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**DeRiggi-Whitton
is sworn in**
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Roksana Amid/Herald photos

Chipping in for a greener Glen Cove

The Beautification Commission, elected officials, the Department of Public Works and residents gathered early last Saturday morning for the city's annual Chip-a-Tree event. The event collected 111 trees, which were loaded into a wood chipper and turned to mulch. The mixture will be used for the planting of flowers and trees throughout the city. Story, more photos, Page 10.



Glen St. project has council's early support

By ROKSANA AMID

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After a three-hour debate on Tuesday, a sharply divided City Council voted 4-3 to advance zoning and environmental actions for a proposed transit-oriented development at the Glen Street Long Island Rail Road station. The vote followed a contentious meeting marked by warnings about the strain on infrastructure, gaps in the environmental-review process and increased housing density.

The council adopted a negative declaration for the proposal under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, a determination that it would not have a significant environmental impact. Council members Grady Farnan, Michael Ktistakis, John Maccarone and Mayor Pamela Panzenbeck voted for the resolution, while Danielle Fugazy Scagliola, John Perrone and John Zozzaro opposed it.

The proposal would rezone

the MTA parking area and nearby parcels along Cedar Swamp Road — an area of 1.88 acres — to allow the construction of a four-story residential building as tall as 55 feet. Cedar Swamp Developers LLC, described by City Attorney Tip Henderson during the meeting

as "a renowned developer of affordable housing," has offered \$750,000 in community benefits to address infrastructure issues, including water service.

Panzenbeck stressed that the vote did not approve construction. "This is just the start of a process before they get to go to a site plan approval at a later date," she

explained, framing the project as a response to demand for more housing. "We get criticized because we don't have affordable housing," she said, adding later that "75 percent of the units are affordable."

Opponents argued that the city lacks sufficient information to issue a negative environ-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

HERALD
Community Newspapers



BACK IN OFFICE

DeRiggi-Whitton on her term and the road ahead

By ROKSANA AMID

ramid@liherald.com

Nassau County Legislature Minority Leader Delia DeRiggi-Whitton was sworn in for her second term as leader of the Legislature's Democratic caucus during inaugural ceremonies held Jan. 8, at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Uniondale, simultaneously beginning her eighth term representing Nassau County's 11th Legislative District, which includes Glen Cove, Sea Cliff, Port Washington, Glenwood Landing and portions of Glen Head, as well as the Villages of Port Washington North, Roslyn Harbor, Baxter Estates, Manorhaven and Sands Point.

■ Q: You were just sworn in to



DELIA
DERIGGI-WHITTON

your eighth term. What does that milestone mean to you, and why do you keep going?

A: I really have loved my job, and I've been very privileged to have the opportunity to serve the 11th District and, more recently, become the leader of our caucus. I also have a number of projects that I'm really hoping to see come to fruition.

We've been waiting for a while. I have two shore roads — one in Port Washington, one in Glen Cove and Sea Cliff — and hopefully the one in Sea Cliff and Glen Cove should be started in 2026, if not definitely 2027. I'm also looking forward to seeing, hopefully, Crescent Beach reopen.

We've been getting good numbers, so I'm cautiously

optimistic that might be coming soon. I still feel like it's important to have a voice with this administration, especially when it comes to things like, after almost going into our fifth year, only 5 percent of the opioid money being disbursed, as well as budgetary issues and other grant issues. Our local fire departments have yet to receive the money that they were promised when we made that bill.

They were given big, big checks, but no real money. The comptroller and the county executive went to various fire departments and EMS places throughout the county with these big checks, not inviting the local legislators. They never followed through with getting the money, so I think that's even worse than not doing it.

So I think I'm a voice to stand up to them and still try to fight to have the right thing done in our county.

■ Q: How has the role of a county legislator, and the challenges facing Nassau County, changed most dramatically?

A: There have been a lot of challenges in the last 16 years.

I went through Hurricane Sandy, when Bayville and Shore Road collapsed, so I lived

through that and all the Sandy recovery money, and all the fraud that went on with the trees and Welwyn. Then we went through all of the corruption, and unfortunately County Executive Mangano was arrested and is serving time for corruption. Mangano obviously had a lot of issues with corruption, and I was also there when we obtained an inspector general, which was great.

I also went through COVID as a legislator, and that was just really challenging. We did so much with delivering food. We got special permission from the governor's office to still hold the Toys for Tots collection. So much of it was trying to get vaccines, trying to get test kits, trying to help businesses — oh my God. It was just surreal how much work it was.

Then, the last four years, I've almost been — I believe — self-inflicted by the mechanism that is set up today, which really, as I said in my speech on Thursday, is because it's one branch of government now. There are no more checks and balances. The executive branch really controls the majority, and they can hardly do anything without getting the okay from the county executive.

If we have questions or want things done a certain way, we're told no. The powers that

be say no, and it's a shame because I really believe in government. You're right — the last four years have been a challenge, but a very unnecessary one, in my opinion.

I do continue to try to fight and do the right thing, and we do get some — there are some things that happen that definitely are rewarding, so I try to focus on that.

■ Q: What are some of the rewarding things about your role?

A: We're able to help people. Sometimes it's not even something that has to do with the county, but it's really a nice thing when we can get people in touch with the right agencies, or even the federal government, or wherever it is, and people call and thank you.

People really do appreciate also trying to stand up for good government. We've trained over 1,000 people in Narcan. I've worked so closely with the senior centers in my district, so there's a lot of positive, and that's really what I do enjoy.

It's a different job. Every day is different. You have to be able to handle situational stress, but all in all, I've been very lucky to represent this district for as long as I have, and I hope to do it for a while longer.

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Photos courtesy Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews

Prior to the close of the Tribute and Honor Awards Ceremony, all veterans in attendance are invited to join the honorees, along with members of the Foundation's Board and Liaison Committee, elected officials, and community leaders, for a group photo marking the conclusion of the evening.

Tribute and Honor Foundation Gala Feb. 7

By ROKSANA AMID

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Planning is underway for the fifth annual Tribute & Honor Awards Ceremony, with organizers encouraging community members, businesses and organizations to support the event through ticket purchases and sponsorships ahead of the celebration on Friday, Feb. 7, 2026, at the Crescent Beach Club in Bayville.

Hosted by the Tribute & Honor Foundation, the annual ceremony has become a North Shore tradition, drawing supporters from Glen Cove and across Long Island to recognize veterans and those who serve military families. This year's event carries added significance, marking both the foundation's fifth anniversary and the nation's 250th anniversary.

"It is a significant year in that it is our fifth year of the celebration of our awards ceremony, and it is also the 250th anniversary of our nation," said Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews, co-founder and president of the Tribute & Honor Foundation. "Granted, for us it's kind of a young history, but it's still a milestone for the foundation, being that we just began back in 2021."

Founded as a grassroots 501(c)(3) non-profit, the Tribute & Honor Foundation works year-round to celebrate and support veterans and military families. Locally, the organization is known for co-sponsoring the Glen Cove Salutes Military Tribute Banner Program at Morgan Memorial Park, helping install the veterans monument on Vinnie's Island, and administering the Ben Farnan Scholarship Program for graduating high school seniors entering the U.S. military.

"We began as a very grassroots organization. We had no idea that we would be where we are now," Stevenson-



Members of the Tribute & Honor Foundation Board of Directors with the promotional poster announcing the 5th Annual Awards Ceremony scheduled for Feb. 7.

Mathews said. "The response of the community has emboldened us to move forward, and we feel so fortunate to be able to grow and serve not only Glen Cove, but Long Island in a significant way."

This year's honorees represent multiple generations of service, from World War II remembrance to modern-day veteran advocacy. Among those being recognized is the late Simone Renaud, who will receive the Front Runner Award posthumously for her lifelong dedication to honoring Allied soldiers and supporting their families following World War II.

"Her historical significance is giant, especially for our World War II veterans and for the North Shore because of her kindness shown to our American soldiers after D-Day," Stevenson-Mathews said. "It's an incredible legacy that we are celebrating." Renaud's son, Maurice

Renaud, will travel from France to accept the award on her behalf.

Philip Como, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and longtime civic leader in Sea Cliff, will receive the Leadership Award. Reflecting on how veterans were treated after the Vietnam War, Como said, "There's still a part of me that remembers 1971 when being a veteran wasn't cool. I'm very happy the country kind of decided that it wasn't the warriors that were the problem. It was the wars."

Despite the recognition, Como said he remains uncomfortable with public praise. "It was my honor to serve. They don't have to thank me," he said, adding that he is grateful to share the evening with about 20 family members.

Officer Owen Valance, a former U.S. Navy aircrewman now serving with the Glen Cove Police Department, will receive the Impact Award. Valance



At the podium is Navy veteran and Glen Cove police officer Derek Valance, the 2024 recipient of the Foundation's Impact Award.

recently completed a 22-mile PTSD Awareness Kayak Challenge to raise awareness for veterans' mental health.

Glen Cove Police Chief Chris Ortiz said military service often leads veterans into public safety careers. "It's the same mindset — a sense of service to others and a duty to help the community," Ortiz said. "Owen works very hard for us and has done an excellent job in his years of service here."

