The PORT TIMES RECORD

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Pressure on Brookhaven as local group urges landfill closure The Brookhaven Landfill Action and Remediation Group rallys on June 9

A5

TBR photographer wins awards with the Long Island Press Club A12



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Tense atmosphere dominates meet-the-candidates night

BY SABRINA ARTUSA

EDITOR1@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

In anticipation of the June 17 vote, five candidates assembled at the Port Jefferson Village Center for a meet-the-candidates night, where they spoke on pressing village concerns and their leadership priorities. The mayoral seat and two trustee seats are open, as Mayor Lauren Sheprow and trustee Robert Jiuliano's two-year terms are at an end and each are up for reelection.

The event, sponsored by the Port Jefferson Chamber of Commerce and the Civic Association of Port Jefferson, allowed each candidate to answer previously submitted questions from residents, with topics ranging from the East Beach Bluff Stabilization Project to transparency and communication.

Incomers Matthew Franco and Julie Vitrano are also vying for a trustee seat left vacant with the exit of Stan Louks. Franco has 10 years of experience in construction, is an occupational therapist and has worked with disabled children. "Most importantly, I want to bring honestly and integrity and decency back into village government," he said

Vitrano is a real estate agent and mother of three sons. With her 20-years experience in the real estate industry, Vitrano said she is knowledgeable about code compliance and mindful of commercial development. "Yes, I am a real-estate agent but that doesn't mean I want to overbuild", she said.

Juliano is finishing his first term, during which he was deputy mayor, commissioner of the Department of Public Works and liaison for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Counsel, Conservation Advisory Council and the Citizens Committee of Erosion. He was previously a clerk for the Village of Westbury and an administrator



Left to right: Kathianne Snaden, Lauren Sheprow, Mathew Franco, Robert Juliano and Julie Vitrano. Photo by Sabrina Artusa

for the Village of Port Jefferson.

Former deputy mayor and two-term trustee, Kathianne Snaden is challenging Sheprow for mayor. In 2023, Sheprow defeated Snaden for the role, but Snaden said she is running to continue the service and to "bring back the heart and soul of the community."

"At the end of this meeting," Snaden said. "I think you will see that I am not only prepared to become mayor, but am already doing the work."

As her term came to a close, Sheprow reviewed her policies and actions from the past two years and reiterated her position on issues such as the East Beach Bluff, the country club, flooding and transparency. She is the daughter of former Mayor Harold Sheprow and has raised her three children in the area. "Port Jefferson is on a better path because we have done the hard work together," she said. "I am running for reelection because there is more to do."

Development and schools

Candidates emphasize collaboration with the school district, which is facing declining enrollment and the loss of LIPA's tax contributions. With many of the candidates having children that attended the district, they acknowledged its tremendous

To promote economic growth, Snaden spoke of several programs, such as an incentive initiative

that would encourage residents to shop in the village through monthly events, a punch card, or a village-specific app that serves as a guide for residents and tourists while also promoting businesses.

\$2.00

Sheprow, who created the Economic Opportunity Task Force, said shop-front vacancies aren't as big an issue as the larger vacancies like the Gap building and McDonalds might suggest, with the real number being around 9%. The task force works with the Business Improvement District to determine what shops would be appropriate.

In 2013, the village created a comprehensive plan intended to guide village development for the following two decades. However, Sheprow said it may need an upgrade: an idea reiterated by Juliano, who said uptown development was one of the three major concerns in the village.

"We can make all the plans we want but we have to make sure to put them into place," he said, promising to work with Planning Commissioner Andrew Freeling to get uptown "to what we want." A plan could help guide developers and provide a framework for unity in the village, balancing both respect for the village's history and intentional progress.

"We have to make sure they bring in businesses that are going to attract people to the community *Candidates continued on A3*



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Tuesday, June 17[‡] @ Village Center

Candidates

Continued from A1

that are going to attract people to the community and revitalize some of Port Jefferson," Franco said

"I can only name five rental offices or spaces that are vacant," said Vitrano. She added that more festivals and events throughout the year would help "bring the society back to the village".

Bluff and country club

Of the candidates, Franco was alone in speaking definitively against proceeding with the bluff project. He argued the town was simply buying time against the inevitable environmental deterioration of the area. "The real problem is that we are never going to beat Mother Nature...I don't think we should spend millions of dollars of hard-earned taxpayer money to buy time," he said, noting the continuing maintenance the wall would require.

Juliano, the liaison for the Citizens Committee on Erosion, said they are meeting with engineers every two weeks and waiting for their proposed plan for the final stage of the bluff project. "We don't know what the other part of the project will look like," he said. After those results come in, they will make an educated decision. Sheprow confirmed: they do not know what the following steps will constitute.

Vitrano, on the other hand, said she does not believe Phase I should have been approved without a "clear plan from the engineers." Since it began, she said, the project has been entrenched with "questionable spending" and called for a public referendum before Phase II is considered.

She stated needing to look at reports before making a decision on future bluff projects.

Snaden argued the public was not involved enough throughout the process and that the current board is not truly exploring all options. The additional fiscal stress from losing LIPA's contributions to the tax base concerns Snaden, so she said embarking on the expensive bluff project may not be in the village's best interest.

Juliano said they don't even know how much the next phase will cost, and the loss of long-term revenue from the country club should be taken into account when weighing the monetary pros and cons.

Juliano said she is not committed to the bluff project and does not "have a plan ready yet" as she continues reviewing documents and plans with the engineering firm GEI. "We are challenging the engineering firm on every level," she said, adding that she welcomes her constituents asking "the tough questions."

With Lessing's Hospitality Group entering a new contract to lease the Port Jefferson Country Club, Franco protested the lack of stipulations requiring a restaurant; he listed the contract as one of the village's three major issues. "There is no pressure to operate a restaurant...and we will be choked by that contract for a very long time," he said.

Snaden said the club "must become a selfsustaining community asset." Lessing's contract is doing just that, according to Sheprow, who said the previous contract was an "exhaustive liability" and Lessing's, who operates restaurants at parks like Sunken Meadow State Park, is "committed to doing something really good." Transparency

Sheprow said she initially wanted to run after not being included in a vote on a \$10 million bond during a time Snaden was on the board. Snaden responded that several public sessions were held before the vote took place. However, Sheprow criticized the lack of conversation and openness of the town hall at that time. "There was a lack of fiscal management [and] a lack of town hall," Sheprow said.

Snaden and Franco said Sheprow has not made vital bluff reports accessible to the Citizen's Commission on Erosion, delaying the completion of their interim report. Franco said the reason for the delay is because the report advised for moving the building back. Jiuliano acknowledged a delay in providing some reports, but said they were going to hear the report the next day and will post it online thereafter.

