



# The TIMES of SMITHTOWN

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## The norovirus spreads among Long Islanders

Local doctors advise on how to stay safe

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## How Pres. Jimmy Carter's policy changed the lives of a local family

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## Three Village Historical Society distributes historic house markers

Also: 'Transcendences' photography exhibit  
opens at Gallery North

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## Wizards wow Smithtown



Photo by Steven Zaitz

## Harlem Wizards play against staff at High School East and raise funds for the district — A5



## Love My Pet

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Suffolk County. Email your pet photos by **January 23** to [loveourphotos@tbrnewsmedia.com](mailto:loveourphotos@tbrnewsmedia.com) and put

"Pet Photo" in the subject line plus pet's name, your name and town.



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# JOIN THE TOWNLINE RAIL TERMINAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Dear Community Members,**

In January 2025, Carlson Corp and Townline Rail will launch a monthly Zoom meeting to discuss the development of the Townline Rail Terminal Project. These meetings are designed to educate and inform the community about the progress and details of this important initiative.

We are currently seeking volunteers from the community to serve as community representatives or advocates. These individuals will closely follow the project's development and help share updates and insights with others who may not have the ability or resources to engage directly.

If you are interested in taking an advisory role in this significant project, we encourage you to reach out. This is an unpaid position and would require a commitment of 4 to 8 hours per month.

To express your interest, please email me directly at [Toby@carlsoncorp.com](mailto:Toby@carlsoncorp.com). Kindly include a brief paragraph about yourself, your interest in the project, and how you feel you could bring value to the advisory council.

You may also reach me by mail at the following address:

**Toby Carlson, 140 Old Northport Rd., Kings Park, NY 11754**

We look forward to hearing from you and working together to make this project a success for the entire community.

Best regards,

*Toby Carlson*  
Chairman of the Board  
Carlson Corp

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# Jimmy Carter’s impact on a local family

BY SABRINA ARTUSA  
EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In the early 1980s, Robin Agnew’s parents were at the end of their rope. After years of struggling under the increased oil prices, Robin Agnew’s father, a commercial gardener, was struggling to maintain operation of his greenhouse.

The inflated oil prices caused by President Jimmy Carter’s (D) embargo on oil from Iran drained any revenue her father gained from selling chrysanthemums and orchids.

“There was this hope that this incredible increase in oil prices would subside. Year after year it got worse,”

Robin Agnew said. “It never changed.”

On June 30, 1980, Carter signed the Energy Security Act, which emphasized the development of renewable energy projects and energy conservation.

By this time, the Agnew family’s “state of the art” greenhouses were falling into disrepair and Robin Agnew’s father was “working around the clock just to break even.” At this point her brother, Clark Jr., designed a new greenhouse. He proposed a greenhouse that can weather the elements and utilize the sun’s warmth to its highest potential. The greenhouse would be partially underground, with the top part south-facing to maximize exposure to the sun; it would use rocks as thermal energy storage and have a fan to spread the warm air.

Clark Jr. Agnew, a recent graduate who studied architecture, applied and was approved for a government grant to support

his plans to create a new greenhouse.

“They had their backs against the wall and it saved them,” said Robin, who was around 13 when her parents received the grant.

The greenhouse not only saved the livelihood of her parents, but supplied Robin and Clark with livelihoods of their own.

“He was extremely excited then,” Robin said of her brother. “It was his first really big project and to have someone acknowledge and support it was pretty life changing for him I would think.”

Robin remarked how a member of the Carter administration, sent to supervise the project, had told her brother “that of all the grant money that they handed out, his was most impressive.”

“It boosted the trajectory of his life because he felt like they made the right decision in his future and it gave him the confidence to go ahead and do big things,” she said.

Carter’s presidency is marked by environmental advocacy and progressive climate policies. During his presidency, Carter passed numerous acts aimed at increasing energy efficiency and conservation.

The grant program that helped the Agnew family was part of Carter’s larger mission of diversifying the country’s energy sources, thereby reducing the country’s reliance on oil.

His vision in the power of renewable energy sources was such that Carter had solar panels installed on the White House.

The Agnew greenhouse is still used by Robin Agnew, who refers to it as “her happy place.” There is an aviary, a grapefruit tree and constant warmth. A dressmaker, Robin



Leah S. Dunaief, editor and publisher of Times Beacon Record News Media was invited to the White House for an out-of-town press conference in 1978. Photo courtesy of Leah S. Dunaief

Agnew works on her craft in the greenhouse as well.

The greenhouse was a vessel for the economic growth of each of the Agnew family members; it actualized a future that

could have easily slipped away without help from the Carter administration.

“They [Robin Agnew’s parents] were extremely grateful and appreciative and so was I. For me it was amazing,” Robin said.

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# Long Island history – back to basics

BEVERLY TYLER

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

We are all familiar with the lives of the famous men and women in US history. From the time we were students in school, with the images of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln staring down at us from their place of honor in the classroom, we learned of the people who made our great nation. Our coinage includes U.S. presidents as well as men and women who contributed to America and American freedoms.

We can now see movies, videos and streaming programs about these same heroes of American democracy. Students are familiar with the poem about the “Midnight Ride of Paul Revere,” but the lives of many of our local men and women, who have contributed to history, are largely unknown.

Long Island has played host to a number of these famous and well-known people from the past. In this century one of the best known was Charles Lindbergh, the Lone Eagle, who took off from Roosevelt Field on his solo flight across the Atlantic on May 20, 1927. Long Island was the scene of many other historic flights and record-setting attempts by early pioneers of flight throughout the 20th century.

Long before Lindbergh, in June, 1791, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison came to Long Island at the conclusion of a pleasure trip - which included the recording of many natural science observations through New England as detailed in “Jefferson and the Rights of Man” by Dumas Malone, “...they proceeded down the Connecticut ( River), crossed Long Island Sound, followed the northern coast of Long Island to Brooklyn, and then crossed to New York. On their way they visited a nurseryman in Flushing and Jefferson left with him a large order for trees and shrubs, including all the sugar maples that were available.” Not mentioned by Malone was the Ketcham Inn in Center Moriches where Jefferson and Madison spent at least one night. During the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Havens ran the inn and provided intelligence to the Culper Ring, usually through Caleb Brewster who was a frequent visitor.



Ketcham Inn in Center Moriches. Photo by Beverly Tyler

George Washington also visited Long Island after the Revolutionary War. In April 1790, while he was president of the United States, Washington toured part of Long Island traveling to Setauket from Patchogue. In his personal diary for April 22, 1790, Washington wrote, “We struck across the Island for the north side, passing the east end of the brushy marsh - and Coram, 8 miles - thence to Setauket 7 miles more, to the house of Captain Roe, which is tolerably decent, with obliging people in it.” According to Selah B. Strong, in an article written in the 1920’s, “The procession was led by my great grand-father, Capt. Selah Strong. He was evidently an important man in the county, holding the offices of County Judge, supervisor and President of the Board of Trustees of Brookhaven; and County Treasurer, and afterwards State Senator. It was very appropriate that he should entertain the General at Roe’s as the house was the former residence of his grandfather, the first Strong to bear the name of Selah, who came to Setauket about 1700 and on March 23, 1703 bought the land from Thomas Clark and built the house.”

