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Celebrating poet Robert Burns
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Courtesy John O'Connell

RYAN DOHERTY, GRAND marshal of this year's St. Patrick's Day parade, left, is presented with the drum major's mace — used to direct the band — by a piper from the Police Emerald Society of Westchester County. Doherty, a member of the group, was invited to lead its Pipes and Drums.

Sept. 11 first responder will lead St. Patrick's Day parade

By **ROKSANA AMID**
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Glen Cove's St. Patrick's Day parade will mark its 35th anniversary with Bayville resident and 9/11 first responder Ryan Doherty leading the way as the historic parade's grand marshal.

Doherty, who will help celebrate the heritage and rich culture of the Irish, was an easy choice for the honor by this year's parade committee.

Typically, choosing a grand marshal takes time. The parade committee usually has a few

choices, but this year, organizers knew instantly who they wanted to represent their community.

"When someone suggests the likes of Ryan, we know we are not going any further," said Andy Stafford, the parade's treasurer.

Doherty was born in Smithtown in 1974, and his upbringing was deeply influenced by his Irish immigrant parents, William and Teresa Doherty. His father is one of the parade's founders and a former grand marshal.

Doherty's involvement in the Irish community is plentiful as an avid bagpiper for the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Assessing the Suozzi legacy

Congressman was committed to the country, and his hometown

By **LAURA LANE**
llane@liherald.com

Former U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi's legacy is rich with accomplishments helping the North Shore, from securing money for a roof for Sid Jacobson JCC to ensuring the rehabilitation of the Roslyn Grist Mill is federally funded.

And he's always been there for his hometown of Glen Cove and its residents.

Glen Cove resident Howard Stillwagon has known Suozzi his entire life. An Army combat soldier in Vietnam, Stillwagon has post-traumatic stress disorder from his ser-

vice. Unable to sleep at night, among other issues, he applied for a service dog from Americas VetDogs in 2021, but after a phone interview, was rejected. Stillwagon appealed the decision and then asked Suozzi for help.

"Within a week I got a call to go in for an in-person interview," Stillwagon said. "They took me for a tour and everything and I was put on the waiting list."

In this crazy world that we're living in, we are so divided these days. I managed to work across the aisle and get things done with the Problem Solvers.

TOM SUOZZI
 former congressman

Stillwagon was united with a service dog a year later. "Cruiser goes everywhere with me," he said. "Tom helped me out. He's a lovely person who has always been kind to me and my family."

During his six years as congressman for the 3rd District, the Democrat secured millions of dollars for community projects.

Suozzi secured \$2 million for Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory for its

Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Center for Advanced Cancer Diagnostics. The project supports advanced cancer research through state-of-the-art technology. It will provide in-depth study of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Blakeman not yet ready to unfreeze assessments

By MICHAEL MALASZCZYK

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It's a vital component of the property tax system, yet for the third straight year, Nassau County won't be conducting a tax assessment of homes and businesses.

Such a freeze first gained momentum under former Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano, but lifted by his successor, Laura Curran. However, the freeze was re-implemented during Covid-19, and now continues under Bruce Blakeman's tenure.

The difference — at least according to the county legislatures Democratic minority — is that Blakeman campaigned against Curran, promising to roll back the tax increases caused by the reassessments done under her administration. Yet, they still remain frozen.

"As housing prices soared at an unprecedented rate during the worst of the pandemic, the minority supported a temporary freeze to protect property owners from dramatic swings in a remarkably turbulent market," minority spokesman Daniel Schrafel said. "However, 'temporary' is key. History has demonstrated that freezing the tax rolls for extended periods distorts assessed values to such a degree that the only way for property owners to protect themselves from overpaying is to grieve. We must do everything in our power to break this unjust, exploitative cycle."

The reassessments are supposed to happen annually to review property value and



Michael Malaszczyk/Herald

STATE SEN. KEVIN Thomas, second from left, was joined by Nassau County Legislators Carrié Solages, far left, Debra Mule, and Joshua Lafazan at a news conference to discuss the county's freezing of property tax assessments for a third consecutive year. County Executive Bruce Blakeman is extending the grievance deadline to April 3.

tax property owners accordingly. When they don't happen, properties that have risen in value become under-taxed, while those that may have dropped end up paying a higher tax than they would have otherwise.

The value of property impacts school taxes and other issues.

When in office, Curran called the reassessment process "corrupt" and "broken."

The Democrat pledged to fix it in a 2018 opinion piece published in the Herald, only to freeze it once again during the pandemic.

Democrats now criticize Blakeman for the continuing the freeze despite the economic pressures of the pandemic subsidizing, particularly in light of Blakeman's promise to do so.

"Mr. Blakeman vowed to rescind the

county's increases that he blamed on the recent assessment," Democratic county legislator Debra Mulé said. "That basically means that if you're over-assessed, you'll be stuck paying more than your fair share of taxes this year, unless you successfully grieve your assessment."

State Sen. Kevin Thomas joined in the chorus against the freeze to highlight that grievance process.

"Every homeowner in Nassau has received solicitations from tax grievance workers, myself included," Thomas said. "These grievance workers use deceitful tactics that lead many to believe filing a grievance is just too complicated for the average resident.

"That is not the case — homeowners can file grievances themselves. You are not required to use an attorney or a specialist, nor is there a fee to file. You can even file online from today until March 1 by yourself. It should be as simple as that."

Thomas introduced a bill in Albany intending to bring more trust and transparency to the tax grievance process.

For his part, Blakeman called the phase-in plan of his predecessor a failure, and says it won't expire until next year. He is extending the grievance deadline, however, from March 1 to April 3.

"My administration has reviewed the comptroller's comprehensive audit that uncovered many inaccuracies in valuations," Blakeman said in a statement, "and I felt it was important to give residents additional time to grieve."

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Roni Chastain/Herald

DAVID MCCORMICK, LEFT, Calum Pasqua, Jim Stevenson-Mathews and Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews were the night's performers. Each of them helped carry the memory and traditions of Robert Burns to a new generation of Scots. Fiddle player Calum Pasqua, who played during the evening, is the first American to win the Glenfiddich Fiddle Championship.

Lads and lassies celebrate Burns night in style

By **ROKSANA AMID**
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The North Shore Historical Museum celebrated Burns night, a celebration of the famous Bard of Scotland, Robert Burns, and all things Scottish. The annual festivities are a welcome excuse for a feast, music, dancing, and boasting about Scotland's cultural contribution to the world.

Burns Night is considered Scotland's other national day, alongside St. Andrew's Day in November. The museum's Jan. 24 event was a rare chance to see champion fiddler Calum Pasqua and performer David McCormick. Pasqua is known as the first American invited to, and win, the Glenfiddich Fiddle Championship held at Blair Castle in Scotland. McCormick has been widely received for his annual performances at Mohonk Mountain Houses Scottish weekend.

Burns is widely celebrated as the greatest Scottish poet, and one of the renowned poets in history. He wrote his first poem at 16 and wrote more than 700 poems and songs throughout his life.

The first Burns Night was celebrated over 200 years ago, when nine of Burns' close friends gathered to mark the fifth anniversary of their friend's death. It took place at Burns Cottage in Alloway and included a meal of haggis and performances of Burns' work. The celebration's popularity has only grown over the years.

Burns, known familiarly as "Rabbie" in Scotland, was a pioneer of the Romantic Movement known for capturing the sound and soul of rural Scotland and Scottish history in the late 18th century. Burns was a champion of the Scots language at a time when it was not popular in literary cir-

cles. Many of his works became famous, such as "Auld Lang Syne," while his influence is sprinkled throughout the American consciousness. John Steinbeck's famous novel "Of Mice and Men," which takes its name from a line of Burns' poetry, is a well-known example of his influence.

Burns was going to move from Scotland to Jamaica but decided against this when sales of his poetry collection "Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect" also known as the Kilmarnock Volume, took off. He moved to Edinburgh instead, where a second edition of his poetry book was published. For all his fame, Burns never forgot his humble roots. His love for farming stayed with him throughout his life and his writing often dealt with issues affecting the poorer classes, notably highlighting the need for greater social equality.

