



Fiscal responsibility to public safety
County executive charts four-year plan for revitalization

A5



Middle Country Public Library gears up for Museum Day
Also: Review of 'Unfrosted'

B1

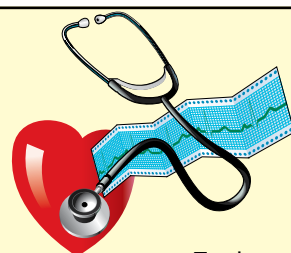
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Stony Brook welcomes Ronald McDonald House

Construction begins for newest family resource — A8



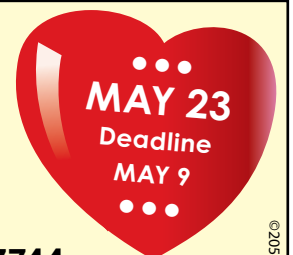
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Stonebridge golf club withdraws its development proposal

BY SABRINA ARTUSA
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

As of May 7, Stonebridge Golf Links & Country Club withdrew its application to modify the 1999 agreement, which if accepted, would have allowed the club to further develop its property.

While the development proposal was accepted initially by the Town of Smithtown, the Planning Board's approval was necessary for any covenant change.

After fierce backlash and extensive media coverage, Stonebridge withdrew its application three days before the end of the feedback period.

When Stonebridge released a proposal to add a driving range, an 8,000-square-foot clubhouse and 28 new housing units to a total of 133, among other modifications to the golf course, Legislator Leslie Kennedy (R-Nesconset) received hundreds of letters in protest.

The original covenants were intended to protect the environment, taking into consideration the Nissequogue River, adjacent forest and impacts to the floodplain. Stonebridge was prevented from building any more than 105 single-family residences on its 134-acre property. If more housing units were to be built, the covenants stated, then the golf facility must be closed and 90 acres must be preserved as open space.

As a result, community members feared not only that development would result in a rise in traffic and environmental damage, but



Stonebridge Golf Links & Country Club. Photo courtesy Stonebridge Facebook page

also the loss of the golf course.

"The threats of the Stonebridge owner closing the golf course or reducing it to an executive course is alarming," read a petition letter from the Hauppauge community.

At the March 20 Planning Board meeting at the Smithtown Senior Center, an influx of community members attended to voice their opinions, which were overwhelmingly against the development. Among those who spoke were Sue Stavrakos, secretary of the Stonebridge Homeowners Association,

county Legislator Rob Trotta (R-Fort Salonga) and Michael Kaufman, vice chair of the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality.

"If this covenant is abolished, then what?" Stavrakos asked. "What else could he apply for? This was put to protect the community."

Hundreds of residents of this area have experienced flooding in their houses and adding to the property would only hinder the flow of water, according to Kennedy.

Residents, including Trotta, noted the

influx of traffic on an already busy road, congestion, dwindling open space and encroachment on Blydenburgh Park as more reasons to reject the proposal and honor the covenants.

"It really goes against what Suffolk County has been doing along with preservation and streambed maintenance," Kennedy said. "My interests are preserving what little we have left."

Now the Stonebridge application has been withdrawn.

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Eye on the Street: Mother's Day

BY SAMANTHA RUTT
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

As Mother's Day rolls around, TBR News Media took to the streets throughout our coverage area, asking locals what this special day means to them.

It's a day which makes people remember the importance and significance of mothers in their life, and to express love, appreciation and gratitude toward mother figures for their unconditional love, support and sacrifices. TBR wants to know, "What does Mother's Day mean to you?"

— Photos by Samantha Rutt

Seema Pandya, Smithtown

I think it means the honoring and passing of traditions and wisdoms of mothers to mothers to mothers. Usually, I spend time with my kids, calling my parents and wishing them well.

I used to work at a restaurant in Colorado and for Mother's Day they would make chocolate-filled buns with raspberries and they looked like breasts! They were so clever. It was a bun with a chocolate areola and a raspberry for the nipple



— they were so good!

Jordan Mahmood, Stony Brook

Mother's Day is a day to appreciate my mom for what she does. She is a single mom and she literally means the world to me and my family. Each year we celebrate by spending time together and doing whatever it is she wants to do — it's really nice spending time with my mom.



Tyler Stephenson-Moore, Queens

I love my mom a lot. Mother's Day to me is just like the day-to-day stuff, acknowledging all the sacrifices she's made, honoring her for everything she has done for me.



Usually, I'll go to Queens to see her with cards and flowers.

Rubens Meza-Henderson, Centereach

The United States was the country that enacted this holiday. I can say that because before the enactment, nobody cared about that — but now many countries in the world follow the U.S. example.

Typically, because I am in the restaurant



is very important.

I do believe in the Bible and one of the commandments says that you have to honor your parents. The Bible encourages you to honor your father and mother and there are many ways to honor them. One way is behaving well and another is through words — you have to express your gratitude. I was with my mother a couple of weeks ago in South America. She was a little sick, but she's well now. I took time off to go see her, to honor and love my mother.

