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Health officials warn of increased risk as mosquitoes expand their range

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Prime Times

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SUNY names former Rutgers president Richard McCormick as interim SBU president

The State University of New York Board of Trustees has named former Rutgers President Richard McCormick, 76, interim president of Stony Brook University as the school continues its search for a seventh president.

Mc Cormick, who will take over the reigns at the downstate flagship SUNY school on August 1st, replaces Maurie McInnis, who left Stony Brook after four years to become the president of Yale University on July 1.

Dr. Bill Wertheim, Executive Vice President for Stony Brook Medicine, has been serving as Officer-in-Charge and Stony Brook University Hospital’s Governing Body since July 1.

McCormick, who was president of Rutgers from 2002 to 2012 and has taught and studied United States political history in the 19th and 20th centuries, has over four decades of experience in higher education, including leading several highly ranked public universities.

McCormick will oversee Stony Brook University and Stony Brook Medicine and will serve as part of the management team of Brookhaven National Laboratory.

“Each step we take in this leadership transition is important, and we welcome Dr. McCormick,” John King, Jr, SUNY Chancellor said in a statement. “His vast higher education experience will continue to move this esteemed university forward as the campus conducts a national search for its new president.”

McCormick welcomed the chance to lead Stony Brook during this transition period.

Stony Brook “has achieved national stature yet remains fully engaged with its Long Island community, for which it is an economic engine,” McCormick said in a statement. “My thanks to the SUNY Board of Trustees, Chancellor King and the Stony Brook Council for this opportunity.”

As an interim president, McCormick will not be a candidate to become the next permanent president.

In addition to his tenure at Rutgers, which started in 1976 when he joined the history department, McCormick also was vice chancellor and provost at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1992 to 1995 and was president of the University of Washington from 1995 to 2002.

The incoming interim Stony Brook president earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College in American Studies and his PhD in history from Yale in 1976, 20 years before McInnis also earned her PhD in the History of Art from the New Haven-based Ivy league school she now leads.

McCormick started his academic career at Rutgers, where he was a member of the history faculty from 1976 to 1992. He was also Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

McCormick is the son of Richard Patrick McCormick, a former Rutgers professor and Katheryne Levis, a former Rutgers administrator.

McCormick and his father co-taught an

CONTINUED ON A8

Diving into ‘Shark Week’ on Long Island

Sharks on Long Island

Sharks are often on the minds of beach-loving Long Islanders due to a wide variety of visiting sharks, such as the dusky shark, the sand tiger shark, the white shark and the sandbar shark. The New York Police Department captured the first shark sighting of this summer season using drone footage. The sharks were seen off the coast of Rockaway Beach.

Sharks have been known to appear in beaches like Robert Moses State Park, Long Beach and Kismet beach on Fire Island. In the last two years, 13 people were involved in shark-related incidents. However, this isn’t cause for fear. Since the surge in shark sightings on Long Island, the NYPD and New York State Parks have implemented more thorough measures to track sharks, such as drone tracking.

A ‘hot spot’ for wildlife

Long Island, an under-researched area in regards to sharks, has optimal conditions for sharks. Their visits to our island are certainly not new, according to Oliver Shipley, Stony Brook University School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences research assistant professor.

“In the summer the South Shore of Long Island is a hotspot of wildlife,” he said. “There is so much going on there. And it is a very productive system for all different animals, not just sharks.”

Shark research in New York began seriously 10 years ago. Stony Brook started tagging sharks for tracking purposes in 2017. In order to make scientifically sound conclusions, Shipley said SoMAS would need 10-15 years of data.

Is there an increase?

Researchers do not view the increase in sightings and incidents these past two years as an increase in the number of sharks. In truth, the numbers of sharks that exist along our coast presently are only a fraction of the numbers pre-1950s.

Shipley said that this “increase” of sharks is only an increase of people noticing them. There are more drones on the water and more people patrolling, which will result in more sightings. Indeed, five shark attacks were recorded during Independence Day weekend in 2023 — a stretch of days when there would have been more people than usual at the beach.

Some species of sharks, such as the sandbar sharks, have had dangerously low populations, leading to the species being listed as “vulnerable” on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s list of threatened species. The population’s return to a stable number could also contribute to increased sightings.

Warming temperatures could be bringing sharks up north. Shipley has noticed different animals associated with warmer habitats moving closer to Long Island — water temperatures are important for these cold-blooded creatures to regulate their body temperature — but the research assistant professor is hesitant to definitively blame climate change due to lack of data.