The Tribute and Honor Foundation will host its fifth annual Tribute and Honor Awards on Feb. 7, at the Crescent Beach Club, 333 Bayville Ave., Bayville. The evening begins with cocktails from 6 p.m. to 6:45, followed by an opening ceremony with a color guard at 6:45 p.m. Advance tickets are \$100, with a discounted \$90 rate for veterans; prices increase after Jan. 18. Tickets will not be sold at the door. More information, sponsorship opportunities, and ticket purchases are available at tributeandhonorfoundation.org.

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Requirements:

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- Proficiency in Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat; RIP systems knowledge.
- Strong attention to detail, problem-solving skills, and ability to meet deadlines.
- Ability to lift plates (20-30 lbs) and work in a production environment.

Preferred: Experience with web press imposition, color-management systems, or workflow automation.

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Generosity

It is remarkable to us how many people we meet who have amassed significant wealth beyond their needs, yet have little or no inclination to share their good fortune with others, even their immediate families. It seems to us that the only value that any asset has is in its use — those who have assets they are unable to utilize are really no better off than those who don't.

How much richer and happier many lives would be if only we learned to share more. Studies in psychology and neuroscience have demonstrated that acts of generosity trigger a release of endorphins, referred to as the "helper's high", leading to increased feelings of happiness and satisfaction. Generous acts involve considering the needs of others, expanding one's empathy and leading to deeper connections with others and a more meaningful and fulfilling life. This may explain why those least able to give are sometimes the most generous. Generosity has less to do with what one has than the way one thinks.

"A fight is going on inside me," said an old man to his son. "It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil. He is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other wolf is good. He is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The same fight is going on inside you."

The son thought for a minute and then asked, "Which wolf will win?"

The old man replied simply, "The one you feed."

— Wendy Mass

Generosity may also involve giving of your time and attention. As theologian John Wesley put it three hundred years ago:

"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you ever can."

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CRIME WATCH

ARRESTS

- On Dec. 25, a 39-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Driving While Intoxicated, drinking alcohol in vehicle, and operating a portable electric device while driving on Glen Street.
- On Dec. 27, a 36-year-old Brooklyn man was arrested for Aggravated Unlicensed Operation of a Motor Vehicle 3rd degree, Unlicensed Operator, Unregistered Vehicle, No Insurance, No Inspection, Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 3rd degree, No/Inadequate Lights, Unlicensed Operation, and Suspended Registration on Glen Street.
- On Dec. 29, a 36-year-old Glen Head man was arrested for Trespassing on Glen Cove Avenue.
- On Dec. 31, a 57-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Criminal Contempt in the 2nd degree on Stuart Drive.
- On Jan. 1, a 72-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Trespassing on Sherman Road.
- On Jan. 3, a 51-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Trespassing on Glen Street.
- On Jan. 5, a 32-year-old California man was arrested for Criminal Contempt in the 2nd degree at the Nassau County Correctional Facility.
- On Jan. 6, a 46-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 2nd degree, Unlicensed Operation, Suspended Registration, and No Insurance on Pratt Boulevard.
- On Jan. 8, a 66-year-old Merrick man was arrested for Making Graffiti, Possession of Graffiti Instruments, and Criminal Mischief 4th degree on Forest Avenue.
- On Jan. 8, a 43-year-old Forest Hills woman was arrested for Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th degree on Cedar Swamp Road.
- On Jan. 8, a 38-year-old Glen Cove man was arrested for Driving While Intoxicated, Unsafe Lane Change, Fail to Signal a Turn, and Uninspected Vehicle on Elm Avenue.
- On Jan. 9, a 47-year-old Whitestone man was arrested for Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 7th degree on Cedar Swamp Road.

People named in Crime Watch items as having been arrested and charged with violations or crimes are only suspected of committing those acts of which they are accused. They are all presumed to be innocent of those charges until and unless found guilty in a court of law.

NEWS BRIEF

Soup and movie night at NCRT Jan. 22

North Country Reform Temple will host a community soup-and-movie night on Thursday, Jan. 22, featuring a screening of the Coen brothers' 2009 film *A Serious Man*.

The event begins at 6 p.m. and is open to the community. Admission is \$5 per person and includes the movie along with dinner consisting of three hearty soups, salad and bread. The program combines winter comfort food with cinema for an evening of conversation and community gathering at the temple in Glen Cove.

Starring Michael Stuhlbarg, *A Serious Man* follows Larry Gopnik, a Midwestern physics professor in the 1960s whose life begins to unravel as he navigates marital strife, family pressures and threats to his academic tenure, while seeking guidance from a series of rabbis.

Advance reservations are requested by Jan. 19. To RSVP or for more information, call 516-671-4760 or email office@ncrt.org.

—Roksana Amid

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HOW TO REACH US

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Local priorities frame the governor's race

By JEFFREY BESSEN

jbessen@liherald.com

Celebrating its centennial year, the Long Island Association hosted its annual State of the Region breakfast with Sen. Chuck Schumer speaking, a panel discussion moderated by LIA President Matt Cohen that included State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, Nassau County Executive Bruce and Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine. Gov. Kathy Hochul was the final speaker.

Through the panel discussion at the Jan. 9 event highlighted several issues that most likely will be the focal points of the gubernatorial race between Blakeman, the presumptive GOP candidate and Hochul, a Democrat.

"We have been very successful in Nassau County, we have the safest county in America, Niche magazine said we're the most desirable place to live," Blakeman said during the panel discussion.

Hochul spoke for roughly 30 minutes and used her time as part campaign stop and part preview of her State of the State address that will be delivered on Jan. 13. Unveiling a proposed five-year, \$3.75 billion for water infrastructure.

"The environment of Long Island, it is everything, it means more here than most places because it's an island," Hochul said, noting the \$3 million she approved for upgrading septic systems.

She called the nearly \$4 billion com-



Tim Baker/Herald

Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine, left, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, LIA President Matt Cohen and State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli during the State of the Region panel discussion on Jan. 9.

mitment to build water infrastructure, including building sewers, "historic."

Even before Hochul spoke, housing, Romaine said, must also be addressed — but through smarter planning and help from the state for vital infrastructure projects.

"Affordable housing is not an issue by itself," he said. "You have to have the infrastructure — the sewers, the roads — to support it."

Cohen noted the substantial growth the two-county region has undergone in the 100 years since the LIA was founded.

"Since 1926, the population on Long Island has increased 900 percent, and we've really gone from a bedroom community of New York City to our own bustling, diverse, economic powerhouse," he said in his opening remarks. "We're home to world renowned tourist destinations, the highest ranked education and health care institutions, and we're still the embodiment of the American dream and have an unparalleled quality of life."

DiNapoli noted that while the state has a relatively strong economy, uncer-

tainty remains as federal decisions begin to impact funding for such items as healthcare, education, energy and nutrition programs. The state's large reserve funds will continue to support the economic region through these challenges.

"My role as comptroller is to remind everybody, at the end of the day, whatever the policy decisions are," he said, "we have to look at the implications of our spending choice. Not just in the short run, for the coming years budget, but what will it mean a year, two, or three down the road."

And while Cohen touched on Long Island's expansion, DiNapoli noted that the state has seen a decrease in its young adult population, however there has been a jump in residents' ages 18 to 34.

A December report from DiNapoli's office on Gen Z and millennial New Yorkers struggling with economic and affordability challenges noted the overall decline is a result of rising housing costs and a job market that lacks entry-level positions.

Schumer noted he just completed his 27th year visiting all of New York's 62 counties.

"The mantra that guides my work and all of my staff is this: when Long Island does well all of New York does well."

Madison Gusler, Carolyn James and Jordan Vallone contributed to this story.

RichnerLIVE Announces the Long Island Business Summit

Presented by Bank of America

A Must-Attend Gathering for Business Leaders Ready to Grow, Scale, and Win in 2026



Herald Community Newspapers and RichnerLIVE today announced Bank of America as the presenting sponsor for its first-ever Long Island Business Summit. Taking place Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury, this high-energy, full-day summit is designed for every entrepreneur, executive, and business builder committed to accelerating growth and unlocking new opportunities across the region.

Bringing together founders, CEOs, small business owners, high-growth startups, and major corporate leaders, the Long Island Business Summit will deliver actionable strategies to scale smart, build winning teams, innovate faster, and strengthen competitive advantage in a shifting economy.

"Entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes fuel our local economy and help Long Island communities thrive," said Marc Perez, president, Bank of America Long Island. "As the nation's largest lender to small businesses, helping businesses grow and succeed is at the core of what we do. In partnership with RichnerLIVE and Herald Community Newspapers, we look forward to bringing our region's business leaders and innovators together at the inaugural Long Island Business Summit."

The program will feature headline keynote speakers, results-driven workshops, expert-led panels, curated networking, and a business showcase where attendees can discover partnerships, solutions, and resources to power their next stage of growth.

Underscoring the significance of the Summit, Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP – Attorneys at Law will serve as a Partner Sponsor of the Long Island Business Summit.



