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FEBRUARY 2024

13th Year, Issue 2

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## Long Island fox in snow



This adorable red fox was captured on camera in the snow last year. Red foxes are the most widely distributed carnivore in the world, and are known to appear in nearly every county of New York State.

MT/Kathleen Balsamo

## CM schools presents revised bond proposal

Revote to take place March 19

BY NICOLE FUENTES

The Center Moriches School District Bond Committee has recently made a recommendation for a revised bond proposal to the board of education. The board has since voted, last month, to put the bond up for a re-vote with a modified and scaled-back \$13.9 million proposal.

The project, according to Keri Loughlin, assistant superintendent for busi-

See **CM SCHOOLS** on page 4

## Meet Matt, the 12-year-old farmer

Barn Again Farm is located in Center Moriches

BY NICOLE FUENTES

Twelve-year-old Matt Gartelman moved to the Moriches in 2022 from Wantagh in Nassau County with his family, seeking a life with more outdoors and space. As a first-generation farm manager, he found just that in Center Moriches by creating and co-owning Barn Again Farm. He lives on the just under two-acre farm, located at 87 Bernstein Boulevard, with his parents and older brother and sister.

"It's family owned, and I run and main-

See **FARMER MATT** on page 18

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**CM Library to expand parking** PAGE 3

**Get your valentine something sweet at Nettie's** PAGE 8

**Proposed budget cuts school funding** PAGE 16



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# Parking lot expansion to come

No cost to  
CM Library taxpayers

BY NICOLE FUENTES

Last year, the Friends of the Center Moriches Free Public Library provided financial support to help the library purchase a piece of land adjacent to the building located at 235 Montauk Highway, the land is located near the existing lot in the rear.

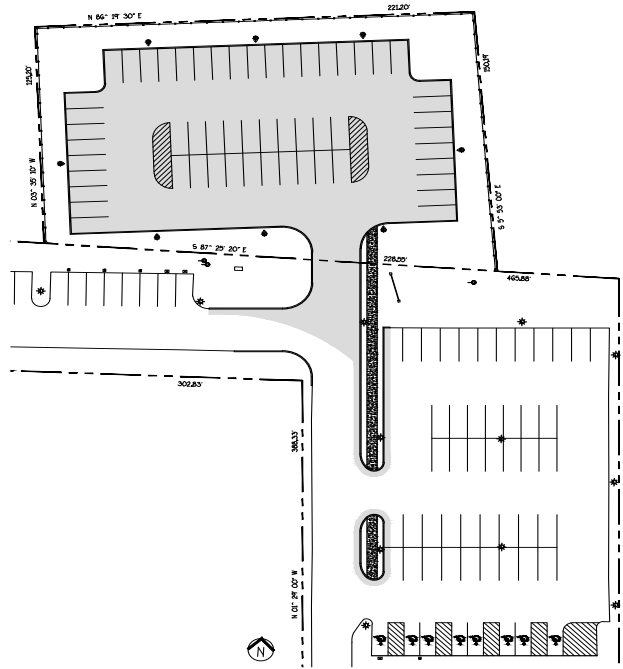
In 2024, according to Center Moriches Library director Marcie Litjens, they plan to use the land to expand the parking lot which is already at capacity most days. In addition to extra spaces that are wider, she said, they will designate more handicap parking and walkway through the parking lot.

The club, according to members, collects donated books eight months out of the year in an effort to sort and collect enough books for their sales. All funds raised support the purchase of equipment, furniture, and programs. This funding also made the donation property purchase possible.

“People don’t know what to do with them [old books], and, for years, I hated when people would throw them away. So, we collect them,” member Kathy Kleinpeter said of the idea behind the book sales.

The land was officially acquired last year by the friends of the library. The current budget for the lot is \$650,000, which will include the new lot and redesigning the existing one. The library board is currently working with their architect, John Tanzi, to complete the design of the new

## Center Moriches Free Public Library Parking Lot Project



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John Tanzi ARCHITECTS

Rendering provided by John Tanzi

area. The new area is projected to include 55 additional spots, including more handicap parking. The new design will also

widen the existing stalls and create a pathway to walk through the lot.

“Many factors were considered beyond

### TOTAL LIBRARY VISITORS

2021: 67,668 or 190 per day (COVID)  
2022: 179,184 or 491 per day  
2023: 199,098 or 545 per day

traffic flow and safety including fencing, landscaping, and special lighting to reduce light pollution at night,” said Litjens.

Additionally, she said, they were recommended for a NYS Construction Aid Grant of \$225,000. The land for the parking area was acquired last year, and the Friends of the Library generously donated money towards the purchase.

“Careful budgeting has allowed the library to proceed with this project without asking the public for a bond,” Litjens explained, noting the zero cost to the taxpayer. “The need for a larger parking lot has been necessitated due to an increase in the community using the services of the library.”

Additions including a brand-new computer lab, a lounge area to enjoy a cup of coffee from the café, and many new services over the years, including passport acceptance, notary, social work interns, museum passes and seed library, which she credited to the increased usage of the library.

“We’ve purchased new tables and chairs to accommodate the increase of people staying to enjoy what the library offers,” she added. “It’s only natural with an increase of people using the library that we would have to create a larger parking lot.”

The project, according to Litjens, is awaiting SED approval and then it will go out for public BID. Project start time and completion are still undetermined, with a projected groundbreaking for the spring and a hope for completion before the summer. ■

# Local business leader fills vacant library board seat

## Chris Ricciardi appointed to Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library Board

The Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library has announced an addition to its Board of Trustees. Following the resignation of Nancy Marks, the library board has appointed Chris Ricciardi, a distinguished local business owner and community leader, to fill the vacancy.

This decision comes at a pivotal time for the library, which is currently expanding its reach with two new satellite centers and undergoing major renovations at its main facility. Rather than leaving the seat vacant, the board opted for an appointment to ensure strong governance during this transformative period.

Ricciardi brings over 30 years of experience in the home improvement industry and a rich history of community service. He has served as chair of the Mastic Beach Village Zoning Board of Appeals, secretary to Zoning and Planning, and is the current vice president of the Pattersquash Creek Civic Association. His involvement in various community events and initiatives demonstrates his commitment to the community’s growth and development.

Ricciardi will serve on the board until the next trustee election on Tuesday, April 2, when he will stand for election.

Also on the ballot will be Joseph Maiorana, the current board president.

“We are thrilled to welcome Chris to the board,” said Maiorana. “His extensive experience and dedication to community service make him an ideal choice for this role, especially at such a crucial time for our library.”

Kerri Rosalia, the library director, echoed these sentiments.

“Chris’s appointment is a testament to our commitment to progress and community engagement. His insights and expertise will be invaluable as we continue to transform and grow,” she said.

The library budget vote and trustee election will take place on Tuesday, April 2, at the Mastic Beach Satellite Branch, located at 369 Neighborhood Road, Mastic Beach.

Further information for those interested in running for library trustee, including details on collecting petitions, will be announced soon. For more information, please contact (631) 399-1511.

### ABOUT THE MASTICS-MORICHES-SHIRLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library was established by the voters of the William Floyd School District in the summer of 1974. It grew from two portable classrooms to a full-service 44,000-square-foot facility in Shirley. The library is now undergoing a voter-approved \$26.7 million major expansion and renovation, which has so far resulted



Courtesy photo

in the addition of two 7,000 square foot satellite branches in Moriches and Mastic Beach. It is one of Suffolk County’s busiest libraries and has been a leader in providing innovative services includ-

ing dynamic programming for children, families, and seniors; cultural activities; literacy and ESL services; and college and career readiness. For more information, go to [www.communitylibrary.org](http://www.communitylibrary.org). ■

# CM SCHOOLS: Vote next month

FROM PAGE 1

ness, still has a focus on health and safety, also addressing aging infrastructure. A presentation was made by the district on Jan. 10

Projects will now include sidewalks, asphalt, American Disabilities Act compliance, security upgrades, boiler replacement, and crawlspace abatement at Clayton Huey; and sidewalks, asphalt, auditorium renovation, roof replacement, boiler and storage tank replacement, security upgrades, interior renovations relating to health and safety, window/wall replacement, and outdoor track replacement at the middle school/high school.

According to the district, with smaller projects the proposal is expected to be completed within two to three years, depending on state permitting. However, the project start date was pushed back to winter 2025 due to the re-vote.

The district also noted that all included projects are aidable at the 78 percent building aid rate. The cost equates to \$0.22 cents on the dollar to get all projects completed. Taxpayer impact analysis will be updated and provided in future presentations. The current estimate is about \$200/average taxpayer in total at conclusion of all work.

The Center Moriches School District hosted their original \$45 million bond vote on Oct. 24, 2023, for two phases of projects, including major building upgrades as well as a turf football field. The vote ultimately failed, with 341 yes

votes to 610 no votes for Proposition 1, and 258 yes votes to 690 no votes for Proposition 2.

The first proposition was for infrastructure including the roof replacement, door replacements, sidewalk repair, new boilers, library upgrades, an auditorium revamp, a dedicated space for the music department and as well as family consumer science classroom upgrades and new locker rooms at both the middle and high schools.

