INSIDE: Dunewood Turns 60 | Watch Hill Boaters Back | Jay Blakesberg Interview | SWIMS!

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Storm Chasers

A THUNDERSTORM PASSED over Fire Island on Tuesday evening, like it did much of the region. It rolled in fast, as those crazy-wild summer storms will, and chose to stay until it was time for it to move on. Filtered white sun then peaked out afterwards, catching us by surprise. Rainbow weather – we know it well. For me this is the perfect allegory for July on Fire Island.

The whirlwind of events that happen during this month come up fast and furious. No sooner could we exhale after Fourth of July than Kirsten Corssen and Robert Sherman were back out in the hot summer sun covering the 7th Annual Ocean Charity Swim at Atlantique. John Burke writes about a cause most of us have heard about for decades, but in his coverage of the July 14 gathering in Cherry Grove for God’s Love We Deliver, we see it again through a fresh lens. Danielle Lipiec captured a modest ribbon cutting of the littlest library that could with the same versatility in which she memorialized a legendary surfboard maker on Long Island.

Not unlike the rainbows that follow summer storms, Fire Islanders follow their passions, be it over a 100 men and women who swim across the Great South Bay for a cause and Maggie Fischer’s memory, or one of our own writers for this paper singing cabaret at Cherry Grove’s historic LBGT Theatre as they have done for 58 years.

There are the writers, photographers, and staff for this publication. We too are following our passions, a drive to tell you their stories – call us the storm chasers!
AROUND & ABOUT

Jr. Lifeguards Compete: Jones Beach won Fire Island’s combined effort team in the first-ever junior lifeguard tournament held in Saltaire on July 11. The event was open to youths ages 9-15. Additional competitions will be planned this season. (Photo courtesy of Nick Stertz)

Our own Emma Boskovski not only reported on the Maggie Fischer Memorial Great South Bay Cross Bay Swim on Friday, July 13, she swam all 5.6 miles of it! She is pictured here with her kayak partner, Heather Joinides. Read all about her experience on page 31.

Sandra and Bryan Krut have been organizing the Fire Island Ocean Swim event in Atlantique for seven years now. This year their children, Samantha and Evan (ages 10 and 8), completed the 400-meter USA Swim. (Photo by Carolyn Williams) Find Kirsten Corssen’s coverage of this exciting day on page 25, with photos by Robert Sherman.

Matthew Krauthamer and Maxwell Deyo opened their home for this year’s God’s Love We Deliver Gratitude Event. Catch Johnny “Boardwalk” Burke’s coverage on page 22.
Around & About >> Continued

The Grove, Pines, and Ocean Beach are not the only Fire Island communities with stuff going on to celebrate the Fourth of July! Pictured are Saltaire Fire Company, and the Kismet Kandies float in their respective parades. (Photos by Catherine O’Brien and Bradlee White)

Shark Attacks off Fire Island Coast
By Shoshanna McCollum

Two youths were victims of separate purported shark attacks off the shore of Fire Island on Wednesday, July 18. Both incidents occurred moments apart from one another before noon. Matthew Donaldson, age 13, was part of a day camp program operated by the Town of Islip in Atlantique. Lola Pollina, age 12, was with her family at Sailors Haven, which is approximately 4.5 miles east of the corresponding incident.

Donaldson was treated at Northwell’s Southside Hospital in Bay Shore, after receiving first aid on site by Town of Islip lifeguards, and Ocean Beach EMS who extracted a small tooth from his limb. Pollina was assisted on site by FINS lifeguards at Sailors Haven, and Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau at Good Samaritan Medical Center in West Islip. Both are reported in stable condition with non-life threatening injuries.

Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter and Brookhaven Town Councilman Neil Foley hosted a joint press conference later that afternoon in which they described the events as “most unusual” for waters in this area. Islip Town Councilman John C. Cochrane Jr. then added it was breeding season for sharks, which may bring them closer to shore. However positive identification of shark species involved in the incidents was still pending at the time this article went to print. At the press conference, it was also announced Islip and Fire Island National Seashore oceanfront beaches were closed to bathing as the matter continues to be investigated. Beaches were subsequently announced as reopened on Thursday, but marked by purple lifeguard flags to signify possible presence of dangerous marine life.
Letter to the Editor of the Fire Island News:

So... I forgot that “the motto of the day is to cut away,” but I cut towards and ended up at Southside Hospital Emergency Room with a gash to my index finger.

Couldn’t have done it without the members of and cooperation between the Ocean Beach Police Department, Ocean Beach Fire Department, Suffolk County Marine Bureau, and the Islip Ambulance Exchange. I never realized how many skill sets represented by these different departments it takes to deal with medical emergencies. Because I was on an island it required all of these teams working cooperatively – and they did.

Members of each team made personal contact while performing their professional duties. It made a bad ordeal actually quite pleasant.

With gratitude and appreciation,
Douglas Shankman
from the Charlton Family

Fire Island News Readership Survey

Fill out the survey and send a picture of the completed survey to the Fire Island News via email for a chance to win!

Win a night at The Palms Hotel

The prize for the winner of the Survey Contest will be a one night stay for two at The Palms Hotel and a $50 gift card to CJ’s. The Palms Hotel stay will be valid September 3rd-9th, September 15th, 16th, 22nd and 23rd. The prize has no cash value and will be based on availability.

To be eligible to win the Fire Island News Readership Survey Contest, you must take a picture of the questionnaire, and email it to emma@fireisland-news.com. Hard copies will not be eligible for entry. The winner of the contest will be notified via email.

1. How old are you? a. Less than 18 b. 18-35 c. 36-55 d. Older than 55
2. Where do you reside? If Fire Island or Long Island, please specify the community in your response.
3. Which section of the Fire Island News do you enjoy the most?
4. How often do you pick up the paper?
5. If you could change anything about the paper, what would it be?
6. Have you looked at us online? If so, specify where (Our website, Facebook, or Instagram).
7. Agree or disagree...
   a. The Fire Island News is a newspaper that is a part of both Fire Island and the South Shore communities character. a. agree b. disagree
   b. I trust the Fire Island News to deliver news that is relative to me. a. agree b. disagree
8. On a scale of 1-10...
   a. What do you rate the quality of our writing? ________
   b. How important is the paper to you? ________
9. Additional comments ______________________________________________

Fire Island News Readership Survey Winner

LAST ISSUE’S SURVEY WINNER! The winner of the Fire Island News Readership Survey Contest for Vol. 62, Issues 2-3 is Joann Murino from Bohemia! Joann enjoys reading the Police Blotter and Around and About sections when she picks up the paper, and her first words when picking it up are, “Yay, I love this paper!” She also rated the quality of the Fire Island News writing at a 10.

Another chance to win a fabulous night at The Palms Hotel is being offered, and you too could be a winner! Complete the survey now on our website. No fee to enter: fireisland-news.com/reader-survey.
Welcome New Advertisers!

Netter Real Estate office now open! (Photo by Robert Sherman)

Anthony Cerabino, B.M., LMT, M.S., L.Ac, founder of Healthcare Wellness Center in Bay Shore: Medicine and Wisdom in Perfect Harmony. (Photo by Lorna Luniewski)

Manager Anja Calabrese at Main Street Wine & Liquors in Bay Shore, which offers a large variety of wine and liquor, and free delivery to Fire Island and Davis Park ferries. (Photo by Lorna Luniewski)

Dana Wallace III still going strong! (Photo by Robert Sherman)

Dennis and Ivan sing cool tunes to folks relaxing at Houser’s Bar and the Hideaway on a beautiful Sunday night. (Photo by Shoshanna McCollum)

Hallelujah! Another successful used book sale at Free Union Church. (Photo by Robert Sherman)
INTERVIEW:  
Jay Blakesberg – Rock Legend Photographer  
By Laura Schmidt

Whether or not Jay Blakesberg is a household name depends on what house one lives in, but households across America know his work. The longtime photographer for Rolling Stone magazine has taken pictures of bands such as the Grateful Dead, Talking Heads, and Jane’s Addiction, as well as artists like Beck, Tom Petty, Tom Waits, Neil Young, and John Lee Hooker just to name a few. He has multiple published books to his credit, and co-directed the Phil Lesh & Friends concert film “Live at the Warfield” in 2006. His first one-man show gallery exhibition will take place this fall at Southport Galleries in Southport, Connecticut, opening Oct. 28, 2018. Jay Blakesberg also happens to be a Fire Islander.

Fire Island News (FIN): When did you first start going out to Fire Island?  
Jay Blakesberg (JB): I first went out to Fire Island about 20 years ago. I live in San Francisco, so I’m one of those odd people that own a house in Ocean Beach but live on the West Coast. Then we started renting a house for a couple years and then we bought a house on Evergreen and have been on Evergreen ever since. I think we’ve been there 16 years. My kids have basically grown up on the island during summers. They both were OBYG kids and counselors, and now they’re college grads. I love everything about Fire Island. It’s a unique and interesting place, and I really love spending time there, and I’m happy I discovered it.

FIN: You followed the Grateful Dead on tour in the late 1970s as a photographer. What was that like being just a teenager and how do you think that shaped your life?  
JB: So I grew up in New Jersey, and I started seeing the Grateful Dead in 1977 when I was 15 years old. I borrowed my dad’s camera in 1978 when I was 16 and photographed them at the Meadowlands, Giants Stadium, 1978. By 1979, I was definitely part of the traveling circus of freaks and misfits running around the country following the Grateful Dead and did that for a number of years and eventually moved out to the West Coast. Still to this day I photograph them on a regular basis. Right now there’s Dead and Company, which is the latest incarnation with John Mayer on guitar, and I’m sort of the official photographer for that. That was sort of the foundation of my career as a photographer. I’ve worked with all sorts of artists from the Grateful Dead to Radiohead to Tom Petty to John Lee Hooker to Neil Young to Carlos Santana. I’ve worked with a ton of different artists and shot hundreds of magazine covers.

FIN: Are there any artists in particular you enjoyed photographing?  
JB: One of the things I love about what I do is that I’ve been photographing artists for decades, besides the Grateful Dead, which at this point I’ve been photographing for about 40 years, which is mind-blowing for me to have a film/digital archive of the arc of a career of an artist that’s so important to pop culture and American pop culture history is incredible. There’s a lot of bands that I love connecting with early in their careers and working with them for years and years and years. A lot of photographers are like, ‘Oh, I shot that band I don’t need to shoot them again.’ I don’t feel that way at all. To me it’s really important to work with an artist on that kind of career arc and see the changes and watch them grow.

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FIN: You have described your photography before as a “visual anthropology.” Explain what you mean by that.  
JB: It goes a little deeper than just working with an artist for a long period of time. Anthropology being defined as the study of humankind, right? So I’m known as this Grateful Dead, jam band, hippie photographer and surrounding this community of musicians there’s this whole tribe of people. I put out a book three years ago called “Hippie Chick: The Tale of Love, Devotion & Surrender,” and this is a book about women and their connection to live music and what it means to them. The photographs in that book go back 38 years and come all the way up to 2015. So I’ve been studying that tribe of people. This is an important tribe in a modern day pop culture phenomenon that started in the 1960s in San Francisco and it continues to this day. The things that were born out of that modern day hippie movement are still very valid and relevant today. The entire organic food movement and recycling. There’s so many things that were first started by the hippies that are now part of everyday life. I always like to say the hippies were right. They were right about the food. They were right about the environment. They were right about the music, and they were right about the drugs.

FIN: You’ve published 13 books throughout your career. Is there one you enjoyed making the most?  
JB: They all have been really fun to do. My first book I did was on the Grateful Dead, and I loved the process, and I learned a lot. And that’s how I got the book-making bug and started my publishing company, Rock Out Books. The next book I did was on the band Primus and then the Flaming Lips. Each one has had its unique challenges and moments that I’ve loved. But I’m really proud of every single book that I’ve done. We live in a computer, on-screen world, and so I think it’s nice to be able to hold something and flip pages.

FIN: What do you think of the role technology plays in concerts today?  
JB: Unfortunately, the advent of technology is the great disrupter in the photography world. It has given everybody the ability to create a lot of mediocre content that is cluttering the airwaves and our brains. I think a lot of people have a hard time distinguishing between really brilliant photography, and mediocre photography. Anybody can go out and buy a $600 DSLR these days and take a photo. It’s created a situation where mediocrity is accepted and the norm. Continued on page 49
THE FOURTH OF JULY, the parade of children’s wagons, the drumbeat of the Bay Shore and West Islip bands, Marines raising the flag, Saoirse Ryan singing the national anthem, the reading of the names of deceased veterans from WWII and Korea – mentioned in my last column – and the names of Kismet veterans of Vietnam: Jack Baker, Tom Doxie, Rusty Phelan, Mike Mckowsky, Phil Villachi, Arthur Weinstein and Art Weisser; and of course Kismet Fire Department members cooking burgers, dogs, clams, and selling raffle tickets. The Wagon of Cheer was won by Jackie from Nassau County; the 50-50 by Irena of Surf’s Out, $730; and a board of scratch-off lottery tickets won by Nick Petris. Kismet League for Animal Welfare became a part of the celebration in the ‘80s with their homemade pies, more recently with bicycles. This year’s bike was won by visiting Theresa Diemer. The old “pump house” is where the floats assemble, with beves of parents struggling to tuck their costumed children onto or into decorated wagons as the bands tune up. Excited neighbors line the parade route to cheer. The Best in Show float this year was First Woman to the Moon, with Quinn Sowers and Brett Arthur from the Arthur house. The most topical float was American Airlines, with Lydon and Riley Rose Cole and a friend riding a silver colored wagon-plane. Crossing the Delaware, aka Give me Kismet or Give me Death, with Reagan, Ryan and Nicolas of “Déjà vu,” was deemed the Most Patriotic float. Other notable entries were Rowan and Anna (staying with Jimmy and Joaney) with a Grateful Dead theme; Tess from “Friends Again” singing “Boogie Wonderland,” Maeli, Ava and Jack of “Way Way Yonder,” with Kismet Candies; and Fishing for the 4th, with Kai and friends. Babies Enzo and Lexie made their first debut.

Another sign of summer: The 11th Annual Burger Cooking Contest on the beach on June 30, organized by John Berinzoni and assisted by Nick Veljaich, Greg Weisser and Alicia Greneško. Burgers were vegetarian, meat, lamb, seafood, and even dessert burgers – sesame cupcakes with coconut shreds and sugar cookies as fries. The judging was done by Greg Weiser (last year’s winner), Morgan Mooney and Nick Veljaich. Onlookers were also asked to taste and vote. Each entry was cut in quarters and placed on a long table with a written description of ingredients. Official judges had to taste all entries, though they didn’t have to finish them – too much. Everyone else was allowed three quarters each. These cooks – chefs actually – take their creations seriously. An international “rookie” group from BVT, hailing from Hungary, Germany, Haiti and Ireland, submitted a hungry VIAF burger with roots in France in the 1500s. A husband-wife team, Leslie and Brian, had two winning entries – Rockin Ramin with tuna and ginger wasabi mayonnaise and French Onion Burger (Judge’s Best). Jane Weiser won the Five-Napkin award for her Gooey Yummy Burger. Chris Braun got the Mad Cow award (just crazy enough to work) for his New England Chedah Buga. Scott Fishman won most creative for The Lucian – a burger with rum, pineapple, bacon and jalapeno. The crowd favorite was Frank Ribando’s Kismet Kontender, a porterhouse with bacon, cheese, onions and shiitake mushrooms in cognac, which he enthusiastically described to me. Saturday, July 7, was a busy day and night. Jacquie Jones and Linda Knoth organized a “fun-raising” sandcastle/sculpture event on the beach. It was a perfect day for it: sunny but water too rough for children. There were 16 team entrants and three notable winners. Judges were unbiased visitors. First prize – a gorgeous gift basket filled with swag from local businesses as well the right to host a large beach castle flag for a year – went to an intricate Jurassic Island, created by Uncle Matt; his nephews, Charlie and Jack; and godson, Lydon Cole. The second place team won a smaller flag for their Dolphin sculpture. Unfortunately, that group had left the beach before I got there. Third Place went to the Sea Turtle created by the Palace Squad – Reese, Ace, Kai, Avery and Hudson. It was a perfect beach evening for the Annual Seabay Potluck dinner organized by Gregg and Jane Weiser. The dishes were scrumptious. There was no contest, no prizes, just a relaxed gathering of neighbors and friends. My favorite – John Berinzoni’s lobster ravioli. Another crowd pleaser was Jane’s lemon meringue pie.