“It’s important to understand that this is a really complex thing that we are studying and there is not a single cause or effect scenario,” he said. “We have really poor historical data to compare to.”

“We are doing everything we can to plug the gap and find out as much as we can about this animal,” Shipley said.
Long Island school districts are suing social media giants over rising mental health concerns

BY TONI-ELENA GALLO
EDITOR@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

According to News12 Long Island, thirteen Long Island school districts are suing social media companies Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and Facebook, citing increased mental health concerns among students.

South Huntington, Kings Park and Port Jefferson are just three of the school districts taking part in the class-action lawsuit.

South Huntington Union Free School District superintendent, Vito D’Elia, commented on his school district’s decision to join the lawsuit in a notice on the district’s website, saying, “We know the damage it’s doing to our students. We see it. We’re dealing with it. We see students that are more focused on their interactions on social media as opposed to their education. And, the ramifications are extremely dangerous.”

This stance was, recently, corroborated by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, when he said that “it is time to require a surgeon general’s warning label on social media platforms,” citing found evidence that more than three hours per day on social media can double the risk of poor mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Social media use is a major component of the vast majority of adolescents’ lives. According to data obtained by Pew Research Center in 2022, up to 95% of youth, ages 13 to 17, use at least one social media platform, and more than a third use social media “almost constantly.”

A prime motive for joining the lawsuit is hiked mental health service costs, as students have been showing symptoms of internet overexposure.

South Huntington school district is seeking increased funding to employ more mental health professionals, as well as implement “social emotional learning lessons more,” including assemblies and workshops, on safe digital use.

Social media harm to students’ psyches has forced the school district to revamp their curriculum in recent years, with teachers having to focus on things “other than their actual lesson plans,” explained South Huntington Board of Education president, Nicholas Ciappetta, who added that the board’s decision to join the lawsuit was unanimous.

“There are costs associated with [our plans],” he said.

The lawsuit is also asking for the social media companies to implement appropriate and stricter safeguards including improved age verification, parental notification upon sign-up, improved management of age appropriate content and the design of their algorithms.

Ciappetta did add that the purpose of social media is not completely negative, or in vain.

“We’re not trashing social media,” he said. “[The school district] certainly uses it as a way of getting our message out. But if you look at any of the platforms, there’s a lot of negativity on there. And I think the negative always gets amplified. So you need a little more positivity and you need a little more kindness. And that’s something that the social media companies can invest in too. They can partner with us to promote that message.”

Joining the lawsuit comes at no cost to the school districts. Lawyers taking on this case will get a percentage of a monetary recovery, if any, that comes out of this legal challenge.

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Sealed bids subject to all instructions, terms and conditions herein are 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 7:00 P.M., on August 13, 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:

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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.

Bids must be delivered in sealed envelopes marked “INSTALLATION OF ELECTRONIC SIGN BOARD” to the office of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Selden Fire District by 7:00 P.M. on August 13, 2024.

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: July 9, 2024

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SELDEN FIRE DISTRICT
TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN

ATTEND:
Marion Warren
Secretary

219900 7/18 1x tmc

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Dated: July 9, 2024

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
SSELDEN FIRE DISTRICT
TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN


TIME OF MIDDLE COUNTRY

1. Melissa LaScalesa, 64 Blydenburgh Rd., Centereach, NY. Location: West side Blydenburgh Rd., 2,082’ South of Horseblock Rd., Centereach. Applicant requests division of a parcel into 4 plots, 1, 2, 3, & 4, requiring lot frontage, front yard setback & rear yard variances for a proposed one family dwelling on plot 1. (0200 53500 0500 007000)

2. Melissa LaScalesa, 64 Blydenburgh Rd., Centereach, NY. Location: West side Blydenburgh Rd., 2,057’ South of Horseblock Rd., Centereach. Applicant requests division of a parcel into 4 plots, 1, 2, 3, & 4, requiring lot frontage, front yard setback & rear yard variances for a proposed one family dwelling on plot 2.

3. Melissa LaScalesa, 64 Blydenburgh Rd., Centereach, NY. Location: West side Blydenburgh Rd., 2,007’ South of Horseblock Rd., Centereach. Applicant requests lot frontage, front yard setback & rear yard variances for a proposed one family dwelling on plot 3.