Increasing the accessibility of village hall is a point of pride for Sheprow, Snaden and Juliano, who host sit-downs once a month where residents can speak about their concerns or ask questions.

Snaden addressed an accusation that she unethically accepted money from the village taxpayers for photographs she took of the Dickens Festival; however, she said she recused herself from the vote that resulted in a village payment to her and it was included on the auditor's report. "Everything was done in public," she said.

The upcoming election is preceded by fierce campaigning and fiery online and public discourse that was alluded to several times during the event. Before introducing himself, Franco condemned the "slanderous nonsense" and accused Vitrano of causing his family embarrassment.

Vitrano, in her closing statement, made similar claims, saying members of the village were attempting to coerce her to not run. She said, "I've been told what to say, what not to say, who I should associate with and even who not to be friends with."

"This is not how our community works," she said. "This is not how democracy should operate. This is nonsense and it needs to stop, no matter who wins this election."

Snaden promised to revamp the public safety department if elected. "Currently we don't have a public safety department," Snaden said. "Our former code enforcement that prioritizes public safety and the safety of our community now focuses on parking tickets and building code violations. I want to bring an all new public safety department to our village." She said she would also promote collaboration with the Suffolk County Police Department. Vetrano agreed a bigger police presence is necessary.

Juliano told the audience that, by law, the code enforcement cannot pull vehicles over. Sheprow said that enforcing the ordinances is an essential part of ensuring the code and that the village recently hired 11 new officers. "There are plenty of ordinances to enforce in our village code so they have their hands full," she said.

The election is on June 17 at Village Center from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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EGALS

The annual meeting of the members of Cedar Hill Cemetery Association Inc., will be held on Wednesday, July 9th at 5:00 pm at Cedar Hill Cemetery on Liberty Avenue, Port Jefferson, NY. Lot owners will be welcomed.

272800 6/19 3x ptr

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that sealed bids will be received by the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Terryville Fire District, 19 Jayne Boulevard, Port Jefferson Station, New York until 4:00 P.M., time then in effect, on June 18, 2025 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud for lights, radios, and related equipment for the 2025 Chevrolet Silverado.

Bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes at the above address, and shall bear on the face thereof the name and address of the bidder and marked for "Lights, Radios, and Related Equipment". Detailed specifications regarding the project will be available at the Main Stationhouse, 19 Jayne Boulevard, Port Jefferson Station, New York commencing on June 12, 2025 between the hours of 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

The contract for the above item will be awarded by the Board of Fire Commissioner to the lowest responsible

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bidder. In cases where two or more responsible bidders submit identical bids as to price, the Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the right to reject all bids and re-advertise for new bids at its discretion.

No bid may be withdrawn by any bidder for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of the bid opening.

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Dated: June 6, 2025

Marilyn Peterson District Secretary

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Brookhaven Environmental Group calls for landfill closure

BY WILLIAM STIEGLITZ DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

On Monday, June 9, the Brookhaven Landfill Action and Remediation Group (BLARG) rallied outside the Brookhaven Town Hall in Farmingville to call for the closure of the Brookhaven landfill and the development of "zero -waste" solutions. Pollution from the landfill, activists argued, has endangered the health and safety of those in North Bellport, where the landfill is located, and that its closure would provide both environmental and economic benefits.

"This landfill has been with our community for fifty plus years," said BLARG co-founder Monique Fitzgerald. She introduced herself as a proud descendant of the Setalcott Nation, which originally occupied Brookhaven's land, and described the landfill in the minority community as "a monument to environmental racism." The closure of the landfill, she said, had been repeatedly promised since the 1980s, but each time the landfill had been expanded instead. "It is 270 feet tall. It's one of the tallest structures in Suffolk County." According to Fitzgerald, Town councilmember Mike Loguercio (R, Ridge) had previously said the landfill would close in 2024.

Loguercio said, "The landfill is forecasted to close sometime in 2028, consistent with our plan" and argued activists were spreading the false impression it could be closed sooner. He also said that as a Gold Star Family member, he objected to the setting of the rally, a memorial for fallen soldiers outside the town hall, being used for what he considered a "fanciful charade."

William Kokell, however, who spoke at the rally as a veteran and as a member of the South Country Peace Group, said the landfill had become too large, and swift action needed to be taken to protect children's lives. "I've been all over the Pacific Ocean, all over a lot of Southeast Asia. I have never ever, ever seen anything even close to that." He said his son went to school with three young men from North Bell Port who developed cancer, attributing the disease to air and water pollution in the area.

John McNamara, who spoke as a coordinator from Christians Against Racism in the Apostolic Spirit (CARITAS), said solutions could be reached through a four-step plan toward zero waste.

Step 1, he said, is to adopt a Save Money and Reduce Trash, or SMART, program, where instead of a set fee, "you just pay money for the amount of trash that you dispose of." Step 2 is to implement both the "Bigger, Better Bottle Bill" and the "Manufacturer's Responsibility Bill" in the state senate and assembly. The first, he explained, would allow more kinds of bottles to be covered for recycling, while the second would incentivize manufacturers to rely more on recyclable materials and limit the use of toxic chemicals. Step 3



From left to right: BLARG cofounder Monique Fitzgerald. John McNamara, speaking as a coordinator from CARITAS, and William Kokell, speaking on behalf of South Country Peace Group. Photos by William Stieglitz

would be a townwide composting program for Brookhaven, and Step 4 would be establishing "reuse and repair" centers for people to bring no longer wanted items where others could come to pick them up.

In terms of economic benefits, McNamara argued zero-waste policies would save taxpayer money he says is currently used to ship a portion of Brookhaven's waste off the island to landfills in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and upstate New York. Fitzgerald also argued that the landfill, by bringing in industries like warehouses and truck terminals, and that this comes at the expense of funding needed to keep teachers employed at South Country district schools. Loguercio, responding to the topic, said, "We would love to reach a point of zero waste, so would everyone else in America, but it doesn't work because the strength of the markets for recycling just don't exist." Fitzgerald, however, reading a statement from Zero Waste USA, argued that "communities across the US" using zerowaste policies have "cut their waste stream in half within a few short years: achieving 60%, 70% and 80% reductions."

"We are looking for a partnership for zero waste," said Fitzgerald. "We are looking to create, procreate, co-design, and get our hands dirty right along with the council and the town supervisor Dan Panico [R], so this is on all of us to do."