Burns Night, traditionally held on his birthday Jan. 25, is an unofficial national celebration in Scotland and is widely celebrated in parts of America and other former British colonies with many Scottish descendants. While the museum's Burns Night didn't take place on the poet's birthday, it had many of the classic features of traditional Burns Nights, including a wide range of fresh Scottish delicacies.

The evening also featured music and vocal performances by Glen Cove's own Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews and Jim Stevenson-Mathews.

Stevenson-Mathews is descendent from Scots who settled in the Cape Fear region of the Carolinas and is often called on to perform his Scottish repertoire at Highland games and festivals.

Pianist Jim Stevenson-Mathews is a founding member of the Scottish dance band Highland Oasis and frequently performs with contra dance band Fish Family.



GAITLEY STEVENSON-MATHEWS sang traditional Scottish music to celebrate the life and works of Robert Burns.

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Medicaid Asset Protection Trust Myths

Why don't more people do the Medicaid Asset Protection Trust (MAPT)? The answer is that clients often get the wrong advice from well meaning but ill informed professionals, family and friends. Here are some of the most common MAPT myths.

1. You Can't Sell the House. The MAPT may sell the house at any time. The money is paid to the MAPT. You may invest the money and use the income for a rental or you may purchase another residence in the name of the MAPT. The five year clock does not start over.

2. You Lose Your Property Tax Exemptions. Properly drafted MAPT's preserve your Senior, STAR and Veteran's exemptions as well as the exemption from capital gains on the sale of the primary residence —\$500,000 for a couple or \$250,000 for a single person.

3. It Takes Five Years. While it takes five years to protect ALL of your assets from long-term care in a facility, the time "pro

rates". For example, if you have to go into a nursing home four years after you set up the MAPT, you only have to pay for the one year that is left.

4. You Can't Get Your Money. The trust pays you all of the income. Principal may be gifted from the trust in any amount to any of your heirs.

5. The MAPT Cannot Be Revoked. Strange as it may seem, in New York you may revoke an irrevocable trust. Here's why. It's irrevocable because you, the grantor, cannot revoke it alone. However, New York has another rule on the books that says that if every person named in the irrevocable trust agrees in writing that they no longer want the trust, then you may revoke it on consent of all the named parties. Since that is just you and your adult children, it is usually a simple matter to accomplish. If a child won't sign, we simply amend the trust to remove them and then their signature is no longer needed.

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CRIME WATCH



Herald file

GLEN COVE POLICE arrested Derrick Dyer for a drug trafficking operation in Glen Cove.

Authorities arrest Derrick Dyer, of Glen Cove, in major drug bust

Glen Cove police arrested 29-year-old Derrick Dyer following an eight-month investigation that led to an alleged drug trafficking operation. The joint investigation between the Glen Cove Police Crime Prevention Unit, DEA Task Force and Nassau Narcotics Unit resulted in the Feb. 10 arrest of Dyer on Glen Cove Avenue. Glen Cove detectives Christopher Paolillo and Brain Glennon, along with members of the DEA task Force made the arrest.

Police say Dyer was also in possession of an undisclosed quantity of cocaine and illegal pills. He was charged with additional drug charges and authorities have also accused him of multiple drug sales.

The investigation began with a near fatal overdose that occurred in Glen Cove last May. Glen Cove Police Lt. John Nagle said they received leads to Dyer through cell phone records and other ways linking him to the original sale of drugs.

Undercover police conducted three drug buys with Dyer. Each time, they say he sold them pills that were laced with fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Fentanyl is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the United States.

According to the CDC, the number of drug overdose deaths has increased by

nearly 30 percent from 2019 to 2020 and has quintupled since 1999. Nearly 75 percent of the 91,799 drug overdose deaths in 2020 involved an opioid. From 2019 to 2020, there were significant changes in opioid-involved death rates.

A search of Dyer's residence on Madison Avenue in Glen Cove uncovered an assault rifle, a loaded handgun, multiple high-capacity magazines, ammunition, a bulletproof vest, five pounds of marijuana, and over \$6,000 in cash.

Dyer was charged with five counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance, six counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance, four counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon, criminal possession of an assault weapon, criminal possession of a firearm, and criminal possession of cannabis.

Nagle said the collaboration between the Glen Cove Detective Division and the DEA Task Force successfully prevented the drugs from entering the community.

Dyer denies the charges. After making bail, he told News 12 Long Island that he feels as though he has been framed. Despite his claims, authorities say they have sufficient evidence for their case.

"If you're going to deal fentanyl and drugs, don't do it here in Glen Cove," Nagle said.

GLEN COVE

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George Santos update

Meet George Santos' State of the Union special guest

A 9/11 first responder, and former congressional candidate Michael Weinstock

By ANA BORRUTO
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U.S. Rep. George Santos — who remains the center of controversy around his trail of reported falsehoods — welcomed an unexpected guest to last week's State of the Union address. Notable because of his own debunked claims surrounding how his mother's death was tied to the Sept. 11 attacks, when instead, she was allegedly in Brazil between 1998 and 2003.

Despite that, joining Santos to hear President Joe Biden on Feb. 7 was Michael Weinstock, a former firefighter and 9/11 first responder, who suffers from neuropathy related to his heroic work more than two decades ago.

In the days following the attack on Lower Manhattan, the Great Neck resident was there at ground zero clearing rubble and searching for survivors. He was diagnosed with neuropathy — severe pain associated with nerve damage — in 2016.

Weinstock is well aware of Santos' own claims about Sept. 11, but told reporters he accepted the congressman's invitation to Washington because he wanted to raise awareness of the health care needs of 9/11 emergency workers — especially firefighters with neuropathy.

"This is an issue that transcends politics and speaks to my heart," Weinstock said in a statement provided by Santos' office. "I am a proud Democrat, and Congressman Santos is equally proud to be a member of the GOP. However, we speak with a unified voice, and we encourage the World Trade Center Health Program to include neuropathy as a 'covered condition.'"

Although Weinstock said he didn't vote for Santos or contribute money to his campaign, the two share a bit of a history — or a similar background, at least, in running for office.

Weinstock ran for the congressional seat now held by Santos in 2020 against then-U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi. At the time, he told the Herald he hoped to become "the first 9/11 firefighter elected to Congress, and first openly gay person to represent New York City — or Long Island — in Congress."

On the 20th anniversary of the attacks in 2021, Santos posted a photo of Weinstock to his Instagram page thanking him for his service and "brave, heroic actions."

Weinstock thanked Santos for his kind words and called him a "mensch," a Yiddish word for a person of integrity. Santos previously asserted he is the grandson of

Jewish refugees of the Holocaust — a claim that's also been challenged by news outlets.

In a recent interview with SiriusXM radio host Howard Stern, Weinstock said he shared a story of Santos coming to visit him when he was ill and unable to walk. The congressman checked in on Weinstock's health several times, urging him to give him a call if he was ever "feeling suicidal."

During his 2022 run for Congress, Santos offered Weinstock an online crowdfunding page to raise money for his medical care, but Weinstock said he declined, fearing it would be used as part of Santos' political campaign, according to The New York Times. Santos also promised Weinstock he would sponsor a bill in Congress to amend the Zadroga Act — which provides compensation for 9/11 first responders — and expand coverage to neuropathy, as well as to thousands of first responders not currently included in the program.

In addition to being a volunteer firefighter and EMT, Weinstock is also a former assistant district attorney in Brooklyn's special victims unit. Weinstock told reporters he was fired from his former law firm, Mullen PC, when they learned he would be Santos' State of the Union guest

— calling the congressman "toxic" and not wanting to have any association with him.

Still, Weinstock told The Times he was touched by Santos' concern for his condition and hoped to bring further awareness, but still found the congressman's actions over the credibility of his past as "inexcusable."

Casey Sabella, a Glen Cove resident and community organizer with Courage for America, said Weinstock had been a member of her private Facebook group, "Hold George Santos Accountable," with more than 1,200 other members.

Weinstock was quite active on the social media channel, but when she and other members found out he was going to be Santos' State of the Union guest, she said the group was "surprised, but not surprised."

