



Our Turn

The importance of poll workers

A7



Celebrate the season with 'A Christmas Carol' at Theatre Three

ALSO: LIM presents Dickens in the Carriage Museum, 'The Play That Goes Wrong' at SCCC

B1

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HONORING LOCAL HEROES

Kings Park observes Veterans Day with parade

— **A4**

Photo by Michael Scro/Media Origin

2023

PEOPLE of the YEAR

2023

❖
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DECEMBER 1, 2023

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Times Beacon Record News Media

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Mills Pond Elementary School's first Veterans Parade is held on Nov. 9. Photo courtesy SCSD

Mills Pond Elementary hosts first Veterans Day Parade

Mills Pond Elementary School Principal Ireen Westrack proudly told local veterans that, “We wanted to do something more personal this year.” So, she, Mills Pond staff and students hosted their first Mills Pond Veterans Parade on Nov. 9. Veterans related to students and staff were invited to the school in honor of Veterans Day. The veterans walked down a red carpet with their relatives, were served a hot breakfast, received thank you certificates and participated in a parade in front of the school. The 5th grade choir also performed some patriotic songs and local Girl Scouts proudly led the parade.



Smithtown High School's Douglas Antaky finishes second overall in the New York State boys Class A cross-country championship. Photo courtesy SCSD

Douglas Antaky makes Smithtown High School racing history

Smithtown High School West senior Douglas Antaky finished as the state runner-up in the boys Class A cross-country state championship on Saturday, Nov. 11. Antaky, running for the Smithtown High School East/West team, finished second out of 107 runners in the 5K, with a time of 15.56. Antaky is just the second Smithtown High School athlete ever to place runner-up in the event.

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The Kings Park community recognizes Veterans Day with a memorial parade on Saturday, Nov. 11. Photos by Michael Scro/Media Origin

100 years of valor

Kings Park pays homage during Veterans Day parade

BY MICHAEL SCRO
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Kings Park Veterans Day parade and memorial ceremony took place on Saturday, Nov. 11, where local veterans, first responders, Scouts, Kings Park High School performers, community groups and residents gathered to honor all who have served in the military.

Originally named Armistice Day to commemorate the ending of World War I on Nov. 11, 1918, the holiday was renamed Veterans Day in 1954, passed by Congress and signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower (R). Each year, it is held to honor military veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The parade began at the R.J.O. Intermediate School. It concluded at Veterans Plaza in front of the Kings Park Library and 1 Church St. Well over 100 participated during a comfortably crisp, sunny November morning.

The memorial ceremony was held immediately afterward, featuring a moment of remembrance and wreath laying. Speakers included VFW Kings Park 5796 Cmdr. Eric Burnett, American Legion Post 944 Cmdr. Hans Richter, American Legion Post 944 member Phil Barczak and Superintendent of Kings Park Central School District Timothy Eagen.

Burnett acknowledged the branches of the U.S. military, giving a brief historical background of each, and paid tribute as members

of some branches in attendance cheered when they were mentioned.

Richter pointed out that this year marks the 100th anniversary of their American Legion Post and spoke about Donald C. Munro, a veteran of World War I for whom the post is named.

“He was a Kings Park resident, served the community as a plumber, and when his nation called for his service in World War I, he answered, and that’s where he died,” Richter said. “Veterans run deep in Kings Park. We have names on our memorial in the plaza going back to the Revolutionary War — it is very humbling.”

Barczak said it is the veterans who have given America its freedom of religion, speech, the press, a right to a fair trial, the right to vote, and it is the veteran “who salutes the flag, serves under the flag and has given us the freedom to proudly wave our flag.”

Eagen spoke about how Kings Park schools teach their youth “the importance of service, and the history and significance of Veterans Day,” where students honor local veterans with meals, letters, hugs, handshakes and saying, “Thank you for your service.”

The wreaths were laid beside the memorial stone at Veterans Plaza, which states, “This monument is dedicated to those who made the supreme sacrifice and to others of our community who served honorably in our country’s wars.”

LEGALS

To Place A Legal Notice
Email: legals@tbrnewsmedia.com

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Formation:
KELALA EXPRESS LLC

Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 10/16/2023.

Office loc: Suffolk County.

SSNY designated for service of process.

SSNY shall mail copies of any process served against the LLC to 31 Lily Dr. Lot 137 South Setauket, NY 11720.

Purpose: Any lawful purpose or activity.

