



# The PORT TIMES RECORD

PORT JEFFERSON • BELLE TERRE • PORT JEFFERSON STATION • TERRYVILLE

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\$2.00



## Car show raises money for Agape Meals for Kids

AHEPE's fourth annual car show took place  
on June 21

**A20**

## Valedictorian and salutatorian reflect on their high school careers

These high achieving students share study  
strategies and career aspirations

**A9**



## 'The Language of Flowers' opens at Mills Pond Gallery

**B1**

## Port Jeff erosion commission calls for deep dive into bluff project options

BY LYNN HALLARMAN

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

A newly-released interim report from the Port Jefferson Citizens Commission on Erosion offers a candid appraisal of mounting risks and financial pressures surrounding the East Beach Bluff Stabilization.

The report cites worsening erosion, persistent drainage challenges and the likelihood of rising construction costs as factors that could drive up the long-term expenses of Phase 2. In light of these concerns, the commission urges officials to conduct a thorough cost-benefit analysis of alternative strategies before moving forward.

The planned wall of Phase 2 will be constructed seaward of the club building, which sits near the edge of East Beach Bluff on the municipally-owned Port Jefferson Country Club property. According to officials, Phase 2 construction is tentatively scheduled for the fall of this year.

Any strategy moving forward, the commission argues, should recognize that the club building — perched dangerously close to the bluff's crest — will ultimately need to be moved in the wake of rising sea levels, increasing storms and accelerated global erosion of Long Island's shoreline.

"The report outlines multiple pathways forward," village trustee Kyle Hill said on his Facebook page. "But each underscores a shared reality — we must begin planning for a strategic retreat [of the club building]."

### Overview of the project

In 2017, the village hired GEI Consultants, an



Citizens Commission on Erosion members and Port Jeff Mayor Lauren Sheprow (front left, leaning) examine a blueprint of the PJ Country Club on Feb. 20. Photo by Lynn Hallarman

engineering firm based in Huntington Station, to develop a plan designed at curbing the rapid erosion of the East Beach Bluff. In recent years, wind, surf and storms have scoured the bluff of vegetation and steadily eaten away at its edge, ultimately leading to the collapse of the club's gazebo and a section of the tennis courts that once were set perilously close to the brink.

Phase 1, completed in June of 2023, included the construction of a reinforced steel and cement wall at the base of the East Beach Bluff, along with a series of terraces and native vegetation planted along its slope.

Destruction of costly Phase 1 work of the bluff face vegetation in the wake of a series of severe storms late in 2023 and early 2024 complicated the overall cost and timelines of the project. [For further information about Phase 1 see TBR News Media website, "Report finds no maintenance or repairs carried out on Port Jeff East Beach

Project," Feb. 6.]

Phase 2, includes the installation of a second wall landward of the bluff crest with the intention of preventing the building from collapsing onto the shoreline below.

The design of Phase 2 is currently being revised to address drainage issues complicating the wall build, according to GEI Consultants' 2024 Annual Bluff Monitoring Report, submitted to the village this May.

As of yet, the village has not received the updated engineering plans, trustee Bob Juliano confirmed during a recent commission meeting.

### Financial questions linger

In 2021, village trustees projected the initial cost at around \$10 million for the Phase 1 and 2 wall build and bluff restoration. This figure assumes at least three decades

*Bluff continued on A19*

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Adrienne Esposito Photo by William Stieglitz

## CCE Director Esposito discusses Environment and Health at Port Jeff / Terryville Civic Association Meeting

BY WILLIAM STIEGLITZ  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The June 24 Port Jefferson and Terryville Civic Association meeting at Comsewogue Library saw Adrienne Esposito, the executive director for the Suffolk based CCE (the Citizens Campaign for the Environment), featured as a special guest. Esposito touched on a number of topics related to health, the environment and local infrastructure and in particular advocated for three bills in the state senate and assembly.

One such piece of legislation was the Ban on PFAS in Everyday Products bill, which would prohibit the use of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) for goods such as food packaging, cookware and textiles. “PFAS is a very, very dangerous chemical,” Esposito said. “It’s associated with liver disease, liver damage, thyroid damage, kidney cancer, testicular cancer... and it’s in our drinking water.” Esposito said that while the Suffolk County Water Authority cleans our water using granulated activated carbon filtration systems, this does cost the county \$1,500,000 on average per wellhead.

Esposito spoke next on the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure bill, which would minimize the packaging sizes allowed for certain products and also prevent PFAS use in food packaging. She said that despite her organization having advocated the bill for seven years with it seeing 29 amendments based on industry

input, it still failed to pass when the assembly speaker declined to bring it up for a vote. She attributed the failure of both bills to the influence of industry lobbyists, arguing that while environmental organizations such as hers do a lot of work, “We don’t have a quarter of a million dollars to drop on the bills.”

The third bill she advocated for is the Horseshoe Crab Protection Act, which would prohibit the harvesting of the species for commercial and biomedical uses. She said that overharvesting, particularly during their mating season, has hurt not just horseshoe crab populations but other species as well, such as the red knot, a migratory bird that eats horseshoe crab eggs and is listed as threatened by the New York DEC.

Esposito added that while CCE is a fully bipartisan organization, she was disappointed in assembly members recently voting against this bill despite voting for it last year. According to Esposito, when she asked the assembly members about their ‘no’ votes, several said it was an accident due to being on an “on automatic” mindset of voting ‘no,’ and that some apologized and changed their vote to a ‘yes.’

Esposito encouraged local residents to contact their representatives if they support the bills, and also thanked Port Jefferson Assemblywoman Kassay (D, AD-4) for her efforts in passing the Clean Water Septic System Bill as well as a bill to further the development of a rail yard at the Port Jefferson Lawrence Aviation site, which Esposito says she expects the governor to approve.

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# Concerned residents approach legislative committee over harbor road safety

BY EMILY MANDRACCHIA  
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Nearly one year after Harbor Road collapsed, the unrepaired road is raising serious public safety concerns for residents and first responders. The delay has led to increased emergency response times and growing fears that the situation could result in avoidable loss of life or property.

At a June 17 Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services & Preparedness Committee (FRES) meeting in Hauppauge, residents and officials voiced frustration over the inaction and jurisdictional confusion surrounding the collapsed roadway. They warned that the current detours and narrow, curving side roads are not appropriate for emergency access and are already contributing to slower response times for fire and EMS services.

Beth Zweig, a resident of Head of the Harbor, said the risk is not theoretical. “This is not speculation. Five and seven minutes could be the difference between a person found DOA or a house burned down,” she told attendees, describing the main thoroughfare as “nearly impassible.”

In response to public pressure following a community rally earlier this year, WMHO promised to provide a list of provisions that would render them comfortable signing the FEMA application. Instead, according to a June 10 letter from WMHO’s attorney, the organization presented a list of stipulations that the town and federal government would need to meet in order to access the site for repairs — without accepting ownership or signing off on the application.

The lack of a signed agreement is preventing FEMA funding, which is tied to a 30-month deadline for project completion. Nearly 10 months have already passed. If the parties fail to act soon, the funding could be rescinded. Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta estimates repairs could cost \$8 to \$10 million.

