



THE TIMES

of Huntington, Northport & East Northport

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NEW!

Letters and columns, *Between You & Me* and *D. None of the Above* are now on pages A6 & A7.

Our printer has closed and we have had to reconfigure these pages for the new printer. Please bear with us during this transition time.

Thank you for your support,
Leah S. Dunaief, Editor & Publisher



Ambassador McMullen, President Trump's friend and PJ grad
A5



'Wicked' soars at the box office
B1



Photo by Toni-Elena Gallo

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Huntington Holiday Spectacular is back and lighting up the village

BY TONI-ELENA GALLO
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Huntington Village turned into a winter wonderland once again as Wall St. was transformed into a display of lights, ornaments, a massive Christmas tree and — of course — a visit from Santa Claus.

The annual event runs from Nov. 30 to Jan.

FESTIVAL

2 and features numerous events almost daily. From live music, to dancers, to ice carvers and holiday markets, this extravaganza has something for the whole family.

Huntington Hospital/Northwell Health has been the premier sponsor of the festival for four consecutive years. “We take immense pride in sponsoring the Huntington Holiday Spectacular, a celebration that brings our community together in the spirit of joy and togetherness,” said Dr. Nick Fitterman, executive director of Huntington Hospital, in an interview with Living Huntington. “Supporting events like these is at the heart of our commitment to our community.”

The celebration kicked off at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday with a tree-lighting ceremony hosted by Impractical Jokers star Joe Gatto. This was immediately followed by the

Huntington Holiday Parade.

Time with Santa is intertwined with the falling of fake snow, as the hourly light show adds ambiance to the already twinkling 82-foot-tall Holiday Tree of Hope Christmas tree.

For more information on daily events, including a Dec. 15 toy drive, visit www.huntingtonholidayspectacular.com, where you can also sign up to volunteer.



Scenes of the Huntington Holiday Spectacular, including light, local dancers and adornments. Photos by Toni-Elena Gallo

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Port Jefferson's Steam Room provides compassion this holiday season with a free Thanksgiving meal

BY TONI-ELENA GALLO
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Steam Room restaurant provided a free Thanksgiving Day meal Thursday, Nov. 28., with all welcome. Whether the person who dined at the restaurant was financially struggling, alone for the holidays or simply in the neighborhood, no one was expected to pay for the feast, which was provided by DiCarlo Food Service.

"When we started this three years ago, we did it for those in need. But what happened was, not a lot of people came," said Vinny Seiter, general manager of The Steam Room. "I think a lot of people felt that they did not need the meal as much as somebody else, and had the feeling they were taking away a meal from someone who might need it even more."

So the restaurant opened it up to everyone. "Even if someone comes down in their fancy jewelry and nice car, so be it," Seiter laughed.

The manager explained that the initiative came about when Welcome Friends Soup Kitchen, located in Port Jefferson, shared with him that they did not have people to help on Thanksgiving Day and were not able to serve. "That is what inspired us to do this," he said.

Seiter estimates that about 200 people partook in this year's event, which saw them seated throughout the front dining area as well as in the large dining room in the back of the restaurant.

In addition to Thanksgiving Day's free meal, a discounted menu was available all weekend long.

The Steam Room is located at 4 East Broadway in Port Jefferson.



The Steam Room in Port Jefferson. Photo by Toni-Elena Gallo

Suffolk legislators honor veterans across 18 districts

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces from across Suffolk County were honored for their service and sacrifice in protecting our nation's freedom and liberty. Each of the 18 members of the

OUR VETS

Suffolk County Legislature introduced a veteran as the "Veteran of the Year" from their district during Tuesday's General Meeting of the Legislature in the Rose Caracappa Auditorium at the William H. Rogers Legislative Building.

Suffolk County, home to the largest veteran population in New York State, also boasts one of the largest veteran populations of any county in the United States.

"Today's recognition of our veterans is the least we can do to honor their vital role in protecting our freedom and liberty and my colleagues and I are proud to celebrate the inspiring commitment of these men and women. They have made significant contributions to their communities and our nation," said Presiding Officer Kevin J. McCaffrey.

"By publicly commemorating their achievements, Suffolk County reaffirms its gratitude and respect for those who have served in the Armed Forces, ensuring their stories and sacrifices remain a lasting part of our county's



From left to right (front row): Christopher M. Geackel, Walter Maresco, Eugene Leavy, Charlie Armstrong and Santiago Mejia. From left to right (back row): Michael Mundy, Christopher J. Hirsch, Bob Grisnik, Enrico Rossi, David Tracy, William F. Murray, Marty Thompson, Dr. Jaime Marcos, William Borthwick, Charles Vinciulla and Grace Mehl. Photo courtesy of the Suffolk County legislature

and our nation's legacy."

McCaffrey highlighted the achievements of Christopher M. Geackel of Lindenhurst, who was honored as "Veteran of the Year" for his district. Geackel retired from the U.S. Air Force

as a Master Sergeant in 2006 after 23 years of service. His awards include three Commendation Medals, five Air Force Achievement Medals, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and two Meritorious Service Medals. He was also

recognized as the Community College of the Air Force Noncommissioned Officer and Athletic Warrior of the Year.

"As a member of Wade-Burns VFW Post 7279 for 17 years, Chris has served as both Post Commander and Suffolk County Commander," McCaffrey added. "He coordinates the Village of Lindenhurst's Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies and regularly visits the Long Island State Veterans Home and VA Hospital to provide clothing, birthday cakes, gifts and vouchers to fellow veterans. He is truly a shining example of selfless service."

November is a significant month for veterans, marked by Veterans Day on Nov. 11 — commemorating "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" to honor those who have served — and the U.S. Marine Corps birthday on Nov. 10.

Former Swiss ambassador, PJ alumnus McMullen looks forward to Trump, part II

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Former Ambassador Ed McMullen Jr. was flying to Italy to visit his vineyard when he received a text from Peter Capobianco, his best friend growing up.

Capobianco, whose family owned Cappy's Carpets, was congratulating McMullen on the work he did to help get President Donald Trump reelected when the former ambassador was flying over Long Island.

"It's amazing to see how friendships from home continue," said McMullen, who is a 1982 graduate of Earl L. Vandermeulen High School and served as Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein during the first Trump administration, from 2017 to 2021.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview, McMullen spoke from President-elect Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida about his upbringing, his experience as ambassador and his expectations for the second Trump administration.

When he returns from his current residence on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina to the Port Jefferson area, where his family has roots that extend for four generations and over 100 years, he enjoys sailing in the Port Jefferson Harbor and Long Island Sound. During the summers, he also travels out to the Hamptons.