"As a business and transactional attorney serving Long Island business leaders for over forty years, from garage startups to multigenerational corporations, I've seen many changes in the marketplace and legal landscape," said Joseph Milizio, Managing Partner of Vishnick McGovern Milizio LLP – Attorneys at Law. "But what I haven't seen until now is a business expo that brings together professionals from across Long Island and across industries in one place. It's an idea long overdue, and it's my great pleasure to help produce it and strengthen the Long Island business community."

"This is the place where business gets done," said Amy Amato, Executive Director of RichnerLIVE. "If you're serious about expanding your network, scaling your company, and staying ahead of the competition, you cannot afford to sit this out. The Long Island Business Summit will give business leaders the tools and connections that lead to real results."

Expanding the Summit's access to practical business insight and advisory expertise, CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP) is a Workshop Sponsor of the Long Island Business Summit.

Why Attend The Long Island Business Summit

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For more information, visit

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Will there be more housing in the city?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mental declaration. Perrone said that the proposal's Environmental Assessment Form downplayed its potential impact.

"The assessment form is basically the opinion of our planner as to what is going on on the property and how it affects the community," Perrone said. "This is in no way a positive or a negative for the project itself."

Perrone cited land disturbance, drainage and construction concerns. "This project is going to require pilings," he said. "It's a four-story building at 55 feet. "So how 'no' was answered here is beyond me."

He raised other environmental concerns. "The site has four monitoring wells on it from the DEC," Perrone said, referring to the state Department of Environmental Conservation, and asked why potential contamination was not more fully addressed.

Perrone said he tried to get clarification from a city legal environmental consultant, but was unsuccessful. "I made a phone call to speak with him twice and was not given a call back," Perrone said. "Unless these are answered, we cannot adopt this EAF."

Fugazy Scagliola echoed those concerns, noting that the Environmental Assessment Form itself identifies potential significant impacts. "When you go through this form and you see the things they have checked off as concerning

impact on groundwater, that's a 'yes,'" she said. "Impact on traffic, that's a 'yes.' Impact on parking, that's a definite 'yes.'"

Former Councilwoman Marsha Silverman urged the council to instead issue a positive declaration. "Negative declaration means there are no impacts," Silverman said, calling the report "directly contradictory" because it raises concerns while concluding that there would be no significant environmental effects.

Silverman also challenged how Cedar Swamp Developers' \$750,000 community benefits payment would be handled. "You cannot put that money into the general fund," Silverman said, citing city code requiring such funds "to be deposited in a trust fund exclusively for specific community benefits."

Fugazy Scagliola questioned whether the local law should be amended to reflect that requirement. Henderson, the city attorney, said the wording reflected how the offer was made, adding, "If it has to go into a trust fund, it will go into a trust fund."

Public comment amplified residents' infrastructure concerns. Christopher Pierce said that Perrone had raised "a lot of red flags," and cautioned against dismissing the vote on the project's environmental impact as simply procedural.

"It's wholly irresponsible to pass this when there's a lot of unanswered questions," Pierce said, focusing on cumula-

tive water demand. "You're gonna lose water," he warned.

After Panzenbeck acknowledged, "Our water infrastructure is more antiquated than any other place," Pierce pressed further. "With all due respect, Mayor, if it's admittedly antiquated, why are we gonna stress it further?" he asked.

Panzenbeck said the city was making gradual repairs.

Another attendee, Nancy Hawkins, questioned site constraints and precedent. "This is 1.88 acres as it stands right now," she said, raising concerns about parking, access and environmental limitations. She warned that rezoning could open the door to increased density. "When you start granting these things, everybody else gets to do it," Hawkins said. "You've now set a precedent. And I don't like that precedent."

Supporters argued that the city must act to address longstanding needs. Former Councilwoman Barbara Peebles spoke in favor of the proposal, saying she viewed it "extremely optimistically." "The way to move Glen Cove forward is when you invest plans and committees and you listen to experts, the next consideration should be to move forward," Peebles said, calling the site "literally the ideal location" for transit-oriented-development.

Ktistakis framed his support by focusing on affordability and future generations. "Who's gonna go out there and buy



Roksana Amid/Herald

Christopher Pierce was one of the residents who spoke in opposition to development at the Glen Street LIRR station.

an \$800,000 house?" he asked. "No one." The project, he added, could help young adults, seniors and first responders remain in Glen Cove.

Maccarone noted the larger political landscape, with Gov. Kathy Hochul's previous attempt to require local governments to allow higher-density housing near LIRR stations. "I'd rather have some say in what's gonna happen in our community," Maccarone said, warning that "in the very near future, we're not gonna have that say."

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L.I. roots shape Blakeman's bid for governor

By MOHAMMAD RAFIQ & ANGELINA ZINGARIELLO

Special to the Herald

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman announced last month that he would run for governor this year. His bid attracted more media focus when his potential Republican primary contender, U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik, abruptly dropped out of the race a week before Christmas, and when President Trump endorsed Blakeman the following day.

"As I travel around the state, one of the things that stands out is the fact that people are basically unhappy," Blakeman, 70, told the Herald when asked why he was running. They're miserable with [Gov.] Kathy Hochul's leadership." (Hochul will be challenged in a Democratic primary by Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado.)

"The economy is doing very badly in many portions of the state," Blakeman added. "They need job creation, economic development. Communities are unsafe. They want more policing. They want more secure neighborhoods, and they don't like a lot of the policies that Kathy Hochul has, especially taking away a lot of the control over the schools from parents and trying to centralize it in Albany."

Blakeman cited a number of the county's accomplishments under his leadership. The county tax property levy has not changed during his first term. Nassau's bond rating has been upgraded, and it has been recognized for being a safe place to live with a low poverty rate compared with the rest of the state.

From Valley Stream to county power

Blakeman, a lifetime Long Islander, was born in Oceanside in 1955. He graduated from Valley Stream Central High School, where he played basketball, and went on to attend Arizona State University and California Western Law School. As an attorney, he focused on real estate, commercial litigation, personal injury, land use, transportation, finance and insurance.

In 1993, Blakeman ran for public office for the first time, and was elected to the Hempstead Town Board. Three years later, after the creation of the Nassau County Legislature, the then 41-year-old became the new body's first presiding officer.

Blakeman lost the 1998 race for state comptroller to Democrat Carl McCall, and lost his seat in the Legislature the following year. In 2021 Blakeman was appointed by Gov. George Pataki — the last Republican to hold statewide office — to be a commissioner on the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a position he held until 2009.

After a failed run at the U.S. Senate and an appointment to the Hempstead Town Board in 2015 — a full-circle moment for Blakeman — he was selected by Nassau Republicans to challenge Democratic County Executive Laura Curran. He won an extraordinarily tight race by a .35 percent-point margin over the incumbent.

A familiar figure at home

Steve Bello, now an executive vice president at Northwell Health, came to know Blakeman through his work at what was then Franklin General Hospital, later renamed Long Island Jewish Valley Stream. Bello, who was the hospital's president from 2016 to 2019, said his role required close engagement with community leaders and families who had long supported the institution. According to Bello, the Blakeman family was among the most influential supporters



Tim Baker/Herald photos

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman announced on Dec. 9 that he would run for governor this year, launching a campaign focused on public safety, economic development and opposition to Gov. Kathy Hochul's policies.



Blakeman, a Valley Stream native, has served as county executive since 2022. He has cited flat property taxes, bond-rating upgrades and public safety initiatives as key accomplishments during his tenure.

of the hospital, particularly at times when it faced financial and operational challenges.

Bello's earliest interactions were with Blakeman's father, Robert Blakeman, who served as a state assemblyman in the 1960s and a member of the board that approved the hospital's transition to the Northwell system. As Robert's health declined, Bello said, his son became more involved not only in his care, but also with the broader issues affecting the hospital and the surrounding community.

"Bruce had actually been working at that time as an attorney in the area, and had lots of influence with many folks," Bello recalled. "When there were opportunities for the hospital to do better in one way or

another, where he was getting feedback from the community, [or] if there was an opportunity for the hospital to partner with people, so we could potentially expand our services, Bruce was always helpful ... when it just came down to supporting the hospital publicly as a place of really excellent care and great opportunity."

While Blakeman no longer has a formal role with the hospital, Bello said he remains engaged in health care issues and continues to support the institution.

"What I know is what that family has done for that community, the hospital, in particular," Bello said. "If he's able to translate that really personal, philanthropic and caring kind of sentiment that was evident in his support for the hospital into a larger role for him, politically, he would be wonderful."

Donald Steinert's connection with Blakeman dates back more than 50 years, to Valley Stream Central High School. Steinert, a Vietnam veteran who returned to finish high school in 1972, at age 20, recalled sharing a business law class with Blakeman.

Steinert said that Blakeman treated him with respect at a time when he felt out of place, which Steinert credits with helping him complete his education. Steinert, who now lives in Suffolk County, supports Blakeman's run for governor, believing his experience as county executive has prepared him for higher office.

"I wish the best for his governor's run," Steinert said. "The state is long overdue for a governor like Bruce, and I would love to see it."

Not all Valley Stream residents see Blakeman's candidacy through the same lens. Althea Campbell, who has lived in the village for 21 years, said she remembers Blakeman attending community events. She noted that his presence made him a familiar figure to residents, many of whom have followed his career. Campbell, a lifelong Democrat, said she supports Hochul and disagrees with aspects of Republican leadership.