Dominick Thorne, a Suffolk County legislator and member of the Public Safety Committee, warned at the June 17 meeting that continued delays not only jeopardize FEMA funding, but could expose all involved parties to greater legal risk if emergency response is compromised.

“There will be more lawsuits if someone

calls the fire department and they don’t make it,” Thorne said.

The Village of Head of the Harbor officials have expressed concern that the current situation has created unsafe conditions for residents and placed emergency responders in a difficult position.

Public safety officials have not confirmed whether any formal emergency response assessments or contingency plans have been issued regarding Harbor Road, and no agency has stepped forward to assume full responsibility for leading the recovery.

Community members have called on Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine to take a leadership role in coordinating a resolution, citing his prior involvement with infrastructure issues and relationships with local stakeholders. As of this writing, no direct action has been announced by the county executive’s office.

For residents and first responders alike, the concern is that the longer the road remains closed, the higher the chance of a preventable tragedy.

## Update on Harbor Road

BY THE WARD MELVILLE HERITAGE ORGANIZATION  
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The Ward Melville Heritage Organization (WMHO) announced on June 23 that it has retained an engineering firm, Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers (MRCE), and work has begun on taking borings of Harbor Road to determine its composition. This process entails drilling down every five feet until reaching 50 feet, inserting a four-inch wide hollow tube, and pulling out samples of soil from three separate locations.

An engineer will analyze data from the borings. Once that information is gathered, hydraulic data (rainfall, road runoff, the existing water in the pond) will then be analyzed. This process will take approximately two to four months.

The board of trustees feels the frustration of the community regarding the issue of Harbor Road, and we have initiated this work to secure on an accelerated basis the critical information needed to repair or replace Harbor Road. After signing the contract with MRCE on February 12, the first step of this multi-tiered process was conducting a survey of the grist mill and providing a subsequent report. Once the data collection and analysis are complete, three design concepts will be provided.

The organization hopes to at that point share all the pertinent details with the county, towns, and village. They realize that the matter requires a comprehensive approach that prevents this disaster from recurring in the future.

# Cuts to science and education impacts everyone: a high schooler’s perspective

BY ANISHA MAKOVICKY  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

America is the land of opportunities they say, we just have to work hard and we can succeed. As a high school student, I have watched the current administration strip students such as myself of the opportunities that will allow us to build a successful future. The current funding cuts do not impact just science research but also

education. According to a report published by Education Week in May 2025, the National Science Foundation, under the Trump administration, canceled over 400 grants for STEM education. The administration has even cut funding for PBS Kids, which was created to bring STEM education to children of lower class families. I can’t imagine any benefits to discouraging our future doctors, engineers, scientists and leaders from science. If high school students are not allowed to start pursuing science early, they will be set back in the future. And since one day we will all depend on this next generation of scientists, doctors and engineers, setting back high school students will set back our whole country, not just in science.

Everyone should be worried about cuts to science and education funding. These affect entire families, students and educators. Parents



are worried that their children will lack future opportunities to become involved in STEM fields. High school students are primarily affected by the loss of programs and reduced chances to gain experiences to form their career ideas. Educators and teachers are not able to do their jobs and support students as they did in the past. Knowledge generated by scientists trickles down to the high school curriculum but if science is limited, there will be less knowledge passed down, meaning that future high schoolers will be

at a lower standing. This domino effect will have a cascading impact on future generations.

A well rounded education is important for everyone, not just students who aspire to attend competitive colleges. As a society, we believe a high school education is crucial for making informed decisions and helping one understand the world better. This is especially relevant because for many people, a high school diploma is the highest level of education they will receive. Federally funded education programs

offer different ways of learning both in and outside classrooms. Experiential learning such as hands-on curricula through internships, public education programs, museums and field trips expand upon the standard public school curricula. This is important because students learn in different ways and non-classroom learning experiences are especially beneficial for students with learning disabilities or different capacities to engage. These diverse types of opportunities are necessary to ensure every student is given a chance to succeed.

Over 50% of NSF funding cuts have been to education programs, according to the Hechinger Report. 1,400 grants have been cut, and 750 of those were to STEM education. That equates to about \$775 million that could have helped students engage with STEM. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) began the cuts to reduce diversity, equity, and inclusion in scientific research. While it is understandable to want our federal government to run efficiently, cutting scientific research and education will have little effect on the efficiency of our government and the lasting impacts will put our entire nation at a disadvantage. It is imperative that we protect our equal access to education in order to create a better future.

*Anisha Makovicky is a student at Earl L. Vandermeulen High School.*



# Smithtown's Yang wins \$40K Judge Cohalan history scholarship

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF  
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For her in-depth research about the Prime Thimble Factory in Huntington, Smithtown High School East senior Avery Yang has won the Honorable Peter Fox Cohalan Scholarship in American Studies from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.

In its 10th year, the scholarship provides \$10,000 per year for four years to a student who plans to study history in college and who demonstrates a commitment and interest in the subject by focusing on an element of local history on Long Island that reflects New York state and American history.

An accomplished student at Smithtown High School East, Yang focused on the factory that produced the small metal pieces that protected the fingers of those who were sewing from 1836 until the 1880's.

"She did a great job on her research," said Judge Cohalan, for whom the scholarship is named and who is one of the four trustees of the foundation. "Her English was perfect, there were no mistakes. I'm a nitpicker."

Yang, who plans to attend the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the fall, is especially passionate about the history of fashion and its connection to the cultural history of an era.

In her paper, which included 30 references and 47 endnotes, including a photo from her own collection of thimbles, Yang described not only the history of the factory but also the symbolism associated with the thimble.

To continue to receive the scholarship, whose previous winners have attended schools including William & Mary, Dartmouth, the University of Michigan and Marist, Yang must earn a 3.25 grade point average during each semester and contribute to a local historical society through a host of possible eligible activities, including website design and maintenance general research.

Over the course of its operation, the factory, which was owned and operated by Ezra Prime, "reflected changes and conflicts within American society. It echoed the broader shift across industries from artisans to factories, and shaped social debates surrounding women's rights through its product's symbolic meaning," wrote in her winning essay.

## Gibson girls

Shaun Minton, who taught Yang last year in an Advanced Placement US History class, was delighted that she won this scholarship.

He described Yang as the "top of the top" among students.

During class last year, Minton was discussing the flapper style of the 1920's. He usually compares the flappers to the Gibson Girl.

While some students may have heard of, read about or seen films with flappers, few have any working knowledge of the Gibson Girl, whose archetypal fashion preceded the flappers.

That, however, wasn't the case for Yang, who was able to "explain the fashion of the Gibson Girls better than I could."



In an email, Yang described the Gibson Girl, who was described in illustrations by Charles Gibson, as fashionable women who were modern and active and yet conformed to a patriarchal view of femininity.

Minton, who provided a college recommendation for his former student, recalled how she wrote a targeted and accurate response to a document based question.

"She was able to get right to the point and analyze the material in such a concise manner that I photocopied her paper and showed it to the rest of the class," he said.

