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 and Gift Guide



George Santos
 expelled
 Page 5

PICTURES WITH SANTA

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Tammy Lanham/Herald

A time of year when the star is a tree

Several people were spotted memorializing the lighted trees in downtown Glen Cove on Dec. 1 at the annual holiday tree lighting. Some even waited in line to do so. More photos, Page 10.

1,000-year-old relic of St. Jude brings some hope to Glen Cove

By ROKSANA AMID

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Holding his Bible and crucifix tightly, Michael Schenc knelt before a relic of St. Jude, the patron saint of hope and impossible causes. He bowed his head in prayer, and then pressed his holy possessions against the glass casing protecting the relic, hoping they would become third-class relics.

Schenc prayed for his autistic daughter to better connect with the world, he said, and for his wife, who has been diagnosed with a neurological condition, and his father, who has Parkinson's disease.

"Being able to carry some of that blessing from God and St. Jude, and be able to spread it out to loved ones that are in need of the impossible, is important," Schenc, a Glen Cove resident, said. "It certainly brings a greater sense of reality to

my faith."

The 2,000-year-old Catholic relic, believed to be a bone of Saint Jude's arm, was on display at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church last Saturday. This is the first time the relic has left Italy, and it is being taken on a North American tour.

Denise Busse, of Glen Head, said she felt "pulled" to the relic when she first heard about its visit to Glen Cove. To Busse, seeing the relic was a reminder that asking for help through prayer helps keep her faith strong.

"It felt like a blessing that the spirit was with us," Busse said of her experience with the relic. "And that we can get through anything, especially with what's going on in the world today."

Born in 1 A.D. in the city of Galilee, Jude Thaddeus was a farmer who, according to Catholic tradition, was, along with his brother James,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Lights off, no one home at Santos' office

House Clerk to take over district offices

By WILL SHEELINE

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Following George Santos' expulsion from Congress last Friday, his district office has been completely abandoned,

leaving residents without a direct conduit to the federal government to address important issues such as immigration, veteran's rights and a bevy of other issues. The Founding Fathers famously declared that there can be "no taxation without representation," yet the abandonment of Santos' district office has left constituents with no official capacity to address numerous pressing issues.

Although Santos no longer holds his seat, a new problem has emerged. District resident attempting to reach out to his Douglaston office will find the doors locked, the lights off and no one home. In other words, even with him gone constituents lack their constitutional

right to representation.

Throughout his tumultuous tenure in office, one consistent complaint of Santos was his lack of support for constituent services, despite the former congressman's consistent claims

Having George Santos as our member of Congress was worse than nothing.

JODY KASS FINKEL
 organizer, Concerned
 Citizens of NY-03

that his constituents were his top priority. As a congressman, Santos' duties included helping people and local organizations acquire grants, obtain visas, support veterans and even assist them in arranging visits to the White House or applying to United States Service Academies such as West Point.

Richard DeJesu, first vice commander of North Shore Veterans Memorial Post 21 in Oyster Bay, said that while the post has a policy to not get involved with politics, his and other posts in the district would continue working with county and state organizations to see that veterans' needs are met.

"We don't have any problems

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Relic comes to America for the first time

December 7, 2023 – GLEN COVE HERALD

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personally called by Jesus to become one of his followers and spread the message of the Gospels. After Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, Jude is said to have continued his evangelical mission by traveling to Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia and Lebanon alongside his fellow apostle Simon.

In 65 A.D., while in Beirut, Simon and Jude were clubbed to death and beheaded by an idolatrous mob, and were buried in the city. Their remains remained in Beirut until 333 A.D., when Roman Emperor Constantine — as part of his mission to recover relics of the early Catholic Church — had the graves exhumed and the remains taken to Rome. There, Simon and Jude were placed in a crypt under St. Peter's Basilica.

The Vatican permitted a portion of St. Jude's arm to be removed and placed in an upright wooden reliquary resembling an arm giving a blessing. It was given the status of a first-class relic, as is any remnant of a saint's body.

"St. Jude's visit offers a unique opportunity to experience a connection with one of the most venerated figures in Christian history," a statement from the Diocese of Rockville Centre read. "The visit provides an opportunity for individuals to experience intimacy with someone who dwells in Heaven and beholds God face-to-face."

Glen Head residents Mario Reali and



Mario Reali and his wife, Linda, praying to the relic of St. Jude, asking for the health and safety of family members.

his wife, Linda, came to St. Patrick's to offer prayers of good health. They prayed for Linda, who uses a wheelchair because she lost all the toes on her left toes to diabetes. They also prayed for their deaf daughter, who recently became legally blind.

"Two years ago, (Linda) was a leader of many people, cooking, getting around, taking care of her two girls and grandchildren," Mario Reali said. "And now, all of a sudden, she can't walk. I strongly

believe that through faith, maybe St. Jude could help us."

During the veneration, many pious visitors approached the Pastor of St. Patrick's, the Rev. Dom Gabriel Rach, and asked him to bless their religious medallions. Rach said that although he has heard anecdotes about a global decline in the influence of religion, people still search for a deeper spiritual connection. He believes that maintaining that connection means accepting the spiritual



Tim Baker/Herald photos

The relic of St. Jude brought to St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church gave visitors a unique experience.

with tangible aspects of faith.

"In a world where we're surrounded by fake things, whether pictures or sounds, things that are made up in fleeting, it's easy for us to get disconnected to our connections to the world," Rach said. "When people are able to see that, it's important that we remember, as human beings, we are, of course, flesh-and-blood creatures. And to engage the senses can be a very powerful thing."

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Glen Cove celebrates the holidays in the downtown

By ROKSANA AMID

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A cozy den to meet Santa, horse carriage rides, and a chance to meet Martha May Whovier and the Grinch were some of the magical happenings at Village Square on Dec. 1.

The hub of activity kicked off the start to the most wonderful time of year in Glen Cove. The festivities were part of the business improvement district's annual holiday festival, followed by the city's tree lighting ceremony.

"This tree lighting is such a special event," Pamela Panzenbeck, Glen Cove mayor, said. "We all enjoy these festivities, and people love to drive by the tree. It is beautiful and warms our hearts. This is such a special time of year."

As onlookers enjoyed hot chocolate throughout the afternoon, the Glen Cove High School orchestra and select chorale, Jazz Hands Children's Theatre and many more held performances. The holidays are all about celebrating the values that bring us together in life, such as our friends and family. These important connections can bring us unity through togetherness, generosity, and gratitude.

December is jam-packed with celebrations. While Christmas is the headliner for many, countless winter celebrations abound. Some of the most well-known and oft-celebrated are religious in nature, but a number spring from nature itself, acknowledging the darkest day of the year and the inevitable return of the sun, while others honor cultural traditions.

Hanukkah runs from Dec. 10 to 18 this year, and is a Jewish holiday based on the story of the menorah in the Second Temple of Jerusalem that burned for eight days in spite of only having a single day's supply of oil. The temple had just been rededicated to God following the Maccabean Revolt, where the Jews rose up to defeat the much larger Greek-Syrian army that oppressed them. It was seen as a miracle and thus, Hanukkah was born. During each of Hanukkah's eight nights, one candle on the menorah is lit by the Shamash candle – the ninth candle used to ignite all of the others.

Las Posadas, runs from Dec. 16 to 24, and is celebrated throughout Mexico and Central America. The Spanish for "The Inns." It honors the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of lodging. During each night of this nine-day festival, a small child dressed as an angel leads a procession through towns and cities.

The Winter Solstice, also called Yule occurs on Dec. 21. This Pagan celebration of the darkest day of the year originally is one of the oldest recorded winter holidays. At its core is the rebirth of the sun – a welcoming back of longer days of sunlight – and it has long been viewed as a powerful time for energy renewal and introspection. Historically, Yule – also referred to as Christmastide or Yuletide – was celebrated by feeding a large oak tree into the fireplace. The tree would be cut down on the Winter Solstice and the yule log would be slow-



Tim Baker/Herald photos

Santa carefully listened to what Harper Etheridge wanted for Christmas.



Elizabeth Berka, left, Kaylah Cherenfant and Isabella Graziose, from St. Dominic Dance Ensemble, energized the crowd with their elegant performance.

ly pushed into the flames over through the 12 days of Christmas.

Although the holiday has become commercialized, Christmas is a Christian holiday that commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. While Protestants and Catholics celebrate on the 25th, a lot of countries and religious sectors may choose to embrace the festive period on a different day. Orthodox and Coptic Christians will celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7.

Kwanzaa, celebrated on Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, was created in 1966. Kwanzaa – which stems from a Swahili phrase meaning "first fruits" – honors African-American culture. Each of Kwanzaa's seven nights involves a candle-lighting ceremony during which attendees light a candle representing one of Kwanzaa's seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work/responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.



The Grinch and Martha May Whovier reminded children that the holidays are a season of giving thanks for one another.

Unclear when constituent services will resume

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

right now,” DeJesu said. “We’ll wait to see what happens and we’ll deal with it as it happens.”

Jody Kass Finkel, a Great Neck resident and the organizer of Concerned Citizens of NY-03, a bipartisan non-profit organization dedicated to removing Santos from office, said that throughout the former congressman’s tenure she and many other district residents were unable to receive assistance and support services due to lack of trust in the fabulist and his inability to get things done. Now, with his office doors seemingly shuttered until his successor fills them following a special election — the date of which hasn’t been announced — she said that even this is better than having him in office.

