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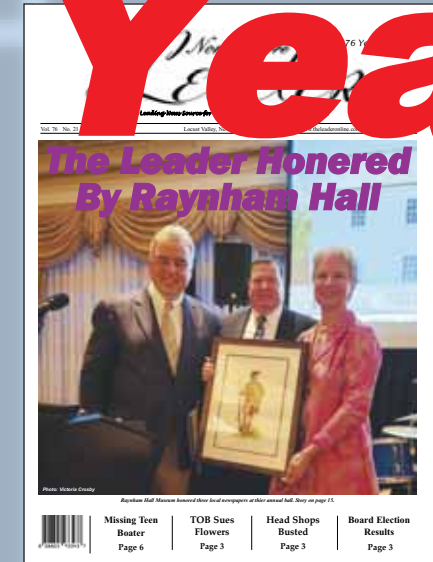
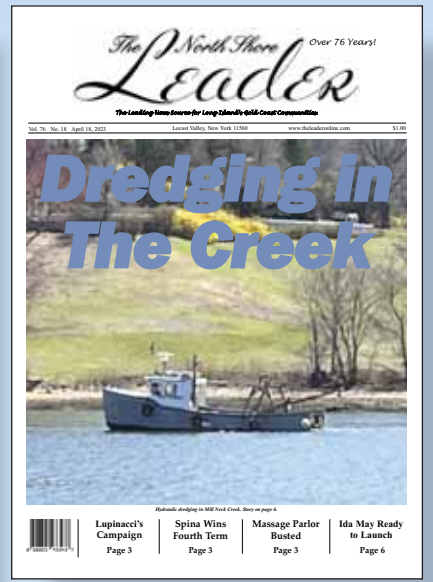
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Happy New Year



Just some of the cover stories from the 2023 North Shore Leader..



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FOR CONGRESS ★ 2024
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“ Washington D.C. isn't working for us. I will work day and night with both parties to deliver for the people to make living here more affordable, safer, and better. I delivered for this district before, and I will do it again by putting you ahead of partisanship. Let's reject the nonsense and get back to work. ”

Tom



SPECIAL ELECTION
Tuesday, Feb. 13th

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Leader Reporter Decorated by Polish President

By TOM NOTHEL

Chris O'Neill, a reporter for the North Shore Leader, was decorated by Polish President Andrzej Duda with that country's second-highest civilian award, the "Polonia Restituta," last month, on December 13th.

The ceremony took place at the presidential palace in Warsaw, exactly 42 years after the communists in Poland imposed Martial Law in 1981, outlawing the Solidarity free trade union movement.

Chris O'Neill actively took part in the struggle against the communist regime in Poland in the 1980's. He belonged to an underground organization that focused on preparing and printing uncensored materials for distribution to the public.

The organization acted strictly according to what the Poles call the 'principles of underground conduct', taking care not to be detected by the authorities, which meant, for example, that, on average, most members only knew several other members, and only by pseudonyms. Of the 30 member group, only two were discovered and served prison time.

"This is an unbelievable honor" said O'Neill. "What is especially significant for me is that I received this award on the anniversary of Martial Law – which for Poles is as traumatic as Pearl Harbor was for our grandparents."

"I was a student in Poland at the time," added O'Neill. "I remember looking out my dormitory window at tanks rolling down the street in the middle of the night. The university was shut-down, and all the students were ordered to go home."

"They fought for a few days, in the dorms, or together with striking workers in the factories, but were crushed. My dorm was then used as a barracks for the riot police. They would sleep in the



President Andrzej Duda presents Chris O'Neill with the Polonia Restituta

day, and at night go off and "pacify" another striking factory."

"There were only a few of us foreign students left in the dorm. We had no place else to go. I was the only one from a non-Third World country."

"I cut out pictures and letters from Newsweek or Time that I had gotten from home and made a collage with nuclear missiles, a mushroom cloud, and a picture of Ronald Reagan, together with letters that spelled out the Polish word: CHCESZ?, which means, "Do you want this?" I put this on the door of my dorm room."

"We had riot police in the next rooms, and we shared a bathroom. One morning I got up, passed a burly guy shaving and found the toilet smashed into smithereens," recalled O'Neill. "They did not want me there. I could go on and on about my experiences. It was only later that I got actively involved in the underground."



The Polonia Restituta medal



Chris O'Neill (right) with other honorees

Sex Charges Filed Against Huntington Band Teacher

By THOMAS NOTHEL

A former student at Huntington High School has filed charges alleging improper sexual contact in a lawsuit against the Huntington School District and a Music department administrator, Brian Stellato.

The suit alleges that Stellato, who was formerly the band director, sexually assaulted the student once in School and once outside school when she was a student there. It also alleges that he continued the sex assaults against the student after she graduated in 2010.

Stellato has denied the allegations.

The complaint was filed in November, just days before the New York State's Adult Survivors Act expired.

The Adult Survivors Act allowed former victims (currently 18 and over) of sexual assault in New York state to file a civil suit even if the statute of limitations had expired.

Civil suits could be filed for a one-year period, from November 24, 2022, to November 24, 2023.

Stellato was hired in the fall of 2006 to be the Huntington High School Band director. He continued as Band director until he was promoted to Director of Fine and Performing Arts in December of 2022.

The Huntington School District has said it will not comment due to the pending litigation. Stellato has been re-assigned to work from home.



Brian Stellato (courtesy HSD)

Ed Romaine Sworn-In as Suffolk County Executive



Ed Romaine is joined by his wife Diane, and Judge James Hudson, for the Oath of Office (courtesy Suffolk County)

By NIALL FITZGERALD

Former Brookhaven Supervisor Ed Romaine was sworn in last week as the new Suffolk County Executive, the first Republican to hold the office in 20 years.

Romaine had previously served as Suffolk County Clerk and a Suffolk County Legislator. He ran unsuccessfully for Suffolk County Executive in 2003, and ran for US Congress in 1992.

He was joined at the oath of office by his wife Diane, and was sworn-in by Supreme Court Justice James Hudson.