172760 10/26 6x ts

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK; Index No. 204914/2022 Filed 11/03/2022, Plaintiff

BANK OF NEW YORK MEL- LON TRUST COMPANY, N.A.

AS TRUSTEE FOR MORT- GAGE ASSETS MANAGE- MENT SERIES I TRUST V UNKNOWN HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF ANNA VAN DYK A/K/A ANNA VERONICA VAN DYK A/K/A ANNA JEAN VAN DYK; CAROL VAN DYK, AS HEIR- AT-LAW; NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA O/B/O INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE; JOHN DOE Defendants.

PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANTS: UNKNOWN HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF ANNA VAN DYK A/K/A ANNA VERONICA VAN DYK A/K/A ANNA JEAN VAN DYK

YOU ARE HEREBY SUM- MONED to answer the Amended Complaint in the above captioned action and to serve a copy of your Answer on the Plaintiff's attorney within twenty (20) days after the service of this Summons, exclusive of the day of service, or within thirty (30) days after

completion of service where service is made in any other manner than by personal delivery within the State. The United States of America, if designated as a Defendant in this action may answer to appear within sixty (60) days of service hereof. In case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the Amended Complaint.

NOTICE

YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME

If you do not respond to this Summons and Amended Complaint by serving a copy of the answer on the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home.

Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case

is pending for further in- formation on how to answer the publication and protect your property. Sending payment to your mortgage company will not stop this foreclosure action. YOU MUST RESPOND BY SERVING A COPY OF THE ANSWER ON THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF (PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION) AND FILING THE ANSWER WITH THE COURT.

To the above named defen- dants: The foregoing Pub- lication is served upon you by publication pursuant to an order of the Hon. Paul M. Hensley, J.S.C, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of N.Y., dated Septem- ber 28, 2023 and filed along with the supporting papers in the Suffolk County Clerk's Office. This is an action to foreclose a mortgage on the property located 43 Harvard Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787

District: 0800 Section: 102.00 Block: 03.00 Lot: 004.000

Suffolk County is designated as the place of trial based upon the location of the

property being foreclosed. Attorneys for Plaintiff: Stern & Eisenberg, PC, 20 Commerce Drive, Suite 230, Cranford, NJ 07016 T:(516) 630-0288.

173330 11/2 4x ts

Notice of formation of JSternRecruiting LLC. Arts of Org. filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 10/9/2023 Office loca- tion: Suffolk County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of the process to the LLC: 50 Fairfield Way #4 Commack, NY 11725 Pur- pose: Any lawful purpose.

174230 11/2 6x ts

SMITHTOWN FIRE DISTRICT NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION SUBJECT TO PERMISSIVE REFERENDUM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

that the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Smit- htown Fire District, in the Town of Smithtown, Suffolk County, New York, at a meeting thereof, held on the 6th day of November, 2023, duly adopted, subject to permissive referendum, a Resolution, an abstract of which is as follows:

The Resolution authorizes a transfer in an amount not to exceed \$38,600.00 from the Building Reserve account to the General Fund account for roof repairs at Head- quarters.


Dated: Smithtown, New York November 9, 2023

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF THE SMITHTOWN FIRE DISTRICT IN THE TOWN OF SMITHTOWN, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

THOMAS A. BUFFA DISTRICT SECRETARY

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of the YEAR

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and why he or she deserves to be a Person of the Year.

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 1, 2023

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POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Traffic stop leads to marijuana seizure

Just under 300 pounds of marijuana was seized at a traffic stop on the Sunken Meadow State Parkway on Nov. 8, New York State Police said.

A trooper on patrol pulled over a 2015 Chevy Suburban for a vehicle and traffic infraction on the northbound Sunken Meadow Parkway, south of Pulaski Road, in the Town of Smithtown around 1:30 p.m. The driver, Peash Rahman, 29 of Queens, was found to be allegedly impaired by drugs and arrested, police said. Rahman was also found to be in possession of nearly 300 pounds of marijuana inside the Chevy.

Rahman was charged with allegedly driving while ability impaired by drugs (a felony - prior convictions) and first-degree criminal possession of cannabis (a D felony).

Islandia man arrested for 14 burglaries

Suffolk County Police arrested an Islandia man on Nov. 11 for allegedly burglarizing four businesses a total of 14 times during the past 11 months.