"I have nothing personally against Bruce Blakeman, but [Hochul is] where my vote will go," Campbell said. "But I think with the right support, anybody can excel, and I'm sure he can make a believer out of me. But the current state of affairs," she added, referring to the Republican Party, "is a little painful."



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Roksana Amid/Herald photos

Colleen Spinello, a member of the Beautification Commission, helps put trees into the wood chipper every year.

111 trees recycled at Chip-A-Tree event

By ROKSANA AMID

ramid@liherald.com

The City of Glen Cove's Beautification Commission, in partnership with the City of Glen Cove Department of Public Works, hosted its annual Chip-A-Tree event this past Saturday, continuing a long-standing post-holiday tradition focused on environmental stewardship and reuse.

A total of 111 Christmas trees were collected during the event and chipped on site with the assistance of a professional tree service company. The trees were processed into natural mulch, which will be reused throughout Glen Cove in public green spaces, landscaped areas, and city flower beds, helping to reduce waste while supporting ongoing beautification efforts.

“These days, all the talk is about sustainability,” said Dr. Eve Lupenko of the Beautification Commission. “One of our favorite events of the year has always been the annual Chip-A-Tree. Whether you’re donating from a residential home or a business bringing over leftover Christmas trees, we physically take the trees off the cars, feed them into the chipper and—bang—we have mulch for the City of Glen Cove.”

Beautification Commission Chair Lora Cusumano said the program does much more than collect discarded evergreens. She noted that Chip-A-Tree keeps Christmas trees out of the waste stream and transforms them into a resource that benefits local parks and gardens throughout the year.

The annual event is one of several initiatives through which the City of Glen Cove promotes sustainability while enhancing public spaces for residents to enjoy year-round.



Manny Grella, with the Department of Public Works, helps residents remove trees from their cars.



Ralph Comitino, with the Department of Public Works, helped to oversee that the event ran smoothly.



Councilman Michael Ktistakis and Tom Duffy said they love the smell of the trees after the event.



Many residents like Patrick Logan love to help beautify their city.

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Spy surprise

Dear Great Book Guru,
I am in search of a compelling, amusing, challenging read for the cold winter week ahead.

PS I love spy thrillers!

Weary Winter Reader

Dear Weary Winter Reader,

I too love a good spy thriller and I just finished a great one: "Clown Town" by Mick Herron. Herron has written a series of novels starring the Slow Horses - a group of misfits - members of MI5 (British equivalent in some ways of our FBI) who for medical or psychological reasons have been put on leave.

The name comes from their headquarters, Slough House, but more so for their flawed performances. The story opens in Oxford, England where River Cartwright - grandson of David Cartwright who had been the esteemed head of MI5 - is waiting for medical clearance to return to active duty in the organization.

River decides to research his grandfa-

ther's library of books recently bequeathed on his death to his alma mater. To River's puzzlement, one of the books is missing - a book that covered the perilous Troubles - the period in which Irish freedom fighters were terrorizing England.

The disgraced and demoted spies - the Slow Horses - are brought in secretly by MI5 to unravel the mysteries of long ago that now threaten to upend a hard-earned peace. Jackson Lamb, leader of the Slow Hoses team and a dissolute genius, would rather his people - his "clowns" - not become involved but is himself intrigued by the politics and possible security lapses of the past.

A cast of colorful characters, numerous humorous plot twists, and a clever surprise ending make for a great read and highly recommended.

Would you like to ask the Great Book Guru for a book suggestion? Contact her at annmdipietro@gmail.com.

NEWS BRIEF

42nd Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The City of Glen Cove will mark Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day with its 42nd annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commemorative Program on Monday, Jan. 19, honoring the civil rights leader's legacy through reflection, community participation, and service.

This year's theme, "Dr. King's Dream: Equality and Inclusion for All!", underscores the continued importance of unity and social justice. The day will begin at 8:30 a.m. with participants gathering outside First Baptist Church, 7 Continental Place. A commemorative march will follow at 8:45 a.m., leading to Finley Middle School, where the main

program is scheduled to begin at approximately 9:15 a.m.

The program will feature welcoming remarks along with performances by students and community members, including poetry readings, choral selections, drumline, orchestra pieces, and dance presentations. The event is being organized in partnership with the Glen Cove City School District and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Commemorative Commission.

Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food donations, to benefit NOSH,

-Roksana Amid

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OBITUARY

Katherine Wanzor Hulse



Katherine Wanzor Hulse passed away at age 70 on January 8th, 2026. Kathi was the loving mother of Michael Hulse and the daughter of Leonard Wanzor, Jr. and Barbara Fancher Wanzor. She is survived by her son Michael, her sisters Debra Biglin (Pat), Jeri Nieves (David) and Leslie Kle (John) and many loving nieces, nephews and cousins. Kathi was born and lived in Glen Head until moving to Saratoga County 10 years ago to be nearer to her son, Michael.



A memorial will be at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Glen Head on January 24th at 3 pm.

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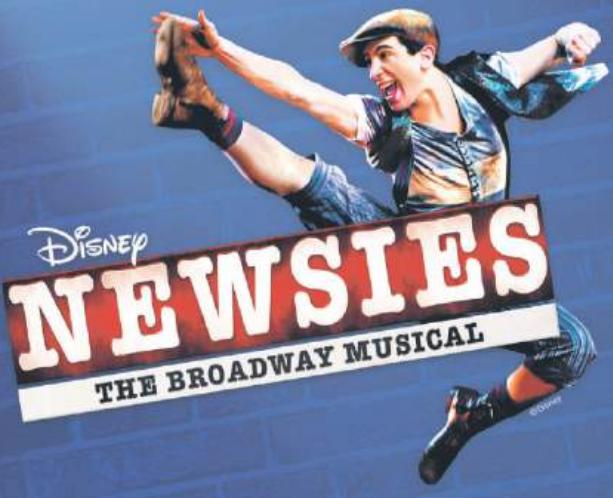
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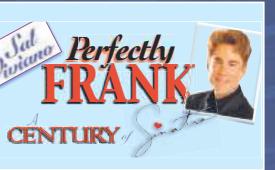
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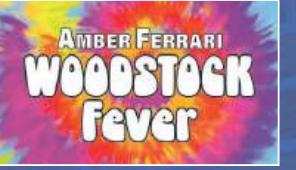

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STEPPING OUT

Epic moments on ice

Join Mickey and friends on their latest adventure

By Karen Bloom

Welcome the New Year with another dose of that wonderful world of Disney. The latest Disney ice extravaganza — "Mickey's Search Party" — arrives at UBS Arena in Elmont to the delight of families who can't get enough of their favorite Disney moments. Audiences can relive some of the iconic characters and stories — classic and new, now through Jan. 19.

Families embark on a quest with Mickey Mouse and pals as they follow Captain Hook's treasure map for clues to find Tinker Bell after he attempts to capture her magic. This adventure delivers compelling storytelling — so be prepared to join this magical search and help unlock an epic journey in a fast-paced, family-friendly production that follows the search for Tinker Bell through stunning worlds.

With top-level skating, daring aerial stunts and memorable moments from beloved Disney tales, this all-out celebration delivers nonstop music, mischief and memories.

Journey across the Marigold Bridge with Miguel from Disney Pixar's "Coco" into the magnificent and mystical Land of the Dead. The vibrantly colorful performance involves skeletons atop sway poles dancing over the audience in a beautiful cultural celebration of family. Travel to the wintry world of Arendelle and sing along with Elsa as video projection creates a kaleidoscope of crystals to help build her ice palace. Watch Stitch crash the action with mischievous surprises. Witness Belle lift into the sky as everyone marvels as the enchanted chandelier comes to life high over the ice.

Also observe the power of teamwork when Buzz Lightyear, Woody and Jessie recruit the Green Army Men for a daring rescue in Andy's room. Sail away with Moana on her daring voyage across the ocean and bravely encounter the fiery wrath of Te Ka. Plus, you'll laugh hysterically as the hilarious pirates flip, tumble, and twist on tumble tracks, stilts and more in an effort to showcase their talents for Captain Hook. And even more fun awaits as the search party becomes an all-out magical celebration.

These beloved characters are, of course, joined by Mickey and his crew: Minnie, Donald and Goofy. As always, the atmosphere is electric from the get-go.

"When Mickey first comes out, it's always a big moment for everyone," says ensemble skater Tess Terpos.

Certainly so for Terpos, who's thrilled to step into the spotlight with the rest of the Disney skaters. It's a magical moment for her — every time.

Ice skating been central to Terpos' world, since her childhood in Maryland. After years of devotion to her craft — countless hours of practice, grueling



Photos courtesy Feld Entertainment
Search for Tinker Bell through stunning worlds.