Jen and Jillian Dunn, Setauket



On Mother's Day, Jillian values time well spent with mom Jen: "I really don't get to spend too much time with her, so just being able to see her is a gift — that is what is most important to me." Jillian usually takes her mom out to

lunch and goes for a nice walk through one of their favorite spots, Avalon Nature Preserve.

Jen loves to spend time with her family on Mother's Day: "This year my son is graduating that weekend, so we will take a trip down to see him." On a typical year, Jen and her family like to celebrate with a daytime activity like a drive out east or a day exploring local farm stands. "One of my favorite things is picking out flower flats and the kids will help me plant them."

Steve Frederico, Stony Brook

My mother has passed and there isn't a day that I don't think about her. But on Mother's Day we always commemorate her.

I seem to quote her unconsciously — she had these infamous sayings, like, "It's a great life if you don't weaken."



Stephanie Moncavage, Coram



I love my mom. We spend the day golfing and then my sister and I will make her a nice dinner — of mom's choice of course.

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Romaine unveils vision for a safer, stronger Suffolk

in State of the County address

BY SAMANTHA RUTT
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In his inaugural State of the County Address, Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine (R) outlined a comprehensive four-year plan to revitalize and fortify Suffolk County, emphasizing key priorities such as fiscal responsibility, public safety, infrastructure enhancement and social services reform.

“I am extremely hopeful about the future of this county and there are 18 reasons for that and they all sit around me,” the executive said of his Legislature. “I have watched this Legislature for many years. I was part of this Legislature for many years and I am so impressed with the dedication and commitment of these people,” Romaine said as he stood before the podium.

Addressing an audience May 7 at the William H. Rogers Building in Hauppauge, Romaine outlined his administration’s achievements within its first 100 days while charting a course for the county’s future.

“Let me start off by saying that the state of the county is good — but it can be improved,” Romaine said. “I am going to be working with the 18 people behind me, men and women of goodwill. Men and women of intellect. Men and women to lead this county forward, because I believe our best days are ahead.”

Fiscal strength and accountability

Romaine heralded significant strides in Suffolk County’s financial standing, citing a notable upgrade in the county’s credit rating by S&P Global Ratings.

“One thing I’ve learned over a long life is all issues of government are issues of money,” he emphasized. “Right now our general obligation bonds are rated ‘AA-’. I am happy to say that we got our first upgrade this quarter and we are now ‘A+’.”

With an upgraded rating and a stable outlook, the county seeks fiscal stability and enhanced access to capital markets.

Additionally, Romaine announced initiatives to ensure budgeting practices, including a commitment to adhere to the state-mandated 2% property tax cap and the establishment of a centralized grants office to maximize state and federal funding opportunities.

“New York State has a 2% tax cap, inflation is running a lot higher than 2%,” Romaine explained. “I will submit a budget this



Scenes from Executive Romaine’s State of the County Address on May 7. Photos by Samantha Rutt

September for next year that will not exceed the 2% property tax cap. We cannot afford to do that.”

Investment in public safety

Recognizing the importance of public safety, Romaine announced key appointments within the Suffolk County Police Department and outlined plans to expand law enforcement capabilities.

“Public safety is a concern — we have new leadership in our department,” Romaine said. “As I promised, I’ve hired more detectives, and we have more cops on the street. It’s important because two things that I’ve heard from the voters and residents of Suffolk County is we need the county to be safe and we need it to be affordable.”

Investments in new personnel, equipment and technologies aim to uplift public safety efforts and address emerging challenges. Notably, Romaine emphasized the significance of fair and efficient operations within the Traffic and Parking Violations Agency, a growing concern among residents across the county.

Infrastructure revitalization

Romaine touched on the imperative to modernize and

maintain county facilities, highlighting initiatives to renovate and upgrade critical infrastructure. With a focus on improving constituent affairs and enhancing employee morale, the administration plans to address long-standing deficiencies in county facilities, including the Suffolk County Police headquarters and the Medical



Examiner’s Office building.

Additionally, plans to reacquire the former John J. Foley nursing home property in Yaphank signals a strategic approach to meet evolving community needs while realizing significant cost savings.

Cybersecurity preparedness

Reflecting on the cyberattack of 2022 and acknowledging the enduring threat posed by cyberattacks, Romaine outlined measures to reinforce the county’s cybersecurity infrastructure. Through comprehensive audits, strategic hiring and resource allocation, the administration shifts its aim to mitigate vulnerabilities and safeguard sensitive data.

Social services reform and environmental preservation

“Now I come to the Department of Social Services, a department that needs a little bit of attention,” Romaine shared. “When I came into office and I read the Newsday article that Suffolk County was one of the worst in the state at processing SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] applications and that we were way behind in processing social service applications ... that is going to change. We are going to put staffing in, we are going to be on top of things.”