McMullen, whose parents Christine and Ed, were high school sweethearts in Port Jefferson, is an appreciative graduate of the public school system.

He suggested some of his teachers, including history teacher Richard Olsen, had "huge impacts on me throughout my life."

He reflects fondly on his upbringing, surrounded by friends and family, including 14 cousins, and supportive teachers and professors.

His grandfather Irwin McMullen had a store on East Main Street called McMullen Market, where he "knew everyone in town," McMullen said.

His education on Long Island and beyond at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia prepared him well for a life that would include representing the country as ambassador and serving currently as a senior policy advisor at Adams and Reese LLP in South Carolina.

His language classes in high school didn't enable him to connect with Europeans.

From seventh grade through his senior year, he studied Latin. That provided a "great foundation," helped him with his SATs and enabled him to speak English properly.

In Switzerland, however, they speak four languages. He found German and Romansh the hardest, while French and Italian, which

he now speaks, were easier.

Swiss roots

McMullen had several connections to Switzerland before serving as ambassador. He skied in the country and traveled there with his grandparents.

After college, he attended a 10-day American Swiss Foundation Young Leaders Conference. Faith Whittlesey, who was former president Ronald Reagan's Ambassador to Switzerland and was on the board of The Heritage Foundation where McMullen worked, brought him into the program.

"Getting exposure to a program like that, where you're spending time in the country, not just skiing it as a tourist, being there and experiencing it is a way to learn" about the beauty of the country and its "amazing" people, McMullen said.

McMullen recalled that he traveled with Ueli Maurer, the president of the Swiss Confederation for a bilateral meeting with President Trump, where the two leaders discussed a "serious trade deal," McMullen said.

"That was an experience with the Swiss," said McMullen. "When they want something, they are very clear about what they want."

Switzerland, which has compulsory military service for all men after the age of 18, has the second-highest percentage of firearm ownership in Europe. The country doesn't have the violent episodes that have caused tragedies in communities throughout the United States.

"The Swiss start educating their children about the benefits [of guns] and why they're used and the problems that can be created if they're not used properly," McMullen said.

Hunters have shown an interest in these educational efforts, the former ambassador said.

Next steps

McMullen, who was a vice chair of the inauguration committee in 2017 and is playing the same role in January, is prepared to work in the administration.

"If there's a place for me to serve, I will be happy to have that conversation," he said. "I don't lobby. I don't pursue things that everyone is out there trying to play the Game of Thrones for."

McMullen is helping the former and future president not only with the inauguration but also with filling State Department jobs.

In searching for members of the Cabinet and to work with the administration, Trump is trying to guard against the kind of people from his first administration who "thought they were put in those posts to do their agenda, write books to make millions of dollars and to talk about things that mostly were not true," McMullen said. "Those are the people who are about themselves and not the good of the public and the good of the country."

Most people take these jobs with the best interests of the country in mind, although some pursue their own self interests. McMullen



President-elect Donald Trump standing with Ed McMullen Jr. Photo courtesy of former ambassador McMullen's personal collection

suggested that was true of former National Security Advisor John Bolton, who is an outspoken critic of his former boss.

The process of finding people to work with the current administration is different, as Trump is conducting meetings with people on his own turf.

McMullen said that abortion, which was a focus of the campaign from Democrat Kamala Harris, did not determine the outcome of the election.

"The President has nothing to do with abortions," he said. "It's the role of the states and state courts and legislatures."

People can choose where they want to live based on their priorities and agendas.

"If you're in a state that's pro choice or is limiting abortion, where do you want to live?" McMullen said. "In all likelihood, if you're in one of those states that's limiting abortion, if you're a big advocate for pro choice, you're not going to agree with much of what's being done in those states."

Climate crisis

McMullen suggested that Trump's view is that innovation and research and development will solve the climate crisis.

Throwing money at government programs for electric vehicles and that pollute groundwater through discarded parts such as batteries won't solve the problem, he said.

"The president's goal is to inspire innovation," McMullen said.

As for energy, that could involve forms that are clean and efficient, including fossil fuels with scrubbers and nuclear energy, the former ambassador said.

The solar energy arena provides an example of where innovation and research is needed.

In the world of nationally funded research, the country is likely to see an effort to cut what administrators consider fat and waste.

"Where there is legitimate research and

development in academia or institutes for health or areas where there is something that is completely legitimate, yes" funding will continue, McMullen said. "Studying the lifecycle of hermaphroditic worms in Borneo is not the kind of things we should be wasting billions of dollars on."

In the crisis facing the country, those areas of research aren't important, he added.

Funds need to go towards pressing issues facing society.

McMullen snapshot:

Mantra Trump has shared: Fight, fight, fight. That's not something he came up with standing on the stage after the attempted assassination. Every time you enter a dilemma or problem or question that can't be answered, fight, fight, fight is the way he approaches a problem, the former ambassador said.

Toughest class in high school: chemistry, without a doubt. I hated it

Favorite food in Switzerland: The best chocolates in the world are Läderach chocolates [which have expanded all over the country].

Weight gained in Switzerland: 60 pounds in four years. Trump told McMullen he sent an ambassador to Switzerland, who was a great ambassador, but he discovered chocolate.

Proudest achievement: President Trump's attention to getting American prisoners home from Iran.

Wish he had done more of when he was in Switzerland: relaxing.

Pitch that encouraged companies to move jobs to the United States: The average salary for a Swiss company is \$130,000. Trump wanted to get more such jobs in the country.

Trump promised to create the tax and regulatory environment, which helped vault Switzerland from the 8th largest foreign investor in the country to the 6th during Trump's first term.

Editorial



METRO Creative Graphics

Good news, everyone — this week's paper is full of good news

News can be one of the most important and constant aspects of every American's life. It can permeate our every waking moment, from the televisions in waiting rooms, our phones' constant push notifications and the reposting of articles all over our social media feeds.

Unfortunately, many Americans are discouraged by the negative news which surrounds us. They feel the polarization of the political parties, constant coverage of crime and oftentimes dark undercurrents that are aspects of the news. Some try to hide from current events for the sake of their own wellbeing. In fact, up to 43% of Americans avoid the news, in some form, according to this year's Reuters Institute Digital News Report.

That is why we are pleased to share that this week's newspaper is full of good news — something most people will happily welcome. It is always wonderful to revel in the holiday season and all of its elements, and that is precisely why happy news can be especially satisfying this time of year.

From the honoring of our Suffolk County veterans, to The Steam Room restaurant's philanthropy this Thanksgiving, to wonderful spectacles of holiday cheer out of Huntington and Port Jeff, our communities have come together to provide each other with bits of joy, in our complicated world.