5. Melissa LaScalesa, 64 Blydenburgh Rd., Centereach, NY. Location: West side Blydenburgh Rd., 2,032’ South of Horseblock Rd., Centereach. Applicant requests lot frontage, front yard setback & rear yard variances for a proposed one family dwelling on plot 5.


THE FOLLOWING CASES WILL COMMENCE AT 4 P.M.

23. April and Robert Mindlin, c/o Woodhill Expediting, 800 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Ste. CL-101, Hauppauge, NY. Location: South side Sunset Ave., 275’ West of Evergreen Dr., Selden. Applicant requests height variance for existing 16 ft. high - 823.68 sq. ft. pool house (14 ft. high - 400 sq. ft. permitted). (0200 52000 0300 002000)

24. April and Robert Mindlin, c/o Woodhill Expediting, 800 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Ste. CL-101, Hauppauge, NY. Location: South side Sunset Ave., 275’ West of Evergreen Dr., Selden. Applicant requests height variance for existing 16 ft. high - 823.68 sq. ft. pool house (14 ft. high - 400 sq. ft. permitted). (0200 52000 0300 002000)

25. April and Robert Mindlin, c/o Woodhill Expediting, 800 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Ste. CL-101, Hauppauge, NY. Location: South side Sunset Ave., 275’ West of Evergreen Dr., Selden. Applicant requests height variance for existing 16 ft. high - 823.68 sq. ft. pool house (14 ft. high - 400 sq. ft. permitted). (0200 52000 0300 002000)

26. Ramon Torres, 70 N. Howell Ave., Centereach, NY. Location: West side N. Howell Ave., 1127.93’ South of Marta Rd., Centereach. Applicant requests height variance for existing 5 ft. high fence located the front yard; front yard setback & side yard variances for a proposed one family dwelling on plot 4.

CASES WILL BE HEARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BOARD.

HOWARD M. BERGSON CHAIRMAN

219920 7/18 1x 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 zoning 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 in dependence hill, farmingville, n.y.: 1. a worksession on july 22, 2024 (2nd floor auditorium) commencing at 2:00 p.m. (the public hearing will be live streamed over the internet at https://brookhavenny.portal.civicclerk.com), to consider the matters listed below and 3. a worksession on july 24, 2024, (public dining area 2nd floor) commencing at the end of the call of either the 2:00 p.m. public hearing calendar and/or the end of the call of the entire public calendar, as time permits to discuss the decision calendar

TIDES OF MIDDLE COUNTRY

1. 1815 middle country llc, c/o kelly’s expediting, 215 smithtown ave., suite 5, Ronkonkoma, NY. Location: North side middle country rd. 417.61’ west of howell ave., centereach. Applicant requests permission for 4 proposed wall signs, one per elevation; permission for one of said signs to exceed 80 sq. ft. permitted (93.59 sq. ft.); also, height variance for proposed 18’ high, 168 sq. ft. ground sign (12’ high, 32 sq. ft. permitted) located less than the required 17’ from middle country rd. (10). (0200 48700 0300 031001)

cases will be heard at the discretion of the board.

HOWARD M. BERGSON CHAIRMAN

220260 7/18 1x tmc

Information for publishing LLC notices in Times Beacon Record Newspapers

We have 6 newspapers: The Village Times Herald, The Port Times Record, The Village Beacon Record, The Times of Middle Country, The Times of Smithtown and The Times of Huntington, Northport & East Northport. Please tell us which one of these newspapers you want your LLC to appear in.

Our newspapers are published weekly on Thursdays. The deadline for LLC notices is Friday noon the week before you wish it to begin running.

All LLC notices must run for 6 weeks. The cost for the 6 week run is approximately $165, including one affidavit of publication (This affidavit is the paper you will send to the state). Your affidavit will be mailed to you at the end of the 6 week run at the address you provide.

We do require prepayment, by credit card, prior to the week that your LLC notice begins running. Contact me with your payment information at 631 751-7744 ext. 127, or you can email your credit card information to me at Legal@TBNNewsmedia.com. I will need the credit card number, the name on the card, the security code, expiration date and billing zip code.

The text of your LLC notice must be provided to us attached to an email as a word document OR typed into the body of an email. Scanned copies cannot be accepted.