I see that Brooke and Evin have advertised a plant and pet care business and that Islip Department of Public Works cleaned our drains at the end of June. Let’s hope both are successful.

Upcoming Events

July 21: Kismet Day – Raffles, face painting, and dunking; also the Pine Street Block Party.

1. Four International “rookie” chefs from Hungary, Germany, Haiti and Ireland competed in the Burger Cook-Off.
2. Palace Squad – Reese, Ace, Kai, Avery and Hudson sculpted a Sea Turtle.
3. Fourth of July float American Airlines, with Lydon and Riley Cole and a friend.
FROM A BARREN PATCH OF SAND used as a dumping ground to a lush, family-oriented community, Dunewood has gone through quite a transformation in its 60 years on Fire Island.

Irwin Chess and Maurice Barbash began developing the small town in 1958, to fight against the Moses Road, a road introduced by Robert Moses that was intended to run through the entire island. Environmental lawyer and brother-in-law to Barbash, Irving Like, and his wife, Margalit, joined in the development of Dunewood to further support the creation of the Fire Island National Seashore to protect the island’s delicacy from becoming polluted.

“The reason we selected Dunewood was because it was developed as a residential, family community,” Like said. “It became, to us, a place we could all gather together so that was a very important part, from our perspective, that it was a family community.”

Barbash’s daughter, Cathy, was just a child when the development occurred but she recalls spending weeks there each summer and falling in love with the small, underdeveloped town.

“They [Barbash and Chess] began building houses and each of the families kept a house for themselves,” Cathy said. “Usually builders don’t live in the communities they build, but it was such a utopia for kids.”

At the start, there were less than 10 original houses built, and they were all identical, simple and functional.

“The original intent of my father was you’re at Fire Island to be active outside so you don’t need a big house,” Barbash said. Of course, as the years went on, homeowners began to add decks, rooms and other accessories to their homes to give it their own personal flair.

When Chess and Barbash first bought the land, it was a dumping ground for the surrounding towns and had barely any trees or greenery. So another important aspect of the development was the fact that it was created to be strictly residential. There is no commercial zoning to allow for pollution of any kind.

Stopping the development of the Moses Road certainly changed the lives for residents because it guaranteed a community free of vehicles cluttering the roads and polluting the air. Children were, and still are, safe to roam the streets barefooted without a care in the world.

“There were no trees,” Like said. “That all changed, and the community began to take shape as not only a beach community but a green, wooded community with flowers and trees.”

As the community grew larger over the course of 15 years, more amenities were offered to residents such as tennis, swimming and sailing lessons. In the early 1960s, the Dunewood Yacht Club first gave young adults the opportunity to learn how to sail on the bay with instructors and other islanders their age.

“As soon as kids could swim you could basically let them out in the morning and not see them again until dinner time,” Barbash said.

The first generation of Dunewood residents would often get together at various times throughout the summer for barbecues and picnics, according to Like. And at the end of the season, the Fire Department would hold a parade and drive up the streets with trucks for the kids and families to see.

As a small town consisting of about 100 homes and lacking a market or restaurant of any sort, Dunewood acts as a quiet getaway from more fast-paced towns on the island. With Fair Harbor just to the west and Ocean Beach to the east, Dunewood is a middle ground for families looking for peace and relaxation.

“Don’t come here expecting anything like Ocean Beach,” Like said. “It’s a very quiet community and, to some people, that’s boring, but to the people who go there for tranquility and serenity and to be out in the open and with their children, it’s ideal.”
DR. BOB TOLD ME an Independence Day story the other week, and it makes for a good (if now belated) holiday quiz. Bob informed me that every July 4, Father Richard—‘we’re very chummy in this town, no last names or anything—hoists the flags of the five nations (or their successor states: the Kingdom of Naples hasn’t much troubled the world these past 200 years or so) that were allied with America during the War of Independence, and asked if I knew which countries they were. Well, uh … France … and, um, Burgundistania … and, oh, Grand Fenwick … okay, you get the idea. And not just me, no one seems to know the right answers, and after all, this is our country, you’d figure someone would be up on this stuff. (Oh, right, I’m forgetting—the American educational system.) I didn’t even bother asking my wife, who though currently masquerading as an American citizen is in heart and origin a Brit, brought up to refer to the Revolution as the Rebellion or the War of Treason, resentful of all that money they still owe us for bailing them out of two world wars, and part of a covert vanguard of descendants of our former colonial masters that for years was infiltrated Stateside with the aim of subverting our democracy, stifling dissent, and placing us once more under the cruel domination of local lackeys doing the bidding of a foreign tyranny. Of course, the whole project collapsed once Trump beat them to it, but still …

Anyway, it’s a good question, so see if you can come up with the countries, and no cheating until after I cheat by giving the answers from Father Richard. All this is yet another reminder of how truly fortunate we are to have a person as singular as Father Richard serving our community. I’ve often thought that if the rest of us were half as smart, half as erudite, half as loquacious, half as kind, half as gracious, half as compassionate, half as self-deprecating, and half as small-c catholic in our interests as Father Viladesau, this world wouldn’t be half as bad.

Ah, a pleasant refuge from our doleful reality: the pompadoured certitudes of the gentlemanly international order of 1776. However, we have our own little refuge right here, so how ‘bout a few upcoming events in the forthcoming weeks for all you fellow refugees.

Two big SCAA events are on the way. Final alert! On Saturday, July 21, the House & Garden Tour toddles about town starting at 9:45 a.m. from Our Lady Star of the Sea. (You know, Fr. Richard must acknowledge that if the British had won the Revolution, first, the only flag he’d be flying would be the Union Jack, and second, he’d be minister of an Anglican church with a shorter name, like St. Baldrick’s or St. Peregrin’s or Kirk of the Moors or something.) Followed by an optional lunch at the SYC. Even at this late date tickets are for sale online (saltairecitizens.org) or at the headstades of Pat Hennessey (104 Marine) and Grace Corradino (207 Anchor). On Saturday, Aug. 4, Arts & Music flourish o’er downtown as the annual festival takes wing. Kids under 18 are invited to set up wagons selling homemade crafts or food along Broadway for free, while adults can get dibs on some space by applying at the above website, adding/exhibit reservations form to the basic address. It’s not on the posters, but naturally the bayfront picnic remains the day’s linchpin, closing with Grucci’s attendant pyrotechnics, which hopefully this year won’t blow into the community and set it on fire.

In between, those with a hanker-in’ for ice cream can attend the aptly-monikered Ice Cream Social, the SVFC’s annual cone-and-drip-a-thon hosted by Saltaire’s answer to Dolly Madison, Christine Schiff; scooping starts at 2 p.m. on July 28. Think of it as belated dessert after the Seventh of July Parade’s hot dogs, hamburgers and bratwurst (in honor, no doubt, of George III’s Prussian allies in the late war).

Speaking of ice cream, Keeper of the Saltaire Flame Jim O’Hare vacationed in Alaska recently, and after being alerted by yours truly of the existence of a familiar-sounding but alternate universe in the frozen north, Jim took a ferry out of Anchorage for a visit to Fire Island—one memorialized in the photo that I trust made it onto this page. We’re cutting things short this week to squeeze in some extra pix. One picture is worth a thousand words, they say, but let them try counting this text every issue.

1. There’s not much breeze to stir the flags of America’s 1776 allies atop Fr. Richard’s rectory. (Photo by Dr. Robert Furey)
2. SVFC Chief Emeritus Harry Baker, back in a familiar spot. (Photo by Jim Rieger)
3. The incomparable Tommy Campo performs at the old bandstand. (Photo by Catherine O’Brien)
4. SVFC comrades-in-arms. From left: Will Rover, Patrick Smith, Nicolas Oudin, Catherine O’Brien, Christine Schiff, Kathy Rieger. (Photo by Jim Rieger)
5. Jim O’Hare snacks ‘neath the midnight sun at the Fire Island Rustic Bake Shop near Anchorage, Alaska. (Photo courtesy Jim O’Hare)
YOU CAN’T GO OUT to dinner at 7 p.m. on a lovely Saturday night and expect to get seated right away if you don’t have a reservation. Just like you can’t pull up to Atlantique on the Fourth of July and expect a slip to be open, or can you? Well, two summers ago the Town of Islip implemented an optional reservation system for the marina, letting people secure a spot for their boat.

First, let’s dive into how the system works. To receive a slip you must book two weeks in advance online. As stated on the Town of Islip website, “Online reservations are available in one-week increments only. Reservations will not be accepted for two consecutive weeks. Those wishing to reserve more than one week can do so provided the reservation periods are not consecutive.”

This reservation system only is for 10 B slips; a B slip is a docking spot that fits an 11- to 14-foot beam. Any A (larger beams) or C slips (smaller slips) cannot be reserved ahead of time. The reservation system is effective during the peak holiday demand, but less utilized during regular season usage.

After speaking to residents around the marina, it was interesting to see what people really think about the reservation system. Jim and Diana Hetter on their boat “Irene Sea” didn’t even know much about it. They claimed to have looked it up once but it seemed confusing. “With work, weather, events on the mainland, it is hard for us to plan two weeks out when we will be coming to the beach,” says Jim. They worry if they pay ahead and don’t make it there it will be a waste. Although they may not use the reservation system, they believe it might be a good fit for them in the future because of the flexibility it would give them. They would not need to be glued to a slip, and it could provide them with the freedom to leave for an hour or two to go for a boat ride and come back to their original slip.

Down the dock we found Jackie and Tom on their boat “Seas the Moment.” This delightful couple has been coming to Atlantique for more than 20 years and they love their little slice of heaven. They seem to be open to the reservation system, but it is not a good fit for them yet. “The system seems like a good idea, but it is not perfected yet,” says Tom. “I like the freedom to come and go as I please, especially with my high demanding job.” Tom did say he appreciated aspects of the service however. “It seems to be a perfect fit for people who are planners and need to know they will have a slip when they come over for their summer vacation.”

It seems as if the reservation system really depends on the person and their schedules. This was not the case for Barry and Maureen Greenberry on the boat “Winter’s Dream” because they found the Dockwa app that is used at Sailor’s Haven for reservations to be pretty convenient. “What is appealing about the reservation service is the fact that I could leave my slip then come back to it later in the day,” says Barry. “Living over in Bellport it is hard for my family to get a ride to the Bay Shore ferry, and having a reserved slip for the day would let me take the boat over to pick up my family, and have that security that my slip is waiting for me.” This reservation service could really give boaters that freedom they want at the marina.

A few more steps down the dock we found Lisa Holmes who was one of two boats this particular week that had made a reservation. She needs that security of having a slip waiting for her. “It takes the worry out of getting to the marina and finding no available slips,” says Lisa. “The only criticism I have would be the fact that I could not pick my slip. I wanted to be on the west wall, but the reservation service gave me one on the east wall.”

General consensus seems to be that boaters would be receptive to the reservation service for Atlantique Marina if it were better organized. Perhaps Town of Islip can consider the advantages of Dockwa for Atlantique. Who knows what next summer will bring?

1. To make a reservation visit www.townofislip-ny.gov then click Reserve an Atlantique Marina Slip link.
2. The marina tends to be full on the weekends, this is when a reservation can come in handy.
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THE OCEAN BEACH Board of Trustees meeting on Saturday, July 14, began with an acknowledgment of the passing of Leslie Lieber, a respect- ed and longstanding member of the Ocean Beach Community. A collabora- tion between the family and the mayor will result in a memorial in two weeks. Led by Mayor James Mallott, all at the meeting sent their deepest condolences to the Lieber family.

The minutes from the trustees meeting held on June 9 were approved, as well as the bills and claim vouchers. The Mayor’s Report began with the welcoming of Trustee Dawn Har- graves. The meeting marked her first since her recent election: to the board. Mallott joked, “She’s been a pain in the neck already,” before more seri- ously acknowledging the board is already benefiting from her presence.

Regular attendees of the trustee meetings know that no Mayor’s Report this season would be complete without an update on the ferry terminal. The terminal was finished this season would be complete without an update on the ferry company was happy thus far with the temporary situation. Meetings about the construction of the terminal are happening every two weeks and include the ferry company in order to make sure that when completed the terminal will meet their needs.

Windswept is officially fully occupied by Ocean Beach Youth Group (OBYG) and the board is working with OBYG to discuss the possibility of a teen program in the building. The mayor also discussed the prominence of garbage on the beach, acknowledging the addition of more cans and new systems in place to more efficiently remove full cans from the beach. For those concerned about the state of Main Street, there are also plans in place to review with business owners which parts of their storefronts they are responsible for cleaning, and remind them to clean their buildings once a week.

The Ocean Beach Quality of Life Committee is discussing the issue of smoking on the beach, and is considering passing a ban on smoking on the beach. The Village attorneys are doing more research on the requirements of such a ban, noting that it may have to result in the designation of a specific permitted smoking area.

In terms of offshore drilling, the board supports the resolution passed by the Fire Island Association agreeing with the state’s position banning offshore drilling. The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program was reviewed by the state, a process Mallott described, “The state was amazed at how much is done.” The living document will now be reviewed again and amended.

The Superintendent of Public Works’ Report was, as always, a scru- ning update on all that has been accom- plished around the Village since the last meeting. Highlights included receiving the temporary Certificate of Occupation from the building inspector for Windswept and the acquisition of the new water meters to be installed in the fall. Trustee Powers gave a moving state- ment thanking “Kevin and the guys for all their work around the Village.”

Questions were raised about the abundance of medical permit bikes and whether or not they are allowed on Main Street. The conversation quickly became one debating whether all current medical permits are legitimate, and if there should be a more strict review process before the permits are approved and issued. As residents expressed concern about the abuse of permits, the board reminded them that increased scrutiny is a slippery slope.

The Ocean Beach Police Depart- ment has issued 173 tickets so far, most of them on the beach. The most popular resident response to the issu- ing of 15 bike tickets this summer was, “That’s it?” There was a remind- er not to use the senior cart for freight, a restriction that has resulted in sever- al members of the community losing their cart privileges for the summer. The Ocean Beach Fire Department has responded to 12 calls since the last trustee meeting. The OBFD elec- tion was held on July 1, and the elect- ed officers were officially confirmed by the board of trustees.

The Lifeguard Report showed no major medical emergencies so far this year. The lifeguards recently compet- ed against Jones Beach in the Junior Lifeguard Competition and the Fire Island Lifeguard Competition will be held on Aug. 2. The lifeguards report that the water has been unusually warm in the past few weeks and dol- phins have been spotted off our shores.

The lifeguards also recently passed their state inspection with no concerns. Residents raised questions about how to better raise awareness of the jetties when they are covered by high tide. The conversation resulted in the deci- sion to try out a sign on the dune fencing marking the jetty locations that would be visible to those in the water.

All appointments were approved and members of the board of trustees were authorized as signors on the Vil- lage checking accounts. An extension was accepted for the yearly electrical maintenance contract and members of the board were approved to attend Suffolk SHARE Inter-Municipal Procurement. The fee for shed, garbage bin, or shower construction has been changed from $250 plus 50 cents per square foot to the flat rate of $50, a change that helps homeowners but does not con- tribute to a significant loss in revenue for the Village. The board also accept- ed a donation of $1,250 from the Ocean Beach Community Fund to be used for AED equipment for the lifeguards.

Residents raised concerns about power outages this past week on Surfview and into Seaview. Some transformers were replaced. There has been no further conversation about the electric line starting in Ocean Beach and heading east. Residents were quick to ask who would be paying for the new line, but the board specified that Ocean Beach would not be paying for it, as the Village does not benefit at all from the line.

For those concerned about increas- es in freight boat charges, guidelines will be posted soon about how to ship packages to the post office.

The Village has encountered some difficulties with securing Mobi-Mats® for the beach, and will be bringing in a local vendor to get a better idea of what is needed to overcome the chal- lenges the beach provides. Residents also asked about the possibility of putting benches on the beach overpasses, but the steps and pathways are currently under the control of Suffolk County. The Village has been waiting for a year to receive guidelines from the county about how the overpasses can be adapted or reconstructed while still staying within FIMI project guidelines.