Captain Austin Roe maintained his home as a tavern and, in addition to hosting General Washington on that April evening in 1790, he is known as one of Washington’s spies during the Revolutionary War. This group of men and women, mostly from Setauket, were Patriots who, after their deeds were discovered, became famous. The Setauket Spies operated with such secrecy and modesty that their heroism and, in most instances, even their identities were not fully known until Morton Pennypacker discovered the facts, as we now know them, and published them in his book “General Washington’s Spies,” in 1939.

As detailed in the Three Village Historical Society exhibit “SPIES!”, for two years, since August 1776, when General Washington’s army



A painting by Patricia Windrow of President Washington visiting Roe Tavern. Photo by Beverly Tyler

was defeated by British and Hessian soldiers at the Battle of Long Island, New York City and Long Island were occupied by the enemy. Washington and the Continental Army were fighting elsewhere, in upstate New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and in the South. British headquarters was in New York City.



Roe Tavern location marker. Photo by Beverly Tyler

The only way for Washington to get information about enemy troop movements and strength was to plant reliable spies among them. But this had been tried and failed. In September 1776, Captain Nathan Hale had volunteered, crossed Long Island Sound, and gathered

information on his way to and from the city, by then in British hands. Without training and support he was captured and brought to British General Howe who had him hanged the next day as a spy.

On Washington’s staff was 24-year-old Dragoon Major, Benjamin Tallmadge. Washington asked Tallmadge to create a spy ring of Patriots who could be trusted and who would support each other. Hale had been Tallmadge’s best friend at Yale. He would make sure that his spy ring would operate safely. Tallmadge was born in Setauket, a village across Long Island Sound from Fairfield, Connecticut, where Tallmadge and his Dragoons were stationed. There, Tallmadge had friends, Patriots like himself, who were determined to defeat the British. Tallmadge assured Washington that they could be trusted spies. To keep them safe, Washington did not want to know their names, so Tallmadge gave them code numbers and aliases, or spy names. General Washington called them Culper Spies, after Culpeper County in Virginia where he had his first job as a surveyor. Tallmadge gave himself an alias, too, and gave Washington and himself code numbers. Washington’s number was 711.

“SPIES!” tells the story of Washington, Tallmadge, and the Culpers. All but one was born in Setauket. Each had known Tallmadge since childhood: Abraham Woodhull, a farmer who had reason to hate the British; Anna Smith Strong, who let Woodhull know where Brewster was hiding with his whaleboats and crews: Austin Roe, a tavern keeper who rode into Manhattan as a courier for the Culper Spies; Caleb Brewster, a fearless whaleboat captain and artilleryman who crossed the Sound repeatedly to pick up and deliver spy messages, daring the British to capture him.

The one Culper spy not from Setauket was Robert Townsend. He was born in Oyster Bay. His family home was occupied by the British. Townsend owned a shop in Manhattan where Loyalists and British soldiers visited. He was in a position to gather information. He wrote messages in a code Tallmadge devised. Sometimes he wrote with invisible ink, between the lines of ordinary letters, a suggestion from George Washington himself. Roe picked up the letters and brought them back to Setauket where Woodhull gave them to Brewster, who took them back across Long Island Sound to Tallmadge in Connecticut. From there the letters were sent to General Washington. Information gathered by Long Island’s spy ring helped save the Revolution.

The homes, markers and graves of these Patriots can still be seen, many of them in the Three Village area. The location of the Roe Tavern is marked by a state plaque that locates where the house was, at the corner of Route 25A and Bayview Avenue, before it was moved. The grave and memorial for Abraham Woodhull is located directly behind the Setauket Presbyterian Church. A state plaque also marks the location of the home of Woodhull and is located on Dyke Road between Heritage and Bob’s Lane, overlooking Little Bay and Strong’s Neck. These Patriots are part of our local history and their lives can be an inspiration to us all.

Beverly Tyler is Three Village Historical Society historian and author of books available from the Three Village Historical Society, 93 North Country Rd., Setauket, NY 11733. Tel: 631-751-3730. WWW.TVHS.org



# Harlem Wizards weave their magic at Smithtown High School East

BY STEVEN ZAITZ  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Hundreds of smiling faces, young and old, braved the cold to gather at Smithtown High School East Monday night to experience the dazzling spectacle of the Harlem Wizards Basketball show.

More entertainment than competition, the athletic and comedic troupe, who have names such as Sky-Rise, Jumping Jack, Big J, and Road Runner, wowed the crowd with a mixture of high-flying dunks, ball spinning, break dancing, showmanship and good-natured fun, as MC and ringleader U GoBoy egged on the Wizards to cause mayhem with all who dared to enter - or even stumbled unwittingly - into their playful path.

The team of players/performers ran layup drills, conducted a dance contest for the moms only, all the while signing autographs on balls, hats, and shirts whenever asked.

For an extra treat, the students in the crowd got to see the Wizards dunk on - and run circles around - their very own teachers. Faculty members from Dogwood Elementary, Saint James Elementary and Nesaquake Middle School took turns trying to keep up with the Wizards sky-scraping slams and quick-dribbling chicanery.

Dogwood principal Renee Carpenter served as the ceremonial referee, but after the opening tap, did not

blow her whistle very much. Nesaquake principal Dan McCabe and St. James Elementary principal Adam Javidi played for Smithtown side, as did a dozen or so teachers from the three schools.

The event, which was also held in 2023, was organized by Smithtown PTA President Brittany McGrath. She got the idea from her son Dylan, who is a fifth grader at St. James Elementary.

“Dylan saw the Wizards on Instagram and he is a big basketball fan, so we thought this would be a great idea,” said McGrath. “The kids have a lot of fun and all the money we raise goes back to the schools to help fund programs.”

Last year, the Wizards helped raise about \$10,000, and judging by the capacity crowd on this cold January night, that number could easily be matched or surpassed.

Austin Black, a second grader at Dogwood Elementary, got his basketball signed by Jumping Jack at halftime.

“I’m so happy that the Wizards came to our town,” said Black, who watched his teacher, Miss Ferolito, compete against the Wizards. “It entertains the kids and gives us a great night of alley-oops, tricks and dunks.”

There were many dunks and tricks by the visiting team, and although nobody—except maybe McGrath, who was designated official scorekeeper—was really counting, the Wizards came out on top, beating the Smithtown Teachers 88-76.

“We’ll get ‘em next year,” McGrath said.



Scenes from the Harlem Wizards basketball game at Smithtown High School East.  
Photos by Steven Zaitz





# Editorial

## The unique hazards of driving in the winter

The unique hazards of driving in the winter

As winter enters it’s peak, drivers should be ever-conscious of the dangers the season poses to drivers and pedestrians.

The short winter days provide limited sunlight and therefore, limited visibility to drivers returning home during rush hour. With the sun setting at the early time, most people drive home from work in the hazy twilight. The early sunset often means that many are forced to drive towards the intolerable glare of the sun, blinding drivers who forgot their sunglasses.

Flurries crowd the window and accumulate on the ground. In the following days thirty degree weather is projected after last weeks hiatus of slightly warmer temperatures. Snow is in the forecast.