However, he crossed enough of a line to no longer be a member of her group.

"We knew the guy was kind of supportive of Santos, but you can support someone and also hold them accountable, so we left him in the group," Sabella said. "He went to the State of the Union with this man. At that point, I'm not sure if you can engage that deeply and hold something accountable at the same time."



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Suozzi never forgot his hometown of Glen Cove

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

tumors with a goal to characterize different cell types and allow for earlier detection of cancerous cells.

According to Charles Prizzi, the senior vice president at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the not-for-profit research programs in cancer and neuroscience encourages high school students to become scientists, hosting a summer program. In 2020, before the coronavirus pandemic, Suozzi hosted a reception for the high school students who were Regeneron Scholars from his district presenting them with a congratulatory certificate.

“Congressman Suozzi is a great advocate for the Cold Spring Harbor Lab,” Prizzi said. “We will miss him in Congress and are grateful for this important financial assistance.”

Glen Cove Hospital received \$2 million through Suozzi’s efforts for its Geriatric Center of Excellence in March 2022. Kerri Anne Scanlon, RN, the hospital’s executive director, said a 20 percent increase in residents over age 64 in Nassau County in the last decade makes the center vital to the community.

Residents in Glen Cove are benefiting from Suozzi’s roughly \$3.5 million appropriation for the Duck Pond Road water infrastructure project. The funding covered the cost for installation of a packed tower aeration system at the well station. The former aeration was meeting only 60 percent of its needs and reached its life expectancy.

“Tom got us a lot of grants and money to improve our water systems, our drinking water,” Glen Cove Mayor Pam Panzenbeck said. “He’s always paid attention to Glen Cove.”

Suozi also moved forward the hiking trail project at Garvies Point Museum, which will extend 800 feet to connect to Garvies Point Road. The \$294,000 grant will also be used to upgrade the boat-house and the waterfront. In addition, funds will be used to add an elevator in the museum to make it handicap compliant and upgrade the museum’s basement classrooms. The project is projected to be completed by 2023.

Suozi’s interest in the hiking trail is indicative of who he is. Named “Environmentalist of the Year” for New York state by the League of Conservation Voters in 2008, he has maintained his commitment to the environment throughout his political career.



Courtesy Tom Suozzi

CITY RESIDENTS WERE members of a committee that helped former U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi, center, with a fundraiser, Rebuild the VFW, to help Glen Cove’s James E. Donohue Veterans of Foreign War Post 347 rebuild after a fire in 2021.

As congressman, he increased funding for the Long Island Sound by 1,000 percent, from \$4 million in 2016 to \$40 million in 2022.

He’s worked to keep the Sound viable by securing funding for a variety of purposes, including \$300,000 for shellfish seeding.

“I’ve always been passionate about the environment,” Suozzi said. “The Long Island Sound is like our national park.”

When Suozzi was elected to Congress in 2017, he joined the Problem Solvers Caucus — 29 Democrats and 29 Republicans who meet weekly to try and find common ground — and served as the co-vice chair. The group, committed to bipartisan lawmaking to end the gridlock in Washington, remained important to Suozzi throughout his time in the House. He stayed with them until he left Congress.

“In this crazy world that we’re living in, we are so divided these days. I managed to work across the aisle and get things done with the Problem Solvers,” he said. “A lot of the big things we did for the country, I wasn’t the leader of it necessarily, or the main person, but I played a big role in contributing to get

these bipartisan bills done.”

Being a member of the Problem Solvers was a way Suozzi built personal relationships with Republicans. He was also a member of an intense work-out class led by a Republican with a background in martial arts. Suozzi said he was the “old man” in the group and eventually had to stop going. But he continued to do his own work out there, maintaining the relationships he had built.

“I just always made it a point to get to know people, to understand where they were coming from,” he said. “And even people I disagree with, I still tried to let them know that I’d work with them in good faith if they were working to solve a problem.”

And through it all, Suozzi continued to help his neighbors in and around Glen Cove.

When a fire broke out in August, 2021 at Glen Cove’s Veterans of Foreign War James Donohue Post 347, veterans were left without a home base. The cost of repairs was estimated at \$400,000, and insurance was offering only \$140,000. Stillwagon, a member of the organization, asked Suozzi for his help.

Veterans are close to former U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi’s heart. His father, Joseph, a

recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, was a World War II navigator on a B-24.

“The prime responsibility of government is to take care of our veterans,” Suozzi said. “In Ukraine, they are fighting for freedom and democracy. That’s what our vets have done for us.”

Hosting the fundraiser, Rebuild the VFW, in March 2022, Suozzi donated \$10,000 from his congressional funds, which he included in the \$35,000 he raised from donors. An additional \$100,000 was raised.

“I did the fundraiser as an individual,” Suozzi said. “I did all kinds of stuff for Glen Cove. I never forgot about my hometown.”

Suozi said he misses being in Congress. He left not because he didn’t like the job or was worried Democrats would be in the minority. He wanted to be governor to help his state, which he said is troubled by crime, taxes and corruption — issues he’s been fighting for his entire political career. Although he lost the Gubernatorial Democratic Primary, Suozzi said he has no regrets.

“Everything happens the way it’s supposed to happen,” he said. “Our system will work.”

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RAISE  HEALTH

Full LIRR service to East Side finally coming

By JUAN LASSO

jlasso@liherald.com

Commuters are riding the high of never-before-seen rail service aimed at connecting the Long Island Rail Road to the bedrock of Midtown Manhattan at Grand Central Madison.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority celebrated a turning point with the long-anticipated opening of its 750,000-square-foot East Side Manhattan transit hub with the first shuttle train from Jamaica station on Jan. 25. Now the terminal is set for a full rollout of regular train service beginning Feb. 27.

The East Side Access Project, as it was known, has already drawn a daily rush of commuters — albeit under a limited format with shuttle service from the Queens station to Grand Central Madison.

Rather than plunging straightaway with full service, MTA officials said the station is in a soft-launch phase, enabling riders to slowly acclimate themselves to the additional shuttle service from Jamaica, find their way around the facility and test out commuting options.

Once Midtown's terminal comes fully online, it will no doubt reorder the MTA's transit system and send ripples through its 11 Long Island train branches, each offering direct or transfer service to Penn Station on the West Side, and Grand Central Madison.

For LIRR commuters, this change will



Courtesy Metropolitan Transportation Authority

FULL PASSENGER TRAIN service from the Long Island Rail Road to Grand Central Madison is set to begin Feb. 27 according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Limited shuttle service opened up late last month, bringing in some of the first LIRR passengers to Manhattan's East Side.

be felt most acutely in adapting to an overhauled train schedule that divvies up Manhattan-bound train service between the two sister terminals.

Some commuters may feel more taken to the change than others with the promise of greater accessibility and efficiency to their commutes. Still, others can't help but groan over the foreseeable loss, and longing for their preferred service lines and connections.

But at least for MTA chair and chief

executive Janno Lieber, the change is a net-gain for most commuters — and a sign of economic renewal for the metro Long Island area, with a 41 percent increase in service.

Grand Central Madison provides “faster, more convenient travel that brings Long Island closer to the heart of the City,” Lieber said, in a release. “The new schedules are going to be a major shot in the arm for the local economy and the effort to get people back to offic-

es, theaters and shopping.”

But critics are quick to point out that the often-touted 41 percent service increase — raising the number of daily trains from 665 to 936 — is relative to current service which has experienced a major cutback of its own compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Weekday ridership continues to hover at about 65 percent of what it was before any of us had ever heard of Covid-19.