History close at hand: The Mather House Museum

BY BEVERLY C. TYLER DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

Driving along Main Street in Port Jefferson, turn east onto East Main Street and bear right at the historic Biddle fountain reproduction onto Prospect Street. On your left at number 115 is the home of the Historical Society of Greater Port Jefferson in the John R. Mather house and

HISTORY

grounds. Mather was a famous shipbuilder in Port Jefferson and a descendant of local shipbuilders. He built the home in the 1840s and ront of the house in the 1860s.

added the present front of the house in the 1860s. His son John T. Mather bequeathed funds to create a community hospital. The J.T. Mather Memorial Hospital opened on New Year's Eve 1929.

My wife Barbara and I were welcomed to the house by guide Cathy Duffy who began with the 1860s parlor filled with period pieces, maritime paintings and artifacts. The next room, listed as the library, includes a wonderful collection of half-hull models used as one of the first steps in ship design and construction. One of these half-hull models is of the schooner yacht "Wanderer" which was built in East Setauket in 1857 and became an infamous slaver, transporting more than 600 enslaved Africans from the west coast of Africa to Jekyll Island, Georgia in 1858. In the next room, in a case labeled "Recent Acquisitions" is a painting of the



Barbara Tyler (left), with guide Cathy Duffy (right). Photo by Beverly Tyler

"Wanderer." This room, guide Duffy noted, is the main exhibit room for the 2025 exhibit "Treasures From Our Attic." The "treasures" here also include hand-made quilts, costumes, samplers, and three dresses. The most interesting item was a paper dress made for an 1876 masquerade party. The dress was constructed from current issues of Harper's Weekly and was worn by the party hostess, Mrs. James E. Bayles. Engraved pictures showing scenes of the day decorated almost every inch of space on her dress. The other two dresses are a wedding dress and a Campfire Girl's uniform labeled "Woodgatherers." It includes a beaded necklace of "badges" earned.

The grounds and buildings include a tool shed with maritime tools and artifacts, the Dr. R. Sherman Mills general store and post office, and a replica of a sail loft on the lower level. The archival building includes a large collection of documents and photographs which is available to researchers by appointment.

For me, the number one attraction on the

grounds is the Spinney Clock Building, which was added to the property in 2000. Inside are more than 200 magnificent clocks donated to the historical society by Tex Spinney. The collection ranges from tall grandfather clocks to mantle clocks with beautiful hand-painted scenes. A grandfather clock, made by Tiffany, is nine feet six inches high with a fully carved case. A black marble astronomical clock includes a barometer and calendar and a mouse clock strikes "hickory, dickory, dock." Volunteer clock enthusiasts from the Spinney Clock Collector's Guild maintain the collection and offer classes in the care and repair of antique and newer timepieces.

When you visit the John Richard Mather house, be sure to pick up the three free "Historic Walking Tour guides that describe the homes, sites, businesses and features of the historic Port Jefferson downtown and harbor areas. Each guide covers a specific concentrated area with a minimum of walking, so enjoy this area, rich in history and beauty.

Mather's home, the surrounding museum buildings and the consignment shop are open Wednesday – Sunday 12-4 P.M. through October 5th.

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

Editorial The lasting impact of local elections

Driving to work in the morning, we may brace ourselves for the pot-hole that, day-afterday, violently shakes our car as we drive over it. However, one day to our delight, we notice it is filled with smooth asphalt. Then, we may decide to stop for coffee at a recently opened shop before heading to work. We take a detour to avoid traffic near a new housing development.

From the pothole, to the new coffee shop, to the traffic, the rhythms of our days are shaped by our elected officials and the decisions they make on behalf of the community.

As the conduit for local news, we hear residents' opinions on development, infrastructure, funding, open space, historical preservation, economic growth and policy. These issues are constantly topics of discussion, and rightfully so. The decisions our town and village officials make in these areas shape our lives: where we shop and live, and how much we pay in taxes. We all have opinions on the decisions local officials make. June 17 is the day we can act.

Our local elected officials have power to make changes that could impact us for r years after they leave office. As their constituents we are their guides and as voters we choose and empower the decision-makers. What do we want our community's future to look like and which candidate will take us there?

We give local elections less thought and focus, especially when compared to the highly publicized federal elections. Over half of eligible voters turn out for federal elections while fewer than a quarter vote in local elections.

In May, residents voted on their district's budget, and if there were available seats on the board, for school board trustees. In the Huntington Union Free School District, only about 1,000 residents voted out of the 24,000 registered voters in the district, according to the district website. That amounts to around 4%.

School board trustees could have a significant impact on the quality of education and programming. What the children in that district learn, what clubs they join, and what amenities the building offers can be altered by school boards. Our elections have concrete implications, not only during a two or four-year term, but in decades to follow.

This month, we are voting for the mayor and trustees of Port Jefferson Village and for town supervisor and several board members for the towns of Smithtown and Huntington. In November, we will vote for our congress members, assembly members and senators.

To work towards what we envision for our community, and to protect the parts we value, we must do our part and vote.



Letters to the Editor

Nonprofits and the car show community?

Recently, I attended the Drive for Dana car show at the Smithhaven Mall. The strength and support of the car community that comes out to support a charity is incredible. Every weekend, actually every night of the week, there are shows. On many nights there are multiple events at different spots on Long Island. They are free to attend as a spectator and at regular events free to show your car. But wait until it's about a charity. More cars arrive, more money is raised and at the Drive for Dana event more auction items are bought.

I have been promoting the idea of a motorsports park on Long Island. Currently, I have been assisting with public relations and announcing. As we enter the fifth year of racing in Calverton it has become very clear that the car, race car, show car, high-performance street car community is very strong. Besides the generosity seen at the car shows, there is an amazing amount of driving skills shown.

It's definitely a feel-good story when monies are raised for a charity, but that's only a portion of the story.

Long Island's history and development of auto racing has led to many careers. We have seen some drivers move on to the professional level. Years ago, Steve Park enjoyed racing in Nascar, and today we have Justin Ashley running a Top Fuel Dragster.

The racing we enjoy at Calverton on the 7,000-foot runway that Grumman used when they were on Long island hosting drag racing (most cars are street legal, Drifting), the cars have more safety equipment than many others and Go-karts. From the cute 5-year olds to the much older that race around the country and a few even beyond that.

Long Island at one point had multiple circle tracks (now we have one), multiple drag-racing facilities and even a road course track that held a Formula One race. Are the race tracks as strong as they once were? No. Is the car community as far reaching as it once was? From what I see at these car shows and race events, it may not be as big, but there is a huge interest. The positives are community, careers and the economic benefit.

nmunity, careers and the economic benefit. Brian Cohen Three Village

DA Tierney, elder parole, redemption and compassion

A few weeks ago Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney released a powerful statement warning of dangers he sees lurking in the Second Look Act, Earned Time Act, and Elder Parole Act.