“Having George Santos as our member of Congress was worse than nothing. We all feel this way,” she said. “Asking him for help with a federal agency was really difficult because you were afraid to give him any personal information for fear of being his next scam.”

According to the House of Represen-

tative’s bylaws, following the death, resignation or expulsion of a member of Congress, the House Clerk, currently Kevin McCumber, takes over the management of congressional duties, and has the authority to hire or fire new staff as necessary. While it has been

less than a week since Santos’ expulsion, his office remains unstaffed, and McCumber’s office did not respond to questions regarding a timeline in filling the office by press time.

In the meantime, it is unclear what happened to Santos’ former staffers, and whether their services will be retained. Gabrielle Lipsky, Santos’ former communications director, stated in a text that she had left the former congressman’s employment two weeks ago, and did not know the status of any former staffers.

Constituents will have to get along as best they can

until the office is staffed, which could be difficult, considering that any potential staffers would only be employed until Santos’ replacement is elected following the special election that will take place 70 to 80 days after his expulsion.

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Book Review:

“Flourish” by Martin E. P. Seligman (Part 1)

In 1998, as President of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman recognized that psychology was only addressing psychological “problems” such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, personality disorders, etc. Seligman became known as the father of positive psychology by proposing that psychology supplement its venerable goal with a new goal: exploring what makes life worth living and building and enabling conditions of a life worth living.

Positive psychology’s content — happiness, flow, meaning, love, gratitude, accomplishment, growth, better relationships — constitutes human flourishing.

Well-being is more than happiness, itself a somewhat vague term. The measures of well-being are (1) positive emotion (2) engagement (3) meaning (4) positive relationships, and (5) accomplishment.

Seligman likens well-being to a “construct” like the weather. It has several measurable elements, each contributing to the “construct”, be it well-being or the

weather, but none alone being well-being or the weather itself. For the weather these are: temperature, humidity, wind speed, barometric pressure, and so on. For well-being, those who are the most positive, have the most engagement, and the most meaning in life are the happiest and have the most life satisfaction.

Breaking down the elements, positive emotion relates closest to what we think of as happiness — a pleasant and satisfying life. Engagement corresponds to “being in the flow” or so absorbed in what you are doing that you lose sense of time and place. “Meaning” refers to serving something larger than oneself. Your writer has previously posited that if you’re feeling unhappy try doing something for someone else and, sure enough, Seligman writes “we scientists have found that doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise we have tested.”

“Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.” — Karl Barth

Chuck Lavine, a New York state assemblyman for part of Santos’ district, explained that he and other local politicians and neighboring members of Congress will continue to do their best to provide constituent services, which they have been doing since Santos’ litany of lies and alleged crimes were revealed.

“(Santos’) office was utterly undisciplined, and we would have been deluding ourselves to think that he was a positive influence or that he had any managerial skills whatsoever,” Lavine said. “My office, Senator (Chuck) Schumer’s and Senator (Kirsten) Gillibrand’s offices have been providing services to the

people of the 3rd Congressional District, and we will continue to do that.”

Most residents of the district seem to view the short-term loss of Santos’ district office as a small price to pay to be rid of their former fallacious congressman. Roger Street Friedman, a resident of Sea Cliff, agreed that even having no congressman was better than having Santos.

“As a resident of the district I’m relieved that he’s no longer our representative because it felt completely fraudulent,” Friedman said. “Having no one there is better than having a complete charlatan, liar, fraud and criminal.”



Will Sheeline/Herald

George Santos’ former district office in Douglaston appears to have been completely abandoned, and it remains unclear when district residents will be able to receive constituent services again, although it’s required by House bylaws.

GLEN COVE
HERALD

HOW TO REACH US

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Congressman George Santos expelled, finally

By LAURA LANE

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George Santos has become the first congressman to be expelled from the U.S. House of Representatives without first being convicted of a felony since the Civil War. And he is the first Republican.

Predictions prior to the vote were that results would be close, since Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, a constitutional attorney, had said he would not vote for Santos' expulsion, advising members to "vote your conscience." But it was anything but.

More than 300 colleagues from both sides of the political aisle voted for the embattled congressman's ouster, well over the two thirds needed.

Santos, who is being accused of identity theft, credit card fraud and utilizing campaign funds for trips to Las Vegas, the Hamptons and to pay his rent, among other allegations, has had little, if any support among his constituents.

"I think he should have been expelled a long time ago. He has so many character flaws so he doesn't belong in any position of authority as far I can tell," Frank Stroppe, of Glen Cove, said. "What disturbs me more is that he's been there that long. The fact that so many people have stood by him, or not stood up against him all this time, that's what bothers me."

In May, California Democrat Rep. Robert Garcia introduced legislation to expel Santos, but it did not receive enough votes for passage. Anthony D'Esposito, a Republican representing New York's 4th Congressional District, tried unsuccessfully in October.

D'Esposito did not respond to the Herald's question of why he waited until October to try to expel Santos. Instead, he sent a statement on Dec. 1 after the attempt led by other congressional members was successful.

"The expulsion of George Santos has removed a



Herald file photo

Rep. George Santos' expulsion from Congress included 105 votes by his fellow Republicans.

stain from this institution and will allow the residents of New York's 3rd Congressional District the opportunity to select a representative who is not engrossed in scandals," D'Esposito wrote. "I will continue to fight for Long Islanders in Congress and work diligently to ensure a true conservative succeeds Santos."

Many Republicans who had supported Santos during the two previous expulsion efforts said prior to the Dec. 1 vote they had changed their minds based on the results of the House Ethics Committee report.

The scathing 56-page report released on Nov. 16 details evidence Santos broke federal laws and delivered a "constant series of lies" to voters and donors on his way to winning a seat in the House of Representatives.

After the vote, Santos rushed to his car in an attempt

to avoid the throng of press, but according to the Washington Post did say, "You know what? As unofficially already no longer a member of Congress, I no longer have to answer a single question to you guys."

Annette Capobianco, of Glen Cove, said she favored ending Santos' tenure, based on his lack of ethics. "He symbolizes all the wrong things," she said. "My feelings are that most politicians are out for themselves. They're not out for the people, which are people like me."

Catherine Madden, a recent college graduate from Sea Cliff, found having Santos as her congressman personally offensive.

"I went to school out of state and people knew who he was. I'd say he's my congressman and people would laugh," Madden said. "It's been kind of embarrassing for this district. Just knowing everything that he's done."

But not everyone is happy to see Santos leave. Phyllis Troutman, a Glen Cove resident, said although she did not approve of the allegations being waged against Santos if true, he was not much different than most elected leaders.

"I don't think he should have been expelled because they're all crooks," Troutman said. "I think he's done a pretty good job standing up for conservative principals and I think it's pretty hypocritical of some of these other people in Congress."

Gov. Kathy Hochul issued a proclamation on Tuesday that a special election will be held to fill Santos' vacant seat on Feb. 13. Party leaders from the county's Democratic and Republican parties are interviewing candidates and it's expected there will be an announcement of their decisions soon.

-Additional reporting by Rokhsana Amid and Will Sheeline

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6 Diocese claims \$200M 'best,' 'final' offer

December 7, 2023 — GLEN COVE HERALD

By DANIEL OFFNER

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The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre has made what it says is its “best and final proposal” toward a settlement with the more than 600 people who accused the church of child sexual abuse.

In question is the Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection the diocese filed three years ago, with church officials saying they are willing to amend its reorganization plan to compensate those victims through a \$200 million fund the church would set up.

This particular offer isn't new. In fact, it was made last February, entitling victims to a minimum cash payment of \$100,000 for some lawsuits, while others would receive an immediate cash payment of \$50,000.

The proposed payout is the largest settlement offer made in any diocesan case to date, according to church spokesman, Sean Dolan — both on a total payout and per-claimant basis.

“Further litigation will delay compensation for all survivors,” Dolan said, in a release. It also “may result in unfair compensation for many survivors, and could ultimately leave some survivors with no compensation at all. Instead of continuing to fund lawyers' fees, this money is better spent compensating survivors.”

The Diocese of Rockville Centre — the eighth largest in the nation — filed for bankruptcy in late 2020 after hundreds of lawsuits were filed against it following Gov. Andrew Cuomo's approval of the Child Victims Act. Passed in 2019, the law significantly extended the statute of limitations on sexual abuse claims.

Lawyers for the diocese and the victims met with Judge Martin Glenn ahead of the church filing its amended proposal last week.

“From the committee's perspective, the plan they



Herald file photo

The Diocese of Rockville Centre hopes to move forward on a settlement with the more than 600 people who have made claims of sexual abuse against the church.

have filed is the same one that we have said ‘no’ to,” James Stang, the attorney representing the victims and other creditors, said.

While the diocese has provided a lump sum of its total finances, Stang says church leaders would need to disclose finances on a parish-by-parish basis in order to get the support of his clients. In order for the plan to move forward, the church would need to get 75

percent of its creditors represented by Stang to approve it.

Yet, rejecting the plan may lead to the dismissal of the bankruptcy case, church officials said, potentially forcing roughly 40 percent of victims to move their claims off the federal docket and back to state court.

“The diocese has already made it clear that it is at the end of its resources,” Dolan said. “Contrary to assertions that additional funds are available to increase settlements, no independent Catholic organizations are being offered releases through the diocese's proposed plan other than those that will participate in funding the settlement trusts.”

Should the creditors represented by Stang continue to prolong or even dismiss the case, Dolan says it will ensure payments to victims will only go lower than the current settlement offer.