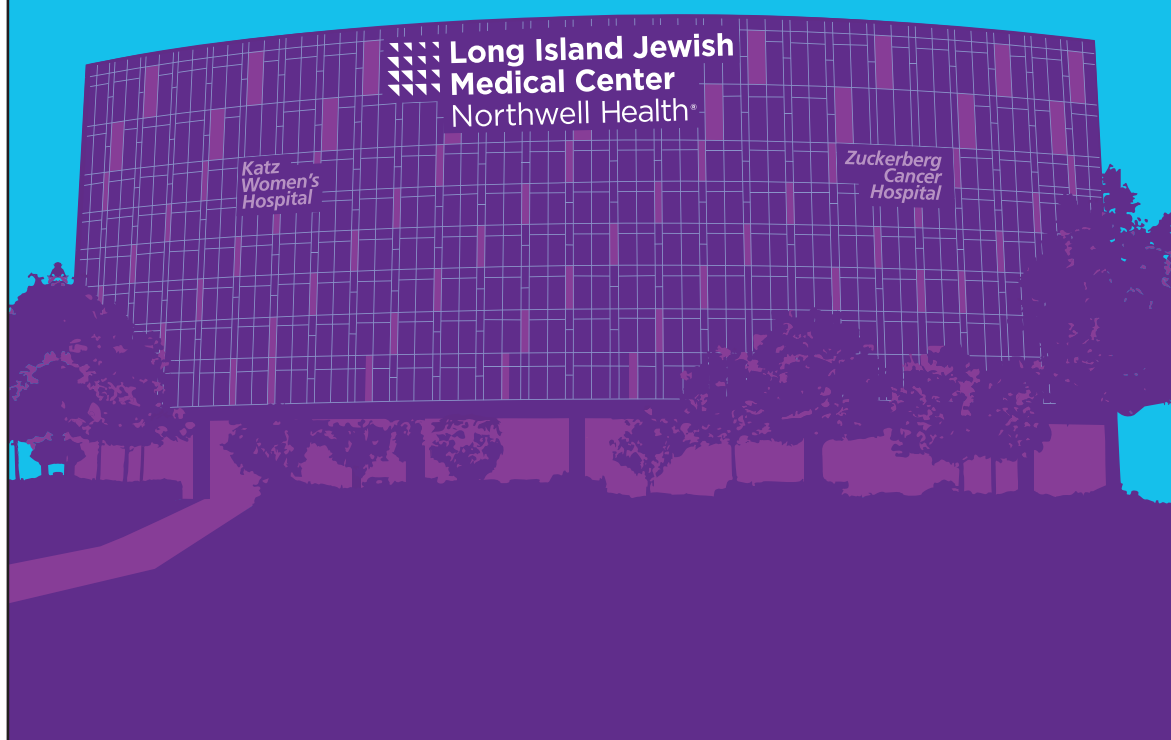
And while MTA officials expect nearly 45 percent of riders to shift over to Grand Central Madison, there are nagging concerns about the potential travel headaches brought by the decline in available morning rush-hour train service to Penn.

Take, for example, the fact that the Long Beach branch which will get 10 additional rush hour trains from its current 13 at Penn Station. Yet, it will have two fewer rush hour trains at Penn Station with shared service lines to Grand Central Madison.

“The new schedules are designed to have more evenly spaced trains and fewer large gaps in service,” MTA spokesman Dave Steckel said. “There will also be more frequent service to Queens and on the Ronkonkoma and West Hempstead branches. New service promises decrease travel times from Long Island to Manhattan, and reduce crowding at Penn Station.

“We will continue to monitor and adjust service based on ridership trends and other factors.”

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STEPPING OUT



Dino daze Dinosaurs **ROAR** to life of all kinds

By Karen Bloom

The herd is back. Kids of all ages are in for a thrill when Jurassic Quest — the traveling dinosaur “experience” — returns to Nassau Coliseum for four days of prehistoric adventuring. Jurassic Quest takes families back to the days when these prehistoric creatures ruled the lands, Friday through Monday, Feb. 17-20.

This immersive spectacle features a bevy of lifelike dinosaurs — of all shapes and sizes — that are an impressive lot. They transform the arena environment to a time 165 million years ago during the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods where visitors can get up-close and personal with the creatures.

“They are all life-size and authentic,” Park Ranger Marty (aka Marty Hoffman) says. “You get to see what dinosaurs are really like, hearing the different sounds they made.”

Described by Park Ranger Marty and the Jurassic Quest folks as North America’s largest and most realistic event, the creative team collaborates with leading paleontologists to ensure each dinosaur is painstakingly replicated, from coloration to teeth size, to textured skin, fur or feathers — drawing on the latest research about how we understand dinosaurs and these ancient creatures looked and moved. Plant settings, sound effects, lighting and electronics add to the authenticity of the setting.

But perhaps what makes the experience more than just a spectacle is the way it pulls on the heartstrings. As Park Ranger Marty — who proclaims himself a “dinosaur nerd” — put it: “It’s a great time for everyone. Especially the kids, but also the adults. We’ve all had that time in our lives when we loved dinosaurs. Then we get away from it. When we take the time to see them through the kids’ eyes, we reconnect with that love of dinosaurs we all had.”



- Feb. 17-20; times vary
- Tickets start at \$22; available at MonsterQuest.com or NassauColiseum.com
- Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale

It’s all self-guided, so visitors proceed at their own pace. That means you can approach the mighty T. rex, check out the 50-foot-long Spinosaurus, largest known carnivorous dinosaur, even longer and heavier than the T. rex, also the enormous Apatosaurus with its whip-tail, along with sea creatures, and many others.

“One hundred sixty million years worth of dinosaurs are here,” Park Ranger Marty enthuses.

And there are those baby dinos, “hatched” specifically for Jurassic Quest: Cammie the Camarasaurus, Tyson the T. rex, and Trixie the Triceratops.

“People really love them,” Park Ranger Marty says. “Kids want to hang out and pet them. It’s an amazing thing to see. The interaction between the babies and the kids is really fun.”

While the dinosaurs are the main draw, of course, the event includes a fossil dig, where budding paleontologists can dig up bones, along with an excavation site, with actual fossils and themed rides, among other activities.

“There really is something for everyone,” Park Ranger Marty says. Plus an education component is worked in — and the kids won’t even realize it.

“We like to think of dinosaurs as the ‘gateway science,’” he explains. “Kids are learning about biology and geology, and more, when they explore dinosaurs. Also other sciences like astronomy and engineering. It all relates back to dinosaurs and ancient plants. And this all comes out of the kids thinking dinosaurs are cool.”

Park Ranger Marty and Dino Trainer Dustin hanging out, at left, with a Tylosaurus skull. Open wide! An enthusiastic young visitor, at right, finds his way into an Allosaur head.



Alan Doyle

The prolific Canadian singer-songwriter has boundless appeal. The moment he burst onto the scene in the early 1990s with his band Great Big Sea, Canadians fell in love with the pride of Petty Harbour, Newfoundland, whose effusive charisma and sense of humour was eclipsed only by his magnetic stage presence. His influence is now being heard in a new generation of artists as his solo work continues to endear him to roots music fans everywhere. That’s clearly evident on Doyle’s latest EP ‘Rough Side Out,’ which finds him collaborating with Canadian country music superstars Dean Brody and Jess Moskaluke, while at the same time offering his own distinctive interpretation of contemporary country. His songs all have a strong personal meaning, according to Doyle, who believes ‘the best songwriters in any genre are the ones who can look in their own backyard and find something they want to sing about.’

Saturday, Feb. 25, 8 p.m. \$41, \$37, \$29. Jeanne Rimsky Theater at Landmark on Main Street, 232 Main St., Port Washington. (516) 767-6444 or LandmarkOnMainStreet.org.



Dublin Irish Dance

The acclaimed Dublin Irish Dance ensemble visits Long Island with their new production, ‘Wings: A Celtic Dance Celebration.’ Wings features exquisite Irish and World champion dancers alongside Ireland’s musical and vocal virtuosos. Complete with original music and choreography, this groundbreaking production, infused with world dance and musical influences, will thrill audiences with its transformative emotional energy and imaginative design. The vivid and illuminating production portraying rich Irish heritage themes, in spectacular dance and musical performances by this superb cast that will thrill audiences of all ages. Everyone will be entranced by these world champion Irish dancers as they defy gravity in this captivating spectacle.

Friday, March 17, 8 p.m. \$60, \$45, \$35. Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, LIU Post campus, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville. (516) 299-3100 or TillesCenter.org.