The second proposition was for a new turf field. The district currently uses the nearby Town of Brookhaven turf field, though there are no bleachers. The new field would have included the existing already replaced lighting as well as new bleachers for viewing and a press box.

The total cost for the field would have been about \$3.6 million. Proposition 2 was contingent on Proposition 1 passing. However, both originally failed.

The \$13.9 million bond re-vote for the revised and scaled-back proposal will take place on March 19 at the Clayton Huey Main Street gym from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A community forum will be hosted at the high school library on March 13 at 7 p.m. A bond brochure has also been mailed to all residents and a simple tax calculator will be posted to the website this month. For more information on the revised proposal visit: <https://www.cmschools.org/district/bond>. ■



## MORICHES CHAMBER UPDATE

In February, the chamber will be running a lottery raffle. Lottery tickets are \$5 and can be purchased up to 29 times. The winning number will be determined by the New York State Daily Lottery evening number for the month of February 2024. If your ticket number is drawn on Monday through Saturday, the prize is \$50 and Sunday is \$100.

Tickets can be purchased at Moriches Bay Deli, Moriches Bay Realty, AJ Sunflower, Jimmy Osborne Music, Druerk's Hardware, and South Shore Plumbing and Heating. Tickets can also be purchased online at [www.moricheschamber.org](http://www.moricheschamber.org).

The February chamber meeting will be held at the Moriches Field Brewing Co. in Center Moriches with food from Buckley's.

Also, the Center Moriches St. Patrick's Day Dinner honoring Grand Marshal George Keller will be held on March 8 from 7-11 p.m. at The Rock Hill Country Club. Tickets are \$75; visit [moricheschamber.org](http://moricheschamber.org) for more information. ■

### STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The chamber held another successful year of their student scholarships. Below is the list of students honored for 2023:  
 September- Isabella Rayburn  
 October- Sophia Riamondi  
 November- Nicholas Gentile  
 December- Andrew Foster

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# Tai Chi Fall Prevention Program at CMFPL

BY C. E. PARRY

We are fortunate to have Suffolk County's only Level I Trauma Center at Stony Brook University's Medical Center. To better serve our communities, their free, in-person injury prevention programs offer community education on best practices to enhance safety, prevent injuries, and save lives.

Overseen by Kristi Ladowski, MPH, Injury Prevention and Outreach co-coordinator at Stony Brook Medicine, and delivered by volunteers, staff, and community organizations, their programs like Stop the Bleed training, Fall/Injury Prevention and Preventing Car Crashes strive to help people stay out of emergency rooms. One of these programs, Tai Chi For Arthritis, led by Suffolk County Department of Health's Linda Bohman, has found a home at Center Moriches Free Public Library.

A fall at any age may cause lasting injury; for those over 60, it can be life-altering, even fatal. Mobility issues, including those brought on by arthritis, in those over 65 often lead to falls or motor-vehicle injuries. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there are 36 million reports of falls among older adults each year and more than 32,000 deaths. One-in-five of these causes broken bones or head trauma. To reduce risk, the CDC recommends exercise to improve leg strength and balance, especially activities like tai chi.

What is tai chi? It began in China as a martial art. Over time, it evolved into an evasive art that taught practitioners to use energy in more efficient ways that create harmony, to use energy to reduce



MT/Parry

conflict by evading it. In turn, it offered health benefits to practitioners through integrating mind, body, and spirit with one's environment.

It is a philosophy of living that takes its influence from nature, where we learn to focus on "gi" (pronounced "chi"), energy that gives us our vital life force through breath. It embraces balance and a harmony that resides between the pairing of opposites—yin and yang—to create oneness. It teaches us to work toward completion and integration instead of struggle and disconnection.

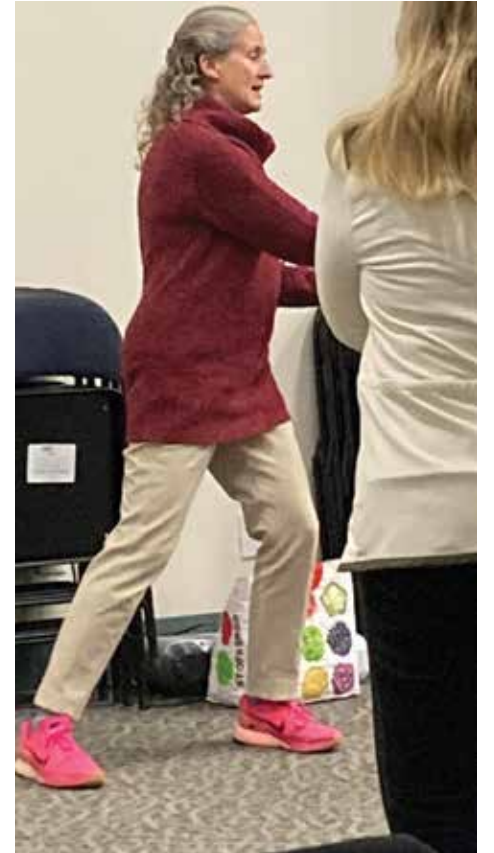
Doctor Paul Lam, the man credited with developing this program, grew up in China under harsh conditions, including malnutrition, which left him nearly crippled by painful arthritis in his mid-20s. He trained as a physician after he left China, and while in practice discov-

ered that tai chi changed his life. Over time, he has developed an evidence-based program using scientific outcomes with demonstrated health benefits, including improved balance, greater ease of movement, general well-being and fewer falls. Since it is a program designed to build life enhancement, one should expect to have at least 16 sessions to see its benefits.

Among these are reduced arthritis pain, enhanced balance through shifting weight transfer, greater ease of movement, reduced risk of falling, as well as greater coordination between hands and feet. It is a lifetime activity, done without equipment and, once learned, may be practiced anywhere. It is especially welcoming for beginners since the forms taught are slow and are designed to be learned over a lifetime of practice.

It is beautiful to observe and soothing to practice, a choreography in which less is best. And while it may be a solo practice, it also builds community.

CMFP, one of the few libraries in Suffolk County willing to accommodate the program, will have a new tai chi session starting Tuesday, March 5 through April 30. For more information contact the CMFPL reference desk at (631) 878-0940. ■

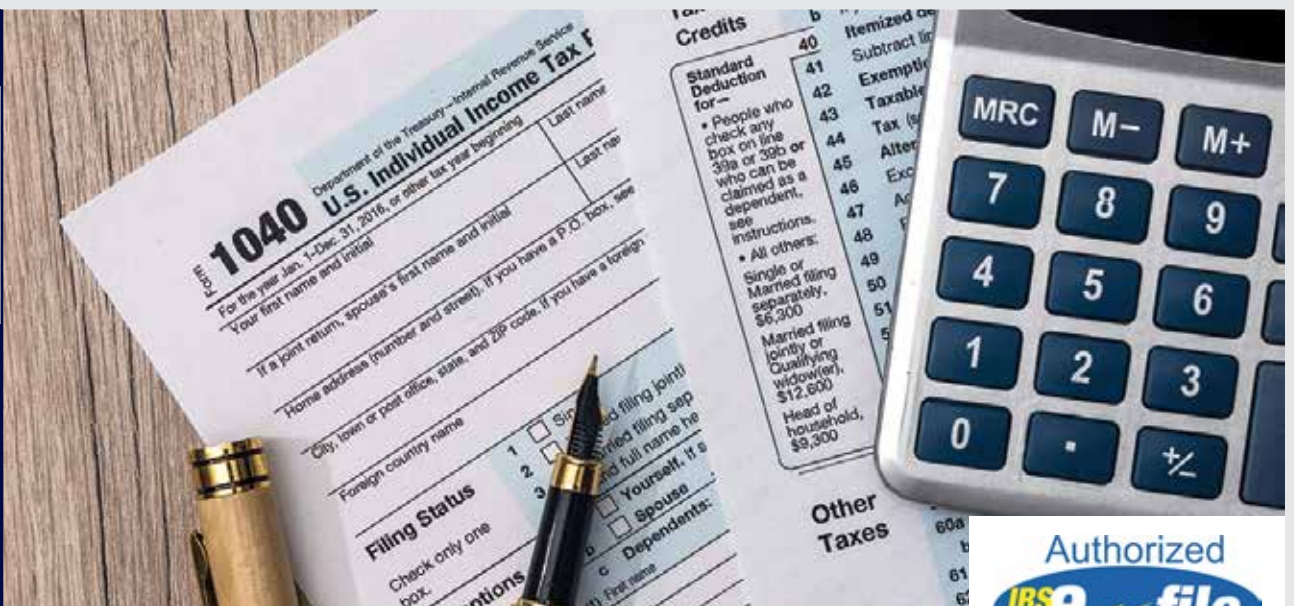


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# VALENTINE'S DAY PICK

There's nothing sweeter than a visit to Nettie's

BY NICOLE FUENTES

Center Moriches-based Nettie's Country Bakery officially opened in 2014; however, the family bakery dates back much further than that.