During times like these, it is imperative that we practice defensive driving. This means putting our blinkers on the ensure others can see our vehicles (even if there is next car is far away, remember, it is illegal to switch lanes without using your blinker), cleaning the frost off our cars so that it doesn’t blend in with the surroundings, and pumping the break and testing the acceleration on icy days. After snow, the roads are full of salt, moisture, and black ice—all of which affect the traction of the tires on the road.

In neighborhoods, folks who walk their dogs after getting home from work have to do so in the diminishing sunlight. We need to be cautious. As eager as we may be to get home, we must resist the urge to press the accelerator a little more as we round the bend to our homes. Sidewalks are not ubiquitous and dogs aren’t always well-behaved and walking calmly next to their owner. Pedestrians, wear bright, reflective colors, carry flashlights, and to the extent possible, walk on quiet streets.

The dangers to public safety from cold, early, snowy days are, of course, paramount, but the dangers to the state of our vehicles is not to be ignored. To save yourself hundreds in repairs, we must ensure that our vehicle is in top condition.

- Check the tire pressure. The cold weather can cause the air to contract and result in under-inflated tires.
- Clean the exhaust. Condensation build-up can cause the exhaust system to rust.
- Lift the wiper blades upwards off the windshield when it snows so they don’t break. Wipe down the rubber lining of the car door so the rigid rubber doesn’t make it difficult to open in freezing temperatures.
- Let the oil circulate. Oil gets thicker in colder temperatures, so we need to be conscious of allowing time for the oil to warm up or switch to oil with a lower viscosity for the winter.

Enjoy the sight of snow-lined trees and slowly descending flakes, but we should not let the precautions slip from our mind. Drive safely.

# Letters to the Editor

## LIRR funding shortfall

LIRR commuters should be concerned about insufficient funds being programmed to bring bridges, viaducts, tunnels and other basic infrastructure that are in poor or marginal condition up to a state of good repair in the proposed MTA \$68.4 billion 2025-2029 Five Year Capital Plan. This also applies to Metro North Rail Road and NYC Transit. It is questionable if \$600 million is sufficient funding for LIRR critical infrastructure projects under the proposed next Five Year Capital Plan. Can this eliminate the growing backlog of critical infrastructure repair. Too many critical capital assets remain in daily service beyond their anticipated useful life. There is still a \$33 billion shortfall to fully fund the proposed upcoming Five Year Capital Plan.

Safety, state of good repair, reliable on time performance with a minimum of service disruptions at a fair price should be a higher priority than system expansion projects. The \$7.7 billion Second Avenue Subway Phase 2, \$5.5 billion Queens Brooklyn Light Rail Inter Boro Express and \$3.1 billion Metro North Bronx East Penn Station Access projects all need to be put on hold. Funding for all three would be better spent on critical infrastructure projects benefiting over 4 million NYC Transit subway, 200,000 plus LIRR and 200,000 plus Metro North daily commuters. MTA Chairman Janno Lieber and MTA Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to protect the interests of riders and taxpayers.

**Larry Penner  
Great Neck**

## Keep those letters coming...

Congratulations to my fellow 2024 Letter to the Editor writers. Surveys reveal that “Letters To The Editor” is one of the most widely read and popular sections of newspapers.

Most newspapers will print letters submitted by any writer regardless of where they live so long as the topic is relevant to readers.

It helps to have a snappy introduction, good hook, be timely, precise, have an interesting or different viewpoint to increase your odds of publication. Papers welcome letters commenting on their own editorials, articles or previously published letters to the editor.

I’m grateful that TBR News Media affords both me and my fellow letter writers the opportunity to express our views, as well as differing opinions on issues of the day.

Please join me along with your neighbors in reading TBR News Media. Patronize their advertisers; they provide the revenues necessary to keep them in business. This helps pay to provide space for your favorite or not so favorite letter writers.

**Larry Penner  
Long Time Reader  
and Frequent Letter Writer  
Great Neck**

## Armed guards aren’t the answer


As has become the norm in the Three Village Central School District members of the community have discovered a cause to champion that needn’t be raised. Now that the start time phenomenon has become a budget-contingent coming attraction, armed guards in our schools are the latest call to action. A knee-jerk reaction to an unfortunate, yet thankfully harmless, incident at Ward Melville High School this past fall, has been the demand to arm our security guards. The reasoning behind this charge is the all too familiar claim that “the only way to fight a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.” Decades of research by the highest and most well-trained law enforcement agencies in the country have debunked this “theory” and proven that many times the presence of armed guards in school settings has invited and/or intensified the violence committed. Anyone with recollection of the atrocities in Uvalde and Parkland knows firsthand that armed security did nothing to deter the perpetrator and no lives were saved. As a mother and an educator there is nothing more important than safety in school buildings and I would never begrudge any parent the feeling of security when a child is in an academic setting. However, there are myriad other approaches to avoiding threats to our children today and they do not include arming security guards. The pushback will of course be the previously noted adage about fighting a bad guy with a good guy gun, especially since many of

the guards are former law enforcement officers. None of the crusaders of this battle are willing to note the fact that we are actually very lucky. Long Island has fortuitously been spared any instances of mass gun violence in our schools. And the one scary instance that Three Village experienced was handled responsibly and transparently. Yes, a gun entered our high school. Yes, there was a chance something horrific could have occurred, but it didn’t. The true concern is that a weapon came through the doors. The best defense against a repeat situation is a system of detection (and not metal detectors) not an addition of guns.

At this juncture we need to trust that our district security experts have the best interests of our children at heart and will continue to keep them safe. Guns in and/or around our schools is not the answer.

**Stefanie Werner  
East Seatauket**

*Editors Note: There were errors in the article, “Paul Braille brings light to his community” of the People of the Year edition published on Dec. 26, 2024. The caption under Braille’s photo stated that he was a contestant on “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire”, which is untrue. He worked on the show for 14 years. To add, he is no longer the president of the Port Jefferson High School Prom Committee. He was only president for the 2024 High School Senior Prom.*



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Email letters to: editor1@tbrnewsmedia.com or mail them to **TBR News Media, P.O. Box 707, Seatauket, NY 11733**



Opinion

Pondering the highs and lows of a trip to the slopes

It's hard to come up with a short list of the pros or cons of skiing. The experience, with everything from getting there, to being there, to trekking home, is filled with, if you'll pardon the pun, ups and downs.



D. None of the above  
BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

I'd like to share a few observations from our recent venture to the slopes.

For starters, just being in the mountains is extraordinary. The air is fresh, clear and clean and the views of snow-capped peaks and valleys are inspiring. Of course, you have to get to those mountains, which can require anything from a long drive to a flight filled

with challenges and delays.

On a recent trip, our flight to those magnificent mountains involved sitting in a row on the plane that was exceedingly hot. When I asked the flight attendant why the plane was so warm, she explained that we were likely sitting near the engines.

The way home was no picnic either, because those wonderful winter storms that bring snow caused us to have a five hour delay, coupled with another hot ride home that suggested that the entire plane must have been sitting too close to the engines. Other passengers complained that they were wearing tank tops and jeans and sweat through their pants.