THE SCENE

Feb. 23

Art talk

Grab your lunch and join Nassau County Museum of Art Docent Riva Ettus for her popular "Brown Bag Lecture" live, via Zoom, Thursday, **Feb. 23**, 1 p.m. She'll discuss the current exhibition, "The Big Picture: Photography Now." Participants are invited to ask questions at the end of the program. Register at least 24 hours in advance to receive the program Zoom link. Also Feb. Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor. (516) 484-9337 or NassauMuseum.org.



Meet author Brendan Slocumb

Glen Cove Public Library offers a virtual program with author Brendan Slocumb Tuesday, **Feb. 28**, 2:30 p.m. Discuss Slocumb's debut novel "The Violin Conspiracy," a mystery about a Black classical musician whose family heirloom violin is stolen at a classical music competition. To register go to GlenCoveLibrary.org. For more information contact adultprograms@glencovelibrary.org or call (516) 676-2130.



March 3

The Hot Sardines

The band brings their distinctive sound to the Landmark stage, Friday, **March 3**, 8 p.m. Their unique recipe blends hot jazz and sultry standards from the '20s, '30s and '40s, rich New Orleans sounds, a dash of '40s Paris flavor, and vibrant musical surprises. It's all steeped in salty stride piano and the music Louis Armstrong, Django Reinhardt and Fats Waller used to make. The result is straight-up foot-stomping jazz. Their name says it all: their iconic 'hot' styling will paint a vibrant picture with smoky sounds and audiences revel in the steamy, swanky influence of their art form. With their contagious brand of joy, grit, glamour and passion, they invoke the sounds of nearly a century ago, yet stay right in step with the current age. \$60, \$50, \$46. Jeanne Rimsky Theater at Landmark on Main Street, 232 Main St., Port Washington. (516) 767-6444 or LandmarkOnMainStreet.org.

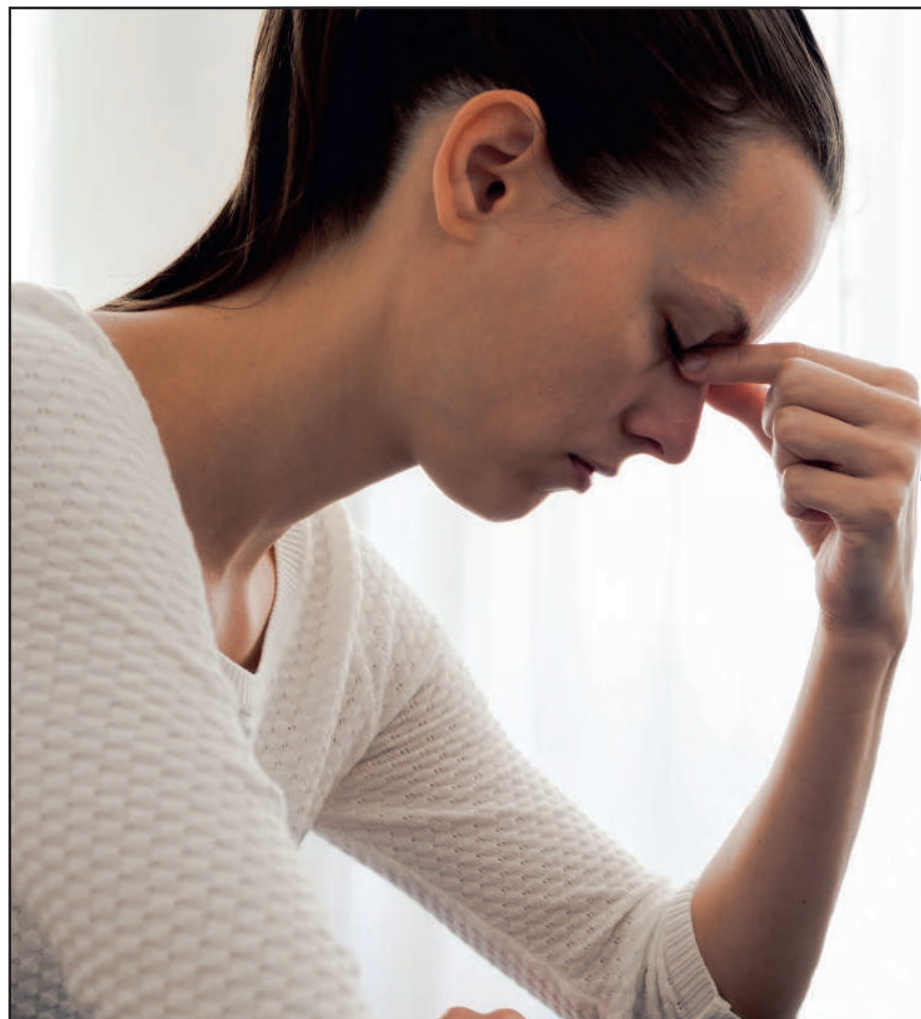
A Donde Llega el Silencio

Visit Planting Fields Arboretum, 1395 Planting Fields Road in Oyster Bay, for a performance by Argentinian musician Jacinta Clusellas, Saturday, **Feb. 18**, 6-8 p.m. Hear tunes from her second EP, "A Donde Llega el Silencio," with a wine and cheese reception following. For more information, call (516) 922-9210 or email info@plantingfields.org.

Andy Aledort & the Groove Kings

Andy Aledort & the Groove Kings perform, Friday, **Feb. 24**, starting at 8 p.m., at Still Partners, 225 Sea Cliff Ave., Sea Cliff. Enjoy a mixture of blues, country rock and folk music. For more information call (516) 200-9229.

Feb. 24



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Kimon Bekelis,
MD, FAANS, FAHA, FACS
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Voyage

The Journey tribute band visits The Paramount, Saturday, **Feb. 25**, 8 p.m. The popular band takes everyone back to the '80's when Journey's timeless music ruled the airwaves. Hailed by fans and critics alike as the world's top Journey tribute band, this group performs their music with chilling accuracy. Fronted by Hugo — a dead ringer for Steve Perry, both visually and vocally — he continues to delight fans with his miraculous resemblance, exact mannerisms and identical voice to Perry. Fans agree that Voyage delivers an experience to the original Steve Perry-fronted lineup. \$40, \$35, \$30, \$25. The Paramount, 370 New York Ave., Huntington. (800) 745-3000 or Ticketmaster.com or ParamountNY.com.

Senior Lunch Program

Enjoy visiting friends, with a delicious lunch and chair yoga, at the popular senior program hosted by Mutual Concerns, **every Tuesday**, at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church, at 253 Glen Ave., in Sea Cliff. Those interested in joining the lunch program can call Peggie Como at (516) 675-7239.



On stage

Mo Willems' popular Pigeon comes alive on the Long Island Children's Museum stage, Saturday, **Feb. 18**, 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.; Monday through Thursday, Feb. 20-23, 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. LICM, Museum Row, Garden City. (516) 224-5800 or LICM.org.

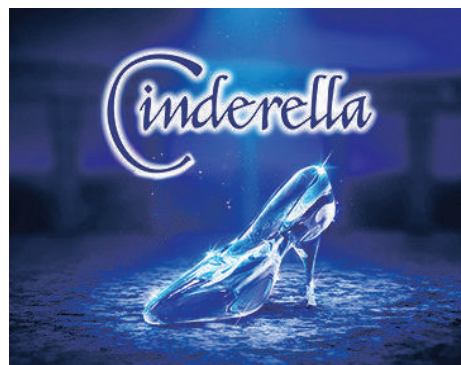
Mark Whitaker and Tracey Edwards

In honor of Black History Month, Theodore's Books hosts a conversation between journalist and author Mark Whitaker and the Long Island Regional Director of the NAACP Tracey Edwards, Sunday, **Feb. 26**, 4 p.m. They will discuss Whitaker's latest book "Saying it Loud: 1966 – The Year Black Power Challenged the Civil Rights Movement." The event, at 17 Audrey Ave., in Oyster Bay, is free and open to the public. RSVP at TheodoresBooks.com. For more information contact (516) 636-5550.



