

The TIMES HUNTINGTON

Edition

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75¢

Test run of Toaz

Architects estimate capacity and costs

BY ARLENE GROSS

arlenegross@tbrnewspapers.com

With space constraints a continual concern for the growing school district population, the Huntington Board of Education is taking a closer look at the Toaz building at 300 Nassau Road.

Four of the trustees recently toured the building and came away impressed with what they saw.

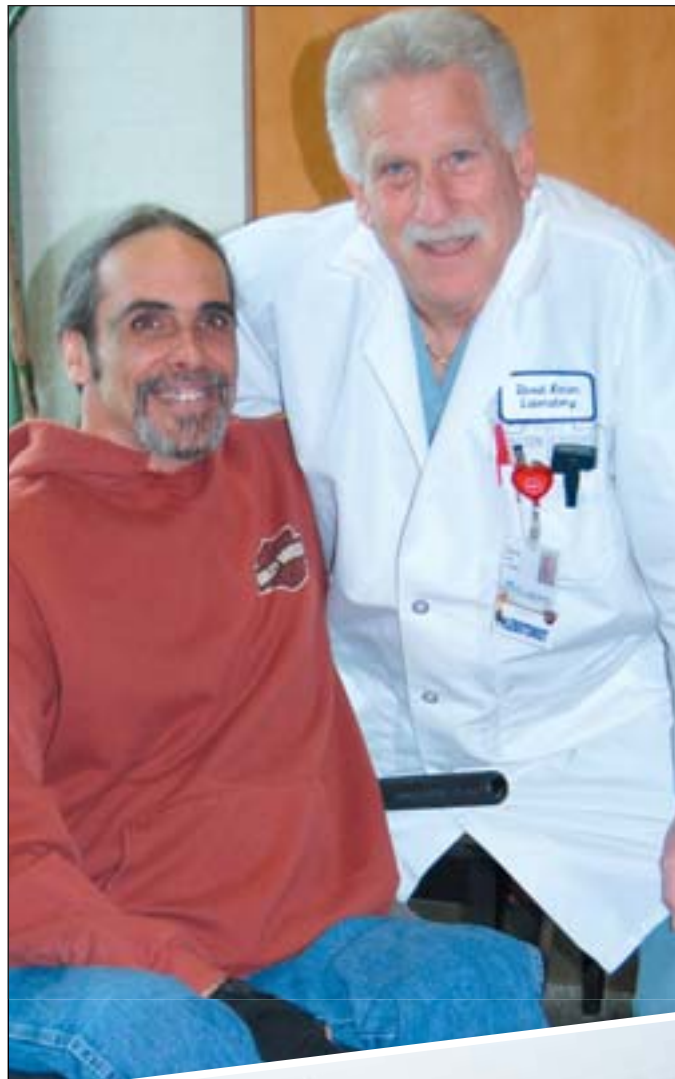
Rich McGrath called it a "magnificent building." Both Chris Bene and Emily Rogan went in thinking the structure would be in bad shape but were pleasantly surprised. Kim Brown was equally impressed, McGrath reported on her behalf, with her being absent from their Jan. 25 meeting.

The district then asked their architect to assess whether 300 Nassau would be a viable option to add to Huntington schools, and what would need to be done to have it up and running as an intermediate school for grades 3-6.

Roger Smith of BBS Architects & Engineers, of Patchogue, visited the 120,000-square-foot edifice and brought back his proposal on how to adapt the building as an intermediate school for 900 students. The district now has four primary schools with students in grades K-3, and two intermediate schools: Woodhull and Jack Abrams, with students in grades 4-6.

Based on a 2010-11 enrollment estimate of 1,400 students in grades 3-6, Smith projected that close to 900 students

Continued on page A8



Good save — but not his first Northport phlebotomist makes a habit of heroic acts

BY ARLENE GROSS

arlenegross@tbrnewspapers.com

They say timing is everything. Now, the old adage is one Patrick Budani of Halesite can literally live by after having just escaped a brush with death due to the quick action of a passerby.

"Being in a wheelchair, I routinely stop at places where I know I could reach things out the window of my car, like a garbage pail," he said.

When he was just about to make a U-turn in the parking lot, Budani's car stalled. At first he assumed it was a minor mechanical problem, but then the car started smoking.

"The car caught on fire," he said. "It literally happened in seconds. It was the scariest thing that ever happened."

In no time, the electrical power shut down in his 1985 Buick Riviera, the power was gone and Budani was trapped in his smoke-filled car:

"At that point, I really didn't think of anything

else but how I'm going to get out of the car. And I couldn't ... I was just about to panic. ... Out of the smoke comes this guy, David. He scooped me up like I was a baby and carried me away."