Back to the positive, the chairlift experience often is an opportunity to meet interesting and compelling people during a short but jovial journey. In one such conversation, I met a precocious nine-year old boy named Stephen, who told me he and his family, including his mother with whom we rode the lift, had recently visited London and Paris. He said he liked the food better in Paris, but that the food in London had improved over the years.

"And how would you know that?" his flabbergasted and amused mother asked.

He shrugged.

"My mom travels a lot for her work, so she's not always around," Stephen said. "Sometimes, we get to go with her to fun places, though." That statement seemed to offer an interesting window into the dynamic in their household.

Those chair lift rides, however, can take longer

to board and to ride than expected. The lifts can stop at inopportune times, near a snow gun that blankets skiers and snowboarders with snow we'd prefer were beneath our feet rather than trickling down our necks. Other times, people on those lifts swing their legs back and forth, making me feel as if I'm on someone else's suspended rocking chair.

On a trip down the slopes, the speed and movement can be exhilarating. The swishing sound of the snow and the speed of the wind, without any mechanical noise from an engine, can allow us to experience the world at higher speeds, as the sound of rushing air and sliding skis combine to form a whispering symphony. At the bottom, our tired but rejuvenated muscles can relive the excitement from our self-directed ride.

We are not the only ones on the slopes and, while we might enjoy the thrill of a high speed run, we may also brace ourselves for the possibility that other skiers or snowboarders might push themselves beyond their limits. We could become bowling pins on a mountain, as others lose control, barrel into us and knock us down.

In the moment, the great unknown over the next plateau presents the opportunity to anticipate

and embrace the terrain ahead. Perhaps the untrodden snow just past the peak has perfectly packed powder, the mogul (or bump, in modern parlance) is the right height and dimensions to catch some air, or the width and steepness of the slopes is exactly as we imagine when we dream of the ideal slope.

The other side of that peak, however, may have thin cover, with grass or even exposed rock, while someone may have taken a spill just beyond what we can see, turning them into obstacles we have to avoid.

While the pieces of equipment makes it possible for us to traverse snow covered mountains deftly, they are not designed for everyday maneuvering. Walking through a parking lot in ski boots can be torture for our shins, which may take days or more to forgive us for our skiing indulgence.

And, finally, the weather can offer the kind of glorious sunshine that transports us into an Ansel Adams poster or inserts us into picture postcard, with light shimmering off the tops of mountains, causing snow covered trees to glow. Then again, Mother Nature doesn't care how much you spent on lift tickets and is perfectly happy to throw wind, rain, sleet and snow at you from every direction.

Oscar Wilde's wife and a racehorse kept me company while I was ill

They weren't really New Year's resolutions but rather goals I set out for myself during the holidays when the office would be closed and we would be on a staycation. Did I meet them? Even though I was ill with a nasty



Between you and me  
BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF

upper respiratory infection for the entire time off, I did manage to accomplish the desired result.

What were they? I wanted to read two unusual books, recommended by The New York Times, over the 10 day period. And I did.

Now that may not sound like such a challenge to most people, but my reading, because of my job, is to keep up with the

news. After all, I am a newspaper publisher and newspapers provide the first draft of history

So reading books, for me, is a luxury, and I'd like to tell you what two books I read because I

found them engaging and would, in turn, readily recommend them. One was the beautifully written, "Horse," by Pulitzer-prize winning author, Geraldine Brooks. I should tell you that my favorite reads are historical fiction and biographies. Those are, for me, effortless ways to learn history and any other subject with which the characters are involved.

"Horse" is indeed about a four-legged animal named Lexington, probably the most famous American racehorse in our history, who lived in the mid-1800s and about art. The horse is the literary device that ties the characters, who live in three different centuries, together. Some of them live before and after the Civil War, some in mid-century 1900s and the rest in the 2019. With that temporal range, Brooks touches on key themes: class, race, regional cultures, war, and the intelligence and loyalty of animals. The book, to a remarkable extent, is based on real people, as evidenced by the extensive research provided by the author in the coda called, "Lexington's Historical Connections," and it has a riveting plot.

Now I happen to love horses, always did from

my earliest memories, when I was enchanted by the horses and riders on the trail in Central Park and begged to join them. I believe that's a passion handed down through our genes. My mother's father, I was told, was something of a horse whisperer, and my father was persuaded to take time from his work, something he almost never did, and accompany me one afternoon on a horseback ride through the park when I was about six years old. Since he had grown up on a farm, riding was familiar for him, although he did ask the stableman where we rented the horses if he could ride bareback rather than on what he called the "postage stamp" English saddle. The groom leading out the horses for us was stunned. Surprisingly he let us ride away toward the park.

But back to the book. It is not only the tale of the remarkable horse that engages the reader of this beautifully written novel. It is the rendering of the time and place in which each character lives, the deftly drawn personalities of the people who populate the stories, the challenges and tensions of their times, and ultimately how much and also how little times have changed.

And if you are an animal lover, the true heroes of the book are the animals.

The second book, which I happened to read first, was "The Wildes," by Louis Bayard. While it doesn't have the runaway narrative of "Horse," it is more of a look back in time at the way Victorian England viewed homosexuality. The theme is developed through the lives of Oscar Wilde's wife, Constance, and two sons. We meet them half a dozen years before his infamous trial in London, when they seem to be living a luxurious and loving pastoral existence. He is highly regarded as a famous author, playwright and witty companion, and she is involved in feminist causes. Enter the aristocratic young poet, Lord Alfred Douglas, and the reality of life at that time begins to change the narrative. Ultimately it is Douglas's provocative father, who causes Wilde to sue for libel, throwing his life open to titillating and legal inspection that brings ruin to the whole family.

The book is both witty for its clever dialogue and sad for all the shadows it reveals about the Wildes, society at the end of the 19th century, and what might have been in modern times.



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**Year After Year**



# POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

### Two arrested for illegal speed contest

Suffolk County Police cited two drivers for an illegal speed contest and reckless driving in Islandia on Jan. 5.

Members of the Suffolk County Police Street Takeover Task Force observed two Mercedes Benz sedans traveling eastbound on the LIE, near Exit 58, weaving in and out of traffic at speeds in excess of 100 mph at 8:45 p.m. Officers safely stopped both vehicles and cited their drivers, Dean Carfora, 24, of Lloyd Harbor, and Matthew Famighette, 24, of West Babylon, for Illegal Speed Contest, Reckless Driving, and multiple Vehicle Traffic Law and Suffolk County Law violations.

They will be arraigned at First District Court in Central Islip on January 24. Both vehicles were seized.

### Man injured in Coram crash

Suffolk County Police Sixth Squad detectives are investigating a motor vehicle crash that seriously injured a man in Coram on Dec. 31.

Anthony Maynes was driving a 2024 Mercedes Benz SUV westbound on Norfleet Lane when he attempted to pass, but sideswiped, a 2007 Toyota Camry, then struck a parked 2015 Toyota Tacoma pickup truck, crashed through the fence in front of 114 Norfleet Lane, struck a tree and came to a stop at approximately 4:25 p.m.

Maynes, 33, of Ronkonkoma, was transported to Stony Brook University Hospital in serious condition. A passenger in the vehicle, Jawarren Booker, 28, of Ridge, was transported to the same hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. There were no other injuries. The Mercedes was impounded for a safety check.