“The diocese hopes that all parties — including survivors and their legal advisors — will vote in favor of the equitable and unprecedented offer in the plan,” Dolan said. “Survivors deserve compensation now, and the diocese's charitable mission is more important than ever in these uncertain times. Both face a vulnerable and uncertain future if the plan is rejected.”

Mary McKenna, the New York state representative for the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, says her organization is “extremely disappointed” the Rockville Centre diocese has refused to budge from its settlement offer.

“It's a slap in the face to the victims,” McKenna said. The diocese “spent \$100 million fighting the victims, and offered them \$100,000 if they want to quickly take a deal.”

“It doesn't make sense. These children were raped, and their lives were destroyed. The damage is lifelong.”

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Slayer Players return for another captivating show

By **ROKSANA AMID**

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The Slayer Players are back looking to captivate their audience with their rendition of Charles Dickens' classic "A Christmas Carol" on Dec. 15 at the Glen Cove Senior Center and at North Country Reform Temple on Dec. 9.

The Slayer Players Theatre Company, which first formed in November 2016, have performed across the North Shore such as at the Sea Cliff Yacht Club. The original goal was to spread murder, mystery and mayhem to the masses and the Slayer Players did just that when they took the stage for their first show on April Fool's Day in 2017.

In recent years, the group changed their creative direction with the comedy "The Honeymooners." Not long after, Eve Lupenko and Kevin Horton joined director Fred DiMenna. The three now manage the group.

Last December, the group presented "Classic TV Live" to a full house of 186 seniors at the senior center. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive such that the center was eager to have them return. This year, the group is adding technology to their performance, including an 86-inch television to help transition scenes for the 30-person cast.

"We have 'The Honeymooners' set, but for some of these other things like 'A Christmas Carol,' there's so many different places where that takes place," DiMenna explained. "We couldn't have a set for each of those, so this video backdrop will provide Scrooge's bedroom or the park."

DiMenna, also the group's manager and treasurer, will be playing Ebenezer Scrooge. But unlike that character, DiMenna's empathy and generosity are evident in his dedication to bringing the community of seniors together. For three months, he balanced rehearsals among the 30-person cast, and devised a system where each cast member came together in their respective to rehearse their scenes.

The cast includes Jim Bilello as nephew Fred, Kevin Horton as Bob Cratchit, Ferrante as Emily Cratchit, John Canning as the Ghost of Christ-



Courtesy John Kappenberg
Fred DiMenna returns to his role as Ebenezer Scrooge.

mas Past, Doug Spadaro as the Ghost of Christmas Present and Michael Renga and Dan Bellusci as Scrooge as a boy and Scrooge as a young man. John Kappenberg co-directed the play with DiMenna.

Christine Rice, executive director of the senior center, said in person events like these are essential to seniors, as they're more susceptible to isolation, which can cause severe loneliness.

"We appreciate any extra enjoyment that we can give them such as this play," Rice said. "There's nothing better in life than laughter and

being able to enjoy time with your friends and those around you to kind of forget about the worries of life for a few minutes."

Steve Frese, a retiree and widower, joined the Slayer Players when he saw them perform "The Honeymooners" and "The Twilight Zone" at The View Grill. After speaking with DiMenna after the show, he knew he wanted to be involved in their next performance.

Frese isn't a stranger to speaking in front of an audience since he conducted training sessions at his former banking job and had once preached sermons.

He's been a regular cast member ever since, and will play two roles in "A Christmas Carol," the ghost of Marly and old Joe. The 77 year old said being part of Slayer Players helped combat his loneliness.

"This particular theater group was just something for me to do, and it was great," Frese said. "It got me back out of the house. It got me involved with other people, and it's kept me busy. It was definitely part of me recovering from (my wife's) death, so it's been a godsend to me."



When the Slayer Players last preformed "A Christmas Carol," Anthony Green portrayed Tiny Tim.

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Herald's latest senior health expo is a hit

December 7, 2023 — GLEN COVE HERALD

By Alexa Anderwkavich

The O'Connell Gardens in Oceanside hosted the Herald's Health & Beyond Expo on Nov. 16 — the last expo this year.

This community-favorite event featured more than 35 businesses and service providers sharing their expertise with Long Island residents. HearingLife conducted free hearing examinations. Mount Sinai South Nassau provided free blood pressure tests. And, thanks to Parker at your Door, Parker Jewish Institute Mobile Vaccination Station there was to provide free Covid-19 and flu vaccines.

Attendees enjoyed snacks and coffee, as well as panel discussions led by Lori Berger, sales director for Herald Community Newspapers, who cracked a few jokes.

Panelists included Lauren Block from Vishnick McGovern Milizio, Ana Arevalo from CenterLight Health System, Jill Wasser from the state's public service department, and Pablo Rendon from Parker Jewish Institute for Healthcare & Rehabilitation.

Guests received goody bags filled with the expo's special section, keepsakes, and valuable take-home materials. Raffle prizes included tickets to "The Play That Goes Wrong" as well as "Illuminate NY," a half-dozen cookies from Chip City Oceanside, gift certificate for a dozen bagels from Cino's Hot Bagels, and manicure-pedicure — or just manicure — gift certificate from Ivy Nail & Spa.

The first 175 guests received a packaged lunch thanks to Bagel Boss of Hewlett, complete with a wrap — choice of Caesar salad, veggie tuna and egg salad — coleslaw and a pickle.

The expo's success was made possible by Silver Sponsors: Long Beach Rehabilitation and Assisted Living (Cassena Care), Aetna, New York State Department of Public Services, Centerlight Healthcare, Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care & Rehabilitation, Silver Lining Homecare, and Vishnick McGovern Milizio, as well as the gift bag sponsor, Grandell Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

Both guests and vendors eagerly anticipate the next expos to take place in 2024. Stay up to date with upcoming events, webinars and expos at RichnerLive.com.

For more information about senior health expos — or to become a sponsor or vendor — contact Amanda Marte at (516) 569-4000, Ext. 219, or at amarte@liherald.com.



Tim Baker/Herald photos

Pablo Rendon, Dennis Perez and Betsy Pierre-Louis from Parker Jewish Institute were providing free Covid-19 and flu vaccines to those attending the recent Herald Health & Beyond Expo in Oceanside.



Panelist Jill Wasser from the state's public services department.



Panelist Lauren Block from Vishnick McGovern Milizio shared with attendees everything you need to know about estate planning.



Ana Arevalo and Debbie D'Amato from Centerlight Healthcare PACE.



Event silver sponsors from Silver Living HomeCare say hello.



The event's gift bag sponsor was Grandell Rehabilitation & Nursing Center.

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Tammy Lanham/Herald photos

The sound of hooves clip-clopping on streets were heard from horse drawn carriages rides in downtown Glen Cove.

Tree lighting kicks off holidays, brightens spirits

The holidays are a magical time of year filled with countless things to do, plan for, and see. One of the most iconic elements of the holiday season that is looked forward to is the dazzling display of Christmas lights. Each year, people eagerly unpack their lights or invest in the latest festive trends to adorn their homes and trees with colorful and cheerful reminders of the holiday season.

The time honored tradition that kicks off the holiday season in Glen Cove each year, the annual tree lighting ceremony, took place on Dec. 2.



Santa visited kids of all ages.



Glen Cove Fire Department Captain Michael Capobianco III and his son, Michael Capobianco IV, waited for Santa at the city's tree lighting ceremony.



The twinkling lights of the city's Christmas tree dazzled onlookers, brightening the holiday spirit even more.



Two horses took a break from carting around people in Glen Cove to share a little love.

STEPPING OUT

Jingles all the way!

Holiday



with Laurie Berkner

By Danielle Schwab

Laurie Berkner remains at the forefront of the kids music scene. And she's ready to share some holiday cheer with her fans — as only she can. Everyone will have a jolly good time when Berkner visits Long Island to ring in the holidays, next Sunday, Dec. 17, on The Paramount stage.

"I'm so excited to be heading back to The Paramount," Berkner enthuses. "I love playing there, and the energy in the room is always so high and will be filled with the joy of the season."

Her upcoming show is one of her first live performances of tunes from her newest holiday album "Another Laurie Berkner Christmas." She'll sing "I Live Inside a Snowglobe (Shake It Up)" and other new songs, along with such classic favorites as "Deck the Halls" and "Holly Jolly Christmas."

The rest of the program features traditional and original holiday songs that fans know and love, including "Jingle Bells," "Candy Cane Jane" and "The Dreidel Song." Of, course, a Laurie Berkner concert always includes an array of her greatest hits, such as "We Are the Dinosaurs" and "Waiting for the Elevator," and she'll deliver. Plus, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of her album, "Buzz Buzz," she'll sing the title track to that as well that family favorite, "Pig on Her Head."

Berkner has delighted families for more than 25 years with her creative and catchy tunes. With 15 albums — and more on the way — she proudly retains her title as the "Queen of Kindie Rock."

The first recording artist to perform in music videos on Nick Jr., her original songs, music videos, books (along three original off-Broadway musicals) are seemingly everywhere — including NBCUniversal's "Sprout House," and the Laurie Berkner Band's YouTube channel.

Being inspired by kids made for an "easy" transition from her rock band days, according to Berkner, also a former preschool music teacher. She pivoted to her full-time career as a children's performer when she saw the impact her "kindie" songs had not only on kids, but the parents, too.

"I had this moment of like, this is what I want to do with my life. That's how I want to spend it."

Berkner still channels her rocker's passion to all she does.

"I bring that rock sensibility to my shows and in my songs," she says.

She encourages her audience to rock out with her, moving their bodies, all the while with plenty of laughter.

