SBU duo awarded $1.2M for pathogen prevention

Stony Brook scientists look to cicada wings for insights into creating antimicrobial surfaces — A8
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CD1 Democratic primary sees candidate shakeup

BY AIDAN JOHNSON
DESK@TBNNEWSMEDIA.COM

As the primary elections move closer, New York’s 1st Congressional District has experienced some shakeups within the Democratic race. Three candidates, Craig Herskowitz, Kyle Hill and James Gaughran, have exited.

Herskowitz left the race to instead pursue the New York State Senate 2nd District, saying, “In the meantime, I’m ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work electing Nancy Goroff as our next representative in Congress for District 1.”

In a press release, Hill announced that he was suspending his campaign, stating that he encourages “Suffolk Democrats to maintain their focus on flipping NY-1 because this election is entirely up for grabs.”

Gaughran is no longer running due to the redistricting of the congressional districts. Despite still living inside the new district, and therefore being qualified to run, he feels that his Democratic base has been gutted, saying in an interview that “the redistricting took away all of the large Democratic communities in the Town of Huntington that I represented in the state Senate and gave them to [U.S. Rep.] Tom Suozzi [D-NY].” Since leaving the race, Gaughran has endorsed the newest candidate, John Avlon.

Owning homes in Sag Harbor and Manhattan, Avlon announced his bid for the congressional seat on Feb. 21, saying in a video posted to social media platform X: “This election is not a drill. It’s up to all of us to step up and get off the sidelines.” He is currently facing off against fellow Democrat Goroff.

Avlon has previously served as a CNN contributor and editor of The Daily Beast. Additionally, he helped found No Labels, a centrist political organization. However, Avlon has since condemned the organization’s attempt to run a third-party presidential candidate in the upcoming election, saying he “hasn’t had anything to do with the organization in more than a decade.”

Avlon is married to Margaret Hoover, host of the PBS public affairs program “Firing Line.” She is a great-granddaughter of Herbert Hoover, the 31st U.S. president. They have two children.

In a phone interview, Avlon detailed how he first became involved in politics, explaining that his grandparents were immigrants “and like a lot of immigrant families, we grew up really patriotic.”

“My grandfather would talk about Abe Lincoln (R) or Harry Truman (D) like they were present in our lives, and that really inspired me and just got me interested,” he said.

Avlon went on to volunteer for both of Bill Clinton’s (D) campaigns, saying his “third-way approach to politics made a lot of sense to me.”

The new candidate decided to run for Congress after feeling frustrated that the seat wasn’t considered a national priority.

“I’ve voted here for years, it’s my home,” he said. “It’s a community I love and it’s a district that I have watched with some frustration knowing that it’s a swing seat, knowing the Democrats can compete here.”

Avlon believes that Democrats need to “play offense, not defense,” saying that it was necessary to not just reach out to the Democratic Party, but to independent voters and Republicans who are against Donald Trump (R).

“I deeply believe that hyperpartisanship and polarization is a danger to American democracy and that we need to come up with new solutions, commonsense solutions that can help us reunite as a nation,” he said.

Avlon described one of his fundamental issues as strengthening the middle class in the United States as a whole and Long Island in particular.

He believes that a way to combat the affordability crisis is to “restore state and local tax deductions as they were. If they’re restored, which they will be if Democrats control Congress, that’s real money in people’s pockets.”

Avlon also said that the child tax credit should be expanded again, citing the near 50% decline in childhood poverty rates that the expansion led to during the pandemic.

While he feels that things are moving in the right direction to address affordability concerns, he said that they are not going fast enough, citing statutes such as the CHIPs and Science Act as “huge opportunities that could be transformative for the middle class, but they’re going to take time to be fully felt.”

“We have] less inflation than most industrialized nations and a faster recovery from the pandemic, but it can’t come fast enough,” he said.

Avlon stressed working with the communities to build affordable housing that is being built should be “consistent with the character of the communities.”

Additionally, Avlon noted the impact that climate change has had on Long Island’s coastal communities, saying that the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of Transportation & Infrastructure, which former CD1 Congressman Tim Bishop (D) served on, would be a “perfect place to deal with some of these issues.”

In a phone interview Goroff, who is now the only other Democratic candidate for the congressional seat, said, “I believe that the voters should decide who will represent them, and that includes primary voters deciding who the candidate should be, and so I welcome anyone who wants to join this fight.”

The Democratic primary is on June 25.
Remembering Arthur Grollman

Dr. Grollman’s scholarly output was prolific, with over 200 papers that advanced our understanding of molecular biology and cancer research. His work on the biological consequences of DNA damage and the antitumor agent bleomycin was groundbreaking, as were his studies on the three-dimensional structures of DNA enzymes.

A recognized authority on the clinical pharmacology of herbal medicines, Dr. Grollman’s expertise was sought by the White House Commission on Alternative and Complementary Health Policy and Governor George Pataki’s Task Force on Life and Law. His academic influence extended globally, with visiting professorships at prestigious institutions around the world.

In 2003, his contributions were honored with the title of Distinguished Professor of Pharmacological Sciences at Stony Brook. His pioneering work earned him numerous accolades, including an American Cancer Society Scholarship Award and a MERIT award from the National Cancer Institute. The Environmental Mutagen Society recognized his vital research on environmental mutagenesis and his insights into DNA repair mechanisms.

As the world grappled with COVID-19, Dr. Grollman rose to the challenge, dedicating himself to the fight against the pandemic with unwavering commitment.

In 2011, the Environmental Mutagen Society bestowed upon him a prestigious recognition award for his research in environmental mutagenesis, which brought to light the public health crisis of aristolochic acid-induced kidney failure and urothelial cancer. This award also honored his seminal work in elucidating the molecular mechanisms by which DNA repair proteins process oxidative DNA damage.

