations over the restructuring of LIPA will continue this week as the commission is scheduled to meet again at 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 14, at the Nassau County Legislature in Mineola. To livestream the meeting, visit totalwebcasting.com/live/nylipa. Register on-site to testify. Written testimony can be submitted at nylipa.gov/public-input. Other September meetings are due to be held at The Rockaways, Southampton and Farmingdale State College.

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Smithtown will ‘never forget’

BY RAYMOND JANIS
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Town of Smithtown in conjunction with the Smithtown Chamber of Commerce conducted the annual 9/11 memorial service Monday afternoon at 4 p.m., Sept. 11, honoring the lives lost and the sacrifices made during the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

Town Supervisor Ed Wehrheim (R) presided over the service, which was well attended by members of the Town Board, New York State officials, the clergy, U.S. service members, local business leaders and residents.

Wehrheim said the annual ceremony fulfills “a promise made 22 years ago” to honor the victims, keeping their memories alive within the community.

“We pay respects to our friends and neighbors and grieve their loss together,” he said. “But we also reclaim a spirit of unity, faith and resilience that served us as a light of hope through our darkest of hours.”

The service included a name-reading ceremony of the 53 Smithtown residents who were killed during the attacks, ending with attendees placing roses upon the 9/11 memorial fountain.



Right, public officials, service members and residents gather during the Town of Smithtown's annual 9/11 memorial service.

Bottom right, Town Supervisor Ed Wehrheim, at podium, delivers his remarks.

Below, attendees place roses upon the 9/11 memorial fountain.

Photos by Raymond Janis





Smithtown East girls volleyball continues unbeaten run

BY BILL LANDON
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

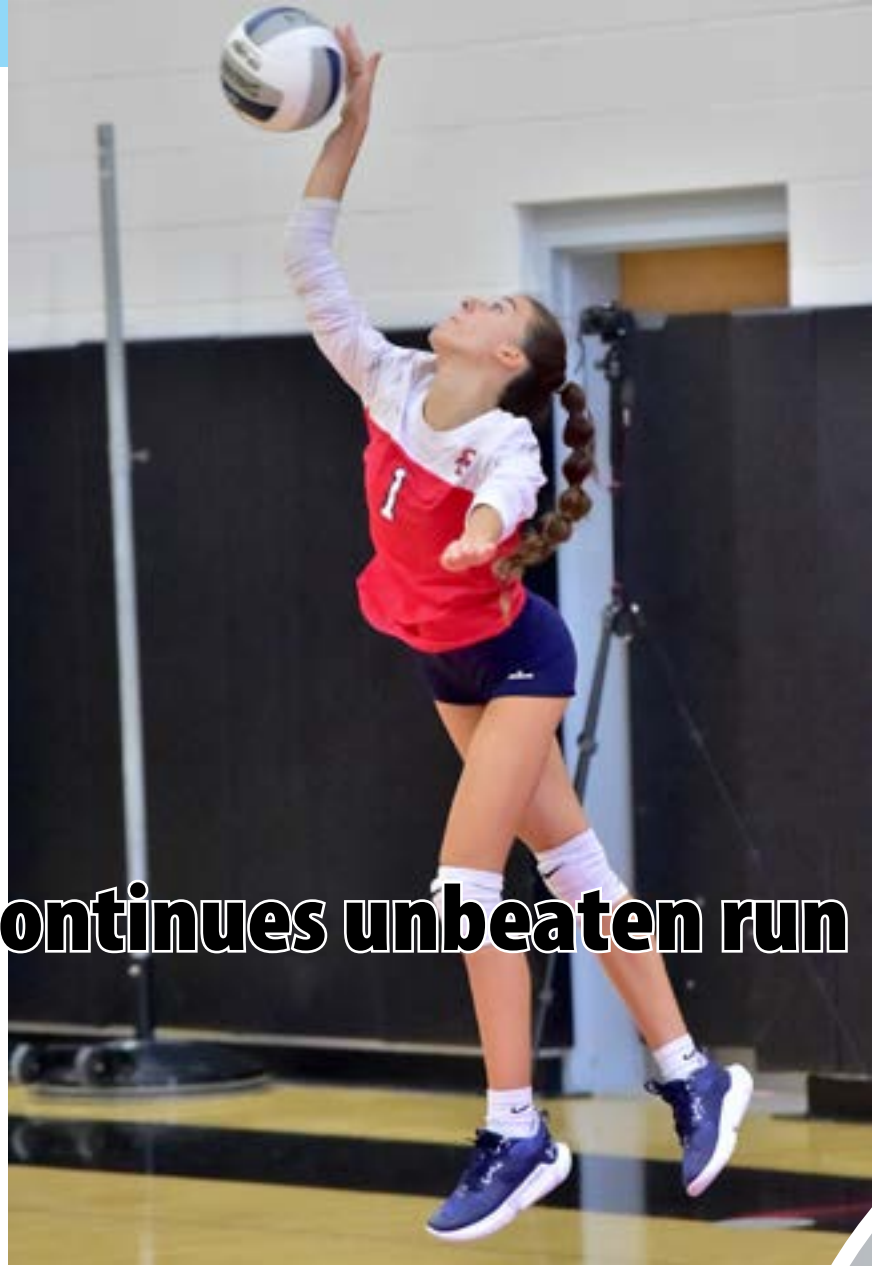
The Bulls of Smithtown East looked to make it four wins in a row when they traveled to Newfield for a League III matchup, where they dominated the first two sets winning 25-14, 25-13 in the Sept. 12 contest. Newfield rallied in the third set, leading by three points late in the match, but