The investigation is continuing. Detectives are asking anyone with information on the crash to contact the Sixth Squad at 631-854-8652.

### Pedestrian from Medford killed in crash

Suffolk County Police Fifth Squad detectives are investigating a motor vehicle crash that killed a pedestrian in East Patchogue on Jan. 3.

Yvonne Balbucacuji was driving a 2012 Nissan southbound on Route 112, near Sycamore Street, when the vehicle struck a pedestrian at 10:45 p.m. The pedestrian, Deshawn Parrish, 30, of Medford, was pronounced dead at the scene. Balbucacuji, 22, of Patchogue, was not injured.

The vehicle was impounded for a safety check. Anyone with information is asked to call the Fifth Squad at 631-854-8552.

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.

### CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Do you recognize this couple? Photo from SCPD

### Wanted for alleged petit larceny

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Fourth Precinct Crime Section officers are seeking the public's help to identify and locate the man and woman who allegedly stole merchandise valued at \$409 from Kohl's, located at 45 Crooked Hill Road in Commack, on December 13 at 7:30 p.m.

### Deceased puppy found in Miller Place

On Nov. 14, the Suffolk County SPCA was notified of a tragic discovery: a backpack containing the severely emaciated remains of a deceased French or English bulldog, estimated to be between six months and one year old. The backpack was found on Miller Place-Yaphank Road, north of Whiskey Road in the woods in Miller Place.

The Suffolk County SPCA is offering a \$3,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) responsible for this heinous act of animal cruelty. SPCA detectives are actively canvassing the area for witnesses or information related to this crime. The New York State Humane Association has pledged an additional \$1,000 reward.

"If you witness any act of animal cruelty or neglect, please report it immediately to the Suffolk County SPCA. Together, we can ensure justice for these innocent animals," said Suffolk County SPCA Chief Roy Gross.

If you have any information, please contact the Suffolk County SPCA at 631-382-7722.

Visit [www.tbrnewsmedia.com/police](http://www.tbrnewsmedia.com/police) for more press releases from the Suffolk County Police.

— COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

# Yaphank woman indicted for manslaughter in drunk driving crash

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on Jan. 7 that Melissa Koprowski, 31, of Yaphank, was indicted for Manslaughter in the Second Degree, Vehicular Manslaughter in the Second Degree, Driving While Intoxicated, Driving While Ability Impaired by the Combination of Alcohol and a Drug, and other related charges, following a November 2024 crash on Middle Country Road that killed a passenger in another car, Esther Guy, 75, of Coram, and injured the driver.

According to the investigation, on Nov. 22 at approximately 8:39 p.m., Melissa Koprowski was allegedly operating a 2014 Dodge Durango eastbound on Middle Country Road in Middle Island. As Koprowski entered the intersection at Wading River Hollow Road, she attempted to make a left-hand turn in front of oncoming traffic, without having the right of way.

At that time, a blue 2022 Nissan Rogue was traveling westbound on Middle Country Road proceeding through the intersection with a green light. The driver's two-year-old child and 75-year-old mother, Esther Guy, were seated in the back seat of the Nissan Rogue. Koprowski's SUV crashed head-on into the Nissan Rogue within the west bound lane of

the intersection sending the Rogue off the road and into the wooded shoulder.

Immediately following the crash, Suffolk County police and other emergency responders rendered aid to those involved in the collision. All three occupants of the Nissan Rogue were transported via ambulance to Long Island Community Hospital where the driver of the Nissan Rogue was treated for her injuries. Esther Guy was pronounced dead shortly after her arrival to the hospital. The two-year-old child was uninjured.

Koprowski was also transported to Long Island Community Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. While at the hospital, officers alleged that she displayed indicia of intoxication and placed her under arrest.

Koprowski was ordered held on \$200,000 cash, \$400,000 bond, or \$1.5 million partially secured bond, and her license was suspended during the pendency of the case. She is due back in court on Feb. 5.

"Driving while impaired is lethal activity and will be treated as such," said District Attorney Tierney. "My office will continue to aggressively prosecute anyone who chooses to threaten the safety of our roadways."

— SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.'S OFFICE

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# Local doctors applaud Surgeon General's request to add cancer risk to alcohol

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Close to six decades after another surgeon general urged a warning label about the link between cancer and smoking, Dr. Vivek Murthy, the current surgeon general, would like to add cancer warnings to labels for alcohol.

The third leading cause of preventable cancers after tobacco and obesity, alcohol increases the risk for at least seven types of cancer, the surgeon general recently wrote.

At the same time, less than half of the American population recognize alcohol as a risk factor for cancer.

As with the prevailing wisdom about smoking decades ago, several doctors and various studies have, until recently, indicated that moderate drinking such as a single glass of red wine for women each day and two glasses for men, have suggested a medical benefit to consuming alcohol.

"We have been misguided all these years by thinking there's an acceptable amount of alcohol that's safe enough to recommend," said Dr. David Rivadeneira, Director of Northwell Health Cancer Institute at Huntington Hospital.

Any change in required labels for alcohol would have to come from Congress, which would likely face lobbying pressure from the alcohol industry.

Local doctors, however, suggested that the potential increased risk of cancer from alcohol outweighs any potential reduction in the risk related to any cardiovascular incident or stroke.

Dr. Mark Solomon, medical director of St. Charles' chemical dependency program, called the benefits of alcohol a "myth."

"Anything you put in your body affects every cell in your body," said Solomon. "It's finally coming to the forefront that we should put labels [on alcohol]. Drinking alcohol is not some benign social activity. There are certain risks associated with that, with cancer being one of them."

Paolo Boffetta, Associate Director for Population Sciences at the Stony Brook Cancer Center, explained that earlier studies, including one that he participated in, that showed a cardiovascular benefit to drinking had various scientific problems.

Those studies didn't differentiate between people who quit drinking and those who never consumed alcohol.

"The category of a non drinker had an increased risk" that was above what researchers had understood because that group included a mix of people, Boffetta said.

This sampling problem suggested to Boffetta that the results of some of these studies that suggested a cardiovascular health benefit to drinking "were probably not correct."

Boffetta, who welcomed Dr. Murthy's recommendation to add cancer risk to a label that already warns consumers who are pregnant or who are operating a car or heavy machinery, urged researchers to continue to study the link between alcohol and cancer.

## Protecting health

Dr. David Rivadeneira, director of Northwell

Health Cancer Institute at Huntington who specializes in colorectal cancer, is concerned about the increased incidence of cancer among the younger population.

The current cancer rates are at levels "we've never seen before in patients that are less than 50 years old," said Rivadeneira. "That is very worrisome. The issue of alcohol may have something to do with it."

Indeed, during the worst of the lockdowns amid the Covid pandemic, some people increased their consumption of alcohol.

"Our current understanding is that alcohol is a chemical that probably has no health benefits whatsoever," said Rivadeneira. "If anything, it's detrimental even in small quantities."

Rivadeneira anticipates the effect of such a discussion of the health consequences of consuming alcohol and of any future labeling on bottles may alter consumer behavior more rapidly than changes in established patterns for smoking decades ago.

"People are more likely to take ownership with regard to their own health," he said. "They want to be healthier."