He said, "These measures, cloaked as compassionate reforms, prioritize criminals over the security of law-abiding New Yorkers and, in the process, once again drag grieving families and victims into a never-ending cycle of parole hearings and reconsideration of previously imposed sentences, for the sole purpose of drastically reducing sentences for

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

violent, dangerous offenders."

Specifically mentioning the Elder Parole Act, Tierney continued, "This bill grants automatic parole hearings every two years to inmates who are 55 and older, and who have served 15 years in prison, regardless of the crime they were convicted of. Murderers, rapists, even cop killers would get a shot at freedom just for aging behind bars. This bill eliminates life without parole for serial and mass murderers."

Hoping for redemption is a noble goal, but how that "hope" is viewed by loved ones grieving their murdered law enforcement family members should be taken into consideration. Over the last 8 years they've been forced to witness 43 convicted killers released from prison.

NYS legislators considering voting for this bill should speak to the mothers, daughters, wives, husbands or children of these fallen heroes. State pols must show proper respect and consideration for these victims.

How about offering those innocents something other than the continued heartbreaking prospect of reliving the tragic loss of loved ones every 24 months.

New York State currently has 16 members sitting on the parole board. There's room for 3 more. Let's offer one or more of those spots to relatives trying to overcome their tragic loss. Given that great hardship, it would seem they've earned a properly weighted voice in this discussion. Perhaps some of the current 16 could gain a new and better understanding of how difficult a prisoner's release can be on those surviving their loss.

Our highly respected, local DA, Ray Tierney, looks to seek justice not vengeance for victims who've suffered at the hands of criminals. He is on the front lines dealing with the aftermath of some truly heinous crimes. Tierney consoles those harmed while prosecuting those charged. His warnings should not be taken lightly.

If memory serves, much of disgraced Gov. Andrew Cuomo's (D) "criminal justice reforms" were sold on the lofty theme of redemption. If these kinds of grand ideas are going to be tried, we cannot forget those whose lives are devastated, when those grand ideas horribly fail them. At the very least, they're innocent victims worthy of our compassion.

Jim Soviero Setauket

In response to Drew Biondo's letter from June 5 edition of TBR

He may call it "silly season," but spreading misinformation, spin, and false claims isn't silly, it's dishonest. Port Jefferson deserves facts, not political games or distractions from real issues.

Let's set the record straight on PASSPort, a first-of-its-kind municipal rideshare service created for Port Jefferson. Like every other municipal transit program in the country, it wasn't meant to turn a profit. It was about accessibility, safety and smarter mobility. It worked, residents used it, and they appreciated it. On May 1, 2023, then Trustee Lauren Sheprow voted in favor of PASSPort, along with the entire Board of Trustees. She even requested a test ride and had only positive things to say. Now to attack the program she helped approve isn't just disingenuous, it's political.

Regarding the ballot issue, Mayor Sheprow was removed not by opponents but by the Board of Elections for failing to properly complete and file her own petitions, a basic, legal requirement every candidate must meet.

Let me be clear, neither I nor anyone from my campaign has ever created or used a fake social media profile. I've run this campaign the way I've served, openly and with integrity.

Yes, I was asked by the village to use my photography to help promote the Dickens Festival. It was discussed in public meetings, disclosed to our auditor, and unanimously approved by the board where I recused myself. The images remain village property and continue to support our most cherished community event.

While Mr. Biondo claims I've been "disengaged," I've continued serving our community through volunteer work, civic participation and staying connected with residents. Leadership isn't just about holding office; it's about consistent service.

As for the Maryhaven project, our process was transparent with full disclosure and open dialogue from day 1. We held a public meeting where the developer's request was thoroughly explained. Contrast that with what we learned from another developer, who said Mayor Sheprow promised him annexation approval a year ago, something the public didn't hear about until March 2025, only after a resident discovered it. That's not transparency.

What should also concern us are closeddoor executive sessions used for questionable purposes.

Port Jefferson deserves true transparency and open government led by a mayor who will stand for honesty, accountability and integrity. That's what I've delivered, and that's what I'll continue to fight for.

Kathianne Snaden Port Jefferson

Correction : The article, "Rally at Harbor Road", which appeared in the June 5th issue, incorrectly stated that Brookhaven found a title report signed by Gloria Rocchio. In fact, Brookhaven comissioned the title report. The document with Rocchio's signature was an easement contract.

WRITE TO US ... AND KEEP IT LOCAL

We welcome your letters, especially those responding to our local coverage, replying to other letter writers' comments and speaking mainly to local themes. Letters should be no longer than 400 words and may be edited for length, libel, style, good taste and uncivil language. They will also be published on our website. We do not publish anonymous letters. Please include an address and phone number for confirmation. Email letters to: editor1@ tbrnewsmedia.com or mail them to TBR News Media, P.O. Box 707, Setauket, NY 11733

Opinion

The magic that resides within us and the foul balls we bring home

hy do we go to baseball games? Oooh, pick me! Pick me! I can answer. Of course you can. You're writing this piece. Okay, let's talk about the appeal of baseball.



First of all, there's the potential for anything baseball related to happen. I might see a triple play, a no hitter, a perfect game, four home runs in a row, eight consecutive strike outs, or something other collections of fans have either never seen or rarely witnessed. We recently attended

a minor league game in

which two runners scored

on a sacrifice fly to deep

of the above BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

center field.

Baseball is an endless series of what-if moments, as in, what if the batter hits the ball to third base with runners on first and third and one out. Is it hit hard enough for a double play

based on the speed of the runners, the score at the time, and the movement of the runner on third?

The combination of athleticism and strength bring different qualities to the game. Sure, people who are big and muscular can hit a ball hard, but can they get a good jump when they're running from first or second base, can they cover a larger strike zone, and can they be satisfied with a single or double instead of a towering home run?

Then, there's the aesthetic appeal of the stadiums, with bright lines going out from home plate to the outfield, defined base paths, and a shimmering outfield grass (if it's real grass), where fleet-footed fielders race to track down balls.

Two questions immediately occur to me as I reach my seat. The first is how good the view is relative to the field. Can I see pitches clearly? Can I track balls from home plate to all parts of the field?

The second is whether I'm in prime foul ball territory. Admittedly, that's a tougher question to answer, especially with all the screens that have now gone up around the infield.

There is something about balls flung from these fields of dreams that imbues them with a power far in excess of their raw materials. Is it the perfect weight in our hands? Is it the feel of the gently raised seams? Or, perhaps, it's the combination of the white hard outer layer, the red seams, and the blue from the logo, the official major league baseball lettering and the signature of current commissioner Robert Manfred, Jr.