Additionally, Romaine reaffirmed the county’s commitment to environmental preservation — just like preservation was a staple of Romaine’s time as Brookhaven Town supervisor — citing investments in farmland preservation and open-space conservation as critical components of sustainable development. The county executive recently appropriated \$15 million to preserve farmland across the county. Since taking office, nearly 100 acres of farmland and open space throughout the county has been preserved with additional acquisitions planned later in the year.

Looking ahead

“I believe working together, investing in our infrastructure and rebuilding what is needed in this county as our best days are ahead,” the county executive remarked.

In concluding his address, Romaine articulated a vision of optimism and collaboration, emphasizing the collective efforts needed to propel Suffolk County forward. With a dedicated team and a commitment to transparency and accountability, he expressed confidence in the county’s ability to overcome challenges and realize its full potential.

“Let’s step up to the plate, we have a lot of challenges ahead,” Romaine concluded.

Garbage truck driver indicted for crash that killed motorist in Hauppauge

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on May 3 that Jaswinder Singh, 52, of Bellrose, Queens, was indicted for Criminally Negligent Homicide and other related charges, for allegedly driving a sanitation truck at an unreasonable speed and crashing into multiple vehicles that had been stopped at a red light on the South Service Road of the Long Island Expressway in Hauppauge. The collision caused the death of Joseph Kelly, 24, of West Islip, who was in one of the other vehicles.

“This defendant, who was allegedly driving a 19-ton truck, had a responsibility to drive prudently and cautiously. Instead, he is alleged to have been speeding, causing him to crash into a line of cars stopped at the traffic light, resulting in the loss of Joseph Kelly’s life,” said District Attorney Tierney. “Today’s indictment reflects the solemn duty of law enforcement to hold individuals accountable for their actions, particularly if their alleged crime results in the loss of life.”

According to the investigation, on July 3, 2023, Singh was allegedly driving a sanitation truck from Brooklyn to a commercial establishment in Suffolk County, where it was to be outfitted before being put into service with the New York City Department

of Sanitation. At approximately 8:50 a.m., Singh, who was allegedly headed eastbound on the Long Island Expressway, exited at Exit 57 onto Express Drive South in Hauppauge.

Singh allegedly continued to drive on Express Drive South at a high rate of speed that was as he approached a steady red light where cars were stopped. Singh then allegedly failed to slow down or apply the brakes of the truck, causing him to crash into the back of multiple vehicles that had been stopped in front of him, and barrel through the red light at the intersection.

The 38,900-pound garbage truck allegedly first collided with a Honda Civic that was being operated by the victim Kelly, causing a chain reaction of multiple car crashes. Kelly died on impact. The multi car collision involved damage to five vehicles, including a school bus, and left a debris field of approximately 300 feet.

The judge ordered Singh to surrender his passport, placed him on supervised release and suspended his driver’s license. Singh is due back in court on May 17. If convicted of the top count, the maximum sentence allowable under current New York State law is one and one-third to four years in prison.

—SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.’S OFFICE

POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

East Northport student arrested for making threat of mass harm

Suffolk County Police arrested an East Northport student on May 6 at approximately 3 p.m. after she made threats of mass harm to several students. Second Precinct Crime Section officers responded to East Northport Middle School, located at 1075 5th Ave., after a student made a verbal threat of mass harm to other students at the school.

Officers located and isolated the 13-year-old student, and an investigation was conducted. There were no weapons brought to the school. She was arrested at the school at approximately 3 p.m. and transported to the Second Precinct. The student was charged with Threat of Mass Harm, a Class B Misdemeanor, and released to her parents.

Teen arrested for DWAI/drugs after fleeing scene of fatal Centereach crash

Suffolk County Police arrested a teenage male for driving a stolen vehicle while impaired by drugs after he attempted to flee the scene of a fatal motor vehicle crash in Centereach on May 4.

A 16-year-old male was driving a stolen 2008 Land Rover LR2 eastbound on Middle Country Road when he crashed the vehicle into the rear of a sedan being driven by Marion Napolitano, 73, who is undomiciled, at approximately 9:10 p.m.

Napolitano was transported to Stony Brook University Hospital where she was pronounced dead. A 50-year-old male passenger in the sedan was transported to the same hospital for treatment of serious injuries. Their identities are being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

The teen, who was not injured, attempted to flee the scene on foot but was apprehended by an off-duty Suffolk County Police officer.

Officers from the Selective Alcohol Fatality Enforcement Team (SAFE-T) charged the teen, who is not being identified due to his age, with Driving While Ability Impaired by Drugs 1st Degree. Major Case Unit detectives charged him with Leaving the Scene of a Fatal Motor Vehicle Accident and Criminal Possession of Stolen Property 3rd Degree.

Detectives are asking anyone with information on the crash to call the Major Case Unit at 631-852- 6555.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for Petit Larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public’s help to identify and locate a man who allegedly stole approximately \$460 worth of Pokemon cards from Target, located at 265 Pond Path in South Setauket, at 4:12 p.m. on April 25.

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

— COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

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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.