Here is a sample LLC notice:

```
NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A&J HOME RESORTS LLC, Arts of Org. filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 02/29/2024. Office location: Suffolk County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of the process to the LLC: 1 Jackson Avenue, Centercy, NY, 11720 Purpose: Any lawful purpose.
```

Notice of formation of Sample, LLC. Arts of Org. filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on Month/Day/Year. Office location: Suffolk County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of the process to the LLC: 5 Sample LLC Drive, City, State, Zip Code. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Please let me know if you have any questions by emailing Legal@TBNNewsmedia.com.
Medford man indicted for fleeing scene of fatal crash

On July 16 Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced the indictment of Dolores Mancialandaverde, 28, of Medford for leaving the scene of an incident without reporting, and other related charges for allegedly operating a motor vehicle while his privilege to drive in New York State was suspended, and then leaving the scene of a crash that resulted in the death of his passenger, Hedilberto Nava-Perez, 44, of Medford, and serious physical injuries to another passenger.

According to the investigation, on June 8, 2024, at approximately 1:52 a.m., Mancialandaverde was allegedly driving his 2008 BMW 328i southbound on Horseblock Road in Medford, with two passengers inside.

As a tractor trailer was making a left-hand turn from Horseblock Road onto Express Drive North, Mancialandaverde allegedly drove through the intersection and crashed into the tractor trailer. Mancialandaverde allegedly exited his vehicle and fled on foot as a bystander attempted to render aid to the victims.

Nava-Perez, Mancialandaverde’s backseat passenger, was pronounced dead at the scene. Mancialandaverde’s front-seat passenger suffered femur, spinal, and facial fractures, and was airlifted to Stony Brook University Hospital. The driver of the tractor trailer was uninjured.

At the time of the crash, Mancialandaverde’s privilege to drive in New York was suspended.

“After slamming into a tractor trailer, this defendant allegedly cared more about evading responsibility for his actions than rendering aid to his own friends and passengers,” said District Attorney Tierney.

“My office will seek justice for the victims in this case, including Mr. Nava-Perez who tragically lost his life,” added Tierney.

Supreme Court Justice Timothy P. Mazzei ordered Mancialandaverde held on $50,000 cash, $100,000 bond, or $500,00 partially secured bond during the pendency of the case. Mancialandaverde is due back in court on August 18.

— Suffolk County DA’s Office

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Scooter operator injured in Medford crash
Suffolk County Police Fifth Squad detectives are investigating a motor vehicle crash that seriously injured a man in Medford on July 10.

Leonel Ventura Jr. was operating a motorized Varla scooter northbound on the sidewalk of Route 112 when he collided with the passenger side of an idling 2021 Dodge Durango that was attempting to make a right turn out of Speedway Gas, located at 2012 Route 112, at 5:29 p.m.

Ventura, 19, of Brentwood, was airlifted to Stony Brook University Hospital for treatment of serious physical injuries. The driver of the Dodge Durango, Kerin Simmons, 37, of Coram, was not injured.

Anyone with information on this incident is asked to contact the Fifth Squad at 631-854-8552.

Fireworks damage Stony Brook home
Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public’s help to identify and locate the person who allegedly set off fireworks causing damage to a Stony Brook home this month.

A person allegedly set off fireworks in the direction of a Manchester Lane home that caused damage on July 2 at 10:25 p.m. The suspect fled in a white vehicle.

Mt. Sinai smoke shop employee arrested
Suffolk County Police arrested a Mt. Sinai smoke shop employee on July 14 for allegedly selling a nicotine product to an underage person.

Alexzia Diaz Garcia allegedly sold an underage person Zyn nicotine pouches at MT Smoke and Vape, located at 5507-3 Nesconset Highway, at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Garcia, 18, of Coram was issued a Field Appearance Ticket for Unlawfully Dealing with a Child 2nd Degree and will be arraigned at a later date.

Police seek hit-and-run driver
Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Seventh Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public’s help to identify and locate the driver of a vehicle that fled the scene in Shirley in June.

A white box truck was traveling southbound on William Floyd Parkway, near Flower Hill Drive, when the vehicle struck a 2015 Kia Optima on June 26 at 11:15 p.m. The driver of the box truck fled the scene. The driver of the Kia sustained a minor injury.

— Compiled by Heidi Sutton

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers offers a cash reward for information that leads to an arrest. Anyone with information about these incidents can contact Suffolk County Crime Stoppers to submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-800-220-TIPS.
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LONG LIVE LONG ISLAND™
As dengue fever soars, travel-related cases in Suffolk County rise

BY DANIEL DUNAEF
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Mosquitoes can be much more than a nuisance as they search for their next blood meal: they can also pass along potentially dangerous viruses.