Following an investigation by Fifth Squad detectives, Christopher Lacker was identified as the man who allegedly committed multiple burglaries at storage facilities within the confines of the Fourth and Fifth Precinct between December 7, 2022 and November 9, 2023.

During each burglary, Lacker allegedly entered storage facilities, cut locks from individual storage units, and stole property from within. Lacker, who was located by detectives at his home on November 11 at 4:33 p.m., burglarized the following locations:

- Public Storage, located at 770 Nesconset Highway in Nesconset, on December 7, 2022.
- Extra Space Storage, located at 3016 Express Drive in Islandia, on February 24 and 28, September 29, October 3, 4, 13 and 14, November 8 and 9, 2023.
- Extra Space Storage, located at 1590 Lakeland Ave. in Bohemia, on Sept. 27, 2023
- Public Storage, located at 745 Calebs Path, Hauppauge, on October 16, 2023.

Lacker, 42, was charged with 14 counts of Burglary 3rd Degree and one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for grand larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Fourth Squad detectives are seeking the public's help to identify and locate a man who allegedly stole a snowblower from Cutting Edge Power Equipment, located at 234A Carroll Avenue in Lake Ronkonkoma on November 3. The snowblower was valued at approximately \$1,100.

Wanted for petit larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Fourth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public's help to identify and locate a man who allegedly stole a pair of Dr. Martens boots from Famous Footwear, located at 1770 Veterans Memorial Highway in Islandia on October 19.



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

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

— COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

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.

My experience as a first-time poll worker

BY CAROLYN SACKSTEIN
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

I am a consumer of news. In addition to writing for TBR News Media, I read, watch and listen to various news formats. The troubling reports of harassment and intimidation of poll workers across this country have both saddened and angered me.

OUR TURN

I have long believed that citizens must actively engage in the democratic process. I get a thrill each time I vote. And so, it became incumbent upon me to do more than just vote and donate to organizations that promote the election process.

My journey to do more started in September when I participated in a League of Women Voters of Suffolk County event in Patchogue. After learning that there was a shortage of election workers, I was determined to do my part.

After the event, during which I handed out voter registration forms and voter information literature, I drove to the Suffolk County Board of Elections at 700 Yaphank Ave. in Yaphank. I was



Voting booths at Rocky Point High School. File photo by Kyle Barr

greeted by a friendly and professional staff, who assisted me in signing up for a position as an election inspector.

They verified that I met the requirements. The staff asked which of the yearly training dates I would prefer to attend. I was then informed that I would receive a letter confirming the date, place and time of my training.

Training occurred at Brookhaven Town Hall and was conducted by a SCBOE employee. Each trainee received a detailed booklet. The three-hour class covered matters of election law. The procedures for

opening and closing the election site were quite detailed.

Yes, there was a test at the end of the class. Each prospective election inspector was required to pass the test before being certified and sworn in with an oath of office. Election inspectors are compensated for required training sessions and when they work on early-voting days and on Election Day at an assigned polling site. Before leaving, we were told to expect a letter in October that would inform us to report to our assigned site at 5 a.m. on Election Day.

On Tuesday, Nov. 7, I walked into my assigned polling site at 4:57 a.m. It was only five minutes from my house. An experienced co-worker greeted me. As the three other workers arrived, we began the setup process. We were fortunate in that our location served only one election district. Other sites may have multiple election districts.

Our first voter arrived seconds after 6 a.m. The remainder of the day passed as a continuous stream of voters moved through the signature verification process and received their ballots. Our experienced coordinator helped those who needed assistance with a variety of issues.

Four people did not show up to work. As a result of being short-handed, we did not have any “breaks.” We watched for a lull in the line so we could go to the restroom. Rarely was the line backed up, and never by more than about seven people.

Next year, the demand for poll workers will be greater due to an expected larger turnout.

The main complaint was from people who did not recall getting instructions on their polling location and arrived at the wrong place. We

verified their polling site and, if needed, provided directions.

The voting public was courteous, and many thanked us for our efforts. One voter overheard our coordinator mention to a co-worker that he had not eaten all day. The voter returned with a dozen donuts to be shared. His appreciation and kindness made the long day worthwhile.

Polls closed at 9 p.m. We packed up and secured all equipment and ballots. Our day ended at 11 p.m.

As a first-timer, I had been a bit anxious. I was blessed with patient, helpful and supportive co-workers. My primary takeaway? Becoming an election inspector was worthwhile, fulfilling and deeply satisfying. I felt safe.