- Now through Jan. 19, times vary
- Tickets start at \$35, available at ticketmaster.com or disneyonice.com
- UBS Arena, 2400 Hempstead Tpke., Elmont



Comic showcase

Known for their elite clever comedy, The Ivy League of Comedy visits the Madison Theatre. They're a presence on late-night TV and Comedy Central and on the club circuit. The lineup features Keith Alberstadt, whose playful personality radiates. He mixes light-hearted sarcasm with southern charm and has become a favorite at comedy clubs. Also Clayton Fletcher (pictured), heard on Sirius/XM Radio's Laugh USA, Blue Collar Comedy, and Jamie Foxx's Foxxhole stations. He has been featured on Hulu-TV's "Comedy Brew," MSNBC's "Your Business," ESPN's "World Series of Poker," and Comcast-TV's "Who's Laughing Now?" He allows us to see the world through the eyes of the son of a poker-playing mom and a jazz musician dad. And Jane Condon, mom of two boys, has been dubbed "an uppercrust Roseanne." She loves to tell stories about her adventures (mostly survival tales) with her husband and kids.

Saturday, Jan. 17, 8 p.m. Madison Theatre, Molloy University campus, 1000 Hempstead Ave., Rockville Centre. Tickets available at madisontheatreny.org or (516) 323-4444.



Paul Cornish Trio

Newly signed to Blue Note Records, Los Angeles-based pianist and composer Paul Cornish is making waves as one of the most innovative new voices in jazz. Presented in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center, Tilles Center Atrium becomes an intimate lounge to showcase this exciting up-and-coming jazz talent. Cornish, who strives to inspire freedom and collaboration in his music and community, has performed extensively across the globe with such notable artists as Joshua Redman, Louis Cole, Mark Guiliana, and more. With Jonathan Pinson (drums) and Jermaine Paul (bass) he'll perform selections from his Blue Note Records debut album "You're Exaggerating." A Stanford Jazz Workshop alumnus, Cornish blends deep jazz roots with bold, forward-thinking vision, transforming tradition into an electrifying and inspiring musical journey. Don't miss this opportunity to witness Cornish's extraordinary artistry and boundless creativity live.

Thursday, Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. Tilles Center, LIU Post campus, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville. Tickets available at tillescenter.org or (516) 299-3100.

competitions and performances — the 28-year-old Terpos, a Towson University alum, found her way to the World of Mouse when she caught her break in 2021 with Disney On Ice.

Now an established ensemble member with the tour, Terpos lives that Disney magic every day.

"Disney on Ice is so truly special and we with our audiences see that 'magic' come to life in truly personal way. I have found a home here. It's a great place to be, surrounded all these special talented skaters and creative people who are as passionate as me."

Her fondness for the stories and characters goes back to childhood.

"I loved 'The Little Mermaid,' Jasmine, all the princesses. I'd watch them over and over. There are even photos of me dressed up as princesses."

Known for her classic yet playful approach on the ice, Terpos credits her strong foundation in basic skating skills for her versatility as a performer. One of her most memorable moments came on opening night of her first professional show, when she was so overwhelmed with excitement that she cried as soon as she stepped off the ice.

"Skating with Disney On Ice is a dream come true for me," she says. "It's so special and the connection with our audiences is amazing."

And everyone is right there with her.

"There are so many interactive elements where audiences get involved up close with the characters. That's what makes it so special. We need the audience to help solve clues to get Tinkerbell back."

As with her fellow cast members, Terpos' skating skills enhance the high level of athleticism that is the hallmark of these spectacles. Solos, pairs and fast-paced ensemble skating with high-flying jumps add to the appeal of the stories the audience knows so well.

Among the highlights, Terpos talents are on full display as she takes on the role of a napkin during the aerial sequence in the "Be Our Guest" scene from "Beauty and the Beast."

"Napkins, forks, knives and spoons fly into the air. It's really special and they [audiences] love it."

In fact, there's not a moment that wouldn't be described as "special."

"The show has something for everyone. It's about magic and memories," Terpos adds for emphasis.

That Disney magic: it's all around us.

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

JAN 15 Game Night

Meet up with friends or make some new ones at Glen Cove Public Library. Play a board or card game, from the Library's collection or feel free to bring your favorite games from home, or even Mah Jongg. Games are available anytime — just ask at the Information Desk.

- Where: Where: 4 Glen Cove Ave.
- Time: Ongoing Thursdays, 7 p.m.
- Contact: glencovelibrary.org or (516) 676-2130

JAN 18 Hempstead House Tour

See the grand rooms inside the massive 50,000-square-foot Tudor-style mansion at Sands Point Preserve, the former summer residence of Howard Gould (1912-1917) and later Daniel and Florence Guggenheim (1917-1930). For adults, but children 5+ are allowed. \$10 per person.

- Where: 127 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point
- Time: Noon-2 p.m.; also Feb. 1
- Contact: sandspointpreserveconservancy.org or call (516) 571-7901

JAN 19 Ninja Née's Secrets of the Signal Tower

Kids in grades 2-5 are invited to Sands Point Preserve's Hempstead House to join the clever young scientist-turned-superhero Ninja Née as she unravels the mystery of strange flashes of light coming from preserve's old clock tower! In this hands-on STEM adventure, kids become part of the story by experimenting with mirrors, secret light codes, and even drawing their own working electric circuits to help save the day from the mischievous Dr. Chaos. This interactive workshop blends science, storytelling, and teamwork into one unforgettable mission. \$40, \$35 members. Registration required.

- Where: Hempstead House, 127 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point
- Time: 10- a.m.-noon
- Contact: sandspointpreserveconservancy.org or call (516) 570-2185

JAN 24 Paint Party: Snowy Shadows

Artist Celicia Cargill of Authentic Heartwork leads an in-person paint party at Glen Cove Public Library. Participants



JAN 23

'Cold Beer on a Saturday Night'

If the January frost has you dreaming of salt air and sun-drenched afternoons, it's time to trade your snow boots for flip-flops — at least mentally. Jimmy Kenny and the Pirate Beach Band are back to rescue us from the winter doldrums, bringing their high-energy "Ultimate Beach Party Tribute" to the Paramount stage. There's no need to wait for the solstice to get your fix of island life. This Long Island-based powerhouse has spent over a decade perfecting the "Beach Country" genre. They masterfully blend the catalogs of the "Big Three" of tropical rock: Jimmy Buffett — for the Parrotheads looking to waste away in Margaritaville; Kenny Chesney — for the No Shoes Nation craving that Caribbean soul; Zac Brown Band — for the Zamily ready to keep their "toes" in the water and a cold beer in their hand. Led by Paul C. Cuthbert (the titular "Jimmy Kenny") on lead vocals and acoustic guitar, the band delivers a lush, full sound that captures the easy-living flair of a Nashville-meets-Key-West concert. The lineup features: Linn DeMita (Lovely Linn), bringing powerhouse lead and backing vocals; Luis Rios, with sizzling lead guitar riffs; Frank Stainkamp, with essential island vibes on the keyboards; Dan Prine and Mike Vecchione, a steady rhythm section keeping the groove alive on bass and drums. Whether you're a lifelong fan of the genre or just someone in desperate need of a "5 o'clock somewhere" state of mind, Jimmy Kenny and the Pirate Beach Band offer more than just a concert — it's an escape. Expect a lively, sing-along atmosphere where the spirits are high, and for a few hours, the Northeast winter simply doesn't exist. Don't be afraid to lean into the theme — floral shirts, straw hats, and leis are not just welcomed; they are practically the uniform of the night. The Paramount's expansive floor transforms into a temporary shoreline where the boundary between the stage and the crowd disappears under the weight of anthemic choruses and shared nostalgia. Whether you're raising a glass to the late Jimmy Buffett or swaying to a country ballad, the infectious energy of the Pirate Beach Band ensures that the "summer state of mind" isn't just a catchphrase, but a reality. Gather your crew, and prepare to leave your winter coat at the door — you won't be needing it where we're going.

- Where: The Paramount, 370 New York Ave., Huntington
- Time: 8 p.m.
- Contact: ticketmaster.com or paramountny.com

are taught to create a one-of-a-kind winter-themed masterpiece. Space is limited and registration is required. \$7 fee covers all materials and is payable at the Reference Desk upon registration.

- Where: 4 Glen Cove Ave.
- Time: 2-4 p.m.
- Contact: glencovelibrary.org or (516) 676-2130

JAN 25 Art talk

Nassau County Museum of Art hosts Dee Shapiro, a New York-based artist, is known for her richly detailed paintings

exploring geometry, architecture, and place. She discusses works from her City and Landscapes series featured in The Real, Surreal, and Photoreal exhibit, which capture the rhythm and structure of urban and natural environments. \$20, \$15 seniors, \$10 students (members free). Limited seating, register in advance.

- Where: 1 Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor
- Time: 3 p.m.
- Contact: nassauartmuseum.org or (516) 484-9337

Booked: An afternoon of reading

Sands Point Preserve welcomes

visitors to relax at Hempstead House. Enjoy the warmth of Hempstead House for an afternoon of quiet, independent reading. Bring your book, find a cozy spot by the fire, and enjoy! Complimentary tea and coffee are provided.

No advanced registration is required. To maintain a quiet atmosphere, this program is for children aged 12+ accompanied by an adult.