During the tumultuous times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Grollman’s indefatigable spirit shone brightly as he led a consortium of top medical and scientific minds from an off-university chemistry lab. Together, they revisited a drug he had worked on in the 1960s—emetine—and studied its effectiveness and toxicity. His dedication persisted until his final days, culminating in the shipment of newly manufactured pills for the first clinical trial against Covid. His team’s research also demonstrated emetine’s efficacy as an antiviral agent against Zika, Ebola, and herpesviruses.

Dr. Grollman’s investigative prowess was pivotal in discovering the cause of Balkan Endemic Nephropathy, a previously fatal kidney disease. His relentless research and collaboration across nations revealed that the herb Aristolochia, intermingled with wheat crops in the Balkans, was the culprit. His findings led to changes in farming and milling methods that halted the disease’s spread.

Moreover, he identified the use of this herb in Traditional Chinese Medicine as the cause of Taiwan’s high rate of urothelial cancer, leading to a cessation in its use and a subsequent decline in kidney failure and cancer cases in the region.

An adventurer at heart, Dr. Grollman’s curiosity extended beyond the realms of science and medicine. He traversed all continents except Antarctica, scaling peaks such as Mt. Whitney and Mt. Kilimanjaro, as well as the Alps, the Andes, and Mt. Kellas. His journeys took him to Base Camp 3 on Everest and through the Karakoram Mountains, where he and his guide charted a new route. His profound connection with the Himalayas led to a friendship with the Dalai Lama, whom he invited to Stony Brook to receive an honorary degree. Dr. Grollman also established a program at Stony Brook University to support a Tibetan student annually, typically in pursuit of a degree in Public Health.

A champion of justice, Dr. Grollman’s actions consistently reflected his commitment to protecting and supporting those treated unfairly. His leadership and mentorship touched countless lives, leaving an indelible mark on those who had the privilege of knowing him and benefiting from his work. Dr. Grollman’s passing leaves a void in the hearts of many, but his enduring impact on science, medicine, and humanity will forever be cherished and remembered.

New York State must close the drugged driving loopholes

New York’s roads are deadlier than ever. With the legalization of personal use of marijuana and New York’s antiquated impaired driving laws, which have not kept up with new synthetic designer drugs, the problem is getting worse by the day. The Drugged Driving Loopholes in our laws enable dangerous drivers to escape responsibility far too often while endangering innocent people simply trying to drive on our roads or walk on our sidewalks in safety.

The Drugged Driving Loopholes exist because New York is one of only four states that still uses an archaic list to allow for arrest and prosecution of drugged driving. In New York, to prosecute a drugged driver, it is not enough that the drug has impaired the driver. The substance must be listed in the Public Health Law passed by the state Legislature and signed by the governor, before a dangerous, obviously impaired driver can be arrested. Right now, a driver can be as “high as a kite,” but if they are high on a drug, or other substance that is not listed, they go free. For instance, drugs such as xylazine (“tranq”), analogues of fentanyl and nitazene (“ISO”) are not on New York’s list.

With modern chemistry, our lawmakers cannot keep up with new designer synthetic drugs coming out regularly. The constant influx of new impairing substances has turned the drug list into a barrier against stopping dangerously impaired drivers. It is at the root of the National Transportation Safety Board’s recommendation to New York and three other states to abandon the limitation of an ineffective drug list that will never be able to keep up.

Additionally, even drivers high on a drug that is on New York’s list can avoid responsibility by simply refusing to take an identifying test because it prevents the drug from being named. Twenty percent of drivers in New York evaluated by police Drug Recognition Experts in 2021 refused to take a chemical test, up from 13 percent in 2019. We are not protected when drugged drivers can escape arrest simply by refusing a test.

The type of alcohol ingested by a driver does not have to be named for someone to be charged with Driving While Intoxicated and if impairment is observed, no test is needed to establish a blood alcohol level or whether it was whiskey, vodka or wine, that has caused a driver to be impaired. The same should be true for drugs.

Just like with alcohol impairment, driver appearance, behavior and common sense ought to apply to drug-impaired drivers too. Blood alcohol tests are valuable evidence in DWI cases, but if drivers refuse the test for alcohol, they can still be prosecuted and lose their licenses based on the other impairment factors.

This is a public safety and public health emergency. If we have learned anything during the current opioid crisis, it is that public safety is enhanced when law enforcement and addiction treatment providers work together. Laws that hold people accountable for their actions, paired with evidence-based substance use prevention messages and readily accessible drug and alcohol treatment for those who need it, will save lives.

It is time to plug the loopholes. New York’s outdated approach to impaired driving handcuffs law enforcement, leaves those struggling with a drug problem untreated and puts innocent people at risk. A commonsense bipartisan bill (S3135/A174), backed by both law enforcement and addiction treatment providers, has been introduced in Albany this session to plug these Drugged Driving Loopholes. We need to be responsible and keep everyone safe. It is time to reverse the increase in highway deaths and save lives by passing the Deadly Driving Bill.

Raymond A. Tierney (R) is the Suffolk County district attorney and Dr. Jeffrey L. Reynolds is the president/CEO of Family and Children’s Association, based in Garden City. Both are members of the Coalition to Protect New Yorkers from Drugged Driving.
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Two men indicted for three arsons and nine commercial burglaries in area

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on Feb. 27 that Frank Costa, 54, of Port Jefferson Station, and Jon Pucci, 29 of Middle Island were indicted for allegedly committing a series of three arsons and nine commercial burglaries at businesses throughout Suffolk County.