David Karen of Northport, a phlebotomist who works in Huntington Hospital's emergency room, had just left work and was taking the shuttle bus to Mill Dam Park, which the hospital uses for extra off-site parking.

Recalling the moment he saw Budani and the car, Karen said, "He was right in the middle of the parking lot." As the bus went past Budani's car, Karen noticed white smoke coming out of it.

But when he got off the bus, Karen noticed the smoke was black. "Obviously, it was on fire," he said.

When Karen approached the car and noticed it was occupied, he yelled to Budani to get out but Budani answered that he couldn't.

"I grabbed him, took

Continued on page A8

Patrick Budani of Halesite is shown at top left with his rescuer, David Karen, at Huntington Hospital, where the pair were reunited days later. Budani's 1985 Buick Riviera, at left, was destroyed in the electrical fire. *Courtesy Patrick Budani*



Calorie countdown

By fall, healthy options will be more transparent but will that change habits?

Page A6



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Art in the digital age

Also, 'Run for your Wife' in Northport, 3V house on Historic Register

Page B1



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Dire school aid forecast

BOE seeks community input tonight, Jan. 28

BY ARLENE GROSS
timesnpt@tbrnewspapers.com

It's time to tighten the purse strings in Harborfields as well as most other public school districts across New York, as Gov. David Paterson's preliminary budget released Jan. 19 projects reduced state aid in 2010-11.

"We're not going to receive any additional aid from the state of New York, barring an absolute miracle," Harborfields Superintendent Frank Carasiti said. "I think we're all aware of the fact that the state is about \$8 billion in deficit, and it's expected to go to \$13 billion next year. So we can't realistically look forward to any relief from the state of New York."

The budget calls for a reduction of \$820,000 in school aid between this year and next, he said. In addition, there was an error of roughly \$250,000 on the figures reported for BOCES aid, "which means that instead of the \$820,000, we're looking at closer to a \$1 million in reduced aid for next year," he said.

"Simplistically, that means, there's no way we can project the same budget for next year," Carasiti said. "But if we took the \$69 million and projected it to next

year, we'd still have to increase taxes because we'd be getting less revenue."

Carasiti urged community members to attend the board's community forum set for Thursday, Jan. 28 at 8 pm in Oldfield Middle School.

If voters reject their local school budgets this spring, boards cannot authorize any spending increases.

"It is not going to be a budget presentation," he said. "What we want to do is show the financial situation that the district is in. With what we now know and what we know for next year, and the reduction in aid and increased expenditures, we want to project not a two-year, but a three-year picture of where we are. ... we need to hear what direction you want to go in as we move forward in very, very difficult times."

If voters reject their local school budgets this spring, boards cannot authorize any spending increases, Carasiti warned. State law dictates that a contingency budget, which goes into effect if the budget fails after two public votes, cannot exceed the consumer price index for the present year, which for 2009 was zero percent.

With mandated cost of living increases, that leaves virtually no room for any other increased expenditure on contingency.



Courtesy Jim Hoops

'First Lady' at Finley

New York State First Lady Michelle Paterson visited J. Taylor Finley Middle School on Tuesday to kick-off her health and wellness awareness campaign.

Paterson discussed some of her own middle school experiences before describing 'Healthy Steps to Albany: First Lady's Challenge,' a six-week contest beginning March 1 that challenges middle school students to exercise and eat nutritious and healthy foods. Participants keep a daily log. Each minute of activity is then converted into 'steps' that are added to a classroom team's virtual trip to Albany. Winning teams will be invited to a 'healthy' lunch with the First Lady and her husband, Gov. David Paterson, and have an opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about whole foods and state agriculture.

Want to be in the "know" for the New Year?



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Courtesy A.J. Carter

Town officials and representatives of the local Haitian community are working together in the effort to continue supporting earthquake survivors who are in need.

Help Haitians through CYA

The town has joined with leaders of the local Haitian community in arranging for the Tri Community Youth Agency office to receive items for victims of the earthquakes in Haiti and to help in transferring them to a group that will ensure the items get to Haiti and those in need.

"As Haiti begins what will be a long road to recovery, Huntington is proud to do its part to assist those in need," Supervisor Frank Petrone said. "We look forward to continuing the relationship we have forged with Huntington's Haitian leaders to address the concerns of Huntington's Haitian community over the long term."

Councilwoman Glenda Jackson said, "Our Haitian population is concerned about how they can assist their loved ones back home. Many others share their concerns and want to help. Working with the community leaders, the town will do its

part to help Haiti in its struggle to recover from the effects of this devastating earthquake."

The Tri Community Youth Agency is accepting items at the Big H Community Center, 809 New York Ave., Huntington Station from Monday to Friday, 10 am to 4:30 pm, and on Saturday, 1 to 5 pm. The items will be transported to Brooklyn-based Fernande Valme Ministries, an organization that has been of service to Long Island's Haitian community for more than 36 years.