Romaine pledged to be strong defender of Suffolk's suburban communities, and to resist the urban "mass housing" plans of Gov. Kathy Hochul (D-Buffalo) the Albany Democrats. He also

pledged to protect Suffolk's environment and natural resources, and to protect Suffolk's water quality.

Romaine appointed Kevin Molloy to be Chief Deputy County Executive; and Michael Monahan, Jennifer Jeungst, and Christina Capobianco as Deputy County Executives.

Rob Waring has been designated as acting police commissioner, and according to sources, Christopher Clayton, Special Counsel to Suffolk DA Ray Tierney, is slated to become County Attorney.

Many of the appointments require approval by the County Legislature, where Republicans won a super-majority of 12 to 6 in last November's elections.

Vernon School Principal Fired Over Sex With Student

By CHRIS O'NEILL

The mysterious sudden resignation last October, of newly-appointed Principal Jessica Bader from the Vernon School (grades 3-6) in East Norwich, was due to a sex scandal that she had with a student at a prior teaching job - which she concealed from the Oyster Bay - East Norwich (OBEN) school district.

Bader worked as a teacher at the East Meadow school district in 2005, when she was caught having a sex with an 18-year-old high school student.

She was suspended from teaching, resigned from the East Meadow school district, and her teaching certification was suspended for four years.

Then, in 2013, Bader was hired by the New York City schools as an Assistant Principal at the George Ryan Middle School in Fresh Meadows, Queens. She held that job for nine years before taking a job as an Assistant Principal at the Vernon School in the OBEN school district.

She was promoted to Principal just five months ago, in September, 2023.

According to the OBEN

Superintendent's office, Bader concealed her prior firing for sex with a student in East Meadow, and her suspension by the NYS Board of Education.

Parents in the OBEN district are alarmed that the Superintendent hired a person, with a record of sexual misconduct, as a School Assistant Principal - and then promoted her to Principal - without apparently doing a basic "background check" or any normal due diligence before hiring her.

The OBEN Superintendent issued a letter to the community in October disclosing the firing of Bader - but not disclosing her serious sexual misconduct behind her firing.



Jessica Bader (courtesy OBEN CSD)



The James H. Vernon School

EDITORIAL

HARVARD HATES AMERICA

Back in 1978, a young Harvard graduate from Long Island named John LeBoutillier authored a book called "Harvard Hates America" warning about the elitism, anti-Americanism, Marxism and civic contempt at Harvard University. LeBoutillier went on to be elected in 1980 to the US Congress from the north shore - the last Republican from the north shore ever to serve a full term in Congress.

LeBoutillier's book was a warning about the subversion and Marxist-fascist ideology creeping through not just Harvard, but every major educational institution in America. Now, 45 years later, the process is complete.

There are no conservative professors left - none. And the Left's ideological tyranny brooks no dissent. Conservative professors are just "not hired." And the few who are - like Professor Ilya Shapiro, formerly of Georgetown University - are ruthlessly driven out.

Students who dissent - conservatives, Christians, and Jews - are targeted, often doxxed and attacked, and cowed into silence. Political ideologies like "intersectionality," "structural racism," or "DEI - diversity, equity inclusion" are used to force all administrators to engage in anti-white and anti-Asian racism, and embrace antisemitism.

Traditional concepts like "due process" are out, and "popular rage" is in - particularly when a young man is accused of anything sexual. Never mind if the accuser is a mental case spouting lies.

A renowned Huntington lawyer, Philip Byler (himself a Harvard grad), has represented over a dozen young men railroaded - with star chamber inquisitions and openly biased faculty panels - and had their lives and careers destroyed - by Ivy-League fascists out to "make an example" of the hated white or Asian or Jewish male. Never mind if the charges are bogus - the point is to strike-at a symbol of the the hated "structural oppressor." Byler has been one of the few with the courage, integrity and smarts to help the wrongly-accused fight back.

In 2023, Harvard was judged - by the federal courts and the US Supreme Court - to have practiced open "racism" against white and Asian student applicants. Tens of thousands of Asian American kids were "blackballed" from Harvard because - to quote one official - they "don't have the right look."

Out of this foul stew emerged Claudine Gay, now Harvard's ex-President. The child of wealthy, educated Haitian immigrants. The totally mediocre beneficiary of endless "race preferences" designed to reward her for her skin color.

Gay made a fool of herself last fall, testifying before the US Congress, claiming that marches on the Harvard campus chanting for the mass murder of Jews - just after the mass murder of 1200 Jews by Hamas - was acceptable "depending upon the context." A review of her meager publications revealed a history of rank plagiarism. She finally resigned last week - losing her \$1.4 million salary as Harvard President, but keeping a \$900,000 "consolation prize" salary on the Harvard faculty. She predictably blamed "racism" and "right wing hate" for her self-inflicted disgrace.

Harvard is rotten to the core - and there is no one and nothing left inside to save it. Sadly what happened at Harvard is happening to hundreds of other American universities, including every Ivy League school. Is there anything that can stop this subversion and destruction of America's once-great institutions ?

The Publisher

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: We encourage our readers to express their view regardless of opinion, through the Letters to the Editor column. Letters published represent the viewpoint of our readers. *They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Leader* and, in fact, may be of opposite viewpoint. Letters should be typed and mailed or emailed to the editor's attention. Letters will be edited for length, clarity and accuracy. All letters should be signed and contain author's address and telephone number for verification. Although it is discouraged, we will withhold an author's name if the subject matter is sensitive or the writer may be subject to intimidation or harassment. Letters that contain accusations or important "facts" must demonstrate knowledge in the area described or show evidence for their writing. *The Leader* will not return letters and reserves the right to publish them at a later time or not at all, due to lack of space or editor's discretion.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Leader has received several unsigned letters to the editor. We will respect an author's request for anonymity, but must have your name, address, and phone number. We want to hear from you and publish your opinions, so in the future, kindly include the above requested information.