Owner Joe McHefey has been baking since high school. In his senior year at Center Moriches High School, he also met his wife Jeanette, known as Nettie. After graduating, they both opened a string of hometown bakeries—however, successfully running them became increasingly difficult while raising four children. McHefey ditched baking and focused on practicing law, while Nettie focused on being a mom and a teacher for children with autism.

But McHefey's love for baking never stopped. He eventually turned his woodshed into a kitchen, baking cookies and bread to deliver to friends and family during the holidays—all accompanied by plans to reopen a bakery and eventually leading to the creation of Nettie's as we know it today.

Known for their large assortment and holiday favorites, nothing beats some of their featured favorites. This holiday, consider some of their best sellers.

## BROWNIE BITES

Choose from a line of chocolate-covered brownie bites sold both in-store and online at [nettiescraftbrownies.com](http://nettiescraftbrownies.com).

The bakery currently has a dozen year-round flavors and 13 seasonal flavors. They ship nationwide. Last year, according to the owner's son and manager Brendan McHefey, they shipped 700 boxes of brownie bites across the country in the two weeks before Christmas.

With Valentine's Day around the corner, the bakery is gearing up to prepare plenty of these chocolatey treats. The raspberry and red velvet bites start at \$11.49 for four. Or, select a box and make your loved one the perfect combination of flavors, starting at \$19.99 for eight.

# Nettie's COUNTRY BAKERY



## ABOUT THE ORIGINAL BROWNIE RECIPE:

The popular recipe includes old-fashioned ingredients that never wastes a scrap. It was handed down to Joe McHefey, owner of Nettie's Country Bakery, during his early baking days.

## COOKIES

Every holiday, the bakery also makes assorted cookie boxes.

"They have become very popular in the store," Brendan said.

The in-house scratch-made cookie line includes chocolate chips, chocolate-dipped almond biscotti, oatmeal raisin, Russian tea, lemon icebox and more—the cookies are packed in gift boxes and tied with a ribbon and are \$32.50 each. They are available in the store and to ship.

"We have big plans to expand the line of cookies in the store and to ship even more this year," he said.

## OLD-FASHIONED OFFERINGS

The old-fashioned bakery also includes traditional offerings including pastries, buns, and cakes. Offered bakery classics include crumb cake, apple turnovers, scones, cheese Danish, and pecan Danish.

"Our owner, Joe, has been baking his entire life and has been using many of these same recipes since he was in high school," Brendan explained. "And there are some that people only remember from their childhood, like apple swirls and crumb buns."

All of their pastries are made in-house from scratch and are baked the day they are sold—everything is guaranteed fresh. ■

## STOP BY THE SHOP

Visit Nettie's Country Bakery at 366 Railroad Avenue in Center Moriches. They are open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 7 a.m.- 4 p.m. But! It is always tricky with holidays, and McHefey suggested people come the weekend before.

Or online at <https://nettiescountrybakery.com>.

Nettie's Country Bakery: <https://www.instagram.com/nettiescountrybakery/>

Nettie's Craft Brownies: <https://www.instagram.com/nettiescraftbrownies/>





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Please consider donating. All proceeds will go directly to P.S. I Love You Day Inc. (50%) who use the money to further raise awareness and encourage activism in teenagers, Long Island Crisis Center (25%) which is our primary local crisis center, and Response Crisis Center (25%) who offer valuable bilingual crisis services. Donations are accepted by mail at the P.O. Box listed below, through the Venmo below, as well as through select local businesses along Main Street. **Every donation is greatly appreciated.**

## Questions?

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# Moriches organizations collect coats for charity

BY KRAIG KLEIN

In Center Moriches, residents were encouraged to donate any used coats they had. Collected coats were then redistributed to people who need them to survive the harsh winter weather. The organizations behind the various coat drives sought to help the communities they served with the donated coats.

Helping Makes U Happy encouraged people to bring coats to Carlos Pizza in Manorville and place them in a donation box so they could be collected. Residents could also drop off coats in a "beige drop closet" in front of Helping Makes U Happy's headquarters on Neville Street in Center Moriches.

"We collect coats every year until February," Helping Makes U Happy co-founder Cassy Caputo said. "We donated approximately 50 to the sheriff's SMART Center and we also donate to St. John's Place homeless shelters, Angels of Long Island, East End Hospice Thrift Store, and Lighthouse Mission. We keep some on hand to donate to people who reach out to us and to give to schools and counselors who also ask."

The Presbyterian Church of the Moriches also collected coats throughout January. Donations may be dropped

off at the church on Mondays between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m.

"We ask that all donations are clean and in good condition," church food pantry coordinator Dawn Murray said.

St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church held its own coat collection drive. Residents were able to leave coats in bins found in the Our Lady Queen of Apostle parking lot, or donate the coats inside the church's fellowship hall.

"St. John's looks for coat donations year-round," church parish social ministry coordinator Kate Spellman said. "We have our Street Ministry that goes out into our community every Thursday night, so we are always looking for donations. Donations are most welcome year-round; we look for winter coats now and lighter-weight coats in the spring. Raincoats [are] most welcome, too!"

The Town of Brookhaven is also hosting annual coat donation drive, with this year's coat drive lasting from Jan. 8 to Feb. 9. Organized by the Brookhaven Youth Bureau, the drive distributes donated new and used coats to families in need throughout Brookhaven. Moriches residents can make donations at the Moriches Bay Recreation Center on Frowein Road in Center Moriches. ■



Stock photo

## Annual Black History Month celebration

Brookhaven Town supervisor Daniel J. Panico has announced that the Town of Brookhaven's Black History Commission will host the 33rd annual Black History Night at Brookhaven Town Hall on Feb. 2, starting at 6 p.m. The theme of this year's Black History Month Celebration is African Americans and the Arts. The evening's program will include performances, art exhibits, a cultural food tasting, and the presentation of Academic Achievement Awards to Brookhaven's top 51 African American high school seniors from 10 school districts who achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

### About the Black History Commission

In 1991, a Black History Month Committee was formed in observance of Black History Month. Two years lat-

er, the then-Town Board established a permanent Black History Commission to provide continuity in planning and organizing a Black History Night celebration each February. The purpose of these celebrations is to acknowledge and honor the contributions of Black Americans, both nationally and locally, while fostering an appreciation for Black culture and heritage in our young people.

Recognizing that celebrating Black culture should not be limited to one specific month, in January 2014 the Town Board unanimously passed a resolution expanding and broadening the scope of the Black History Commission. This afforded the residents of Brookhaven the opportunity to attend the first ever Juneteenth event hosted by the Town on June 19, 2014, and has since become a new annual tradition. ■

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# Why we say it with flowers on Valentine's Day

BY C. E. PARRY

Ever wonder why we cherish the sight of a dozen red roses on Valentine's Day? Or why we pay so much for them? In her article, "A Brief History of Flowers in Western Art" (Artsy, July 1, 2017), Sarah Gottesman provides one possible answer: "People have long imbued flowers with personal, cultural, and religious significance."

It may surprise you to know that the original reason why red roses were considered important had to do with early Christian symbolism. At a time when few people could read, and many patrons of the arts were churches, the two most appropriate subjects for painting were scenes from mythology or the Bible. Such work was considered instructive as well as an homage to religious piety. The scenes were visualizations of lessons on morality and sacrifice.

According to Gottesman, painters depicting Christian scenes used white lilies as reminders of the Virgin's chastity and purity, while red carnations meant her love of Christ. Red roses and red carnations also symbolized Christ's sacrifice. Yet, they also appeared in wedding portraits of the time to represent enduring love and devotion; in medieval Europe, they were also a sign of royalty, hence the rose symbols that stood for the House of Lancaster and the House of York in England.

The Victorians ushered in a new emphasis on refinement in behavior and communications among the upper classes, especially in the realm of romance. Flowers could carry secret messages meant to stir emotions between the lovers. Books



Stock photo

on floriography—the language of flowers—helped one offer a token of flirtation, friendship, embarrassment, or disdain to a recipient. Under this scheme, red roses, a symbol of ideal love and beauty, indicated love; darker roses, shame; and pink roses that your love should remain a secret.

So, as you plan your own floral expression this Valentine's Day, remember the choices are many. For those seeking a traditional statement, roses are still enormously popular. Choose pink for appreciation, yellow for friendship, or white for innocence.

Looking for a floral statement all your own? Learn more about flowers and their meaning in Kate Greenway's charming book "The Language of Flowers," illustrated by the author—a perfect guide for communicating with flowers, and a novel gift. ■

## Flowers for your Valentine at Bailstone Florist

BY C. E. PARRY

While the rest of us were making our lists, checking them twice, Carol and her staff at Bailstone Florist, in East Moriches, was planning for Valentine's Day.

To have enough inventory to meet the demand for arguably the most romantic day of the year, florists must decide by mid-January how many roses and other blooms to order to fulfill customer

requests that will increase up to eight weeks later.

"It's always a gamble," she shared. "Valentine's Day is a one day or nothing event, and it can be the worst day for a florist. People look at the cost of flowers and think we're all prospering. In fact, it's a long lull before Valentine's Day, followed by a long, quiet period after it."