Congressional candidates debate ahead of Democratic primary

BY AIDAN JOHNSON
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The Democratic congressional candidates for District 1 — Nancy Goroff and John Avlon — attended a meet the candidates night at C.P. La Manno's restaurant in Miller Place April 30. During the debate, Goroff and Avlon discussed issues such as foreign aid, social media, Social Security and more. The congressional seat is currently held by Nick LaLota (R-NY1).

Introductions

Avlon, who served as an anchor on CNN before deciding to run for Congress, said that he joined the race because he "didn't feel like this was a time for talking, I think this is a time for doing." He also described being frustrated that the district was being seen as a battleground swing district, and that it was important to win both Democrats and Independents "to build the broadest possible coalition to defend our democracy, defeat Donald Trump [R] and win back the House."

Goroff, who has formerly served as chair of the Department of Chemistry at Stony Brook University and previously ran for the congressional seat in 2020 against former Congressman Lee Zeldin (R-NY1), described how she co-founded a nonprofit called the Long Island Strong Schools Alliance, along with a nonpartisan political action committee to get "good people elected to the school board." According to LISSA's website, its mission is "to support policies that strengthen education in our public schools, with a focus on critical thinking skills, civic engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion." Goroff said that LaLota has "not been there for the people of this district."

Social Security and Medicare

Goroff described Social Security and Medicare as being "two of the most successful programs this country has ever had." She said that Medicare's age should be lowered from 65, and that the income level tax cap for Social Security, which currently stands at \$168,600, should be increased.

Avlon also supported raising the income tax cap for Social Security. "The one thing we got to do is make sure we're rebuilding and strengthening the middle class, and making sure that people have a path from the working class to the middle class, and making sure that we're keeping our promise on a federal level with Social Security and Medicare," he said.

Social media

Avlon supports the law that will force ByteDance, a Chinese technology company, to divest itself of TikTok or have it banned in the United States, saying, "If you're owning a major media platform or company, it's reasonable that you're not being owned by a hostile foreign power that's trying to propagate its own disinformation."

Goroff pointed out the distinction between "keeping platforms free and open for fair

information and banning people on those platforms," stating that having TikTok either banned or sold is about not subjecting people to disinformation, with this issue also extending to making sure that other platforms, such as Facebook and X, formerly Twitter, are "fair and open platforms."

Ukraine and Israel

Avlon said that he would "absolutely" support funding for Ukraine. For Israel, he said that when seeing "a vicious act of terrorism like October 7, I believe instinctively and deeply that we need to stand with the victims of terrorism and not blame the victims of terrorism." He also stated that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made it difficult to have more broad and bipartisan support for Israel, due to his policies and the level of civilian casualties, along with "the hamstringing of humanitarian aid." Avlon called for a two-state solution with a demilitarized Palestinian state.

Goroff also supported aid for Ukraine. For Israel, she stressed that the conflict is very complicated, with its history extending far past the current conflict. She explained that Hamas is a terrorist organization that is "absolutely not helping the people of the Palestinian communities." However, she said that the Palestinian National Authority is not helping either, due to extensive corruption that provides no alternative to Hamas. Additionally, she said that Netanyahu has "done everything he can" to strengthen Hamas against the Palestinian National Authority. Overall, Goroff called for a regime change in Israel, and a legitimate government in the West Bank, along with Israel increasing trade with its bordering countries, and for these countries to increase trade and stop worrying about uprisings within their populations.

Water quality, septic systems and sewers

Avlon called cesspools and septic systems a "fundamental issue of infrastructure and investment that needs federal dollars." He said that it is necessary to protect the Long Island aquifers, which will require federal investment, some of which "has already been allocated to expand our sewer system and get us off septic." If elected to Congress, Avlon would want to serve on the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, in order to help bring solutions to these issues.

Goroff said that water quality was an extremely important topic: "Voters across the political spectrum care about what our coastline looks like and what the water that comes out of our tap looks like." She noted that there are places on Long Island that need sewers, which could bring opportunities for businesses, but there are also some places where sewers would not make financial sense.

The Democratic primary is on Tuesday, June 25.

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Ronald McDonald House holds ceremonial groundbreaking at Stony Brook Children's Hospital

Ronald McDonald House Charities NY Metro held a ceremonial groundbreaking event for its new house, to be built on the Stony Brook Medicine campus, to provide

HOSPITAL

a safe, secure and comfortable environment for families of children who are receiving medical care at Stony Brook Children's Hospital. Construction is set to begin later this year with completion scheduled for 2026. Of the \$30 million needed to complete the project, \$24 million has already been raised.

This will be the first Ronald McDonald House located in Suffolk County, and only the second on Long Island. The other Ronald McDonald House is in New Hyde Park in Nassau County, located adjacent to Cohen Children's Medical Center.

The three-story, 60,000 square-foot building will include 30 private bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms for families, a media center, outdoor playground, interactive playrooms, a community kitchen providing free meals made by volunteers and fully



Suffolk County Legislator Steve Englebright, SBU President Maurie McInnis, State Senator Mario Mattera and State Senator Monica Martinez at the Ronald McDonald House groundbreaking ceremony on April 30. Photo from Legislator Steve Englebright's office

stocked pantries, a fitness center, meditation room and laundry facilities.