the Bulls made fewer mistakes to win by four points for the 3-0 sweep.

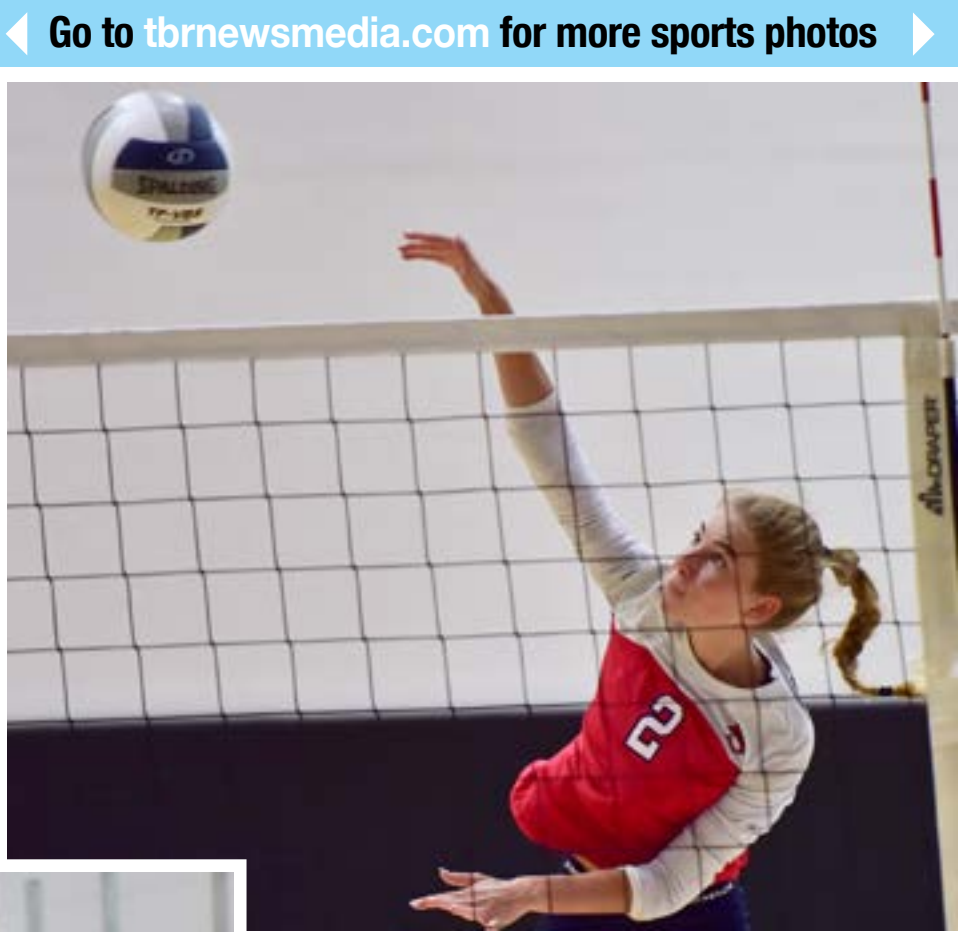
The win lifts the Bulls to 4-0, not having lost a set and blanking all of their opponents in the early going while Newfield falls to 1-4.