According to the investigation, between August 20, 2023, and Feb. 9, 2024, Costa and Pucci allegedly burglarized nine businesses and set fires at three PSEG Long Island substations in Suffolk County. The defendants apparently believed the fires would cause power outages in the local community, which would distract law enforcement while Costa and Pucci committed the burglaries. On Feb. 10, Suffolk County Police Department detectives followed Costa and Pucci and placed them under arrest.

While police searched the location, they discovered an ATM that was allegedly stolen from a Shell Gas Station in Ridge the day before. Money from the ATM was allegedly found in the defendants’ pockets after their arrest.

The alleged arsons occurred at the PSEG LI Terryville Substation on Aug. 20, PSEG LI Centereach Substation on Sept. 16, and PSEG LI Medford/West Yaphank Substation on Feb. 5.

The alleged burglaries occurred at USA Gas in Middle Island on Dec. 11 and 26; BP Gas in Ridge on Dec. 26; Gulf Gas in Smithtown on Dec. 29; BP Gas in Bohemia on Dec. 31; Ideal Food Basket, Port Jefferson and DJM Laundromat in Coram on Jan. 12; Back Country Deli in Yaphank on Jan. 24; Kings Park Car Care in Kings Park on Jan. 30; and Shell Gas Station in Ridge on Feb. 9.

Costa and Pucci were each indicted for Burglary, Criminal Possession of a Weapon, Attempted Burglary, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property and Arson.

“These alleged criminal acts have not only caused extensive damage, but have also put the lives of Suffolk County residents and first responders at risk,” said District Attorney Tierney. “I thank the Suffolk County Police Department for their thorough investigation of this case. Now, my office will ensure that these defendants are held accountable for their alleged extremely dangerous crimes.”

— SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.’S OFFICE
NOTICE OF ANNUAL BUDGET VOTE AND ELECTION OF THE MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY, TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN, COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, NEW YORK

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Annual Budget Vote and Election of the Middle Country Public Library at Centereche, Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York, will be held in the Centereche Building of the Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Boulevard, Centerche, New York, on Thursday, April 2, 2024, at 9:30 A.M. prevailing time, for the purpose of voting upon the following items:

(1) To adopt the Annual Library Budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025 and to authorize that the requisite portion thereof be raised by taxation on the taxable property of the Middle Country Central School District; and

(2) To elect one (1) Trustee to the Middle Country Public Library to fill a five (5) year term commencing July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2029, as a result of the expiration of the term of office presently held by Lisa Mitnick.

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that for the purpose of voting at such meeting on April 9, 2024 the polls will open between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time, and voting will be held in the Middle Country Public Library (Centerech Building), 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a copy of a statement of the amount of money which will be required for the ensuing year for the Middle Country Library’s purposes, exclusive of public moneys, may be obtained by any resident of the District during the fourteen (14) days immediately preceding said meeting or Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holidays from the Library, located at 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York during the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. prevailing time; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that petitions nominating candidates for the Office of Trustee of the Middle Country Public Library are available from the Office of the Election Clerk (designated Election Officer) located in the Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Boulevard, Centerche, New York. Petitions may be filed on any weekday between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., prevailing time not later than Monday, March 11, 2024. Each petition must be directed to the Election Clerk and must designate the office for which the name and residence of the candidate and must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) qualified voters of the District setting forth their addresses; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that personal registration of voters is required either pursuant to § 2014 of the Education Law or pursuant to Article 5 of the Education Law. If a voter has heretofore registered pursuant to § 2014 of the Education Law and has voted at any Annual or Special District Meeting within the past four (4) years, such voter is eligible to vote at this vote/election; if a voter is registered and eligible to vote pursuant to Article 5 of the Education Law, such voter is also eligible to vote at this election. All other persons who wish to vote must register. The Board of Registration will meet for the purpose of registering all qualified voters of the District pursuant to § 2014 of the Education Law on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time at the Library Building, 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York and at the election/vote, at which time any person will be entitled to have his/her name placed on such register. Such registration at the meeting of the Board of Registration he or she is known, or proven to the satisfaction of the Board of Registration, to be then or thereafter entitled to vote at such Special District Meeting or Annual District Meeting for which the register is prepared, and that the register so prepared pursuant to § 2014 of the Education Law of the State of New York and the registration list prepared by the Board of Elections of Suffolk County will be filed in the office of the Election Clerk, and will be open for inspection by any qualified voter of the District on each of the five (5) days prior to April 9, 2024 for as long as the Sunday and holidays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. prevailing time; and

FURTHER NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that applications for absentee and early voter ballots for the election of Trustee of the Library, and for the adoption of the annual budget may be applied for at the office of the Election Clerk, 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York during regular business hours. Such application must be received by the Election Clerk no later than 5 pm on the day of the election or by 5pm on April 8, 2024 if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. No absentee or early voter’s ballot will be canvassed unless it shall have been received in the office of the Election Clerk not later than 5 pm on the day of the vote/election. A list of all persons to whom absentee ballots shall have been issued will be available in the Election Clerk’s office during regular business hours on each of the five days prior to April 9, 2024 except Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

DATED: Centerche, New York December 20, 2023

BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE MIDDLE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY
Lisa Mitnick, President

189000 2/22 4x tmc

AVIS DE VOTACIÓN DEL PRESUPUESTO ANUAL Y DE LA ELECCIÓN DE LA BIBLIOTECA PÚBLICA DE MIDDLE COUNTRY, CIUDAD DE BROOKHAVEN, CONDADO DE SUFFOLK, NUEVA YORK

EN EL HORA DE 9:30 A.M. A 5:00 P.M. HORA VIGENTE,

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE INFORMA que la solicitud de nominación de los votantes calificados del Distrito para el año fiscal 2024-2025 y autorización que la parte necesaria de este se reduce mediante impuestos sobre la propiedad inmobiliaria del Distrito Escolar Central de Middle Country, y

(2) elegir un (1) fideicomisario de la Biblioteca Pública de Middle Country para cumplir un mandato de cinco (5) años que se iniciará el 1 de julio de 2024 y terminará el 30 de junio de 2029 como resultado de la finalización del mandato que actualmente ocupa Lisa Mitnick.