"We've been planning this for 10 years and now we're finally able to provide for families in Suffolk County the way they need," said Matt Campo, CEO, Ronald McDonald House

Charities NY Metro. "All of our programs provide a place for families to rest and recharge so they can focus on the health and well-being of their child."

"This facility will stand as a beacon of hope, compassion and support for families facing

their toughest challenges," said Dr. William Wertheim, interim executive vice president for Stony Brook Medicine. "Our partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities highlights the strength of collaboration, and I am delighted to be joining our resources and expertise to meet the diverse needs of our community."

"The soon-to-be-built Ronald McDonald House will be able to serve as a respite for patients and families whose infant or child is ill by offering a place to stay, food to eat and a place to rest and recharge that is in close proximity to the hospital," said Carol Gomes, CEO, Stony Brook University Hospital. "There is nothing more cherished than the ability to be able to focus on the care of your child without having to worry about daily life logistics."

"It's been a labor of love recruiting the financial support to make this house a reality," said Cynthia Lippe, chair, RMHC NYM Stony Brook House Fundraising Committee. "Our entire committee is proud of our work and know we have the momentum to raise the final funds to open the house to the public."

Stony Brook University grapples with student protests

BY SAMANTHA RUTT
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In the early hours of Thursday morning, May 2, Stony Brook University was rocked by a series of events that culminated in the arrest of 29 individuals, including students, faculty members and external affiliates for violating various legal statutes and university policies.

What began as a peaceful demonstration on the university's Staller Steps escalated into a tense standoff between protesters and university officials, ultimately resulting in police intervention. The pro-Palestinian protests were against Israel attacking Gaza following the Hamas atrocities Oct. 7 last year.

The university administration, in a statement released shortly after the arrests, expressed disappointment at the turn of events.

According to university officials, efforts were made to deescalate tensions throughout the day on Wednesday, with administrators offering to meet with protest leaders to discuss their grievances. However, these attempts were rebuffed, and the situation continued to deteriorate as protesters erected tents and engaged in behavior that violated university policies.

"What began on Tuesday as a peaceful demonstration in compliance with our rules escalated to include intimidation and harassment of other students, the erection of tents in violation of the university's policy and the continued occupation of a space that must continue to be available to other student groups that had reserved its use well in advance," said Maurie McInnis, university president, in a statement.

McInnis lamented the need for police intervention and emphasized the university's commitment to upholding the rights of free speech and peaceful assembly. She acknowledged the complexities of the situation, recognizing the importance of allowing all voices to be heard while ensuring the safety and well-being of the campus community.

"I am deeply saddened that we reached a point where police intervention became necessary. University administrators made every effort to avert this outcome. Nevertheless, I want to express my appreciation to all involved for the peaceful manner in which the events of yesterday evening unfolded.



Yellow tape blocks off grass area nearby the early May protests. Photo by Samantha Rutt

The police acted professionally and with restraint, and most of our students comported themselves peacefully and with dignity in a manner that contrasts sharply with the scenes we are seeing from many other campuses.

"As we have stated previously, Stony Brook supports every individual's right to free expression and peaceful assembly. As a campus community, we have hosted numerous demonstrations and events, for the most part, mindful of our responsibility to treat one another with respect and civility," the statement continued.

The events at Stony Brook are reflective of broader tensions surrounding issues of free speech, activism and campus governance that have been playing out on college campuses across the country. With protests related to the Israel-Hamas conflict sparking controversy and debate, universities like Stony Brook find themselves navigating challenging terrain as they seek to balance the rights of students to express their views with the need to maintain order and uphold institutional policies.

After the conclusion of the protests, U.S. Rep.

Nick LaLota (R-NY1) made a visit to the Stony Brook campus. "Upon my return from Washington, I visited Stony Brook University to thank my friend Larry Zicarese [vice president for enterprise risk management and chief security officer] for his leadership and his officers' work following the recent protests on campus and subsequent unlawful conduct. Their professionalism has ensured students' safety and an environment much different and better than the abhorrent and antisemitic harassment and assaults at Columbia University," LaLota said in a statement. "Every American has a First Amendment right to free speech, free assembly and free expression. Yet, our laws prohibit trespass, assault and battery and I applaud law enforcement and university officials for taking swift action to hold those who violated campus rules and our state's laws accountable. Jewish students should not fear for their safety and Stony Brook's actions are a model for other universities to follow."

As the campus grapples with the aftermath of the events, questions remain about the future of student activism and student life at Stony Brook, and the university's approach to managing protests and demonstrations. While the administration has made clear its commitment to supporting free speech, it also stresses the importance of adherence to university guidelines and policies.

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Commack Middle School appoints new principal

The Commack Schools family officially welcomed its newest member at an April board of education meeting.

Victoria Hogan was appointed the next assistant principal at Commack Middle School.