The Community Fund announced an adult game night that will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays atWind- swept, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. The Fund will be purchasing game tables and chairs for the event.
Summertime in the Club

THE FIRE ISLAND SUMMER CLUB held its annual summer kickoff party on Tuesday, July 3, at its clubhouse on the bay. A barbecue dinner, hors d’oeuvres, and cocktails were served to several dozen guests, most of them members and friends of the community’s 40 homeowner families.

Cliff Weinstein, one of the nine members of the Summer Club board of managers, became involved in the community after purchasing a home in 2013, and helps to plan its annual dinner. Having joined the board soon after Hurricane Sandy flooded the property around the clubhouse and destroyed or damaged many Summer Club homes, Weinstein had a hand in drafting a survey that was distributed to homeowners to ascertain their primary concerns as the community recovered. The condition of the clubhouse appeared high on the list of popular responses.

“It was not maintained or updated for decades,” said Board Vice President Carey Lyons. “The event space was not used.” Lyons purchased a home in Summer Club in 2007, and has served on the board for nine years. He and the rest of the managers worked with the community to redesign the clubhouse, which reopened after a three-year period of construction prior to the 2017 summer season, and it is now used daily for recreation and special events.

“As an eyesore was turned into a gem,” said Weinstein. Improvements include new floors, walls, and outdoor decking; and a redesigned floor plan that features a renovated kitchen, bar, gym, and game room.

“As a board, we created both short-term and long-term goals,” he added. “In the long term, we’re looking to protect the bayfront by building a rock wall to stop erosion, raise sidewalks, provide new furnishings for the clubhouse, and look into the possibility of moving the clubhouse back from the bay. In all our decisions, we always make it a priority to remain as transparent as possible.” Additionally, a dock for homeowners is awaiting DEC and homeowner approval, and a bay swimming area is being considered. Weinstein, a young family man, noted that turnover in the community has remained slow but steady.

On July 1, Ocean Beach Community Fund celebrated the fruits of its own restoration effort many years in the making, with the ribbon cutting at Windswept. Yes, it will remain home to Ocean Beach Youth Group, but also so much more. Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter bestowed a citation to Honorable OBCF Chairman John Schaffner in recognition of this Herculean achievement.

A flag-raising ceremony was held at the Ocean Beach Youth Group building on the morning of July 10, with campers singing the national anthem as others circled in various watercraft on the bay. Each year, campers work together to create a unique flag design to represent the season.

The winners of the Fourth of July house decorating contest were announced by the Ocean Beach Community Fund and Ocean Beach Association: First prize went to the Chenault family on Ocean Road, second went to the Pickard family on Dehn, and third went to the Meyer family on Surf Road.

The talk of the town this week is the exhibit that opened on July 14, at the Ocean Beach Historical Society, titled “Thru the Lens,” featuring the photographic work of Joel Silverberg, Zack Stertz, and Jo Ann Wanamaker.

“Your eye is drawn to one of these artists’ work depending on your mood,” said Curator Linna Salamone. “Each photographer’s work is unique.” Silverberg’s pieces are all under 8 inches and vividly colored; Stertz’ are lush and framed in black; Wanamaker’s prints capture the Fire Island lifestyle and are calm and soothing. The Historical Society is open Thursday through Monday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 7 to 10 p.m. The annual children’s arts and crafts fair, sponsored by the Ocean Beach Community Fund, will be held on the East end of the village green, on Saturday, July 21, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a rain date of July 22. An entrance fee of $1 per wagon may be paid at the Ocean Beach Historical Society or at the village office. The winner of the children’s fair will earn a place in the regular art show being held Aug. 11 and 12.

The Community Fund’s annual benefit dinner, a Sunset Tea Dance, will be held this year at Windswept, on Saturday, Aug. 4, at 7:30 p.m., featuring the music of DJ Karin Ward. Tickets may be purchased for $80 at www.oceanbeachcommunityfund.org. The Community Fund also will be hosting a concert on the dock, featuring the band Jet Stream, on Saturday, July 21, at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.

The Free Union Church will be hosting its second family movie night of the season with a showing of “Peter Rabbit,” on July 21, at 7 p.m. Adult education classes are being held again this summer at the Fire Island School: On Mondays, Tabata from 5-6 p.m.; Tuesdays, bingo from 6 to 8 p.m.; and Wednesdays, yoga from 4:15 to 5:45 p.m. Walk-in fee for each class is $15 at the door; must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Call the school at 631-583-5626 for more information.

The Ocean Beach community lost its two eldest residents on July 9 and 11, respectively: Jazz musician and radio host Les Lieber was 106, and talented sculptor Nina Meyer was 105. Longtime resident David Appelson also recently passed away. Our condolences to all the families.

Until next time, whether you find yourself in Robbins Rest, Summer Club, Corneille Estates, or Ocean Beach, I hope to hear from you soon.

1. Cliff and Pepper Weinstein and Chris Dunworth at the Summer Club kickoff party.
2. Islip Town Supervisor Angie Carpenter awarding a citation to OBCF Honorary Chairman John Schaffner at the Windswept ribbon cutting. (Photo by Robert Sherman)
3. Nina Meyer enjoying ice cream with her great-grandson in Ocean Beach, in the summer of 2016. (Photo courtesy of Aviva Meyer Grasso)
THE OLD ADAGE, “be careful what you wish for…” is so true. Some weeks I have to scrounge for news and then all of a sudden, there is so much to report it’s hard to fit it all in one column. So here’s a brief recap of how summer really started to ramp up and what’s been going on, in and around “The Park!”

Festivities, Fireworks, Food – that was the Fourth of July week that was. It started on Tuesday, July 3, with a very elegant cocktail party hosted by the Greenbergers, Joyce and George, along with their lifelong friends, Mary Cummings and Barbara Lederberg. The invitation said come to a pre-Independence Day party at “Verdemonte,” the Greenberger’s home on Erie Street. The requested dress code was red, white and/or blue and everyone who attended obliged. Melissa Dodici provided the fantastic food, which was complemented by George’s always excellent choice in wines. The guests mingling around the pool were a very interesting mix of OBP and Seaview residents. Despite the heat wave, it was a really cool way to kick off Independence Week and a wonderful startup to a very hot and busy week.

The next day, July 4, the annual Point O’ Woods fireworks did not disappoint. Some of us gathered on the back deck of the OBP firehouse while others watched from Bay Park as the Grucci fireworks exploded over the Great South Bay. Since Tom Byrnes was not there to sing “God Bless America” and wanted to win it. Paula preferred the blue Coro- the corner of Cayuga and Bayview just in time for the “parrot head” invasion. Needless to say they sold out completely. They had a good time, made some spending money and even met a corgi dog named Simon who has his own Instagram account! Simon’s owner posts pictures of his comings and goings and took a picture of him at the lemonade stand.

We went from parrot heads to arts and crafts as Fran “Redhead” Miller held her annual Art Show at Schooner Inn. Each year there is something unique and different to see and buy and Fran’s photos just keep getting better. A highlight of the show is always the streaming of photos that Fran has taken over the years. They play in an endless loop on the Schooner TVs and we are all reminded of how much younger we once were and how much better we all looked back then. Thanks, Fran!! In my first column of the season, I reported that longtime OBP resident Betty Errico passed away in February. Her family held a beautiful and heartfelt memorial for her at the firehouse on July 14. Betty’s husband, Bob, who is a Korean War combat veteran, welcomed everyone to a celebration of her life, and her three daughters, Beth, Barbara and Bonnie, each spoke lovingly of their mother. Betty was an extraordinary person who was very humble about her accomplishments. As Barbara said, she was a nurse, educator and mentor. She never pulled any punches and with Betty, what you saw was what you got. Many of us did not know she had earned a Ph.D. from NYU as I never once heard her refer to herself as Dr. Errico. It was just Betty – the Bronx! In fact that is the message I had on my voicemail when she called to say she would be contributing a dish for the Community Fair a summer or two ago. It was a pleasure to see and hear Bonnie’s best friend, concert musician Michael Vannoni, who played a beautiful rendition of “Amazing Grace” on his viola. The afternoon ended with Leggio’s sandwiches, which was a great way to remember and fete a great lady. Rest in peace, Betty.

Two weeks ago Rita Addo won a blue Corona market umbrella at the local happy hour. She really didn’t need it and Steve liked it so he bought it from her. The next week the Cronins won an umbrella, which they thought might be too big, and asked Steve if he wanted to trade with them, but then they decided to keep theirs anyway. This week Ellen Lavin- no won the black Fireball umbrella, which she sold to Paula Ingram. I really liked the Fireball umbrella and wanted to win it. Paula preferred the blue Coro- na umbrella, so we traded. I couldn’t decide if this should be called the “sisterhood of the traveling umbrella” or a continuation of the “six degrees of OBP” so I’ll leave that decision up to you.

1. The Erricos: Bob, daughters Beth, Bonnie and Barbara, along with grandchildren Anthony and Riley. 
2. Frank Pillitteri, stained glass artisan. 
Boaters Back at Watch Hill Marina

WATCH HILL MARINA, which opened in 1967, was closed for repairs in 2016 and reopened in May 2018 with a new electrical system; a new bulkhead and boardwalk; and a new concessioner, Love Watch Hill and Sailors Haven, Inc.

Woodstock Construction LTD began work on the multimillion dollar project in September 2016 to replace the entire electrical system, including pedestals and lighting, and the adjacent bulkhead and boardwalk damaged by Hurricane Sandy. The electrical system, including existing conduit and conductors, was replaced. When the 50-year-old marina was opened up for this project, it became clear that additional work was needed to strengthen the substructure. Supplemental girders were added and all areas of the bulkhead were backfilled. Composite lumber decking and new pedestals and lighting were also installed on the marina boardwalks, and a new elevated electrical building was constructed. The project ensures the marina is more resilient to future storms.

“We are excited to have both sites up and running this season,” said the Seashore’s Facility Manager Jim Dunphy, who oversaw the project, in a press release. “With the opening of Watch Hill we can close the chapter on Hurricane Sandy recovery at Fire Island National Seashore.”

Since Hurricane Sandy, six construction contracts totaling $16.4 million have been funded through a partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to restore access by rehabilitating roads, boardwalks and marinas on Fire Island. The Watch Hill Marina was the sixth such project to have been completed in the last five years.

While the marina project was underway, Seashore staff updated the visitor center exterior and added an accessible ramp to the marina center. The overlook and upper section of the three-quarter mile Salt Marsh Nature Trail was also upgraded during the marina closure.

Watch Hill Marina has a National Park Service visitor center with park ranger-led programs (see our Calendar on page 35), a lifeguarded beach, a small convenience store, snack bar, restaurant and backcountry and family tent campgrounds. Located on the western edge of the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, directly across the Great South Bay from Patchogue, there are 175 public slips, the majority of which accommodate between 10- and 14-foot beams and offer 120 and 208 volt service. There are 23 slips that accommodate 15- to 18-foot beams and offer 208 volt service. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/fiis/planyourvisit/watchhill.htm.

Sailors Haven is located adjacent to the globally rare Sunken Forest, across the Great South Bay from Sayville. The 45-slip marina can accommodate boats with beams between 10 and 18 feet. All slips have electric and water. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/fiis/planyourvisit/sailorshaven.htm.

Love Watch Hill and Sailors Haven, Inc. will run the marina, snack bar, restaurant, camp store and campground at Watch Hill; and the marina and snack bar at Sailors Haven, for the 2018 season. In a press release, Doug Biviano, president of Love Watch Hill and Sailors Haven, Inc. said he has, “spent the past 18 summers on an old sailboat with his family at Fire Island,” and is, “eager to share his passion for this place with others.” Campsites at the Watch Hill family tent campground are available to walk-ins on a first come, first served basis. More information on the marina and campground reservation systems is available at LoveFins.com.

This story was compiled by Lorna Luniewski through press releases and with the help of Elizabeth Rogers, Public Affairs Specialist, Fire Island National Seashore.

Lifeguarded ocean beach at Watch Hill.
Invasion 43 Over and Out

The balconies, ramps, windows, restaurants, and decks – the entire town was overflowing with people lined up waiting for the arrival of Cherry Grove’s new Homecoming Queen Rose Levine.

Diane Romano drove me in a cart through town waving and smiling to all the fans. The Queen’s entourage of 16 met at the Community House so we could get ourselves organized in preparation for our big entrance in the Pines. Photographers were on hand to record the moment. For me it was an unbelievable experience.

We walked to the Ice Palace to join forces with some 300 additional Invaders. Then we walked down the ramp waving to the screaming crowds who were hanging over the rafters and the decks at local restaurants, where people had rented front row tables to enjoy the day’s festivities. Sitting atop the boat as we made our way to Pines Harbor on the hottest day of the year was pleasant and breezy but we had to hold on to our hats or our headdress!

Upon our return to the Grove, I took the helm of the boat for at least 15 minutes, which was a fantastic experience. If they ever need a captain in an emergency, I’m available. I want to thank the Fire Island News for the cover of the last issue, and the stunning photo spread and coverage.

In Memoriam

On the cusp of the July Fourth holiday celebrations, we had a horrific tragedy in Cherry Grove. On Sunday, July 1, Pete and Linda D’Ancona, who have been residents of Cherry Grove for more than 50 years, lost their son Pete at the age of 54, and his 51-year-old girlfriend Tina Sgambari. They were sleeping on their boat docked in the Grove when carbon monoxide leaked from the motor. Linda is a partner of Sweet Licks in the Grove along with Frank from Cherry Grove Pizza. Linda’s husband, Pete, has been a building contractor in the Grove for many years. Their son, Pete, was a respected former New York City police officer, as well as a retired FDNY 9/11 Ground Zero firefighter. The entire community is still mourning their loss.

Some Birthdays

Michelle held a birthday celebration for her partner Karen. Michael, Jeffrey Mac Lean and I were the only men at the party among 12 lovely ladies that included Annie, Gerri, Keri, Nicky, Jamie, Donna, Danielle, Kathryn, Bob and Peggy Samson. Karen baked a strawberry short cake, which was delicious.

Diane Romano and Patricia Goff hosted a birthday party in New York City in honor of Diane’s mother, Kay, who turned 96. For many years the party was held in the Grove at Heaven ‘N Earth, but now it is held in the City, which is more convenient for Kay.

Great News!

After being on a heart donor list for a quite some time, Lois Pisani, the wife of Joanne Tavis, was notified on Saturday after midnight that she should report to the hospital. They left immediately for New York City. She is doing very well. Lois, we are all looking forward to seeing you in the Grove very soon.

Visiting the Grove

From New Orleans was Rita George who arrived for the In-\sion. She will return to attend Miss Fire Island for her 50th time later this summer. Her guest was former Grove resident, Bebe, who hasn’t been here for 20 years. Two young ladies from Ocean Beach, Samantha Jones and Brenna Caico, came to Cherry Grove for the first time on their day off from bartending at The Landing. Touring the Grove’s sites, they stumbled upon “Roseland." They told us all about The Landing’s famous special house drinks – the Daytripper and the Banana Rum Mud-slide – both sound fabulous if we ever venture west.

Milestones

Congratulations to our local resident Ernie Saglione, who recently bought the old “Monster” then “Tides” properties. Perhaps the day of rehabilitating this long vacant site is near.

Congratulations to Joan Van Ness and Lorraine Michels who are celebrating their 25th anniversary.

Ray De Forest (Doris Dear) and his partner Jim McGuinness are celebrating their 13th year together. They have rented a house in the Grove this season for the first time and are loving it.

Showings

Congratulations Daniel Nardicio for exposing Manhattan’s “Club Cumming” to the Grove for one very successful week at the Community House, featuring a variety of entertainers, artists and comedians including Broadway and TV Icon Alan Cumming. Actress and now governor candidate Cynthia Nixon also made an appearance, having a Q&A with the audience. Brini Maxwell and Josh Bennett introduced their knitting circle to our locals on Monday evening. Alison Brackman, Avery Ryan and I were trying to teach Jack Roullo, Michael McPherson, and John Adams how to knit. Fun!

Northwell Health, who services Ocean Beach and Cherry Grove, hosted a cocktail/buffet dinner party at Heaven ‘N Earth. Many Grove residents attended. This is their fifth year in Cherry Grove, and the community is better for it. Many representatives from the corporate office attended and spoke, including Eddie Fraser who lives in the Grove. Arthur Cohen spoke of his incident and thanked them for the attention and the urgent care he received. Doris Dear entertained, giving them all a taste and flavor of the Grove.