## Fashion and history

Yang became fascinated with understanding history through fashion in middle school, when she started watching videos on the Internet of people who made historical clothing.

"The tactile aspect drew me into it," she said.

To live the connection to history, Yang sews her own clothing that reflects the styles and fashions of the time. She recreated a vintage original dress that took about three weeks to make from the 1930's and early 1940's with rayon crepe that she bought from an online fabric store.

For another ensemble from around 1818, she worked for about two months to recreate a gown from Théodore Géricault's "Portrait of Laure Bro." She researched primary sources such as historical sewing guides and garments in digital museum collections.

She enjoys the connection to the people, history and culture when she designs and sews these outfits.

It is a "magical experience to feel like you are participating in the same sorts of practices and rituals as someone from the past," she said. "When I finally get to put it

on, it's a completely surreal experience."

Yang has her own Youtube channel and her videos, which include descriptions of old antique machines and the dresses she's made with them as well as a description of sock plushies.

Yang's parents Alan and Cherry Yang are happy and proud of the work her daughter, who has also been a Gardiner scholar, did for this scholarship, which is an ongoing part of her passion for history.

Yang surrounds herself with history, as her room has various antiques including a collection of working children's sewing machines, old irons, advertising pieces and spools of thread, said her mother.

Yang loves antique shops, where "each object there has a story. We bring items home" and her daughter delves into its history, her mother said.

Minton appreciates how Yang, who is successful in math and science classes as well, has chosen to study history in college.

"Kids of her caliber nowadays tend to do STEM," he said.

Yang's parents would like their daughter and her older siblings to find their own way. After college, Yang, who also plays alto saxophone in several groups including the pit orchestra

and jazz band, would like to go into museum conservation where she can work with historical pieces and help preserve them, giving her the opportunity to paint a picture of cultural and social trends that are often missing from the written record. She would also consider becoming a history teacher.

Yang, who is hoping to participate in the graduate level program in public history at UMass Amherst, sees fashion as a reflection of cultural and social aspects of life.

"I find it really interesting to see changes in fashion and the ways in which things are sewn," she said.



Left: Yang with the black dress she recreated from the 1940s vintage original.

Bottom right: Yang wearing a period dress she designed and created based on Theodore Gericault's "Portrait of Laure Bro", painted in 1818. That project, which involved using silk and cotton, took two months to create.

Photos courtesy of Avery Yang

# Editorial

## Cutting STEM threatens future growth

Plants need stems to survive. They provide structural support and connect the roots to the leaves and flowers, making it possible to bring water, nutrients and sugars throughout the plant.

Similarly, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) serves a critical function for society.

As with the rest of a plant, STEM is not the only part that nourishes our culture, but it does offer critical support that makes it possible to adapt to future challenges and to push the frontier of human knowledge.

This week, we and scientists around the world celebrated the long-anticipated grand opening of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile, a telescope and camera so advanced that it has already spotted 2,400 asteroids we hadn't previously seen.

This state-of-the-art camera was funded by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science, making it possible to see deep into space and to ask questions about changes around us as well as dark matter and dark energy.

"NSF-DOE Rubin Observatory reflects what's possible when the federal government backs world-class engineers and scientists with the tools to lead," Harriet Kung, acting director of the DOE's Office of Science said in a statement.

Indeed!  
This project echoes some of the cutting edge science efforts that the federal government supported after World War II.

STEM funding supports translational research, which addresses questions like what molecule can scientists target to slow or stop the progression of cancer or what plant genes can enhance resistance to disease or environmental extremes. It can also support basic research that explores what causes a cell to divide, to die, or to differentiate.

Both of these areas of research have led to important discoveries that have contributed to society. Researchers credit their achievements with the opportunity and knowledge they received from previous generations of scientists who, like runners in a relay race, pass the baton to the next generation of great thinkers and explorers.

Science funding has among the highest returns on investment of any federal funding. Cutting funding to areas like the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and other federal programs can impede the ability of science and society to grow and respond to change.

The current budget proposal for 2026 suggests a 40 percent cut to the NIH, which would reduce the number of institutes from 27 to eight. Yikes!

Further up the chain, societal growth also depends on supporting the education of students who can go from a classroom where they learn about what's known to a field where they can rewrite the textbooks they had studied.

Canceling grants to STEM education not only threatens the students who miss out on chances to learn, but also society, which won't benefit from the spark of inspiration these students receive.

The federal government must continue to invest in STEM. The future growth of our society - with businesses, cures for diseases and an expanding knowledge base that enables us to live healthier and better lives - depends on it.

# Letters to the Editor

## Local community paper should cover community events

I'm irritated by the coverage of the No Kings protest by the Port Times Record in the June 19 issue. Why this "community" newspaper continues to give attention to left-leaning causes rankles me. Right there on the front page side-bar were two other stories that merited much greater attention because of their community interest: The PJ mayoral results in a hotly contested election and the nationally ranked rowing teams celebrating the accomplishments of our hard-working teens. Instead, the main focus was on a totally ineffectual protest that accomplished nothing.

Why must the Port Times Record give voice to misguided individuals. For example, the article quotes the protest organizer claiming, "We don't do dictator parades." The parade celebrating the founding of the US Army had been planned under the Biden administration for two years.

The irony should not be lost on clear-thinking people that the real dictatorship was the government that required and demanded that we wear masks, stay quarantined, prevented us from worshipping in our churches and synagogues, mandated vaccines, closed businesses, made sure that the elderly died alone, kept us social distant at an arbitrary 6-feet apart and closed schools setting back the education of our children. Who were the real dictators? Where were these antidictatorship protesters then? Yet, the Port Times Record thinks No Kings is front-page news.

Perhaps the Port Times Record should focus on community news and leave its bias to the op-ed page.

*Rick Ceo  
Port Jefferson Village*

## Response to Gene Sprouse's June 12th letter

I am responding ONLY as a longstanding resident of the community, not as a Setauket Neighborhood House Board member.

I purchased a home on Lake Street in 1976 directly across the Setauket Mill Pond from the Setauket Neighborhood House. Before that, I lived in the B Section of Strathmore for 7 years. A total of 56 years in the community, compared to Mr. Sprouse's 55 claimed years, is pretty equal local tenure. However, as a person living so close to the SNH for 49 years, I do have a pretty good sense of the daily activities there.

While living on Lake Street, I used the SNH many times for my children's birthday parties and for two of my own birthday celebrations.

The Lake Street ladies, led by Eva Glaser, Liz Tyler and Marylu Mills assembled to do the first major redecorating of the house back in 1980. It was the first Three Village Historical Society Candlelight House Tour

featuring some homes around the Setauket Mill Pond to raise money to refresh the interior of the Setauket Neighborhood House. I was part of that effort, yet those three ladies deserve all the credit.

I offer the above simply to show my longstanding involvement with the SNH.

I have been a member of the SNH Board for 10+ years now, but this letter is NOT from the board. It is from a local Lake Street resident who happens to be on the board. It is NOT an official SNH Board response, just my thoughts.

The cameras were installed in the SNH as a safety issue, not to monitor or to spy on any groups using the house.