She attributes her success to listening to kids and being reminded of what she liked when she was younger.

"'Pig on Her Head' I wrote because I taught music at day care. When I walked in one day and we were about to start, one kid, Marco, looked at me and then put a toy pig on his head. I could have been a disciplinarian,



- Sunday, Dec. 17, 11 a.m.
- \$20.50-\$88.50, plus applicable fees; available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or [ParamountNY.com](https://www.paramountny.com)
- The Paramount, 370 New York Ave., Huntington

but instead, I started singing 'Marco has a pig on his head.' Then all the kids grabbed toy animals and put them on their heads, and I started singing to all of them."

Berkner went on to record the song, now a concert staple.

"It's turned into this big, physical interactive element in my shows," she adds.

Not only are "animals on heads," but they're also in everyone's hearts. One dollar of each ticket sold will be donated to Little Shelter Animal Rescue.

For families who can't snag concert tickets, be sure to enjoy some holiday magic at home. Berkner's latest YouTube Christmas special features many of her holiday songs. She also releases a free show about once a month on TikTok, Facebook and Instagram. In the new year, there may also be some new music to keep a lookout for.

"I'm always recording some new music," Berkner hints.

A sequel for the musical "Interstellar Cinderella" — one of Berkner's theatre projects — is in the works as well.

Her goal remains strengthening those family connections.

"I think it's hard when you're parents — or even kids — trying to get kids to do things," she says. "It's not easy for them, especially if you are working, or have more than one child."

She strives to make her 75-minute shows a time of togetherness.

"I want this to be a space where a whole family can come and parents can relax and enjoy the music while the kids feel totally engaged and want to be there," she said. "They leave with that happy positive memory together."

As always, Berkner instructs her fans (reminder really not needed) to "bring your dancing shoes and a stuffed animal for your head." Get ready to join in the holiday spirit and sing along.



Cherish the Ladies

The holiday spirit bursts forth with music that embodies the beauty of the season, Celtic style. Now in their 38th year, Cherish the Ladies continues to delight audiences, under the leadership of All-Ireland flute and whistle champion Joanie Madden — named by The Irish Voice as one of the Top 25 most influential Irish Americans of the past quarter-century. The decades have included world tours, concerts at the White House and the Olympics, and numerous critically acclaimed albums, including their Emmy award-winning special, "An Irish Homecoming," on PBS. Their spectacular blend of virtuoso instrumental talents, glorious vocals, captivating arrangements, and lively step dancing demonstrates their ability to take the best of Irish traditional music and dance, and put it forth in an immensely entertaining show.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m. \$47, \$41, \$37. *Jeanne Rimsky Theater at Landmark on Main Street, 232 Main St., Port Washington. (516) 767-6444 or [LandmarkOnMainStreet.org](https://www.LandmarkOnMainStreet.org).*



'A Celtic Christmas'

The Madison Theatre also celebrates the season Celtic-style. Enjoy some 'Celtic Christmas' when A Taste of Ireland visits Molloy University on its U.S. tour. Immerse yourself in the magnificence of the traditional Celtic landscape, and let the magic of Christmas in Ireland transport you to a world full of excitement and wonder, with energetic music and dance that embodies the festive season. Featuring a powerful mix of traditional tunes, heartfelt ballads and beloved carols, 'Celtic Christmas' combines dynamic rhythms and top Irish dancing talent for an evening of musical storytelling enhanced by Irish charm. Choreographed and produced by multiple national champion and star of Gaelforce Dance & Rhythms of Ireland, Brent Pace, and world champion/Lord of the Dance lead soloist Ceili Moore, this is a festive spectacular that leaves audiences wanting more.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m. *Molloy University, 1000 Hempstead Ave., Rockville Centre. For tickets and information, visit [MadisonTheatreNY.org](https://www.MadisonTheatreNY.org), or call (516) 323-4444.*

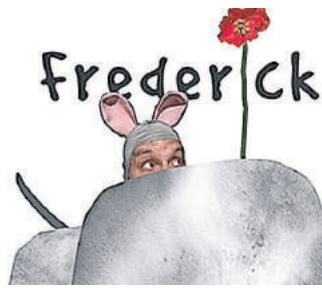
THE SCENE

Dec. 16

Emily King

The soulful pop singer-songwriter visits the Landmark stage on her first

solo tour, Saturday, **Dec. 16**, 8 p.m. Like so many of music's most essential singer-songwriters, Emily King has a near-magical gift for digging into life's deepest sorrows and uncovering unexpected beauty and illuminating truth. Since the arrival of her Grammy Award-nominated full-length debut album *East Side Story*, the New York City-bred artist has brought ever-evolving levels of depth and nuance to her songwriting, rooting each revelation in her mesmerizing blend of soul and R&B and forward-thinking pop. On her latest (fourth full length) album *Special Occasion*, King shares a real-time exploration of the endless dimensions of heartbreak — an inquiry informed by the end of her romantic relationship. King and longtime producer Jeremy Most (Grammy nominated producer and multi-instrumentalist) collaborated closely on every track for an intimate and infinitely enchanting look at the ways we love, grieve, and eventually stumble toward a greater sense of self-understanding. Her lush and polished vocals serve as the perfect vehicle for her carefully crafted compositions. With pop, rock and those R&B influences, King has quickly become a favorite among fellow musicians and fans alike. \$48, \$38, \$33. Jeanne Rimsky Theater at Landmark on Main Street, 232 Main St., Port Washington. (516) 767-6444 or LandmarkOnMainStreet.org.



Family theater

It's a beautiful sunny summer day in the meadow. Leo Lionni's beloved children's books come to life, in "Frederick," on the Long Island Children's Museum stage, Friday, **Dec. 8**, 10:15 a.m. and noon; Saturday, **Dec. 9**, 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.; also Tuesday through Thursday, **Dec. 12-14**, 10:15 a.m. and noon. Mouse friends Nellie, Sunny, Baby, Ernest, and Frederick are playing their musical instruments and having fun singing, until a leaf falls from the sky — autumn is here! Winter will be coming soon. All the mice get to work gathering supplies for winter, except, where is Frederick? He is gathering supplies, too, in his own unique way. With toe-tapping Americana music inspired by bluegrass, gospel, and folk, Frederick is an engaging, energetic story about the power of the arts, community, and that no mouse gets left behind. \$10 with museum admission (\$8 members), \$14 theater only. Long Island Children's Museum, Museum Row, Garden City. (516) 224-5800 or LICM.org.

On exhibit

Nassau County Museum of Art's latest exhibition, "Our Gilded Age," examines the appearances and the realities of an era that mirrors our own in many ways. Like the nation's economy, American art and literature flourished during the Gilded Age. It was an exuberant age of excess with its own secret flaws, including widespread fraud. The art of John Singer Sargent, Childe Hassam, Louis Comfort Tiffany and others adorned palatial residences designed by Stanford White and Ogden Codman Jr., architect of the museum's own quintessential Gilded Age mansion. Drawing heavily upon the local literary history of Long Island, including William Cullen Bryant, Mark Twain (who named the Gilded Age), Walt Whitman, Edith Wharton and others, the exhibition will include paintings, fashion, decorative arts including period silver and china, photographs, manuscripts, first editions and other historic memorabilia. The "Upstairs, Downstairs" approach to the life of a country house brings to life not only the storied conspicuous consumption for which the Gilded Age was infamous, but also the real lives of these many individuals who maintained the palatial estates where that lifestyle was enjoyed. On view through **March 10**. Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor. (516) 484-9337 or NassauMuseum.org.

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A Motown Christmas

Plaza Theatricals invites everyone to celebrate the holidays in true Motown style, Sunday, **Dec. 10**, 4 p.m. Enjoy an afternoon of soulful tunes, joyful dancing and nostalgic vibes at an electrifying Motown holiday party. Get ready to groove, spread the festive cheer, and make unforgettable memories. Performance is at the Elmont Library Theatre, 700 Hempstead Turnpike, Elmont. \$35, \$30 seniors. Elmont. For tickets, visit PlazaTheatrical.com or call (516) 599-6870.

Winter FUNderland

Epilepsy Foundation Long Island hosts a holiday event for children with epilepsy and their families, Saturday, **Dec. 9**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. It's open to children with epilepsy, their siblings and their parents. Pediatric neurologist Dr. Robin Varughese, with Cohen's Children's Medical Center, presents an educational lecture for parents. Kids can enjoy activities and meet others with epilepsy. Pizza and snacks will be served. The event is held at EPIC Long Island, 1500 Hempstead Turnpike, East Meadow. Pre-registration is required. Contact Janet Romeo at (516) 739-7733, option 1, Ext. 145, or email jromeo@epicli.org.

Fun with art

Families can enjoy an arts-filled day at Nassau County Museum of Art, with author and illustrator Tim Miller as he reads his newest book, "Izzy Paints," Saturday, **Dec. 9**, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1-2:30 p.m. The program includes an illustration demo and an immersive artmaking activity designed to activate imaginations and creativity. Miller is the author-illustrator of "Moo Moo in a Tutu," "What's Cooking, Moo Moo?," and "Tiny Kitty, Big City." He's also illustrated numerous other books. \$20, \$10 children and members. Reservations required. Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor. (516) 484-9338 or NassauMuseum.org.

Holiday Market

Enjoy festivities in Oyster Bay on Audrey Ave., Saturday, **Dec. 9**, 1-5 p.m. Ice skating, rides, shopping, entertainment, tree sales, and more, with elves to assist.