TBR brings the spirit of community to our readers' doorsteps every week, and will always share with you the merry, along with the hard-hitting. We are proud of our communities and enjoy showing them off during this complex political climate.

Thank you for your readership and support.

Letters to the Editor

Community call to action: Addressing safety and planning for battery storage sites

[The Nov. 21] issue of the TBR Port Times Record was rife with thought-provoking Letters to the Editor from our neighbors in the Three Villages regarding the proposed siting of two lithium-ion battery storage facilities in their community. These facilities, while pivotal in providing impetus toward a green energy future and away from fossil fuels, are not without the attendant public safety concerns and controversy when placed very close to residential areas. Given the proximity to neighborhoods surrounding Sheep Pasture and Old Town roads, as well as the Greenway Trail bisecting our area, many in Port Jefferson Station/Terryville are equally concerned about the process and appropriateness of the placement of these projects.

It is important to note, however, that the Savion proposal(s) are not the only activity which can impact our hamlet. Since July, there has been a pending application at 1575 Route 112 for a 10-megawatt storage site by New Leaf Energy which is adjacent to the Sagamore Condominium complex and a stone's throw from the back of Comsewogue High School. It is our intention at our next Civic Association meeting Dec. 17 (7 p.m. at the Comsewogue Public Library) to have representatives of this organization address our membership which is open to any PJS/Terryville resident. I would urge all my neighbors to participate and educate themselves about this pressing and important topic.

Just as significant, I reiterate my plea that Brookhaven take a leadership role in helping engage the broader community of our town by way of a summit meeting bringing experts together to ensure that our citizens are informed. These storage facilities are spreading across Brookhaven since it is one of the few (perhaps only) municipality on Long Island to have not imposed a moratorium on these projects until defined criteria can be developed to ensure safety. I believe it is incumbent on our local officials to develop a Master Siting Plan to determine what safeguards and standards are necessary and what specific parcels can be identified for the proper, safe location of this activity. Having any L1 (light industrial) zoned parcel have an "as of right" opportunity to develop this new technology could lead to an uproar of confusion as these sites proliferate. In the absence of extensive dialogue, misinformation can be spread as to how dangerous or toxic these proposals are, when a more rational discussion and analysis could lead to better public policy and a clear direction for our future.

Ira Costell

President, Port Jefferson Station/Terryville

Civic Association

Lithium-ion batteries: A risky bet for energy storage?

As an electronics engineer, I designed several systems incorporating charging and balancing circuits for lithium-ion batteries. One

of these was for the Juno mission, which was launched by NASA in 2011, arrived at Jupiter in 2016, a trip of 1.74 billion miles, and continues to be operational today. I have some familiarity with the characteristics of lithium-ion batteries, which are scheduled to be utilized in the proposed energy storage facilities in Setauket and East Setauket.

The problem with lithium-ion batteries is that they are subject to the phenomenon of thermal runaway, which produces an uncontrollable white-hot fire that cannot be extinguished by ordinary means. This fire does not require external oxygen, but is the result of an intense chemical reaction inside the battery cell. Thermal runaway can be induced in several ways, including mechanical stress, such as by impact or lightning, or by overcharging, even by a very small amount. To attain the maximum amount of stored energy, a lithium-ion battery is charged to very close to its maximum rated voltage, which is typically around 4.2 volts. If this voltage is exceeded, even very slightly, e.g., to 4.3 volts or 4.4 volts, thermal runaway may be induced, and it cannot be reversed. In a well-designed system, electronic circuits are utilized which do not allow overcharging to occur. Unfortunately, no electronic circuit is absolutely 100% failure proof. For established critical applications, including military and space, reliability calculations are performed. For each circuit, the mean time between failures (MTBF) and probability of failures per year are calculated. It would be interesting to know whether Savion can provide this analysis for this application.

Thermal runaway, and its fearsome result, is not the only problem that may be encountered, and it may not even be the worst problem. That problem is as follows: how many energy storage facilities will we need to provide uninterrupted power to all of our homes, businesses and other users, when our only source of energy becomes solar arrays and windmills? We have been told that, within a few years, all of our "fossil fuel" plants will be shut down, and all of our energy will come from the sun and wind, with batteries to fill in the gaps when the sun and wind are not cooperating. And, to make matters even worse, new AI applications on the horizon will actually cause our energy needs to double.

One would hope that our elected officials have considered this problem, and have made calculations of the amount of energy storage, and the quantity and size of the battery facilities, that will be required to prevent brownouts and blackouts, particularly during extended periods with diminished sun and wind. If they have, it would be most interesting to see them.

George Altemose
Setauket

What was missing from Senator Schumer's \$72 million Penn Station grant announcement

Port Jefferson LIRR riders should be concerned about some critical details that were missing from Senator Schumer's announcement that he has secured \$72 million from the United States Department of Transportation for various Penn

Station capital improvements. Is the \$72 million an approved appropriation of funding that a transit agency must still develop a grant application or apply for, or is it a real grant that includes \$72 million in funding to a transit agency that is now immediately available to be spent by the grant recipient? Are these funds being administered by the Federal Transit Administration? Is there already a Memorandum of Understanding between the MTA, LIRR, New Jersey Transit and Amtrak for administration of these funds?

How many years will it take to advance design and engineering (reviewed and approved by MTA, NYC Transit, LIRR, NJ Transit and Amtrak operations, maintenance and other departments) before the project is ready for the next phase of construction? Design and engineering usually average 5% to 10% of a capital project cost. Who is going to come up with the \$648 to \$684 million for construction, independent third-party engineering construction management firms to assist in oversight and contingency funding for construction bids coming in above the project cost estimator engineers estimates, contract change orders during construction due to unforeseen site conditions or late requests by LIRR, NYC Transit, NJ Transit and Amtrak operations or maintenance groups?

Larry Penner
Great Neck

Clarifying roles: Code officers don't need firearms

The recent decision by the Port Jefferson Village Board to disarm code officers is a commendable step toward responsible governance and a clearer understanding of law enforcement roles within our community. This move has, understandably, ignited public discourse, revealing a critical misconception: the conflation of firearms with authority.

It's imperative to clarify that code officers, tasked with upholding local ordinances and ensuring quality of life, operate under a strictly defined legal framework. New York State law does not grant them the power to carry firearms. The notion that a weapon somehow amplifies their authority is erroneous and potentially dangerous.