Rivadeneira wants to give patients information that is appropriate and medically sound, giving them the option to decide if they want to incorporate this knowledge into their lifestyle.



Dr. David Rivadeneira. Photo courtesy of Northwell Health

Working with their doctors, people can decide on their overall risk profile, based on their family history, other health factors such as their weight and their history through cancer screenings such as mammographies, whether they want to reduce the kind of risk that might tip the scales through alcohol consumption, Rivadeneira said.

"I tell people, 'You can be proactive or reactive. Here you are, you've got to make a decision about what you want to do. Do you want to reduce the chance of cancer and other ailments?'" Rivadeneira said.

## A warning and behavior

Doctors believed a warning label on alcoholic products might alter consumer behavior.

"People are more afraid when it's written down," said Dr. Jana Deitch, breast surgical oncologist at St. Catherine of Siena Hospital in Smithtown. "If it's on the bottle, the population will take it more seriously."

Deitch added that everyone has to decide to what degree they are putting themselves at risk.

"It's information that's readily available to the general population" Deitch said.

Solomon suggested that doctors should educate their patients about the dangers of consuming alcohol.

"The medical community and physicians have to be more educated so they can start to relay this to the patient," said Solomon. "There'll be some kind of shock to this" because people will indicate that they have been drinking their whole lives. "It's going to take a long time and it has to start with education from doctors."

# Norovirus running rampant in the county and the country

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Good cruise ships? Sure, absolutely. Norovirus? Nope, that's a hard pass!

Unfortunately, residents on Long Island and in many places around the country are battling higher than normal outbreaks of the stomach curdling norovirus, which sometimes afflicts people who are on cruise ships.

Norovirus has been coming "from the community, from nursing homes" and from places where large groups of people congregate, said Dr. Adrian Popp, chair of Infection Control at Huntington Hospital/ Northwell Health and associate professor of medicine at Hofstra School of Medicine.

Norovirus, with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramping, nausea, headache and chills, is spread through contaminated food, contaminated drinking water, unclean hands and surfaces such as counters or door handles where the virus awaits its next victim.

"It doesn't take a lot of virus to get somebody ill," said Popp. The usual incubation period, when someone can be contagious without knowing it,

can be a day or two.

People often have these symptoms for anywhere from a day to three days.

At this point, researchers have not produced a vaccine for the virus and treatment for those with the most severe symptoms often involves fluids, either orally or intravenously if a person can't keep anything in his or her stomach.

People who are most at risk from complications related to norovirus include senior citizens who are in poor health, people with chronic conditions, those who are immunocompromised, or people who become dehydrated quickly, doctors suggested.

When people have numerous and frequent liquid bowel movements, they should realize something is wrong, even if they are younger or in good overall health.

The emergency rooms at hospitals recognize the symptoms of the virus and can often place a person in isolation quickly, reducing the likelihood of other patients developing the illness, Popp added.

Unlike other viruses, norovirus does not respond to hand sanitizer. The virus dies in response to products containing hydrogen peroxide or to a

thorough washing with soap and water.

"During COVID we had people who were a lot more careful about these sorts of protection measures," said Popp. "Now, we're back to baseline carelessness. People don't wash their hands as much as they should."

## Higher reporting

Dr. Sharon Nachmann, chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Stony Brook Children's Hospital, believes norovirus cases have increased in part because of more testing.

"If you ask families in the past, they would say, 'we've all had that stomach bug. Our relatives had it.' No one would have said, 'Let me go to the hospital to get tested.'"

Rapid testing means that doctors can get results quickly, leading to more immediate diagnosis and isolation.

Nachmann added that this virus is particularly infectious, with a potential patient needing only 10 particles to become sick, compared with a couple of thousand for infections from other pathogens.

## Stay home!

Doctors urged those who are experiencing norovirus symptoms to work remotely, if at all



Metro Creative Connection photo.

possible.

"We don't want you at work if you have six watery stools a day," said Nachmann. "You need to stay close to a bathroom and close to home. Whatever you have, nobody wants it."

Indeed, even at home, doctors urged people to try to isolate from family members as much as possible.

"You don't want everyone using the same toilet and door handles," Nachmann said.

People don't need to use plastic utensils when they are sick. Putting forks, knives, spoons and plates in a dishwasher should protect others from contracting the virus.

# New ferry sails into the PJ harbor

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The Bridgeport and Port Jefferson Steamboat Company added a new vessel to its fleet: the Long Island.

The 300-foot long, 53-foot wide ferry completed its first voyage to Bridgeport on Dec. 27. The boat features new amenities such as an updated interior and tier 4 engines, the highest standard for diesel engines. It can carry 1,000 passengers and up to 124 cars.

The Bridgeport and Port Jefferson Steamboat Company Vice President and General Manager Fred Hall was the second passenger on the first voyage of the Long Island. “It was a wonderful trip; it was great to see people oohing and aahing at the decor that they hadn’t seen before.”

Unlike the smaller Park City, the Grand Republic or PT Barnum, the Long Island has seating along the window, a counter with phone charging stations, two-seat and four-seat tables and a separate cabin for pets.

The speed is the same as the other boats, but the engine is of a higher standard and releases less carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbon and particulate matter emissions.

The addition of a fourth boat to the fleet

## VILLAGE

allows Hall and the company to pursue ventures besides the simple transit to and from Bridgeport.

Hall said that years ago the company used to plan excursions to other locations, such as Playland Park in Rye, an overnight trip to Albany or a trip down the Connecticut River. With an extra boat, this now may be possible.

A fourth boat also alleviates the burden of demand. the company can only schedule three boats, but having a fourth reduces the inconvenience of delays in the case one of the others needs repairs or is out of commission.

Further, Hall is exploring the possibility of using the fourth boat as a shuttle. In other words, if there is a surplus of vehicles waiting to board, and the scheduled vessel is at capacity, the fourth can serve as a shuttle to transport the remaining cars.

“This is the huge benefit,” Hall said. “Everyone asks me when is your peak season. I’ve always said when the public schools aren’t in session.” He had meant summers, but has since realized that weekends are just as busy.

“Our goal is to provide three-vessel service every weekend of the year. It is not going to happen 100% of the time. If you have four boats you have a better chance of providing three-boat service on the weekends consistently,” Hall said.

Come down to the Port Jefferson Harbor and check out the new addition of the Long Island.



The Long Island. Photo courtesy of Fred Hall

# John Glenn’s boys soccer team earns numerous postseason awards

It was a year of achievements and accolades for John Glenn High School’s varsity boys soccer team. Extending far past their 2024 fall season, the Knights went 13-2-1, earning league and county championships, the No. 1 Class A playoff seed, and a ranking of seventh in New York State.

At the Suffolk County Soccer Coaches Association (SCSCA) All-Star Awards Banquet in December, goalkeeper Tyler Ziminski won the Bill Lown Small School Player of the Year award and was named All-Conference, All-County, All-State, All-Region (a first in school history), the SCSCA’s Exceptional Senior in the All-Star Game, and League VIII MVP and Keeper of the Year. Ziminski, a senior, finished the season with an incredible 13 shutouts, raising his career total to 30.