While it IS posted everywhere that NO SMOKING is allowed inside or on the porches, people using the house continue to smoke there. As a member of the Three Village Garden Club, I have planted and maintained the flowering annuals in front of the house for many, many years. I check them twice weekly and pick up the cigarette and cigar butts (along with cups, plates, napkins and other trash) thrown from the porches into the bushes and flowers. Other board members do so as well.

The house is open most days with little or limited supervision. Recently, a group left a kettle on the stove to burn dry, a major fire hazard. People frequently use the house as a bathroom stop. Significant damage has occurred over the years, and it has become worse of late. Items are stolen and damage occurs. We have had groups from other LI communities using the house for fundraisers that are of no benefit to the local community. While the house is available until 11 p.m., some groups illegally stay longer.

For example, two summers ago I heard loud noises from both inside the house and in the parking lot at 11:30 p.m., well beyond closing time. A fight broke out in the parking lot, and I called the Suffolk County Police at 11:45 p.m. An officer arrived at 12:30 a.m. after I made a second call asking the 911 operator why it was taking so long to arrive at the scene of this fight. The operator told me that the police officer did not know where the SNH was even though I explained its location in my original call. Incredible! At 8 a.m. the next morning SNH Board President Tim O'Leary and I were at the house picking up all sorts of garbage left behind by this group. Needless to say, we are both volunteers.

So, yes, Mr. Sprouse, the SHN DOES need cameras for security and safety. I disagree that, "There is little need for this internal surveillance to protect the House...." It is NOT just "our neighbors" who use the house. People from communities 45-50 minutes away rent space there as well. I am not certain they will "value and protect this great community resource."

As for privacy issues, the house was never meant to be used for secret private political meetings. If privacy is an issue, then such

groups should find another place to meet.

No board member is spending time spying on meetings or ogling yoga classes, but when damage occurs (and it certainly has!), we do have a video of the damage done and the responsible party. At one recent meeting, one of the group disabled the camera. Do you support such actions? I do not.

Although groups are told they may NOT tape banners to the walls, just a few weeks ago, a group from outside the Three Village community did so, damaging the paint on a wall that had been painted just months before. We have proof and can assess the responsible group for repairs. Video proof was essential.

Please understand that we have numerous groups who use the house for its intended purpose and deserve credit for their tender care of as Mr. Sprouse asserts, "a wonderful community resource."

I believe, as a neighbor living near this historic building, that video monitoring is essential to the safety and security of the house. If a group finds that offensive, I am sure they can meet elsewhere or in private homes.

With grateful appreciation to all who use and support the house for its intended purpose from the Constitution and By-Laws --"To promote moral, intellectual, recreational and social welfare of the residents of Setauket, New York and vicinity."

*Julie Robinson Parmegiani  
Lake Street, Setauket*



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## Opinion

## It's all absurd and it helps to laugh your way through it

My uncle was mad and probably a bit disappointed with the rest of the family. He had gallantly, I suppose in his mind, volunteered to drive our family from the funeral home to the cemetery where my father was going to be buried.



**D. None of the above**

BY DANIEL DUNAIEF

There my brothers and I were, laughing in the back as if we were on a normal family retreat. No, scratch that, we were probably laughing even more forcefully. It was our coping mechanism, which my uncle, who spent little time with us growing up and, in particular, during my father's illness, wouldn't and didn't understand.

One of the many things that we observed and shared with each other from the back of that vehicle of loss was the impressive collection of fancy cars that were trailing behind us.

Our father was a big fan of test driving cars but not as much of a fan of buying them. We're pretty sure there were car salesman who went on break immediately as soon as they saw him

turn into their lot, desperate to get away from the bearded guy who seemed so earnest and excited about the cars, but almost never did anything other than ask about them, drive them, and return to his aging Buick LeSabre, promising to "think about it."

We were amazed at the Jaguars, the Mercedes and the host of other cars that people who wanted to pay their respects drove to his funeral.

"Oooh, there's a BMW," one of us said. "Wow, dad would love that car, but maybe not in that color."

My uncle shook his head slightly and frowned at us in the mirror. I guess he wanted us to behave more properly or respectfully during this somber moment.

But laughter is not only the best medicine, as it turned out for us, but has been a way my family connects with each other and with many of the people in our lives.

I must have watched the movie "The Court Jester" starring Danny Kaye at least a dozen times with my father. Each time, I knew when the dialog that made him laugh so hard was coming. His breath came in high pitched squeals as he bent over double trying to get air into lungs that were too busy laughing spasmodically.

"The pellet with the poison is in the vessel

from the pestle. The chalice from the palace has the brew that is true," Kaye would say.

Those lines, and the bumbled repetition with nonsense word variations, always hit their mark, forcing him to find a tissue to wipe the tears from his cheeks.

I remember the laughter, and what triggered it, from friends and family members who have either passed or with whom I have had little contact over the years.

Shared laughter, as sitcom producers understand, creates a positive and encouraging atmosphere, telling us that we can return and enjoy these light-hearted and peaceful moments with unseen strangers or with others in the room.

The hit show M\*A\*S\*H combined macabre humor in the midst of a war zone with antics that helped talented but stir crazy doctors manage through difficult circumstances.

My aunt Maxine used to find it both surprisingly annoying and oddly funny when I rolled my sleeves up into strange positions or turned parts of my collar inside out.

"Don't be silly!" she'd laugh, which, of course, only encouraged me. "What are you doing, Daniel?"

She'd come over and, with the soft small fingers of someone who had Down syndrome,

would unfurl the sleeves of my shirt and would adjust my collar.

My grandmother, meanwhile, giggled at the absurdity of her grandchildren.

My brothers and I would sometimes say or do something unusual and, rather than get upset, she would find our behavior so ridiculous as to be laughable. When she giggled, her entire upper body shook, as those quaking motions had an epicenter around her stomach. Her laughter made her seem so much younger.

My wife and I recently attended a live musical show that poked fun at everyone from politicians to sports figures to crazy neighborhood text messages.

The show not only hit home for many, but it also caused people to chuckle so hard that their laughter became a part of the show.

These days, with uncertainty around the world and hovering heat and humidity squeezing sweat out of us like a dish rag, the laughter of those we know or have known can serve as a soothing salve. Life is messy and frustrating and seemingly beyond our ability to control. Laughter may be just what we need, offering the kind of cooling shade that dials down the temperature.

## Is showing one's knees still scandalous?

Whew! That was blistering heat we just endured for the last few days. When it gets that hot, I have two reactions. I need some ice cream, preferably a cone filled with coffee ice cream dotted with chocolate chips. And I have to switch to wearing shorts.



**Between you and me**

BY LEAH S. DUNAIEF

So it gave me a chuckle to read an inquiry by a reader of the New York Times Style Questions column asking about wearing shorts to work. Now I'm supposing that she works in a large city office, where there is a formal or informal dress code, and like me, she wants to beat the heat by donning shorts.

Her question amuses me because it reminds me of how far wearing shorts has come, and also how lucky we are.