Introducing firearms into code enforcement scenarios unnecessarily escalates risk. It fosters an illusion of power that can lead to confrontations and undermine the essential nature of community-based code compliance. De-escalation tactics, conflict resolution and proactive community engagement are far more effective tools for achieving the goals of code enforcement.

The Village Board's decision wisely prioritizes these methods, fostering a safer environment for both residents and officers. By removing firearms from the equation, we encourage a less adversarial and more collaborative approach to code enforcement. This shift promotes trust and mutual respect, which are vital for a thriving community.

Drew Biondo
Former PJ Trustee

Editor's Note: This is a rerun of last week's letter due to mistakes in the text. We apologize for the errors.

Opinion

From Shirley Temples to designated driver, a lifetime without alcohol

My initials suited me well before I was old enough to care. You see, I don't drink, so the idea of a DD, or designated driver, works for me.

Over the years, not drinking alcohol has triggered an even wider range of responses from adults than discussing my food allergies, which, in themselves, typically start unusual conversations. It seems odd to discuss painful digestive responses to consuming food with people who are about to eat.

Anyway, alcohol is supposed to be some kind of rite of passage, a bonding experience, a chance to celebrate and let loose, and something of a national past time.

I don't mind when other people drink, but I've never been all that tempted to throw down a few beers or to end a tough day with a stiff drink.

When I don't order a drink, I get a range of questions. "Are you in recovery?" "Are you

taking medicine?" "Are you very religious?" "Are you sure you're human?"

Alcohol is as much of a ritual in the country when adults celebrate as sugary treats are when our children attend another birthday party.

Athletes douse each other with champagne, beer, and other beverages when their teams win rounds of a playoff or championships. People toast each other and the start of a new year with adult beverages.

It'd be funny to see a baseball team retreat to the clubhouse after dog piling at the pitcher's mound and eat a tray of cookies and milk (which I also can't drink and, no, I don't feel like describing what happens if I do). Can you imagine them sitting back with a tray of their favorite vegetables, a towel around their necks and a satisfied smile on their faces?

When I was younger, I held cups of alcohol and laughed with a group that became progressively louder. I would search for water or root beer, which was and still is my favorite soda.

I was tempted to order a scotch and soda, but hold the scotch or, perhaps, a rum and coke without the rum.

The early teens were my drinking sweet spot,

literally. I could go through three or four Shirley Temples without seeming to develop too much of a sugar high. No doubt the milk and cookies, the ice cream and the chocolate sprinkles helped me build up a sugar tolerance.

I received my first bottle of wine from a friend in college, who was sharing it with me out of genuine appreciation and was, undoubtedly, following in his parents' footsteps in offering me an adult gift.

Over the years, I have accumulated a collection of wines that have likely increased in value. At the end of coaching a long, hot baseball, softball or basketball season, grateful parents acknowledged the hours I put into running practices or preparing lineups for games for the team with a bottle of wine.

I did try drinking more than a few sips of alcohol a few times. Once, my wife took me out for my birthday, where I had about a cup of wine. I wasn't drunk, but I was surprisingly tired and was much more ready for bed than for celebrating.

When my children reached their early teens, we ordered three Shirley Temples for the table.

Recently, I attended a bring your own booze

holiday party. We brought some alcoholic drinks and a pecan pie.

We considered purchasing a large bottle of water for me, but figured there'd be a pitcher of water somewhere.

Walking from room to room, I didn't find water and didn't want to make anyone uncomfortable searching for it or trying to accommodate my request. When I returned home, I was happy to fill my reusable water bottle.

Professionally, not drinking alcohol is not quite as limiting as not playing golf. Back in the days when I covered investment banking, foregoing golf outings meant making fewer connections and gathering less information.

In those days, I was never invited to a batting cage to practice hitting baseballs, which I would have readily accepted.

These days, when neighbors offer to share a few cocktails on their porches, I smile and nod, without making any declarations. It's harder to argue that I'm not drinking because I'm the designated driver when they live a few hundred feet away. Maybe I'll bring my own water and will tell them my DD religion doesn't allow alcohol.



D. None of the above

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

A partisan divide at our Thanksgiving dinner

This one just passed was my favorite weekend of the year: Thanksgiving. It started last Wednesday night, as all good weekends should. We, the Dunaief Clan, have managed to extend it into three, even four days.

We deserve no less. Like many American families, our immediate members are stretched across the entire continent, from the California coast to Pennsylvania, and from below the Mason-Dixon Line and the Florida Peninsula to the Gulf of Mexico. They need that much time just to get to Grandma's house and back.

What's waiting for them when they arrive? Food! All kinds of favorite foods. And love. Lots of love that bridges three generations with mighty hugs. Why, it even takes a good part

of that long weekend before all the members of the family finish hugging each other, at which point we sit down to eat. We get back up some hours later, only to regroup for the next meal. We know we are among the fortunate in that regard and give thanks.

Food means so many different things. There are the traditional historic dishes that symbolize the meal reputedly eaten by the Pilgrims. But we have added more to the basics. And each person has a favorite that tickles them when they look at the offerings on the laden table and know it was prepared especially for them. Food is love, and special foods carry that message.

It still amazes me to be surrounded by the many members of my tribe. Some 60 years ago, before I was married, there was just I. Then, three months later, there were the two of us, my husband and me. And then there were children and children-in-law, and their children and now, their new daughter-in-law and my first granddaughter-in-law. Together we populate the dining room and fill the house with chatter and laughter.

One of the high points of the weekend follows dinner, when we are still sitting around the table, digesting sufficiently until we can have dessert, and we tell each other what we are most thankful for that occurred in the past year. In that way, I get to catch up on some of the events in my loved ones' lives and they on mine.

Speaking of dessert, the pumpkin pies were an issue again this year. For almost all the Thanksgivings we have celebrated here, 55 to be exact, we have enjoyed the classic finale from The Good Steer. Their pies pleased all our taste buds, from my offspring to my parents, who would join us from NYC during those early years. Alas, the restaurant on Middle Country Road is no more; the owners having closed the business.

So, faced with this significant void, I have done some research and have come up with replacements over the last couple of years. We did a scientific taste test between the offerings I procured this year. I've had a number of friends offer suggestions, and I thank them kindly because they understand how important it is

to find an alternative source. After all, no two differently made pumpkin pies taste the same.

The result here hung in the balance until the celebrations ended. My reputation as the Best Thanksgiving Grandma, I am relieved to tell you, is secure. We found a satisfactory replacement. In fact, there was a partisan divide between the two choices, so we will have one of each next year.

This year, we had a first to celebrate. My oldest grandson had asked the woman he wants to spend the rest of his life with to marry him, and she accepted. The wedding was this past spring, and we welcome her enthusiastically into the tribe. I give thanks for the blessing of seeing our family continue to grow.