I encourage everyone who qualifies to become an election inspector. It is a singularly edifying and enriching experience. To lend a helping hand for the betterment of our democracy, please visit www.elections.ny.gov/becomepollworker.html.

The writer is a reporter for TBR News Media.

TOWNLINE RAIL: WHY KINGS PARK?

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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SBU names Pierce Native American Studies director, plans new hires

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Stony Brook University named Joseph Pierce, associate professor in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature, the inaugural director of a Native American and Indigenous Studies effort as the university plans to hire three new faculty in this nascent undertaking.

Next year, the southern flagship school of the State University of New York plans to add staff in the English Department, Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies and Anthropology.

“I have been eager for this to start,” said Pierce, a member of the Cherokee Nation who has been at the university for a decade. “We have so much to contribute to broader discussions that are happening around the world. The university is better by including Native American studies.”

Andrew Newman, professor and current chair of the Department of English, who is also chair of a committee advising Axel Drees, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, described Pierce as having a “real national profile,” adding that he was the “right person to be the founding director.”

Starting next fall, students at the university can minor in Native American and Indigenous Studies, where they can study the history, art, social and political interests, languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples.

The focus on Native American Studies will emphasize transdisciplinary topics such as environmental justice and sustainability.

Earlier this year, Stony Brook won a competition to develop Governors Island as a climate solutions center [see story, “SBU will develop \$700M climate center on Governors Island,” April 26, TBR News Media].

Indigenous scholars should have a “seat at the table,” said Newman, “as they are globally one of the demographics most impacted by climate change.”

Islands in the Pacific are disappearing, Guam is undergoing “significant environmental degradation,” and fires in the Pacific Northwest and leaking pipelines in the United States and Canada are “disproportionately affecting Indigenous peoples,” Pierce added.

Indigenous groups relate to the land in a way that’s different from others, approaching it as stewards and caretakers, Pierce said.

“We see land as a relative,” he noted. “We’re asking very different questions about what it means to care for a place and to care for the environment and to care for the life that sustains it.”

The New York City government proposed plans for flood relief on the lower East Side of Manhattan in the event of future storms like Hurricane Sandy. The proposals included building massive walls and raising



Above, Joseph Pierce, associate professor in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature and the inaugural director of Stony Brook University’s Native American and Indigenous Studies program. Bottom left, Axel Drees, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Bottom right, Andrew Newman, professor and chair of the Department of English. Photos courtesy Stony Brook University



elevated platforms, including clearing thousands of trees.

Numerous indigenous groups objected and protested against such plans, Pierce said.

In an email, Carl Lejuez, Stony Brook University’s provost, suggested that a significant piece of Governors Island is climate justice, so the link between the Governors Island effort and indigenous peoples “fits naturally with the goals of the New York Climate Exchange.”

Lejuez credited Drees as a “driver of this in collaboration with Professor Pierce.” Lejuez added that his office is “definitely providing support to see it come to fruition.”

The most crucial component in the start of this effort is hiring faculty.

“If we build the core faculty across the university, we can definitely consider

expanding research and curriculum opportunities,” Lejuez wrote.

Student interest

Students from the Anthropology Department recently invited Pierce to give a talk about some of his current research.

“It was evident that a lot of them have an interest in working toward understanding humanity, what it means to be human,” he said. They also have an understanding of how anthropology as a discipline has sometimes historically “adopted rather unscientific and proto-eugenic methods” in describing and analyzing Indigenous Peoples.

Students are eager for an alternative perspective on the acquisition and acceptance of knowledge.

Pierce believes students have considerable

interest in Native American Studies. His courses about Latin American indigenous populations are full.

“There are numerous students who are interested in Native American and Indigenous studies but don’t quite have a cohesive plan of study that’s available to them,” Pierce said. “This is remedying that disconnection.”

Long Island students grow up in numerous towns and communities with Native American names, such as Sachem, Wyandanch, Montauk and Setauket.

Newman added that the staff hopes the new effort can do some “outreach to local schools and provide professional development with kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers. It would be an important mission for the university to educate Long Island as a whole about Native culture.”

Cousins born just over an hour apart at St. Charles Hospital

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

It started on Friday, Oct. 13, and concluded with a near photo finish the next day.

Viviana Cueva Gomez, who was getting close to her due date, went to St. Charles Hospital with her husband Bryan at around 7 p.m., when she started to feel discomfort.