Sure, free stuff in general is fun to catch, but something about these baseballs makes bringing them home particularly rewarding, giving us a physical connection to the game.

Maybe it's the stories we can tell about how the baseball came from a particular hitter or a specific game. Or maybe the balls, like the game itself, contain within them the power of the what-if.

Have you ever seen people after they've caught a ball at a game? They can't help smiling, often examining it closely, as they look for where a bat struck it or where it rolled across the grass or dirt.

Tossing a ball to a particularly vociferous or angry fan could serve as a pacifier. Yeah, your team is losing by 12 runs, and yes, you could have done a better job at everything because you're that much more knowledgeable about the game than everyone else, but you have a baseball in your hand. How cool is that?

The balls from America's pastime are like us. They may have similar qualities or look and feel the same, but they can and will be unique in and of themselves and as a part of a game. They could be the central part of a double play, the main character soaring through the air on a walk off home run, or the 18th pitch of a tremendous 21 pitch at bat.

These balls carry magic and hope.

And, yes, if you're wondering why I'm so rhapsodic, I caught a ball at the aforementioned minor league game. A third base coach knocked down a foul ball and tossed it directly at me in the stands. When I caught it, I handed it to my daughter, excited to share this small piece of baseball and personal history with my family and now with you. It's just a ball and yet it's so much more.

We found corn on the cob in Coney Island

ednesday was National Corn on the Cob Day, and when I saw that, I began to salivate because I love that vegetable. We are now coming into the



Between you and me **BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF**

and chew straight above the first.

season when the kernels are sweet with or without butter and salt.

eater's personality by watching the pattern of Everyone eats corn differently, it seems, if you watch people devouring the offering. I bite the corn from the cob as if I were using an old fashioned typewriter, meaning in

a single row from left to right. I'll eat one row, then go back, as if I were slinging a typewriter carriage to the next line,

consumption from the cob. My favorite corn on the cob story takes place in the late 1940s on a freezing January day. My dad, who grew up in the mountains and loved the cold, brisk air, would put on his

I guess one could tell a lot about the corn

heavy winter coat and take my mother, my brother, my sister and me to Coney Island. It was always on a Sunday, when he had off from work. The ride tickled my mother, who thought it was an extraordinary price on the subway for the same 15 cent token that one paid just to go one stop, so that typically would be part of the conversation on the trip to Brooklyn from our apartment in Midtown Manhattan

When we emerged from underground, the wind and cold would initially take our breaths away, but before long, we acclimated. We followed my dad down to the beach and watched the wild waves plunge into the shore with a roar and lots of foam, then recede meekly only to repeat the fury. It was Nature showing its dramatic face.

It was also intensely cold.

After a few minutes of beach walking, we would head toward Nathan's Hot Dog stand, one of the few stores open in the winter. This one Sunday, we were in for a surprise. In the narrow alley between Nathan's and the next building was a man with a cauldron on what I guess was an electric burner, steam pouring from the pot. As we drew near, we could see butter, salt and napkins on the stand.

When my dad cleared a hole in the steam and peered into the pot, he expressed some happy surprise. "Where did you get corn on the cob in January?" he queried the man holding the tongs.

"They are in the frozen food section of some of the supermarkets," the man explained. Frozen foods were just beginning to appear in markets at that time.

"Do they taste the same?" my dad asked.

"Try one," the fellow offered and plucked one from the boiling water, putting it on a piece of white paper.

When it had cooled enough to bite into the cob, my dad approved the purchase and we all ate those steaming corn with butter and salt, crowding around the cauldron for warmth. I still remember those corn as the sweetest as any I had ever tasted in the summer.

Besides, they warmed my hands.

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Others turn the cob so that they are eating in a circular fashion, one circle precisely after the other in a geometric display. Still others just plow right in, chewing wherever their teeth land. They eventually clean off the whole cob.

Former PTA President from Holbrook arrested for alleged grand larceny

Suffolk County District Attorney from the PTA bank account by making Raymond A. Tierney announced on June 6 that Pamela McManus, 42, of Holbrook, was arrested and arraigned for Grand Larceny in the Third Degree for allegedly stealing over \$27,000 from a Sachem School District Elementary School Parent Teacher Association.

According to the investigation, McManus served as President of the Nokomis Elementary School PTA from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2024. During that time, and continuing past the expiration of her term as President, McManus had sole access to the PTA bank account through a Visa Debit Card.

In October 2024, when McManus turned over access to the bank account to other PTA board members, it was discovered that McManus had allegedly and unlawfully used PTA funds to pay for numerous personal expenses, including purchases from Amazon, Walmart, Target, Verizon Wireless, PSEG, Sephora, and Dick's Sporting Goods.

It is also alleged that on numerous occasions, McManus stole cash directly unauthorized withdrawals when school was not in session, such as during summer break and holiday breaks.

McManus is alleged to have stolen over \$27,000 from the organization over the course of her three-year term as president.

On June 5, 2025, McManus surrendered to the District Attorney's Office and was arraigned before Acting County Court Judge Jennifer A. Henry on one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a Class D felony. Her offense is considered non-bail eligible under New York State law, and therefore, she was released on her own recognizance. McManus is being represented by Jonathan Scher, Esq, and is due back in court on July 10, 2025.

"Parent Teacher Associations are an integral part of our school communities throughout Suffolk County," said District Attorney Tierney. "The allegations in this case represent a disturbing betrayal of trust, and my office will continue to hold accountable those who unlawfully abuse their positions for personal gain."

- SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.'S OFFICE

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POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

Man found dead in Shoreham pool Id'd

Suffolk County Police Homicide Squad detectives have positively identified the man found deceased in an East Shoreham pool on Pal Ct. on May 25 as Matthew Zoll, the 23-yearold man that went missing after stabbing his father to death in Rocky Point last November. Zoll's cause of death has yet to be determined.

Man drowns in Nissequogue

Suffolk County Police Homicide Squad detectives are investigating the death of a man who was pulled from the water in Nissequogue on June 8. Fourth Precinct and Marine Bureau officers responded to a report of a swimmer in distress off of Long Beach Road at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Eric Soloff was pulled from the water a short time later. Soloff, 63, of Nissequogue, was transported to Stony Brook University Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Detectives are asking anyone with information on this incident to call the Homicide Squad at 631-852-6392.

Three injured in Lake Ronkonkoma crash

Suffolk County Police Fourth Squad detectives are investigating a two-vehicle crash that seriously injured a driver and her two sisters in Lake Ronkonkoma on June 8.

Jesilynne Bauer was driving a 2010 Ford Focus southbound on Ronkonkoma Avenue, when the vehicle collided with a 2021 Jeep Gladiator traveling eastbound on the Long Island Expressway South Service Road, at 6:28 a.m.