Long considered a tropical and subtropical health threat, dengue fever has reached record levels in the Americas this year. The illness has been traveling with Aedes mosquitoes that have been moving further north amid global climate change.

As of early July, mosquitoes in Texas, Florida and California have had one of the four viruses associated with the disease. Through early July, Florida reported 10 cases from local spread, according to an American Medical Association update.

Suffolk County residents who have traveled into areas that have dengue have contracted the illness, which has symptoms that are similar to the flu, such as high fever, headaches, body aches, nausea, vomiting and a rash.

Suffolk County has reported 12 cases of travel-related dengue so far through early July, which is more than all of last year and is the highest level since 2013, when 13 cases were reported for the entire year.

“We do have a fair amount of concern with global warming,” said Dr. Sharon Nachman, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Stony Brook Children’s Hospital. “Even if people do not believe in it, mosquitoes have changed where they’re located. There is concern that the mosquitoes will continue their trek farther north.

Suffolk County is one of many places throughout the country and the Americas that have reported an increase in cases for a disease for which residents have generally had no exposure and, as a result, no natural immunity.

New York State Department of Health alerted medical professionals to consider dengue as a diagnosis if people who are sick have a travel history and related symptoms, Dr. Gregson Pigott, Suffolk County Health Commissioner, explained in an email.

Symptoms of dengue typically begin within two weeks of being bitten by an infected mosquito.

From January 1 through June 24, countries in the Americas reported more than 9.7 million dengue cases, twice as many as in all of 2023, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Indeed, in Puerto Rico, infection levels climbed so high in early April that the Puerto Rico Health Department declared a public health emergency.

While a majority of dengue infections are asymptomatic or produce mild illnesses, the virus can cause severe cases and can be fatal, according to the World Health Organization.

“Anyone who lives in or travels to an area with risk of dengue is at risk for infection,” Pigott explained. “Children and those who are elderly are at higher risk for serious illness.”

People with dengue typically receive supportive care, which includes rest, pain medications and fluids.

Protection

Health professionals urged people traveling to areas with dengue to take a number of steps to protect themselves.

EPA-registered insect repellents, coupled with loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants can keep mosquitoes away.

SBU President
Continued from A3

American history course.

An author of several books, McCormick is writing a book on the history of American political corruption from the 17th century to the present.

Rutgers achievements

McCormick, who earned his high school diploma from Piscataway Township High School in Piscataway, New Jersey, orchestrated constructive changes in his hometown university during his presidency.

McCormick helped raise $650 million while he was president.

Four years after becoming president, the university reorganized the undergraduate colleges on the New Brunswick campus into a School of Arts and Sciences and School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.

The reorganization included a comprehensive new curriculum at the School of Arts and Sciences, first year seminars, signature courses, expansion opportunities for undergraduate research and honors programs and support for top undergraduates competing for highly competitive scholarships and awards.

In the final years of his tenure, he merged Rutgers with the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and divisions of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. The New Jersey Legislature passed a bill to integrate almost all units of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey into Rutgers.

“Dr. McCormick’s notable accomplishments as president of Rutgers from 2002 until 2012 included reinvigorating undergraduate education, elevating its standing in the top tier of public research universities, realizing a longstanding goal of returning medical education to the university’s portfolio, and improving and strengthening connections with important partners, including alumni and local communities,” Wertheim said in a statement. “He is the ideal leader to help Stony Brook sustain its momentum as New York’s flagship university.”

The former Rutgers president led the school when it installed 40,000 high-efficiency solar panels over two large surface parking lots on the Livingston campus, producing over eight megawatts of power, which, at the time, was the largest renewable energy system built on a college campus in the country. Rutgers has continued to add solar panels.

Stony Brook momentum

McCormick’s experience with solar energy dovetails with some of Stony Brook’s recent environmental initiatives and successes.

With the support of the Simons Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies, Stony Brook University won the competitive process as the lead institution to create a climate solutions center on Governors Island. The New York Climate Exchange will develop and deploy dynamic solutions to the global climate crisis, will provide educational and research opportunities and will serve as a place for New Yorkers to benefit from the green economy.

The Climate Solutions Center will include 400,000 square feet of green-designed building space, including research labs, classroom space, exhibits, greenhouses, mitigation technologies and housing facilities.

McCormick takes over as interim president at a time when Stony Brook has achieved some important financial and academic victories.