The medical staff admitted her to the hospital, where she and Bryan anticipated the delivery of their first child.

Around 3 a.m. on the 14th, Anita Gomez, who is married to Viviana's brother and was also pregnant, began to experience contractions, which sent her to Port Jefferson-based St. Charles Hospital as well.

At one point during the night, Viviana suspected that her sister-in-law was at the hospital.

Viviana asked the hospital staff if they could confirm that Anita was on the same floor.

The hospital, however, couldn't give her that information because of confidentiality rules.

At some point during the next day, Viviana's husband Bryan bumped into his brother-in-law Byron.

"I didn't know my sister was there," said Byron. "When I saw Bryan, we were joking" about how their sons were coming on the same day.

Indeed, as that Saturday wore on, Dr. Sarah Karalitzky performed C sections on both women.

Despite coming to the hospital second, Anita won the birth race, delivering her son Thiago at 4:26 p.m., while Viviana gave birth to Mattias soon thereafter, at 5:45 pm.

Separated by just over an hour with their birth times, the cousins were also just over half a pound different in weight: Thiago weighed in at 8 pounds, one ounce, while Mattias was 7 pounds, 10 ounces.

Big announcements

The extended family work in the same business, towing and fixing cars at S&B Auto Repair in Middle Island.

Viviana recalls the moment her brother shared the big news with their father Secundo at work.

Byron "started to tell my dad," she said. "Everyone asks him what happened, is someone here [having] a baby?"

The family looked at Anita, who also works at S&B.

"Yes," Byron said, "but someone else is, too."

Their father looked at his daughter.

"Viviana, you?" he asked.

When she nodded, he jumped up and clapped for the impending arrival of two grandchildren.

"We didn't believe we would deliver the same day, but things happen," Viviana said.

Viviana, 31, and Byron, 29, have two other siblings, neither of whom is married and has children.

In addition to this momentous day, the



On the left are Viviana Cueva Gomez and Bryan Cueva with their son Mattias. On the right are Byron and Anita Gomez with their second son Thiago. Viviana and Byron are siblings. Photo courtesy St. Charles Hospital

extended Gomez family, who are originally from Ecuador, is having a memorable year, with a cousin giving birth this past June while another cousin is expecting a child in January.

"My family is growing a lot this year," said Viviana, who lives in Medford.

Expectations for the cousins

Byron and Viviana anticipate that the two cousins, who were born one room apart at St. Charles Hospital and who each left the hospital the following Tuesday, Oct. 17, will be close.

"They're going to be like brothers," predicted Byron, who lives in Coram.

The two families haven't yet decided whether they would consider having joint birthday parties for the Libras, whose Zodiac sign is, perhaps

fittingly, represented by two equal parts of a scale.

A friend suggested the two cousins "don't have to share the same day" for future birthday celebrations, said Viviana. Their friend wants to "go to two different parties" to celebrate each of their births.

A beaming brother

Thiago's brother Dereck, who just turned five, is already fond of his younger sibling.

"He says he's going to share TV and toys with him," said his father Byron. "All the time, he's kissing him. He really loves him."

Indeed, Dereck used to play with a friend, but he only wants to be with his younger brother. When Dereck speaks to Thiago, he tells him he loves him and asks his father to

translate his newborn brother's movements and sounds.

"I say that he loves you, too," said Byron.

Karalitzky, who delivered both babies, said staff members were caught up in the excitement.

An OB-GYN, Karalitzky feels "lucky to be in a field where the vast majority of the time, she's able to be a part of good news and a happy day" in people's lives. For the extended family, the shared birthday ensures that people "will always remember your birthday."

Karalitzky, who has been at St. Charles Hospital for 10 years, should know: she was born on her mother's birthday.

Her mom "always made it a special day," Karalitzky said. "Every year, she'd say, 'This is the best birthday present ever.'"

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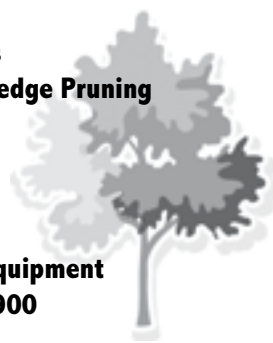
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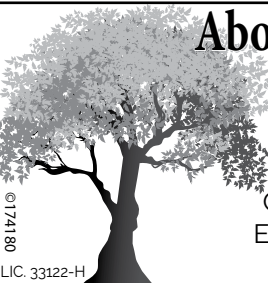


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Editorial

Beyond 'thank you'

Honor veterans by preserving their history

"Thank you for your service."