Upcoming Events

July 21: Mike Fisher’s documentary “Cherry Grove Stories” will be presented at Whyte Hall in the Pines, at 8:30 p.m.

July 20-22: The Cherry Grove Archives Collection Film Festival features many excellent films to view. See flyers in town.

July 28: The Arts Project will hold its 70’s Casino event at the Community House, from 8 p.m.-1 a.m. Roulette, Blackjack, Wheels of Fortune. Donation: $10 at door.

1. Birthday cake for the beautiful girl. (Photo by Peggy Samson)
2. Cynthia Nixon’s Q&A at Club Cumming. (Photo by Jason Barker)
3. Samantha and Brenna stumble into “Roseland.”
WE BOARDED THE FERRY and left the Grove.

We cruised along the Great South Bay, arriving in Pines Harbor. Our ferry was packed with our bevy of 300 beauties. As we approached the entrance of the harbor, we were greeted with horns and whistles blowing, flags and hands waving. It was incredible. We slowly approached the same dock where Panzi and I first embarked so many years ago.

Robin Byrd, who was filming the event, Pines President of FIPPOA Jay Pagano, Ariodne Villarreal, Randy Wilson, Jim Vandermothe, Ed Schulthefer, and Crayton Robey were among so many others standing shoulder to shoulder. Broadway choreographer and director Jerry Mitchell was there, cheering like so many others. People were standing on the Pavilion balconies and the decks with hundreds of people lined up along the harbor walks. Panzi looked fantastic in her cotton candy pink ruffle coat. She was the first to exit the boat. She welcomed all and then introduced the 2018 Homecoming Queen Rose Levine. Sixteen handsome men and women walked off the boat and lined up wearing their top hats, tuxedos and red canes. Rose walked through the arch of canes and the crowd roared. The speakers had “I Could Have Danced All Night” as her entrance song. She then sang a chorus of Jerry Herman’s “The Best of Times is Now” while everyone joined in. For me it was the experience of a lifetime.

My partner, Michael Fitzgerald, in his kilt, was right by my side. We then went to Sip-N-Twirl, the Pool Party at the Hotel, and then we bounced around right by my side. We then went to Sip-N-Twirl, the Pool Party at the Hotel, and then we bounced around.

After a full day of excitement we finally arrived home. Only in the Grove and the Pines can we have such a full day of fantasy. Nowhere in this world could we have experienced this – a day of the Rose.

Lila Swell hosted a delicious brunch that we attended along with Bo Fridsberg, Bobby Michel, with his houseguests Brian Banke and Michael Edwards. Brian Ridley and Ignacio Serrano who owned “Summer Solstice” for 15 years – now retired – were able to join us for brunch. The famous Green Twins of the Pines were also guests. Richard Green who lives in Long Beach, California, spent two weeks in the Pines with his brother Clark. They lived in the same house in the Pines, since 1963. They finally bought it in 2014. I dubbed Lila’s brunch “The West Side Group” since all the guests live west of the harbor.

Returning to the Pines for a few weeks were the Steluka family. Christine, who grew up here with her parents Kay and Charles Corso, met architect Gary in the Pines and they wed. They have two daughters and now are the proud grandparents of four. The entire family, sons-in-law included, were enjoying the Pines. Kay Corso will soon be 98 years old. She is now living at The Arbors, in Islandia, a Long Island village not too far from us.

Peter Thambounaus and his partner Demetrios Sengos had a top-notch glorious dinner party at their home.

Richard Mulero will have his annual art show of oil paintings, on Aug. 11, at 250 Bay Walk.

The 10th Annual Fire Island Pines Fire Department BBQ was held at the Firehouse. As usual it was a tremendous success, but this year they had an even larger crowd than last. Our firefighters doubled as chefs, cooks, bartenders, servers and of course gracious hosts. Welcome and congratulations to new FIP Fire Chief Joe Gimann.

Real estate mogul of the Pines Chris Grae held his annual luncheon around his oceanfront pool. The party was extended because the crowd was having such a great time. DJ Vito Fun made the party more fun. Chris was the grill master serving hot dogs, drinks and watermelon. The many guests included his sister Karen Grae who also sells real estate, Paul Albertson, Martin Hicks, Gil Neary, Anthony Taccita, John Stevens, Kenny and Jeanne Lesser.

Mitch Cirka, Randy Smith, Jorge Gallegos and Tommy Nichols hosted their annual luncheon/pool party. Among the guests was Broadway performer Adam Shapiro who is currently the understudy in the Yiddish production of “Fiddler On the Roof” in New York City.

Ellen Feldman Putnam spent a few days vacationing in Columbia, and Annapolis, Maryland, with her old school mate Barbara Bice, who showed her champion Brittany Spaniel Micka at the National Capital Kennel Club in Annapolis. She came back to the Pines and didn’t miss a beat. She and John walk to the Grove weekly; they love to have breakfast there.

Upcoming Events:

July 21: “Cherry Grove Stories,” a film produced by Mike Fisher, will be shown at Whyte Hall, at 8:30 p.m. Admission: $20. It premiered in the Grove last season, hope to see you there.

July 21: Lambda Legal will have its annual luncheon/fundraiser at Beach Hill Walk.

July 20-22: Fire Island Dance Festival, by Broadway Cares, presents the annual DRA Dancers Responding to AIDS.

Aug. 4: Pines Conservation Society will have its Go Native Plant Tour, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Tickets: $25; only 75 will be sold. For details, www.pines-conservationsociety.org.

1. Rose and her entourage at the Invasion.
   (Photo by Robert Sherman)
2. John Putman and his blues group at the Blue Whale.
3. The Steluka family.
4. Lila Swell’s brunch party.
that one of her clients (seriously compromised by his AIDS infection) couldn’t prepare the groceries she dropped off for him each day. She resolved to deliver pre-cooked and portioned meals that could be popped into a microwave or heated up quickly on the stove in a saucepan. Gangga conferred with her good friend and eventual co-founder Jane Best and other volunteers in similar circumstances, and God’s Love was born. With all the new attention and fundraising going on in the 1980s around the AIDS crisis, God’s Love We Deliver approached the personal, in-the-home, food-on-the-table priorities head-on. Scientific research, medical protocols, and new experimental treatments were all well and good, but patients were literally starving in their own apartments. During these dark days Gangga and her gang of bicycle riding angels began helping to bolster the severely compromised immune systems of scores of early recipients with nutritious meals delivered … with love.

I spoke with Stephen Covello who started as a volunteer and has now been the manager of Corporate Partnerships for seven years.

“After several address changes in the early years, God’s Love moved into our current building on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Spring Street, which was overhauled and equipped by music mogul David Geffen in 1993. It served our needs for a good 20 years, but the growing demands of the community required some serious rethinking. GLWD celebrated the serving of our 1 millionth meal in 1995, but by 1997, we had served our 2 millionth meal, and in 2013, and the serving of our 15 millionth meal, the board realized it was time for a general reconfiguration of our headquarters. There wasn’t enough space to accomplish everything we needed to.”

With the generous support of many corporate sponsors, and society celebrities like Anna Wintour, Joan Rivers, Blaine Trump, Harry Slatkin, and most especially Michael Kors, the two story building was transformed into a seven story showplace of light, efficiency, and technological marvels including a 10,000 square foot, 21st century kitchen on the sunny second floor where visiting guests can watch the actual preparation of all the meals behind wrap around glass-walls. Covello boasted proudly about every part of the new building: the gorgeous kitchen in which over thousands of volunteers work each year, the public spaces and meeting rooms for special events, and even the fully landscaped roof garden where fundraising parties are held and herbs and vegetables are raised for the meals.

We spoke with Karen Pearl, president and CEO for 12 years now of GLWD, and she had much to say about the charity’s evolution. “I had so many friends back at the height of the AIDS crisis who were being neglected as far as their nutritional needs were concerned until GLWD came along. But our original menus were focused mostly on the basics for them as a group. Then as the antiretrovirals around 2001 began to help HIV positive folks to live better and longer, we expanded our mission. In 1986, GLWD was delivering about 2,500 meals a year, and now in 2018 we serve approximately 1.5 million meals, that now include clients with over 200 different diagnoses. We’re applying nutritional breakthroughs to breast cancer survivors on chemo, homebound elderly folks with chronic debilitating illnesses, and children battling leukemia. We’re very proud to have expanded our reach and our horizons.”

The justifiable pride that the GLWD members and volunteers take in their mission and the lives they have changed remains a great reason to celebrate here on Fire Island. And the warmth and joy was shared by all on that sunny afternoon in a beautiful setting. Many, many thanks to all!
sunsets and cocktails on the bay

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Around the Bend at the East End
Dining Review: Cherry Grove Pizza

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CHERRY GROVE PIZZA provides plenty more than just pizza, and with a diverse menu, I found myself overwhelmed by all of the options: Salads, hero subs, sandwiches, pasta, and a variety of other entrees. Later, I left Grove Pizza with a full stomach and fulfilled expectations.

After seating ourselves outside at 5:30 p.m., the brief wait for our waitress to come over and introduce us to the menu became an opportunity to take a look around at Cherry Grove Pizza. With delicate red flowers hanging above us and enclosing the outdoor seating, I felt engulfed by the peaceful ambiance of the space. The prime location, not far from the bay, provides a breezy spot for a meal and truly matches the Fire Island atmosphere that we all know and love.

Our waitress only contributed to the friendly vibe of the restaurant and went out of her way to ensure that we were comfortable with the menu. I decided to order garlic bread and a Caesar salad to start, like she suggested.

The salad was a fresh bed of romaine lettuce, tossed in Parmesan cheese and Caesar dressing. I was impressed by how well distributed the Parmesan and dressing were, and also enjoyed the croutons that were made from a variety of different breads, making each bite taste fresh.

Other salad options on the menu include Antipasto, Lettuce and Tomato, and Fresh Mozzarella and Tomato. There were also two soups on the menu – Lentil and Minestrone.

The garlic bread was an entire loaf of bread that came cut into pieces. With a crisp crust, the inside was chewy and saturated in a butter and garlic spread. While I was only eating with one guest, it certainly could feed a village.

Choosing a pasta wasn’t easy, but I decided to order Lasagna. All of the other pasta dishes allow you to make your choice of spaghetti or ziti, with whole wheat or gluten free pasta available as well. With a variety of choices, there was also Ravioli, Stuffed Shells, Ziti, and Eggplant Parmigiana, to name a few.

Considering my lengthy search for the right pasta, I had almost forgotten to order a slice of pizza! Although they had many types to offer, I simply ordered a plain slice. A slice of pizza at Cherry Grove Pizza begins at $4 for a plain slice, and specialty slices can cost up to $6.25.

With “Pizza” being in the name of the restaurant, I was not surprised to find many different specialty slices on the menu, including bacon cheeseburger, garlic knot, and tomato and basil. Of course the menu also included Sicilian and spinach slices as well.

Also available: Meatball, Chicken Cutlet, Shrimp, Sausage, or Eggplant heroes, all for $10.25.

My lasagna came out with a thick layer of cheese on top, which concealed three layers of noodles, and tomato sauce with meat, which did not disappoint. And, of course, the pizza did not disappoint either. I found myself in awe of how well Cherry Grove Pizza was able to cook all of their dishes, not just pizza.

For dessert I picked the Reese’s Pie – Reese’s pieces sprinkled on top of a peanut butter cheesecake. With each bite, I wondered, how am I still eating?

By this point in our meal, I had noticed that the surrounding tables had been filled with sunburned, hungry people of all ages, ready for dinner. With the restaurant beginning to fill with the dinnertime crowd, the vibe of Cherry Grove Pizza became apparent to me – a place that welcomes all to enjoy not just pizza, but a variety of Italian dishes.
The sun was shining on Saturday morning, July 7, with the ferry filled to the brim with smiling faces full of excitement. Not just because of the beautiful day ahead, but also for the 7th Annual Fire Island Ocean Swim. Hosted by Bryan and Sandra Krut of Open Water Swim (OWS) LLC, this year for the first time the swim was selected as a 5K National Championship dual sanctioned event by United States Masters Swimming (USMS) and USA-Swimming (USA-S), making this favorite Fire Island event that much more special.

The National Championship is awarded by USMS via a bidding process that is reviewed and awarded two years prior to the event date. USMS advertises the swim to more than 60,000 of their members nationwide, recognizes overall race winners as National Champions, and those placing first in their age groups are recognized as All American Swimmers.

Before the swimmers ran off into the water I caught up with Don Livoni who was swimming the 5K and is also the vice president of programs for the USMS. Livoni had been to the race three years before and loved every second of it. When it came time to pick a bidder to host the 5K National Championship, he was rooting for the Kruts and the Fire Island Swim. He was delighted to know that Bryan had won the bid for the race and was excited to attend. “The Kruts do an amazing job for this race and their team is outstanding,” Livoni said.

Livoni, along with the rest of the swimmers, suited up and went to the starting line. This year’s distances included the USMS 5K Wetsuit Division and 1-mile distance as well as a USA-Swimming 400 meter (10 years of age and under) and 1-mile distance (11-17 years of age).

As they headed off into the water, the swimmers realized this swim was a little different than year’s past. The water temperature on this warm July day was only 64 degrees, which is very unusual for this time of year. Cold water temperatures made it a lot harder than usual, and some people had to get out of the water early. It was a busy day for the lifeguards that’s for sure!

“This year’s swim was by far the most challenging swim we have hosted in the last seven years! We had a northeast wind come in on Friday, which brought cold waters, and a nice sweep and waves,” stated Bryan Krut, owner of OWS and nationally ranked lifeguard, long distance swimmer and all American. “The weather was absolutely beautiful! Our swimmers were definitely challenged and those that finished were totally pumped. Even many of the DNF (did not finish) seemed pleased with their overall accomplishment, and they should be!

“Our approved safety plan was quite robust and the rescue teams did an incredible job following it 100 percent and ensuring our swimmers were safe. In the end, thanks to the Town of Islip, our very talented Fire Island Ocean Rescue team made up of certified and nationally ranked ocean lifeguards, Ocean Beach Fire Department and EMTs from Ocean Beach, Fair Harbor and Saltaire, everyone was accounted for and received assistance if they required it.”

Although the water was cold, the swimmers were in there for a good reason. The Fire Island Ocean Swim raises money for Hospice Care Network’s Children and Family Bereavement Program thanks to their swimmers and sponsors, such as Northwell Health Southside Hospital Orthopaedic Institute, Banfi Vintners, Maguire’s Bayfront Restaurant, and the Bay Shore Lion’s Club, among others. The swim raised approximately $10,000 this year, totaling about $50,000 over the past seven years. Without the sponsors, volunteers and swimmers, they could not put on this fantastic swim event and the ocean swim team is so thankful to give back to the community while raising awareness of the sport of swimming!

On behalf of the Fire Island Ocean Swim, Fire Island News, volunteers and sponsors we would like to congratulate the overall 1st place winner and National Champion, Ricardo Valdivia, coming in at 1:07:56.3; and Laurie Hug, the overall Female 1st place National Champion, at 1:23:02.2.

Overall, it was an incredible event, and possibly one of the most challenging swims in the country. Every swimmer should be extremely proud of their accomplishments. We are all proud of them!

For full swim results visit www.openwaterswimli.com/events/fire-island-ocean-swim.
Cherry Grove Dock to Get Some Rehab
By Robert Levine

AFTER MANY YEARS OF DETERIORATION from storm damage, heavy usage, as well as general wear and tear, Cherry Grove Property Owners Association President Gerri Losquadro, in partnership with Cherry Grove Community Association President Diane Romano, along with Doreen Rallo and other homeowners, have worked long and hard in petitioning the Town of Brookhaven to rehabilitate the community’s aging dock.

Meetings were held with design and engineering firms and with Deputy Commissioner of Parks Rob Maag to reach a commitment to repair the dock. Work is slated to begin after Labor Day, with completion targeted by July 4, 2019. Cherry Grove is a popular destination for seasonal homeowners, vacationers, tourists, and business establishments. Ample utilization of motor carts, wagons, and hand trucks to pick up deliveries of building supplies, appliances, necessities, and other freight compound the equation. The dock is also used for private watercraft, water taxis, and emergency response services in addition to landing by the passenger ferries – which means foot traffic is in the thousands on any high season summer weekend.