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE INFORMA que, con el fin de votar en dicha sesión del 9 de abril de 2024, la votación se llevará a cabo entre las 9:30 a.m. y las 9:00 p.m. hora vigente, y la votación se llevará a cabo en la Biblioteca Pública de Middle Country (Centerche Building), 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York.

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE INFORMA que una copia de la declaración de la cantidad de dinero que se necesitará para el año siguiente para los fines de la Biblioteca de Middle Country, excluyendo los fondos públicos, podrá ser adquirida por cualquier residente del Distrito Escolar del Distrito en cada uno de los cinco (5) años anteriores, dicho votante es elegible para votar en esta votación o elección; si un votante está registrado y es elegible para votar de conformidad con el artículo 5 de la Ley de Elecciones, dicho votante también es elegible para votar en la que todas las demás personas que deseen votar deben registrarse. La Junta de Registro fijó el horario para los votantes calificados del Distrito con conformidad con la sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación, el día martes 2 de abril de 2024, entre las 9:30 a.m. y las 9:00 p.m. hora vigente en el edificio de la Biblioteca 101 Eastwood Blvd, Centerche, Nueva York y en la elección o votación, en cuyo momento cualquier persona tendrá derecho a que su nombre se incluya en dicho registro, siempre y cuando la reunión de la Junta de Registro se sepa, o se demuestre a satisfacción de la Junta de Registro, que tiene derecho a votar en ese momento o posteriormente en dicha Junta Especial de Distrito o la reunión del Distrito Anual para la que se prepara el registro, y que el registro así preparado de conformidad con la sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación del Estado de Nueva York durante la reunión del Consejo de la Junta Electoral del Condado de Suffolk en los Oficinas del Secretario de la Junta Electoral del Condado de Suffolk de Middle Country que se celebrará el 2 de abril de 2024, desocupado por no menos veinticinco (25) votantes calificados en dicha Junta Especial de Distrito para el año 2024-2025, excluyendo sábados, domingos y días festivos, desde las 9:30 a.m. hasta las 5:00 p.m. hora vigente; y

POR LA PRESENTE TAMBIÉN SE INFORMA que las solicitudes de boletas electorales de votante ausente para la elección de fideicomisarios de la Biblioteca, y para la adopción del presupuesto anual pueden solicitarse en la oficina del Secretario de la Junta en 101 Eastwood Blvd., Centerche, New York 11720 durante el horario de oficina. El Secretario de la Junta debe recibir dicha solicitud hasta las 5:00 p.m. siete (7) días antes de la votación o elección, y en caso de que la boleta sea enviada por correo al votante, o antes de las 5:00 p.m. del 8 de abril de 2024, en caso de que la boleta se entregue personalmente al votante. No se escuchará ninguna boleta electoral de votante ausente salvo que haya sido recibida en la Oficina del Secretario de la Junta hasta las 5:00 p.m. del día de la votación o elección. Un listado de todas las personas a quienes se entregaron boletas electorales de votante ausente estará disponible en la Oficina del Secretario de la Junta del día de la reunión del Consejo de la Junta Especial de Distrito o la reunión del Distrito Anual para la que se emitió el registro, y que el registro así preparado de conformidad con la sección 2014 de la Ley de Educación, el día martes 2 de abril de 2024, entre las 9:30 a.m. y las 9:00 p.m. hora vigente en el edificio de la Biblioteca, ubicada en 101 Eastwood Blvd, Centerche, New York.
SBU couple scores $1.2M to study ways to provide anti pathogen coating

By Daniel Dunaief
Desk@bnewsmedia.com

Hoping to take a page out of nature’s playbook, a married couple in the Department of Materials Science and Chemical Engineering is studying a structure that could prevent the spread of pathogens on the surface.

Before the pandemic started, Research Professor Maya Endoh and Associate Professor Tadanori Koga were exploring how anti microbial coatings controlled pathogens on the molecular scale. With the pandemic, they became more focused on ways to prevent pathogens from causing infections after people came into contact with contaminated surfaces.

Working with researchers from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, the team received $12 million over three years as a part of the Department of Energy’s Biopreparedness Research Virtual Experiment initiative, which supports multidisciplinary research efforts designed to strengthen precautionary measures against infectious disease outbreaks. Koga and Endoh received a subcontract of $1.2 million from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory which runs until December 2026.

This kind of study, along with other funded research on the spread of pathogens, could be “important to prevent the next pandemic,” said Endoh. She added that this kind of work could not only help reduce the danger from another potential pandemic, but could also help cut down infections from other common health threats.

The research plans to explore the physical and chemical interactions that occur when bacteria come in contact with a material surface.

To develop surface coatings that might resist the spread of disease-carrying pathogens, Koga and Endoh are turning to an insect that will be even more abundant than usual this year. For the first time since 1803, the 13-year and 17-year cicadas will emerge at the same time.

Koga and Endoh, however, are less focused on their prevalence or their loud noises than they are on their wings, which resist bacteria and may also provide protection against viruses and fungi, as something about their nanostructure disables these pathogens.

“We want to learn from nature,” said Endoh. “As material scientists, we want to mimic this structure.”