Especially around Veterans Day, we say and hear these words many times. We express our gratitude and appreciation for American veterans, those who risked it all so that we may enjoy our cherished American freedoms.

The freedom to speak one's mind. The freedom to exercise one's sincere religious convictions. The freedom to peaceably assemble and petition government — and the freedom of the press.

While we often take these freedoms for granted, we must remember that they are not guaranteed. Throughout our national history — from imperial Britain to the Confederate States to the Axis powers to al-Qaida — our enemies have sought to deprive us of our sacred freedoms. They have sought to undermine and wipe away our way of life and our democracy.

Standing in their way time and again have been American service members. To protect and defend our democratic norms and our way of life, veterans risked their lives, many paying the ultimate sacrifice.

Along the North Shore, we live among some of American history's greatest patriots. No matter his or her tour of service, each veteran has a story to share. And crucially, many have carried the banner of service back into civilian life, building up our local communities and making this a better place to live.

We would be deeply troubled by the loss of local and national historical memory. Thankfully, we have history courses built into elementary and middle school curricula. We also enjoy and sincerely appreciate the efforts of local historical societies here preserving our history.

History gives us roots, establishing a sense of who we are and where we came from. To move forward as a community and nation, we must first grasp how we arrived at where we are. Fortunately for us on Long Island, we have a path ahead.

At the former Rocky Point train station, a collection of veterans and local volunteers are building out the Suffolk County World War II and Military History Museum. This regional veterans museum, to be operated by VFW Post 6249, aims to tell the stories of local service members from across Long Island. The museum is slated to launch on Thursday, Dec. 7.

Since learning of this project, our staff has enthusiastically supported its mission. We believe the museum will help foster two of our central goals as a staff: informing locals about their community and inspiring love for this place we call home.

As this year's Veterans Day services wind down, we can all help this museum get off the ground. The museum is actively seeking donations in the form of equipment, uniforms, combat supplies and other artifacts and memorabilia.

We ask our readers to honor a veteran in their own lives by donating. We urge all to help lend a hand — because these stories are too valuable to lose to history.

To donate, contact the museum's curator, Rich Acritelli, by emailing richvack@yahoo.com.

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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**

Perspective: 'Diet Coke' Democrats not effective?

Over the next few months, voters and pundits alike will dissect and pontificate about how Long Island as a region could be a "red den" when voter registration is relatively even — it was 50/50 in 2020 between Biden and Trump — and given Democratic party victories across other states, including Kentucky.

A familiar chorus making the rounds is saying that Democrats running as "GOP-lite" is not an effective strategy. This theory effectively states that if consumers are given a choice between Coke and Diet Coke, they will invariably choose classic Coke — or the Republican candidate — over the Democratic GOP-lite candidate.

There is some curious credence to that theory as we are entering what I call the "voter silo" era of American politics, where the level of cross-pollination — namely voters spreading their ballot choices among Democrats and Republicans, as well as voters crossing party lines — is a rare phenomenon. This makes messaging to voters more complicated.

When I ran for Brookhaven Town highway superintendent in 2017 and 2019, I engaged in guerilla marketing, carrying a piece of asphalt around to depict how grave our infrastructure problem was. It was entertaining in every room I entered.

I would canvass neighborhoods, find the worst road and open my statement with "Who took Chaplin Boulevard here?" or any other road in the area. "Well, I brought a piece of it here with me" to a chorus of laughter. I was able to lower the margins in some districts that were 75% red to 60% red, and in my hometown of Selden, flip districts 70% red to 55% blue.

Guess what? I still lost, both times.

Look, my opponent had a ton of money, the Republican and Conservative line, a 12-year political career and the political machine behind him. While the voters we could get our message to were somewhat responsive, it is very hard to get a majority of red voters to cross over unless you have deep ties to the community you seek to represent in elected office.



By Anthony R. Portesy

The only reason I flipped election districts in Selden and Centereach is because I played on the voters' baseball teams or shoveled their driveways as a kid. Community ties matter.

Long Island as a region certainly has voters that will never leave the GOP silo no matter how much we hammer them on corruption, cronyism, career political careers or any of the other poll-

tested modicums of why America hates politicians. But, as one of my mentors and good friends, Rabia Aziz, has told me over and over, "We have to make political campaigns bottom up from the grassroots instead of top down."