Dec.
7

Let's Skate

Get ready to enjoy all the thrills of the snowy season, while staying warm and cozy as Long Island Children's Museum's popular "Snowflake Sock Skating rink returns, now through **Jan. 7**. Slip on "sock skates" and take a spin on the indoor rink, made from a high-tech synthetic polymer surface that lets kids slide around without blades. Kids can stretch, twirl and glide. As visitors step off the "ice" they can jump into winter dramatic play in Snowflake Village. Become a baker in the holiday sweet shop, step inside a giant snowman and serve up some hot cocoa, take a turn in the rink "ticket booth" and "warm up" around a rink side "fire pit." Long Island Children's Museum, Museum Row, Garden City. (516) 224-5800 or LICM.org.

Holiday at Westbury House

Old Westbury Gardens' Westbury House offers a festive glimpse of early 20th century holiday merriment, before it closes for the winter, Saturday and Sunday, **Dec. 9-10**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Also Dec. 16-17. The "Christmas at Westbury House" celebration reflects what the festive season was like during those opulent decades of the early 1900s when the Phipps family lived there. The period rooms in which John S. Phipps — the eldest son of Henry Phipps, Andrew Carnegie's partner at Carnegie Steel — and his family resided are impeccably decorated with wreaths, mantelpiece drapes, plenty of greenery, and other horticultural arrangements. Take a self-guided tour through Westbury House and view specially decorated rooms for the holidays, have cookies and cider on the West Porch and meet and take photos with Santa while listening to ambient holiday music. The gardens will also be open, along with other special holiday events, including Holiday Flute Choir concert, Dec. 10, 2 p.m., and Girl Scouts Chorus, Dec. 16, 1 p.m. \$15, \$13 ages 62+ and students, \$8 ages 7-17. Old Westbury Gardens, 71 Old Westbury Rd., Old Westbury. For information visit OldWestburyGardens.org or call (516) 333-0048.



Multi-Association Holiday Party

Celebrate the season and support local business organizations. Glen Cove Chamber of Commerce, Downtown BID, Gold Coast Business Association, and North Shore Hispanic Chamber of Commerce invites all to their end-of-year holiday party, Thursday, **Dec. 14** 6-10 p.m., at the Metropolitan. The fabulous evening that includes cocktail hour, dinner and desserts, open bar and DJ for dancing. Celebrate 2023 with fellow association members. \$75 per person. 3 Pratt Blvd., Glen Cove. RSVP at Glencovechamber.org/holiday.

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.

Christmas Wonderland

Enjoy the season at a Winter Wonderland benefiting the sisters of St. Dominic and Cove Animal Shelter, Sunday, **Dec. 10**, noon-4 p.m., at the Knights of Columbus. This festive event includes a cookie exchange and clothing collection, story time, dance party, a visit from Santa snacks and scavenger hunt. 81 Sea Cliff Ave, Glen Cove.

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Sands New York is aiming to redefine Long Island hospitality.

Through a proposed flagship resort and entertainment venue featuring a state-of-the-art Canyon Ranch spa and fitness center, indoor and outdoor pools, celebrity chef establishments such as Rao's and Estiatorio Milos, as well as favorite Long Island restaurants, plus a world-class performance venue, luxury hotel rooms, meeting and conference facilities, casino gaming, public attraction spaces and so much more.

Sands New York is poised to create thousands of career opportunities, unparalleled recreational enjoyment, and billions of investment dollars for Long Island and its residents.



SANDSNEWYORK.COM



Long Island's Top Chiefs inspire, innovate

Inaugural event from RichnerLive, Herald Community Newspapers draws hundreds

By Danielle Schwab

Friends, family and colleagues gathered last week to honor the hard work and dedication of Long Island's corporate and nonprofit leaders.

There were more than 50 in all, representing nearly a dozen categories as part of the premiere Herald Top Chief Officers of Long Island awards gala at the Heritage Club at Bethpage. Leaders were recognized in groups that included accounting and banking, development and real estate, education, entertainment and hospitality, health care, human resources, manufacturing, not-for-profit, technology, tourism, transportation, utilities and unions.

"When you take a look of the list of honorees, it's pretty good company," said Marc Perez, president of Bank of America Long Island. "I'm excited about it."

Those were the kinds of sentiments shared by Jack Khzouz, chief executive of NICE buses, who has been with that organization since its beginning in 2012.

"Of course, I feel great about getting honored tonight," Khzouz said, "but it's more about the team, what the team does, and how we're able to help each other get things done. We have 850 employees and provide services for 70,000 residents a day."

Among the accounting and banking honorees was Renu Dalessandro, the chief marketing officer of Jovia Financial Credit Union.

"It's such a great opportunity to highlight and showcase the neighbors of Long Island and the influence that they have on the community," she said. "It speaks volumes. I wish my daughters were here tonight because these are the kind of things I want to instill in them — a great work ethic, great leadership, and being appreciated for the work that they do."

Another winner, Steven Bush, leads Apple Bank as its chair, president and chief executive — an institution that just celebrated its 160th anniversary.

"It's been a crazy year," he said, "but we've come through just fine. I think it goes to our very loyal, long-standing depositor base."

David Lyons, the interim president and chief operating officer of PSEG Long Island, says it was great to be recognized among utilities.

"I'm very proud of the people here," he said, "as well as my own accomplishments."

For many of the companies honored, the Herald Top Chief Officers of Long Island is a chance to talk about exciting projects they have been working on.

Ming Chiang, for example, is known for his leadership of Casual Home Worldwide. But made the trip out to Bethpage for another one of his companies, Biacomm — a zero-emissions industrial equipment start-up.

"We manufacture solar power generators," he said. "We help with night construction, for fixing potholes and highways. The technology we have here uses a solar-powered alternative. We have a whole slew of other self-sustaining, high-tech products."

New technology is one of the keys to the foundation of Mount Sinai South Nassau's success, according to its honored leader, Adhi Sharma.

"We have so many excellent leaders on Long Island with such strong history that, to be included, is an honor," he said.

"As leaders, our role is to inspire, set goals and support our teams," Michael Lessing, chief executive of Lessing's Hospitality Group, told the honorees. "When teams are empowered, motivated and work together cohesively, they can push our organizations to new heights."

The dinner and award ceremony are reminders to the Long Island community about the people who support it.

"Recognizing business leaders is not just about acknowledging the successes," said Amy Amato, execu-



Tim Baker/Herald photos

It was truly a crowd last week honoring local leaders as part of the inaugural Herald Top Chief Officers of Long Island awards gala at the Heritage Club at Bethpage.



Mark Stempel, left, of Blue Island Homes receives his award from Herald Community Newspapers publisher Stuart Richner.



Steven Bush of Apple Bank, gets his award from Stuart Richner.

utive director of RichnerLive, which hosted the event with Herald Community Newspapers. "It's about celebrating the driving force behind our local economy, and the innovation that shapes our community's future."

The Herald Top Chief Officers of Long Island was sponsored by Apple Bank, Lessing's Hospitality Group, New York Cancer and Blood Specialists, Mount Sinai South Nassau, Biacomm, Douglas Elliman, and Prager Metis.

Other sponsors included St. Joseph's University, Jovia Financial Credit Union, Long Island Cares, PSEG Long Island, UBS Arena, PBI Payroll, New York Institute of Technology, The Guide Dog Foundation, American Vet Dogs, Hofstra University, Blue Island Homes, Nassau Inter-County Express, and Sands New York.

To view the full list of honorees and photos, go to RichnerLive.com/chiefofficers.



Honoree Michael Lessing of Lessing's Hospitality Group gives welcoming remarks.



Jason Thomas/Herald photos
Zaki Hossain, left, joins James Lentini of Molloy University and Rahat Hossain, right, of Pintail Coffee, at the Herald Top Chief Officers of Long Island ceremony last week.



Marc Perez President of Bank of America Long Island.



Tim Baker/Herald photos
Jack Khzouz, left, of NICE Bus, gets his award from Herald Community Newspapers publisher Stuart Richner.



John Miller, left, of the Guide Dog Foundation takes a moment to say hello to Ming Chiang of Casual Home Worldwide and event gold sponsor Biacomm.



Diane Walsh, left, and Marianna Mooney of Prager Metis CPAs.



Tracey Edwards of Sands New York, right, is handed her award by Richner.



Antoinette Biordi was the host of this year's Top Chief Officers of Long Island event at the Heritage Club.



Tom Bourgard, left, of Douglas Elliman, was one of the Top Chief Officers honorees.



David Lyons of PSEG Long Island.



Honoree Renu Dalessandro of Jovia Financial Credit Union.

Kanter Freedom pushes for food donations

By PARKER SCHUG

pschug@liherald.com

Enes Kanter Freedom wants to pay forward his positive experience of becoming an American citizen by feeding the hungry in Nassau County. And Emily Austin — an online personality and Hewlett Harbor resident — plans to do the same.

The former New York Knicks player and Austin joined Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman recently to launch the annual food drive in collaboration with the Harry Chapin Food Bank from Long Island Cares.

“We’re very happy to have all of us here today, talking about people who are struggling paycheck-to-paycheck, who might not have the ability to have hot meals and good meals during this holiday season,” Blakeman said.

Austin and Kanter Freedom are ready to do their part, using their large social media platforms to make it happen.

“I have a huge following now, especially with the social media and the apps and the kids out there, following me and idolizing me,” said Kanter Freedom, who moved to the United States as a teenager from Turkey, and became a citizen in 2021.