First the shorts evolution. It must have been a slow news day back in 1960, when The New York Times ran a front page story about Barnard students wearing Bermuda shorts as they meandered through the Columbia campus. Imagine the scandal. It seems President Grayson Kirk of Columbia was offended by the casual dress and asked Barnard President Millicent McIntosh to clamp down on her students. Only skirts were to be worn, came the directive, with some sort of appropriate blouse.

Well, we students protested, with petitions and rallies, until the ban was rescinded to a "request" to wear a coat or slacks over the shorts when on the Columbia campus, which was across Broadway from Barnard. Think how innocent the uproar when measured against today's protests on the same campuses.

Clearly President McIntosh wasn't similarly offended because she advised us during an ensuing assembly of the entire college "to turn over your book covers when you are riding the subway (some two-thirds of students were

commuters then) so no one knows you are from Barnard." And any ban would not take place until September, which was one way of kicking the can-or-ban-down the road.

Other women's colleges treated the issue of showing knees differently. Radcliffe, adjacent to Harvard, only permitted shorts for athletic activities. Vassar College allowed shorts both on campus and in town (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.). Smith College, in Northampton, Mass., allowed shorts on campus and in class, but no shorter than two inches above the knee. All that was researched by The NYT reporter for the 1960 article.

Today's reporter, Vanessa Friedman, answered the reader this way. "Shorts are often longer than skirts these days and often more conservative. There is no reason a woman shouldn't wear them to the office." She goes on to say that any hesitation might stem from the association of shorts with play and summer weekends rather than work. As such they are not considered professional garb.

There is also the question of what kind of

shorts, she advises. Very short shorts are not any more acceptable than very short skirts. To professionalize the look, a blazer, a belted T-shirt and conservative shoes — platform shoes or even pumps — might complete the outfit, or an oversize button-up shirt.

So now I come to the point of our being lucky. First, most of us are not in a large city office but rather a suburban environment, which, culturally, is more relaxed. We live in the land of the sweatsuits.

Furthermore, times have so radically changed that no one, for example, expects a doctor or lawyer, the epitome of professional, I guess, to appear in a suit. Not even a tie. A button-up Oxford shirt is pretty dressed up these days, and we often see professionals thusly outfitted: men in golf shirts and trousers, and women in short sun dresses.

Finally, we, as journalists, are allowed to look casually dressed. Few people would expect to be interviewed by someone in a suit. It might even make them nervous. Yippee!



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**Year After Year**

# Ronkonkoma man convicted of second DWI within 10 years

Suffolk County District Attorney Raymond A. Tierney announced on June 18 that Thomas Gaylor, 70, of Lake Ronkonkoma, was found guilty of felony Driving While Intoxicated and Aggravated DWI, for driving his vehicle while intoxicated on Ronkonkoma Avenue in Ronkonkoma in 2023.

The evidence at trial established that, on November 9, 2023, at approximately 5:40 p.m., Gaylor was observed operating a 2018 White Chevrolet Cruze in a northbound direction on Ronkonkoma Ave. in Ronkonkoma.

Gaylor was driving the car erratically by driving significantly below the speed limit, breaking at odd points in the road, and even veering into oncoming traffic. A witness driving behind him called 911 to report the dangerous and erratic driving to police. Gaylor was eventually located by Suffolk County police a short time later, parked outside his home and slumped over the steering wheel. After being transported to the hospital due to



Thomas Gaylor

his high level of intoxication, he consented to a blood draw, revealing that his blood alcohol level was .33, over four times the legal limit of .08.

On June 18, 2025, Gaylor was convicted after a jury trial heard before Acting County Court Judge James A. McDonough for Driving While Intoxicated, a Class E felony, and Aggravated Driving While Intoxicated, a Class E felony. Gaylor was previously convicted of Driving While Intoxicated on August 27, 2018.

“In 2025, there is no excuse for driving drunk,” said District Attorney Tierney. “Car services, taxis and rideshares are everywhere. Unfortunately, we see too often how drunk or drugged driving can lead to a tragic result. Repeating that same offense shows a complete and utter disregard for human life.”

Gaylor is due back in court on August 13 and faces up to 1 and 1/3 to 4 years’ incarceration.

— SUFFOLK COUNTY D.A.’S OFFICE

# POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents have been reported by Suffolk County Police:

### Child left unattended in vehicle

Suffolk County Police arrested a Patchogue man after he left his son in a parked vehicle during extreme temperatures on June 24.

Sixth Precinct officers responded to the parking lot of Walmart, located at 161 Centereach Mall, at approximately 1:40 p.m. after a Good Samaritan called 911 to report a child sleeping in a parked 2007 Toyota Highlander that was not running with the windows open a few inches.

Officers were able to reach through the window to unlock the vehicle and remove the child. As first responders were administering aid to the child, his father, Keniarold Andre, 36, returned to the vehicle and was arrested.

The child was in the vehicle, unattended, for approximately 20 minutes and the outside temperature was approximately 100 degrees. The boy, 2, was transported to Stony Brook University Hospital for treatment and was released to a family member and Suffolk County Child Protective Services was notified. Andre was charged with Endangering the Welfare of a Child.

### Man dies in police custody in Selden

Suffolk County Police Homicide Squad detectives are investigating the death of a man who died in police custody on June 23.

A detention attendant in the Sixth Precinct was monitoring the cell block when he noticed a prisoner, Quinn Harrison, laying on a bench in the cell in an awkward position at approximately 9:40 p.m. The detention attention notified the desk sergeant. Officers then began CPR and applied an automatic external defibrillator. Members of Selden Rescue responded, continued CPR, and administered Narcan. Harrison was transported by ambulance to Stony Brook University Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Harrison, 39, of Shirley, was being held overnight after being arrested earlier in the day on two bench warrants and one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th Degree.

### Kings Park man arrested for stalking

Suffolk County Police arrested a Kings Park man on June 23 for stalking a Suffolk County legislator outside of his home last week.

Legislator Robert Trotta reported to police that between June 16 and June 18 a white 1989 Chevrolet pickup truck parked in the driveway of his Northport home on more than one occasion

and revved its engine to intimidate him and his family. The incident was reported to police on June 19.

Following an investigation by Major Case Unit detectives, Joshua Smith was arrested. Smith, 47, was charged with Stalking 4th Degree, a misdemeanor.

### Mt. Sinai massage parlor raided

Suffolk County Police arrested a woman on June 24 for alleged unauthorized practice of a profession in Mount Sinai.

In response to numerous community complaints, Suffolk County Police Sixth Precinct Crime Section officers, in conjunction with officials from the Town of Brookhaven, conducted an investigation into Sakura Foot Spa, located at 47 Route 25A, and arrested Rongzhen Wang at 7 p.m.

Wang, 43, of Flushing, was charged with alleged Unauthorized Practice of a Profession, a felony. The Town of Brookhaven issued multiple violations and condemned the building as unsafe.

### Two arrested at Melville fight club

Suffolk County Police arrested two Northport men on June 22 for allegedly participating in an unauthorized fight club event in Melville.

In response to community complaints, Second Precinct Anti-Crime Unit and Second Precinct Investigative Unit officers investigated a fight club advertised on social media and arrested two participants at Walt Whitman Park at approximately 4:30 p.m. There were approximately 70 people in attendance.