Demand for most commodities dictates cost and flowers are no different. Unex-

pected weather events like snow or ice storms or extreme cold can delay grower deliveries that come from Holland, South America, California, and Florida. Florists must pay more for stock during periods of peak demand.

Nevertheless, it is Bailstone's practice to try to meet its customers' needs with something at every price point. "We can't control the weather," Carol said, "but we try to keep costs down by offering arrangements that are less dependent on the most expensive blooms, like red roses. We have affordable options for everyone."

As one would expect, red roses are the most popular floral gift on Valentine's Day, but pink, white, and yellow roses, as well as colorful Gerbera daisies are frequent choices as well.

Carol has some thoughtful suggestions for those looking for something different this year.

"Lilies, in an arrangement with soft pastel colors, especially in a Victorian design, are very romantic. But order ahead, preferably a week or more in advance, to make certain we have the floral stock on hand to accommodate your request," she said.

For the procrastinators among us, she had some sweet alternatives. The shop has anticipated last-minute purchases with some premade arrangements available for on-the-spot purchases. It's best to arrive before 3 p.m., however, or this option may no longer be available since most are gone by that time.

Many other choices can provide a personal, sweet gift for those uncertain or late to the decision. Bailstone Florist has an array of chocolates, orchids, person-



al-care products for gift baskets, soy candles, silver jewelry and stuffed animals, all displayed to help ignite a gift giver's imagination.

"We try to make everyone happy, whether you're shopping for a special someone, a parent, neighbor or friend," she said.

But, if you're set on flowers after all, Carol's advice is to treat your purchase well, so its color and appeal last. "Change the water daily and trim the stems after a few days to help extend the life of your arrangement," she explained of the upkeep.

When asked about the most unusual order she'd had, Carol's eyes twinkled.

"We had a small mannequin wearing a red dress outside the shop as part of our display. A man came in and said he wanted to buy it, have flowers added to it, and then delivered to a local address. It wasn't really for sale, but he was so insistent we honored his request, made up the order, and delivered it. The woman who received it seemed very confused when it arrived. And we never saw the man again. It was quite a mystery," she said.

Bailstone Florist, 345A Montauk Highway, East Moriches, N.Y. (631) 878-0359. ■



MT/Parry

# Plan a date night at Waterdrinker Family Farm

Waterdrinker Family Farm and Garden are planning garden workshops at the Farm Brewery for the month of February, creating some really fun Valentine's date-night ideas. As of last month, the farm hosted Garden Workshops every Tuesday night. At the workshops, they will also be offering new and unique garden workshops accompanied by beer, cider, and wine on tap. There is also a non-alcoholic root beer on tap.

"Our whole family is itching to get back into the garden and to enjoy the

outdoors, so we figured the community would be, too," said owner Marc Weiss. "These garden workshops are open to the whole family, including kids! It's also a great date-night activity!"

Upcoming events include Valentine's Day Garden Workshops on Tuesdays, Feb. 6 and 13, at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$40 per participant and includes one drink. No reservation are required and all are welcome.

-Nicole Fuentes

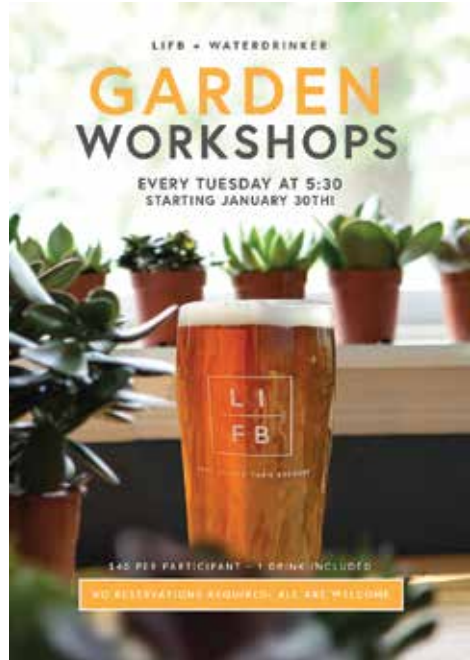


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# Schools to lose over \$500K in state funding

BY SAM DESMOND

Gov. Kathy Hochul (D-New York) announced the FY 2025 Executive Budget, which is proposed to make “significant investments to make New York more affordable, more livable, and safer.”

Local school districts, under new metrics in the 2025 budget, will see a decrease in state funding:

**EASTPORT SOUTH MANOR:**

-\$86,242 (-.3 percent)

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-\$476,287 (-7.3 percent)

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The executive office has touted the budget as “record-breaking investments in public education... since taking office, Gov. Hochul has increased school funding by record amounts—a total of \$6 billion over two years—and includes a proposal to ensure every school district utilizes instructional best practices grounded in the science of reading.”

This year, the proposed budget includes the highest amount of school aid in New York State’s history, including:

-\$35.3 billion in total school aid, an increase of \$825 million (2.4 percent) from FY24. This includes a \$507 million increase in Foundation Aid.

-\$10 million to train 20,000 teachers and teaching assistants in best practices for evidence-based literacy instructional practices.

-Four-year extension of Mayoral Control over New York City public schools.

-\$1.2 billion for SUNY and CUNY capital projects.

-\$207 million for SUNY and CUNY operations.

-\$2.75 million for the SUNY Empire State Service Corps, offering students community service work opportunities.

-\$2.5 million for the operating costs of SUNY’s participation in the Empire AI consortium.

-\$2 million for SUNY’s role in NY SWIMS.

-\$1.5 million for the State Weather Risk Communication Center at the University at Albany. ■



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# No kitten around

## Kent Animal Shelter offers reduced spay/neuter surgery for feral cats

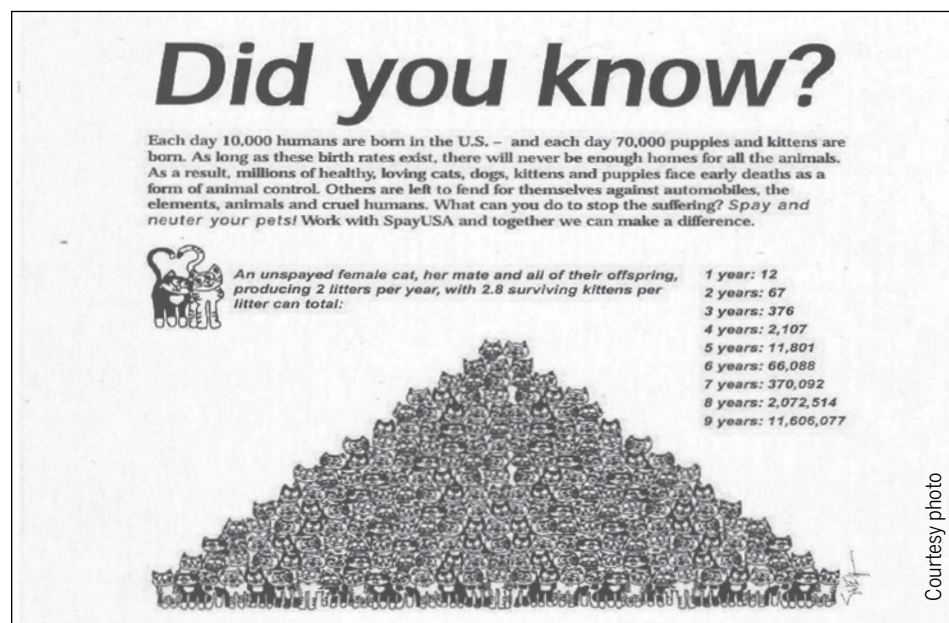
BY C. E. PARRY

Kitten season, the period when hundreds of stray and feral cats give birth, begins in February and ends sometime between October and November.

An unspayed kitten can go into heat at just six months, delivering its first litter before it's 1 year old. Unspayed female cats can have three litters a year, adding hundreds of cats to the already increasing outside cat population.

Left to fend for themselves, they suffer to find shelter in winter, risk illness, injury, starvation, and early death. The average life span of an outside cat without care is just two years.

As part of its effort to help maintain cat health and control the community cat population, Kent Animal Shelter offers low-cost spay/neuter surgeries in its Calverton clinic. And, for a limited time, and to encourage people to start early, they are currently offering as a service to our readers a 55 percent discounted rate of \$50 instead of the usual \$90 for the first 63 people who make an appointment and mention this article. The fee includes spay/neuter surgery, rabies vaccination,



and left ear tip to identify the cat as non-reproducing.

Kimberly Reilly, operations manager of the Spay/Neuter Clinic at Kent, stressed the importance of making an appointment before trapping a cat.

"It's important because appointments are usually scheduled at least a couple of weeks ahead. If you trap a cat and have to release it, it's unlikely to go into a trap again," she said. "We understand if you

have an appointment, but the cat wouldn't go into the trap and you have to cancel. Just call us. We'll reschedule for you. But please, don't trap a cat until you have an appointment, or show up without one."

What happens after the cat is no longer able to reproduce? Most areas follow the ASPCA-approved guidelines of TNR: trap/neuter/return. Following a brief period of recovery, especially in inclement weather, the cat is released back into

the environment it came from, where it's familiar with food sources, risks, and territorial boundaries of other cats in the area.