SCHOOL She will succeed Frank Agovino, who is retiring at the school year's completion.

Hogan has served for the past two school years as a districtwide instructional leader with the Mineola Union Free School District. In that role, her duties included collaborating with teachers and administrators on the creation and implementation of competency-based learning scales for kindergarteners through eighth graders as well as coaching new teachers.

"Her energy, enthusiasm and experience separated her from more than 200 applicants for the position," assistant superintendent for human resources Scott Oshrin said.

Hogan earned a bachelor of arts in English with a minor in secondary education from Queens College, a master's in reading instruction from Goucher College and an advanced certificate in school building and school district leadership from The College of Saint Rose.

"The most exciting thing about being able



Victoria Hogan, CMS assistant principal Amy Martin and principal Michael Larson at an April board of education meeting.

Photo courtesy Commack School District

to come to Commack is being welcomed into the Commack family itself," Hogan said. "I'm excited to get to know everybody — the students, the staff, the community — and really make this my home."

A transition plan is currently being implemented at CMS.

"We wish both Ms. Hogan and Mr. Agovino much luck and happiness as they begin the next journeys in their professional and personal lives," Oshrin said.

Perspective Unions strengthen America's democracy



File photo.

BY SARAH S. ANKER
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM



Former county Legislator Sarah Anker (D-Mount Sinai). File photo

As the daughter of an IBEW union member, I know first-hand the importance of why we need to protect unions, and that is, because they protect us. Unions serve as powerful advocates for workers' rights and through collective bargaining, they ensure fair wages, working conditions, job

security, and healthcare benefits to help grow and strengthen our economy.

As a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union, my dad was represented by his union after he lost his job. Months went by with no paycheck for my family, but his union provided support and eventually my dad went back to work. I'll always remember this part in my childhood and understanding that being part of a union family gave me the sense that someone cared enough to help.

Unions are the backbone of this country, the bedrock of workers' rights and the catalysts for social and economic progress.

In a world where privatization dominates this country's economic power, unions provide the collective strength to guard against the exploitation of individual workers' rights. They promote diversity, equality, and inclusion by advocating for fair treatment and opportunity regardless of a workers' background, gender, race, or ethnicity.

With a balance between free market enterprise and workers' rights, unions play an important role in creating a more just and equitable society by advancing landmark reform, including the eight-hour workday and the abolition of child labor. However, despite their proven success, unions continue to face challenges due to globalization, technology disruption and shifting labor markets.

When I first ran for office in 2011, unions were being threatened in this country as public employees' rights were being stripped of collective bargaining by republican governors in Wisconsin, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. As I rallied with labor, it became clear that the energy and effort forged person by person, was motivated by their collective ability to care for one another.

Unions are the collective thread that hold our American democracy together. They strengthen our resolve and provide beacons of hope and resilience, reminding us that the enduring power of collective action can create positive change.

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ELEGANT EATING



Wow! You guys really knocked our socks off yesterday! The food was a huge hit at my mom's "Celebration of Life" gathering. Everyone raved about the food and especially the presentation. The Gemelli Pasta salad was a party favorite. My favorite was the Shrimptini, deviled eggs and fruit cups. We used all of my mom's china, silver, crystal, punch bowl and serving trays. My mother would have approved :) ~ Bellport, NY, 8 April 2023

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Romaine's State of the County Address,
Meet the Candidates for CD1
and more!

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Announcements

SCHOOL NUTRITION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Three Village Central School District plans to apply to the New York State Education Department for an exemption from serving breakfast in their five elementary schools during the 2024-2025 school year.

This yearly exemption will be based on the results of a survey taken by parents of elementary students.

If you have any questions, please contact the Child Nutrition Office at 631 730-4505.

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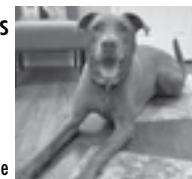
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Editorial



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National Nurses Week, a time for recognition

In the heart of the medical field lies the nurturing presence of nurses.

As National Nurses Week unfolds from May 6 to 12, it's time for communities everywhere to pause and reflect on the indispensable role nurses play in our health care ecosystem. Beyond being health care providers, nurses embody the essence of compassion, advocacy and expertise. They are heroes whose contributions resonate far beyond the confines of hospital walls.

They are not just caregivers; they are companions on the arduous journey of illness, offering solace and support when it's needed most. In moments of vulnerability, it's often the gentle reassurance of a nurse that brings comfort and hope to patients and their families. In this role, nurses serve as a beacon of empathy, providing not just medical care but also emotional sustenance.

Nurses serve as invaluable liaisons between patients, families and the broader health care team. They bridge the gap between complex medical jargon and everyday understanding, helping patients to make informed decisions about their health. Through clear communication and advocacy, nurses ensure that patients receive the personalized care they deserve. Whether it's coordinating treatment plans, advocating for patient rights or providing vital education, nurses are the linchpins of effective health care delivery.