- Where: Hempstead House, 127 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point
- Time: 3-4:30 p.m.
- Contact: sandspointpreserveconservancy.org or call (516) 571-7901

JAN 28 Community Assessment Grievance Workshop

Nassau County Legislature Minority Leader Delia DeRiggi-Whitton hosts a free online workshop in partnership with the Nassau County Assessment Review Commission to help homeowners challenge the assessed value of their property. Participants will learn how to navigate the online grievance process, dispute an assessment, and ask questions via chat to ARC representatives. Familiarity with Microsoft Teams is encouraged. Free.

- Where: Online via Microsoft Teams
- Time: Noon-2 p.m., also Feb. 11
- Contact: Call (516) 571-6211 or email dderiggiwhitton@nassaucounty.ny.gov

JAN 31 Lunar New Year Celebration

Families are invited to vibrant celebration of art and music when Nassau County Museum of Art ushers in the Lunar New Year, honoring the rich creative contributions of Chinese culture. Activities include a Year of the Horse craft at the Manes Center. Before or after art making, head to the mansion to enjoy cultural performances. \$20, \$10 child; members free. Registration required.

- Where: 1 Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor
- Time: 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1- 2:30 p.m.
- Contact: nassauartmuseum.org or (516) 484-9337

FEB 1 Winter In The Woods Walking Tour

Explore Sands Point Preserve's natural environment on a guided tour. Examine the preserve's unique physical

features and wildlife, as well as critical conservation issues and helpful practices to create a healthy, sustainable environment. Environmental educator Hildur Palsdottir engages everyone in hands-on nature discovery activities as participants observe the changing season. Meet at Castle Gould's Clock Tower. \$15, \$10 members; children \$5, free for members.

- Where: 127 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point
- Time: 10-11:30 a.m.
- Contact: sandspointpreserveconservancy.org or call (516) 571-7901

Talking art

Nassau County Museum of Art welcomes Christian White. He discusses his work and artistic process rooted in the tradition of Realism. A descendant of a storied lineage of American artists, White continues to honor and expand this legacy through his detailed, perceptive paintings that capture the beauty and truth of everyday life. \$20, \$15 seniors, \$10 students (members free). Limited seating, register in advance.

- Where: 1 Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor
- Time: 3 p.m.
- Contact: nassauartmuseum.org or (516) 484-9337

FEB 6 First Friday: Under Glass

Explore the beauty and remarkable history of Planting Fields historic Camellia House.

Join Sustainability Coordinator Rebecca Slagle and Archivist Marie Penny for a tour of a living legacy. Discover the Coe family's passion for horticulture through a historic collection of more than 200 blooming camellias. Designed by the famed Olmsted Brothers Firm, the Camellia House stands as one of northeast's most treasured architectural and horticultural gems. \$25.

- Where: Camellia House, 1395 Planting Fields Road, Oyster Bay
- Time: 10-11 a.m.
- Contact: plantingfields.org or call (516) 922-9210

Having an event?

Items on the Calendar page are listed free of charge. The Herald welcomes listings of upcoming events, community meetings and items of public interest. All submissions should include date, time and location of the event, cost, and a contact name and phone number. Submissions can be emailed to kbloom@liherald.com.

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Kelly Killoren Bensimon to Receive Herald Real Estate Award

The Herald and RichnerLIVE are proud to announce that Kelly Killoren Bensimon will be recognized with the Strategic Visionary in Luxury Real Estate Award at the 2026 HERALD Real Estate Achievement & Leadership (R.E.A.L.) Awards, taking place on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, at 99 Quaker Meeting House Road in Farmingdale.

This prestigious award celebrates Kelly Killoren Bensimon's exceptional expertise in luxury real estate and her distinctive ability to combine market insight with lifestyle driven strategy. With extensive hands-on experience in New York City real estate, Kelly approaches each property not just as a transaction but as a story, carefully blending timing, branding, and market intelligence to create lasting value.

"I'm honored to be recognized by The Herald and RichnerLIVE alongside so many leaders shaping the future of real estate. To me, real estate is about vision, storytelling, and creating lasting value this recognition is incredibly meaningful," said Kelly.

Kelly's success is rooted in sharp negotiation skills, deep market knowledge, and an entrepreneurial mindset that bridges luxury, media, and investment.



Her influence extends beyond individual sales; she has helped redefine how high end residential properties are positioned, marketed, and experienced, setting a new standard for client centric, strategic real estate.

Most recently, Kelly is known for her key role in a standout New York City transaction, underscoring her leadership and impact in the market.

"Kelly Killoren Bensimon embodies the modern evolution of luxury real estate where insight, brand, and strategy intersect," said Amy Amato, Executive Director, RichnerLIVE. "Her ability to anticipate the market while elevating the client experience makes her a natural choice for this award."

The R.E.A.L. Awards celebrate leaders across the real estate and development community who are shaping Long Island and the greater New York region through innovation and vision. The evening will feature an exclusive honoree and sponsor reception, cocktail hour, dinner, and awards presentation.

For more information about the R.E.A.L. Awards, visit <https://www.richnerlive.com/>

- Anna Graci

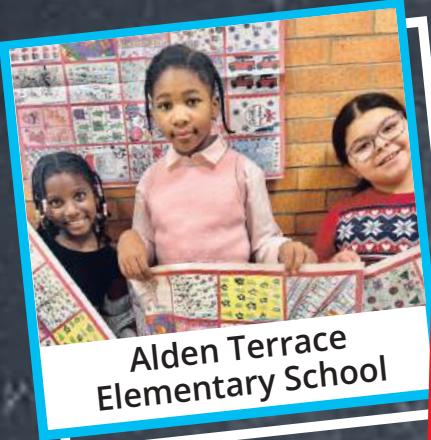


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*Thank you to all the parents and
teachers who helped make this possible.*

Discovery at lab could help fight dementia

By WILL SHEELINE

wsheeline@liherald.com

Corina Amor Vegas, an associate professor at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and her research team have made a scientific discovery that could help restore gut health in people suffering from age-related diseases. The work builds on advances in immunotherapy and aging research, and could soon lead to clinical trials aimed at improving the quality of life for patients whose intestinal tissue has been damaged by aging or cancer treatment.

The discovery centers on the intestine, an organ critical to digestion and overall health. Under normal conditions, the intestinal epithelium, a single layer of cells lining the gut, regenerates every three to five days. With age or injury — from radiation therapy, for example — that regeneration can slow or stop, leading to inflammation and conditions such as leaky gut syndrome.

Researchers at Cold Spring Harbor have found that eliminating damaged, aging cells from the intestine can restore its ability to regenerate. The approach uses CAR T cell therapy, a form of immunotherapy in which immune cells are engineered to recognize and destroy specific targets.

Amor Vegas, who is originally from Spain, said her lab focuses on aging and a process known as cellular senescence.

"Cells in your body, they accumulate a lot of damage," she said. "Over time, they stop doing their normal job, and they instead become really pre-inflammatory. They cause a lot of damage in tissues."

Senescent cells do not divide or die, but secrete signals that activate the immune system unnecessarily, leading to chronic inflammation. As people age, these cells accumulate, and have been linked to diseases such as diabetes, fibrosis and dementia.

Amor Vegas came to the lab in January 2022 after completing her medical training in at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and earning a Ph.D. in cancer biology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She now leads a group of eight scientists, including postdoctoral researchers, graduate students and technical staff, who engineer immune cells to target senescent cells. They have experimented by extracting immune cells from mice, modifying them in the lab to recognize senescent cells and then injecting them back into the animals.

The modified immune cells are known as chimeric antigen receptor T, or CAR T, cells. The team engineered them to target uPAR, a marker found on senescent cells. Amor Vegas said that only one injection was needed for the treatment to have lasting effects.

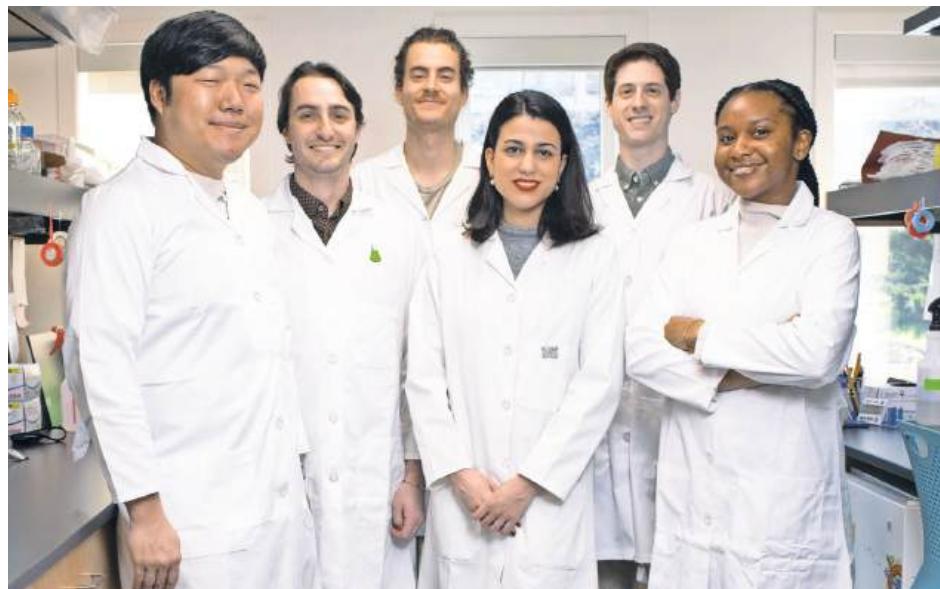
"[The CAR T cell] redirects the immune cells to recognize the senescent cells," she said. "We take [the cells], we train them and then we put them back."