Some community cats are born outside, often within a colony of other cats that are familiar with each other, seeking shelter, food, and water wherever they can find them. Others are released, often by those who mistakenly believe cats can fend for themselves.

A cat abandoned outside faces a cruel and uncertain fate. They will be attacked by an established colony that see it as competition for food and territory. Other threats include speeding cars, diseases like feline AIDS or leukemia, hostile humans, starvation, and poisoning from toxic substances.

Of course, some people are kind and offer food and water to cats they see outside. These are the people Kim Reilly would most like to encourage to act now and make sure the cat is spayed or neutered. Using a cat pyramid graphic, she cites the consequences of failing to do so.

"It should make people stop and think, especially about feeding and not being responsible about spaying and neutering."

*Kent Animal Shelter  
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appointments/information M-F.*

## FARMER MATT: Farm stand to open this spring

FROM PAGE 1

tain the farm," he said, noting his parents own the property. "We had a really small garden [in Nassau], but we moved out here for much more property."

Matt raises pigs, goats, horses, rabbits, turkeys, chickens and ducks, among other animals. And in the spring, he has a small farm stand where he sells home-grown vegetables as well as flowers and plants. He also sells fresh herb and vegetable kits for customers to grow their own.

The farm, he said, is committed to sustainable and responsible farming practices. They use natural fertilizers and pest control methods to ensure the crops are healthy and free from harmful chemicals. Also, the animals are raised in spacious and clean environments, with plenty of access to fresh air and sunshine.

With rescue animals and animals with disabilities, like a partially blind and deaf pig, and a miniature horse with a heart murmur, the farm name, according to his mother Michelle Gartelman, was originally all about the animals on the farm getting a second chance. But, she said, "The truth is, after the pandemic, moving to the farm was a new beginning for all of us and we believe God led us here."

Matt also rescued a pregnant mama rabbit who was dumped in a park—growing his rabbit population quickly. He also has two chinchillas and a hedgehog he rescued from families that no longer wanted them.

"We are so proud of the passion and enthusiasm he has for farming and promoting agriculture among youth in our community," Michelle said of her son. "The East End has such a unique agricultural history and array of farms and growers, and everyone he has met has been so kind to share their experiences and help him grow."

Matt is also known for touring local businesses and farms for his YouTube page, with a goal of teaching the importance of farming to kids and the commu-

nity. Recently, he visited Waterdrinker Family Farm.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Matt this year. He is a local kid with a passion for farming and growing and learning about other local farm/greenhouse businesses," said Marc Weiss, owner of local Waterdrinker Family Farm in Manorville. "To me, he seems like a young Doug Geed. I'm super impressed with his work ethic and his drive to grow his business."

Matt said he is grateful to the local farms, including Waterdrinker and Hulse, which have helped him learn and grow his own farm.

This spring, Matt hopes to continue his tours and expand his farm stand by selling additional items, including local honey and flower bouquets. He also hopes to build a nicer stand attached to a trailer to sell out of as well as host events to allow people to visit.

"I want this farm to keep growing," he said, noting he also has plans to move out to different properties as an adult. "My business goal is to help children and families in the community to know about farming on Long Island."

He also intends to eventually pursue a degree in veterinary or agricultural studies.

The farm stand will put out a schedule every weekend in the spring, summer, and fall. The farm stand is set up at the home address; however, it does move to other locations. His farm stand will reopen in the coming months; a date and locations will be announced via his Instagram page. ■



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# Folkie Fest gears up for the 2024 season

February's theme is "A Few of My Favorite Sings," bringing a few of the organizer's favorite performers to the stage. These include Robert Bruey and Kerry Kearney. The event will take place on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 2 to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$10 in advance.

Robert Bruey's music is honest and real, raw and meaningful, gritty and naturalistic. Kerry Kearney is best known as a slide guitar master. His style, music from the "Psychedelta," is his own brand containing an upbeat mix of American blues and roots, created from writing and performing on the circuit for over 40

years. American roots musician Maria Fairchild, a dedicated "singer-song finder," makes traditional music feel new, and contemporary songs, including her own, seem timeless. Bryan Gallo is a Long Island-based singer-songwriter inspired by late nights in bars, the backseats of cars, and the pressures and consequences of living life romantically. James O'Malley is considered by many to be the consummate songwriter; his songs take the listener on an emotional journey of family, relationships, human nature, or contemplation of life's choices.

March will bring Women's History Month; there will be "Unstoppable Women Making Herstory." In May, "I am, I said" has performers sharing a song that defines them as an artist. Also, there will be two shows at the Moriches Field Brewing Company over the summer where they celebrate favorite folkies.

Folkie Fest is an ongoing concert series with local acoustic artists in the spirit of folk music as envisioned by the late Pete Seeger. They provide a listening space and support live, local, singer-songwriters sharing their original work. A portion of the proceeds are donated to the community center, and a 50/50 raffle is held to benefit Long Island Cares: The Harry Chapin Food Bank.

For more information or details on past events and some of the artists, visit the Folkie Fest YouTube channel. To keep up with happenings, "like" Folkie Fest on Facebook, or sign up for their mailing list at folkiefest@gmail.com. For tickets visit [www.morichescommunity-center.org](http://www.morichescommunity-center.org). ■



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## REVIEW

## ‘Fiddler on the Roof’ debuts with traditions, hard times, illumination

Show runs through  
Feb. 25 at The Gateway

BY LINDA LEUZZI

There’s a lot to be said about a musical, namely “Fiddler on the Roof,” that lit up Broadway like a blazing comet in 1964, becoming the first longest-running Broadway show for nearly 10 years, winning nine Tony Awards, prompting countless revivals on Broadway and other stages. The story, which takes place in the early 1900s, centers on Tevye, the Jewish milkman, who lives in the village of Anatevka, Russia, (now the Ukraine) and his family.

Tevye’s world as he knows it is about to change. He grapples with three of his daughters and their untraditional choices for husbands. Also, brutal times are emerging.

Gateway executive artistic director Paul Allan discussed why this gorgeous, beloved musical is being produced now.

“Although we like to do the latest releases, it’s important to go back to some of the classics,” Allan said. “It has deep roots with Jerome Robbins (legendary original choreographer and director; Harold Prince produced it), it’s enduring, and it’s nice to offer something with a message that’s especially relevant today. You think you’re secure in your little town, and then something happens.

“There was a recent Yiddish version (Yiddish with supertitles, a seven-week run from Nov. 13 to Jan. 1 at Manhattan’s New World Stages). They tried to be to

true to the culture, and that helped us.”

Bruce Winant stars as “Fiddler”’s Tevye. An accomplished actor with numerous Broadway roles including “An American in Paris,” “Chicago,” “Ragtime,” “Phantom of the Opera” and “Fiddler,” as well as films and television shows (he’s also a Gateway alum), Winant sat for an interview with the *Tide* in the theater recently.

“In my world, there are three perfect musicals: ‘Man of La Mancha,’ ‘Sunday in the Park with George,’ and ‘Fiddler on the Roof,’” he said.

“It’s not a bunch of songs with a story; it’s a brilliant play with music woven in and creates a timeless piece that never gets dated. It’s the perfect alchemy: music, book, and lyrics. The story is so relevant to any time period and to any father. When he sends his daughters off to marry, is the man good enough? It’s something we all go through, especially for a Jewish family that prides themselves on tradition.”

Winant is the son of character actor H.M. Winant, soon to be 97, and network executive and Emmy Hall of Fame inductee Ethel Winant (who died in 2003); producer/director Scott Winant and new music percussionist William Winant are his brothers.

Talk about show-business royalty.

Winant’s dad worked in 1950s films as well on television shows like “Mission Impossible” and “Hogan’s Heroes.” The acting bug bit when his dad asked him to cue lines when he was about 12. “I had the script and fed him lines,” he recalled. “I’d be with him on the sets, on location.”



He met Elvis.

“My favorite story was when he had just finished ‘It Happened at the World’s Fair’ with Elvis, who beat the snot out of him in a scene and wound up shattering his nose,” he said. “Six weeks later, he returned to the set. I came back from school and there’s Elvis at my front door with a big bouquet of flowers and candy as an apology.”

All Winant could say was a stunned, “I know your name.”

Winant was reflective about the “Fiddler” story.