Finley McCloskey, 19, of Northport and Jake Zimilies, 19, of Northport, were charged with Unlawful Assembly.

### Pedestrian injured in Huntington

Suffolk County Police arrested a Babylon man for driving while intoxicated after a motor vehicle crash seriously injured a pedestrian in Huntington on June 22.

Jorge Alfaro was running westbound across New York Avenue at Carver Street when he was stuck by a southbound 2012 Chevrolet Camaro, driven by Alexander Vargas, at approximately 2:30 a.m.

Alfaro, 28, of Huntington Station, was transported with serious injuries to Huntington Hospital. Vargas, 30, was charged with Driving While Intoxicated. Vargas is a Suffolk County Police officer assigned to the Second Precinct and was off duty at the time of the crash. He was suspended without pay following the crash.

— 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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# Meet the scholars leading Earl L. Vandermeulen’s Class of 2025

BY TBR STAFF  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

**GRADUATION** TBR sent a Q&A to local salutatorians and valedictorians, asking about the strategies that helped them become their school’s top performers.

*Sara Freitas: Valedictorian*

- GPA: Weighted – 103.0; Unweighted – 99.5
- Activities: Interact Club (President), Investment Club (President), Environmental Club (President), International Club (Secretary), LEO Club (Secretary)
- Attending Brown University to study Applied Mathematics

*Jax Moore: Salutatorian*

- GPA: Weighted – 102.88; Unweighted – 99.64
- Activities: Science Olympiad (Grades 9–12; 3-time medalist), GSA (Secretary), National Honor Society, Virtual Tutor, Save A Pet volunteer, STEM program (Grades 9–11), Fall Play, Environmental Club Fundraiser Organizer
- Attending Binghamton University to study

*Biochemistry with a minor in Spanish*

**What advice would you give an incoming freshman?**

**Freitas:** I would encourage incoming freshmen to pursue what catches their attention, no matter what that interest may be. It’s easy to lose sight of oneself in the modern world. Amongst pressures to appease others and chase a lucrative career path, I’d encourage younger students to live for themselves, work for their goals, and remain true to themselves; that is the only way true success can be achieved.

**Moore:** Don’t let yourself get caught up in comparison or what you “should” be doing. At the end of the day, the number of AP classes you took or your grade in a certain class don’t matter; it’s more important to explore your passions and learn something new.



**How did you stay motivated throughout your studies?**

**Freitas:** It’s easy to stay motivated when you change your perspective. Although it’s human nature to burn out and require relaxation, I am always able to find my way back to my studies by remembering it is a privilege, not a chore, to learn. I try to remind myself that studying is for my benefit; it’s not just an assignment. Rather, it’s my future.

**Moore:** I’ve always been a very driven person who sets lofty goals for myself, and it’s that drive that motivated me to try my hardest throughout high school.

**Please share some study habits you employ that helped you maintain high grades.**

**Freitas:** My study habits have shifted through the years as coursework has grown increasingly cumbersome. I’d recommend studying for tests about five or so days in advance whenever possible. It allows you

as a learner to take control. By the day of the test, the material will feel second nature. Besides that, making notecards can be helpful to conceptualize information.

**Moore:** The system I found that works best for me is periodically taking notes on what work I need to complete for each class I’m in. Then, when I get home from school, I’ll go through that list and start with the tasks that need to be done first. To keep myself motivated, I often start with the assignment that I think will be easiest because it’s easier to transition into doing something harder when you’re already in “work mode.” I also keep my phone in another room to avoid distractions. One of the key parts of high school is discovering how you learn best and developing time management skills.

**What are your goals or career aspirations?**

**Freitas:** This is tentative to change, but as of now I am interested in mathematics. I’m not sure how this will look in a career, so for now my goal is to successfully complete college. I think it would be amazing to become a Mathematician, but I’m not sure if this is the perfect fit for me.

**Moore:** I plan on going into medical research and/or practicing medicine.



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- Garage Sales
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- Antiques & Collectibles
- Automobiles/Trucks etc.
- Finds under \$50
- Health/Fitness/Beauty
- Merchandise
- Personals
- Novenas
- Pets/Pet Services
- Professional Services
- Schools/Instruction/Tutoring
- Wanted to Buy
- Employment
- Cleaning

- Computer Services
- Electricians
- Financial Services
- Furniture Repair
- Handyman Services
- Home Improvement
- Lawn & Landscaping
- Painting/Wallpaper
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LEGALS

To Place A Legal Notice  
Email: [legals@tbrnewsmedia.com](mailto:legals@tbrnewsmedia.com)

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 OF SALE**  
SUPREME COURT:  
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK  
BOARD OF MANAGERS OF  
ARTIST LAKE CONDOMINIUM, Plaintiff, against AL3 CONDOS HOLDINGS LLC; and “JOHN DOE” AND “JANE DOE”, Defendants. Pursuant to a judgment of foreclosure and sale entered herein and dated February

18, 2025, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction on the front steps of the Brookhaven Town Hall, 1 Independence Hill, Farmingville, New York, on **July 24, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** premises being in the Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk and State of New York, being known as Home No. 105 together with a .38809% subdivided interest in the common elements of the condominium hereinafter described as the same defined in the Declaration of Condominium hereinafter referred to. The real property above described is a Home shown on the Plans of a condominium prepared and certified by Nelson & Pope, and filed in the Office of the Clerk of Suffolk County on the 31st day of January 1974, as File No.

30, as defined in the Declaration of Condominium entitled Artist Lake Condominium made by Hall Huntley Corp. under Article 9-B of the New York Real Property Law, dated January 14th 1974, and recorded in the Office of the Clerk of Suffolk County on the 31st day of January, 1974, in Liber 7581 of Conveyances, page 58, covering the property therein described. Said premises being known as 105 Artist Lake Drive, Middle Island, Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk, State of New York. (District 0200, Section 403.00, Block 07.00, Lot No. 001.000). Said premises will be sold subject to zoning restrictions, covenants, easements, conditions, reservations and agreements, if any; subject

to any state of facts as may appear from an accurate survey; subject to facts as to possession and occupancy and subject to whatever physical condition of the premises may be; subject to any violations of the zoning and other municipal ordinances and regulations, if any, and if the United States of America should file a tax lien, or other lien, subject to the equity of redemption of the United States of America; subject to the rights of any lienors of record whose liens have not been foreclosed herein, if any; subject to the rights of holders of security in fixtures as defined by the Uniform Commercial Code; subject to taxes, assessments and water rates which are liens on the premises at the time of sale, with accrued interest or penalties thereon and a first mortgage held by Margolin, Weinreb & Nierer, LLP Profit Sharing Accident & Health Plan f/b/o C.I. Margolin \$60,000.00, Nino Caridi and Rebecca Caridi \$50,000.00 and Denise Langweber and Laurence Langweber \$85,000.00, mortgagee, given to AL3 CONDOS HOLDINGS LLC, mortgagor, in the original amount of \$195,000.00 dated 12/14/2023 and recorded 2/27/2023 in Liber 23569 at page 326.

of said external audit has been filed in the Office of the Treasurer of the Fire District, with the Town Clerk, and the New York Office of the State Comptroller. Said report is available as a matter of public record for all interested persons, who may obtain access to it at said firehouse, during normal business hours, Monday through Friday at 19 Jayne Blvd., Port Jefferson Station, New York, pursuant to Section 35 of the General Municipal Law. The Board of Fire Commissioners may, in its discretion, prepare a response to the report of the independent public accountant and file said response in the Office of the Treasurer of said Fire District, as a matter of public record for inspection by all interested persons.

within ten days from adoption of this resolution, publish the required notice and otherwise take any steps necessary to effectuate the same.”