Hunt for Symbols

Planting Fields Arboretum holds a drop-off program for students in grades 6-8, Tuesday, **Feb. 21**, 10:30 a.m.- 2 p.m. Students will explore Coe Hall's many diverse symbols on a guided tour and then create an art project using symbols that express their own unique selves, at 1395 Planting Fields Road, in Oyster Bay, followed by a pizza lunch. For more information contact Jocelyn Russo at (516) 922-8666 or jrusso@plantingfields.org.



Family theater

The beloved fairy tale springs to life in a delightful musical romp, presented Plaza Theatrical Productions, Monday, **Feb. 20**, 11 a.m.; Friday, Feb. 24, 11 a.m.; Sunday, Feb. 26, noon. All the ingredients that have made this story a perennial favorite

are here, including Cinderella, a zany Godmother, a trip to the royal ball, and a glass slipper. Tickets are \$16. Visit the Plaza stage at The Showplace at Bellmore Movies, 222 Pettit Ave., Bellmore. For information/tickets, go to PlazaTheatrical.com or call (516) 599-6870.



Snacking around the world

Families can stop by Bayville Free Library for some international snacking, Sunday through Saturday, Feb. 19 -Feb. 25, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., 34 School Street in Bayville, Kids in grades 6-12 can sample international potato chips, chocolates, biscuits and more, and write a review on the library's social media page. For more information contact teens@bayvillefreelibrary.org or call (516) 628-2765.

Absolute Adele

Vocalist Jennifer Cella, who performs with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, returns to her alma mater, Nassau Community College, with a tribute to Adele, Saturday, **Feb. 25**, 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Mainstage Theatre, Garden City. Tickets are available through the NCC online box office at Nassau.BookTix.com/seating.php. For information, visit NCC.edu or call (516) 572-7676.

Having an event?

Items on The Scene 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 thescene@liherald.com.

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George Santos has a problem with the truth

By **ROKSANA AMID**

ramid@iherald.com

The news surrounding U.S. Rep. George Santos, who misled voters about his background among other things, has gained both national and international attention.

After a New York Times investigation into his past in December, the congressman admitted he had “embellished” various elements of his background, including his Jewish heritage. However, he insisted he did nothing wrong, and said he wouldn’t step down.

The daily flood of new information coming to light has left many glued to their television and computer screens, unable to turn away from the political trainwreck unfolding in front of their eyes.

Beyond its entertainment value — partially fueled by late-night television hosts — the Santos saga raises questions about the psychology of someone who seems incapable of telling the truth, and his footprint on the political landscape.

The falsehoods surrounding Santos has inspired a new bill by Nassau County Legislator Josh Lafazan, called the “GEORGE Package” — Get Egregious Officials Removed from Government Elections. If it becomes law, GEORGE will require political candidates to undergo a background check, penalizing them with a criminal misdemeanor for lying about income, employment, education history or where they live.

It would also exclude any candidate with an open foreign arrest warrant to be elected. Law enforcement in Brazil, where Santos lived for some time, say there is an open investigation into a check theft there where Santos is a suspect.

Mental health experts, like psychologist and Nassau Herald columnist Linda Sapadin, speculate that the falsehoods from Santos indicate traits of narcissistic grandiosity, an unrealistic sense of superiority. But even with those observations, Sapadin makes it clear it’s difficult to diagnose somebody without meeting them and is not necessarily saying this is a complete and accurate description of the congressman.

“Those lies are trying to make himself seem better



Tim Baker/Herald

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS speculate that the falsehoods from Santos indicate traits of narcissistic grandiosity, an unrealistic sense of superiority.

and more important than he really is,” Sapadin said.

Psychologists don’t know whether traits of narcissism are inborn or if they’re shaped by upbringing. But what they do know is that these traits develop at a young age. It’s common for narcissists to demand things be in their favor.

“In childhood, they make these little lies,” Sapadin said. “But as they learn that they can get away with the lies, they tend to make them more outlandish because they see it’s working.”

Even with a number of news outlets casting serious doubts about his claims of where he worked, where he lived and where he went to school — among other things — Santos refused to step down, even after Republicans in

Nassau County banded together, calling for his resignation.

“He shows no remorse,” Sapadin said. “It seems to most voters that he doesn’t care about the impact of what he’s done. This is a major indication of narcissism, and certainly lack of empathy for others and for what goes on in the world.”

Sapadin also suspects Santos doesn’t internalize right and wrong, and that he only cares about what is best for him.

Still, the congressman’s actions have left many voters feeling angry and duped. They have doubts Santos can be trusted to represent the best interests of the people in his district above his own.

Glen Head’s Michele Purcell voted for Santos, but now feels he is emotionally unfit to represent her.

“Every day is a new level of horror,” Purcell said. “I don’t even care if we lose the seat, I just think he should go. I can’t put any trust in him at all.”

Hofstra University political science professor William Schaefer said that political trust and accountability is a sore topic for Republicans right now.

“I think the Republicans have a stain in the 3rd District that’s going to be looked at more carefully,” he said.

In the meantime, it is up to Congress to decide how they will handle these extensive falsehoods.

Schaefer cites the “political question doctrine,” in which the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that when there are issues that clearly fall within the domain of one of the other branches of government, that they are going to defer to that branch of government to make those decisions, and will not involve themselves.

Yet, there is irony to Santos being thrust into the political spotlight, Schaefer says. While Santos has become a joke people are using against the Republican Party, one could almost make the argument that is good news for the GOP because it takes emphasis away from the perceived dysfunction of the Republican Congress.

Even though many voters don’t have time to do their own research, Schaefer advises adopting a more cynical view during election season, and not taking things said by any candidate at face value.

NEWS BRIEFS

Grants issued to preserve drinking water

The Nassau County Legislature voted unanimously on Jan. 23 to designate \$1.55 million to support multiple water quality initiatives. This allocation is drawn from \$6 million of the County’s federal American Rescue Plan Act, funding that the county previously dedicated toward water quality improvement initiatives. \$1.55 million was allocated toward \$50,000 grants for eligible public and private water suppliers in support of their efforts to remove emerging contaminants and toxins from our drinking water.

Water districts can apply the funding toward conducting studies; planning and design remediation initiatives; purchasing equipment, materials and supplies; developing operations manuals, guidelines and materials; maintaining removal systems that are already online; and defraying the cost of lab testing. The Nassau County Department of Public Works will oversee the administration and implementation of these projects.

The Glen Cove, Port Washington, Roslyn and Sands Point Water Districts are eligible to receive grant funding to combat emerging contaminants such as 1,4-Dioxane and PFOs/PFOAs (perfluorooctanoic acid), which have been found in the sole-source

aquifers that provide Long Island with its drinking water.

“Removing dangerous emerging contaminants like 1,4-Dioxane, PFOs and PFOAs from our drinking water must be one of our top public health priorities,” Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, Nassau County Legislator, said. “I am proud and gratified that the Legislature unanimously allocated ARPA funding to our water suppliers in support of these crucial ongoing efforts.”

A likely carcinogen, 1,4-Dioxane is a byproduct of industrial processing. It is found in common items such as anti-freeze, shampoo and laundry detergent. It is called a “forever chemical” because it is resistant to water, heat and normal biodegradation, which means it can last for thousands of years.

PFOs and PFOs are synthetic chemicals that were once used to coat non-stick, waterproof, or stain-resistant products. Although these compounds have not been made in the United States for more than two decades, these chemicals never break down and they have been discovered in soil and water. Human health impacts include developmental defects, cancer, liver damage and immune disorders.

To learn more about ongoing efforts to preserve and protect drinking water, contact the Glen Cove water district at (516) 676-2238 or reach out to Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton’s office at dderiggiwhitton@nassaucountyny.gov or (516) 571-6211.

Be the next Downtown Sounds Teen Idol

The second annual Downtown Sounds Teen Idol vocal contest, presented by the Glen Cove Downtown Business Improvement District, is open to Gold Coast residents from 13 to 18. It showcases local emerging talent, and the top finalists will perform live during the Downtown Sounds 2023 concert series.