WINTER HOLIDAYS BRING MORE HEART ATTACK DEATHS

To the Editor,

The joy of the winter holiday season is often marred for many as research shows that more people die from heart attacks during the last week of December than at any other time of the year. The American Heart Association, the world's leading voluntary organization focused on heart and brain health for all, says being aware of this annual phenomenon and taking a few important, heart-healthy steps may save lives.

"The holidays are a busy, often stressful, time for many of us. Routines are disrupted; we may tend to eat and drink more and exercise and relax less. We're getting too little sleep and experiencing too much stress. We also may not be listening to our bodies or paying attention to warning signs, thinking a trip to the doctor can wait until after the new year," said American Heart Association Chief Clinical Science Officer Mitchell S.V. Elkind, M.D., M.S., FAHA. "While we don't know exactly why there are more deadly heart attacks during this time of year, it's important to be aware that all of these factors can be snowballing contributors to increasing the risk for a deadly cardiac event."

Scientific research finds an uptick in cardiac events during the winter holiday season. A study published in *Circulation*, the flagship journal of the American Heart Association, reported that more cardiac deaths occur on December 25 than on any other day of the year; the second largest number of cardiac deaths occurs on December 26, and the third largest number occurs on January 1.

Winter weather has been noted as a trigger for increased heart attack risk due to restricted blood flow through constricted vessels caused by cold temperatures. However, another study published in *Circulation* found that even in the mild climate of Los Angeles County, about a third more heart attack

deaths occur in December and January than in June through September. These findings were supported by a study published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* by researchers in New Zealand, where the December holidays fall during that area's summer season.

"Research also shows that the biggest increases in these holiday heart attack deaths are among people who are not in a hospital. This highlights the importance of recognizing symptoms and seeking immediate medical care. Don't ignore heart attack warning signs because you don't want to spoil the holidays, the consequences could be much worse," Elkind said. "It also calls attention to the need for increased awareness of knowing how to perform hands-only CPR. You could be out holiday shopping, enjoying an office party or spending time at a family gathering and witness someone having a heart attack and going into cardiac arrest. Starting CPR immediately and calling 9-1-1 could be the difference in life or death in those situations. Hands-only CPR is something nearly everyone can learn and do."

Elkind notes that while it's important to live heart-healthy all year long, there are a few tips you should gift yourself and your loved ones as we approach the holiday season:

- Know symptoms and take action: Heart attack signs vary in men and women and it's important to recognize them early and call 9-1-1 for help. The sooner medical treatment begins, the better the chances of survival and preventing heart damage.

- Celebrate in moderation Eating healthfully during the holidays doesn't have to mean depriving yourself, there are still ways to eat smart. Look for small, healthy changes and swaps you can make so you continue to feel your best while eating and drinking in moderation, and don't forget to watch your salt intake.

- Plan for peace on earth and goodwill toward yourself: Make time to take care of yourself during the busy holiday. Reduce stress from family interac-

tions, strained finances, hectic schedules and other stressors prevalent this time of year, including traveling.

- Keep moving: The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week and this number usually drops during the hustle and bustle of the holidays. Get creative with ways to stay active, even if it's going for a family walk or another fun activity you can do with your loved ones.

- Stick to your meds: Busy holidays can cause you to skip medications, forgetting them when away from home or not getting refills in a timely manner. Here is a medication chart to help stay on top of it and be sure to keep tabs on your blood pressure numbers.

The American Heart Association has more on ways to live heart-healthy during the holidays and all year long at heart.org.

Mark Hurley
Vice President, Communications
Greater New York & NY City
American Heart Association

PLANTING FIELDS 2024

The Planting Fields Foundation team has made a few resolutions that we hope you'll join us in: Going green and learning more about the horticulture of Planting Fields, focusing on our wellness by taking a walk at least three times a week throughout the 409-acre site (we're preparing for the 2024 5Ks!), exploring the history of Planting Fields through tours and exhibitions, and last, but certainly not least, making a ton of memories with loved ones at our annual festivals and events!

Make sure to put fan-favorite events such as the Camellia Festival, Spring 5K and Arbor Day on your calendars, and reserve your tickets ahead of time. Read on to learn more.

Here is to new beginnings in 2024!

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Op-Ed: Watch-Out for These Bills from Albany

By STEVE LEVY

State legislators and Governor Kathy Hochul have just begun a new legislative session with the New Year. The Governor is scheduled to announce her agenda for 2024 on January 9th. Here are some of these predicted objectives:

Budgeting:

The state is facing a \$4.3 billion deficit in 2024. The question is whether the governor and legislature will seek tax increases to fill the gap. A recent report shows that NY once again led the country in the number of residents fleeing the state for cheaper pastures.

Many believe that a further increase in state taxes will incentivize even more middle and upper-income earners to move out of NY and gravitate towards states such as Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee, which have no state income taxes. The state does have a \$20



Steve Levy

billion rainy day fund, mostly due to leftover covid relief funds from the federal government.

Housing:

The Governor is committed to pushing a housing plan to deal with the unaffordability crisis.

Her plan last year to mandate higher density in suburban communities was withdrawn after significant protest. It is believed she will seek a more incentive based program moving forward.

It is expected that "good cause" eviction will once again be considered by the legislature, which would put in place a cap on rents for counties and cities around the state that opt in. It would also prevent a landlord from evicting a tenant unless limited criteria were met. The legislature may also consider increasing vouchers for New Yorkers of certain income limits facing eviction.

Crime:

Liberals in the legislature are seeking to pass the Fair and Timely Parole bill, as well as Elder Parole, which would allow early release for good behavior or for having served at least 15 years.

It is uncertain as to whether any significant bail reform bills would be considered or if any headway would be made toward allowing judges to consider a defendant's potential threat to public safety when considering bail.

Public access:

Advocates will be pushing for requirements allowing the public to view meetings online and to provide public comment.

A bill will be considered that would prevent industrial development agencies from waving tax payments that would go to school districts.

Yet another bill would require candidates to issue sworn affidavits regarding the details about their background, residence, and employment history. The bill is a reaction to the lies made by the Fabulist, George Santos, who was expelled from the US Congress in December.