“It’s the coming of the modern world and modern children,” he said. The oldest daughter eschews traditional matchmaking with an older man, a prosperous butcher, to marry a tailor; another wants his blessing to marry outside their faith; the third elopes. There’s a revolution

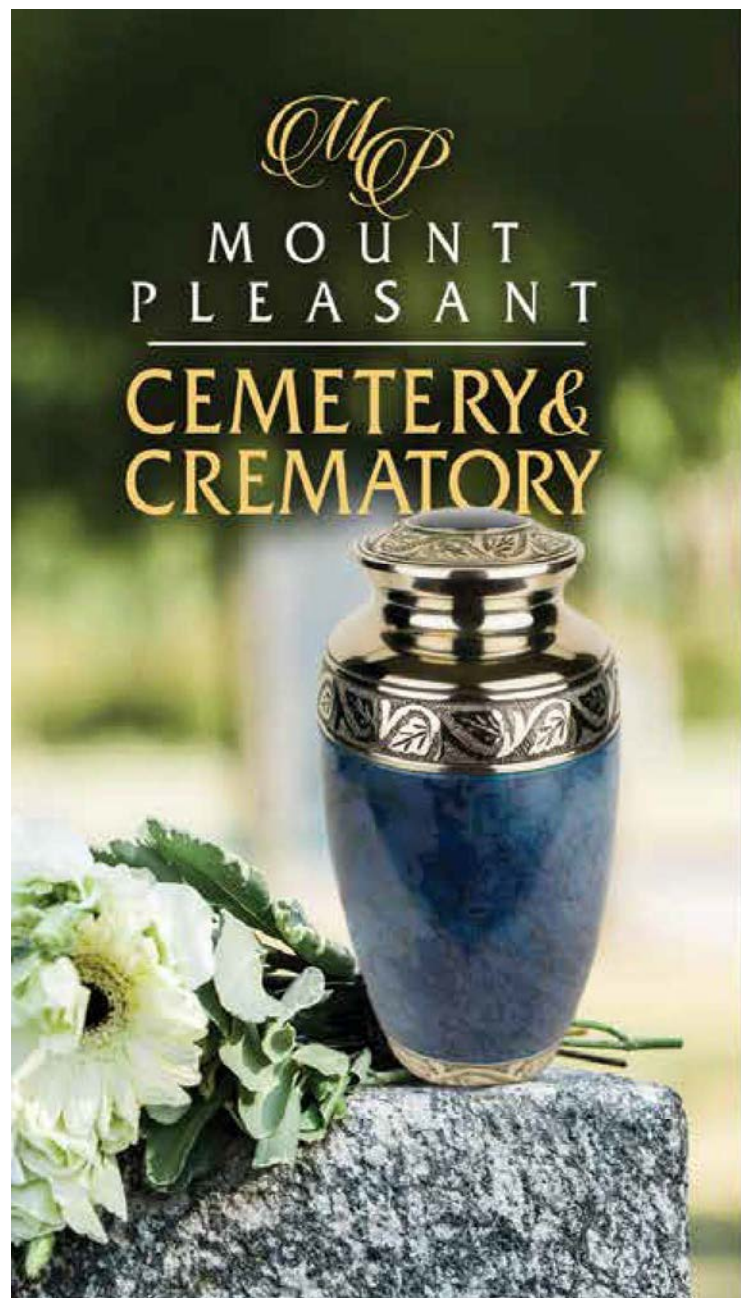
brewing, and Jews must leave their village.

“The village Anatevka is in the center of the Ukraine,” Winant pointed out. “The closest city is Kyiv.”

But in the mix, there is also poignancy, joy, acceptance, and transformation. Prepare to be dazzled. There are 30 in the cast, with two casts of children. Keith Andrews is again at the helm as director and choreographer, with musical direction by Keith Levenson. Musical hits include “Tradition,” “If I Were a Rich Man,” “Matchmaker, Matchmaker,” and “To Life (L’chaim).”

No question about it. You’ll probably leave the theater singing.

“Fiddler on the Roof” opens Jan. 26 and runs to Feb. 25. For tickets or more information, click on [www.thegateway.org](http://www.thegateway.org). ■



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# Don't miss the St. Patrick's Day parade!

This year's Moriches Chamber of Commerce St. Patrick's Day Parade grand marshal has been announced as George Keller. The 20th annual parade will take place on Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m. on Main Street.

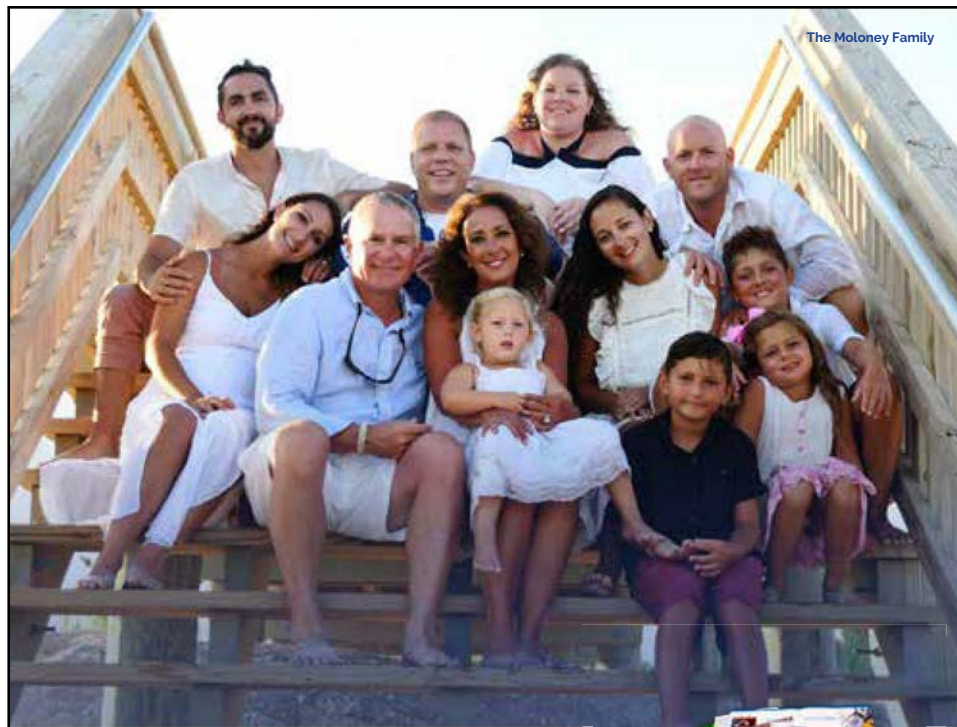
Keller, a dedicated community member, originally moved to Center Moriches from Brentwood in 1976 with his wife, Terry. Together they raised two sons, Frederick and Patrick. Today,

they live in Center Moriches and have two grandsons as well.

The parade begins on Lake Avenue and ends at Railroad Avenue and includes floats, fire departments, and pipe and drum bands. The chamber's dinner will be held on March 8 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$75 per person. For more information or to request to be part of the parade, visit [www.moricheschamber.org](http://www.moricheschamber.org). ■



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# KENNETH JOHNSON

Kenneth H. Johnson was born in Center Moriches on October 14, 1931 and left us at the age of 92 years old on January 9, 2023. He was born to Howard & Marie Johnson (nee Carter) in Southampton, NY. He graduated from Center Moriches High School in 1949 and was a lifelong resident of Center Moriches, where he was deeply involved in many aspects of the Community, School and Fire Department to name just a few.



Ken graduated Center Moriches High School in 1949 after a successful sports career in High School, even staying a 5th year to play an extra year of Basketball. He joined the Center Moriches Fire Department in 1949 and was an active member for almost 72 of his 75 years as a member. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served his country from 1950 to 1953, fighting in the Korean War, as a machine gunner in the First Marine Division. Upon his return he met his wife, Grace Koehler, they married in 1955. They settled down in his hometown of Center Moriches and started a family.

Together they had four children, Kenneth, Kim, Scott and Shaun and raised their granddaughter Jennifer as their fifth child. He was a loving, kind and giving man to so many people. These traits were always on display to those that called him "Dad" or "Grandpa" and this included friends that have become family such as David, Anthony and Paul.

He worked several jobs to support his family, sometimes working up to three jobs at once. He spent several years at Bernstein Farms, before starting his career at Brookhaven National Laboratory from which he retired after 42 years. He was an employee at the Center Moriches Fire Department for many years as a Night Watchman and Radio control Operator, sleeping home for only 2 nights a week! He loved to tinker around the yard, enjoyed planting and tending to his garden and loved planting bushes and flowers around the yard, which we enjoy through the year.

Ken was highly active in so many organizations throughout his life, enjoying his time spent and the friends he made, as much as the service and knowledge that he gave. Within the Center Moriches Fire Department he was not only a 75 year member but held the titles of Lieutenant and Captain twice, Assistant Chief (1970-1974), Chief (1974-1976) and Fire Commissioner from 2011-2015. He was given the Fireman of the Year in 1975, and was very proud of this, after saving the life of a local person by running into the building before the trucks arrived. He spearheaded and ran the CMFD Junior Fire program and ultimately became President of the Nassau Suffolk Juniors Association.

He was very active in various Fire Department titles within the Town, County and State levels throughout his life as a volunteer Fireman, including Brookhaven Town Fire Chiefs, where he served as President for many years, Suffolk County Chiefs Council including the position of Secretary, and New York State Fire Chiefs Association. He was part of the committee that wrote and brought FRES, Fire Rescue Emergency Services, to legislation within Suffolk County.

He and his wife Grace travelled New York State to meetings and conventions for the Fire Services for most of their married life, even running the Hospitality Room at the NYS Convention which they have many fond and funny memories, and made MANY friends.