To study the intestine, the team treated both young and old mice with the engineered cells. Treated animals showed



Photos courtesy Jason DeCrow/Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

Corina Amor Vegas, who is originally from Madrid, has run a lab at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory since 2022.



Corina Amor Vegas worked with a team of postdoctoral researchers, graduate students and technical staff.

reduced inflammation, fewer senescent cells and an increase in healthy stem cells in the intestinal lining. The intestine was better able to absorb nutrients and regenerate after injury.

"In both cases, we see really significant improvements," Amor Vegas said. "They're able to absorb nutrients better. They have much less inflammation. When irritated or injured, their epithelial lining is able to regenerate and heal much faster."

The research has particular implications for cancer patients who undergo pelvic or abdominal radiation therapy, which often damages the intestinal lining. The team simulated radiation treatment in mice and found that those receiving CAR T cell therapy recovered much better than those that were not treated. A single treatment improved gut health for at least a year.

The work took roughly three years to complete and an additional year to pre-

pare for publication. Amor Vegas said the team was careful not to overinterpret early results.

"We feel really excited, but we tried to take it slowly," she said. "We try to not get overly excited over just one piece of data."

According to a news release, the researchers also found evidence that the approach promotes regeneration in human intestinal and colorectal cells grown in laboratory settings. Exactly how the process works remains under investigation.

Beyond gut health, Amor Vegas said, the treatment has shown broader effects related to aging.

"We've seen a lot of effects on metabolism," she said. "Now we're seeing regeneration, and we have some data as well on cognitive functions."

Despite the promise, Amor Vegas emphasized that the goal is not to affect the normal aging process. "Aging is part of life, right?" she said. "We would give it to patients that have age-related diseases."

Conditions such as fibrosis, diabetes and dementia, she explained, could be potential targets if the therapy advances to clinical trials. The next step, she said, would involve scaling up production of the engineered cells and securing funding to launch a startup company capable of supporting human trials.

Bruce Stillman, the laboratory's president and CEO, said the research reflects the institution's mission. "People living with age-related diseases often endure symptoms for years, with few effective options to restore normal tissue function," Stillman said in a statement. "Corina's work, alongside her colleagues at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, is pioneering."

He added that the research has the potential to "significantly improve quality of life," calling it an example of the lab's belief that "science makes life better."

Amor Vegas said that responsible use of the science is essential. The long-term aim, she said, is to reduce the number of years people spend with chronic illness.

"We've all seen patients that maybe they're spending even 10 years with terrible dementia," she said. "I think that's horrible. So really, that's what we're trying to avoid."

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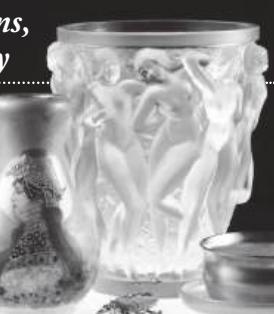
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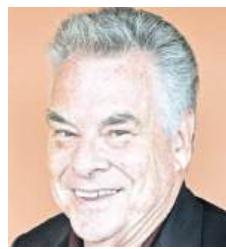
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OPINIONS

Cardinal Dolan retires, and an era has passed

Pope Leo's decision to accept the resignation of Cardinal Timothy Dolan, effective in the next several weeks, has significance for the entire New York metropolitan area. Going back to the 19th century, the archbishop of New York has played an often outsized role in the life of the city, with an influence extending beyond Catholics and beyond the city itself, into the suburbs.



PETER KING

the mid-20th century, Cardinal Francis Spellman spoke out about national issues and against what he viewed as remnants of anti-Catholicism. He met regularly with government, political and business leaders, which led friends as well as critics to label him "the American Pope" and St. Patrick's "the Powerhouse."

Cardinal John O'Connor, who held the position from 1984 to 2000, came from a working-class and military background. He mastered the art of communicating through the media, taking outspoken stands on various issues such as workers' rights in New York and human rights in Ireland and, most significantly, working extensively to strengthen interfaith relations with the many other religions mixed into the city's ecumenical melting pot. Particularly memorable was O'Connor's close friendship with Mayor Ed Koch and their joint efforts against antisemitism, including a popular book they coauthored.

Also meaningful was a television special on which O'Connor and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel decried the evil of antisemitism and all religious bigotry. Personally, I had a strong friendship with O'Connor, highlighted by his refusal to back down to pressure from the British government when its consulate urged him not to review the 1985 St. Patrick's Day Parade because I served as its grand marshal.

O'Connor's funeral, at St. Patrick's in

May 2000 — attended by countless luminaries, including President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Clinton, and future President George W. Bush and future first lady Laura Bush, befitting an acknowledged national leader.

Though he was born and raised in St. Louis, he became a true New Yorker.

ford home, and attended numerous events with him, including Midnight Mass, on Christmas Eve; private lunches at his residence, with retired New York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and his wife, Veronica; and Dolan's annual St. Patrick's Day brunches, replete with a cross-section of elected officials including Mayor Eric Adams, Gov. Kathy Hochul and Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman as well as religious leaders such as Rockville Centre Bishop John Barres and Rabbi Joe Potasnik, of

the New York Board of Rabbis.

Now that he has reached the mandatory retirement age of 75 and the pope has accepted his retirement, Dolan's omnipresence in New York, and his unfailing sense of humor, will be sorely missed. He was always there, for those of all religions, especially in times of need. I distinctly recall being with him at meetings with officials from the Department of Homeland Security, trying to obtain funding to protect houses of worship from terrorist attacks.

Similarly, I remember discussing with Dolan and Potasnik strategies for requesting Covid relief funds for religious entities from the Trump administration. I particularly recall Dolan being a lone voice speaking out on behalf of the police during the violent demonstrations in the summer of 2020.

Dolan has been a gift to New York. Fortunately, he has chosen to remain here, and take up residency in a Manhattan parish. I wish him the best of health, happiness and peace, and congratulations on a job well done. An era has passed.

Peter King is a former congressman, and a former chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security. Comments? pkking@liherald.com.

Protecting our peace of mind, hour to hour

I was looking for a sharp stick the other night, because I had promised myself that I would rather poke myself in the eye than watch another DJT pop-up press briefing.

This time the president was defending our pop-up war against Venezuela, a military campaign executed flawlessly, except that it



RANDI KREISS

Yet there Trump was last weekend, rambling about how we would now "run" Venezuela, and there I was, watching. He ranted and raved until I zapped him with the remote.

But, dear readers, don't we have to be very, very careful? Donald Trump may speak extemporaneously in maddening circles, but we must tune in sometimes. We marginalize him at our own peril. He still has the power, and when jacked

up on irrational impulses, he can bring down the house around us. Or bulldoze the White House East Wing. Or covet the northern slopes of Greenland.

We are caught in a vise: let Trump into our lives or protect our sanity and space.

In my house, my husband turns on the TV as he walks into or through a room, in the same way that one might turn on an oxygen machine in a dead zone. It's always there, in the background, too loud, too repetitive, too blathering, too insignificant.

I reach for the remote, and then stop. How will I know what the commander in chief is plotting? There is no authoritative voice for the opposition. Walter Cronkite died 16 years ago.

So we must thread the needle: Try to find reliable news sources and limit our exposure. This is an urgent priority, lest we slip into complacency, or worse.

To get through this fierce winter of freezing weather and cascading political disasters, let's do our work as citizens. For most of my life, it felt OK to be an observer of the political movements sweeping across the nation, from the

unrest of the '60s through the Obama years. My political activism has been confined to voting, writing and joining peaceful protests.

These times demand more, but what, exactly? We twist in the wind, distressed by the abuses and downright meanness of the Trump administration, yet unable to do anything that feels consequential.

Some people I know have turned off TV news and stopped reading the newspapers, hunkering down in their own lives to avoid the stress of watching disturbing events unfold. That, I know, is a very bad idea. We must stay informed, and at the same time, find and hold a balance. We need space in our days for peace in a chaotic world.

I invite you to examine your own waking hours and consider how much satisfaction and pleasure you experience in any day, in any week. And what are those joyful moments, and how can you — how can any of us — have more of them?

What is the well-spent time before and after work obligations, family duties and monitoring our democracy?

The uplifting hours in our days? A simple walk around the block is doable most days. The fresh air blasts away the cobwebs and the brisk wind engages the senses. Going down to the beach, in any weather, lifts the spirit.

Time in the kitchen, preparing a warm meal, feels rewarding. Something in the gathering of supplies, the cooking and the eating seems like a perfect daily experience.

Connecting with friends and family registers as feel-good time, and I make room for that as often as possible.

I do love my work, both my writing and my book groups. Writing, when you're in the moment, is intense and difficult but fully engaging.