As Democrats, we tend to believe that our ideas will rule the day and that may be true, but at the end of the day, voters want to vote for someone they feel will represent their interests. This starts by identifying the issues that people care about: the disgraced park, the dilapidated shopping center, the broken road, the burnt-out streetlight. That's local politics.

U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) was called "Senator Pothole" because he was known to personally get involved to fix issues in the local community. His successor, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), has copied that business model to a tee.

Look, there are a litany of other issues including fusion voting (the practice should be legislatively banned by the state delegation) and money in local politics (some of these career politicians have more money than people running for Congress in other states). But at the end of the day, we have to cultivate community ties. My councilmember, Jonathan Kornreich (D-Stony Brook), was a school board member and civic leader before becoming councilmember.

As we analyze the results of the election and agonize over how we repair our relationship with the electorate, let's remember there is no replacement for local community involvement in the very fabric of the issues that affect our neighborhoods.

The writer is the chair of the Brookhaven Town Democratic Committee.

Letter to the Editor

Have our leaders ever traveled along the Port Jeff Branch?

You can learn a great deal about the priorities of our elected officials by what they do and don't do when it comes to delivering funding for transportation projects.

Over the past few days, U.S. Sens. Chuck Schumer [D-NY] and Kirsten Gillibrand [D-NY], joined by Gov. Kathy Hochul [D] and others, announced federal funding of \$1.3 billion toward advancing the \$1.6 billion East River Tunnel reconstruction, \$1.6 billion toward the \$3.1 billion Metro North Bronx East Penn Station Access, \$3.4 billion toward the \$7.7 billion New York City Transit Second Avenue Subway Phase 2 and \$3.8 billion toward Amtrak's \$16.8 billion Gateway Tunnel

(for two new tunnels plus rehabilitation of two existing Hudson River tunnels connecting New Jersey with Penn Station) projects.

Not a dime as a down payment to pay for any National Environmental Policy Act review, additional planning or preliminary design and engineering for the \$3 billion-plus MTA Long Island Rail Road double tracking electrification of the Port Jefferson Branch.

This seed money, in the millions, is necessary if these improvements to the LIRR Port Jefferson Branch can become eligible for any future Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants New Starts Core Capacity Full Funding Grant Agreement for \$1.5 billion many years down the road.

Schumer, Gillibrand and Hochul, by their actions — or in this case, inaction — have clearly indicated no interest in supporting any advancement of future capital improvements to the Port Jefferson Branch. Commuters, residents, taxpayers, project advocates and others may want to consider withholding your potential campaign contributions and votes when they run for another term in office.

This is the only influence you have.

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Editor's note: The writer is a transportation analyst and former director for Federal Transit Administration Region 2.

Opinion

Living in a world where it couldn't possibly be my fault

We've come a long way from the "my dog ate my homework" days. I mean, come on, let's give our society the credit it's due. We have taken the blame game, the finger pointing and the it-couldn't-be-me-because-butter-wouldn't-melt-in-my-mouth game to an entirely new stratosphere.



**D. None
of the above**
BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

Gone are the days of simple, linear and mostly nonsensical excuses.

Let's start in Washington, DC, which is the biggest clown show this side of the Atlantic and where the notion of a democracy gets battle tested nearly every day.

Who is responsible for the national debt? That, of course, depends on whom you ask. The democrats point to former President

Trump, while the republicans accuse President Biden and the Democrats.

Maybe those wily politicians are onto something. You see, if no one takes responsibility for anything and we can point fingers at the other side reflexively and without any effort to compromise and work together, we can live without consequence, create our own economics and come up with judgmental and schoolyard bully nicknames for the other side.

Brilliant! Blame someone else convincingly enough and not only do you not have to look in the mirror or come up with solutions, but you can also turn your entire reason for being into defeating the other side or, at the very least, enjoying their losses.

Look, I'm a Yankees fan. I know all about Schadenfreude. The next best thing to a Yankees victory, and it's a close second, is a Red Sox loss.

But I digress. People have turned blaming others into a fine art. In sports, athletes and coaches deploy the modern blame game

to excuse their losses or to step back from accepting responsibility or, perish the thought, to give the other team credit.

Like a zebra in the Serengeti to a hungry lion, referees in their striped uniforms in football games become convenient targets. They took away a victory by calling a game against us. Athletes and coaches can dig their verbal claws and teeth into those officials, who stole what would certainly have been a more favorable outcome.