Jesilynne Bauer, 20, along with the two passengers in the Ford, Brooke Bauer, 19, and Madysen Bauer, 16, all of Centereach, were transported to Stony Brook University Hospital for treatment of serious but non-lifethreatening injuries.

The driver of the Jeep, Jay Perez, 27, of Shirley, and the passenger in the Jeep, Elizabeth Gutierrez, 54, of Shirley, declined medical treatment at the scene. Both vehicles were impounded for a safety check. Any one with information on this crash is asked to contact the Fourth Squad at 631-854-8452.

Multiple people injured in Smithtown crash

Suffolk County Police Fourth Squad detectives are investigating a two-vehicle crash that injured multiple people, two of them seriously, in Smithtown on June 7.

Thomas Cahill was driving a 2020 Kia Optima northbound on Route 25A when a 2020 Honda CRV, traveling westbound on River Heights Drive, made a left turn in front of the Kia, which caused the vehicles to collide at 10 p.m.

Cahill, 46, and his passenger Michael Cahill, 9, both of Kings Park, were transported to Good Samaritan University Hospital in West Islip for treatment of minor injuries.

All occupants of the Honda, residents of Middle Village in Queens, NY, were transported to Stony Brook University Hospital. The driver, Pietro Colombo, 86, suffered minor injuries. The front passenger, Veto Colombo, 56, was not injured. Two passengers in the back, Maria Colombo, 76, and Rosalia Colombo, 78, suffered serious injuries. Another passenger in the back, Angela Colombo, 55, suffered minor injuries.

Both vehicles were impounded for a safety check. Anyone with information on this crash is asked to call 631-854-8452.

Moriches woman found shot to death

Suffolk County Police have arrested a Ridge man for killing a woman in Moriches on June 6

A woman called 911 on June 6 after finding her daughter, Rebecca Roth, dead of a gunshot wound in a Hyundai Elantra in the Tall Oaks Apartments parking lot outside their residence in Moriches, at 8:20 a.m. Roth, 33, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Homicide Squad detectives arrested James Quininchetta, who allegedly killed Roth over a debt of \$1.500, according to authorities. on JUne 7. Ouininchetta, 40. of Ridge, was charged with Murder 2nd Degree.

Melville man scammed out of \$4.000

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers and Suffolk County Police Financial Crimes Unit detectives are seeking the public's help to identify and locate the person who stole money from a Melville man's bank account.

The Melville resident was contacted by a man who identified himself as a bank representative and told the victim his bank account had been compromised and convinced him to turn over his card for destruction and reissuance. An unknown male went to the victim's home on May 21 to retrieve the card and PIN. A man used the card at ATMs in Garden City and Valley Stream to withdraw \$4,000 later that day.

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

- COMPILED BY HEIDI SUTTON

Suffolk County Crime Stoppers offers a **cash reward** for information that leads to an arrest. Anyone with information about these incidents can contact Suffolk County Crime Stoppers to submit an anonymous tip by calling 1-800-220-TIPS.



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Highlights: Port Jeff Village Voice VII Issue

Port Jeff Village Receives Long-Awaited Grant

The Village of Port Jefferson recognized Sen. Anthony Palumbo and former Sen. Kenneth P. LaValle, for their mutual contributions that led to a \$450K reimbursement last month by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) grant that was awarded in 2017.

The \$450,000 grant, known as a State and Municipal Facilities Program grant ("SAM"), was submitted for expansion of the PJV Public Works Maintenance and Storage Facility to house an Emergency Operations Center that would ensure continued deployment and communication during natural disasters and emergencies, enabling rapid response of DPW, Code Enforcement and other Village emergency management crews.

Since taking office in July 2023, the Sheprow administration has prioritized securing outstanding grant funds, methodically chipping away at the \$7.3 million in pending grant awards with assistance from the Treasurer's office and the driving force of Village grants manager, Lisa Mato.

"This DASNY grant was a tricky nut to crack," said Mayor Sheprow. "In 2017 it was sponsored by NYS Senator Ken LaValle, a republican, and the Senate majority had since shifted. We learned the hard way that securing the reimbursement for the completed project was not as simple as it appeared."

That's when Senator Palumbo stepped in. He was able to work out the details in Albany, and after nearly 18 months of follow-up emails and phone calls with DASNY, the Village received the \$450K grant disbursement last month.

"The release of this grant funding to the Village of Port Jefferson is an important win for the Village and the residents they serve," said Sen. Palumbo. "By working together and utilizing state and local resources we were able



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN GRIFFIN

to help update facilities for the Village and provide greater services to local residents. This funding was needed, and long overdue. I am happy that my office was able to help secure this grant and alleviate undue financial pressures on Village government. I commend Mayor Sheprow for her continued advocacy and strong commitment to improve the Village of Port Jefferson and the lives of local residents."

"Prioritizing this grant disbursement was an extraordinary gesture by Senator Palumbo," said Mayor Sheprow. "He looked at the issue and went the extra mile to help the residents of Port Jefferson, knowing this administration is working hard to restore a positive cash flow in the Village Capital Fund."

The Departments of Public Works and Code Enforcement have been making good use of the EOC since it was completed in 2022, particularly following the August 18-19, 2024 deluge that flooded most of the DPW building at 88 North Country Road. The crews had to relocate into the EOC while the building was being restored to workable condition.

"Not only is this facility being utilized for what it was envisioned back in 2017 by Sen. LaValle and the prior administration," said Mayor Sheprow, "Sen. Palumbo made it possible to pay back the money we borrowed to build it. We could not be more grateful."



NEW! Friday Night Summer Concert Series EAST BEACH ROCKS - beginning July 11 at 6:00 PM brought to us by the Greater Port Jefferson Arts Council, the Gitto Group and the Victorian House on Main Street.

First Responders Contact Cascade



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coming soon

New Village provided refrigerator magnet for a quick reference on who to call and when. Get yours at Village Hall or the Village Center beginning **JULY 1**.

Report Storm Drain Problems by June 30

After the unprecedented storm of August 2024, the Village Grants Administrator and the Department of Public Works have been working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and DSHES to address some of the storm water and erosion damaged areas in the Village with grant funded projects. Recently, FEMA/DSHES has authorized a Hazard Mitigation grant to fund a project that will enable the Village to enlist a qualified contractor to clean out and remove debris from up to 50 storm drains in the Village. The Dept. of Public Works is seeking assistance with identifying the storm drains that are most impacted with silt and debris. Steep street storm drains are most problematic, but all suggestions and requests will be considered and reviewed.