Steve Levy is President of Common Sense Strategies, a political consulting firm. He served as Suffolk County Executive, as a NYS Assemblyman, and host of "The Steve Levy Radio Show." He is the author of "Solutions to America's Problems" and "Bias in the Media." www.SteveLevy.com, Twitter @SteveLevyNY, steve@commonsensesstrategies.com. He is a member of Long Island Life & Politics where he also published this article

Op-Ed: "Clean Slate" and Bad Consequences

By SENATOR JACK MARTINS

We all root for the underdog to turn misfortune around. That is why some New Yorkers support the "Clean Slate Law" recently signed by Governor Kathy Hochul. The law seals criminal records for most offenders in hopes that, by doing so, people will more easily shake any stigma associated with their criminal convictions.

This idea certainly comes from a good place, but there are never any one-size-fits-all answers. The core of the problem is "recidivism," which refers to a person's return to criminal behavior, after completing their prison sentence.

The facts about recidivism is shocking. According to the Harvard Political Review, more than 600,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons each year. Another nine million are released from local jails. But within three years, two out of three are rearrested and more than 50% go back to jail. That's not good.

These statistics make it clear that too many ex-offenders return to a life of crime.

Clean Slate doesn't address that issue - claiming that the law helps "people who have truly committed to turning their lives around." But with such high recidivism, most offenders don't "turn their lives around." So why are we embracing such an across-the-board approach?

For years we allowed judges to seal records using their own discretion. Individuals could apply for certificates of good conduct, relief from civil disability, and expungement of criminal records. Yet, promoters of Clean Slate believe it's

now wiser to take that discretion away from judges and parole officers with years of decision-making experience.

I wish I had a solution for the high recidivism rates: I don't. Nor does anyone else. While the problem certainly merits our attention, the primary goal of government is to keep citizens safe. So the more important question for me is how to protect innocent people from becoming victims of that recurrent crime.

The most obvious method, for thousands of years, has been disseminating information.

If you're aware of potential danger, you can avoid it. That's why we have fire alarms and weather reports. From that

standpoint, this new law is deeply flawed. It expressly limits a person's ability to size up a situation and make rational decisions. Further, it hinders an employer's ability to hire and a landlord's ability to protect tenants. Worse, it openly ignores the advice from the front lines as law enforcement and victims' rights advocates are also against it.

Consider that our state has emptied prisons faster than any other - with a nearly 27% drop in prison population between 2019 and 2022. We've also eliminated bail in many cases and we are suffering a "smash and grab" epidemic that makes New York City tops for shoplifting numbers among the nation's largest cities.

"Clean Slate" prioritizes the concerns of criminal offenders over the concerns of victims, law enforcement and legal experts. We must overturn laws that don't work: "Clean Slate" is one bad law that I'll be fighting to overturn.



Jack Martins

Celebrating the Feast of the Epiphany – Three King's Day



Huntington Councilmen Dr. Dave Bennardo, Theresa Mari, Sal Ferro as the Three Kings.

The Three Kings - Gaspar (Dr. Dave Bennardo); Balthazar (Theresa Mari); and Melchior (Sal Ferro) greet children in Huntington and distribute gifts to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany.

The celebration commemorates the end of the Christmas season, represent-

ing the giving of gifts - of gold, frankincense and myrrh - to the baby Jesus from the three wise Kings from the east, and the baptism of Jesus.

Three Kings Day - the Feast of the Epiphany - is a major holiday in the Hispanic community.

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Selmer's Pet Land a Huntington Landmark Closes after 84 Years



Selmer's Pet Land in the 1940's

BY SAMANTHA CAREY

"Long Island's Favorite Pet Store" has closed its doors, after 84 years of continuous business in Huntington.

Selmer's Pet Land, on Jericho Turnpike, just off New York Avenue-Route 110, made the announcement of their closure of their small business in early December, and closed their doors forever on December 18th.

Selmer's was founded in 1939. The Selmer family lived and grew up in Huntington, and founded the pet business to serve the then-growing community of Huntington and Huntington Station.

The population of the entire Town of Huntington was only 30,000 in 1939, when the Selmer family founded their pet store. That population would more than double to 60,000 in the next 12 years, and rise to over 200,000 by 1970.

What started as a small selection of pets and pet supplies and dog and bird

breeding, became a long-standing family business and a community landmark. Thousands of local families and children adopted their puppies, dogs, kittens and cats from Selmer's.

They sold birds, fish, puppies, reptiles, small animals, grooming, and supplies to the Long Island area. They were also awarded First Place as "Long Island's Best Pet Store" for six years in a row.

"Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances and the difficulties of being a small business, we have had to make the difficult decision to close our doors," stated the Selmer family. "We want to express our deepest gratitude for your loyalty and support throughout our 84 years open on the island."

Even after closing, the Selmer family promised that the "beloved pets" still at the store will still be cared for "until they find their forever homes."

Executive Director of Friends of the Bay to Leave

BY ANITA MALLON

The Friends of the Bay (FOB) is looking for a new Executive Director, as current ED Heather Johnson is leaving this week, after more than six years on the job.

"It has been an honor working for Friends of the Bay and its mission to protect this beautiful estuary and watershed," stated Johnson. "I am thankful to the board, donors, staff, volunteers and supporters for all they have done to help make FOB the effective organization it is. I will miss everyone but will certainly not be a stranger."

Johnson is leaving the position to become executive director of the Hallockville Museum Farm in Riverhead. Assistant Director Christine Suter will be serving as interim executive director while the board conducts a search for a new permanent executive director.

"Heather did an amazing job for our organization," stated FOB President Bill Bleyer. "She developed strong relationships with government and community leaders, helped with fundraising to bring the organization to a healthy financial position, increased our visibility and outreach, and ushered in many new programs. We will miss her and wish her luck in her new job."



Heather Johnson

Johnson, who previously served as director of the Northport Historical Society, will remain at FOB until January 5th, after which time she will join FOB's advisory board.

Anyone interested in the executive director position can contact FOB board secretary Eric Swenson at FOBjobsearch@gmail.com.