Teen Idol is an opportunity for teenagers to show off their vocal skills across various genres. Last year’s finalists were asked to choose songs that matched the genre of that week’s concert, spanning from Motown to country and from pop to disco. Guest judges included professional musicians from the bands. Audience members also cast ballots, helping the judges determine the winner each week. Ultimately, Lexi Briones of Glen Cove emerged the winner, taking home a cash prize and four hours of free recording time at Tiki Recording Studios.

In addition to a cash prize, the winner will receive additional performance opportunities, including singing the National Anthem at National Night Out in August, performing during the Downtown BID’s annual Holiday Festival on Dec. 2, on New Year’s Eve with the Downtown Sounds band and at the historic Bitter End with Richie Cannata.



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OPINIONS

Two isn't always a winning number

There are all types of numbers associated with politicians. Pollsters are constantly bombarding us with numbers. Defeated candidates keep complaining that they won, and say they have the numbers to prove it. But the bottom line in this discussion is that the number 2 is by far the worst number to be attached to any political figure.



**JERRY
KREMER**

As living proof of the value of being second, I cite Vice President Kamala Harris and New York Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado. There is no question that either of them would become No. 1 if anything happened to her/his boss. But looking

at their scope of responsibilities shows that they have very little to do. Harris is rarely in the news, primarily because she hasn't been given that much to do on a daily basis. She's called upon to attend important funerals, but the press rarely says much about her.

With the 2024 presidential election coming up, there is speculation about whether President Biden will make Harris his running mate if he decides to run again. Most political observers think she would be a drag on the 2024 ticket, because she hasn't been associated with any winning issues. Shortly after she took on her official duties, the president assigned her the responsibility of helping solve the border crisis, which is proving more difficult than curing cancer.

There was an opportunity for Harris to make some serious recommendations on how to solve the crisis, but she felt the issue was too toxic and declined to actively take on the role. She has been lobbying for the passage of the George Floyd Act, which would better clarify what the role of the police should be, but she wouldn't be able to make any waves without Biden doing the heavy lifting. There's also a possibility that the president has chosen not to boost her credentials because of the 2020

debates, when she went out of her way to attack Biden on school segregation.

No matter how you try to define the role of the vice president, it's very hard to write out a list of specifications. The president decides what the V.P.'s job will

be, and there are many examples of presidents giving their vice presidents serious duties. President George W. Bush delegated most of his high-level duties to Dick Cheney, and many claimed that Cheney became the real president. But the late Vice President James Nance Garner, who served under Franklin Roosevelt, is said to have had the best definition of the job, describing

the vice president's job as not being worth "a bucket of warm spit."

Delgado's situation is an interesting one. He's a graduate of Colgate University and Harvard Law School. He was a very effective member of Congress who was willing to resign to take on the No. 2 position in Albany. Gov. Kathy Hochul spent every waking hour of her time as lieutenant governor traveling to every

corner of the state. She got to know every local chamber of commerce, and elected officials marveled at her non-stop visits. There is no doubt that her tenacity helped her get elected governor.

Currently, however, the only job Delgado has is to preside over the State Senate, which isn't the most exciting work. No doubt after April 1, when the state budget is out of the way, Hochul will decide what role he will play. Delgado is personable and articulate, and was well received during his campaign swings. He could be a great advocate for the governor's programs. She is badly in need of someone who can reach out to the Assembly and Senate members and make some friends. Delgado could help her a great deal in that role.

But either way, being No. 2 in government is hardly the best job in the business.

Jerry Kremer was an Assemblyman for 23 years, and chaired the Assembly's Ways and Means Committee for 12 years. He now heads Empire Government Strategies, a business development and legislative strategy firm. Comments about this column? jkremer@liherald.com.

Who's got less to do, the vice president or the lieutenant governor?

Minx or madman: the George Santos story

Don't mess with puppies, George. From what I've read and what I've heard in statements coming out of your very own mouth, you seem estranged from most commonly held beliefs of what is true and what is false, what is a factual statement and what is a lie. What happened and what didn't happen.



**RANDI
KREISS**

Assiduously, I have ignored the media high jinks and political circus surrounding your behavior, but last week's revelation of the alleged puppy caper in Pennsylvania's Amish country in 2017 unleashes my inner Cujo.

Oh yes, the temptation to joke is overwhelming due to the ridiculousness of many of your quasi-legal escapades and the seemingly endless stream of revelations concerning your grandiose claims, self-promotion and transgressions.

Last week we read in The Washington Post that a farmer in Pennsylvania had come forward with a story about you "buying" golden retriever puppies from him with rubber checks. Other

farmers have come forward with similar claims. Related to these charges is the story about the "charity" you claim to have established, Friends of Pets United, but the Post reported that no IRS records of the group could be found. It also reported that you stole money that had been raised to help a disabled veteran care for a dying dog. A disabled veteran?? A dying dog?? What's wrong with you, George?

I am very disappointed in you. If I were your mother — but oh, wait, your mother died tragically in the 9/11 attacks, unless she didn't. Can't be sure. Well, if I were your mother, I would get you some help. The impulse among us in the media is to point at you, since you have become something of a one-man sideshow. But dude, you need serious therapeutic intervention.

What we can be sure of is that you aren't Jewish, or Jew-ish, despite your repeated claims to the contrary. According to The Forward, even though you said that your grandparents escaped the Holocaust, they actually were safe and sound in Brazil at the time. There's no proof you were really mugged on your way to pay a delinquent rent check in

New York City, or worked for a bank, or owned various houses, or knew people in the Pulse nightclub shooting, or graduated from NYU or played high-stakes volleyball.

Some say your name isn't even George Santos. Pinning down the truth as torrents of lies pour from your mouth is like pinning down Jell-O. You are inventive and indefatigable in your stream of wishful thinking out loud, Walter Mitty on a bad trip.

Mostly this is terribly sad. You need help, but you won't find it in Congress or any public office, for now. Why not step down and save yourself further humiliation? You can't expect assistance from your mates in Congress, George. As long as you have a pulse and can vote the party line, they will let the public evisceration continue. You won't find solace in Congress or real collegiality or decency. You are a GOP vote. Full stop.

Readers, from my perch in the press, the buffoonery of George Santos and his enablers fits perfectly into this time and space. Congress and the Senate have always had their share of nudniks, but Santos is part of a wave of new-age

liars. The toxic lies spewing from people like Marjorie Taylor Green, Rick Scott, Mike Lee, Lauren Boebert and Ron Johnson are poisoning the processes of government. They are all using Santos in what has become a spectacle and a shame.

Last, a shout-out to our neighbors in the 3rd Congressional District, the people of Mineola, Great Neck, North Hills, Port Washington and Oyster Bay. Assuming all of you are literate and somewhat paying attention, how did George Santos sweep by you and right into office? Was holding a Republican seat really a wise trade-off for allowing a candidate with not even a passing appreciation for the truth represent your interests in the People's House?

As we approach the birthday of another George, the George of American history, who could not tell a lie, I wonder what the people of that era would do with someone like Mr. Santos? Hopefully summon some empathy and not put him on public display. During the reign of another George, King George the First of England, someone like our George might have officially played the part of the fool.

Now we don't quite know what to do with him.

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How long will the Republicans allow the public evisceration to continue?

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HERALD EDITORIAL

Gambling addiction is no game

The Kansas City Chiefs edged the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFL's biggest game Sunday night, watched by more than 100 million people around the world.

But more than 50 million sports fans here at home in the United States had more invested in the game than pride in their favorite team. They wagered as much as \$16 billion on Super Bowl LVII, according to the American Gaming Association. And just like football, someone's going to win, which means someone has to lose. The thing is, being on the wrong side of a good bet is more common than not.

The money bet on the Chiefs and the Eagles was said to be more than double the total spent last year, when the Los Angeles Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals. And these days that betting involves more than just choosing which team will win.

Take prop bets, more formally known as proposition bets. They aren't tied to the outcome of the game — like traditional spreads, moneylines and totals. Instead, they focus on more non-traditional occurrences like the length of the national anthem, or what color Gatorade will be poured on the winning coach.

Prop bets are currently the biggest driver of revenue for many sports gambling sites, according to news reports. That is, except in New York, where the law requires that all bets be tied to the game itself.