Cherry Grove homeowners are expected to receive an estimated 16.7 percent tax increase over a 20-year bond period for the $2.9 million reconstruction project. Newsday quoted Brookhaven Town Councilman Neil Foley as saying the dock suffered routine “wear and tear,” but that the nor’easter of Oct. 29, 2017 that ravaged the marinas at Davis Park also took their toll in the Grove.

Cherry Grove undertook a less extensive dock remediation project about 15 years ago. This time marine-grade epoxy coated steel will be used for the foundation dock for a longer service life. The dock’s surface will be Ipe Brazilian hardwood. While the tax increase will be significant, most agree the investment is a necessity, and as one of Cherry Grove’s most beloved gathering spots, worth every penny.
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The 2018 Maggie Fischer Memorial Great South Bay Cross Bay Swim: Friday the 13th is No Match for Tradition

By Emma Boskovski • Photos by Sean Fitzthum

FOR 95 YEARS, the community’s best swimmers hop on a sunrise ferry over to the Fire Island Lighthouse where they share in the tradition of swimming 5.6 miles across the Great South Bay to Bay Shore.

In 1999, Maggie Fischer, daughter of Robert and Mary Fischer, passed away a few days before the swim, and she was one of the 15 scheduled competitors that year. Since then, the swim has been dedicated to Maggie, and the Fischer’s play an instrumental role in organizing the event.

“It is such a rewarding event,” said Robert Fischer. “The fact that it has my daughter’s name on it, and that we can brand the swim as the safest, best run, well organized event – it is like a big family party that we throw every year.”

Last year, the swim donated $65,000 to the Hospice Care Network Children’s Bereavement Fund, and $20,000 to the Maggie Fischer Scholarship Fund.

“We do this for such a good cause,” said Fischer. “Each year we raise more money for those causes. There is nothing better in life than being in service like that.”

At 10 years old, I watched my mother, Julie Boskovski, cross the finish line, just under the four-hour mark. Training since November, my mom talked about completing the Cross Bay Swim as if she had conquered the world – and to me she did. I was determined to conquer the world too, with a faster time than she did, of course.

At 16 years old, I joined in the tradition. I have come back in the years following to demonstrate the same grace, determination, and strength that my mom showed me in 2011, and that other participants of the race demonstrate every year.

“We choose the day of the swim depending on the tides,” said Fischer. “We try our best to find a day where there is no current. There was no day available this summer; we had some slightly better days in June and August, but they were not as favorable to us as doing it in July. We know that we can do the swim with a slight incoming current, but we have never had this much incoming current. This was going to be a test for the swimmers.”

There was a strong incoming tide flowing from east to west, at a right angle to the course. The Fischer family advised swimmers to reconsider the advisability of attempting this year’s swim under these conditions.

“I think the tide was even harder than we expected it to be,” said Fischer. “The swimmers all responded to it because they certainly knew that there was going to be a strong tide, but I don’t think anybody expected it to be quite as strong as it was.”

With the mad dash of swimmers and kayakers grabbing their kayaks off the ferry, this year’s conditions created a second mad dash for kayakers to move as far west down the beach as they could – setting up the ideal situation for the current to carry them towards the first yellow buoy.

Despite the westward start, I quickly became jolted by the current, constantly popping my head up to make sure I was on course. I kept my eyes on the yellow buoy that we had to swim past to get to the first mile. Once I passed it, I thought I was in the clear.

With the perfect conditions, and virtually no wind, I had anticipated that I would swim a 30 minute mile. After about 45 minutes and no indication that I had completed a mile, I popped my head up and shot a look of confusion at my kayaker, Heather Joinnides.

“We are almost at the first mile marker,” she said. “The worst is almost over.”

I whipped my head around to realize that in a sea of swimmers and kayakers, the yellow buoy that marked half of the first mile, was right behind me. Had I not been moving? What was I swimming towards?

I was fighting the current, and I was tired. The words, “Onto mile two, three, four” and finally, “five” came so much easier, than that “mile one.”

“You could say that in a way, we tried to optimize the tides for the swimmers in the past,” said Fischer. “This time we threw a little bit of a monkey wrench at them, a challenge, and we wanted to see how it all worked out. Frankly, it worked out very nicely.”

For others, the tides presented no challenge. Two new records were set by 19-year-old Christopher Area of Amityville, completing the swim in one hour and 38 minutes; and 17-year-old Justin Meyn of Brightwaters, who finished in one hour and 41 minutes; meaning both first and second place cross bay swimmers this year broke Morgan Wolfe’s former swim finish record of one hour and 43 minutes set in 2015.

Megan Donnelly, 17, of Sayville, was the first female to finish, in an hour and 56 minutes.

There were 150 spots this year, as opposed to 120 last year, and 100 in 2016.

“We have slowly been increasing the numbers but nothing substantial,” said Fischer. “I do not think we will ever have more than 150 swimmers. We officially registered 127 swimmers and had 116 the day of, which is not unusual. We know that logistics will allow us to do this.”

Other than beating my mother, the Cross Bay Swim has never been about winning. The reward of crossing the finish line is that with every breath between every stroke of the last half mile, you hear cheering. Cheering of the crowd comprised of your family, your friends, and your community – the people who keep this tradition alive.

“Running this event is not just us,” said Fischer, “or the committee that we have with us. It requires the entire Fire Island community, all of the services of the Great South Bay, the village of Brightwaters, and the Town of Islip. So, there’s no way to say ‘thank you’ adequately to all of the people and services that do it – but it shows the warmth of tradition here.”

Myself and 114 others crossed the finish line on Friday, July 13 – and despite all the bad luck Friday the 13th presents, it was a great day to swim across the Great South Bay.
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CORNEILLE ESTATES gained a library as tiny as the two-block community itself, on its border with Ocean Beach, on Friday, July 13. Attendees of the resident-founded library celebrated its opening ceremony with white wine, neighborly conversation, and of course, a few books. Yes, it is feet away from the public library at Fire Island School, but that’s not the point.

Differing from most libraries, the Cornelle Estates Free Little Library occupies a square footage of no more than 2 feet. It stands on a wooden post on the side of Surf Road next to the ball field. While it may be small, it holds endless potential for book sharing on Fire Island.

Without the initiative of Sarah Abrams, Patty Burzo, Theresa Macri and Rhonda Malhotra, this quaint method of book sharing may never have made its way to the Ocean Beach area. In collaboration with each other, the four Cornelle Estates women were able to build and officially establish their own Free Little Library, with all funding coming from their own pockets.

“It was a no-brainer,” said Macri, who described first hearing of the Free Little Library organization from Abrams. “It’s summertime, people enjoy reading and wonder what to do with a book when it’s done, and how to get another one. This is a perfect venue to share books throughout the community, not just with friends, but with everyone.”

Founded as a non-profit organization by Todd Bol in 2009, the Free Little Library organization strives to make books more accessible to those who may not have the means of accessing them. With a small registration fee, anyone can establish a Free Little Library of their own within their community.

“The founder saw a need to share books not only with friends, but also with communities,” said Macri. “It’s a great way to increase excitement and enthusiasm not only about reading, but also about playing an active role in your community.”

Volunteers are encouraged to be creative and design a library of their own aesthetic, but kits can be ordered from the Free Little Library website. After registering, a new library will be placed on the Free Little Library map, also found on its website.

As the second of two Free Little Libraries on the island, its Cornelle Estates founders see endless potential for the Fire Island-sized library. Books of all genres and for all ages are welcomed to this miniature library, as it operates on a take-a-book, leave-a-book system.

This is not the first Little Free Library on Fire Island. One has existed happily at Central and Holly Walk in Fair Harbor for a few years now. Another is planned at The Palms Hotel, with an unveiling to be announced.

More information on the Little Free Library organization can be found on its website at littlefreelibrary.org.
The Arts Project of Cherry Grove presents

the 70th Annual Art Show

Saturday August 4, 2018
Members Reception:
12 noon-2:00pm
general public 2:00pm-5:00pm
Sunday 11:00am-3:00pm
raffle drawing at 2:00pm Sunday
at Cherry Grove’s Historic Community House
Bayview Walk Cherry Grove, NY

FIRE ISLAND PINES
PinesFl.com #SummerUnlimited
SATURDAY, JULY 21
Kismet Community Day
Kismet Fire Department Auxiliary presents Kismet Community Day, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., at Kismet Marina, featuring games and prizes, raffles, vendors, dunk booth and food and drinks for purchase. Kids can learn to build their own lighthouse and learn knot tying from the U.S. Coast Guard. Live music by the Dirty Vice Band. Proceeds go to the Kismet Fire Department for new safety equipment. Rain date July 22.

Bridgehenge
Come one, come all to Fair Harbor Dock for the annual Bridgehenge, at 7:01 p.m., and celebrate the very moment the sun sets behind the bridge by chanting, stomping your feet, banging pots and making noise. The party begins when the Grand PooPah invokes the invocation and continues until the sun goes down. Participants are encouraged to arrive with a drink in one hand, a giant pagriagate or bamboo in the other and adorned in a headband. For details, email djjaffe@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, JULY 22
Day of the Shark
Have a fin-tastic family day at Fire Island Lighthouse, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Listen to shark talks and live music, see shark movies, create shark art, and more! For details, call 631-661-4876.

Summer Concert
Islip Arts Council, with support from The Natural Heritage Trust, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and Dahab Associates, presents a series of concerts, at Bayard Cutting Arboretum, 440 Montauk Hwy., Great River. Today, Buddy Merriam performs and on July 29, see Mary Lamont; both concerts at 2 p.m. There is an $8 parking fee. For details, call 631-224-5420.

MONDAY, JULY 23
Food, Film and Fun
Town of Islip hosts a night of food trucks, crafts, games, a film and family fun. Tonight, at 5 p.m., at Roberto Clemente Park, Brentwood, view “Home Alone,” with water fun and bubble blizzard. On July 30, “Flubber” is shown at Brookwood Hall, East Islip, with science fun. For details, call 631-224-5430.

TUESDAY, JULY 24
Summertime in the Park
Lone Sharks perform at Dr. Kings Park Gazebo, Main Street, Bay Shore, at 12:30 p.m., presented by Islip Arts Council with support from Bay Shore Chamber of Commerce and BID. On July 31, Linda Ipanema takes the stage. For further information, call 631-224-5420; or visit www.bayshorecommerce.com.

Concert
Islip Town presents NY Exception, performing oldies, at Brookwood Hall, East Islip. Beginning at 5 p.m., music, trivia and food trucks; featured concert at 7:30 p.m. For details, call 631-224-5430.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25
Yoga
The National Park Service offers free yoga classes at Patchogue-Watch Hill Ferry Terminal, 150 West Ave., in partnership with the Friends of Fire Island National Seashore, today and Aug. 1, from 7-8:15 a.m., for beginners and intermediates. For information, visit www.FFINS.org.

Family Seaside Adventures
From 10 a.m. to noon, children ages 7-12 can meet in the Lens Building at Fire Island Lighthouse, and discover the first order Fresnel Lens that once shone in the lighthouse, then proceed to the Keepers Quartet to participate in a mock life-saving drill, followed by a craft in the Arts Studio. Cost: $5; children must be accompanied by an adult. To register, call 631-661-4876.

FRIDAY, JULY 27
Maritime Music
Enjoy sea shanties by the sea, courtesy of The Shipmates, from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Wilderness Visitor Center, located at the southern end of William Floyd Parkway, adjacent to Smith Point County Park. Sit and enjoy the music or join in with your own acoustic instrument. For details, call 631-281-3010, Wednesday-Sunday.

SATURDAY, JULY 28
Poetry Readings
Listen to poems written by Floyd family members and their guests, at Old Mastic House, William Floyd Estate, Mastic, from 10-11:30 a.m. For required reservations, call 631-399-2030.

FIA Meeting
Fire Island Association holds a meeting at 1 p.m., at Ocean Beach Community House. Water taxis are free, compliments of FIA and Fire Island Ferries. For additional information, visit www.fireislandassociation.org.

SUNDAY, JULY 29
Sailors Haven to Pines Saunter
Take the 9:20 a.m. Sailors Haven ferry from Sayville and meet at the Sailors Haven Visitor Center, for a 2.5 mile one-way walk with a park ranger through Fire Island’s coastal communities, from Sailors Haven to the Fire Island Pines. After the program, you can walk back to Sailors Haven or stay a while in the Pines and take the ferry back to Sayville from there. Wear comfortable walking shoes; bring sun and insect protection, snack and drinking water. For reservations, call 631-597-6183, Wednesday-Sunday.

MONDAY, JULY 30
Boat Building
Come and meet the volunteers of both the Penney Boat Shop and the Bob Grooms Moonbeam Shop as they build the Small Craft Building, which houses over 75 craft that sailed the Long Island waters over the past century. For details and additional dates, call 631-HISTORY or visit www.limaritime.org.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1
Seaside Story Time
Meet at Fire Island Lighthouse, from 10-11:30 a.m., for a maritime-themed book and activity, for children ages 5-8 and their caregivers. Bring something to sit on. To register for this free program, call 631-661-4876.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3
Summer Stars and Constellations
Families can join star pro Tom Carey for this star gazing program at Watch Hill Dune Station (access by ferry or boat only), from 8-9:30 p.m. After an indoor presentation, head outdoors to view the night sky. Bring binoculars if you have them, and insect repellent. For reservations, call 631-597-6455, Wednesday-Sunday.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
Native Plant Tour
Join the Pines Conservation Society for an examination of local maritime habitat and environmental conditions including a discussion on how flora and fauna adapt and change over time, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The talk and walk will highlight the evolving nature of Fire Island’s landscape and current best practices for sustainable living and recreation in our community. Following a brief introductory slide show by NPS of the ocean to bay ecology, expert rangers and PCS docents will lead walking tours of the west end of Fire Island Pines ending at the historic Carrington Estate. Tickets: $25; only 75 will be sold. For details, visit www.pinesconservationsociety.org.

ONGOING
Art Show
“Bursting Beauties.”
Bayard Cutting Arboretum, 440 Montauk Hwy., Great River, presents the work of Ron Becker, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, through July 28, in the Manor House Mansion. For details, visit www.bayardcuttingarboretum.com.

There is no fee to post your public event in the Fire Island News community calendar. Email us at info@fireisland-news.com with listing date, time, contact information and optional graphic for your Fire Island or South Shore event. Due to limited space, all event listings are subject to modification at the sole discretion of Fire Island News.
Charles Bunger, Long Island’s Surfboard Legend: 1941-2018
By Danielle Lipiec

CHARLES (CHARLIE) BUNGER, East Coast surfing trailblazer and legendary board crafter, died of lymphoma at Good Samaritan Hospital in West Islip on Monday, July 2, at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife, Janet; children, Theresa, Susan, Charlie and Tommy; and seven grandchildren.

Bunger was born on Feb. 4, 1941, in Brooklyn, New York. After moving farther east to Lindenhurst in his teen years, Bunger took up surfing as a hobby. He pioneered his lifelong venture on the shoreline of Gilgo Beach, a favorite spot of his as an amateur surfer.

After tinkering with a board of his own and slapping his name on it, Bunger would start what could be considered a revolution in the almost nonexistent surfing culture on Long Island at the time. From that moment on, locals would approach Bunger relentlessly to get a customized Bunger board of their own. Just six months later in the summer of 1962, he would have to move his work from his two-car garage, to a 2,000 square foot building in Lindenhurst. Bunger’s first store located in Copiague would only draw more interest toward his custom surfboards across the East Coast, and in just a few years, he was hand-crafting around 1,500 boards a season.

“The boards worked well for our surf conditions on Long Island. People were also drawn to them because they were made locally,” said Bunger’s oldest son, Charlie Bunger Jr. His father’s monumental impact, not only Long Island but the entire East Coast, shaped the way Bunger Jr. and his family lived. As he reflected on his father’s life full of passion, devotion, family, and of course surfing, he did not fail to touch on any of these aspects.

“He had a big impact on a lot of people’s lives,” Bunger Jr. said. “He was the front runner on bringing surfing to Long Island, and since his passing, I have had many people tell me if it wasn’t for Charlie Bunger introducing them to surfing, they don’t know where they’d be in life.”

Bunger Jr. confidently confirmed there was no question in his father’s mind that designing surfboards and immersing himself fully into the surfing culture was what he wanted to do.

“It was his life; he quit a job working for the KLM Airlines to focus all his time and energy on his passion of building surfboards. He put his heart and soul into building surfboards and growing the sport of surfing in New York.”