The Friends of the Bay is an environmental conservation and advocacy group, located in Oyster Bay, dedicated to preserving, protecting and restoring the ecological integrity and productivity of the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Estuary and the surrounding watershed. For more information visit, friendsofthebay.org.

Keith Brown Gets \$500K for Vanderbilt Museum Boathouse



Keith Brown Presents \$500K Check

BY ANITA MALLON

Assemblyman Keith Brown (R, Northport) presented a \$500,000 check to the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium to help stabilize the museum's boathouse, which has slowly been falling into Northport Harbor.

The grant will help renovate and reinforce the pilings under the boathouse.

"The Vanderbilt Museum boathouse is in such disrepair that it is about to fall into Northport Harbor," stated Brown. "I am happy to help secure this stabilization money to ensure the boathouse does not deteriorate further."

"This is the first step toward a bold plan to revitalize the structures on the grounds and help secure this important part of our heritage and culture here in Centerport," added Brown. "Many thanks to my colleagues in government, the board of trustees and the staff for

putting together this grant application."

"We are most appreciative of the \$500,000 grant to help restore the boathouse, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, to its original beauty," added Vanderbilt President Jim Kelly. "This is the first step toward restoring one of the most precious and beautiful assets of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum - our waterfront."

"It is our goal to restore Mr. Vanderbilt's seaplane hangar into additional exhibit areas and to build a boardwalk on the waterfront," added Kelly. "This will allow our neighbors to come and enjoy the quiet beauty that is Northport Harbor."

"On behalf of the village, we want to congratulate the Vanderbilt on this grant," stated Northport Mayor Donna Koch. "The Village looks forward to working with the Museum on other proposed improvements to the waterfront area."

Roland

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Help Wanted

We are looking for a career administrative professional to assist in our auction gallery in Glen Cove. The pace here can be fast and hectic, so you need to be able to stay cool, calm, and collected under pressure while also multi-tasking with changing priorities.

Must have excellent customer service, problem-solving, and computer skills. A team player who can also work independently and has a good sense of humor will be an ideal fit.

General Responsibilities:

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www.RolandAuctions.com

Man Killed in Melville House Explosion Fire

By HEATHER CROSLEY

An explosion in a burning storage shed ignited the neighboring house and killed its elderly homeowner in a deadly fire just one day after Christmas.

On Tuesday, December 26, 2023 the Melville Fire Department responded to multiple calls to a raging house fire on Wilmington Drive. The explosion and raging fire required over 100 fire fighters to extinguish, and the house was totally destroyed.

Firefighters used four engines, three ambulances, one ladder truck and one heavy rescue vehicle, and the Melville Fire Department was able to subdue the fire with help from neighboring fire departments.

One man in the Wilmington Drive



Melville Fatal House Fire

home was confirmed deceased as a result of the blaze. Neighbors described him as elderly and living alone with several dogs.

Although the identity of this deceased elderly man was not released, it is said that he was the only occupant on the premises at the time of the fire. While the cause of the elderly man's death is not yet confirmed, police do not suspect any foul play in connection with his death.

According to Melville Fire Department First Assistant Chief Donald Barclay, the first responders found a shed behind the house burning, which then exploded in a massive blast and fireball, immediately setting the house afire.

Reportedly, there were propane and oil tanks behind the house, which caused explosions and the further spread of the fire to the house. The Melville Fire Department has deemed the fire not to be criminal in nature.



Melville House Ablaze
(Photos courtesy Huntington FD)

Raynham Hall Museum Celebrates 12TH Night

By PATRICIA MAVROS BREXEL

Friday January 5th, Raynham celebrated its annual 12th Celebration. Twelfth Night is a Christian holiday, celebrated on January 5. It marks the twelfth and final night of the Christmas season and the coming of Epiphany. The Epiphany is when the Kings visited the baby Jesus.

Raynham Hall was beautifully decorated for Christmas. The celebration showcased the new rugs. The museum received a grant, and they commissioned Rabbit Goody, of Thistle Hill Weavers from upstate New York, she hand weaves the rugs.

Thistle Hill Weavers create historic



Karen Underwood, Theresa Skvaria and Barbara Adelhardt.

reproduction fabrics of the 17th, 18th & 19th Centuries for museums, homeowners, interiors designers and the film industry. These beautiful carpets are a must see at the museum.

The next event at Raynham Hall is their Historic Spirits Tours, check their website for more information at: raynhallmuseum.org



Just one of the hand woven rugs.



Enjoying the 12th Night party.
Photos: Patricia Mavros Brexel

We Mourn the Loss of

Aurelio "Ty" Gonzalez

70-Year Member

Atlantic Steamer Fire Company No. 1

Oyster Bay



Oyster Bay Fencers Make Their Mark at Holiday Tournament



(L-R) Gabriella Sherlock, Scarlett Shelley, and Luke Kugler with their medals from the Brentwood Holiday Invitational Fencing Tournament.

The Oyster Bay High School varsity boys and girls fencing teams took their talents to the annual Brentwood Holiday Tournament on Dec. 16. Fourteen teams from Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties attended the event with 60 participants (boys and girls) each competing in saber, foil and epee.

Oyster Bay High School's fencing teams, which consist of 16 boys and 18 girls, is led by longtime coach John Bruckner and assistant coach Ian Bozsnyak. During the tournament, Oyster Bay High School was the smallest school on Long Island to compete but that did not stop the fencers from earning four awards.

Oyster Bay freshman Luke Kugler and sophomore Gabriella Sherlock took home a silver medal in epee and foil, respectively. These exceptional fencers are not only part of Oyster Bay High School's fencing program but are also members of club teams where they practice their skills year-round.

Like many athletes, Luke and Gabriella have their own routines before they compete. Both listen to music, and Gabriella always has a traditional pasta dinner the night before a tournament.



Oyster Bay High School senior Nick Ramirez (right) earned the bronze medal in men's saber.

Entering the Brentwood Holiday Tournament was exciting for both fencers who strive to one day win a county championship and be named All-Long Island.