Even with those restrictions, New York-based gamblers placed more than \$472 million in legal sports bets during the Super Bowl between the Rams and Bengals — part of a larger \$16 billion wagered in the first year of legalized online betting in New York. So far, based on the weekly figures from the state gaming commission, this year's figure is predicted to be even larger. All from a practice that didn't even exist here a couple years ago.

There are currently nine different mobile applications legally recognized by the state, with FanDuel, DraftKings and Caesar's Sportsbook among the bigger ones. FanDuel and DraftKings began a decade or so ago, focused on fantasy sports, in which fans build their own teams and compete against each other using real-life game statistics.

But as sports gambling has gained more widespread legal acceptance, the influence of those two companies has grown, and they have shifted gears and focused most of their attention on this new, much-more-lucrative market.

There are strong opinions on both sides on whether gambling should be legal, or if it's even moral. But something many agree on is that if you're going to gamble, do it responsibly. Wager only what you can afford to lose. Don't stretch — or even break — those limits.

And no different than a casino, mobile and online sports betting can also lead to problem gambling.

Like many addictions, gambling can be attributed to the release of dopamine brought on by the thrill of risk-taking and the potential rewards. Gambling, for the most part, is perfectly legal. But then again, so are cigarettes and alcohol.

But gambling is sometimes considered a "hidden addiction," because it's not something that might be as obvious as drugs or alcohol, manifesting physical symptoms, although some gamblers have problems with sleep, anxiety, depression and guilt.

For the working-class poor, gambling can also create a perpetual loop in which addicts throw away much-needed and typically hard-earned cash that would otherwise be spent on necessities like housing and food.

The good thing, however, is that there are services in place to help. The Long Island Problem Gambling Resource Center, for example, offers several services for individuals and families impacted by gambling.

These issues shouldn't necessarily disqualify any talk of bringing a new casino to Uniondale, but they certainly should be part of the conversation — a big part of it. Every resource should be available to keep wagering responsible, and to avoid the destruction of families — both functionally and economically.

As always, if you or a loved one are dealing with problem gambling, you can get help by calling (516) 266-8342, or visiting NYProblemGambling.org.

LETTERS

Lafazan should rethink his GEORGE Package

To the Editor:

Nassau Legislator Josh Lafazan's recommendations last week to prevent future egregious candidate misrepresentations a la George Santos ("A useful way to enshrine a name we'd sooner forget") are unnecessary and provide for a cure worse than the disease. Lafazan's recommendations are to enshrine in law at all levels the following:

1. Mandatory background checks for all candidates "just like any employee." There are significant legal restrictions on the nature and scope of employee background checks, and this is unnecessary, as the most rudimentary opposition research would have exposed Santos.

2. Barring anyone with an open foreign arrest warrant from holding office. Lafazan couldn't possibly have thought this through. So, any foreign country simply has to issue an arrest warrant to remove our public officials? Talk about foreign interference in elections.



OPINIONS

How political extremism became the norm

Viewing the American political scene today, I can't help thinking about what Yeats wrote more than a century ago:

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

I'm not suggesting anarchy is imminent, or that our governmental structures are collapsing, but there are warning signs that should be heeded for our nation to cope with the enormous challenges facing America at home — and throughout the world — effectively. Not only is there bitter partisanship between



PETER KING

the parties, there are also bitter divisions within them.

There can be honest debate as to when this severe fracturing began. Politics is always a combat sport. The days of peace, love and harmony — the "good old days" — never existed. Certainly not during the 28 years I was in Congress. But no matter how bitter the debate and severe the divisions were, certain lines weren't crossed.

Richard Nixon had reason to contest the 1960 election results, but gracefully conceded the race to John F. Kennedy. Al

Gore challenged George W. Bush's razor-thin electoral vote margin in 2000, but conceded with class after losing a similarly razor-thin 5-4 decision in the U.S. Supreme Court.

I believe the major turning point in the rules of political combat was the 2016 Trump-Clinton race and its aftermath. It wasn't just the heated charges and counter-charges of the campaign, but the refusal of some Democrats to accept Trump's victory, and much of the mainstream media's defense of their erroneous predictions.

Nor was it just the refusal of prominent Democrats such as Rep. John Lewis to attend President Trump's inauguration, but the allegations made by Democratic leaders, the intelligence community and major segments of the mainstream media that Trump's election resulted from his campaign colluding with Russia.

This led to the Mueller investigation, which went on for almost two years, tying up the Trump administration and — with media support — giving credibility to the unprecedented belief that an American president was elected by colluding with a foreign enemy.

Being on the House Intelligence Committee and sitting through endless hearings, listening to countless witnesses and

studying reports and analyses, I was convinced there was no collusion whatever. Stripped of defensive rhetoric, the Mueller report reached the same conclusion. But the damage had been done, and the political well was further poisoned.

Then there were the riots in the summer of 2020, which raged throughout the country following the police killing of George Floyd. At least six people were killed. Cities like Spokane, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, were under siege. New York streets became nightly war zones. Police stations were attacked and set on fire. Churches were vandalized. The White House itself was threatened.

Yet Democratic leaders offered only perfunctory disapproval of the violence, emphasizing that most demonstrations were "peaceful." Following a night of violence in Brooklyn — in which bottles and other objects were thrown at cops — then Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, "I stand with the protesters."

In Manhattan, the Democratic district attorney refused to prosecute hundreds arrested for looting and rioting, including a getaway driver aiding those caught on video vandalizing St. Patrick's Cathedral. All further poisoning the well.

Then, beginning on election night in 2020, Trump — citing no credible evi-

dence — charged that the election was "rigged" and "stolen." Never explaining why, in a rigged election, Republicans would pick up 12 House seats while he lost the popular vote to Joe Biden by more than 7 million, Trump continued to attack the results.

The culmination of this constant onslaught — whether intended or not — was the disgraceful and violent assault on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. No rational American — certainly no Republican claiming to be a patriot — can defend that outrage in any way.

Shockingly, however, too many Republicans are willing to minimize the violence as just a protest out of control, and still deny the election results.

What the nation saw last month, when it took 15 ballots over five days for Republicans to elect Rep. Kevin McCarthy speaker of the House, was a further rejection of tradition and civility. It is an ominous sign that this was the most protracted election for speaker since the decade preceding the Civil War.

It's time for the sane forces on both sides to step forward. The United States has come too far as a nation, and faces too many challenges, to allow the voices of anarchy to prevail over our traditions and values.

Peter King is a former congressman, and a former chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security. A version of this essay originally appeared in The Hill.

The turning point in the rules of political combat was the 2016 Trump-Clinton race.

LETTERS

3. Make it a misdemeanor (i.e. a crime) for a candidate to lie about his or her background. Just what we need: candidates routinely trading criminal charges. ("You only graduated cum laude, not magna cum laude!") Again, basic opposition research is all that's needed, not competing police reports.

This is an example of a politician giving the appearance of "doing something" about a problem that may very well make it worse.

TERRANCE J. NOLAN
Lynbrook

Who will stand up to the extremists?

To the Editor:

As a student of history, I am distressed each day as I read and listen to the news, and I wonder:

When did it become appropriate to ignore a congressional subpoena and then be rewarded with the speakership of the U.S. House of Representatives, the third-most important position in the nation?

Why is it OK for Supreme Court nominees to lie at their confirmation hearings and then, after being appointed, overturn decades of court precedent?

When was it determined that politicians

should be permitted to ignore experts in curriculum, history scholars, trained teachers and trained librarians to ban books, whitewash American history and ban topics that are contrary to *their* ideas? Isn't the purpose of education to expose students to diverse ideas?

When did it become fashionable to elect people to Congress who lie, yell, curse and bully — people who have no ability to legislate, and no understanding of the word "compromise"?

When did we turn our backs on the hard-fought-for rights of all people and return to the days when voting rights were restricted?

In the end, the real question is, when will the moderates in government, and the many moderates in the country, stand up to the extremists on both ends of the political spectrum? Left alone, they will destroy our democracy. We would be wise to remember the words of the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller, about the Nazis.

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me."

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