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF THE TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

Dated: June 20, 2025  
Port Jefferson Station, New York

Marilyn Peterson  
District Secretary

279000 6/26 1x ptr

TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT  
Port Jefferson Station, New York

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Fire Commissioners, Terryville Fire District, in the Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk, State of New York, being duly convened in the regular meeting on June 18, 2025 after due deliberation thereupon did adopt the following resolution:

“RESOLVED THAT an expenditure not to exceed the sum of \$30,000.00 to be made from the Terryville Fire District Purchase of Equipment Capital Reserve Fund in order to purchase: Hose and a training door.

FURTHER RESOLVED that this expenditure of funds from the Terryville Fire District Purchase of Equipment Capital Reserve Fund shall be subject to a permissive referendum and that the Fire District Secretary shall, within ten days from adoption of this resolution, publish the required notice and otherwise take any steps necessary to effectuate the same.”

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF THE TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

Dated: June 20, 2025  
Port Jefferson Station, New York

Marilyn Peterson  
District Secretary

279010 6/26 1x ptr

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278900

Index No. 617388/2024  
Dated: June 12, 2025

Daniel O'Brien, Esq.,  
Referee

Cohen, Warren, Meyer & Gitter, P.C., Attorneys for Plaintiff, 98 Maple Avenue, Suite 100, Smithtown, NY 11787.

277660 6/19 4x ptr

PUBLIC NOTICE

TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT  
TOWN OF BROOKHAVEN,  
SUFFOLK COUNTY,  
NEW YORK

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the fiscal affairs of the TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT for the period beginning on January 1, 2024 and ending on December 31, 2024 have been examined by an independent public accountant and the report

TERRYVILLE FIRE DISTRICT  
Port Jefferson Station, New York

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Fire Commissioners, Terryville Fire District, in the Town of Brookhaven, County of Suffolk, State of New York, being duly convened in the regular meeting on June 18, 2025 after due deliberation thereupon did adopt the following resolution:

“RESOLVED THAT an expenditure not to exceed the sum of \$20,000.00 to be made from the Terryville Fire District Buildings & Grounds Capital Reserve Fund in order to purchase: Brick work for the monument.

FURTHER RESOLVED that this expenditure of funds from the Terryville Fire District Buildings & Grounds Capital Reserve Fund shall be subject to a permissive referendum and that the Fire District Secretary shall,



**Bluff***continued from A1*

of structural stability to justify the investment. However, these cost estimates now appear to be outdated with recent inflation spikes and unaccounted expenditure, including a large drainage project, bluff repair and long-term maintenance costs.

The commission report calls for an updated cost analysis factoring these additional projects as well as costs related to potential supply chain uncertainty and tariffs on critical construction materials such as steel.

Phase 2 is supported in part by FEMA money. The commission expressed concern that this funding may be rescinded in the current political climate, leaving local taxpayers to make up the difference.

“The commission is concerned over the reliability of FEMA funding and whether those funds could be withdrawn,” the report states.

Despite calls for a cost analysis of all options, village officials have not yet initiated a publicly vetted fiscal plan for relocating the facility or other options — something that the commission deems a critical omission in its findings.

**GEI report warns of new damage**

The recently-released 2024 Bluff Monitoring Report in May, paints a mixed picture. Conducted by GEI, the monitoring period covers from February 2024 to this March.

While the lower bluff wall — reinforced with a steel bulkhead, stone armor and vegetative plantings — has held up, the upper slope is showing new signs of distress, according to the report.

Three storm events in 2024 exacerbated erosion along the western slope. Further displacement of coir logs and terracing, expansion of gully formation, vegetation destruction and signs of internal sediment movement were all documented in the report’s inspections. GEI notes that drainage remains a major vulnerability.

Recommendations include temporary seeding and erosion control matting over denuded areas of the bluff face, sand backfill in certain sections of the lower wall, repairing cracks in the lower wall, inspection and maintenance of the lower wall, replacement of the displaced coir logs and a soil boring analysis at the bluff crest to help define drainage issues.

The report emphasizes the need for permanent drainage landward of the club building and reconfiguration of the current building drainage system



**Bluff base west of the concrete Phase 1 lower wall showing destroyed coir logs, as at March this year.** Photograph from the commission’s report

southward.

A drainage plan and long-term maintenance plan were not part of the initial design or cost analysis for the entire project — Phase 1 and 2 — according to the commission research on the history of the project.

**CCE’s concerns**

The commission reviewed the recent GEI report in detail at the June 19 meeting held at the club building. Members appreciated the comprehensive summary and visual timeline of project work but had many concerns about the recommendations.

“What is this [GEI] report trying to accomplish besides complying with the state?” one member asked. “The report should help the village identify problems but also guide the corrective action.”

Members point to vague directives without clear implementation plans, missing details in technical specifications for reconstituting bluff damage, and unexplained rationales for root causes of problems such as why the gullies formed in the first place and are now expanding. One member wants to see a priority ranking of potentially costly recommendations made in the report.

“Does it even make sense to do all these recommendations? Or are we just shoveling against the tide?” another member said.

The commission plans to submit questions to GEI and the village

board of trustees about the report recommendations, requesting a priority list, cost estimates and a clear funding plan.

**Long-term outlook**

Trustee Juliano, at a recent Meet the Candidates night, said: “We don’t even know how much the next phase [Phase 2] will cost, and the loss of long-term revenue from the catering facility [that runs private events at the clubhouse] should be taken into account when weighing the monetary pros and cons.”

However, some longtime residents express frustration over the use of millions in taxpayer dollars to subsidize a building that is underutilized by the broader community, with little evidence that it generates sufficient revenue to justify the expense of the stabilization project.

Over the years, many residents say they have seen the club building evolve from a vibrant municipal community center hosting local activities to a catering hall primarily serving private events. There is currently no restaurant at the clubhouse.

“Sadly, this valuable piece of public parkland continues to underused by our village residents,” resident Myrna Gordon said. She has repeatedly called for a reimagining of the site where the clubhouse sits, including rebuilding inland to protect the bluff and the long-term viability of a club facility as a community asset.

The village board, under newly reelected Mayor Lauren Sheprow, appears to be moving forward with plans for Phase 2 construction to install an upper wall.

“Protecting public assets and ensuring our approach is sustainable — not just structurally, but economically and environmentally,” Sheprow said at a recent public meeting.