For Gabriella, this tournament marked her return to fencing after a hamstring injury had sidelined her. To earn silver after an injury was no easy feat but she was determined to give her all and come out victorious against the fencers who had previously beat her. Luke's most difficult challenge during the tournament was facing his friend from club fencing in the final. Both Luke and Gabriella are tough competitors in the fencing world and are high-achieving students. They both hope to continue fencing at the collegiate level at a top academic institution.

In addition to Luke and Gabriella's second-place wins, two other Oyster Bay High School fencers earned bronze medals in the tournament. Junior Scarlett Shelley took home the bronze medal in women's saber, while senior Nick Ramirez took home the bronze medal in men's saber. These two student-athletes started fencing with Coach Bruckner when they were in seventh grade and have made great strides since. Like their teammates, they are involved in club fencing and take private lessons, on top of being part of Oyster Bay High School's fencing program. Nick was named to Nassau County's All-Long Island second team last year and, as a senior, he is planning on continuing his fencing career in college, where he also plans on studying engineering.

"I am extremely proud of the students for representing Oyster Bay High School so well," Coach Bruckner said. "I look forward to continuing to watch all of our fencers reach their highest potential."

CSH School Janitor Arrested for Terror Threats

BY PRIYA PERSAUD

A 57-year-old school janitor at the Cold Spring Harbor School District has been arrested for making terrorist threats of "mass harm" against the CSH schools, after being turned down for a job promotion.

According to Suffolk County police, arrested is Jimmy Martin, age 57, a custodian-janitor at the Cold Spring Harbor School District. Martin, a Huntington resident, had applied for a promotion in the Cold Spring Harbor school district in early December.

However, when Martin was informed that he would not receive the promotion, he spoke to his co-workers and made direct threats of mass harm against the schools on both December 8, 2023, and December 11, 2023.

Martin's comments of threatening mass harm against the schools were promptly reported to school authorities. He was arrested by Suffolk County police on Wednesday, December 13, 2023.

A CSH school administrator was made aware of Martin's threats on Wednesday afternoon, and the administration promptly reported Martin to the police at 5:17PM.

Following an investigation by the Second Precinct, Martin was arrested at his Huntington home at 10:44PM.

According to Suffolk County police, Martin was charged with "Making a Threat of Mass Harm."

He was held at the Third Precinct overnight, and was arraigned on Thursday, December 14, 2023 before the First District Court in Central Islip.



Jimmy Martin
Photo: CSHS

B&N Books to Close East Northport; New Location in Huntington

BY MIKE O'REILLY

The Barnes & Noble bookstore on Jericho Turnpike in East Northport will be shutting-down and closing their doors for good on January 21, 2024. But Barnes & Noble has also announced that they will be opening a new store just 5 1/2 miles west, near the Walt Whitman Mall, on Route 110 in Huntington.

Although the grand opening at the new location will not take place until the Spring of this year, all 30 employees at the current location will be temporarily placed in other stores until the new location is opened.

Barnes & Noble has been taking a significant hit in sales recently, due mostly because of the advent of digital books, as well as the e-commerce giant Amazon, who seized a large percentage of Barnes & Noble's book sales.

Barnes & Noble has proven their resilience though. Founded in 1873, they have no intention of giving up.

Under new ownership since 2019, the brick-and-mortar bookstore has been clawing back market share, after years of decline.

The North Shore has seen the closure of several major local book stores, with the 2012 closure of the Border's Books in



Barnes & Noble bookstore in E. Northport

Syosset, and the 2021 closure of Book Revue in Huntington.

But there also has been a renaissance of new excellent local book stores with the opening of the Locust Valley Bookstore in 2017; Theodore's Books in Oyster Bay in 2019; and The Next Chapter in Huntington in 2022.

Consistent with the move from East Northport to Huntington Station, Barnes & Noble has been seeking out smaller, more efficient retail locations, a plan that has been producing good results under their new leadership.

Aldi, a discount grocery food chain, plans on taking the bookstore's current East Northport space.

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Obituaries

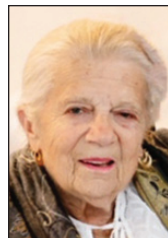
BETTMAN, Martin, 90, of Oyster Bay, NY passed away on December 24, 2023. Martin was born on February 10, 1933 in New York City to C. Hugo and Marguerite Bettman. After graduation from New York University, he was self employed with various business ventures throughout his lifetime. He resided in New Jersey and New York his entire life, mostly on Long Island. Martin is predeceased by his parents, his brother Howard Bettman and his beloved and devoted wife Catherine Bettman. He is survived by his daughter Deborah Bettman (husband Paul McInnish Jr), granddaughter Rachel Taft (husband Zach Nelson), son Richard Bettman (wife Helen), his stepchildren Mary Marino (husband John), their children Michael, Christina and Jillian, Susan Mahlstadt (husband John), their children Erik, Ryan and Kyle, Donald O'leary (wife Barbara) and their children Sean, Danny, Joey and Patrick. Martin was also foster parent and mentor to Canh Pham, Vu Nguyen (wife Sharon), Huong Lee (daughter Amanda Lee), Hoa Luu (husband Van and children Brandon, Justin and Nicholas). www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

GONZALEZ, Aurelio "Ty", on December 31, 2023 of Oyster Bay. Devoted husband of Lucia. Loving father of Mark (Debra), and Michael. Beloved Uncle of Jackie (Steve) Member of the Atlantic Steamer Fire Co. # 1 for over Seventy Years. Retired from the Town of Oyster Bay.