A year ago, the Simons Foundation made a $500 million endowment gift to Stony Brook. The gift, which will be spread out over seven years, was the largest unrestricted donation to an institution of higher education in United States history.

The Foundation gift, which the state legislature is expected to increase the endowment by as much as $1 billion.

Stony Brook recently climbed 19 spots in the rankings of colleges from US News and World Report, ranking 58th in the rankings. That’s the highest ever rank for a State University of New York institution.

The school also placed 12th among national universities for social mobility rank.

“Stony Brook is a world-class institution, moving on an upward trajectory, educating the next generation of leaders and thinkers and bettering our society through research and economic development,” Stony Brook Council Kevin Law said in a statement. “I am pleased to welcome Dr. McCormick, whose accomplishments and vision in higher-education leadership are nothing short of extraordinary, as our interim president, and to begin the search for our next permanent president.”

Challenges ahead

McCormick will likely face the same some of the same challenges other university presidents, interim or not, have dealt with as protestors have expressed their frustrations over the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

At numerous universities, protests disrupted exams, classes and graduation ceremonies.

College presidents have tried to balance between the rights of students to assemble and express themselves and the university’s need to protect various groups of students from intimidation, bullying, or threats.

Local politicians welcomed McCormick.

“I look forward to getting to know Dr. McCormick and collaborating with him to ensure that Stony Brook remains a premier institution of higher learning, providing a safe environment for students of all religions,” said Rep. Nick LaLota (R-NY1).
Announcements

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Be mindful of shark safety

One of the many attractions of Long Island is access to our beautiful beaches. As we take full advantage of our island’s coasts in this hot weather, it is important to stay informed on the risks of the ocean.

While deaths from shark attacks are uncommon — there were only two recorded fatalities nationally caused by a shark in 2023 — Long Island has seen an uptick in shark bites in recent years. Here, at least five people were bitten by sharks in 2023 and eight bites were recorded in 2022.

Robert Moses State Park was a popular spot for sharks last summer with several bites and multiple sightings. Several of the bites occurred during the Fourth of July weekend, so while it’s possible more sharks may be visiting our coast, there was likely an uncommonly large number of people at the beach for the holiday, and therefore more people who were ignorant of shark safety.

This summer, it is important to prepare for what the increased number of bites in the last two years have shown us: that we share the water with sharks.

Experts trace the increase to the stabilization of endangered shark species, such as the sandbar shark, as well as warming water temperatures that are attracting prey closer to the shores.

Luckily, there are many ways to prepare ourselves before plunging into potentially dangerous environments.

An attack can be prevented by staying up to date on sightings and checking the state of the water. Last year, Robert Moses State Park prohibited swimming after a shark sighting. However, you don’t always have to wait for officials to take action in order to stay safe.

Before swimming, it is helpful to observe the water yourself, making note of any schools of fish, dolphins and seabirds — signs that a shark could be nearby. Often, being alert to your surroundings is the primary way you can protect yourself.

If the coast is clear and you choose to swim, stay with other swimmers and in the line of sight of a lifeguard. Avoid swimming when sharks are most active, at dawn or after dusk. To further protect yourself, don’t wear shiny jewelry — the sheen resembles the shimmer of fish scales — or bright colors.

Lifeguards and other officials have taken steps to diminish the danger, such as monitoring beaches with drones, patrolling the area and carrying bite-specific first-aid materials.

The sharks visiting Long Island are primarily nonaggressive and on the smaller side. If you are in the water and see a shark, try to maintain eye contact.

Remember, attacks occur when sharks mistake a person or surfboard for prey. They aren’t vengeful, malicious creatures as movies like “Jaws” might suggest, but an essential part of the ecosystem of the ocean. In fact, biologists and experts see an increase in sharks as a good sign that the ecosystem is stabilizing after years of overfishing.

Swim safely this summer, keeping in mind that sharks, too, love our Long Island beaches.

Letters to the Editor

America’s ‘war on opioids’

Fifteen years ago, a local 13-year-old boy died on his couch after overdosing from opioids. It was a shock to our community, and it set the ominous precedent for the opioid epidemic that has ravaged our country. As I often ask, why is it taking so long to stop the ever-increasing overdose deaths? Americans are dying inside our borders thanks to our adversaries who are funneling deadly drugs that have killed more Americans than multiple U.S. wars. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention more than 1 million Americans have died from opioid overdoses. In 2023, over 100,000 Americans died of overdoses, including an estimated 366 from the powerful opioid fentanyl in Suffolk County.