How about school? It couldn't possibly be the fault of our angelic children, who were busy watching these athletes on TV or on their phones the night before, for doing poorly on a test. It has to be the teacher's fault. If teachers could only inspire their classes, our children would learn and excel.

You know who I like to blame? I like to focus on tall people. Don't get me wrong. Some of my best friends are tall. It's just that, well, have you noticed that tall people get a lot of attention? Some of them are CEOs of big

companies and make enormous salaries. They are also picked first in gym, which gives them the confidence to become successful.

While we're affixing blame, let's also shake our heads at gym class. Sure, it's healthy to run around and have a few moments when we're not listening to teachers who may or may not inspire us, but gym class can bruise egos and create a Darwinian world where height, which is kind of the fault of our parents and their parents and on and on, is an advantage.

Hey, I'm not whining. Okay, well, maybe I am, but it's not me and it's certainly not my fault. I blame society, commentators on TV, coaches, politicians, teachers, my parents, your parents, the parents of the kid who served as a bad role model for my kids, and maybe Adam, Eve and the snake for putting us in this position.

Oh, and you can be sure butter wouldn't melt in my mouth. I have a dairy allergy, which, ironically, is the fault of my dairy farmer grandfather.

What are your likes and dislikes about yourself?

Just for fun during a break, I wandered around the office, asking staffers what they liked best about themselves and what they liked least. I got some interesting answers after assuring them they would not be identified nor fired as a result of their responses.

I would ask you the same question, dear reader.



**Between
you and me**
BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF

But first, perhaps you would like to know what some of the others said. These are not direct quotes but are intended to summarize the thoughts.

"I like my ability to analyze a situation, to think it out," said one. "By the same token, I don't like that I tend to overthink issues and questions, like this one. Or my self-criticism"

"I'm pleased that I'm steadfast and see my way through a project or a decision," said another.

"I'm not easily dissuaded or derailed." What wasn't appreciated? "I'm shrinking, losing height as I age."

Here are some more comments, some delivered off the top of their heads; others after some premeditation, were emailed to me.

"Three things I like about myself: My sense of humor; my capacity for compassion and thoughtfulness, although it can be heartbreaking at times; and my ability to see multiple facets of a situation." As far as dislikes: "Although I like being direct, sometimes I can be too direct and it may take people off guard; I don't have much patience; I can't seem to stick with an exercise regimen."

This same person added, "Well it's been an interesting exercise. I have been doing a little experiment of my own with this. I've been asking my friends and family which has led to great conversations. So thank you for that!"

Not having enough patience was often cited as a shortcoming. Other positives were offered with enthusiasm.

"Authenticity!"

"Comfortable in my own skin.!"

"Integrity!!"

"Good listener!"

"A good friend!"

"My curiosity!"

Another staffer referred to a sense of humor twice: "I like my humor—but sometimes it gets me into trouble." This same person "cares about other people."

"I like that I get along well with other people," was shared with me by another. "I am a team player And I always pay my bills on time." On the other hand, "I have a time management problem, and I worry too much. In fact, I worry about worrying too much."

And here is an almost universal one. "I can't stay on a diet!"

So it seems only fair that I tell you my top likes and dislikes. Here goes, dislikes first.

I'm a lifelong procrastinator. 'Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow' was a saying made for me. Now in my defense, I will suggest that there might be some wisdom in that because...sometimes problems and chores

disappear by tomorrow. But most of the time, that's a lame excuse. I'm sure one of the appeals of journalism for me is that it has unyielding deadlines for press time, thus forcing me to get going.

Another personal drawback is my tendency to keeping my desk messy. I know where everything is, but no one else does. Then I have to go through extended bouts of straightening the many papers. A third is my inability to resist a nosh, especially if it is something sweet.

As to my likes, I, too, value my sense of humor, which has enabled me to endure the incongruities of life. Also I am intrigued by and deeply interested in others' lives, which I guess is a help in interviewing. And lastly, I am grateful for my appreciation of the natural beauty in the world. Snow-covered mountains, a slow moving river under umbrellas of green trees, the waves in the harbor rhythmically caressing the shore, the light on the underbellies of the clouds after a rain, the bluejays casing my deck for next year's nesting, the bright yellow forsythia after a brown and grey winter, all bring joy to my soul.



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