And you? Your truly life-affirming moments? And are there enough of them, or are you slipping, as I have been at times, into too much TV news obsession?

As creatures gifted with self-reflection (most of us, anyway), we can think about the days of our lives, a diminishing supply of a limited commodity. We can decide for ourselves, each of us, how to spend this treasure.

The dead of winter is a good time to live the examined life.

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HERALD EDITORIAL

Long Island's priorities are bipartisan

The message that emerged from last Friday's annual Long Island Association State of the Region breakfast was focused on ideas that matter deeply to everyone who calls Long Island home: affordable housing, clean water, reliable energy, fiscal responsibility and caring for the most vulnerable.

The event brought together voices from across the political spectrum: Gov. Kathy Hochul, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine, just to name a few.

Unsurprisingly, with Hochul and Blakeman widely expected to face each other in November's gubernatorial election, some of the discussion previewed the themes that will likely define the campaign ahead. But the most striking takeaway was not the contrast in party labels — it was the amount of common ground.

Long Island's growth and success were recurring themes. LIA President Matt Cohen noted that since the organization was founded in 1926, the region's population has increased by 900 percent, transforming what was once largely a bedroom community into a diverse economic engine with world-class schools, hospitals and tourist destinations.

Schumer, reflecting on decades of visiting every corner of the state, noted

that when Long Island does well, all of New York does well.

Water infrastructure emerged as a point of broad agreement. In her remarks, Hochul previewed a proposed five-year, \$3.75 billion investment in that infrastructure, calling it historic. On an island where drinking water comes from a sole-source aquifer, protecting water quality is not optional — it is existential.

Upgrading sewers, improving wastewater treatment and replacing outdated septic systems are investments that will pay dividends for generations, regardless of who occupies the governor's office.

Blakeman pointed to Nassau County's public safety record and quality of life, citing national recognition as one of the most desirable places to live.

Housing affordability dominated much of the conversation, particularly as younger New Yorkers struggle to remain in the region. DiNapoli referenced a recent report from his office showing that Gen Z and millennials are being squeezed by high housing costs and limited entry-level job opportunities — a troubling trend for a region that depends on retaining its workforce and future leaders.

Romaine underscored that affordable housing cannot be addressed in isolation; it requires smart planning and significant investment in infrastructure such as roads and sewers to support new

development.

Energy infrastructure, including offshore wind, food security, support for safety-net hospitals and maintaining a strong social safety net, was also part of the discussion. These are foundational responsibilities of government. People cannot go hungry. Communities cannot thrive without reliable health care. Economic growth means little if it leaves large segments of the population behind.

What was perhaps most encouraging was DiNapoli's reminder of fiscal discipline. Even in a relatively strong economy, uncertainty looms as federal funding decisions evolve. Thoughtful, responsible budgeting — looking not just at the next election cycle but years down the road — is itself a bipartisan value.

This election year will bring sharp rhetoric and clear contrasts. That is inevitable, and healthy, in a democracy. But the ideas discussed at the State of the Region breakfast should not become casualties of partisanship. They are good ideas — the kinds of ideas that all elected officials, at every level of government, should be eager to pursue. All of the state's leaders must resist the temptation to govern by party line alone.

The issues highlighted at the breakfast must remain priorities, regardless of which way the political winds blow.

LETTERS

We need the arts 'now more than ever'

To the Editor:

I read Robert Scott's op-ed last week, "The arts on Long Island are for you," regarding the need for regional arts infrastructure while inviting Long Islanders into the art world. I so appreciate this outreach, as I feel Long Island and the country as a whole need the arts now more than ever.

As a resident of Massapequa, I'm currently in the "planting phase" of establishing an Arts Center of Massapequa here. The Long Island Arts Alliance's data on the \$330 million economic impact of Long Island arts is the backbone of our current pitch. We are building the ACM for many reasons: to bridge the "infrastructure gap" Scott identified, to ensure that our town can finally capture its fair share of state funding, and to remind our community members that art and community aren't extreme luxuries —



OPINIONS

Mets and Yankees fans know plenty about chopped liver

I'm sure that at some point in your life, someone has uttered an expression that you'd never heard or didn't understand. There are many of these weird turns of phrase, but my favorite is, "What am I, chopped liver?" It may have ethnic overtones, but it has been used by countless comedians over the decades.

No one can pinpoint exactly when the chopped-liver inquiry was born, but it is said to have emanated from Jewish families in the 1930s. Its purpose was to make it clear to someone that just like chopped liver is a side dish at a dinner, nobody

wants to be treated like a side dish in life. I heard the phrase for the first time at a family dinner, and then I heard the late, great comedian Jimmy Durante growl, "I ain't chopped liver."

I can think of a few people and institutions that I can apply the comparison to, and you'll better understand how



**JERRY
KREMER**

wonderfully it fits. Let's start with the apparent attitudes of the owners of the Mets and Yankees toward the teams' fans. There are no people more loyal to the cause of winning sports in New York than Yankees and Mets followers. We pack the teams' parks throughout the season, pay ridiculous sums of money for tickets, food and souvenirs, and in the end, the Mets' Steve Cohen and the Steinbrenners, who own the Yankees, treat us like, yup, chopped liver.

All season long we slavishly follow every on-field play and off-field rumor, hoping they'll be game-clinchers or season-changers. We argue endlessly with Dodgers and Red Sox fans about whose team is the best. Every September, we hope and pray that our squad will make it to the playoffs. We shell out even more ridiculous sums of money to attend playoff game, and pray for the miracle that will propel our Yankees or Mets into the World Series.

To add to our collective chopped-liver misery, during the winter we check our

phones way too often, in the hope that our team will make some trade or announce some surprise contract that will guarantee our October ticket to the Series. Late last year, the headlined departures of the Mets' Brandon Nimmo, Edwin Diaz and Pete Alonso were like a collective lump of coal in our Christmas stocking.

To show what patsies we are, a couple of months from now, when spring training starts, we'll ignore all the misery we've suffered and begin a new season of hope. We've screamed about the Mets losing favorite player after

favorite player to other teams, and want to believe that something big will happen. Cohen says he is constantly looking for new stars and has an open checkbook, but he's now concentrating on his new casino license and a neighboring soccer stadium. Mets fans? Chopped liver.

And the Yankees owners? During the winter, the Steinbrenners sign as many players as they can find, but the big moves, like signing another front-line pitcher or Cody Bellinger (maybe) don't

seem to be happening right now. According to Forbes and Sportico, the Yankees are valued at \$8.2 billion to \$8.4 billion, making them the most valuable franchise in baseball history. They claim they're a break-even company, but their parent company, Yankee Global Enterprises, is estimated to make as much as \$150 million annually.

We all know what would have happened if George Steinbrenner were still alive. The Yankees would resemble the Los Angeles Dodgers, who have an All-Star at virtually every position. But the Yankees management tells us that baseball is a business, and the sport's luxury tax forces it to maintain a "tighter bottom line." The counterpoint to that argument is what another baseball team owner told me: "When you win a World Series, there's a gusher of new money to be made."

For now, though, if a friend or relative asks you what the chopped-liver line refers to, tell them it's all about being a Mets or Yankees fan.

Jerry Kremer was a state assemblyman for 23 years, and chaired the Assembly's Ways and Means Committee for 12 years. Comments about this column? jkremer@liherald.com.

LETTERS

they belong to everyone.

I would be deeply honored if Dr. Scott would keep our project on his radar as we move toward acquiring fiscal sponsorship and formal 501(c)(3) filing. Thanks to Bob for being a fierce advocate for our region's "creative spark." I receive the Herald and always start on the Opinion pages, and I was absolutely delighted to find his words there.

KRISTA JENSEN
Massapequa

Venezuela: America's latest quagmire

To the Editor:

The United States' adventures in Iran, Iraq and Libya have long been forgotten by those we trust to lead our country. With our move into Venezuela, we just gave China the political and moral approval to "liberate" Taiwan. Russian President Vladimir Putin's promise to restore the Soviet Union to its former glory has been reinforced and justified by our government's recent actions.

Venezuela is twice the size of Cali-

fornia, with a population of 30 million, and has had one of the highest crime/murder rates in the world. American oil companies and their employees will need protection to operate the oil fields. We already produce more oil than we need. Unlike America, the rest of the world is moving away from fossil fuels, especially China. We won't sell to Russia or China. Where is the market that will buy the oil and generate the billions of dollars required to upgrade and protect our "interests" in Venezuela?

What is our government's plan to move forward? I fear that we are heading into the abyss as our moral compass points more toward power and self-entitlement than to compassion and lifting those who need it most. We have invaded a sovereign nation and kidnapped its leader. Nicolas Maduro certainly is corrupt and murderous, but how can we justify our illegal actions on the world stage? Guerrilla warfare, as occurred in Iraq, Libya and other countries we tried to overthrow in the name of democracy, will overtake Venezuela. What and who are we becoming?

ANTHONY BRANCATO
East Meadow

Comments about our stories? Send a letter to the editor to execeditor@liherald.com.

FRAMEWORK by Tim Baker



At South Side High, the cast of "The Actor's Nightmare" takes a break — Rockville Centre



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