I hope all of you, Dear Readers, had a Happy Thanksgiving with the foods you enjoy and the people you love, whether they be relatives or close friends or perhaps those you recently met and with whom you have chosen to share this celebratory meal.

On this day, we give thanks for the special people in our lives.



Between you and me

BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF



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Two men charged with violating Suffolk's Evergreen Law

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on Dec. 2 that Charles Weiss, 32, of Coram, and Marvin Sandoval, 28, of Ronkonkoma, were arrested for allegedly violating Suffolk's new Evergreen Law by allegedly dumping a pile of construction waste and household debris in a remote wooded area within the protected Long Island Central Pine Barrens Region.

According to the investigation, on Nov. 6, Weiss and Sandoval allegedly loaded a U-Haul box truck with construction waste and household debris and then drove into a remote wooded area within the Long Island Central Pine Barrens Region where they dumped the contents of the truck onto the forest floor. The materials they allegedly dumped consisted of pieces of wood furniture, used paint cans, paint rollers, shower doors, chandeliers, large pieces of styrofoam, a sink, a granite countertop, tools, and multiple bags of household garbage.

The defendants' alleged conduct was uncovered by two civilian witnesses who had the good conscience and initiative to sift through the pile for any identifying information and then contact law enforcement. A joint investigation between the Suffolk County

District Attorney's Office, Suffolk County Park Rangers, and the Town of Riverhead Police Department identified Weiss and Sandoval, who had allegedly solicited a job of cleaning up a house for a \$1,000 fee and then, instead of proper disposal, allegedly selected the Pine Barrens as their dump site.

On Nov. 27, Weiss and Sandoval were each arraigned on charges of violating section 433-7 of the Suffolk County Code (the Evergreen Law.) They each face a \$15,000 fine and are due back in court on Jan. 8.

"The Long Island Pine Barrens are necessary to the health of our ecosystem, but at the same time, is incredibly fragile. I am fully committed to preserving our natural heritage and will take any and all actions necessary to deter and defend against pollution," said District Attorney Tierney.

"Any person who is caught dumping trash or any other debris in our county parks will face the full strength of the law," said Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine. "I thank District Attorney Ray Tierney and the Suffolk County Park Rangers and Police Department for their dedication to protecting our parklands and communities."—SUFFOLK D.A.'S OFFICE

POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Dix Hills woman stabbed to death

Suffolk County Police arrested a woman for allegedly stabbing her mother to death in Dix Hills on Nov. 27. Second Precinct officers responded to 2 Carman Court at 9:08 p.m. after a 911 caller reported a stabbing victim at the location. When officers arrived, they discovered a resident, Josephine Bekatoros, 84, stabbed to death.

Homicide Squad detectives located Bekatoros' daughter, Diana Bekatoros, 51, at her home, located at 4610 Center Blvd. in Long Island City, and charged her with Murder 2nd Degree. Bekatoros was arraigned on November 28 at First District Court in Central Islip.

Three injured in Belle Terre crash

Suffolk County Police Sixth Squad detectives are investigating a motor vehicle crash that seriously injured three people in the Village of Belle Terre on Nov. 24.

Cole Girardi was driving a 2017 Kia Sportage northbound on Cliff Road, between Old Homestead Road and Bell Circle, when the vehicle veered off the roadway, struck a tree, and caught fire at approximately 10:20 p.m.

A Village of Belle Terre Constable was first to arrive at the scene and helped extricate Girardi and his two passengers, Tyler Kjeka and Emma Angler, from the vehicle. The Port Jefferson Fire Department extinguished the blaze.

Girardi, 19, of Rocky Point, Kjeka, 20, of Rocky Point, and Angler, 20, of Farmingville, were transported to Stony Brook University Hospital for treatment of serious injuries.

Detectives are asking anyone with information on the crash to call 631-854-8652.

Medford woman arrested for alleged DWI

Suffolk County Police arrested a woman for allegedly driving while intoxicated following a North Patchogue motor vehicle crash that seriously injured a man on Nov. 27.

Aleshia Davis was driving a 2024 Audi Q7 southbound on Route 112 when her vehicle struck an eastbound 2011 Hyundai Sonata at the intersection of Sunrise Highway South Service Road at 12:35 a.m.

Davis, 39, of Medford, was transported to Long Island Community Hospital in Patchogue for treatment of minor injuries. The driver of the Hyundai, Martin Darius, 41, of Shirley, was transported to Long Island Community Hospital for treatment of serious injuries.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this man? Photo from SCPD

Wanted for alleged harassment

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Fourth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public's help to identify and locate the man pictured above who, along with another man, started screaming and yelling at a man while he was driving away from a parking lot, located at 85 Crooked Hill Road in Commack, on November 20 at approximately 8 p.m. The subjects followed the victim onto Crooked Hill Commons when they ran up to his vehicle, punched the man and smashed the driver's side rear window.

The vehicles were impounded for safety checks. Detectives are asking anyone with information to call 631-854-8552.

Melville temple sign defaced

Just released! Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Hate Crimes Unit detectives are seeking the public's help to identify and locate the people who spray painted a sign and pavement at the entrance of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, located at 2 Deshon Drive in Melville, on September 16 between midnight and 12:30 a.m. A third person waited in a dark-colored pickup truck. For a video of this incident, visit www.tbrnewsmedia.com/police.

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.

Port Jefferson becomes a winter wonderland for annual Santa Parade

BY JULIANNE MOSHER
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

To prepare for the Christmas season, Santa Claus made his way down Main St. in Port Jefferson to ring in some holiday cheer.



Scenes from the Santa Parade. Photos by Julianne Mosher

On Sunday, Dec. 1, dancers from nearby schools dressed in their favorite holiday gear while they twirled, spun and danced to some favorite Christmas songs like “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,” and marched from the Port Jefferson Rail Road up to the

Village Center, for the annual Port Jefferson Santa Parade.

Brought in by a horse-drawn carriage at the end of the show, Santa was accompanied by local businesses, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Mayor Lauren Sheprow, who also marched down Main St. Special guests included Disney princesses, Donald Duck and Goofy, who pranced through the streets, waving to all the good little boys and girls, who eagerly anticipated the man in red.

The parade also included characters from the upcoming Dickens Festival, which is scheduled for next weekend, Dec. 7-8.



Long Island Museum celebrates milestones

BY SABRINA ARTUSA
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Long Island Museum is holding its 11th annual members-only exhibition, “Milestones”, from Nov. 21 to Dec. 22, in concomitance with its 85th anniversary.