Both teams retake the court Thursday when Newfield travels to North Babylon with a 6:45 p.m. start and Smithtown East hosts West Babylon at 5 p.m.

— Photos by Bill Landon



Clockwise from top left: Smithtown East senior Jayda Feeney Blocks the ball; Brianna Cerullo from the service line for Smithtown East; senior Julia Cerullo sets the play; Smithtown East senior Ava Finamore with a kill shot; senior Lilly Schwartz puts the ball in play; Alex Arroyo from the service line for Smithtown East; Newfield senior Gabby Agostino sets the play; Smithtown East senior Karson Catalanotto attacks with a block; and Newfield's Karli Scarfogliero digs one out.



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Editorial

More than a pipedream

Suffolk County's wastewater election

As Election Day nears, it is becoming increasingly evident that our local elections here in Suffolk County will hinge upon the people's vision for wastewater treatment.

The state of our wastewater systems is a crucial policy concern for residents and environmentalists alike. Our existing system of disparate sewer districts and individually operated septic tanks is inadequate, impairing our environment, drinking water and quality of life.

Responsible wastewater treatment countywide can ensure our communities remain clean, healthy and safe. However, as years pass, our county's wastewater infrastructure will continue showing its age — and the consequences could be devastating.

The first and most immediate impact of deteriorating wastewater infrastructure is public health. A failure to address these issues could result in an uptick in health crises, increasing the demand for health care services and leading citizens to question the competence of local governments to meet even their most basic human needs.

Residents expect their elected officials to take proactive approaches in maintaining critical infrastructure. If this does not happen, it can erode trust in government.

Our people ask for clean drinking water. We desire fewer fish kills and algal blooms in our local surface waters. Perhaps above all, our citizens long for political representation that actually advances their needs over the wants of powerful, monied interests that finance political campaigns in this county.

Money talks in Suffolk County, as elsewhere. Powerful special interest groups here — notably developers and organized labor — often curry favor with politicians. For developers, sewers allow for increased building height and density. For labor unions, sewers produce lucrative government contracts.

As we inch closer to November, we remind prospective officeholders that they must be careful not to allow campaign contributors to drive policy, that the people are the prime movers of our democracy.

The paramount stakeholder group in this election is the taxpaying citizens of Suffolk County. Though not cutting large campaign checks, this group will be the ultimate judge deciding who ascends to county office.

Shamefully, the county Legislature failed to put the Suffolk County Water Quality Restoration Act on November's ballot. So, this election season voters must listen carefully to candidates from both major parties. Only those who demonstrate a firm commitment to the popular will should earn our votes.

Candidates must develop a plan for modernizing our wastewater infrastructure. They should be prepared to answer difficult questions on this most critical issue, demonstrating their commitment to the betterment of our county.

To our fellow residents, listen closely during this election cycle, especially to conversations surrounding wastewater.

WRITE TO US . . . AND KEEP IT LOCAL

We welcome your letters, especially those responding to our local coverage, replying to other letter writers' comments and speaking mainly to local themes. Letters should be no longer than 400 words and may be edited for length, libel, style, good taste and uncivil language. They will also be published on our website. We do not publish anonymous letters. Please include an address and phone number for confirmation. Email letters to: editor1@tbrnewsmedia.com or mail them to **TBR News Media, P.O. Box 707, Setauket, NY 11733**



File photo by Raymond Janis

Letters to the Editor

Polluted groundwater affects more than the tap

A recent letter by George Altemose ["An alternative to advanced septic systems," Sept. 7, TBR News Media] suggested that instead of increasing Suffolk sales tax 1/8% to help fund upgraded, nitrogen-reducing septic tanks, it would be more cost effective to eliminate the nitrogen after it has already entered the groundwater. But only the groundwater that comes from Suffolk County Water Authority wells and into our homes as drinking water.

What about the polluted groundwater from old cesspools and septic systems that's now going into our beaches, bays and other waterways, killing fish and creating dead zones?