In the intricacy of individualized health care, nurses act as threads binding it all together. They possess a unique ability to see patients not merely as cases but as individuals with distinct needs and preferences. By tailoring care plans to suit each patient's unique circumstances, nurses uphold the fundamental principle of patient-centered care.

"Nurses are the lifeline and lifeblood of our Stony Brook Medicine health care system," said Carol Gomes, chief executive officer, Stony Brook University Hospital. "They provide exceptional and compassionate care for our patients. I'm so grateful and proud of their dedication and commitment to quality care. We celebrate our team during Nurses Week and applaud their talents every day of the year."

As we honor National Nurses Week, let us not only acknowledge the tireless dedication and sacrifices of nurses but also advocate for the recognition and support they truly deserve. Let us continue to invest in their professional development, provide them with the resources they need to thrive and ensure their voices are heard in shaping health care policies. Because a health care system that truly prioritizes the well-being of its citizens is one that honors and uplifts its nursing workforce.

Letter to the Editor



Stony Brook University's Staller Center for the Arts. Photo courtesy Stony Brook University

At SBU's Staller Center on protest night

Last Wednesday evening, May 1, my wife and I, along with our teenage grandson, went to the campus of Stony Brook University to enjoy a wonderful concert given by the Stony Brook Wind Ensemble of the Department of Music.

Imagine our surprise, as we walked to the front door of the Staller Center and found the adjacent grassy area to be hosting a large group of pro-Palestine protesters. We had no problem telling who they were, because they were echoing chants provided by a person wielding a megaphone, most were wearing masks, the grass was covered with small tents and sheets of blue plastic, and many were holding poles flying the flags of Palestine. There were also quite a few signs and posters, carrying messages such as "From the River to the Sea," "Globalize the Intifada" and "By Any Means Necessary." We found the whole operation to be interesting and educational, and we approached the assemblage to observe and take pictures with our cellphone cameras. If we had any thoughts that we might be welcome, these were quickly dispelled by a young lady in the group who told us where to go (not to the Staller Center), and provided visible reinforcement by flipping us the bird, which we dutifully recorded on my grandson's camera.

The concert featured around 65 wonderfully talented musicians, all of them students at the university, one of whom happens to be another grandson — and we enjoyed it immensely. The concert ended around 9:30 p.m., and we went outside to find the protesters still in place, practicing their chants and carrying their Palestine flags. By this time, however, they had been joined by two dozen or so uniformed members of the New York State Police, who were standing in a group and watching them.

Everything appeared to be under control, so my grandson and I went over to the officers and started a conversation with one of them, who happened to be a sergeant. He was very pleasant and accommodating, told us who they were and why they were there, and seemed to really enjoy talking with my grandson, who is a big fan of the police. The sergeant told us that there was a deadline of 11 p.m., and the protesters would be vacating around then. That

was a little late for us, since the next day was a school day, so we wished them luck and went home.

The next day, we tuned in to News 12, and we learned that the protesters were indeed gone, with 29 of them having been arrested. I was thinking about revisiting the grassy area, to see if the protesters have returned, like the swallows in Capistrano. If they have, I was thinking of giving them a few tubes of Super Glue, so that they could glue themselves together, as other protesters have found helpful. This would present a more challenging dilemma for the police officers, but I think they could figure it out.

*George Altomose
Setauket*



Stony Brook University Police posted around campus on Thursday, May 2. Photo by Samantha Rutt

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Opinion

Sharing my first London trip to see Churchill, Big Ben and other icons

I took my first trip to London with my wife and I never felt like we were far from home or from living history.

In Uber rides, the music of Justin Timberlake, the Pointer Sisters and numerous other American artists provided the soundtrack for our visit.



**D. None
of the above**

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

Walking around the city and descending into the tube, advertisements for American products such as Pepsi and movies such as “The Fall Guy” and “Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes” adorned the sides of hackney cars, the iconic red double-decker buses and the walls of the tube.

The cars on the tube were much narrower than I expected, as people sitting across from me tapped my feet without standing or stretching.

For a country that drives on the left, I was mystified by the “keep right” signs. If they drive on the left, why do they walk on the right?

London has its fair share of “must visits,” such

as the Tower of London, Big Ben and Parliament and the Churchill War Rooms. An imposing and impressive testament to the history of the city and the country, the Tower of London forms a small metropolis with its enormous towers and stories of prisoners. Graffiti on the walls bears the name and religious convictions of those confined to the tower and in some cases tortured or killed.

Big Ben was larger and more elaborate than I imagined. It reminded me of an earlier visit to Mount Rushmore, where I found the size and pageantry of the four former presidents magnificent and moving.

The Churchill War Rooms provided a close up view of the remarkable fortitude and foresight of the celebrated prime minister. At the age of 65, Churchill spent considerable time underground.

When he learned that the facility was vulnerable to a direct hit from a German bomb, he complained in a letter displayed on the wall of the memorial that Patrick Duff, who was permanent secretary of the Office of Works, had “sold him a pup.”

The government added concrete and, after a nearby bomb shook the bunker, Churchill lamented that the bomb didn’t strike close enough to test the reinforcements.