Also earning All-Conference honors were three juniors: forward Cooper Kassan, forward Isaac Perez, and midfielder Jake Piacentini. Two defenders, junior Peter

## HONORS



Left: Elwood-John H. Glenn High School senior goalkeeper Tyler Ziminski won the Bill Lown Small School Player of the Year award at the the Suffolk County Soccer Coaches Association's All-Star Awards Banquet. Right: Elwood-John H. Glenn High School varsity boys soccer team earned numerous accolades and awards at the Suffolk County Soccer Coaches Association's All-Star Awards Banquet. Photos courtesy of Elwood School District

Bell and senior James Mossey, earned All-League designation. Senior Davin Li was named Academic All-County and a News 12 Scholar-Athlete. Eli Tyll, Matthew Riberic,

and Sam Voege won John Glenn’s Coaches Award, with Tyll earning the SCSCA’s Captain Alex Fyfe Courage Award.

The superlative efforts of the team’s staff were also recognized. Head coach Lou Hanner won Suffolk County’s John Eden Small School Coach of the Year award, and assistant coach Chris Riley was named United Soccer Coaches 2024 East Region High School Assistant Coach of the Year. Additionally, Hanner, Riley, and assistant coach Don O’Brien were named League Coaching Staff of the Year.

“We just had an incredible year,” Hanner said. “The kids did fantastic. We’ve been really close to winning the county title before; we’ve been to the semifinals 10 of the last 12 years, so to finally win it was special.”

“What a fantastic year for this team,” Athletic Director Dave Shanahan said. “The coaching staff and student-athletes made us proud with their exceptional season. Their postseason honors are well deserved. Congratulations to Coach Hanner, his staff, and all of the postseason award winners.”





Ann-Margaret Navarra, PhD, CPNP. Photo courtesy Jeanne Neville, Stony Brook Medicine

## Nurse scientist selected to a national fellowship to address health inequities

Ann-Margaret Navarra, PhD, a certified nurse practitioner and Associate Professor in the Stony Brook University School of Nursing, has been named to a national fellowship program that will examine social determinants of health in the context of eliminating healthcare inequities in the United States.

She is among the first of 10 “innovators” selected by the Institute for Policy Solutions (IPS) at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing for the Nursing Science Incubator for the Social Determinants of Health Solutions (N-SISS) Fellowship. The N-SISS will comprise a cohort of nurse scientists and other scientists in aligned fields from around the country.

Navarra was selected by Johns Hopkins because of her outstanding qualifications, innovative research focus, and her commitment to eliminating healthcare inequities in the U.S. through the lens of the social determinants of health.

At Stony Brook Nursing since January 2024, Navarra is also the School’s Associate Dean, Nursing Research and Innovation.

Her main areas of research have been in the clinical areas of HIV/AIDS, pediatrics, chronic disease and the underserved.

In the 1990s she was one of the first advanced practice pediatric nurses leading care initiatives for youth living with HIV/AIDS. This pioneering work became the impetus for her significant contributions to the HIV behavioral sciences and advancement of health equity for youth living with HIV.

The N-SISS Fellowship will operate for three years and will eventually include over 30 innovators to be selected by Johns Hopkins. It will be an active incubator to assess the social determinants of health nationwide. The program will also include a mix of virtual and on-campus courses and guided self-study, along with applied research training and individualized and team mentoring, all of which will lead to each participant’s development of a social determinants of health focused grant proposal to a National Institutes of Health agency.

Navarra and each of the first 10 professionals selected for the fellowship will begin a two-week intensive training program in Washington DC, beginning Feb. 3.

## Sicknesses spread: flu leading the charge

BY DYLAN FRIEDMAN  
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Recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data indicates a significant increase in illness across the United States, with roughly 40 states reporting high illness activity levels in the past week.

So, what illnesses are hitting the hardest at the moment?

According to Carrie Reed, epidemiologist with the CDC Influenza Division, as reported in a recent NBC News Chicago article, “There is a lot of flu out there.”

Reed further emphasized that the current flu surge is being driven by multiple strains, a fact supported by the latest CDC hospitalization data.

According to the CDC, “flu symptoms usually come on suddenly.”

Some of the most common symptoms include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness). Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than in adults.

According to the CDC, antiviral medications may be a treatment option if you contract the flu. These medications can potentially lessen the severity of illness and shorten the duration of sickness. They may also help prevent certain flu complications, such as pneumonia.

For optimal effectiveness, antiviral medications should be initiated promptly, ideally within the first two days of the onset of flu symptoms.

While the flu is prevalent at the start of 2025, it is essential to note that several pathogens, including COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus, can present with similar symptoms, such as fever, cough and sore throat. While RSV typically causes cold-like symptoms, it can pose significant health risks for infants and the elderly.

According to the CDC, people infected with RSV usually exhibit symptoms within four to six days after getting infected. The most common symptoms are runny nose, congestion, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing and fever.

It is also important to note that symptoms often appear in stages rather than simultaneously. While adults may experience more pronounced symptoms, they can be less noticeable in young infants. Although RSV typically causes mild cold-like illness, it can lead to severe conditions such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia.

Preventive and protective measures against RSV infection vary depending on the age group. For adults, RSV vaccination



Metro Creative Connection photo

is recommended for individuals aged 75 and older as well as those aged 60-74, who are considered at increased risk for severe RSV. In infants, two primary approaches are utilized to mitigate the risk of severe RSV infection. First, a maternal RSV vaccine can be administered to pregnant women, providing some level of protection to the developing fetus. Alternatively, an RSV antibody can be administered to infants after birth to enhance their immunity against the virus.

Additionally, the common cold can present with symptoms similar to both RSV and the flu, including a runny nose, sore throat and cough. While the common cold is generally considered a mild illness, it can cause significant discomfort and may lead to more serious complications in individuals with weakened immune systems, such as the elderly or those with chronic health conditions.

According to the CDC, the manifestation of cold symptoms usually reaches a peak within two to three days of infection and may include runny nose or nasal congestion, cough, sneezing, sore throat, headache, mild body aches and fever (usually low grade in older children and adults).

The common cold is a self-limiting viral infection that typically resolves without the need for specific medical intervention. It is crucial to understand that antibiotics are ineffective against viruses and, therefore, will not alleviate cold symptoms.

Additionally, individuals experiencing cold-like symptoms who suspect a possible COVID-19 or flu infection, particularly those at elevated risk for severe illness, are strongly encouraged to undergo testing.

Antiviral treatments are available for both COVID-19 and flu, and their efficacy is significantly enhanced when administered promptly following the onset of symptoms.

More information can be found on the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

# Taylor Swift Laser Light Show Illuminates the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium

BY JENNIFER DONATELLI  
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While her Eras Tour may be over, you can still experience Taylor Swift’s music in a whole new way — without shelling out thousands for tickets. In an exciting blend of music, technology and astronomy, the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Planetarium in Centerport is hosting a dazzling laser light show featuring the music of one of the biggest artists of the 21st century.

## EVENTS

The Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium, known for its innovative educational and entertainment programming, has introduced the Taylor Swift Laser Light Show, a unique fusion of astronomy and pop culture. The planetarium’s state-of-the-art dome transforms into a visual spectacle, immersing audiences in Swift’s iconic hits like “Anti-Hero,” “Fearless” and “Shake It Off.”