“I think it’s important to put the right message out there. My one message for everybody is have some empa-



Parker Schug/Herald

Former NBA player Enes Kanter Freedom, left, joined other local personalities like Emily Austin, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, Nassau County Legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip and Long Island Cares chief Paule Pachter calling on neighbors to donate to the Holiday Food Drive through Dec. 15.

thy, have some sympathy. Don’t only look at your table. Think about other people — what they’re going through — and try to help people in-need.”

Austin had a similar message to share.

“It took me many years to actually understand that there are people in this world — let alone in Nassau County and

the state of New York — that don’t know when they’re going to eat next, or go to sleep hungry, or have children to feed and have to sacrifice from their own food,” she said. “With that, I do feel an obligation to sympathize, and understand that it’s our obligation to help those that need the help.”

Paule Pachter, chief executive of

Long Island Cares, says the food bank and services have been seeing the most people in need since the coronavirus pandemic.

“Already, we know that there are 230,000 people on Long Island struggling to get food onto their table,” he said. “Now we’re looking at numbers closer to 300,000 and 325,000. And that includes 65,000 children.”

A lot of that growth has come from the higher cost of food, Pachter added, with the average shopping basket being 35 to 40 percent more expensive than what it was even a couple years ago.

Those looking to donate can drop food at:

- The Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building at 1550 Franklin Ave., in Mineola

- The administration building lobby in Eisenhower Park in East Meadow

- Uniondale Museum Row at the Children’s Museum, Cradle of Aviation and Firefighters Museum

- The Cantiague Park skating rink in Hicksville

- The administration building at Grant Park in Hewlett.

Donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted until Dec. 15.

For more information visit NassauCountyNY.gov.

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'Laramie Project' illuminates realities of hate and hope

By **ROKSANA AMID**

ramid@liherald.com

Kayla Hogan remembers walking through the halls of her high school in Naples, FL, and seeing the residue of gay pride stickers on classroom doors. The small reminders of queer representation were scrapped away only 12 hours after Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, signed the controversial "Parental Rights in Education" bill, colloquially known as the "Don't Say Gay" bill. The absence of the four-inch stickers, which read "safe space," was a reminder of a harsh new reality for queer students like Hogan in the state. Shortly after the March 2022 bill passed, Hogan and her family moved back to Long Island and settled in Glen Cove.

"Any sort of hope that people had that things were going to change there was gone," Hogan, a Glen Cove high junior, said. "It felt like such a violation."

Discrimination still shapes the lives of the LGBTQ+ community, but individual experiences are far ranging. To help keep such stories from fading away, Glen Cove high school students like Hogan preformed "The Laramie Project," a play detailing the brutal 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay 21-year-old University of Wyoming student. The play was performed on Dec. 1, on what would have been Shepard's 47th birthday.



Courtesy Glen Cove City School District

'The Laramie Project' calls on its actors to voice ideas that it can be difficult for them to serve as the conduit.

On Oct. 6, 1998, Shepard was lured from a bar on the outskirts of the University of Wyoming in Laramie by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, who police said pretended to be gay. Shepard was pistol-whipped and left to die, tied to a fence. He succumbed to his injuries on Oct. 12 after being hospitalized in a coma.

"The Laramie Project" uses interviews with hundreds of the city's residents, intertwined with excerpts from media coverage and diary entries from the actors who originated the play, to create a "documentary theater" portrait of a community grappling with the horrific crime. As what's known as a verbatim play, "The Laramie Project" calls on its actors to voice ideas that it can be difficult for them to be the conduit.

They each must take the stage in a wide range of roles, including some with strong homophobic views and beliefs.

"People need to understand that this is not 'The Music Man,' this is not 'South Pacific,' this is a true story," Dennis Shepard, Matthew's father, said, while addressing a panel of students after the play. "The language may be a little strong, but you can't change the language. If you do, you change the meaning of the people being interviewed and why they used those words."

While Shepard's story is one of violence against a young gay man, his father says it could have easily unfolded against someone based on their race or religion.

This is the first play directed by Jared Ross, the high school's theatre teacher.

For Ross, the play seemed like the perfect opportunity to introduce students to a play that affected him deeply when he first performed in it as a teenager.

"It's such a powerful piece to explore as an actor," Ross said. "I think this play has such a profound ability to put a mirror up to the audience and really start some necessary conversations. In terms of the artistic merits of the play, it presents our students with such a diverse array of characters, it's a real challenge for the actor."

Rebecca Goldaper, the high school's genders and sexualities alliances club instructor, said the key to combating hate is by asking LGBTQ people questions with genuine curiosity to better understand their feelings and experiences.

"Using people's pronouns feels small, but it really does make a difference," Goldaper said. "One of the best ways that we can kind of fight back against hate is through understanding."

Hogan said she still worries about her friends in Florida who weren't as lucky to move out of state.

"I think it's so important for us to tell the story because there's people in states like Texas and Florida, who want to represent themselves on stage and to be able to put on such a powerful play," Hogan said. "They can't even be themselves in their own school settings. We're so fortunate here to be able to do this and to be able to tell it for the kids who can't."

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Blakeman, Poser clash over Israel-Hamas

By **ROKSANA AMID**

ramid@liherald.com

They have been locked up in a court battle over a proposed casino in Uniondale, and now they are facing off in a more public setting. But this time, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman says he won't be satisfied until Hofstra University president Susan Poser resigns.

But the current debate is not over whether public meetings were properly noticed. Instead, Blakeman is fired up over statements Poser released following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel in October intended to comfort Hofstra students — both Jewish and Palestinian — she says were directly affected by the Oct. 7 attack, and the war in Gaza that followed.

She wrote that the university mourns the loss of life, and fears the continued tensions will move the Middle East “even farther from lasting peace.” Poser notes that since the campus has students and employees who are directly affected by the tragedy, mental health support should be offered if it's needed.

“As a community, we must abhor violence,” Poser said. “At the same time, individuals can have differing political views, particularly given the complexity of the politics and history of this region of the world.”

But that went too far for Blakeman,

who wrote a letter to Hofstra's board of trustees demanding Poser's resignation. He described her statements as misguided and “antithetical to good moral values and judgment that it puts into question her ability to lead Nassau County's largest private university.”

Hofstra's board of trustees disagrees, telling Blakeman they stand by Poser, who like Blakeman, is also Jewish. Under Poser's leadership, the board said, Hofstra University has “remained an academic center of mutual respect and peace — even in these difficult times.”



BRUCE BLAKEMAN

It was a response Blakeman characterized as “disappointing and disturbing.” He told the Herald he hopes educators will approach the topic of the Israel-Hamas conflict with balance, and

that he has nothing against teaching “both sides” of an issue. At the same time, Blakeman believes educators who lean far left of the political spectrum push students toward an “anti-American” mindset.

“I think that it's high time that we examined exactly what's being done in our institutions of higher education, because it appears that a lot of our children are being indoctrinated,” Blakeman said. “They're not being told the truth, and we need to make sure that we monitor all of our educational facilities to make sure that our children are being taught a balanced and fair history of

what really is happening in the world.”

Blakeman's call for Poser's resignation comes during a major fight between the county and Hofstra over a proposed \$4 billion redevelopment of the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale — a project that includes a controversial casino — not far from Hofstra's campus.

Poser has expressed opposition to the casino, and the university sued Nassau County in court over the initial lease agreement between Blakeman and the Las Vegas Sands, claiming improper notice was given to the public over the meetings where the lease was approved.

A judge ruled partially in Hofstra's favor last month, which could force the county to repeat the lease approval process, although an appellate judge later stayed that ruling pending appeal.

Blakeman told the Herald his opinion on Poser's comments over Israel have nothing to do with her comments on the casino. It's Israel's right to “destroy a terrorist organization,” the county executive said, adding he believes too many professors in schools across the country are “anti-American and antisemitic,” and are funded by foreign governments that are hostile to American interests.

While a number of local leaders — both political and religious — have backed Blakeman on his stance against Poser, the county executive doesn't have the support of Democratic Assembly-

man Charles Lavine, who serves as president of the New York chapter of the National Association of Jewish Legislators.

Lavine described Poser's comments as “every bit as condemnatory of Hamas as were the statements of other noteworthy leading university administrators.” He believes Blakeman's attack is “manufactured” and intended as “revenge for Hofstra's resistance to his plan to redevelop the Hub.”

There is no need, Lavine said, for “politicians threatening universities to teach only the narrow views that they espouse.”

Blakeman wrote to Lavine, saying the Assemblyman's position is in-line with U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib and the informal group of far-left Democratic congressional members known as “The Squad.”

“To suggest only MAGA Republicans unequivocally condemn Hamas is absurd,” Blakeman told Lavine, referring to supporters of former president Donald Trump. “I suspect you are aware that Sen. (Chuck) Schumer, Hillary Clinton and President Biden are not MAGA Republicans.”

Hofstra officials told the Herald in an email they do not know where Blakeman's belief about an anti-American mindset in classrooms come from, calling them unsubstantiated, claims that do not reflect the reality of what happens in classrooms at Hofstra.



SUSAN POSER

HANUKKAH MESSAGE

Be a menorah this Hanukkah

By **RABBI SHOLOM HEBER**

Chabad of Sea Cliff-Glen Cove

Hanukkah, known as the Festival of Lights, begins this year on the evening of Dec. 7 and concludes Dec. 14.

A wise man once said, “Don't chase away darkness with a broom. Simply light a candle.” This message is essentially the message of the Hanukkah story and is especially relevant today, as antisemitism has worryingly come to the fore.