Veterans of the shelter, many of whom rarely

saw sunlight underground, shared stories about going under sunlamps to increase their vitamin D, about Churchill’s need for quiet, and about their secret life.

The arms of one of Churchill’s chairs in the cabinet room bears the marks of his fingers digging into the wood, as he listened to testimony, prepared action plans and reacted to news.

Throughout his tenure during the war, Churchill traveled extensively, visiting everywhere from the United States, to Cairo to Moscow, rallying support for the war and visiting foreign leaders and dignitaries, sometimes for more than a month. The Prime Minister, who was almost 71 when the war ended, traveled over 100,000 miles during those tumultuous years. Observers shared parts of his routine, which included two baths a day and three meals per day.

Churchill, who was involved in everything from planning the war effort to offering advice about military technology, pointed out that the government named a tank after him “when they found out it was no damn good!”

Aside from our historical visits, we enjoyed listening to, and watching, people. Like so many other big cities, London attracts guests from around the world, as French, Spanish and German blended

with Japanese, Chinese and Arabic languages.

We enjoyed the hospitality of numerous Brits. A beefeater at the Tower of London, which was hit by a few stray bombs, suggested the site wasn’t a target during World War II because it had no strategic value.

Or, perhaps, the Germans and their killer leader “liked the Tower” and didn’t want it or the crown jewels, destroyed.

On the lighter side, we experienced a range of London weather while on a short boat trip on the Thames, as sunlight gave way to dark clouds and wind turned some umbrellas inside out.

The tour guide on the boat offered one of the more unexpected linguistic differences. He described how certain buildings were converted from commercial properties into apartments.

“Wait, what did he just say?” I asked my wife, chuckling.

“What do you mean?”

“I think he’s talking about warehouses and he said, ‘Where asses.’”

Later, when he described a queen’s residence, he also suggested this was one of the queen’s favorite ‘asses.’

Yes, we had a “eck” of a time in London and would be more than “appy” to visit again.

The most unforgettable character I ever knew

When lilacs bloom, I think of my mother. That’s not only because they bloom around Mother’s Day, although that is part of the story. My mother loved lilacs, their color, their remarkable shape of many tiny flowers making one larger blossom, their incomparable smell.



**Between
you and me**

BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF

My mother was born in Russia, came to New York with her family when she was four and lived in the house with her father, step-mother, two brothers, three sisters and one unmarried aunt in Corona, Queens until she married. And as she told me countless times, always smiling at the memory, the backyard was

filled with lilacs.

After I moved away, I sent her armloads of lilacs on Mother’s Day. Each year, she would tell me I shouldn’t have, taking deep breaths to

let me know how she loved their perfume.

Forty-one years ago, she died two days before Mother’s Day, surrounded in the hospital room by lilacs.

I wish you had known my mother. She was, to borrow from The Reader’s Digest, the most unforgettable character I have ever met. My father, who was no slouch himself, said she had enormous courage. She would go to court, representing whichever member of the family might have legal woes in connection with their businesses, and patiently explain to the judge what the problem was. She always won.

She would have been a successful lawyer, had she been allowed to finish her studies. But when her father had a stroke in his 40s, she and her older brother were removed from school and sent out to work to support the family. She seemed not to know that she was not a lawyer as she argued her case.

Without a doubt, she was the matriarch and head of the extended family. Did I mention, she was incredibly bright...about most things? Not necessarily about me, however, As you might

imagine, she had a strong personality and was accustomed to being in charge. I, on the other hand, disliked always being directed. My poor dad was habitually caught in the middle.

My father would remind me how much my mother loved me and that she was looking for what was best for me. I don’t believe that line of reasoning ever won me over, but I will say that I learned to love, and love deeply, from my mother and my father.

Is love learned? If so, I felt how much my brother, my sister and I were loved and how my parents, if called upon, would sacrifice their welfare for us in an instant. I have tried to pass along that depth of feeling to my children.

My parents did modify their lives after my sister was born. Two years younger than I, she was diagnosed with Down syndrome, a genetic disorder that is caused by an extra copy of chromosome 21. Mothers 35 and older are more prone to giving birth to children with Down’s, and my mother was 36 when my sister, Maxine, arrived.

It was my parents’ goal to help Maxine live

as normal and complete a life as they were able to provide for my older brother and me. Some relatives urged them to put my sister “away” in a home for children with disabilities. My parents never considered that, instead protecting her with abiding love and care.

Both my parents accepted the challenge of raising my sister, but the larger share of that care inevitably fell to my mother. It was not common to see a child on the street with a disability of any sort in the 1940s, when my sister was born. Some people feared differences, others just stared.

There was a social price to be paid. My parents willingly paid the social price, devoting their free time and resources to her care, happiness and well-being, making sure that my sister was properly looked after. She played the piano, loved watching baseball games in Central Park with my dad and me, and returned our love in equal measure. With infinite patience, my mother taught Maxine eventually to read and do arithmetic on a second-grade level.

My mother was a star.



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