But for Bunger, choosing his livelihood over his family was never an option. In incorporating his wife, children and grandchildren into his line of work, business became and stayed a family matter.

“He was a true family man and dedicated his life to his wife, four children, and seven grandchildren. He worked very hard to keep his surf shop up and running but always found time for his family,” said Bunger Jr. “Up until his passing, he went to work every day with his wife and children. He always said how lucky he was to work with his family for all these years.”

Bunger blazed a path for a great number of surfers in the northeastern region, many who hadn’t come to the realization they’d love the sport until Bunger’s popularization. Bunger’s impact on the developing surfing community of the East Coast earned him one of the first spots in the East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame in 1996. In 2013, he was inducted into the International Surfboard Builders Hall of Fame.

Family and friends of Bunger were asked to wear their best beach attire to his service on Monday, July 9. In lieu of flowers, donations to Bunger’s Surfing Foundation were requested.

There is no question of the caliber of Bunger’s impact on surfing in the east. In diligently crafting countless boards every season, Bunger spread his passion to thousands of others, and inspired even more. Still, his dedication to the Long Island community he knew from the start of his career, and for many years as a small business owner, was evident in both his work and his words. “Everyone surf at the same beaches, takes part in the same competitions – you’ll have people from Babylon, from Long Beach, from Montauk, all together there on the beach as surfers, but also as friends,” said Bunger himself in a past interview with Newsday. “It’s really a small community of its own.”

Peter D’Ancona 1964-2018 / Tina Sgambati 1966-2018
By Anika Lanser

ON JULY 1, 2018, former Fire Department of New York (FDNY) firefighter Peter D’Ancona and his girlfriend Tina G. Sgambati died of apparent carbon monoxide poisoning aboard their boat docked in Cherry Grove. The couple was living in Moriches at the time of their passing.

Peter Rocco D’Ancona was born in 1964. He was a firefighter in New York City during the terrorist attacks that rocked the country on Sept. 11, 2001. He worked with Ladder Co. 10 across from the World Trade Center. Peter worked diligently at the site of the attack in the days and months that followed, pulling the bodies of survivors and victims from the rubble. He retired in November of 2006.

Peter was described by those who knew him closely as a giving soul. In a comment to Newsday, his son Peter D’Ancona Jr. remarked, “He would do anything for you. He would give you the shirt off his back.”

Before working at FDNY, Peter worked for the NYPD, attended Bellport High School, and was a marine reserve. He also worked at his company D’Ancona Carting in Medford with his son, Peter.

Tina Sgambati was born in 1966. She worked in medicine, managing the largest branch of the NYU Winthrop Hospital in North Babylon for nine years, according to Newsday. Coworkers described Tina to Newsday as a respected member of the community who will be dearly missed.

The services for Peter were held at Chapey and Sons Funeral Home in Moriches, while the services for Sgambati were held at Saint Anthony of Padua in Northport.

Peter is survived by his mother Linda D’Ancona, father Peter D’Ancona, and children Peter and Krysta. The D’Ancona family owns and operates Sweet Licks, a popular ice cream parlor in Cherry Grove, and is a major sponsor of community events, including the Grove Pride Parade. FIN’s calls to the family for comment went unanswered at the time this article went to press.
RACIAL EQUITY IS THE ARGUMENT behind the latest push to split up the Town of Islip into council districts to reform its current at-large voting system, but the idea may work in Fire Island’s favor, too.

Advocates last month filed a lawsuit in Central Islip federal court alleging Islip, the town board and Suffolk County Board of Elections are violating the Voting Rights Act in minority communities, which they say are getting ignored under the current system. The plaintiffs argue that if the five town council members were designated to represent specific communities instead of sharing responsibility for all 333,758 residents, the local lawmakers would be more responsive to the constituents.

“This federal lawsuit sets out the violations, one after another, that the Town of Islip has engaged in ... in suppressing the votes of Latino voters and black and brown voters,” said Frederick Brewington, the Hempstead-based civil rights attorney representing the plaintiffs in the case.

The use of council districts, known as the ward system, is used by three of the 13 towns on Long Island — Hempstead, North Hempstead and Brookhaven. Brewington tried the case that brought council districts to Hempstead, where Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby represents minority communities as the lone African American woman on that town board. Voters in the other two towns chose to make the switch via referenda.

Advocacy groups Make the Road New York and New York Communities for Change joined forces with Brewington in the hopes of succeeding where prior efforts in Islip fell short. Petitioners had repeatedly tried to get a referendum to enact Islip districts for years. Once they succeeded in getting the question on ballots 12 years ago, town voters rejected the measure by a margin of 56 to 43 percent.

The ward system is underway on the eastern half of Fire Island. Brookhaven Town Councilman Daniel Panico represents District 6, which includes Smith Point to Moriches Inlet, and Councilman Neil Foley covers District 5, which includes the easternmost FI community of Davis Park to the eastern half of Seaview. So if a resident in Cherry Grove has a complaint about a broken boardwalk, they can call Foley’s office and expect his office will make sure it gets fixed. (Robert Levine’s coverage of the Cherry Grove dock rehabilitation on page 26 of this publication is a perfect example.)

But residents on the western half of Fire Island that falls under the Town of Islip, from the western half of Seaview to the westernmost community of Kismet, sometimes feel ignored. For example, neighbors of a loud new business in Kismet showed up to a town board meeting in 2016 to complain to the board that their concerns fell on deaf ears. Geographically speaking, the island is so far removed from the main part of the town, it’s more difficult for Islip officials to serve residents here.

Less impacted by this issue on FI are the villages of Saltaire and Ocean Beach, which both handle their own issues on a hyper-local level. Village officials don’t need to wait for town officials on mainland LI to fix a pothole or respond to a noise complaint. Those two localities do it themselves, although they could benefit from the ward system too, should the villages need a more direct line of communication with Islip.

The idea of carving the town up has its detractors. Critics of the system say it can pit communities against one another as they jockey for resources, or prompt lawmakers to trade votes to pass unpopular measures.

“The Town of Islip is not commenting on the lawsuit. But when the idea last came up, then-Islip board member Pamela Greene spoke out against the idea.

“If there were districts, the council person from the west side of town would not be directly accountable for a land-use decision made on the east end of town.”

Greene had told Newsday. “Right now,” she added, “the town board members are accountable to every resident of the Town of Islip ... a ward system is ultimately going to decrease the number of people who represent you.”

The plaintiffs point to the fact that the town board is all white and live in the southern part of the town while about a third of Islip’s population are minorities from the northern section. The current town board is solidly Republican and the minority communities are overwhelmingly Democratic. But the hamlet of Bay Shore, which Fire Islanders pass through on their way to the ferry terminal, has a Latino population nearly as large as that of Brentwood, Central Islip and North Bay Shore.

So, should Brewington and company succeed, it’s possible that the first Latino Islip town board member in history could represent part of FI, depending on how theoretical district lines get drawn. And maybe then the western half of the beach won’t feel as neglected.
Ask Camirose

Dear Camirose,

My friend and I came out for a day trip to Ocean Beach. When we got off the ferry we had a nice lunch, shopped a little, and went down to the beach. My friend and I stayed on the beach till about 6 p.m. My friend had to go to the ladies room, but when we finally got there, it was closed. We decided to go for a swim and I noticed her moving away from me and realized shortly after why. I thought a piece of driftwood was floating by, but then I realized, in fact, it was a large piece of poop. I quickly exited the water and dried off. I cannot be sure if she was the culprit but I would think fair warning would have been the right thing to do. Quite honestly I think this will be our one and only beach day of the season together. I can’t even imagine asking her about this.

My question is, how come Ocean Beach does not have more amenities near the beaches, and why is the only one we found closed so early? Doesn’t this cause a public health problem? You would think as a very popular vacation spot they would need to provide adequate toilet space for their visitors.

— Need a Potty

Dear Potty,

Ocean Beach has a complicated history when it comes to the subject of public restrooms. However, using a toilet is a necessity not a luxury, and I sympathize. There are also public restrooms in the Community House across from the post office, as well as behind the police station, while the ferry terminal remains under construction. Yes, the facility at Cottage closes when the lifeguards are off shift. While it would be nice if they could leave that one open till dusk, vandalism has been an issue there in the past. The only remaining alternative beyond this are the local restaurants where one has to be a paying customer.

I am sorry for the experience you had with your friend. I’m sure she was mortified herself, but she is also fortunate that police did not witness this “accident.” This is a ticketable offense, and the paper is often filled with police reports of visitors receiving summonses for it every weekend. Such an embarrassing legal record can haunt an individual seeking employment, applying to college, and more for years to come. As for you, try not to hold it against her. Put yourself in her shoes. Give her a break. You would want the same courtesy under the circumstances, wouldn’t you?

— Camirose

Dear Camirose,

I came to Cherry Grove for a weekend with friends. There were seven of us. We had what I thought was a wonderful time. We went to the beach, drank rocket fuels, shopped and laughed a lot. On Sunday all of the ladies I was traveling with expressed that they were taking different ferries back home based on various obligations. I took an early ferry because the weather reports were not good for the rest of the day. Later in the week I noticed on social media that the rest of the group did not leave; they stayed for another three days. I tried to call the hotel to see if that was the initial plan (without me knowing) but I could not get information since I was not the one who had made the reservation.

I am curious to know if they simply decided over lunch to stay, or if they planned on excluding me all along. I’ve seen these girls several times since our trip, and no one mentioned the extended stay.

I feel like a social media stalker. Should I just come right out and ask my friends what happened, or just say nothing and be hurt with no answers? I hesitate to ask because it seems pretty obvious to me that I won’t get an answer that will make me feel better.

— Left Out

Dear Left Out,

I do not think you should ignore this. Not if they are friends that you spend a lot of time with. I do, however, think that based on what you say it does sound intentional. But I’d want to know why. It does seem strange that no one was able to go back on the same ferry. Has anything like this ever happened before?

If these people are really your friends, you should speak to them about it. If you feel uncomfortable to do it in a group setting, start by speaking to one or two of the ladies that you feel closest to. Let them know that you just would like to know the truth, especially if there is anything that you did to offend someone. At least then you could correct the behavior, or apologize if necessary.

It is possible that it was an oversight and was not in any way done on purpose. Anything is possible. However, unless you ask, you will never find out.

— Camirose

Names and locations have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals. Questions for Camirose? Write to her at advice@fireisland-news.com.
“La Vie en Rose” Unplugged

By Shoshanna McCollum

ON THE STAGE ROSE LEVINE mentioned to her audience that she had been performing at the Cherry Grove Community House Theatre since 1955. That’s 58 years prior to the theatre we were sitting in was declared a historical landmark. Rose performs one night live on stage every summer, but this year is unique. The July 14 date meant this performance was on Bastille Day, thus the decidedly French flavor to the evening. “La Vie en Rose” is also the name of the performer’s beloved and eclectic bayside home, and this performance was just a little more special this year because Rose is Cherry Grove Homecoming Queen – the year of the rose.

Rose’s alter ego is Robert Levine, a columnist with this publication, and over the years a friend of this editor. We have spent many hours negotiating, arguing, and sometimes even gossiping on the telephone. There are better writers on this staff up to the job of stage reviews. Nevertheless I was asked to come, an offer declined in the past because Rose always seems to perform the weekend before we are going to press, when it’s hard to get away. But there is always going to be a deadline, so this year I accepted the gracious invitation.

I’ll start by borrowing a passage that our Broadway theater critic Leonard Feigenblatt wrote last summer: “Rose Levine is no ordinary drag queen... She doesn’t wear over exaggerated make up, 6-inch high heels or have a big teased wig. Rose would never be caught lip-synching. Her transformation is delicate and she concentrates on her art.” However I did not really know how stunning the transformation was until I saw it for myself.

Before the actual performance, a quick “hail to the queen” curtain call was made where the audience was commanded to stand before the home-coming queen regally seated with a bejeweled crown upon her head, as her consort and longtime partner Michael Fitzgerald stood by her side. After a brief pause, Rose flirtatiously peeked out behind the curtain for her opening number, “La Marseillaise,” the national anthem of France, which seamlessly segued into the Edith Piaf classic, “La Vie en Rose.”

The production itself was organized into an anthology of some of Broadway’s best songwriters: Stephen Sondheim, Jule Styne, Cole Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Kander and Ebb, and Irving Berlin among others. Then there were the costume changes. A billowy black silk gown for starters, tastefully accessorized with just the right balance of bling. In the blink of an eye Rose was in “chorus line” mode with high heels and tap pants, which allowed for quick changes in looks – a jacket in black or navy, a boa in white – each one signaling a shift in gears to the next chapter. (How does an octogenarian manage those heels? Not to mention the triumphant red, black and white feathered headdress Rose sported in the royal procession she led the evening when Rose had changed into a tastefully understated black chiffon evening dress, only to have the tag slip out of the sleeve. “I can return it on Monday,” she quipped. The audience roared with laughter at this, and when Michael Fitzgerald gallantly offered his hand to take the tag, Rose shook him away. “And that’s why they call me Secondhand Rose,” she added without missing a beat.

While much of the evening was filled with comedy the performance became poignant as Rose chose Jerry Herman as one of the last composers in this retrospective. Herman is not only famous for “Hello, Dolly” and “La Cage aux Folles,” but as one of the greats with a strong connection to Cherry Grove. Rose’s closing songs were a touching tribute to friends acquired over a lifetime on Fire Island.

Kudos must also be given to Artistic Director George McGarvey, whose stage set design created stunning impact with elegant simplicity; Musical Director Brian Taylor on the piano, whose focus never wavered; and of course Choreographer Chris Bell who accompanied Rose in several song and dance numbers – their chemistry was sheer joy to watch.

Some of the best moments however were the unscripted ones. If Rose stumbled over a line, or her smart blonde wig slipped, she recovered and went on. The best example of this was toward the end of the evening when Rose had changed into a tastefully understated black chiffon evening dress, only to have the tag slip out of the sleeve. “I can return it on Monday,” she quipped. The audience roared with laughter at this, and when Michael Fitzgerald gallantly offered his hand to take the tag, Rose shook him away. “And that’s why they call me Secondhand Rose,” she added without missing a beat.

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Kudos must also be given to Artistic Director George McGarvey, whose stage set design created stunning impact with elegant simplicity; Musical Director Brian Taylor on the piano, whose focus never wavered; and of course Choreographer Chris Bell who accompanied Rose in several song and dance numbers – their chemistry was sheer joy to watch.

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SYBIL SEZ!!! >> by Sybil Bruncheon

Sybil’s Summer Reading Suggestions! ... and WARNINGS!!!

DARLINGS! Do you get bored just lying in the hot sun working on your tan and not improving your mind? Well, okay, that does sound far-fetched, doesn’t it? But for those of you that do like to sound oh-so-smart at the barbecue or the cocktail party after a day of bronzing at the beach, I have a couple of suggestions for summer reading.

Suspense—“The Grapefruit Spoon Slayer.” Based on the true story in the Water Island Gazette from 1934 about the infamous and slightly dyslexic Beatrice Crenwinkle. She killed a known 39 people, and was suspected of another 42 more! All in the Pilgrim’s Progress Luncheonette on the corner of Sandal and Beachcomber walks, all over the span of 18 years. Her trademark was to leave a maraschino cherry in the middle of the forehead of each victim, presumably because she had been raised in India until she was 11, or perhaps because she was just allergic to curry. New York State toyed with the idea of outlawing grapefruit spoons for the following decade, but settled instead on just banning red food dye #1. This book is strictly not recommended for young or impressionable readers because of its fairly graphic and lurid passages, especially the descriptions of what she did with the victims before she’d leave their bodies at various roadside fruit stands along Long Island’s South Shore or in the fresh produce aisles in local grocery stores. Chilling—literally! (The paperback version has additional illustrations, color photographs, a color-it-yourself police blotter centerfold, and several cut-out paper doll versions of her victims and various horrified onlookers. Again, not for the impressionable or elderly prone to seizures!)