Old cesspools and septic systems need replacing, and they should be replaced with upgraded, nitrogen-reducing systems and there are rebates and grants to help pay for it.

Another consideration, according to one local company's website, is that the upgraded systems work best when homeowners use less water and fewer chemical cleaning products. So in the long run the homeowner will be motivated to reduce water use by running only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher and to stop buying expensive cleaning products with harmful chemicals and instead make their own homemade cleaners using baking soda or white vinegar to prolong the life and improve the performance of their new, high-tech septic system.

Remember, we live on an island and there are grants and rebates to help pay for the upgraded systems because we all benefit from Long Island's beautiful beaches and abundant wildlife.

**Diane Ives
Copiague**

Editor's note: The writer serves on the executive committee of the Sierra Club Long Island Group.

SCWA can't ward off algal blooms

While the Suffolk County Water Authority can do something about nitrogen in drinking water, it does not and cannot do anything to reduce the excessive amount of nitrogen in the drinking water of those of us that get our water from our own wells, nor can it do anything to reduce the amount of nitrogen in our lakes, ponds, streams and saltwater bodies. In those bodies, it is a fertilizer for all sorts of life.

Plant life, called algae, grows and reproduces at an increased rate when fertilizers are present in the water. In large numbers, they form a "bloom" which actually changes the color of the water.

Two of these are brown algae and green algae. Brown algal blooms — aka brown tides — shadow the seafloor, which leads to the death of seagrasses. It also can slow the growth of shellfish.

Red algae, which contains saxitoxin — a nerve damaging toxin — when present in large quantities as in a red

tide or red algal bloom, can kill many fish and shellfish and sicken any animal that ingests the water, including making humans quite sick. Red algal blooms also deplete water oxygen levels, resulting in fish not getting enough oxygen through their gills and dying as a result.

Then there is blue-green algae, which is actually a bacteria — aka a cyanobacteria — that grow in number in shallow, still, warm bodies of fresh or salt water. It, too, contains a neurotoxin called microcystin that is known to cause rashes and make people sick. In fact, it is an excess of this toxin that has killed dogs and other animals when they drink the water.

All because of excess nitrogen that the no drinking water process does or can remove.

**Jane Fasullo
Setauket**

The system needs a reset

It makes no sense that inflation creates a work shortage [See story with Assemblywoman Jodi Giglio [R-Riverhead], "Giglio: Long Island still grappling with labor shortages, inflation," Sept. 7, TBR News Media].

How else can you keep up with inflation if you don't work? And, if wages increase, you also increase prices, which creates inflation.

This is putting the carrot on the stick in front of the donkey. Add to this Big Government and high taxes. The system needs a reset.

**Frank Grande
Northport**

Opinion

What if we're ignoring the wrong things

You know that optical illusion with the vase and the two faces? If you're looking at the outline of the white object, you see a vase, but if you look at the white as the background, you see two faces.



D. None of the above
BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

Is it possible that we might, at times, be missing something in our lives?

We drive from one event to another, often ignoring the people in the car next to us at a stoplight, at the birds resting on a telephone wire or at the last few rays of the sun as the light disappears over the horizon.

Instead, we're focused on getting where we're going, giving our mind a chance to wander to important things, like

what we're going to say to the coach of our son's little league team, to our boss who wants to know why we're late, or to that person at the deli counter who starts preparing our sandwich before we even order.

Along the way, we might be missing signs that could stimulate or enrich our mind in unexpected ways or that could provide the kind of unanticipated signs that serve as clues about our lives. Sure, some people read horoscopes for such help, they ponder the pithy poetry of fortune cookies, or they visit a psychic, who asks them if they've ever known a person named John or if they've ever gone with a date to a movie or like to take walks on the beach.

But, with our heads down, living on our phones, focusing on events and people far from us, is it possible that we might miss something akin to a puzzle piece in the mystery of our lives?

Sure, telemarketers are frustrating and annoying, offering us products we don't

need, asking us for personal information, and assuming a far-too-familiar tone.

What if those telemarketers, who are even more unpopular than used car salesman, journalists and politicians, offered us something between the lines of their scripts that might be of use to us? We don't have to stay on the phone long with them and we don't have to buy something we don't want, but maybe we can give them half a minute, listening to them and politely declining their offer for more life insurance, a time share in the Everglades, or a chance to earn money as a personal shopper.