Items being accepted include medical supplies, first aid kits, rubber gloves, toiletries, water, clothing, flashlights, batteries, generators, blankets, plastic containers, plastic bags, camping gear (tents, hot plates, sleeping bags) and nonperishable canned foods. All items should be labeled before they are dropped off.

The TIMES of Huntington

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96557

Huntington Board of Education

BOE crafts budget with 2 percent tax hike in mind

Trustees opt to start from scratch in light of decline in state aid for schools

BY ARLENE GROSS
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As the Huntington school board begins the 2010-11 budget process, Superintendent Jay Finello on Monday night asked trustees to come up with a tax increase they see as workable.

Then with that number in mind, Finello said, he and Assistant Superintendent David Grackin will meet with building principals and department heads to review their individual expenditures for the 2010-11 school year.

In view of contractual obligations and cost of living increases in 2010-11, the same programs and services would cost the district \$5.4 million more than it did in 2009-10, Grackin said, which translates to a 6.5 percent tax rate increase. Every \$900,000 of the school district's expenditure represents one percentage point on the tax rate, Grackin explained.

To eliminate the \$7.4 billion deficit the state is facing, Gov. David Paterson released his projected budget on Jan. 19, and proposed reducing state aid by \$1.1 billion throughout New York schools. For Huntington schools, that would mean a 5 percent reduction in state aid for the 2010-11 school year, although those figures are just preliminary and are subject to change as the Legislature may not accept the governor's budget, Finello advised.

Trustees Emily Rogan and Rich McGrath suggested a tax rate increase of no more than 3 percent; board President Bill Dwyer and Trustee Chris Bene, 2 percent; and Trustee Elizabeth Black, 1 percent. The 2009-10 budget

carried a 1.98 percent tax rate increase over last year.

"At a 2 percent increase, we're looking at \$4 million worth of reductions," warned Finello. "That would have a devastating impact on the district. ... You're not going to recognize the school district. ... That is a significant reduction in programming to reach that level."

Black said, "I think we all know that. If we look at that and start to build in those things that we really need, the

real priorities, and then build up to what we can and then if we end up at 3 percent, 4 percent, whatever, then we've done all that we can to build a school of excellence. But to not start from scratch, I don't know."

McGrath suggested splitting the difference and aiming for 2 percent. "It's still going to be ugly," he said.

The board agreed in a 5-0 vote. Trustees John Paci and Kim Brown were absent.



Arts to anticipate Coffee House Jams

This spring marks the 10-year mark for Coffee House Jams, an open-mic night of sorts for Cold Spring Harbor students to play music, sing and perform. The jams, which started in November 2005 as a spinoff of the former end-of-the year annual event "Night at the Improv." Dorian DeAngelo and Sam Lisabeth, sophomores at the time — now sophomores in college — approached Keith Miller about their idea for a show in which anyone could just get up on stage and jam in an intimate setting. The rest is history. The sessions are usually held in the cafeteria on a Friday night, once in the fall and once in the spring. The Arts Boosters Club has been a crucial supporter of this event since the beginning, providing their continued support and, of course, the coffee. *Courtesy Karen Spehler*



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Someone rats on rat

BY JIM LAINO
news@tbrnewspapers.com

A complainant called at 9 am Jan. 19 from his work area on East Main Street in Huntington to report a group of local carpenters causing a disturbance in front of his location and using a giant inflatable black rat to reinforce their side of the dispute. The police arrived at the scene to assess the legality of the demonstrators' methods.

Arrests

A 32-year-old man of 11th Avenue in Huntington Station and a 19-year-old man of William Floyd Parkway in Shirley were arrested Jan. 19 on West 23rd Street in Huntington Station and charged with two counts criminal mischief with intent to damage property valued at more than \$250. Police claim they caught both intentionally breaking the windshield of a Ford vehicle. The teenaged defendant was also charged with resisting arrest after attempting to evade the officers, police report.

A 27-year-old man of Mastic Boulevard in Mastic was arrested Jan. 19 at the 2nd Precinct and charged with criminal mischief involving property valued at more than \$250. The police allege the defendant purposely caused damage to a taxicab while in Huntington.

A 38-year-old man of Barry Lane in Smithtown was arrested Jan. 19 at the 2nd Precinct and charged with burglary. Police allege the defendant gained entrance to a dwelling through a basement window and stole a briefcase.

A 21-year-old man of East 6th Street in Huntington Station was arrested Jan. 18 and charged with impersonation. Police allege the defendant presented false information to an officer.

A 19-year-old man of Griggs Drive in Greenlawn was arrested Jan. 18 at the 2nd Precinct and charged with offering false information regarding the reporting of an incident. Police allege the defendant reported an incident to the police that did not actually occur.