My Collection of the World’s Most Concerning Children’s Books

It has come to my attention that there are a number of books for young persons that may not be at all suitable at the beach during vacation time, or indeed at any other time, at any location! This book is strictly not recommended for young or impressionable readers because of its fairly graphic and lurid passages, especially the descriptions of what she did with the victims before she’d leave their bodies at various roadside fruit stands along Long Island’s South Shore or in the fresh produce aisles in local grocery stores. Chilling—literally! (The paperback version has additional illustrations, color photographs, a color-it-yourself police blotter centerfold, and several cut-out paper doll versions of her victims and various horrified onlookers. Again, not for the impressionable or elderly prone to seizures!)

“Suspect No One!”

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“Fairy Tales That Help Us Stay Healthy” by Dr. Morizmo Steinholz – 1931. The Giant Clumpp was looking for a child, preferably a fat one that would make a delicious stew, but a healthy stew with green beans for vitamin C and potassium, cabbage for folic acid and calcium, and carrots for vitamins A and K, corn for all the nice B vitamins. He wasn’t going to put leeks, shallots, or onions in because they made him make bad smells from both ends!

“What Is Marilyn Reading to That Child?”

Have you tried yodeling? Go out in your back yard, preferably when it’s dark out, when your Mommy and Daddy are asleep. Did you know that when it’s dark in America, it’s probably already morning for our little friends in Switzerland! Go out in your backyard and yodel as loud as you can! LOUDER! Nope! REALLY LOUD!! A nice little boy or girl in Switzerland might hear you yodel and think, “I have a nice new friend in America!”

Concerned Children.
BOOK REVIEW >> by Rita Plush

“Miss Subways”
By David Duchovny
Farrar, Straus and Giroux-Fiction $26.00

Editor’s note: Actor and writer David Duchovny is one Fire Island can call our own. As a teenage lifeguard in Ocean Beach, his nickname was “Cricket.” This is his third and most recent novel.

“X-FILES” FANS TAKE HEART. You don’t have to watch reruns to satisfy your cravings for FBI agent Mulder, and the arcane and paranormal. You can read all about the shenanigans of the other worldly in author/actor/screenwriter/director David Duchovny’s latest novel, “Miss Subways.” In his most recent plunge into literary waters – back in the day when the author’s parents owned a house in Ocean Beach he summered as a lifeguard there – Duchovny gives “the two-week August time-share in Cherry Grove,” a mention from a lesbian therapist.

The title draws from the 1940s when subway car posters featured young, wholesome, working girls as an enhancement for ads. The heft of the story however, belongs to Duchovny’s take on the Irish myth of Emer and Cuchulain, and a deal Emer makes with a god to give up her lover so that he may find his soul and live.

Down on earth Emer rides the subways where she is smart and pretty and, single at 41, a parochial school teacher. Putting her own writerly aspirations aside, she is the chief cook and bottle washer, as well as unpaid researcher for her boyfriend, Cuchulain Constance Powers (Con), “a good man with a comic book name.” She believes his works on folklore and myths are destined for fame. Though he is a great lover (shades of the author in “Californication?”) with all his posturing and self-involvement, for this reader’s Metro Card she could do better. And do better she does, in the fantasy version of her life, in Con’s more appealing incarnation. A beau from where? Where else? The subway. And so goes the tale – fairytale as it were – a fantasy love story on and off the tracks in real and unreal time.

A backstory of Emer’s benign brain tumor years prior, the remains of which are “imperceptible seizures,” “fits and visions,” make for the shapeshifting. Characters disappear in real life and reappear as reinventions of themselves in a revised version of her life. Once readers get the hang of who’s who, they’re in for a few surprises.

Awakened and drowsy from sleep, Emer answers her door to find an Irish accented, tiny doorman named Sid. “She squelched the urge to lift him up like a baby, he was that small.” He informs her that Con has another lover and has offended the goddess Anansi. He’s about to be murdered. To prove her love for him Emer agrees to give him up.

The doorman’s doppelganger, also Sid, and also short, wears lifts in his shoes as the headmaster of Emer’s school. With a straight face and true PC savvy, Sid reminds Emer that a watermelon snack is a no-no; black students get offended. Try a banana, he suggests, but not too big. “Folks get upset.” For more silliness try Emer’s brain-addled bed-bound 81-year-old father scaling a fence and enjoying an old folks’ orgy in the Central Park reservoir. Err, then again, maybe you shouldn’t.

The serious side of Duchovny (he holds a bachelor’s from Princeton and a master’s from Yale, both in English literature) showcases Nietzsche, Yeats, Jung, Dickinson and the Old Bard himself, their bon mots appearing in “Trains of Thought” cars, in place of ads for teeth whitening and a $99 divorce.

Mythological hijinks follow Emer down onto the subway tracks where the “filth seemed sedimented but somehow loose. Even the detritus had detritus.” There she encounters Golem (in Jewish legend a golem is a clay figure brought to life by magic). His features melt as he uses his cell phone to show the way to a homeless tent city where’s she’s crowned Miss Subways, the citizens “token queen.” She doesn’t take her title lightly.

“I am Miss Subways … and I have powers of my own,” she announces, when Anansi, the goddess out to get Con – hissing snakes her hairdo – demands her due. Like a true New Yorker, Emer brokers a deal whose love-conquers-all conclusion rides to its finish in the “up-top world,” a few stations on.

A city kid born and bred, there’s no mistaking Duchovny’s devotion to his subject when he quotes former New York City Mayor Ed Koch: “Even now, I can sit in the subway, and look up at the ads and close my eyes, and there’s Miss Subways. She wasn’t the most beautiful girl in the world but she was ours.”

For this reviewer’s part, riding the rails or off, “Miss Subways” is sure to entertain while teaching you a thing or two about mythology – Duchovny style. And about love? That’s no myth; that’s the real deal.
The LILCO/LIPA/PSEG Bailout Puzzle

LONG ISLAND POWER AUTHORITY ratepayers— including those on Fire Island and the rest of Suffolk County as well as Nassau and the Rockaway Peninsula—will be and already are paying a disproportionate share of the $7.6 billion bailout of four upstate nuclear power plants pushed by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. The bailout runs for 12 years. It kicked in last year with an added charge in the electric bills of all New York State residents, businesses and other entities including schools and governments.

A lawsuit is underway in New York State Supreme Court to end the bailout. It follows unsuccessful efforts in the State Legislature to stop it, of which State Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele Jr. from Suffolk was a leader. "The lawsuit is our hope now," he says.

The management of the electric transmission and distribution system serving our area, is these days somewhat confusing. The Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) was created under the Long Island Power Act of 1985, to challenge the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) and its Shoreham nuclear plant project. LILCO agreed to turn over Shoreham to New York State for a nominal $1 and have the plant decommissioned as a nuclear facility. In 1998, LIPA replaced LILCO, acquiring its transmission and distribution system. LIPA initially contracted with Keyspan Energy which, in turn, was acquired by National Grid, to, with it, run the system. But in the wake of Superstorm Sandy and criticism of the performance of LIPA and National Grid in that storm, Governor Andrew Cuomo advanced a utility "reform" plan providing for the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG), the largest utility in New Jersey, to replace National Grid – with significantly more management powers than National Grid had. PSEG in 2014 was given under the Cuomo plan control of day-to-day operations of LIPA's electric grid. Further, in 2014 PSEG rebranded the LIPA system PSEG Long Island. Fire Islanders get their bills now from PSEG Long Island but, nevertheless, LIPA, significantly smaller than it had been before the Cuomo plan took effect, continues as a utility and owner of what had been LILCO's system, with PSEG its contractor to run the system.

The disproportionate share LIPA ratepayers are being charged is based on a complicated formula developed by Exelon, which owns in whole or part the four plants, and is approved by the state. Tim Judson, executive director of the Nuclear Information & Resource Service, a plaintiff in the lawsuit, calculates that LIPA ratepayers are being hit with an overcharge of many millions of dollars a year in contrast to what should be their share.

The bailout is based on a claim by Governor Cuomo, and supported by the State Public Service Commission, that nuclear power plants don’t generate greenhouse or carbon gases and thus should receive “zero emissions credit” – an assertion the lawsuit strongly challenges.

The lawsuit points to the full “nuclear cycle” or “nuclear chain” – including mining, milling, fuel enrichment – in which large amounts of greenhouse or carbon gases are emitted and also emissions in the operation of the plants themselves, among them daily discharges into the air of methane and radioactive carbon.

The claim that “nuclear power is carbon-free is preposterous,” says Judson. And to provide a bailout on this basis “is a massive waste of ratepayer funds which should be going to renewable energy and energy efficiency.”

Susan Shapiro, an attorney for the plaintiffs, comments: “The $7.6 billion hand-out is based on the ludicrous claim that nuclear power is somehow good for the environment while ignoring the continuous radiation pollution and the continuous thermal emissions – as well as the release of various greenhouse gasses. Nuclear energy is the dirtiest form of energy and has no business being subsidized in a clean energy program. Moreover, with nuclear power getting a lion’s share of funding, the state is preventing renewables from rapidly developing.”

The true reason for the bailout is that the upstate nuclear power plants can’t make it in today’s energy market – they’re unable to compete. Indeed, just before the bailout there was a move to close one of the plants because it wasn’t viable economically. In addition to the enormous lobbying power of Exelon, the biggest owner of nuclear power plants in the U.S., the other factor in promoting their continued operation are some politicians and business people in communities in which they are located. Indeed, says Thiele, the legislation he and other State Assembly members had been sponsoring to stop the deal received “no support” in the State Senate where senators from upstate constitute an important bloc.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit are Clearwater, NIRS, Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition, Promoting Health and Sustainable Energy and Goshen Green Farms. The plants, all on Lake Ontario, are Ginna near Rochester and Nine Mile Point 1 and 2 and FitzPatrick in Scriba.

Meanwhile, the bailout in New York State has become a model for other states that have been developing their own nuclear power plant subsidy programs financed by ratepayers. These include Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio and Connecticut. Thus the deal “by spreading nationally will cut back the advance of clean, renewable energy throughout the U.S.,” said Shapiro.

Although promoting the continued operation of the nuclear plants upstate, Cuomo has been working for the closure of the Indian Point nuclear plants 30 miles north of New York City. Thiele describes the governor’s contradictory nuclear stance as “schizophrenic.”

"Long Islanders are no strangers to bad energy policies,” says Thiele, citing the Shoreham nuclear plant debacle. "In excess of $6 billion were spent on the construction of Shoreham without ever considering whether or not there was a viable evacuation plan for Long Island’s three million people. There wasn’t. Shoreham never operated.” Now there’s "another energy disaster" happening, the $7.6 billion bailout “to keep open four aging and expensive upstate nuclear power plants. In a free market, without the subsidies, these plants would close because there are cheaper and safer source of energy available... Instead of propping up the failed policies of the past, we should instead be investing in a sustainable energy future ... Make no mistake about it, this $7.6 billion subsidy is nothing more than a tax increase. It is one of the largest tax increases in recent history and it will be buried in your electric bill.”
FOR YEARS, environmental activists and conservationists have been concerned about the bycatch (the unwanted or non-target part of the catch taken by fishermen) of turtles and other marine creatures in commercial fishing and crab traps. For many, the process of changing legislation and increasing regulation is a long road; one that often does not end with significant changes. However, on May 23 conservationists experienced a huge victory as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation required the use of Turtle Exclusion Devices (TEDs) that work to minimize the bycatch of diamondback terrapins in crab traps. The work is part of a years’ long endeavor on the part of Carl LoBue, The Nature Conservancy’s New York Ocean Programs director and senior marine scientist; and John Turner, Seatuck Environmental Association’s conservation policy advocate.

In order to pass the legislation requiring TEDs, the activists first worked to overturn the New York Wildlife Permit that allowed for the directed harvest of terrapins. When LoBue first attempted to pursue legislation requiring the use of TEDs in 1999, crabbers were quick to dissuade others from taking action by noting that the state allowed the catching and selling of diamondback terrapins. When LoBue began the work of passing the legislation again in 2014, he first worked with herpetologists and reptile experts like Dr. Russell Burke of Hofstra University to help him advocate for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to revoke the wildlife permit.

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Brown noted, “We believe that protecting the terrapins will lead to healthier marshes. Perhaps with a rebounding population, we could look to introducing terrapins where their populations have already been decimated. That would have to go hand in hand, however, with improved water quality and habitat restoration.”

After four long years of work from LoBue, Turner and other local organizations, the diamondback terrapins are safer from the perils of the blue crab traps.

TEDs for Terrapins: Turtle Exclusion Devices Come to the Shores of Fire Island

By Anika Lanser
“NYC THEATRE” by Leonard Feigenblatt

“CARMEN JONES” ★★★★★

“CARMEN JONES” OPENED on Dec. 2, 1943, at the Broadway Theater and played for 503 performances, closing on Feb. 10, 1945. It was subsequently made into a film in 1954, directed by Otto Preminger and starring Dorothy Dan-dridge and Harry Belafonte. For her role as Carmen Jones, Dandridge became the first African-American actress to be nominated for an Academy Award as Best Actress in a Leading Role in a Motion Picture.

“Carmen Jones” is an updated version of the Georges Bizet opera “Carmen” with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. The Bizet opera takes place in 1820’s Seville, Spain, in a tobacco factory; “Carmen Jones” moves the action to World War II era America, in a parachute factory, with an African-American cast. Spanish soldier Don Jose becomes Joe, who is engaged to sweet and wholesome Cindy Lou (Micaela, in the opera). The bullfighter, Escamillo, Don Jose’s rival for Carmen’s affection, becomes Husky Miller, a heavyweight boxer.

The cast all sounds glorious. Anika Noni Rose, who made her Broadway debut in “Caroline or Change,” for which she won a Tony Award, makes Carmen Jones a very sensuous femme fatale. Clifton Duncan, with a clear tenor voice, plays Joe. Husky Miller is played by David Aron Damane, who has a booming bass voice. The sweet voiced Lindsay Roberts plays Cindy Lou.

John Doyle, has directed “Carmen Jones” in his usual minimalist style. The orchestra, or band, is made up of six musicians and a company of 10 actors play all the roles. At least the actors don’t have to double up as musicians, and Anika Noni Rose doesn’t have to play the tuba.

“Carmen Jones” has now been extended through Aug. 19.

Classic Stage Company
136 East 13th St.
New York, NY 10003
www.classicstage.org

“Mean Girls” ★★★★★

“MEAN GIRLS” is based on a 2004 film about a new student at North Shore High School, Cady Heron (Erika Henningsen), who has just moved to the United States from Kenya. She is urged by the social outcasts, Damian Hubbard and Janis Sar-kasian (Grey Henson and Barrett Wilbert Weed), to infiltrate the clique group, the Plastics, a trio of girls headed by the mean girl Regina George (Taylor Louderman) and her posse, the insecure Gretchen Wieners (Ashley Park) and the dumb Karen Smith (Kate Rockwell).

Tina Fey (herself a Fire Islander), who wrote the screenplay and appeared in the film, has written the book for the musical and she sticks closely to her film screenplay. It is a fine fresh man effort. It was widely thought that Fey would win the Tony Award, so CBS put the category of Best Book of a Musical on the live telecast of the Tony Awards. That way the very popular Fey would be able to accept her award live on air. When the winner was announced, the award went to the much more deserving Itamar Moses, who won for his book of “The Band’s Visit.”

“Mean Girls” gets no help from the music of Jeff Rich mond (who in real life is Fey’s husband; how did he get this job?) and the lyrics of Nell Benjamin, who together have written a very generic score. What makes this musical special is the whirlwind direction and high-energy choreography of Casey Nicholaw and the all around brilliant performances from the entire cast, who all inhabit the specific traits of their characters. The production design is wonderful, but special mention to Finn Ross and Adam Young, the video designers, for their amazing projections.

August Wilson Theatre
245 West 52nd St.
New York, NY 10019
www.meangirlsonbroadway.com

“Playbill”

“August Wilson Theatre”

“The Damned”

The North American premiere of “The Damned,” based on the screenplay by Luchino Visconti and directed by Tony Award winner Ivo van Hove, a production of Comedie-Francaise, will be presented at the Park Avenue Armory through July 28.

Park Avenue Armory
643 Park Ave. (between 66th and 67th streets)
New York, NY 10065

For tickets and more information, visit www.armoryonpark.org.
SLEEP. WE LOVE IT, we want more of it, we never seem to get enough of it.

No matter how hard we try to “catch up,” if we don’t manage our sleep routine, we feel the ramifications.

We have all done it … miss sleep to cram in some extra work, stay up late to watch our favorite show, lose track of time at dinner with friends.