HUEBNER LABELLA, Mary Theresa, on Dec. 20, 2023, age 56, of Oyster Bay. Cherished mother of Taylor. Beloved daughter of Mary and the late Nicholas. Loving sister of Linda (Eddie), Diamante (John), Kathy (Joe), Patricia, Nicholas (Lauren), and Marcelino. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, relatives and friends. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

LOUIE, Frankie, on Jan. 5, 2024, age 69, of Bayville, NY. Beloved father of Christopher. Loving brother of Choi, Tom (Mew), Ping McCarthy (John), Keung, Shing, and the late Charles (Fanny). Devoted uncle of Vicky, Liz, Brandon, Denise, Peter, Jimmy, Megan, Tara. Also survived by many loving cousins, relatives, and friends. Visiting Oyster Bay Funeral Home, 261 South St., Oyster Bay, Wednesday, January 10, from 5-8 p.m. Inurnment will be held at Locust Valley Cemetery on Monday, January 22, time to be announced. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

MARTIN, John Charles, of Sea Cliff, NY, passed away on December 28, 2023, at the age of 54. Beloved husband of Amanda. Loving father of Bella, Sophia, and Jack. Dear brother to Donna, Timmy, and Charlie. www.whitting.com



N A V E S K Y, Margaret Rose, on Jan. 3, 2024, age 86, of Locust Valley, formerly of Great Neck. Beloved mother of Deborah Dooley (Craig), and the late Robert Jr. Loving grandmother of Nicole Dooley (Nicholas Carpino), Lauren Dooley, and Brian Dooley. Dear sister of Suzanne Hadfield (the late Charles). Devoted aunt of Roxanne Brunner, Charles Hadfield, Jr., and Peter Hadfield. Also survived by loving relatives and friends. Funeral Mass St. Gertrude RC Church, Thursday, January 11 at 10 a.m. Interment to follow at Locust Valley Cemetery. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

PUZIO, Vincent A. of Sea Cliff, NY formerly of Richmond Hill, NY on December 17, 2023 at Age 103. World War II Coast Guard Veteran. Vincent enjoyed tennis, even in his 90's. Beloved husband of the late Muriel. Loving father of Valli (Larry). Dear brother of Sal.

Cherished grandfather of Michelle. Interment at Long Island National Cemetery. www.Dodgethomas.com

SCHMITZ, Marion, peacefully at home on Dec. 26, 2023, age 86, of Oyster Bay Cove, NY. Beloved wife of Dr. Robert M. Schmitz. Loving mother of Dr. Carol Anne (the late Dr. John Cottone), Jeanne Marie Babinski, and Dr. Robert W. Schmitz (Dr. Erika). Cherished grandmother of James, Julianne, Gabriella, Christian, Gracie and Johanna. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends. Interment Locust Valley Cemetery. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

RODRIGUEZ, Carol L, on Jan. 2, 2024, age 75, of Hicksville, NY, formerly of Richmond Hill, NY. Beloved wife of Diomedes. Loving mother of Phillip. Cherished grandmother of Malia Javaeh, and Ethan. Devoted cousin of Anita Sessa (Richard). Also survived by many loving relatives and friends. Interment Pinelawn Memorial Park. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

SOMMER, Brigitte, on Dec. 20, 2023, age 95, of Huntington, formerly of Germany, and Romania. Beloved wife of the late Julian Oprescu. Loving mother of Ingrid Eva Kohan (Dodis, MD). Loving grandmother of Jacqueline Kohan (Ryan Caeti), Dr. Lauren Zagaria (Nicholas), and Corinne Kohan (Maxime Lavallee). Proud great grandmother of Silas Vance Zagaria and Cameron Maxwell Caeti. Dear sister of Lya Sommer. Cherished cousin of Andrei "Dorin" (Diana), Eddie Glaser (the late Miriam), and the late Ana-Otilia "Anca"

Rachmuth. Also survived by many loving relatives and friends. Memorial Visitation Oyster Bay Funeral Home, 261 South St., Oyster Bay, NY, Sunday January 14, 2023 from 10-12 p.m. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

TVETER, Harry Tveter, 93, passed away on January 5, 2024, in Glen Cove, NY. He was born in New York, New York, lived in Oslo, Norway as an infant and young boy, and was the beloved son of the late Johan Tveter and Camilla Granum. Harry was a proud Norwegian American.

Harry was deeply loving, loyal, and committed to his family, including his four children, three grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, whom he adored. He was devoted to his late wives, Marit, who passed away in 1967, and Dolores, with whom he shared more than 40 years of marriage until her passing in 2012.

Harry is survived by his son Eric Tveter, daughter-in-law Terry Collins-Tveter, grandson Ryan Tveter, daughter Kim Tveter, daughter Denise Lapoint, son-in-law David Lapoint, daughter Gina Zalud, son-in-law Robert Zalud, granddaughter Emily Zalud, and granddaughter Phoebe Zalud. He was preceded in death by his wife Marit Hafsaal-Tveter in December 1967 and wife Dolores Tveter in April 2012, as well as his brothers Arne Tveter and Kenneth Tveter.

Celebration of Life for Harry Tveter will be held in Oyster Bay, NY, in late January or February. Contributions in his memory can be made to www.ALS.org.

Funeral Arrangements entrusted to Oyster Bay Funeral Home. www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com

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DBE Fundraiser for The Life Enrichment Center in Oyster Bay



Jane Miness, Diana Naples and Pamela Harwood.

Abbey Chapter, the only Long Island chapter, joined the New York City based Niagara Chapter following the disbandment of Westminster Abbey chapter when Victoria Crosby, Regent of the chapter and former President of The DBE in New York State moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 2021.

The 105-year-old Victoria Home Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility in Ossining was the former recipient of all New York chapters fundraising efforts until the home closed in October of 2020 and was then sold. All fundraising monies are now distributed to various senior charitable organizations throughout the state.



Connie Cincotta
Photo: Victoria Crosby

BY OLIVIA EVERETT

A fundraising party was held by members of the DBE (daughters of the British Empire) at the home of member Connie Cincotta in Oyster Bay Cove, to benefit The Life Enrichment Center in Oyster

Bay. Members attended with their spouses and guests enjoyed a wonderful luncheon, which consisted of parsnip and apple soup, followed by a buffet of a variety of delicious meats, vegetables, and desserts.

Many members of the Westminster

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Notice of Sale Bayville Fire Company #1

Accepting bids for the purchase of 1988 FMC 1000 gpm pumper fire truck
Vin # 1S9AT6LC185908

Truck is sold as is with no implied warranties or guarantees.