PLEASE HELP DPW! Scan the QR code below to submit your photo and address of

the compromised storm drain by June 30.





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TBR News Media photojournalist wins big at PCLI awards ceremony

BY TBR STAFF

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

TBR News Media won its first two Press Club of Long Island awards in the history of the organization on June 5, as photographer and sportswriter Steven Zaitz won both first and second place for Best Sports Photography.

Competing with Long Island multimedia behemoth and 10th largest paper in the U.S., Newsday, Zaitz's two photos, named Laxing Gravity and Loose Ball Blues, took gold and

HONOR

silver in the category. A winner of 15 New York Press Association awards, 13 for photography and two

for Sportswriter of the Year since 2020, Zaitz was ecstatic to have been able to not only win against the stiff competition, but win twice.

"I was shocked because Newsday has so many talented photographers and their high school sports coverage is so good and voluminous," Zaitz said. "Plus, there are so many quality papers and photographers in addition to Newsday that win consistently at NYPA, so I'm honored to have won both of these prizes. I am also thrilled for our organization and hope that this is just the first two of many for TBR News Media."

The contest was judged by the San Diego

Society of Professional Journalists and took place at The Fox Hollow country club in Woodbury. Many recognizable Long Island media stars were on hand, as Antoinette Biordi and Shari Einhorn, both of News12 Long Island, hosted and took turns calling out the winners. National baseball writer and Newsday-based David Lennon won first place for Best Sport Feature about a Hofstra alumna and professional baseball umpire Jen Pawol, and Newsday TV reporter Virginia Huie won nine awards in total, including top prize for the prestigious Video Reporter of the Year award.

John Hildebrand, senior education writer for Newsday; Ellen Mitchell, a reporter for WCBS Newsradio; and Timothy Bolger, the editor-inchief of both the Long Island Press and Dan's Papers, were inducted into the Long Island Journalism Hall of Fame during this year's ceremony.

Held since 1982, the PCLI awards ceremony has recognized excellence in Long Island journalism for over 40 years and they hand out several scholarships to high school content creators. The Stony Brook Statesman won gold for Best College Newspaper and The Stony Brook Press won top prize for Best Magazine - an award that is open to all Long Island publications, professional as well as student-run entities. Overall, Stony Brook University won 17 PCLI awards

Zaitz's top two photos ran on the front

page of The Times of Huntington on April 18. 2024, and Feb. 8, 2024 respectively. Laxing Gravity depicts Northport High School boys lacrosse player Logan Cash lifted out of the air and sandwiched belligerently by two opposing Ward Melville High School players. Loose Ball Blues was taken at the Commack High School gym during the fourth quarter of an intense boys basketball game. Evan Kay of Commack, currently a pitcher on the Stony Brook University baseball team, and Northport's Brendan Fenlon, who starred for the Tigers hoops and volleyball teams, are at each other's throats to corral a loose ball. The judges commented only on Zaitz's firstplace winner:

"In an extremely competitive category, the winner had it all: artful composition, color, and focus, resulting in a photo that captured the movement and physical, as well as sporting and visual impact of the moment."

Zaitz's approach has stayed consistent over his career, always searching for angles that offer a fresh perspective.

"My process during a game shoot is to look for a vantage point that is not often seen," said Zaitz, who has been a freelancer for TBR for five years. "I make educated guesses on where I think the highest drama is likely to take place and I am constantly moving around, searching for the best light, or background, or emotion."

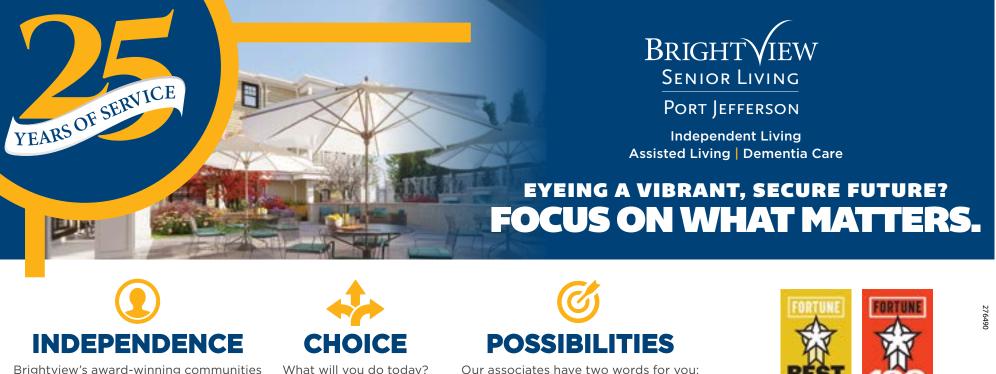
TBR News Media Publisher and Editor in



The first-place winning photo. Photo by Steven Zaitz

Chief Leah S. Dunaief is proud that the paper now has Long Island recognition to go along with its long history of success at the New York State level.

"Steven Zaitz makes us proud to feature his photography, both for its action and professionalism," Dunaief said. "He not only captures the right moment but also the human striving that makes his pictures glow."