Our only wish the next day is that we went to sleep a little earlier. We promise ourselves we are getting to sleep early tonight, but what happens, the cycle continues.

Getting some quality Z’s is one of the simplest and most effective things we can do for our health, yet somehow we take it for granted. But truth is sleep is the golden thread that binds all health together.

As the Irish proverb goes, “A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything.”

Treat yourself to some rest by giving a few of these tips a try.

Go to sleep early: Get into bed 30 minutes earlier. You’ll be glad you did the next day.

Limit the screen time: Set a time to shut off electronics. The bright lights cause stimulation to our body, signaling that it is still daytime.

Chill out with the caffeine: If you think those three cups of coffee during the day are not affecting your sleep, you are kidding yourself.

Drink tea: Herbal teas like peppermint and chamomile have relaxing effects and are great before bed.

Keep it cool: Keep your bedroom at a comfortable temperature for sleeping. Ideal temperature is around 68.

Drink some magnesium: Add a magnesium powder to your nightly ritual. This is a natural relaxant and aids in deep sleep.

Have more sex: Sex can make you sleepy by releasing a chemical called oxytocin. Go do it!

Limit food intake: Late meals can keep you up at night due to digestion. Try to avoid snacking one to two hours before bedtime.

Wear socks to bed: Sounds crazy, but studies have shown that socks on the feet can help circulation, enabling you to fall asleep easier.

Curl up with a good book: Reading in bed causes the mind to relax and keeps excessive thoughts at bay. Stick to old-fashioned hard copy books as the lights from e-readers will keep you up.

Go to sleep – yes, go to sleep! There is nothing on TV worth staying up late for, and nothing good happens after midnight. Just go!
“Home of the ROCKET FUEL”
CJ’s – 47 Years Strong

Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day
Lambda Legal – Protecting LBGT Rights for 45 Years

LAMBDA LEGAL is a civil rights organization that specializes in lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LBGT) rights, as well as those living with AIDS/HIV. In 1971, Lambda Legal’s founder William J. Thom was sitting around a pool in the Fire Island Pines lamenting the frequent arrests of local gay men. Before being a liquor store owner, the recently deceased Jack Lichtenstein, a lawyer who often took his boat across the bay to bail out those arrested, suggested that an organization be formed to protect gay rights. Thom picked up the ball and submitted nonprofit incorporation papers to the New York courts. Lambda Legal became its own first client when the application was denied on the grounds that its proposed activities would be contrary to public policy, i.e. its mission was “neither benevolent nor charitable.”

Undaunted, Thom appealed to New York’s highest court and the court finally ruled in his favor, allowing it to become a non-profit organization. Lambda Legal considers its date of incorporation as 10/18/73, marking 45 years of hard fought battles for LBGT rights.

The three original leaders of Lambda Legal were Bill Thom, E. Carrington Bogdan and Michael Lavery. In 1974, Nathalie Rockhill was the first woman elected to the board. She, among others, had founded the National Gay Task Force, the first national gay rights group in America. As a major figure in the post Stonewall days, her move to Lambda Legal was warmly welcomed and by the 1980s men and women were equally represented on the board of directors.

Since 1973, the few who volunteered their time has now expanded into a staff of more than 90 experts, gay and straight. Its national headquarters is in New York, with satellite offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Georgia, Chicago, Illinois, Dallas, Texas, Los Angeles, California, and Washington, D.C. Its mission statement reads: “Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.”

Besides winning its most important lawsuits, the right to its own existence, Lambda Legal has won several high profile cases that have forever changed the course of American history. Among the more significant cases are:

• Romer v. Evan — In 1996, the Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 6-3 that LBGT individuals have the same constitutionally protected rights as any other citizen.
• Brandon v. Richardson County — In one of its most highly publicized victories, Lambda Legal appealed the case of Brandon Teena, a transgender woman living as a man, who was brutally raped, and later killed. The sheriff’s department not only provided Teena no protection, but also notified the rapists that Teena had pressed charges against them. Their negligence resulted in his murder. After Teena’s mother sued and lost, Lambda Legal took up the case. They appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court, which found in their favor stating that the sheriff’s “abuse of Teena during the rape investigation” was “extreme and outrageous, beyond all possible bounds of decency, and is to be regarded as atrocious and utterly intolerable in a civilized community.”

This case was the basis for the critically acclaimed movie “Boys Don’t Cry” for which Hilary Swank won the Academy Award for Best Actress in 2000.
• Lawrence v. Texas — In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, that sodomy between consenting adults in private was constitutionally protected. At the time this new ruling was considered as the most important legal victory for LBGT rights.

Lambda Legal has been involved in other historic cases but it considers the 2003 win striking down sodomy laws, and the 2015 marriage equality ruling as its two most important victories granting equal dignity to all LBGT individuals.

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Lambda Legal is presently involved in numerous lawsuits. Among them are Karnoski v. Trump, attempting to lift the ban on transgender individuals in the military; Harrisson v. Mattis, which challenges the military’s policy preventing enlistment, deployment, or commissioning as an officer any person living with HIV; and Marouf v. Azar concerning the denial of gay couples to serve as foster parents because they did not “mirror the Holy Family.”

Over the years, Fire Island Pines and Cherry Grove have offered refuge in an unfriendly world unwilling to accept gay proclivities. After decades of struggle that resulted in victories as well as defeats, Fire Island still provides that safe haven while facing a future of new challenges, not the least of which are Supreme Court nominations.

Lambda Legal has been hosting fundraisers in the Pines for 40 years, the longest, continuous LBGT fundraiser in the country. Todd Sears who has hosted Lambda Legal in the Pines for years is doing so again this year on July 21. In 2015 Todd instituted the Pines 20 in an effort to raise $5,000 each from 20 individuals or couples. He now intends to call the group the Pines 78 in recognition of the year of Lambda Legal’s first fundraiser. He has been extremely successful, raising over $140,000 dollars last year alone.

Going forward Lambda Legal sees protecting the rights of immigrants, Muslims, people of color and the LBGT community as their biggest challenge and it does so not in fear but in solidarity with those communities.

The recent announced retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy from the Supreme Court adds to the importance of its efforts. Justice Kennedy was the swing vote in the 5-4 ruling legalizing same sex marriages. Here is his written opinion: “No union is more profound than marriage, for it embodies the highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice, and family. In forming a marital union, two people become something greater than once they were. As some of the petitioners in these cases demonstrate, marriage embodies a love that may endure even past death. It would misunderstand these men and women to say they disrespect the idea of marriage. Their plea is that they do respect it, respect it so deeply that they seek to find its fulfillment for themselves. Their hope is not to be condemned to live in loneliness, excluded from one of civilization’s oldest institutions. They ask for equal dignity in the eyes of the law. The Constitution grants them that right.”

Equal dignity for the LBGT community is what Lambda Legal is all about.

Lambda Legal in New York City.
Beach Meditation  By Lauren Stevens
Breastfeeding Starts at Conception

By Wendi Andria

Breastfeeding can be one of the most rewarding things a mother can do. Human milk offers lifelong benefits for both the mother and the baby and is something a mother can be proud of. Unfortunately for some mothers it does not always come so easily. Social media posts that show mothers calmly breastfeeding their babies are everywhere—and may portray a misleading narrative. A mother should never feel guilty or blame herself if breastfeeding is not coming as naturally as she assumed it would.

Successfully breastfeeding your baby starts at conception and here are some tips to help you get started:

• Choose health care providers for yourself and your baby that are supportive of breastfeeding. Many obstetricians, midwives and pediatricians are now becoming breastfeeding friendly practitioners. These practices have staff trained in breastfeeding, offer prenatal breastfeeding education, and have policies that protect, support and promote breastfeeding. Some even offer lactation consultation in the office.

• Choose birthing facilities that adhere to the World Health Organization’s Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (www.who.int/nutrition/bfhi/ten-steps/en). These facilities have made a commitment to your breastfeeding success and are similar to breastfeeding friendly practices.

• Don’t skip the prenatal classes. Arming yourself and your partner with prenatal education is invaluable to your birth and breastfeeding experience. Most hospitals offer prenatal breastfeeding and birthing classes. You can inquire about these classes by asking your obstetrician/midwife or calling the hospital.

• Plan on having your baby skin to skin for at least the first hour after birth. This time has been coined the golden hour, as your baby will briefly be awake and alert while looking to get to know you. Skin to skin offers amazing health benefits as your baby is transitioning to being outside of you and improves breastfeeding success and duration. Skin to skin is important right after birth, but the snuggling should continue in the first few weeks postpartum. Skin to skin is important for your partner to do too.

• Keep your baby in the room with you while you are in the hospital. Your baby is going to be the happiest when they can smell, hear and snuggle with you. Milk supply is improved and comes in faster with rooming as well. Getting plenty of rest is also important after birth, so make time to sleep when your baby sleeps.

• Avoid introducing formula or artificial nipples unless there is medical indication. Unnecessary supplementation of formula or use of bottles and pacifiers interferes with breastfeeding. Your body has exactly what your baby needs right from birth. Be patient with yourself and your baby.

• You are both going to learn how to breastfeed together. Follow your baby’s early feeding cues and feed on demand. This will ensure establishing the perfect milk supply to feed your baby.

• Take advantage of the trained breastfeeding help at the hospital. Learning to latch your baby can be the most challenging in the beginning. If you are having difficulty, ask to see a board certified lactation consultant in the hospital.

• Breastfeeding support does not end once you are discharged from the hospital. Some moms will need a lactation consultant to come to their homes after birth. You can find a local lactation consultant through the Long Island Lactation Consultant Association (www.illca.org). Most insurance companies will cover these visits as well as a breast pump if you need to return to work.

• Find your mama tribe – Baby Cafes are another invaluable source of support. Mothers meet together with their babies and a lactation consultation to receive peer and professional support. Local support groups and Baby Cafe information is available at your hospitals or provider offices or you can also go to www.babycafeusa.org to find a local Baby Cafe. Southside Hospital became the first one on Long Island last year.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first year of your baby’s life with the introduction of solid food at 6 months of age. Try not to get consumed or overwhelmed with all the pressures of being a new mom and enjoy the journey.

Wendi Andria, MS, RNC-OB, IBCLC, is lactation consultant at Southside Hospital.

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INTERVIEW: Jay Blakesberg – Rock Legend Photographer

You get inspired by good art whether you’re an artist or not. Seeing something that’s beautiful and creative makes you feel good whether you’re a lawyer, dancer, or photographer. Great art inspires us all. That’s why we need to continue to make great art and have people be aware of what the difference is.

FIN: Your youth reminds me of the film “Almost Famous.” The editor in that film tells the aspiring rock journalist main character to never become friends with the rock stars. Would you apply that rule to your experience?

JB: I have a really good friend named Jan Uhelski and Jan helped me work on some of my projects. She used to always walk around and say ‘rock stars are not your friends.’ And I sort of followed that mantra for a long time, and I think, at the end of the day, that was the wrong decision. Especially now I absolutely consider rock stars my friends. They are these incredibly creative, unique individuals who I spent a lot of time with. So, yes, rock stars are my friends today, and I love that. I think having that personal connection enhances my ability to make brilliant photographs.

FIN: You have a son and daughter. Do you think their taste in music has been influenced by you?

JB: Absolutely, both of them. They both love the same music I do, but they have their own unique takes on it. My son grew up listening to a lot of punk rock all through high school and then I eventually turned him on to the Flaming Lips and Radiohead and bands like that. And my daughter going through high school listened to a lot of bad pop music because that’s what her friends listened to and then one day we were listening to Phish or something, she was like, ‘Oh, my god. This is so great,’ and started listening to it more and more.

FIN: Would you ever want your kids doing what you were doing at your age? Hitchhiking, following bands around the country, etc.

JB: It’s a different time. I always encourage my kids to go to shows and festivals, but it’s just a different world we inhabit today. But they go on adventures and I truly, truly believe we are the sum of our experiences. And so I encourage them to constantly have experiences and push the limits and go out and meet interesting people because it really does enrich your life.

Learn more about Jay Blakesberg, his books, and photography at Blakesberg.com. All images are copyrighted material, courtesy of the photographer.
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The Landing

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NORTH AMERICA IS HOME to millions of Virginia opossums, but for a creature so commonly found in Long Island backyards and along roadways, this nocturnal marsupial is the subject of many myths and misperceptions. Opossums are truly unique among our local wild mammals, as they are North America’s only marsupials, contrasting with the far more numerous placental mammals. They are solitary, transient creatures, seldom staying in one place more than a few days. The fossil record of the opossum goes back 70 million years, so clearly these animals are an evolutionary success story. Their ancestors managed to dodge the likes of the dinosaurs.

Colloquially, Americans sometimes use the terms opossum and possum interchangeably. But while Virginia opossums are native to North America, possums are native to Australia. The opossum’s relatives include other marsupials from Down Under — kangaroos, koalas and wombats. But because opossums look like rodents, they don’t share the other mammals’ popularity. It is the furless tail that sets most people off. Additionally, most believe that opossums hang by their tails in trees, but their tails don’t have that kind of strength. However, the tail of this marsupial is still quite prehensile. Their tail allows the opossum to navigate tree branches with ease. Amazingly they also use their tail to help gather twigs and leaves for nesting material.

The opossum also possesses a toe on each foot that is somewhat offset from the other toes. This gives the feet an appearance analogous to a human hand, and allows the marsupial to firmly grip branches. This animal’s body is covered with soft, greyish brown fur, while the facial area is white. They are active all year round, and do not hibernate like some other mammals in our area.

These nocturnal creatures are omnivores, and this diet makes them well adapted to suburban life. Their natural diet includes insects, other invertebrates such as slugs and snails, and small animals such as reptiles and amphibians. They will also take small rodents as prey, including voles and rats. Additionally, opossums are not above scavenging carrion (deceased animals), sifting through their diet to include a variety of fruits (the more rotten the better!) and berries. If they have access to trash or pet food they will readily take advantage of that opportunity.

While good climbers, they can fall into swimming pools when trying to get a drink and into trash cans when going after food. But you can also take steps to keep them out of your yard. Cover pools and trash cans, remove food and water sources, keep trees and shrubs clear of fences and don’t let fruit from trees rot on the ground. A few companies sell repellent granules made of fox urine that you shake on the ground. Manufacturers say the product, $15 to $20, is 100 percent organic so it won’t hurt your cat or dog.

Despite their unique survival adaptation, opossums are confronted with many challenges. They must run a gauntlet of predators, including owls, foxes, coyotes, and of course humans and our cars. Sadly, poor eyesight is why so many are hit by cars. Opossums do 90 percent of their food scavenging through scent and not by sight, as they can only see 6 to 8 inches in front of them. Additionally, they are nocturnal and often cross the road when it’s dark.

Despite these handicaps, this species is hardy. Opossums are resistant to diseases that affect other mammals, such as rabies and Lyme. Rabies in opossums is rare because their body temperature is too low to support the virus. Whether rural, residential or in the wilderness, opossums are a benefit to any area they inhabit.

If you happen to find an orphaned baby opossum, you can contact volunteer groups for wildlife or any local wildlife rehabilitator. The Veterinary Medical Center of Long Island also treats injured wildlife and helps place them with licensed rehabilitators after triage and treatment. We treat and provide care for all wildlife free of charge to give these creatures the best possible chance to return to the wild once able. Call 631-587-0800 for information on how to best proceed.
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*Any submitted drone images must comply with FAA regulations concerning their use within national park jurisdiction, while posing no risk to pedestrians, wildlife, or property in taking said image. Fire Island News reserves the right not to publish any photograph we suspect is in violation of these rules.

“It felt as though a spaceship was hovering above Ocean Beach,” wrote Bradley Lewis upon snapping this image after a storm rolled by. Indeed!

Cross Bay Swim
By Diane McManus

In mid-bay, I am small—
pink cap, numbered arm, all that shows I am here.

Water stretches past boats and bridges to an ocean. In the distance,
birds dive for dinner that swims underneath. I feel only the brush of fish body against skin, push and pull of tide, alive with moon, moving me.

Brian Cauley and Alex Due found a whale vertebrae while body surfing off Dunewood! (Photo by Phil Carpenter)

Deer at Dusk, Ocean Beach. (Photo by Jennifer Lerud)

A man, his cat, and his coffee: Ben Ferraro with his cat Peppercorn after their morning stroll in Fair Harbor. (Photo by Loretta Ferraro)
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