Residents are encouraged to review the interim commission report and the GEI Bluff Monitoring Report, which are publicly available on the village website, and to share their input with the board of trustees. To view the CCE report, visit the village website and search for “Citizens Commission on Erosion.” To view the GEI 2024 Annual Monitoring Report search for “East Beach Bluff.”

“This is a moment for long-term thinking,” Hill said. “It’s a chance not just to respond to erosion — but to reimagine how this space can better serve the entire community.”

# LGBTQ+ nonprofits speak on Suffolk-related issues

BY WILLIAM STIEGLITZ

DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

With Pride Month bringing to Suffolk County both joyous parades and calls for greater support of LGBTQ+ community members, TBR News Media reached out to two local nonprofits, Gender Equality New York and Pride for Youth (a division of the Long Island Crisis Center), to ask what issues most impact LGBTQ+ people in Suffolk right now.

Juli Grey-Owens, executive director of GENY, founded the organization in 2016 in the aftermath of the group Empire State Pride Agenda disbanding. She said that after the passage of marriage equality in New York and nationwide, “all the LGBT people who were giving money to keep the organization up and running left.” “And so with them going out of business,” she continued, “there was no statewide advocacy organization to fight for transgender civil rights.”

So, she founded GENY to empower transgender, gender nonbinary and intersex New Yorkers, and GENY now provides educational training for Suffolk and Nassau police academies, local hospitals and houses of worship.



PFY, an LGBTQ+ health and human services organization, was founded in 1993 in response to its parent organization receiving many calls on its crisis support hotlines from people looking for LGBTQ+-based services. “Back in 1993, nothing like us existed in a suburban setting,” explained Tawni Engel, associate executive director of LICCS, adding that PFY became the first LGBTQ+ organization in the U.S. to offer the services it did in a suburban area.

PFY now offers 32 programs and services throughout Suffolk, Nassau and Queens, including social spaces for queer youth, family counseling, housing support and HIV testing and education. “I feel like if you name the service, we offer it,” Engel said.

Both directors said one of the most prevalent issues facing LGBTQ+ Long Islanders now is hate and disinformation, especially toward the

local trans community, leading to fear, bias and discrimination. “There are people walking around that believe that transgender kids are getting surgery at eight years old; that is a fallacy,” said Grey-Owens. “There are people walking around thinking that school nurses are handing out hormones. I mean, school nurses aren’t even allowed to hand out a cough drop.”

Engel also spoke on the rhetoric around trans community members, saying it is often dehumanizing and federal actions like the erasure of the “T” from the now “LGB+” pages on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website don’t help. “I think the message that that sends to people, especially young people, is just so demoralizing.”

Funding for services is also a major issue. With diversity, equality and inclusion programs dissolving, she explained, corporate sponsorships PFY used to rely on are falling through. “We have received many letters, come to find out they were sent to us illegally by the government, telling us that ‘x’ amount of dollars were gonna be pulled literally within twenty-four hours. It got reinstated, but it’s just been this roller coaster ride.”

The complexity these issues have on Pride Month, said Engel, was a consideration when organizing PFY’s annual pride gala and fundraiser. “It absolutely is a fun celebratory

night of queer celebration and celebrating pride. But at the same time, especially this year ... how do we strike that balance between educating and facing the realities of what’s going on, but also celebrating and taking care of ourselves?” she said. “We kind of started off with, okay, let’s talk about the realities of what’s going on, and then just dance our butts off the rest of the night and take care of ourselves and each other, you know.”

The gala featured Glen Cove city councilmember Marsha Silverman (D), who is the first-out lesbian councilmember on Long Island on the North Shore. Both Engel and Grey-Owens emphasized the importance of involvement and support from local officials, with Grey-Owens being a member of the Suffolk County Legislature’s LGBTQ advisory board and the LGBTQ task force for Huntington.

“Attend a school board meeting,” said Grey-Owens. “Make sure that the school board is representative or has representation or is aware of our community. Go to town council meetings. Visit your legislators... These are all people that have local offices here on Long Island, so it’s not like you have to travel to DC to see somebody. You can do it right here on Long Island.”

For more information visit the GENY website: [www.genderequalityny.org](http://www.genderequalityny.org).





From left to right: Town Clerk Kevin J. LaValle, Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay, AHEPA President George Kallas and Ray Iasili pose while receiving awards at the fourth annual AHEPA Ch. 319 car show. Right: Rob Bernardini stands in front of his cherished turquoise 1952 Ford Crestline.

# Port Jefferson Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption hosts annual car show and charity event

BY CAROLINE O'CALLAGHAN  
DESK@TBRNEWSMEDIA.COM

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption of Port Jefferson was the poised backdrop for the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association Chapter 319's fourth annual charity car show on Saturday, June 21. The multisponsored event was held to raise money for the organization Agape Meals for Kids, whose mission is to help provide essential meals to local children who experience food insecurity. Residents and local representatives bore the heat in support of a great cause.

Visitors and car enthusiasts enjoyed the show of vintage vehicles, locally provided food trucks and virtual driving simulation games.

## CHARITY

To mark the fourth consecutive gathering, several supporters of the car show were honored during a humbling ceremony. One of those supporters was Assemblywoman Rebecca Kassay (D, 4). Kassay noted the large number of sponsorships was in direct correlation to the significance of the event for its community.

"The sponsorships behind us really show just how much support there is for this work for these individuals, how much work goes into getting these funds from our local businesses to the charities that are supported like Agape Meals for Kids, which we're so grateful [to have] for our local children," said Kassay.

Kassay also honored Ray Iasili, who has been a devoted admin of the AHEPA Ch. 319 car show since its conception, with a Proclamation Citation for his outstanding service to the community.

"I see you're shaking your head because you're a humble man, but truly, the work that you do, you will never know the depth of support that you've brought to families and continue to do so. You know it in your heart, and our families feel it and we need to recognize you and that work today," Kassay told Iasili.

Kassay was referring to the enormous impact that the car show has had on Agape Meals for Kids. The charity's president, Irene Michalos, was also honored. Michalos praised AHEPA Ch. 319 for their exponential contributions since Agape began its mission four years ago. "When we packed our first 137 backpacks in December of 2021, we couldn't have imagined that number would grow to over 18,000, but here we are and your support made that possible," Michalos said to the crowd.

For those who came out to show their cars

and compete in its competition, the small event gave way to big kindnesses. Ron Bernardini came through with his turquoise 1952 Ford Crestline. The car was a showstopper to visitors, and Bernardini was happy with the turnout.

"Today's a very small show, but a very nice show," said Bernardini, "the people were all very lovely and they appreciate older things, so they've been very kind and very complimentary." Bernardini continued, "People respect older things that are taken care of, and what can I say? This car is the embodiment of that."

The future of the annual AHEPA Ch. 319 charity car show is bright, according to Iasili, who hopes the event continues to grow.

"I just love everybody that comes out and helps and supports," Iasili said. "Let's do it again next year for a bigger crowd."

—Photos by Caroline O'Callaghan



Left: Sports cars parked next to each other. Middle: A motorcycle featured at the show. Right: A guest at the stands in front of a red Mustang.