He loved his children and sports, and therefore it only made sense that he became a Coach and Manager of the Center Moriches Little League for over 16 years! He was a Member of Center Moriches School Board of Education from 1986-1997, serving as President for 2 years. He also served many years as a member of the Rotary Club of the Moriches. Ken was recently honored to have been named the 2022 Grand Marshal for the St Patrick's Day Parade by the Center Moriches Chamber of Commerce. As well as being recognized as a Center Moriches High School Alumni of Distinction in 2022.

He loved his Church, St John's the Baptist Episcopal Church, where he and Grace were married, he returned to church in the later years of his life and became an active member. He enjoyed meeting and making new friends and the worship and love he felt while in attendance.

Ken is survived by his wife of 68 years Grace, a brother Robert Johnson (Kathleen), his children Kenneth Johnson (Brenda), Kim Johnson-Hennessey, Scott Johnson (Elizabeth), Shaun Johnson and Jennifer Johnson. He was a proud Poppie to his grandchildren Jessica (Ben), Laura, Scott, Meagan (Stephen), Matthew (Melinda), and Heather (Robert). As well as 7 Great-Grandchildren Logan, Adalynn, Madison, Matthew, Carter, Lilah, and Baby-to-be Sherwood, along with many nieces and nephews.

Viewing was on Friday January 26 from 2pm-4pm and 7pm-9pm, with a Firematic Services at 7:30 pm, at Robertaccio Funeral Home, 495 Main Street, Center Moriches. A Funeral Mass was held on Saturday January 27th at 9am at St John's Episcopal Church, 33 Railroad Ave, Center Moriches, with burial to follow at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Center Moriches. All are welcome to join for refreshments at Center Moriches Fire Department, immediately following the burial.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to be made to Center Moriches Fire Department, St. John's Episcopal Church outreach, or Moriches Nutrition Center.

## KEITH'S CORNER

# February has arrived!

We are beating the winter doldrums with lots of good helping stuff!

By the time you read this, we will have delivered our Super Bowl Party Raffle prizes to our two big winners and will have raised several thousand dollars for scholarships at local high schools. Thank you everyone for your support.

During the month of February, we will be donating nonperishable foods to local pantries to help sustain them. We will also be doing a monthlong drive for Pawsitiverescue.org, a pet rescue located in Middle Island.

They are always in need of blankets, towels, sheets, washcloths, dog food, and hard toys. Anything you can do to help will be appreciated and donations can be dropped off in our deck box at the front of our house, 44 Hawkins Avenue, Center Moriches.

We are also happy to be partnering with Brothers Four Pizza and the Ice Cream Cottage to do The Valentine's Day fundraiser of a heart-shaped pizza, heart-shaped ice cream cake, and a stuffed bear (bears limited to first 100 orders), which raises money for kids battling cancer. We are grateful to Kay Jewelers for their help in securing bears for this cause.

Last but certainly not least, the very popular Chef Keith & Kids/Cooking with a Cop will once again be coming to Helping Makes U Happy on Feb. 20 and 22 from 4 to 5 p.m.

Spots are limited and fill up fast!

It's a great way to familiarize your kids with the local officers, talk about respect, and for them to cook and eat some delicious food! Please call 631-848-9008 for more info. ■



## MORICHES BAY GARDEN CLUB

# First meeting to be held next month

The Moriches Bay Garden Club will be meeting on March 21 at the Center Moriches Library. They will have a guest speaker to be announced soon.

The club meets on the third Thursday of each month. Some of their upcoming activities include a speaker to talk about pansies, a trip to a rhododendron garden, and of course, our plant sale at the end of April.

They are also planning a flower show this year, and are excited to celebrate The Moriches Bay Garden Club's 50th anniversary with a special tea/luncheon.

More information to follow.

New members are always welcome. Please contact Debbie Cannarelli at 631-258-3657 or debcan@gmail.com.

See you in the spring! ■

## Freelance Writers Wanted

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## EDITORIAL

# State aid reduction should curb district expenditures

The governor's proposed budget for FY 2025 includes cuts in state funding of over 30 school districts in Suffolk County, with some losing over \$3 million should the budget be approved in its current state.

Proponents argue that these school districts, many of which rely almost solely on property taxes to fund schools, can "afford" to lose this amount, especially as New York City schools are slated to lose over \$100 million.

But can we actually afford that cut in funding out here?

According to *New York Magazine*, the students with the lowest chance of admission to Ivy League schools are those who come from families with an annual income between \$158,200 to \$222,400.

And while this does represent the top

5 to 10 percent of earners in the country, for those of us in Suffolk County, this income range is a "somewhat" comfortable middle-class at best for a family of four.

That the average rent for a one-bedroom in Suffolk County is over \$2,500 a month (according to HUD's Fair Market Rents data), which would mean that to conservatively afford rent (not even a mortgage), an individual would need to earn \$120,000 annually to fit the adage of "no more than 25 percent of your monthly income on housing."

Suffolk County holds the 12th highest property taxes in the country, which is typically around \$10,000 annually for a median house price of \$413,900.

Back in 2009, "The Daily Show" did segment on Long Island wanting to

secede from New York State, and while it was a boisterous parody on Jersey Shore riff-raff, then-Brookhaven supervisor Ed Romaine made the point nearly 20 years ago that Long Island was "paying more than \$3 billion" to New York State then it was getting back.

In 2022, Suffolk County received less than 10 percent of its budget from New York State aid.

School budgets in our area last year ranged from \$80 million to over \$200, and while state aid is typically low for our districts, they do rely on it to be able to propose modest increases that do not pierce the tax cap.

This could also present an opportunity for some much-needed belt-tightening of our school budgets. Districts in Suffolk County function like top-heavy corpo-

rations, with lots of management that is the most costly.

The average salary of a superintendent in our coverage area is well over \$300,000, with the highest being over \$370,000.

In her unveiling of the FY 2025 New York State budget, Hochul said, "I am committed to fight the right fights on behalf of New Yorkers, and to pursue the common good with common sense—by seeking common ground."

Our elected officials in Suffolk County have pledged to make our "common ground" known before the budget passes.

So, no, our schools can't afford to lose any funding, and honestly, why should we have to?

We pay more than our fair share to the state. ■

*the Tide*  
OF MORICHES & MANORVILLE

Published Monthly at 20 Medford Ave.,  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
631-475-1000

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**Letters policy:** Letters to the Editor are always welcome. Letters must be 300 words or less, in good taste and not libelous, signed and include a daytime telephone number for confirmation of authorship. Our email address is ADVletters@optonline.net.

## AROUND TOWN

### Friday, February 2

**Groundhog Day** – Are we in for an early spring or will winter continue for another six weeks?

### Friday, February 9

**P.S. I Love You Day** – Center Moriches Main Street will be decorated and lit in purple for the month of February to raise awareness for mental health and suicide prevention. Visit [www.psiloveyouday.net](http://www.psiloveyouday.net).

### Saturday, February 10

**Coin & Stamp Appraisal** – Bring your stamps and coins to Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library to be appraised by expert Frank McAlonan, 1-4 p.m. Register online or call 631-399-1511, ext. 1028.

### Tuesday, February 13

**Beginner Sketching** – Join local artist Jennifer Lucas at Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library to learn the basics of sketching with colored pencils, 6-7:30 p.m. Register online or call 631-399-1511, ext. 1028.

### Saturday, February 24

**Home Improvement Series** – Learn about the essential tools needed to make any home improvement project at Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library, 9 a.m. Register online or call 631-399-1511, ext. 1028.

### Wednesday, February 28

**PowerPoint for Presenters** – Take your presentation skills to the next level with this class at Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library, 9 a.m. For beginners to advanced. Register online or call 631-399-1511, ext. 1028.

### Of Note ...

**Cat Spaying Season** – Most feral kittens are born in spring, therefore rescue and community cat groups recommend pre-emptive spaying in February. Two local providers: Brookhaven Animal Shelter 300 Horseblock Rd., Medford. Call 631-451-6950. Services: Voucher for FREE spay/neuter at Integrative Veterinary Therapies, Ridge. Must call clinic at 631-924-7700 for an appointment once you have a voucher. Clinic at Kent Animal Shelter, 2259 River Rd., 631-727-5731, ex. 2 or visit [kentanimalshelter.com](http://kentanimalshelter.com). Services \$90 includes spay/neuter surgery, rabies vaccine, ear tip.

**Project Warmth** – Program assists eligible families and individuals with heating emergencies. For more information or to apply for the program, dial 2-1-1 (or 1-888-774-7633) or visit [www.unitedwayli.org](http://www.unitedwayli.org).

**Tell Us About Your Event** – We print local events free of charge for the towns of Moriches, Center Moriches, East Moriches, and Manorville, for our “AROUND TOWN”

section. For inclusion, please submit information by no later than the 15th of the month prior to the event.

**Connecting with Seniors** – The RSVP Telephone Reassurance Program makes daily phone calls to seniors living in the community. If you have a loved one or know of someone living alone who could benefit from a daily phone call, call 631-979-9490 or visit [www.rsvpsuffolk.org](http://www.rsvpsuffolk.org).

**Free Food for Seniors** – The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is offering free food for seniors aged 60 and over who meet income guidelines. Food packages include cheese, milk, starches, cereals, juices, canned fish, meats, vegetables and more. Call 631-491-4156 for information.