Their method of killing bacteria is to facilitate bacterial attachment to nanopatterned surfaces. They are targeting surfaces that are constantly and directly exposed to pathogens, such as medical devices, tools and sensors.

Their computational results suggest that a nanopatterned surface can puncture a bacterial outer membrane. These scientists can not specify the time range clearly, which is something they are pursuing with the awarded project.

“We are targeting the surfaces which are constantly and directly exposed to pathogens, such as medical devices, tools and sensors,” Koga and Endoh explained in an email.

Structural defense

The structure of the cicada wings have nanopillars that are about 100 nanometers tall and that are separated by about 100 nanometers from each other. The nanopillars they plan to use have a height of 10 nanometers, a diameter of 50 nanometers and a space between adjacent cylinders of 70 nanometers.

By creating a similar structure with polymers, the Stony Brook scientists will attempt to manufacture materials that provide the same resistance.

They will optimize the geometric parameters of the nanostructure, especially its height and interpillar spacing, to create different nano topographies, including nanopillars, nanowalls, nanospikes and nanodomes.

They are starting their work with the bacteria E. coli and will use computational approaches to optimize surface geometric parameters, bacteria-substrate interactions and bacterial wall stiffness to create a robust structure-guided antimicrobial surface.

They will use polystyrene block polymers and are planning to use different ingredients such as biopolymers. They believe the ingredients can be varied.

According to their recent molecular dynamics simulations mimicking experimental conditions, attractive interactions promote additional membrane attachment, pulling the membrane taut against the pillars and creating tension that ruptures the cell wall. The rupture occurs at the high curvature regions near the edge of the pillars.

Surfaces coated by polymers would likely require periodic coating applications. The scientists treat those polymers with a three-dimensional link to improve the mechanical property. They also apply atomic-thin scale metal layers to make the surface more durable.

In collaboration with Brookhaven National Laboratory, they are trying to determine how to make this kind of pattern with different substances.

“We don’t know what shape is the best [for various pathogens], what size is the best and what spacing is the best,” said Koga.

Benefits of collaboration

Koga and Endoh appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with a range of talented scientists at other institutions.

“Luckily, we have a lot of collaborators,” Endoh said.

Koga and Endoh became a part of a bigger collaboration when they worked with Jan-Michael Carrillo and Bobby Sumpter at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, who started this project.

“This is a nice step, but it’s not the end,” said Koga. The next step is to “create a real material.”

Lifelong collaboration

Koga and Endoh met in their native Japan. Koga is from Kyushu, while Endoh grew up in Sendai, which was the epicenter of the Tōhoku earthquake in 2011, which created the tsunami at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

They came to the United States when Koga wanted to become a postdoctoral researcher for a two year assignment at Stony Brook. Over 27 years, and four children later, they are still at Stony Brook.

Over the years, Endoh juggled motherhood and a postponed PhD, which she eventually received from Kyoto University.

Koga enjoys watching Japanese players in Major League Baseball and is a fan of Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani. A “soccer mom,” Endoh enjoys cooking and playing the violin. The couple hikes in the summer and skis in the winter.

As for their own protective measures during the pandemic, Koga and Endoh regularly washed their hands, although they didn’t use Purell or other special wipes to clean any surfaces.
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For more information, visit CentereachPatientCare.org
Town of Brookhaven board amends town code and serves as the planning board

At a recent Town of Brookhaven board meeting, the board voted unanimously to approve a resolution with the intent of the board to assume the duties of the Planning Board. The action was taken to streamline applications, save time, save money and eliminate the “red tape” commonly associated with the process of obtaining a community-supported planning approval. The new law is now in effect.

On Long Island, government entities have many layers and as the largest town of 10 towns in Suffolk County, comprising a third of the entire population, Brookhaven plans to lead by example. Since being elected in 2023, Supervisor Dan Panico (R) and the Town Board have moved away from older methodology and are becoming far more involved in the site plan aspects traditionally under the purview of the Planning Board.

When it comes to the architecture, landscaping, fencing, lighting, signage, etc., the Town Board members and the Planning Department are far more thoughtful and thorough than in decades past. Therefore, it makes little sense to have an applicant come forward with a community-supported redevelopment to the Town Board with roughly 80% of the site plan completed and ready for the approval of a change of zone, to then be sent to the Planning Board for the completion of the last 20% and a possible year-long delay.

In discussing the change, Panico said, “We cannot and should not simply do things just because it is the way it has always been done. It’s time to lead and while there will be more work for the Town Board, the times demand it.”

The result of the change in the Town Code is that the applicant and the community will now have the ability to give input directly to their elected council representative and the supervisor as opposed to an appointed board member. Panico said, “It should be noted that these reforms are in no way reflective of the work ethic or work product of the members of the Planning Board. These members have served the town dutifully in their roles, but we must make these changes because the times demand it.”

“In my inaugural address earlier this year, I meant every word I spoke, and it should be noted that I am doing exactly what I said I would do as Brookhaven Town supervisor. We are going to move this town forward to a brighter future and meet the needs of our residents and our region’s economy. This is only the beginning of the changes that will come,” Panico concluded.

For more information about the Town of Brookhaven, go to www.brookhavenny.gov.

Mount Sinai Elementary School
118 North Country Road, Mount Sinai, New York 11766

Kindergarten registration for the 2024-2025 school year will be held from March 4th through March 7th, 2024.

Appointment only - visit the Mount Sinai School District website at www.mtsinai.k12.ny.us and click on the Kindergarten Registration link for registration forms and appointment information.

Children born from December 2, 2018 through December 1, 2019 are eligible.