As the former Suffolk County Addiction Prevention and Support Advisory Panel chair, I can tell you firsthand that the “war on opioids” is not even close to being over, even as we see a slight decline in death rates. We need to see this epidemic as a real war that our adversaries are waging against us and use military force to stop the needless deaths of so many of our fellow Americans. Those actions include sanctions on China, a hard crackdown on drug cartels and the border, and a united front throughout this country to address the carnage of the drug epidemic.

That means putting some of the proposed $850 billion in military spending toward our own internal “war on opioids.” The Supreme Court recently ruled that the Sackler family, the owners of Purdue Pharma that produces OxyContin, cannot be shielded from liability. This decision holds the Sacklers accountable, however it also puts $6 billion in settlement funding, targeted to address the opioid epidemic, in jeopardy.

Let’s stop wasting time over political bashing and focus on what we need to do to make our country stronger and safer. We can end this war by uniting and finding effective strategies to identify drug dealers through law enforcement, providing services for those who need addiction and mental health support, and educating our kids on the dangers of opioids.

So much money has been made in legal and illegal opioid drug sales, yet no money can replace the loved ones we’ve lost who battled addiction and did not know they were casualties of America’s “war on opioids.” It’s time to end this war!

Sarah Anker
Former Suffolk County legislator and chair of Suffolk County’s Addiction Prevention and Support Advisory Panel. Current NYS Senate District 1 Democratic candidate.

A statement by Presiding Officer Kevin McCaffrey

Violence has no place in our political process, whether in our capitols or on the campaign trail. We are thankful that former President Trump was not seriously harmed and we send our prayers to the loved ones of the rally spectators who were apparent victims of this callous assassination attempt. Kudos for the bravery and quick response of the Secret Service and members of law enforcement.

Kevin McCaffrey
Suffolk County Executive

A statement from Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine

Hatred and acts of violence toward an elected official or candidate for office regardless of political affiliation have no place in this country. As Americans, we stand united on the principles that make our country strong. While there are no reported threats in Suffolk County at this time, my office will continue to monitor the situation.

Ed Romaine
Suffolk County Executive

WRITE TO US ... AND KEEP IT LOCAL

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In a role reversal, we ask our kids for the kind of help we used to give them

When our children were young, our first, primary and most important mission was to make sure they were safe and healthy. We didn’t sit down at the beach because each of them had a tendency, like me I suppose, to head directly into the water. Sometimes, they weren’t on board with our efforts to protect them. We would put them in a car seat and, almost instantly, they would arch their backs so far that it was impossible to strap them in.

Or we would try to apply sunscreen and they would wiggle away and giggle, as we dropped a glob of white cream on the floor or sprayed it into the air.

We made them hold our hands even when they didn’t want to touch us. Anyone who read last week’s column can understand why my children, in particular, might not want to hold my intolerably sweaty hand during the heat of the summer.

We also urged them to wear bike helmets, even though they weren’t cool, to wear mittens or gloves in the winter and to get enough sleep so they could function the next day at school or at their numerous basketball/baseball/softball/volleyball/music practices over the weekend or in the evening after a long day of listening to adults talk at them.

One day, after a particularly exciting and challenging basketball game for our son, one of his friends asked if he could bring him to a movie with his family.

“Uh, I guess so,” I shrugged, as I counted the basketballs I shoved into a mesh bag to make sure I had exactly the number the league had given me. “What movie?”

“Hunger Games,” my son’s friend said.

I looked at my wife. I’d heard that the movie was particularly violent and knew that our son, who was under nine, might struggle to make it through a PG-13 movie, particularly one that involved violence among children.

“Are you sure you want to go?” I whispered to our son, hoping that I could encourage him to do something else that evening that might not cost him and, perhaps, us some sleep.

“Daaaaadddd,” he said, giving me the can’t-you-be-a-fun-dad-just-this-once look.

My wife and I locked eyes, trying to figure out if either of us should step in and suggest that we’d rather he didn’t go.

We rolled the dice, holding our breath as he jogged away from us across the gym.

We considered taking a nap before he came home, just to prepare ourselves for a restless night. When he finally returned, he had a broad grin on his face.

“You gotta see the movie, it’s amazing,” he said.

We weren’t sure whether he was just being tough in front of his friend or if he really liked it. Each of the next eight times we asked, he never changed his answer or wavered.