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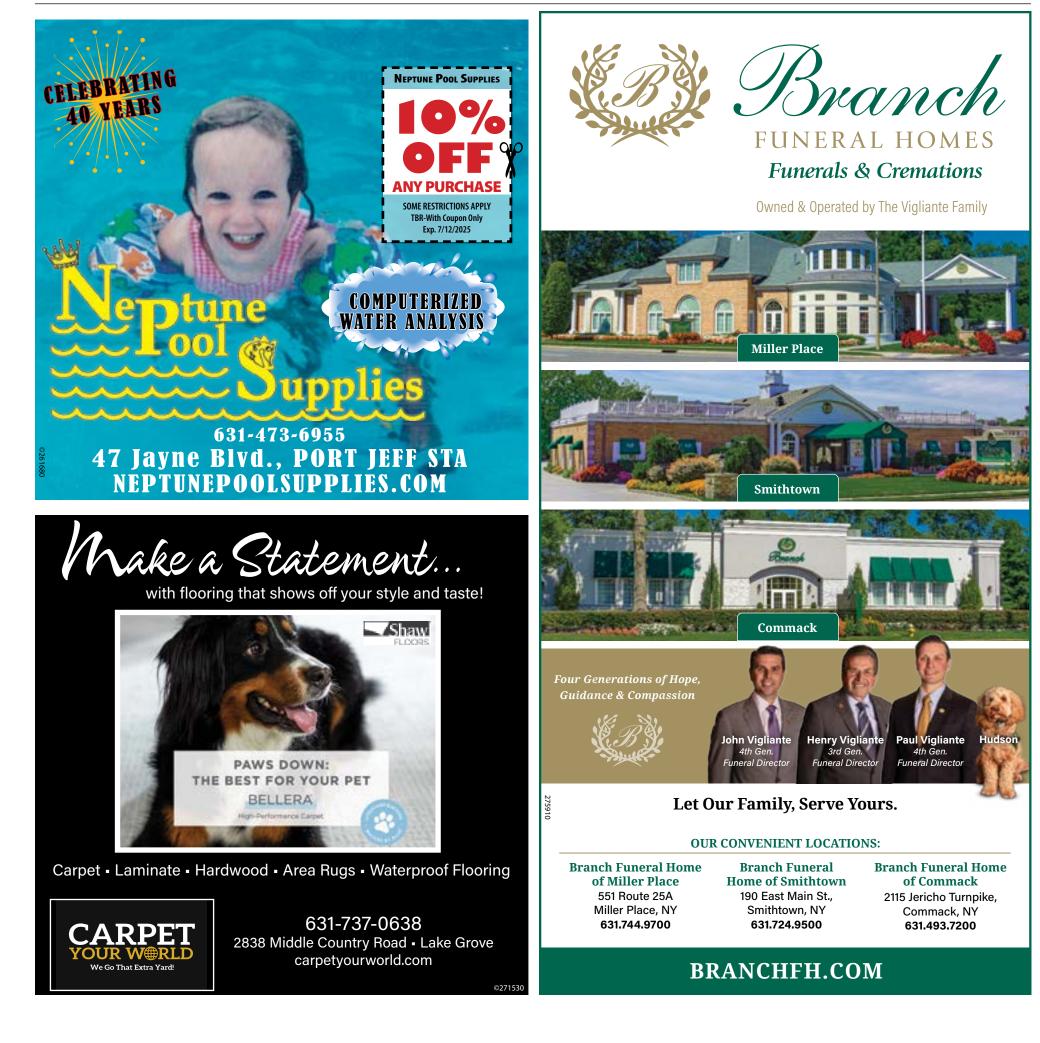


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Acclaimed Spy Ring Golf Course Starts Its Second Season

One year ago, the relatively staid and predictable Long Island golf world was upended by the opening of a 9-hole course, Spy Ring Golf Club. Although the locally based developer, Heatherwood, that built the course, is an experienced golf course owner and manager, the idea that a 9-hole course could successfully compete with Long Island's array of first-class 18-hole courses seemed to many a bit far-fetched. That is, until the skeptics played a round or two and found themselves, by their own accounts, immersed in the most enjoyable golf experience of their lives.

Fast forward to today, Spy Ring Golf Club has established itself as one of the finest courses on the Island. A Tyler Rae masterpiece, the course design is uniquely formulated to appeal to a wide variety of golfers. With closein fairway undulations on approach shots and a variety of pin placements, the course can challenge players of all handicaps. Under the watchful eye of Jimmi Conway, Heatherwood's VP of Golf Operations, the course has matured beautifully as it enters its second year.

Already recognized as a "hidden gem" by regular players last year, Spy Ring first- time players this year are amazed at the condition of the course. As part of Heatherwood's outreach to the community, two high schools claim it has their home course. Brett Thompson, varsity coach for the Comsewogue and Miller Place High School boys team, cites a series of outof-the ordinary aspects of playing Spy Ring. He recognizes the "meticulous" Tyler Rae design and the outstanding staff. But he saves his greatest praise for "the way the club paces its tee times and groupings, so you never have to wait on groups in front of you or feel rushed by groups behind. This is unique among public courses, and it makes for quite an enjoyable golfing experience."

The experience is what it is all about at Spy Ring. One interesting aspect of the Spy Ring experience is the short game practice area. Tyler Rae gave golfers the challenge of navigating undulating approaches to the greens and tough pin placements, but Spy Ring gives them a fighting chance by improving their short game in a practice area like no other. Open only to those playing a round on that day, the short game practice area gets the golfer ready to face the course challenges with a focused and concentrated practice experience.



But will it get the Spy Ring competitor ready for the iconic experience of hole number 7? "Probably not," says Jimmi Conway, "Nothing can really get you ready for number 7. It's a sight to behold: the elevations, the green complex, the bunker placement. You can see the hand of a real talented golf architect in number 7." Playing the 7th hole is part of the Spy Ring experience. It's apparently the source of plenty of good stories that golfers share at the 19th hole.



Christine Grippa, the girl's JV coach at Ward Melville High School, also calls Spy Ring her school's home course. When asked what makes Spy Ring so special, she hesitates and then closes her eyes as if she is conjuring up a few memorable course moments. "This isn't just a course that we play. It's a course where players grow," Grippa muses. "Every round here enhances their game and deepens their love and respect for what golf can be: one great experience after another."

If it seems strange that a one-year-old, 9-hole golf course has already secured a place alongside some of the best courses on the Island, that's because it is strange, strange and unprecedented. When first contemplating the details of the project, more than one golf industry expert politely suggested that Heatherwood should lower its expectations and build a nice, serviceable "pitch and put" course suited to the 55+ clientele of its new adjacent development.

"I just didn't see it that way," said Douglas Partrick, Heatherwood's Owner. "We have a first-class apartment community adjacent to the course, and we envisioned a first-class golf amenity to go with it. We opened it to the public and made it attractive to golfers of varying skill levels. We have been delighted, but really not surprised, by the positive feedback from the playing public."

One thing is certain: Long Island golfers have been waiting a long time (over 20 years) for a new top-flight golf course open to the public. The Island has beautiful, even legendary, courses that are private only clubs. There are also more than a few outstanding public courses. But when some Spy Ring regulars were asked to compare Spy Ring to some of the more well-known public clubs, almost every golfer agreed that Spy Ring provides its golfers with a remarkable experience, different in detail, but equal in stature, to the best golf clubs in its area.

Christopher Capece, Heathwood's President, gave a nod to the many people who combined to bring the Spy Ring dream to life. "It's not easy to complete projects of this scale on the Island. But we had a vision. We thought it was a great idea that would both benefit the Town of Brookhaven and make sense for Heatherwood."

The project includes a mix of onetwo- and three-bedroom apartment homes, with an array of luxury amenities, including a club house, fitness center and the golf course. "The entire community seems happy with the outcome, especially golfers. If the looks on their faces, as they come off the 9th green, are any indication, they're definitely enjoying the full Spy Ring experience," said Jimmi Conway.

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- Corrected all accounting and reporting discrepancies
- Developed a plan to address inherited \$1.3m deficit
- Established Budget & Finance Cmt. to act as fiscal watchdog
- Kept taxes low; did not breach tax cap 2 years running
- Brought Village into compliance with Municipal Guidelines
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