New York State Law requires proof of immunization - 3-5 doses of DPT vaccine, 3-4 doses polio vaccine, 2 doses Measles, 2 doses Mumps, 2 doses Rubella OR 2 doses MMR, 3 doses Hepatitis B and 2 doses of Varicella.

Also required are proof of residency, original birth certificate and physical including a calculated BMI dated (within 2024 year).

If the appointment link is closed, please call 631-870-2605.
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The Selden Fire District maintains a Capital Reserve Fund designated as the Capital Reserve Fund for Buildings, Grounds, Maintenance, Repairs and Capital Improvements known as Capital Reserve #1 under Section 6(g) of the General Municipal Law in which account there is sufficient funds to accomplish the purpose hereinafter set forth; namely, the refurbishment of the elevator in 1964 building at fire headquarters, and it proposed to contract for such work in order to maintain the high standards of performance of the Selden Fire Department in the discharge of its duties in preserving the lives and property of the residents of the community, and said work is deemed in the best interests of the residents of the Selden Fire District.

The resolution further provides that there be transferred from the present Section 6(g) Capital Reserve Fund #1 of the Selden Fire District a sum not to exceed One Hundred and Seventy Five Thousand ($175,000.00) Dollars for the work, and the District Treasurer is authorized to effect such transfer from time to time to effect such work.

This resolution shall not take effect until thirty (30) days unless in the meanwhile a mandatory referendum as provided for in Section 6(g) of the General Municipal Law is required to be held.

DATED: February 27, 2024

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SELDEN FIRE DISTRICT
TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN

ATTEND: MARION WARREN
Secretary

194650 3/7 1 x tmc

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN

PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE IV, SEC. 85-55 (B) OF THE BUILDING ZONE ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS WILL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS LAW, HOLD THE FOLLOWING, AT ONE INDEPENDENCE HILL, FARMINGVILLE, N.Y.:


TIMES OF MIDDLE COUNTRY

8. Tehseen Kamal, c/o Building Permits Plus, 19 Stillwood Rd., Brookhaven, NY. Location: East side Cayuga Ave., 200' South of Kings St., Centereach. Applicant requests rear yard, minimum and total side yard variances for proposed attached garage addition and mud room. (0200 39100 0300 022000)

CASES WILL BE HEARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BOARD.

HOWARD M. BERGSON
CHAIRMAN
194660 3/7 1 x tmc

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed bids subject to all instructions, terms and conditions herein and pursuant to the specifications, will be received by the Board of Fire Commissioners, Selden Fire District at the Fire District Office, 44 Woodmere Place, Selden, New York 11784, until 4:00 P.M. on March 26, 2024, where they will be opened publicly and read aloud after 7:00 P.M. prevailing time, on the said date for the service as specified and the contract awarded as soon thereafter as practical for:

ELEVATOR REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

Specifications, proposals and proposed contracts may be obtained at Fire Headquarters, Woodmere Place, Selden, New York 11784, from the Fire District Secretary or Fire District Manager, between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M.

Every bidder must submit a bid bond issued by an acceptable surety or certified or bank check payable to the Selden Fire District in the amount of five (5) percent of the bid.

The Selden Fire District reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to accept the best bid suited for its specific needs.

DATED: February 27, 2024

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SELDEN FIRE DISTRICT
TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN

ATTEND:
Marion Warren
Secretary
195370 3/7 1 x tmc

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Editorial

Uniqueness of where we live

Upon the recent receipt of a letter from a Virginia-native third-grade student (see Letters to the Editor), TBR has begun to think retrospectively about what it is that makes our coverage area so unique.

As residents and representatives of Long Island’s North Shore, we often forget to share the natural beauty and cultural heritage that defines where we live. The allure of the picturesque beaches, lush woodlands and historic villages capture our hearts, making it an ideal place to call home.

In terms of making a living, our areas offer a diverse range of opportunities. From bustling commercial centers like those off Nesconset Highway to locally owned shops, residents here engage in various professions spanning industries such as health care, education, finance, hospitality and more. Here at TBR, we work to keep the community informed and up to date on all local news and events.

Our area is also home to excellent academic influence provided by research institutions, like Cold Spring Harbor Lab and Brookhaven National Lab, and, of course, like Stony Brook University and Medical Center, the flagship campus of the State University System. To paint a picture, our coverage area displays picture-perfect beaches stretching along the coastline, framed by towering bluffs and pebble-riddled sands. You can find quaint village scenery all throughout our coverage area in Port Jefferson, Stony Brook and St. James, exhibiting charming Colonial architecture and a pleasant way to tour the towns.

For fun, residents and visitors alike indulge in a plethora of activities. From relaxing beach days and scenic walks through Avalon or Frank Melville parks to cultural events and culinary delights, there’s something for everyone. Whether it’s exploring historic landmarks on Washington’s Spy Trail or the Stony Brook Carriage Museum, or attending art festivals or catching a show at Northport’s John W. Engeman Theater or Port Jefferson’s Theatre Three, our coverage area offers endless opportunities for leisure and recreation.

As for wildlife, our coverage area is home to a diverse array of creatures. Along the coast, you may spot ospreys soaring overhead or even the endangered piping plover. Our rocky shoreline creates a unique habitat for horseshoe crabs, hermit crabs and fish galore. While inland, deer, fox and various bird species inhabit the woodlands and marshes, adding to our area’s natural charm.

When it comes to food, there is no shortage of options for whatever culinary palate you crave. Famous for our bacon-egg-and-cheese bagel sandwiches, gourmet deli, New York-style pizza or fresh seafood caught off the shores to hearty Italian and Irish fare, there’s no shortage of delicious dishes to savor.