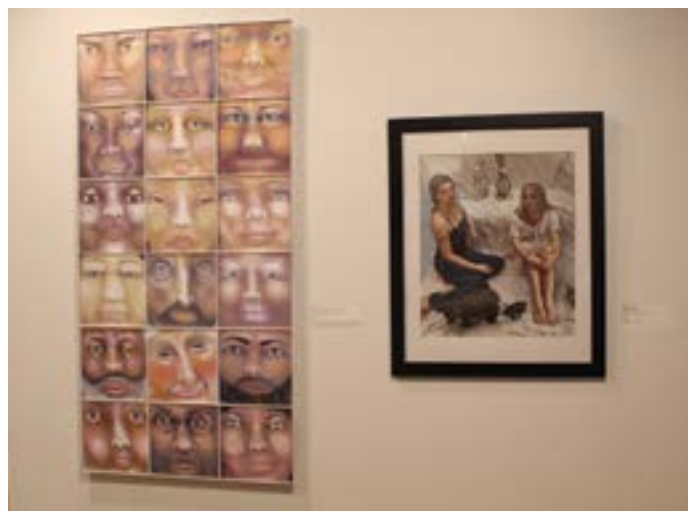
The exhibition features work by LIMarts, the museum’s art group for visual artists.

ART Members of the guild from across Long Island submitted artwork that honors the theme by sharing milestones through visual mediums.

The work of 109 artists can be observed at the museum, where most of the artwork is also for sale. This exhibition is one of the museum’s largest in terms of the number of artists featured.

“Over the past decade, the Museum has continued to grow and adapt in response to a changing community around us,” Karen Romanelli, director of communications at the museum, wrote in an email. “The staff is proud of what we have achieved and are excited to enlarge our reach, both to best serve our Three Village area and to be a regional museum that speaks for all of Long Island.”

On the opening night of the exhibition,



Artwork displayed in the exhibit ‘Milestones’ (left). Guests at the Long Island Museum’s winter gala (right). Photos courtesy of the Long Island Museum



where the white walls of the gallery are decorated with expressionist paintings, intriguing photographs, innovative installations and beautiful landscapes — some of which are recognizable to the native Long Islander — over 150 visitors gathered to share in a milestone through art.

Becoming a member of LIMarts allows artists to utilize the museum’s resources to exhibit and sell their artwork as well

as participate in the constant stream of opportunities and events.

“With its eclectic group of talented artists, Milestones showcases the creative spirit of our members while offering an opportunity for the community to support and connect with local artists,” said Alexandria D’Auria, the director of development at the museum. “This year’s exhibition is a testament to the power of art to inspire, celebrate milestones,

and bring people together.”

Earlier this month, the museum formally celebrated over eight decades of operation with a gala. The event is one of the most important for the museum’s fundraising and the event brought in over \$119,000. Art was auctioned off as guests enjoyed live music, dancing and dinner.

For more information about the Long Island Museum visit longislandmuseum.org.

In Remembrance of Frank S. Bonura, MD

1936–2024

PREPARED BY THERESA JACOBELLIS

Frank Bonura, MD, a beloved physician who touched countless lives during more than five decades of providing healthcare to Long Island women, died Oct. 31 after a brief illness. His energy was boundless, his knowledge endless and his dedication to his patients unparalleled.

OBITUARY

Maintaining his Smithtown medical practice for 55 years, Dr. Bonura was happiest when treating patients, which he did well into his eighth decade.

Born in Queens, Dr. Bonura served in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, achieving the rank of captain. He earned his medical degree at the University of Rome and completed a rotating internship followed by a residency in obstetrical and gynecological pathology at The Brooklyn Hospital. Dr. Bonura also completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at The Brooklyn Cumberland Medical Center.

Shortly thereafter, he and his wife, Lenith (Leni), moved to Smithtown, where he established a solo OB-GYN practice. Over the next 35 years, he delivered close to 10,000 babies, often caring for multiple generations of women and delivering the babies of women he

had previously delivered.

In 1978, Dr. Bonura joined the academic staff at the Stony Brook School of Medicine as an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology. In 1979, he was named chairman and director of OB-GYN at St. John's Episcopal Hospital, a position he continued to hold after the hospital became St. Catherine of Siena Hospital. He established the osteoporosis program at St. Catherine in 1998.

He stopped delivering babies in 2004 and shifted the focus of his OB-GYN practice to caring for women before and during menopause. In his typical style, he devoted himself to becoming an expert in this field by attending national meetings, reading the latest studies and eventually writing articles and a textbook chapter on menopause.

In 2018, Dr. Bonura was named director of menopausal health and osteoporosis at St. Catherine. As one of the few physicians in the region certified by the North American Menopause Society, Dr. Bonura was passionate about helping women navigate the symptoms that commonly appear at this stage of life.

When COVID-19 struck, he continued to treat patients, adding telehealth to his practice. He also began hosting monthly educational

lectures on Zoom to share his vast knowledge about a range of common women's health topics, including weight management, urinary tract infections, breast cancer, vaginal symptoms and hot flashes. More recently, he offered remote educational lectures to women through the Huntington library system.

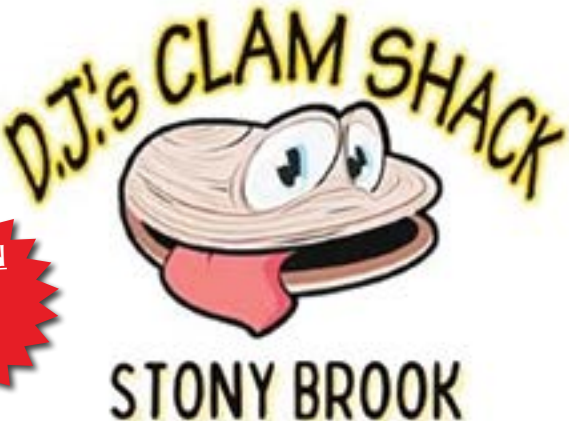
Dr. Bonura was as committed to his own health as he was to his patients'. He regularly played tennis, lifted weights, practiced yoga and took spinning classes. He credited his wife, Leni, with keeping him in good shape by feeding him a healthy Mediterranean diet, which he often recommended to his patients.

In addition to his wife of more than 55 years, he is survived by two sons: Frank (James Pollock) Bonura and Christopher Bonura.



Frank S. Bonura. Courtesy Theresa Jacobellis

A visitation and funeral Mass were held at the Branch Funeral Home and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Smithtown, respectively. Interment followed at St. Patrick's Cemetery.