Truck may be viewed at the Bayville Fire House.

Send sealed bid to the Bayville Fire Company 258 Bayville Ave., Bayville New York 11709 Attn: Board of Trustees Fire Truck Bid.

Bids will be accepted until January 17, 2023.

Vehicle must be removed from premises within 3 days of bid being awarded.

Corresponding Secretary John McConnie

Celebrating Italian Heritage at the Glen Cove Library



(L-R) Amy Mondello, Cathy Gambino, Joe Cirillo, Lydia Wen, and Joe Gallo.

BY VICTORIA CROSBY

The Glen Cove Public Library recently held an all-day celebration of Italian American Heritage Month. The program began at 9.15am with a showing of the film, *My Italian Secret: The forgotten Heroes*, a documentary about Italians who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. Then author Lou Del Bianco talked about his book, *Out of Rushmore's Shadow: The Luigi Del Bianco Story*. His grandfather's story of the struggle of an immigrant and his unsung contribution as the chief carver of the presidents' faces on Mount Rushmore.

In the History Room at the Library there was a photographic slide show tour of The Orchard, a Glen Cove neighborhood with historic significance that was

settled by many Italian immigrants from the south of Italy in the early 1900s. Refreshments, which included pizza, pastries, and cookies, were generously donated by the Downtown Café, and St. Rocco's Bakery, and were enjoyed by all the visitors.

In the afternoon a concert by Dr. David Podles, an acclaimed international violinist, who performed Italian classical music by Vivaldi, Paganini, Rossini, and Puccini, as well as traditional Italian tarantellas.

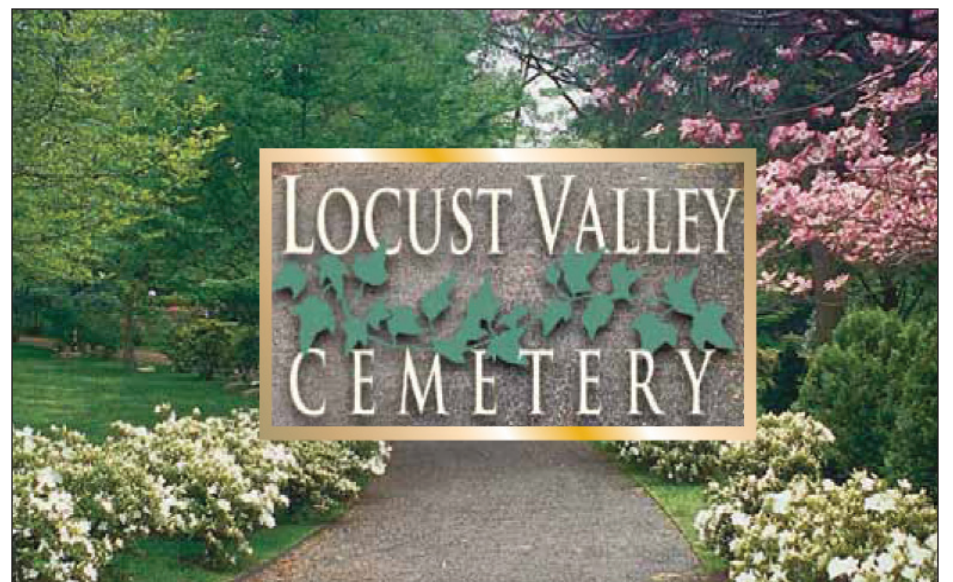
The final event was a talk by author of *An Offer I Couldn't Refuse: From the NYPD to Hollywood*, by Joe Cirillo, a police officer in New York who became a successful actor.

This successful event was the result of a team effort. Joe Gallo from The Loggia, Sons of Italy, provided all the speakers, Amy Mondello, librarian at Glen Cove Library, booked the musician, and Lydia Wen, archivist and librarian at the Glen Cove Library, gave the talk on the history of The Orchard.

The Glen Cove Library is located at 4 Glen Cove Avenue. For further information visit www.glencovelibrary.org



Dr. David Podles



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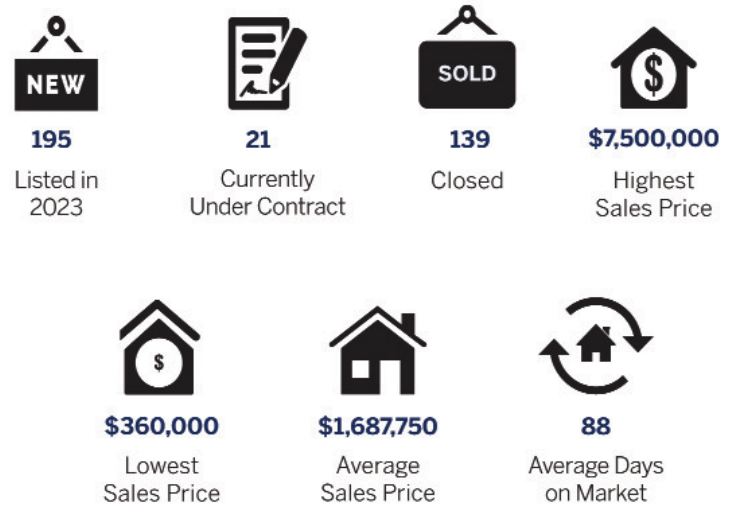
Looking Back, Looking Ahead

A Reflection on 2023 and Anticipating Trends for the 2024 Housing Market

By Dana Hansen



2023 at a Glance Locust Valley School District



2024 Outlook

- The demand for housing will recover from falling mortgage rates and rising income.
- Housing inventory is expected to rise by 30 percent as more sellers begin to list after delaying selling over the past two years.
- Home sales nationally will increase by 13.5 percent this year.
- Expect home prices to remain largely unchanged.

*Source: National Realtor's Association

If you are thinking of selling or buying, give Dana a call today for a complimentary market analysis. She will illustrate the unique differences that Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty can offer you.

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