“This is not your average concert but a celestial experience,” said Dave Bush, director of the Vanderbilt Planetarium. The show combines intricate laser projections, animated visuals and stunning astronomy displays synchronized to Swift’s chart-topping music. Each song is carefully paired with vibrant light patterns and celestial imagery, evoking the awe of stargazing alongside Swift’s unforgettable melodies.

For Swifties and fans of immersive entertainment, this event has become a must-see. “She’s a Swiftie, and I love laser light shows,” said Matthew Verstraten, a history teacher from Middle Island who attended the show with his fiancée Angelina Shtenger.

Tara Moore, who attended with her family to celebrate her birthday, shared her excitement, saying, “I’ve followed Taylor Swift since she was 17 and playing country music. The laser show was an amazing experience filled with music, lights and excitement.” Her five-year-old son Finn added enthusiastically, “I’m a Swiftie too!”

The planetarium’s advanced projection and audio systems ensure a flawless experience, with every light beam and color shift perfectly aligned to the rhythm and emotion of the music. The show’s appeal is wide-ranging, offering something for everyone — from die-hard Swifties to families seeking an educational yet entertaining outing.

Roz Katz of Farmingdale and Jonathan Winter of Woodmere admitted they weren’t familiar with Swift’s music when they bought tickets, but after the show, they were singing “You Belong with Me” in the lobby.



Various light displays depicting Taylor Swift, as well as other graphics. Photos by Jennifer Donatelli

“It was incredible!” they said.

The Taylor Swift Laser Light Show has become one of the planetarium’s most popular offerings, drawing audiences for over a year and a half. “We thought it would be successful, but the magnitude has been unbelievable,” said Bush. “It’s a concert-like experience without the high ticket prices.”

The show, which features 12–14 tracks per performance, changes its setlist every six weeks to keep the experience fresh. Audience members often come dressed for the occasion, wearing glow-in-the-dark necklaces, heart-shaped glasses and other concert-inspired accessories.

For more information on the show and other events, visit [www.vanderbiltmuseum.org](http://www.vanderbiltmuseum.org).





# Start the New Year off with the Christmas tree recycling program

As the holiday season comes to an end, the Town of Smithtown is encouraging residents to recycle their Christmas trees and help make a difference in the community and the environment. The town offers a worry-free curbside tree recycling option during the month of January. Suffolk County also accepts trees at Smith Point to help protect the dunes from erosion.

### Turn your tree into free mulch

The Smithtown Highway Department will collect Christmas trees placed at the curb throughout January. Once collected, the trees will be mulched at the Municipal Services Facility (MSF), providing free mulch to residents.

Preparation: Carefully remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel and plastics from the tree.

Pickup Schedule: Place trees at the curb for collection by the Town Highway Department.

Free Mulch: Pre-packaged mulch (up to 10 bags per visit) is available at MSF. Residents can also opt for loose mulch, which can be loaded into trucks free of charge (cover required).

“We’re proud to offer this service to our community as part of our commitment to

sustainability and environmental stewardship, and it takes a burden off the residents right at the beginning of the New Year,” Highway Superintendent Robert Murphy said. “Simply place your Christmas tree at the curb, and our team will handle the rest. By participating in the Christmas Tree Recycling Program, you’re not only helping us create mulch for landscaping or reinforcing our coastline, but you’re also contributing to a greener, more sustainable future for everyone in our town.”

### Protect our sand dunes

Help preserve our natural coastline by repurposing your tree for sand dune erosion protection at Smith Point County Park.

Preparation: Remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel and plastics from the tree.

Drop-off Location: Smith Point County Park, East Booth, Shirley.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., daily.

Use: Trees will be placed along sand dunes to prevent erosion during high tides.

Contact: Call Smith Point County Park at 631-852-1340 for more information.

Start the New Year with an eco-friendly tradition by recycling your tree and making a positive impact.

## Discover What Our Customers Have to Say About Us!

### Hope Springs Eternal Second Chance

**Boutique (supporting Hope House Ministries)** Barbara Morin, Director and Carol Acker, Photographer:

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### Animal Health & Wellness:

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### Ward Melville Heritage Organization:

“All ad staff are very professional and accurate with their work, we are pleased with their results for SB Village. TBR is outstanding community newspapers, offering balanced stories and are overall professional.”

### Law Office of Tara Scully:

“Tons of visits, very reliable, it has a hometown feel. Even in different more modern times, it still feels hospitable.”

### Carpet Your World:

“It has increased exposure and very good for recognition. Love that it is a local paper, it is very good for target market and aiming towards a specific audience.”

### J.M. Troffa:

“Repeating customer and very satisfied with TBR News Media’s work, we benefit from the exposure. They are nice and straightforward and they update regularly.”

### LI Sinus Institute:

“Still waiting on the impact of business, but it is good for recognition. What we appreciate about community newspaper is focusing on the needs and assisting people locally.”

For advertising inquiries call 631-751-7744 or email [addirector@tbrnewsmedia.com](mailto:addirector@tbrnewsmedia.com). Experience the difference with TBR News Media today!

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## Novenas

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. M.C.D The person must say this prayer 3 consecutive days. The request will be granted. This prayer must be published after the favor has been granted.

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- Merchandise
- Personals
- Novenas
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- Professional Services
- Schools/Instruction/Tutoring
- Wanted to Buy
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**DEADLINE:**  
Tuesday at Noon

The Classifieds Section is published by TIMES BEACON RECORD NEWS MEDIA every Thursday. Leah S. Dunaief, Publisher, Sheila Murray, Classifieds Director. We welcome your comments and ads. TIMES BEACON RECORD NEWS MEDIA will not be responsible for errors after the first week's insertion. Please check your ad carefully. • Statewide or Regional Classifieds also available - Reach more than 7 million readers in New York's community newspapers. Line ads 25 words : Long Island region \$69 - \$129 - New York City region \$289 - \$499 - Central region \$29 - \$59 - Western region \$59 - \$99 - Capital region \$59 - \$99 - all regions \$389 - \$689 words. \$10 each additional word. Call for display ad rates.

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# Royals hold Knights at bay

BY BILL LANDON  
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SPORTS  
Port Jefferson controlled the tempo of the game from the opening tip off against Smithtown Christian in a nonleague boys basketball matchup on Saturday,

Jan. 4 where the Royals took a 12-point advantage into the halftime break. The Knights surged back in the third quarter, but Port Jeff was able to contain the threat to put the game away 56-41 in a home game Jan. 4.  
Smithtown Christian's Lorenzo Crilly, a senior, marked a high point in his varsity career eclipsing 1,000

points while leading his team in scoring with 28 points.  
Ryan Sommerstad did his damage from long distance for the Royals, draining five three-pointers and a field goal for 17 points, and teammate Dan Rose banked 17 points of his own with five field goals, a triple and four from the free throw line. . Photos by Bill Landon



1



2



3

❶ Dan Rose drives the lane for the Royals in a nonleague matchup against Smithtown Christian.

❷ Senior Lorenzo Crilly lays up for two for Smithtown Christian in a road game against Port Jeff.

❸ Rumaan Khan goes to the rim for the Royals.





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