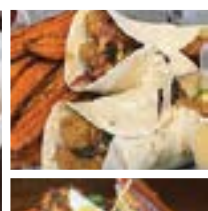




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Photo courtesy the Three Village Central School District

Setauket students spread holiday cheer with a sweet treat

The team builders club at Setauket Elementary School recently kicked off the season of giving. Third and fourth graders worked together to construct gingerbread villages, surrounded by trees, sleds and

characters made entirely of tasty treats. The creations were donated to the Long Island State Veterans Home in the Three Village community for residents and their families to enjoy throughout the holiday season.

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LEGALS

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Email: legals@tbrnewsmedia.com

Notice of Formation of Perl Mental Health Counseling, PLLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 10/21/2024. 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: 121 Main Street #1001 Northport, NY 11768. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

237560 11/7 6x thn

Notice of formation of OLIVIA TWINE LLC. Arts of Org. filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 3/11/2024. 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: 21 ELM DRIVE, EAST NORTHPORT, NY 11731. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

BANK OF NEW YORK MELLON TRUST COMPANY, N.A. AS TRUSTEE FOR MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT SERIES I TRUST,

-against-

UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DISTRIBUTEES OF THE ESTATE OF MARY A. MCCULLOUGH, ET AL.

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the Office of the Clerk of the County of Suffolk on March 15, 2024, wherein BANK OF NEW YORK MELLON TRUST COMPANY, N.A. AS TRUSTEE FOR MORTGAGE ASSETS MANAGEMENT SERIES I TRUST is the Plaintiff and UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DISTRIBUTEES OF THE ESTATE OF MARY A. MCCULLOUGH, ET AL. are the Defendant(s). I, the undersigned Referee, will sell at public auction at the HUNTINGTON TOWN HALL, 100 MAIN STREET, HUNTINGTON, NY 11743, on January 7, 2025 at 1:00PM, premises known as 14 ASHLAND DRIVE, HUNTINGTON, NY 11743; and the

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Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index No.: 610697/2017. Brooke Breen, Esq. - Referee. Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC, 900 Merchants Course, Suite 310, Westbury, New York 11590, Attorneys for Plaintiff. **All foreclosure sales will be conducted in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines including, but not limited to, social distancing and mask wearing. *LOCATION OF SALE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DAY OF IN ACCORDANCE WITH COURT/CLERK DIRECTIVES.**

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Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame celebrates milestone

BY STEVEN ZAITZ

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame (LIMEHOF) held a jam-packed, two-day 20th Anniversary Holiday Celebration Party, on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, at its museum in the back section of Stony Brook Village.

The event featured continuous Long Island-connected entertainment giants, including Mark Newman and his band, Kerry Kearney, DMC, with Johnny Juice, Stanton Anderson, Ernie & the Band and American Idol contestant Christian Padavan. During the two-day event, music videos of LIMEHOF inductees played on the wall-sized screens throughout the museum, as visits from Santa Claus took place.

MUSIC

The gala also did its part in community support by organizing a Christmas Toy Drive in partnership with Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Church's Gerald J. Ryan Outreach Center, supporting 1,500 children in need on Long Island during this season of giving.

On the first day, LIMEHOF board of director members, including Chairman of the Board Ernie Canadeo, Norm Prusslin, Tom Needham, Jeffrey James and Jim Faith waxed nostalgic about the origins of the organization, its trials and tribulations throughout the years, how it established its current home in Stony Brook and its association with Long Island music legends like Billy Joel, Twisted Sister, Mariah Carey and Blue Öyster Cult.

"Long Island, the people in the area, and the artists of the area were so happy that we have established this organization and this place," said Faith. "In the 1970's and 1980's musicians were told to say that they were from New York City, because the perception was that Long Island wasn't 'cool.' No musician has to say that anymore. They can say they are from Long Island because we helped change the perspective of music on the Island."

In attendance on Saturday was Larry "Duck" Dunn. Dunn was a disk jockey at WLIR, a station which introduced "New Wave" bands like Long Island's Stray Cats, INXS, The B52's and Depeche Mode, to area listeners in the 1980's. He sat and listened as the LIMEHOF board of directors spoke of the past, present and future of the music scene on Long Island.

Founded in 2004, the Long Island Music Hall of Fame is an organization dedicated to the idea that Long Island's musical and entertainment heritage being an important



Ernie and the Band perform on Dec. 1 at the Long Island Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame in Stony Brook. Photo by Steven Zaitz

resource, which should be celebrated and preserved for future generations. The organization, which encompasses Nassau, Suffolk, Queens and Brooklyn, was created as a place of community that inspires and explores Long Island music and entertainment in all its forms. In 2022, LIMEHOF opened its first Hall of Fame building location in Stony Brook Village. To date, the organization has inducted more than 120 musicians and music industry executives, and offers education programs, scholarships and awards to Long Island students and educators.

Since 2004, the not-for-profit organization will now be able to be recognized in a permanent home. The space — covering 8,800 square feet — features a large exhibition area, theater, gift shop and an official "Hall of Fame Museum."

"We always wanted a permanent home, but for a long time the organization

never had enough money," said LIMEHOF Canadeo. "We were using a 1998 Winnebago as a mobile museum for many years and now we are lucky enough to have this beautiful facility."

Aside from original concert posters and promotional material that adorn the walls on both levels of the building — much of which is related to Hicksville-raised Billy Joel — the museum features artifacts, such as musical instruments, famous awards, apparel

and other memorabilia from many of Long Island's favorite artists. The wide variety of talent represented by the 120 inductees includes names like Joel, KISS, LL Cool J, Debbie Gibson, Louis Armstrong, Vanilla Fudge, Tony Bennett, Neil Diamond and Run-DMC, among many others.

LIMEHOF is also proud to partner with Steven Van Zandt's TeachRock.

Launched by Van Zandt, who is not only Bruce Springsteen's longtime guitarist, but also starred in the HBO hit series the Sopranos, created TeachRock, along with Bono, Jackson Browne, Martin Scorsese and Springsteen, to provide free, standards-aligned resources, which use music to help K-12 students succeed in science, math, social studies and language arts.

TeachRock improves students' lives by filling every classroom with the sound, stories and science of music.

It aspires to keep the arts in the DNA of school systems, empower teachers with a methodology to engage a generation with the internet in their pocket, create inclusive spaces through the arts by providing teachers well researched, abundance-framed classroom resources, which feature positive representations of all Americans. This is done in the hopes of increasing graduation rates.