**Moriches Chamber of Commerce** – Meetings held at the Moriches Bay Diner, Montauk Hwy., every second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m.

**Volunteer Tutors Needed** – Colonial Youth and Family Services Community Volunteer Corp. is seeking tutors at the Mastic-Moriches-Shirley Community Library. For more information call Gary at 631-281-4461.

**Pet Supplies Needed** – RSVP Inc. Animal Welfare & Rescue Group is in the need of wet and dry dog and cat food, chews, blankets/towels, pens and crates, and flea/tick preventatives. Please call 631-533-2PET

(2738) or email [info@rsvpinc.org](mailto:info@rsvpinc.org) to arrange a pickup.

**Extreme Weather Safety** – Be prepared for extreme weather. Save PSEG’s 24-hour electric service number: 1-800-490-0075; follow PSEG Long Island on Facebook and Twitter for updates before and after storms; and make sure everyone in the family knows what to do in the case of an emergency. Visit [www.psegliny.com/page.cfm/Home/Safety](http://www.psegliny.com/page.cfm/Home/Safety) for video tips from YouTube, Sesame Street and more.

**Gamblers Anonymous** – Are you or someone you know living with a gambling problem? Call 631-297-6166 for help. Covering all areas of Long Island, Sunday-Friday.

**Flag Disposal** – Have a torn or faded United States flag? Boy Scout Troop 800 will dispose of it properly with flag disposal protocol. Email the troop at [TroopPack800@aol.com](mailto:TroopPack800@aol.com) or call Pat at 631-874-0531.

**Are You In Debt?** – Debt Counseling Corporation will have personal finance counselors at Brookhaven Town Hall in Farmingville by appointment. Call 631-698-2074 for information.

**War on Want Project** – Help fight global poverty by getting involved with a project aimed to raise funds and awareness of poor families in northeast Brazil. To learn more about the project, visit [www.waronwant.org](http://www.waronwant.org).

## YEARS AGO

### 75 Years Ago

FEBRUARY 1949

A meeting for the purpose of organizing a Girl Scout troop in Eastport was held at Eastport High School. Among those attending were **Mrs. Kenneth Carman** of East Moriches and **Mrs. John Hean** and **Mrs. John Newham**, both of Center Moriches.

**Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Lukert** and children, **Gwen** and **Gary**, of Moriches, accompanied by **Kevin** and **John Keane** of Manorville, spent Saturday in New York, where they enjoyed a basketball game between the Knickerbockers and Philadelphia at Madison Square Garden.

Scoutmaster **Martin Skarka** of Eastport Boy Scout Troop 31 was presented with the Arm of Liberty Award at the giant court of honor at the Eastport High School. The award is given to a scoutmaster when he has fulfilled many requirements, such as participating in community affairs and taking special Scout training courses.

**Hazel Bishop, Barbara Howell, Edith Ruland** and **Dorothy Glover**, all of East Moriches, sang at the Hampton Star, Westhampton, accompanied by **Mrs. Harry Nugent Jr.** on piano. The numbers included “Lavender Blue” and “The Blonde Sailor.”

With Scout **Harold Dunlap** leading the responsive reading and Scout **Frank Robinson** reading from the Scriptures, the East Moriches Boy Scout troop attended the morning worship service at the Methodist Church on Sunday.

**Mr. and Mrs. Walter Plisko, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pille**, and **Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Carter**, all of Manorville, attended the annual Farm Bureau Roundup dinner at the Henry Perkins Hotel.

**Mr. and Mrs. Henry Steffens** observed their 13th wedding anniversary with a two-day celebration at their home on Main Street, Center Moriches.

A large and appreciative audience attended the combined band concert and art exhibit by the students of Center Moriches High School. The students

whose artwork was exhibited included **Jacqueline Hait, Edward Larsen, Raymond Cameron, Alfred Larsen, Anna Roth, Charles Roth, Robert Dayton, Ronald Herzog, Roger Titmus, William Moylan, William Reden, Peter May** and **Laura Bruno**.

Topping the list for the second quarterly marking period, **Joyce Warner**, with an average of 93, again led the senior class of Eastport High School in scholastic standing. **Marianne Lomaga** and **Catherine Woronka** again held second and third places, respectively.

The East Moriches Stamp Club met at the home of **Ms. Marion Raynor**. The evening was spent in a general stamp swap and a stamp quiz was conducted by East Moriches High School principal **Harry Huson**. **Richard Herbert** was awarded a prize of stamps for receiving the highest score.

Entries of East Moriches poultryman, **Hudson W. Darrow**, won three top awards at the 101st Boston Poultry Show.

Playing in February at **The Center Moriches Theatre**: Cary Grant in “Every Girl Should Be Married”; Gene Kelly and Judy Garland in “Words and Music”; and Loretta Young and Robert Cummings in “The Accused.”

### 50 Years Ago

FEBRUARY 1974

At a regular meeting of the Rotary Club of the Moriches, **Doug Adams** of the Port Jefferson Rotary Club presented Moriches Club president **John Newhouse** with a ticket to the “Potpourri Harmony,” featuring The Harborman’s Chorus of the North Brookhaven Barbershop Chapter.

The past squadron commander signal flag was presented to newly installed commander **Frank J. Nigrelli** by outgoing commander **Al Szezepanski** at the Moriches Bay Power Squadron Change of Watch held at Sons of Italy Hall in Mastic Beach.

Navy Operation Specialist Second Class **Angelo Contino** of Freestate Drive,



February 1974: Ms. Kathy Gail Bergman, president of the Senior Class and Student Council at Center Moriches High School, presents Suffolk County executive John V.N. Klein with a class mascot during a ceremony held in county executive Klein’s Hauppauge office.

Shirley, returned from a four-month deployment to the Mediterranean onboard the destroyer escort USS *Joseph Howes*, homeported in Newport, R.I.

**Mr. and Mrs. William Bragg** of Lexington Road, Mastic, celebrated their 13th wedding anniversary.

The Paquatuck Squaws, a group of women dedicated to raising funds for Camp Paquatuck, Center Moriches, celebrated their first birthday. Members of the Squaws are **Mary Batista**, secretary; **Kitty Lake**, treasurer; **Verna Edwards**, vice president; and **Terry Klaus**, president.

**Anne Crump**, an exchange student from Australia, presented the Rotary flag from the Australian club to Moriches Rotary Club president **John Newhouse** and club vice president **James Dineen**.

The Kiwanis Club of the Moriches gave away an excess of \$2,650 at their first annual Giveaway Night. Among the grateful recipients were **William Goeltz**, representing Center Moriches High School, who accepted a pledge of \$500 for

a scholarship; and Scoutmaster **Charles Fossett** of Boy Scout Troop 414 of Center Moriches, who accepted \$200 to help offset the cost of a trip to the Philmont Reservation near Cimarron, N.M.

The exhibitions on display at the Center Moriches Library feature the original wood carvings of **Leon Ruttner** and the photography of **David Schmidt**, both of Center Moriches.

**Mary Beth Berch** was named the Most Valuable Player on the Center Moriches volleyball team in the team’s last match against Miller Place.

**Sarah Mosley**, who has worked as a teacher with the Bay Area Head Start since its inception six years ago, was named the director of the facility.

Playing in February at local United Artists Theatres: “American Graffiti”; Walt Disney’s “Robin Hood”; Clint Eastwood in “Magnum Force”; Peter Boyle in “Crazy Joe”; and George Segal in “A Touch of Class.”

- Compiled by **Vanessa Graniello**

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A 911 caller reported a fire at 151 Montauk Highway at approximately 11:50 p.m. After the fire was extinguished, a

man's body was found in the house.

The man's identity and cause of death will be determined during an autopsy by personnel from the Office of the Suffolk County Medical Examiner.

Following a preliminary investigation, detectives believe the cause of the fire to be non-criminal in nature. ■



File photo

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400 Main Street, Center Moriches, NY 11934

www.BrookHampton.com



Brook24

**Great River—\$3,500,000** Prime location! Immaculate, 12 room, waterfront contemporary on pristine 2.7 acres with 252' of bulkhead on Connetquot River.



Brook03

**East Moriches—\$2,300,000** One-of-a-kind, fully renovated, 4 bedroom, 5.5 bath, 5,100 sqft barn with amazing upgrades and inground pool with blue stone patio.



Brook01

**Centereach—\$599,900** Modern, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath, center hall colonial on dead end street with all the upgrades today's buyers want and need! Move-in ready!



Brook14

**Jamesport—\$2,199,900** Stunning, custom built, 4 bedroom, 4.5 bath, 3,400 sqft home with too many features to list! Must see!



Brook31

**Riverhead—\$749,900** New construction, 3 bedroom, 2 full bath raised ranch on one acre. Full basement with outside entrance. Full of upgrades!



Brook30

**Shirley—\$569,900** Beautiful, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath Victorian with modern features to satisfy just about every buyer. Completion on or about March 2024.



IS NOW THE  
**TIME**  
TO SELL YOUR  
**HOME?**

We have buyers waiting to  
buy your home! Call today!