For your ears, you’ll find a vibrant music scene with a diverse range of genres. From iconic rock bands like Billy Joel and Blue Öyster Cult to emerging indie artists and classical ensembles, the music of our area reflects the eclectic tastes and talents of its residents. Local tributes to music and entertainment are at the ready with the Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame and The Jazz Loft, both located in Stony Brook, hosting various events catered to music enthusiasts.

For the athletes and sports fans, our local high schools represent some of the most competitive athletes across the state in all disciplines. Rocky Point High School Cheerleading earned another national title this year, while the Lady Patriots of Ward Melville High School were crowned soccer state champions. If that isn’t enough, our very own Stony Brook University is another destination for local sports viewing, representing some of the finest student-athletes in the NCAA.

Tourism is a driver of our local economy as well as we are fortunate to have the greatest city in the world, New York City, within reach. Our area is a treasure trove of natural beauty, cultural heritage and community spirit. A place where small-town charm meets cosmopolitan sophistication, where history whispers secrets from its streets and where a vibrant community thrives, hand in hand with the beauty of the natural world. This unique confluence is what continues to make our area a coveted haven in the heart of New York state.

Letters to the Editor

Letter from a third grader

Hello! I am a third-grade student in northern Virginia. Our class is learning about the United States, and I will be teaching our school about the state of New York. In May, I will create a display for our State Fair that I hope will make you proud.

Although I have gathered facts about your state from books and websites, I think that I can receive the best information from the people who live there. This is why I am writing to you. I am hoping that you would be willing to send me some items to help me learn more about the best things in your state. You might consider sending items such as postcards, pictures, souvenirs, newspaper articles or any other unique items that would be useful to show your state’s pride. Here are a few questions:

- Why do you live in your state? What first brought your family there?
- How do you make money? What is your job?
- What does your state look like?
- What do people do for fun?
- What animals live there?
- What traditional food/recipes does your state have?
- What type of music is native to your state?
- Do you have a state athletics team?
- What geographical features are unique to your state?

I will need to gather all of my information by the second week of May. You can mail items to this address: The Langley School, 1411 Balls Hill Road, McLean, Virginia 22101. I really appreciate your help!

Connor McLean, Virginia

Response to concern for electric school buses

Assemblyman Ed Flood (R-Port Jefferson) stated what he thought were the downsides of Gov. Kathy Hochul’s [D] proposed all-electric school bus mandate. Unlike Flood’s ideas, the Hochul proposal is based on facts, not hearsay or fiction. As such, here is my counterrargument to Flood’s points:

Cost: While transitioning to electric buses does involve initial investment, studies suggest that the long-term operational and maintenance costs of electric buses are lower than those of traditional diesel buses. Additionally, with advancements in technology and potential government subsidies, the cost barrier is gradually decreasing.

Tax increase: While there might be initial costs associated with implementing electric buses, the long-term benefits, such as reduced health care costs due to decreased air pollution and job creation in the clean energy sector, can offset these expenses. Moreover, targeted funding sources, such as federal grants or revenue from carbon pricing mechanisms, can be explored to mitigate the impact on taxpayers.

Reliability: Modern electric buses are becoming increasingly reliable as technology advances. Manufacturers are continuously improving battery technology and bus design to enhance performance and durability. Moreover, many cities worldwide have successfully integrated electric buses into their fleets, demonstrating their reliability in real-world scenarios.

Battery safety: While any energy storage system carries inherent risks, stringent safety standards and protocols are in place to mitigate these risks. Advances in battery technology, such as thermal management systems and robust battery enclosures, have significantly reduced the likelihood of battery-related incidents. Additionally, proper training for maintenance personnel and emergency responders further enhances safety.

Temperature fluctuations: Extreme temperatures can indeed affect battery performance, but modern electric buses are equipped with sophisticated thermal management systems to regulate battery temperature and optimize performance in varied climates. Moreover, ongoing research and development aim to improve battery resilience to temperature extremes, ensuring reliable operation in diverse environments.

To summarize: While transitioning to electric buses involves challenges, dismissing them outright based on outdated or exaggerated concerns undermines the potential benefits of sustainable transportation. Decision-makers should prioritize evidence-based policymaking and consider the long-term environmental, economic and public health advantages of electrifying the transportation sector. Additionally, engaging stakeholders — including industry experts and community members — can facilitate informed decision-making and address legitimate concerns through collaboration and innovation.

Harvey Miller
East Meadow

The opinions of columnists and letter writers are their own. They do not speak for the newspaper.

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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
From early struggles with ‘pooping in the woods’ to appreciating bathroom lighting

A long time ago, I joined a Freshman Outdoor Program trip before the start of college. The venture provided us with a chance to meet other incoming college students, to enjoy hiking, and to ask upper class students who were leading the effort questions about classes, places to eat on campus, and anything else that crossed our minds.

I was excited and anxious about my trek along the trail, in part because I was unaccustomed to relieving myself anywhere other than on a porcelain throne.

Recognizing my trepidation, my father, who sensed an opportunity to tease me, asked in the weeks before my trip how I was going to "poop in the woods." My fear of taking care of business out in nature was even greater than my concern in the woods. "My fear of taking care of business had intensified, with the answer usually given..."

The guide told the group to stop, at which point we used to create our own buried fertilizer, and raced off to the left. How far, I wondered, would we used to create our own buried fertilizer, and raced off to the left. How far, I wondered, would we go to avoid being seen by my fellow students, but be close enough that I didn’t seem like I was reading the New York Times while awaiting the arrival of the number two train?

In the days leading up to the trip, which lasted about a week, I tried to cut back on my food intake and I planned to use a bathroom with indoor plumbing as often as possible before climbing aboard the Appalachian-trail bound bus. For more than a day, I successfully shut my system down, avoiding the normal routine. Somehow, for close to two days, I managed to eat, carry about 60 pounds on my back, hike up and down mountains, and avoid pooping in the woods.