From left to right: LIMEHOF board of director members Norm Prusslin, Jim Faith, Tom Needham, Jeffrey James and Ernie Canadeo discuss the evolution of Long Island music scene with the crowd. Photo by Steven Zaitz

In Remembrance of Carol Albano 1948-2024

PREPARED BY THE ALBANO FAMILY

Carol Albano of Greenlawn passed away on Nov. 28 at the age of 76. She was the beloved wife of the late John Albano (1979) and the loving mother of Joanne

OBITUARY

Albano. Carol was a dear sister to Elizabeth Frisino (Patricia) and Joseph Frisino (Vicki) and a cherished cousin

of Elena Muenckler, Susan Cantone and Jackie Pickle. She was also loved by her nieces and nephews, Kathy Derby, Liam Derby, Zack Frisino, Skyeler Pickle, and the late Noelle Muenckler.

Carol retired as the director of the library at Harborfields Public Library after 36 years of dedicated service.

Visitation was held on Dec. 3 at Nolan Funeral Home in Northport. A funeral Mass was celebrated on Dec. 4 at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church, Centerport, followed by burial at St. Philip Neri Cemetery, East Northport.

In Carol's memory, donations to the Friends of the Library at Harborfields Library, 31 Broadway, Greenlawn, 11740, would be appreciated by her family.



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PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN (Never Known To Fail)
Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful vine, splendor of heaven, blessed mother of the Son of God, immaculate virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh star of the sea, help me & show me here in, you are my mother. Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity There are none who can withstand your power. Oh show me herein you are my mother.
Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. (3 times).
Oh Holy Mary, I place this cause in your hands. (3 times).
Holy Spirit, you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can obtain my goals. You gave me the divine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me, and that in all instances of my life, you are with me. I want in this short prayer to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you in eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy toward me and mine. I.D.P
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THIS WEEK:

We dive into a graduate of Earl L. Vandermeulen High School, who is a former U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, a Rocky Point athlete's inspiring story and this holiday season's various community celebrations. All this and more!

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Scientists, clean-water advocates, elected officials and Setauket marina owners pose with buckets of shells stocked with larval oysters.

Photo by Mallie Jane Kim

Setauket Harbor gains 16,000 oysters to aid water quality

BY MALLIE JANE KIM

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In the thick mud of low tide at Setauket's Shore Road Marina, volunteers and scientists in knee-high rubber boots dumped out a jumble of shells along the shoreline — each with larval oysters attached, ready to grow and help eventually filter the water.

This Nov. 25 “oyster planting” was part of a partnership between volunteer organization Setauket Harbor Task Force, which monitors area water quality, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension's marine program. The planting of about 16,000 larval oysters was funded as part of an \$80,000 water quality grant secured in 2022 through the effort of Suffolk County Legislator Steve Englebright (D-Setauket) during his time in the state assembly.

“We're making the harbor clean today,” Englebright quipped during the event. “We're taking the credit, but the oysters are doing all the work.”

Oysters filter feed, removing nitrogen and other harmful elements from the water, either consuming them or binding them into the mud. An adult oyster can filter as much as 50 gallons of water a day, according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The larval oysters planted in Setauket Harbor are about six months old and were procured by researchers from the Cornell Cooperative. The hope is that the shellfish will grow and spawn, eventually creating an oyster reef with critical mass that can help improve water quality. Marina owners Seth Walker and Mallory Guerin, who opened their shoreline to welcome this project, are also allowing the group to set up an oyster garden on a floating dock in 2025.

“This is a really important educational thing for the community,” said Matt Sclafani, the

Cornell Cooperative senior extension resource educator. “When you get a community invested in it, then that increases ownership, and you get more people lobbying for things. Then you can have a bigger plan to improve the water quality.”

But oysters are only one step in the process of cleaning water.

Sclafani explained that a comprehensive water quality improvement plan must include reducing stormwater runoff as well as improving sanitation systems over the currently prevalent cesspools.

“The oysters can't do it on their own,” Sclafani said. “It's a big picture, it's a complex picture, but it starts here.”

New York voters in November approved a proposition to add a .125% sales tax increase toward funding new sewers and replacing aging cesspools. According to the proposition, there are currently 209,000 cesspools in “environmentally sensitive areas” of Suffolk County. Additionally, the Town of Brookhaven in 2023 installed a drainage system along Route 25A in Setauket to help decrease the stormwater that was previously running straight into the harbor.

The town was also instrumental in the oyster-planting process. Town Councilmember Jonathan Kornreich (D-Stony Brook) led the council in designating the area as a management district, allowing the initiative to move forward with minimal bureaucracy since the work is intended to improve environmental conditions.

Setauket Harbor has long been restricted from shellfish harvesting because of unhealthy water quality and bacteria.

“This is one piece of a bigger puzzle for us, basically just trying to be stewards of these waters,” Kornreich said at the event. “It's a full spectrum approach to trying to improve water quality, and shellfish mariculture is a really important piece of it.”

Legislator Rebecca Sanin connects students with their community at first annual nonprofit volunteer opportunities fair

Suffolk County Legislator Rebecca Sanin (D-Huntington Station,) in partnership with Walt Whitman High School, hosted the first annual Nonprofit Volunteer Opportunities Fair on Wednesday, Nov. 20, bringing together more than 20 nonprofit organizations — including Spirit of Huntington Art Center, Splashes of Hope and Island Harvest — and over 1,000 high school students eager to give back to their community.

Students in grades 9-12 had the opportunity to explore volunteer opportunities with nonprofits spanning diverse causes, from food pantries to environmental advocacy groups. The participating organizations collectively received more than 1,000 volunteer signups, reflecting the enthusiasm and civic spirit of Suffolk County's youth.

“Bringing together these incredible organizations and the students at Walt Whitman High School is an important step in fostering a

culture of service and engagement,” said Sanin, who spearheaded the event. “I'm proud to have organized this fair as a way to connect our future leaders with the nonprofits that do such vital work in our communities. Events like this demonstrate the power of collaboration and the strength of our shared commitment to giving back.”

The fair was held in celebration of Nonprofit Volunteer Appreciation Month, which was officially designated by Legislator Sanin's legislation, Intro. Res. No. 1463-2024. Passed unanimously by the Suffolk County Legislature on June 25, 2024, the resolution recognizes the indispensable role nonprofits and volunteers play in strengthening Suffolk County.

“This event is a perfect example of what Nonprofit Volunteer Appreciation Month is all about — shining a light on the essential work of nonprofits and inspiring others to get involved,” Sanin added. “I'm grateful to Walt Whitman High School for their partnership and to the organizations who joined us to make this fair such a success.”



Scene from the Nonprofit Volunteer Opportunities Fair. Courtesy Suffolk County Legislator Rebecca Sanin's office

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