That night, all of us slept well.

Fast forward to today. Our kids are watching and streaming whatever appeals to them. Somehow, one of them asked if we had seen the series “Black Mirror,” suggesting it was a modern version of “The Twilight Zone.”

The first episode, with Salma Hayek, was clever and amusing at the same time. Playing herself, Hayek was particularly funny. Psychologically, it was what we thought and expected.

Then, we watched a few more episodes that became darker and more unnerving. Both of us lost some sleep after watching scenes that exceeded our gore threshold.

We started a text chain with our children, letting them know that we liked the first one and then felt as if the program did a bait-and-switch on us, taking us in a different direction from the psychological into the painful and gory.

They instantly offered their thoughts on different episodes and what they advised was appropriate for mom and dad to watch.

Our kids sent messages like “this one is not scary” and “I think it’s safe to watch.” At least as far as some TV programs, we’ve come full circle. We are no longer trying to offer them parental guidance, at least where movies are concerned. Maybe they can help establish a new film rating system for sensitive parents.

Compare 1920s vs. 2020s: There are remarkable parallels

In some ways, the 2020s appear to be similar to the 1920s. We humans like to look for historical parallels, I think, in hopes of using the past to predict the future, futile as that might be. Call them coincidences between the two centuries, if you will, but let’s look at them and judge if history is repeating itself.

The most obvious is the raging coronavirus pandemic of this century and its resemblance to the Spanish Flu that began in 1918 and lasted into the early 1920s. The flu killed some 50 million people worldwide, with 675,000 being Americans. Covid killed 6.5 million, including 1.1 million in the United States.

And although no plans existed for coping with a pandemic in 1918, individual cities did implement school closings, banned public gatherings, issued quarantines and encouraged social isolation. Public health and medical advances have made huge strides, which account for the global change, although the world population has quadrupled in the last 100 years.

We can compare cultural shifts, too. Liberal views toward equality of women and minorities, drug use and sexuality blossomed then, as well as backlashes to these ideas, setting us up for issues that have followed. Marijuana became popular in what was termed “The Jazz Age,” especially among musicians and those in show business. These themes, along with their inherent tensions, are prominently with us today, even if we consider that we have made significant progress in some ways.

Geographically, more of the population began to live in cities than on farms then, and that holds true for our cities and suburbs now. But the divide today is not so much physical as generational. Social media and video games are the provenance of the young, while older Americans still read, watch TV and film.

The stock market and the financial world are strikingly similar while a century apart. Stocks are roaring today, much as they did in the Roaring Twenties. America’s wealth more than doubled in the decade of the 1920s. But it was a time of immense economic prosperity for upper-class white American men. Most Americans, with minimal wages, only experienced income inequality. It was also a time of the one percent owning a widely disproportionate share of that wealth, some 23.9 percent.

Sound familiar? And because the wages of the working class were not brought along with that of the wealthy, as consumers, they could not keep up their vital role. Consumers are responsible for as much as 70 percent of the economy. Depression followed. Again, today the top one percent own some 26 percent, and again income inequality is rampant.

Then there was Prohibition. In 1920, the 18th Amendment banned the making and selling of alcohol. But alcohol didn’t simply go away. It went underground, making petty gangs who transported and sold liquor into powerful forces in the country. Fast forward 100 years and we have drug lords with the same sort of influence over society as a result of similar incredible profits. The legalization of pot is clearly an attempt to learn from the century-old Temperance Movement. The turnaround in policy toward cannabis has provided a big economic boon, as the product has made its way into fiber, food and medicine.

Technology in the 1920s was dramatic and had a profound effect on people’s lives. Fridges, vacuums, telephones, radios, electricity and automobiles changed daily living. Again, major technological innovations, coming along at an exponentially faster pace, are transforming lives today. Consider internet expansion, 5G connectivity, 3D printing and artificial intelligence among most recent debuts. A few people are amassing unprecedented wealth with these marvels. Here we go again with an ever-increasing wealth gap. Plus, both centuries saw workers worried for their job, first with industrialization and now with knowledge. Advancing technology provides miracles and threats. It is also a crucible for social unrest in both centuries.

And then there is transportation. Lindbergh crossed the ocean in 1927. We are on course to fly to Mars in 10 years. Both centuries’ 20s hosted marvels. But the 1920s set the stage for WWII.

Are we learning from history?
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