Then, as if by my refusal to obey my stubborn will, I couldn’t take another step. Seeing me freeze on the trail, one of our upper class guides asked me what was wrong. Did my feet hurt? No. Did I need some water or food? No and no. Was I in pain? Yes, but not in the way I wanted to discuss.

I indicated that I had to “use the bathroom.” The guide told the group to stop, at which point I removed my backpack, took the small shovel we used to create our own buried fertilizer, and raced off to the left. How far, I wondered, would I have to go to avoid being seen by my fellow students, but be close enough that I didn’t seem like I was reading the New York Times while awaiting the arrival of the number two train?

With each step, my system recognized that I was getting closer to relieving itself, which meant that I couldn’t go much further without risking soiling myself. I picked a spot that had what looked like poison ivy. Moving over, I found another place that looked nothing like the comforts of home, but would have to do. After I dug a small hole, I squatted. I immediately felt something brush against my right butt cheek.

I turned around quickly and realized, with relief, that it was just a branch.

Throughout the decades that followed, I have put considerable effort into finding a toilet and to avoiding unpleasant restrooms. The search for a relatively clean and manageable bathroom has involved walking into nice hotels in cities around the country and world.

To my great surprise, the McDonald’s at the Spanish Steps in Rome, which has a surprisingly appetizing-looking pasta bar that we couldn’t get ourselves to sample while in Italy, had remarkably clean bathrooms, which my wife and I used many times while trekking around the historic city.

Central Park, which is impossibly spacious and beautiful amid the concrete jungle of Manhattan, has a web page with the locations of public restrooms around the park, although, despite living there for over a decade, I rarely ever used.

Throughout Manhattan, I have searched for restaurants, museums and bars, where the bathrooms don’t become stadium-level suffocated until well after happy hour begins.

With the advent of social media, which took off well after I left New York City, I have found several pages dedicated to the process of finding a bathroom, including one called @poopersguide, which has pictures of the facilities.

Recently, I went to a fancy restaurant outside the city. To set the mood, the lighting was fairly dim. An accommodating waiter even came over, took out his iPhone and smoothly shined his flashlight over the menu.

When I excused myself to use the restroom, I came back with a small smirk on my face and was met with expectant looks.

“‘Well, that was the cleanest restaurant bathroom I’ve ever used,’ I laughed. ‘I was a little concerned about using it. Oh, and I know where we can read the menu next time. The lighting in there was brighter than anywhere in my house.”

Is college worth it?

The debate over the value of a college education continues. If anything, it has intensified, with the answer usually given in relative earnings over a lifetime, as if we were evaluating buying a house compared to renting an apartment. While education has its economic side, there is so much more to consider on the subject.

First the obvious. A four-year college degree has always been thought of as a ticket to a better life because of the financial advantages it is thought to offer. College grads, in the main, earn higher wages, suffer lower unemployment, and as a result of having more income, enjoy better health and easier access to home ownership, the traditional wealth builder. However, today there are jobs that don’t require a college degree but do pay well. These might include those in construction, those that offer professional certificates in technology, boot camp coding, in short jobs that come with trade school degrees, associate degrees or apprenticeships. This path works if the student already has such a goal and knows what he or she wants to do.

But what else do students get from a college experience besides, perhaps, a substantial amount of debt? Student debt is the highest category of debt in the United States, totaling $1.76 trillion according to recent data. That is the result of private colleges averaging $223,200 over the course of four years, and even public institutions costing $104,900.

So what could make college worth the price? For starters, how many 17-year-olds know what career they want for the rest of their lives? College gives students a chance to discover what career they want for the rest of their lives?

Some of the debate about the value of college has been brought on by the colleges themselves. While historically over the last half century prices have risen perhaps three percent, the annual cost of college has increased by six percent. There had to be a time of reckoning as a result of that disparity, and the time has now come.

College offers knowledge, which is not so say that people cannot learn outside of those base paths. College also offers education, which is somewhat different in my opinion. Anyone can learn facts. Just reading the daily newspapers or books conveys knowledge. A college education, however, is a more systematized attempt to show how different disciplines developed, leading to today. It encourages personal and intellectual growth in a structured way.

Education, and more is better, is a tremendous benefit not only to the individual but also to society. We have an example of that with the GI Bill after WWII. That legislation made it possible for millions of people of ordinary means to gain a college degree. What followed was an unprecedented half century of growth and prosperity for the United States. Education was the ladder that made such possible.

Today we are facing the opposite. As a result of the pandemic, education has suffered a substantial setback for our students, a gap we may never bridge. And further debate over the value of education in a college setting is further risk for progress. Other nations put so much importance on education that they make college free for all their members. We are going in the opposite direction at considerable risk to our national standing.

It would be nice if all youngsters experienced the tremendous satisfaction of learning. To attend college in order to get the diploma is one thing. For some of the reasons stated above, that can be a goal. But to learn for the sake of learning, and not just to do well on Jeopardy!, is another.

To make that clearer, I will liken the brain to a muscle. When we exercise the muscle systematically and regularly, it grows and becomes stronger. It also feels good to experience that exercise, especially after a visit to the gym. The more we stretch the brain with knowledge, the more it will grow. And with growth, life becomes more satisfying. No one wants to stagnate.

My mother, who passionately valued education, used to say, “Someone might take away your possessions, but no one can take away your education.” In our world, with so much uncertainty, how clever it would be to build on something so secure as education. And to graduate from college is to acquire more of that great asset, for ourselves and our country.

Now all we have to do is figure out how to make our higher education free.
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