Maybe something they say will remind us of a task we wanted to accomplish, a phrase a friend or relative used to use, or a responsibility we haven't yet met for ourselves. In a world in which there are no accidents, perhaps they can remind us of something we value.

Along the same lines, the scenery that flies by while we're on a train, a bus or in a car could remind us of a picture we drew from our

childhood, a tree we used to climb, or a friend who might need to hear from us but hasn't felt strong enough to ask for help.

Hundreds and thousands of years ago, people looked to the skies for the kind of signs that might help them.

When we shut ourselves in our homes, disconnect from the people in the room or from the environment, we close down the opportunity to see or consider any signs from the world around us or to get out of our own limited physical, mental and emotional headspace. We also lock ourselves in to a particular way of thinking, removing the opportunity to consider whether today is a day to see the vase or the two faces.

By getting away from our computer screens, cell phones, and cubicles, we give ourselves a chance to see what the world offers, and how those cues affect the way we think about our lives.

Do you eat breakfast, and if so, what do you eat?

My favorite meal of the day is breakfast. Now I'm not one of those happy people who awaken with the dawn, but I will say that my first thought after



Between you and me
BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF

I open my eyes is usually breakfast. It used to be that I had to get up and walk the dog, but that's history. Now, as soon as sleep is over, I am hungry.

Maybe that has something to do with the fact that I don't eat past dinner, and that my dinner usually ends by 7:00 pm or even earlier. That means I have been fasting for at least 12 hours, maybe even 14, so my lustful appetite would seem valid. I start thinking about what I am going to make for breakfast while I am brushing my teeth. It's

almost never what you might expect.

I guess the traditional American breakfast is eggs and toast, and maybe some sort of meat, like bacon or ham. Or people start the day with cold cereal and milk in a bowl or hot oatmeal, with maybe some fruit on top. That's if they have time to fix breakfast.

Many people just run through the kitchen, put on their jackets and rush out the door to work or to school. Perhaps they might snag a roll or a piece of fruit on the way out, maybe even a cup of coffee if they remembered to plug in the pot the night before and to push the button on the way to the bathroom in the morning. Incredible as it sounds to me, I even know some people who eat nothing until dinner—a big dinner that then stretches right up to bedtime.

So what do I eat?

I might eat an egg with some veggies thrown in if it's a weekend and I have time to cook. I particularly like English muffins with Irish butter and one of any number of different

jams I harbor in my frig. More often I will heat up some green lentil pasta that I prepared in advance, top it with low sodium spaghetti sauce and a couple of spices, and munch away. (Don't Yuk! Just try it.) The green lentil flour, which comes in a box, is loaded with good nutrients: 11 grams of fiber; 25 grams plant-based protein. My favorite shape for the flour is rotini; it makes me think I am eating wheat pasta. And by the way, it's made in Italy.

Or, I might finish off the previous night's leftovers. That could be anything from shrimp, which I love, or a kind of white flaky fish like branzino or salmon. Now you might be taken aback by the nonconformist choices I make in the morning, so I will explain. I have had the pleasure of traveling to a number of different countries and eating their traditional breakfasts, so I am not in the least put off by eating my leftover sushi that I brought in the previous night. It makes me think I am in Bali.

On rainy mornings, I have the urge for pancakes because my mother, when I was a

child, often made silver dollar pancakes for breakfast when it rained, especially if it rained really hard. The wonderful smell would fill the kitchen and bring us quickly to the table. I never put butter or syrup or powdered sugar on them; they were just delicious straight from the pan. I confess, though, that now I hardly ever have time to make them. I'm too busy looking for an umbrella.

Instead I grab a smoothie, filled with frozen fruits and dark green leafy vegetables, like baby bok choy and baby kale, that is pre-made in the refrigerator and carry it to my office, where I sip it through a straw for a couple of hours.

Another unorthodox breakfast that I enjoy is a salad, one with cucumbers, tomatoes, pears and walnuts, perked up with a little balsamic vinegar. I don't care for iceberg lettuce much, preferring romaine and mixed greens.

I have learned that only some 35 percent of Americans eat breakfast every morning. How about you?



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