The story of Hanukkah occurred over 2,000 years ago when Alexander the Great marched across the Middle East and into the land of Israel. While he allowed the Jews a degree of autonomy, Antiochos Epiphanes, who ruled after him, was a harsh and brutal tyrant.

He strove to eradicate all Jewish observance. Study and worship were prohibited; Torah scrolls were burned; pagan altars were set up in villages all

across the land. Many died heroically, standing true to their faith.

And then, a small band of brave men and women fled into the hills of Judea to organize a revolt. Known as the Maccabees, these warriors — small in number but great in faith and courage — miraculously defeated an enemy of over 40,000 soldiers, with chariots and war elephants.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, the Maccabees discovered the House of God desecrated, its holy vessels destroyed or stolen, the sacred oil tainted and defiled, the seal on each flask broken by the enemy. How could they light the menorah?

And yet, astonishingly, a small flask of pure olive oil was found complete with an unbroken seal. They could light



**RABBI
SHOLOM HEBER**

the menorah but just for one day. A full week was needed to produce new oil.

And wonder of wonders, that tiny amount of oil kept burning and burning for eight days and nights.

The Hanukkah story happened so long ago, yet it carries a vital message for us today.

We are living in a time of the greatest technologies and conveniences, yet it alone cannot free us from

the moral and social challenges of our day. Material pursuits alone do not lead to a happy and meaningful life.

Our children, our future, need a better diet than the value-system fed to them by social media. They want a moral purpose that frames their pursuits and interests with meaning and direction and it's our job to ensure this

happens.

Judaism teaches that every human being is created in the image of the Divine, charged with the duty to illuminate his or her surroundings, to make our universe a better and holier place.

While this may seem like a huge task, like the Maccabees, we can have a tremendous impact starting with our family, our community and ourselves.

Darkness has no reality of its own. It's merely the absence of light. One small act of goodness and kindness will cast a light of epic proportions, just like the tiny flask of oil that miraculously burned for eight days.

So this Hanukkah, let's teach our youth that they are that light. They are a menorah, and in a society of moral darkness they have a part in making the world brighter.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Hanukkah!

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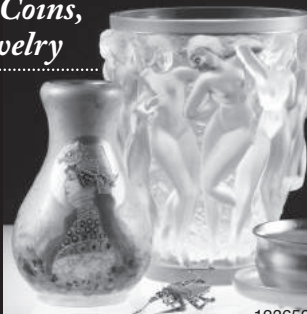
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OPINIONS

Americans must rediscover our unity

The world of politics has never been an oasis of peace and harmony. By its very nature, democracy is a clash of ideas fueled by ambition. It is not an arena for the faint of heart. As a practitioner of politics and government for more than 50 years, I'm no stranger to political intrigue and combat. But until recently, there was a degree of respect for the other side and for the system itself. There were unwritten lines that were understood and not often crossed.



PETER KING

Nassau County politics can be as tough as it gets, but once the debate or the campaign was over, we almost always left the

fight in the arena, and make it personal. Jerry Kremer, for instance, a fellow Herald columnist, was a staunch and powerful Democrat on Long Island and in the state, but I don't think there was ever a harsh word between us. And there were Democrats such as Mayor Ed Koch and Sen. Joe Lieberman that I worked closely with on issues such as homeland security and combating antisemitism. Of course, the classic example of adversaries fighting hard during the day and having a drink after hours

was the relationship between President Ronald Reagan and House Speaker Tip O'Neill.

Today, that collegiality is almost nonexistent, even within the same party. Republicans who work with Democrats to find bipartisan solutions are labeled RINOS. Democrats who do the same are called sellouts, or worse. Kevin McCarthy forged a bipartisan agreement to keep the government open and was removed from the House speakership by his own party. A centrist Democrat like my friend Henry Cuellar, from Texas, who cooperates with Republicans on border security issues, faced a multi-million-dollar primary campaign in 2022, coordinated by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and "the Squad."

Trying to make sense of my life, I'm in the process of writing my memoirs, tentatively titled "The Road to God Knows Where," and came to the chapter on my election to Congress in 1992. Going over my records of that campaign, I was reminded of how tough, hard-fought and close it was.

My opponent was Steve Orlins, a millionaire businessman making his first run for office. I was in my third term as county comptroller. The county had a

budget crisis, and Bill Clinton, heading the Democratic ticket, was running strong on Long Island. While I was better known than Orlins, that was a mixed blessing in a bad economy. Besides, Orlins had personal wealth that he used effectively against me, with a massive radio, television and direct-mail campaign. I won by just 3 percentage points.

What stands out for me in retrospect, though, is that despite the fact that Orlins and I had serious policy differences across the board, there was no hostility between us during the entire campaign. The worst he said about me was that I was a pro-life zealot who was responsible for the county's fiscal woes, and my counter was that he was a liberal Manhattan millionaire who hadn't voted in a number of elections, trying to buy a seat in Congress. Fair political comment on both sides. We had at least three televised debates without either of us raising our voice or pointing a finger.

Similarly, last week I appeared with former Congressman Charlie Rangel on WABC-TV's "At Issue" to discuss how, even though Charlie and I strongly disagreed on almost every major issue, we always worked together across the aisle on issues affecting New York, and had a

strong friendship for many years. The fact that there was a Sunday show dedicated to showing that there was a time when two guys from the same state could actually get along and work together for their constituents indicates how far we've gone in the wrong direction.

Then, two Sundays ago, Rosemary and I visited Bob Beckwith and his wife, Barbara, at their Baldwin home. Bob was the retired FDNY firefighter who stood with President Bush in the ruins of the World Trade Center on Sept. 14, 2001, in that inspiring moment when the president proclaimed, "The people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon!" It may have been an accident of history that Bush chose Beckwith, but he couldn't have picked anyone better — self-effacing, patriotic, dedicated. And as I spoke with Bob and thought back to those days and months after 9/11 when the American people were united, I realized that we haven't had that sense of unity since. Instead, as crises loom larger, we and our leaders grow further apart.

Let us do all we can to reverse this road toward perpetual division, and once again realize that we live in the world's greatest nation and must work to preserve it that way.

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

A war overseas, yet close to home

The war in Israel is one that I have clear opinions about, and one that has affected my personal life. Yet at this time, when expressing thoughts is more important than ever, I find doing so more difficult than ever. I've never had to fear for my safety when it comes to choosing a side, supporting it, and offering a personal



ILANA GREENBERG

perspective in response to global events. Now, however, I can't help but think cautiously about the ideas I put forward.

I've written about current events before, but never could I have conceived that I would need to provide a teenager's perspective on the war that's occurring in my family's backyard.

There is no use hiding it, so I will state outright: I am an American Jew. My father and my mother's father are Israeli, and I have hundreds of relatives

in the tiny country that I call my "homeland" in the Middle East. Now, because of my identity, I am greeted by Nassau County police officers from the 6th Precinct when I walk into my Jewish school each morning. My hearing-impaired grandmother, who lives in a peaceful village outside Jerusalem, can discern the roar of sirens and the thump of missiles landing in her neighborhood. My teachers have children who may never return home.

My people cannot continue to suffer brutally at the hands of terrorists. For my safety, I have been taught to think twice before making that statement.

In my tight-knit New York Jewish community, the unfortunate reality is that everyone knows somebody who has been killed, kidnapped, traumatized, or tortured by Hamas terrorists.

My daily classes are shadowed by the hollow faces of my classmates, distracted by the anxiety of knowing that their

families are running to shelters. The television lulls me to sleep with talk of bombings and invasions. I am scared. I am scared of the horrors that are occurring, with no end in sight, and of the possibility that the terror can travel too close to my own home — in this country that my ancestors have relied on as a haven from persecution for generations.

And yet, while my family, friends and peers suffer, I know that the Gazans cannot continue to suffer, either. My stomach churns at the graphic images, the tragic stories of refugees fleeing their homes, which have been reduced to rubble, and civilians crying for their families. I pray

that Palestinians can live happily and safely — and that safety comes alongside, not at the cost of, the safety of Israel.

I am pained by the loss of innocent lives, and mourn the loss of our friends. I fear for the lives of Israelis, and fear for the lives of Gazan civil-

We haven't had it since after 9/11. Instead, we and our leaders grow further apart.

When I walk into my Jewish school each morning, I'm greeted by NCPD officers.

ians. I want Israel to exist peacefully, and I want Gaza to be more than a city of rubble. Must these all be mutually exclusive?

I want nothing more than peace, yet many are convinced that a brutal war is the only solution.

I wish that I could offer a resolution to these conflicting emotions, but in this war, there may not be one. Death does not pick sides. Need I explain that a bullet will kill an Israeli and it will kill a Palestinian, without considering in which country the lifeless flesh originated?

Regardless of the sides taken in this brutal conflict, I hope that the one thing we can all agree on is the sanctity of human life — though not everyone does. Maybe one day, that will be enough to unite us in a common desire for peace.

For now, I need not continue to express my thoughts on this tragedy. The thousands of voiceless bodies speak loudly enough.

Ilana Greenberg lives in Valley Stream, and is a junior at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School in Great Neck.

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HERALD EDITORIAL

Long Island's water supply is endangered

There's an invisible lifeline across Long Island that sustains us all — our aquifer system.

These underground reservoirs — the source of every drop of water that flows from our taps — are the bedrock of Long Island's clean water supply. Yet beneath the serene façade, a crisis is brewing. It's a threat that could jeopardize our very survival.

The Long Island aquifer system comprises four primary underground formations. From the shallow glacial aquifer to the untapped Lloyd aquifer, which together with the Magothy and Jameco form the aquifer system — commonly referred to as a singular aquifer — these layers face myriad threats. From contamination by cleaning products and paints, as well as pesticides and nitrogen. From fertilizer runoff and septic tanks. And from what could be one of the most destructive threats: saltwater intrusion, exacerbated by over-pumping to fill our seemingly endless need.

The glacial and Magothy aquifers face increasing water demand. Nassau and Suffolk counties utilized nearly 415 million gallons of groundwater each day as of 2014, according to the Long Island Commission for Aquifer Protection — the equivalent of nearly 21,000 swimming pools. That was up more than 10 percent from just a decade earlier, and demand has grown even more since then.

There are increasing concerns about the impact on streams, ponds and wetlands. Coastal areas may face challenges as the demand for water surpasses the limits of the shallow freshwater aquifer.

Rapid development has exacerbated the

issue, reducing water replenishment into the aquifer. Impermeable surfaces and sanitary sewer systems prevent rainwater from sinking into the ground and divert water from its natural course, diminishing the aquifer's ability to recharge. Moreover, pollution — including nitrogen, pathogens and toxins — poses a grave public health concern. Long Island's drinking water is facing a worsening crisis.

The Long Island aquifer is already believed to be the most contaminated in New York state. Urgent policy changes are needed to prevent irreversible damage.

The federal government took significant steps to address issues like these across the country in the early 1980s, creating what has become known as the Superfund program with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act. The Environmental Protection Agency was tasked with investigating and cleaning up sites of long-term pollution — more than 250 of them on Long Island.

Most are former manufacturing facilities or processing plants that remain contaminated decades after their closure, creating what are known as contamination “plumes” underground. The U.S. Navy has pumped groundwater from two such sites since 2008, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation, removing 10,000 pounds of contaminants from the water.

And then, just last year, Northrop Grumman — which built military aircraft on Long Island from 1942 to 1996 — struck a \$100 million deal with the state to remove solvent Grumman used to clean

aircraft parts, which is part of the so-called Bethpage plume.

There are several other examples of work to clean up these plumes, but even current efforts will mean that we won't see significant results for decades. More must be done.

While cleaning contamination must be left to the experts, helping to sustain the aquifer by reducing demand, and not adding more contaminants, is an effort every one of us can immediately contribute to. Water conservation at home, local STOP programs — short for Stop Throwing Out Pollutants — and promoting and prioritizing proper pollutant disposal and responsible medication disposal are crucial steps. More vigilant collection of the waste from vehicle maintenance, lest water-intensive lawn care, and the removal of impermeable surfaces — to allow rainwater to make its way to the aquifer before being lost as runoff — contribute to safeguarding our aquifer. Demanding that local lawmakers pass legislation reducing the future expanse of impermeable surfaces is vital.

Our daily choices — from the disposal of pollutants to the maintenance of our vehicles — resonate in the health of the aquifer. If we want Long Island to continue to serve as our home in a sustainable future, we must rethink our attitude about water. It is not merely a commodity, but a lifeline that sustains our communities.

The fate of Long Island's aquifer hinges on our ability to embrace change, make informed choices, and collectively safeguard this hidden treasure beneath our feet.

LETTERS

There's new LIRR infrastructure, but what about the trains?

To the Editor:

There is nothing to celebrate about the opening of the new \$600 million Penn Station entrance at Seventh Avenue and 32nd Street. Just like previous investments, including the \$1.6 billion Moynihan Station, the \$300 million West End Concourse, the \$600 million entrance at Seventh and 33rd and the enlarged Main Concourse — totaling \$3.1 billion — it does nothing to eliminate periodic cancellation and consolidation of Long Island Rail Road, NJ Transit and Amtrak trains utilizing the East River and Hudson River tunnels due to broken rails or signal, power or other malfunctions.

These investments provide no improvement when it comes to reliability of service or additional platform and track capacity. Periodic overcrowding at the platform levels — which results in overcrowded trains with insufficient seating capacity — will continue. Some riders end up standing in the vestibules and aisles. The mad rush to board late-arriving trains for the trip home will continue.



OPINIONS

N.Y. needs to boost financial education in our schools

Young people in New York have a great knowledge of many subjects, but they have much to learn about personal finance.

Many states have already incorporated financial education into the school curriculum, with some starting lessons as early as kindergarten. Twenty states, including Ohio, Rhode



THOMAS P. DINAPOLI

Island, Tennessee, Utah and West Virginia, require that students take a personal finance class to graduate high school. New York should get with the program.

I issued an executive order on financial literacy in 2019, directing my office to identify ways to enhance New York residents' personal finance knowledge and understanding of issues such as mortgages, student loans and credit card debt. But we should also be

focusing on financial literacy for the next generation, to ensure that young people have the skills to effectively manage their finances and avoid falling into the trap of spiraling debt.

According to a National Endowment for Financial Education 2022 report, 80 percent of those surveyed stated they wished they had been required to take a personal finance class in school. Also, a study by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, a nonprofit corporation regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission, found that respondents with higher financial literacy were more likely to make financial ends meet than people with lower financial know-how.

During last year's legislative session in Albany, eight bills were introduced to include financial education in schools starting as early as pre-K. One bill called for the creation of a financial literacy fund, which would provide funding for grants or programs to

establish financial literacy programs, specifically targeting at-risk populations. These bills merit further discussion.

In September 2022, the state education department convened a Blue Ribbon Commission charged with examining the state's high school graduation measures.

The commission's recommendations to the Board of Regents, related to ensuring educational excellence and equity for New York's diverse student body, are expected to be released soon. Several Board of Regents members have voiced support for adding personal finance as a requirement to obtain a high school diploma. I'm encouraged that the issue of personal finance was included in this important discussion, and hope that it will be given serious consideration. Adding financial education to the state's curriculum can be successfully implemented, as evidenced by the fact that some

of our schools already offering a personal finance class.

For example, Mott Hall V, a South Bronx high school, is offering personal finance, taught in conjunction with a required economics course. Students learn theory, and also follow the stock market in real time, research corporate earnings and select stocks. They appreciate the real-world lessons that can be applied in the future.

The importance of learning personal finance can't be underestimated, and I'm committed to helping New Yorkers strengthen their financial knowledge and understanding.

The stresses associated with financial difficulties can adversely affect your physical and mental health and hurt family members as well.

Education in financial literacy can be an important step toward accessing a better job, improving your quality of life, and providing peace of mind.

Let's make financial acumen part of our kids' educations.

Thomas DiNapoli is the New York state comptroller. A version of this column originally appeared in amNew York.

LETTERS

Amtrak's initiation of East River tunnel rehabilitation starting next year will result in one of four tunnels being removed from service 24/7. If a train stalls in one of the three remaining tunnels, thousands of commuters will be late. To preserve existing service, some LIRR rush-hour trains will be canceled or combined. Until this work is over by the promised 2027 date, it is impossible to guarantee LIRR commuters safe and reliable on-time service, or seats, with a full schedule of trains to and from Penn Station.

LARRY PENNER
Great Neck

Larry Penner is a transportation advocate, historian, writer and a former director of the Federal Transit Administration Region 2 New York Office of Operations and Program Management.

Whose side is AOC on?

To the Editor:

Right after her insincere and unconvincing public rejection of antisemitism in late October, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez could no longer hold herself back. After her ChatGPT-styled condemnation of antisemitism, an impassioned Ocasio-Cortez wrote on X that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee "endorsed scores of Jan 6th insurrectionists. They are no friend to American democracy. They are one of the more racist and bigoted PACs in Congress as well, who disproportionately

target members of color. They are an extremist organization that destabilizes US democracy."

As someone who has repeatedly expressed deep concern for American democracy and called out those destabilizing it, seeing AOC scapegoat AIPAC in this way has shocked me to my core.

And as someone who was shocked by the Jan. 6 insurrection, I have been closely following corporations and companies supporting election deniers. AOC singling out AIPAC before countless corporations, super-PACs, and other organizations supporting members of Congress who failed to certify our presidential election is breathtakingly antisemitic.

Historically speaking, antisemitism starts by targeting one kind of Jew. Not all of us. Antisemitism begins with conspiracies about one segment of the Jewish people who are so powerful, so influential and so deceitful that they must be stopped. Whether it's people on the far right blaming every grievance they have on George Soros; antisemites in the czar's Russia villainizing the fictional Elders of Zion; Soviet propaganda vilifying Jews as capitalists; or Nazis in Germany dehumanizing Jews as the ultimate socialists, antisemites pave the path to violence against Jews with scapegoating.

Ocasio-Cortez, joined now by Rep. Cori Bush, attacking AIPAC with increased frequency, has all the trappings of antisemitism. There are any number of super PACs, corporations and organizations that are truly endangering our democracy, but AIPAC is not

FRAMEWORK by Tim Baker



A greater rhea named Edgar at the Bellmore tree lighting.

one of them. AOC could be drawing attention to the countless individuals and organizations that enabled the Jan. 6 insurrection, but she is not doing that.

At a time when the U.S. is seeing a dramatic increase in antisemitic attacks on Jews, Jews feel less safe in America than ever before. When they are being murdered and beaten on the streets of America, it is time for Oca-

sio-Cortez to stop scapegoating AIPAC. This Jewish group is not responsible for the troubles of society. As MSNBC's Rachel Maddow has recently pointed out, history shows that targeting Jews with such conspiratorial accusations is in and of itself a huge threat to democracy.

RABBI ELCHANAN POUPKO
Bronx

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