A 19-year-old man of Bay Avenue in Huntington Bay was arrested on West Neck Road in Huntington and charged with possession of marijuana.

A 43-year-old man of West Albany Street in Huntington Station was arrested in a parking lot along Jericho Turnpike in Huntington Station and charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance.

A 19-year-old man of Pickwick

Drive in Commack was arrested Jan. 14 at his home and charged with assault with intent to cause physical injury. Police allege he attacked another male with his fists, causing the victim to be treated for fractures of the occipital bones around his eyes.

A 31-year-old man of Jericho Turnpike in Huntington Station was arrested Jan. 19 on Lekamp Avenue in Huntington

and charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. The police stated the defendant has over three prior license suspensions on his record.

Disturbances

A motorist driving northbound on Route 110 in Huntington called at 10:51 am Jan. 15 to report having a dispute with a subject driving a white Crown Victoria with New York registration which he recorded and claiming to be a patrolman. The police arrived at the scene and found the subject gone. A canvass of the area proved negative.

A manager of a restaurant on New York Avenue in Huntington Station called at 10:52 am Jan. 13 to report 10 youths by having a food fight. Police pulled up and restored order to the situation.

Criminal mischief

A resident of West Hills Road in Huntington called at 2:10 am Jan. 19 to report her two vehicles vandalized while parked outside her house.

A resident of Midland Street in Cold Spring Harbor called at 9 pm Jan. 12 to report an unknown person tore up his front lawn by driving over it sometime over the previous three hours.

Theft

A complainant called at 3:10 pm Jan. 19 to report her vehicle burglarized while parked along New Street in Huntington and her pocketbook and credit cards were stolen.

Burglary

A proprietor of a store on New York Avenue in Huntington Station called at 9:40 pm Jan. 10 to report his burglar alarm activated by an unknown intruder at the rear of his establishment.

A resident of Spring Road in Huntington called at 2:10 pm Jan. 20 to report her house burglarized by someone who stole her computer. The complainant stated a neighbor observed an unknown person leaving her property previously.



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Battle between branches to oversee top cop

Legislators claim that 'lack of accountability' from department heads frustrates them

BY ARLENE GROSS
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Since other important department heads in Suffolk County government are appointed to fixed terms, so should the head of the police department, argued Legislator Jon Cooper (D-Lloyd Neck), who on Jan. 4 introduced a bill to establish a fixed five-year term for Suffolk County police commissioner.

The county's commissioner of health services, commissioner of the department of social services, personnel officer and director of real property tax service agency are all appointed to fixed, six-year terms. In 1975, the police commissioner was also appointed to a six-year term.

The current police commissioner, Richard Dormer, was nominated by County Executive Steve Levy and confirmed by the Legislature in 2004. Since the Legislature must approve the county executive's appointments, Cooper said it makes sense to empower lawmakers to reevaluate the position after the five-year term is up.

"I think it makes sense to require at the end of this fixed term that the commissioner maintain the confidence of the Legislature," Cooper said. "If not, there's a problem."

The police commissioner now is answerable only to the county executive, Cooper said. "I think that there are a number of legislators that feel that the police commissioner would be more forthcoming with the Legislature if he knew that he not only had to answer to the county executive but also answer to the Legislature as well," he said.

Legislators have their pulse on the communities they represent, Cooper said, and are thus more keenly aware than the county executive is of policing needs throughout their districts.

Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher (D-East Setauket) said she plans to co-sponsor the legislation with Cooper because she also wants to see the commissioner have more autonomy. "As long as he serves at the pleasure of the county ex-

'No one is suggesting that the secretary of defense be given a term so that he is no longer accountable to the president of the United States. Why would the Suffolk Legislature try to do this with the police commissioner?'

— COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEVE LEVY

ecutive, we don't believe he has the freedom to really speak candidly," Fisher said.

But Legislator Lynne Nowick (R-St. James) wants to see the legislation and have counsel review it before taking a stance. "We'll vet it out," Nowick said. "We'll take a look at it and we'll be more able to deal with it as soon as we take some time looking at the legislation."

Legislator Daniel Losquadro (R-Shoreham) noted that a number of legislators have been frustrated by the lack of accountability on the part of the police commissioner and other department heads.

"But that being said, I do not believe that a five-year term is the answer," Losquadro said. "I'm not even sure that a term for the civilian head of a police department is really the answer but it's something I'm willing to look at. But I certainly don't think a five-year term is good. I think it's far too long."

Losquadro is considering drafting his own legislation on term limits for the police commissioner and other appointed department heads.

Reacting to Cooper's proposed legislation, Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy said, "There is no way I would have been able to reign in police department taxes if I did not have a commissioner directly accountable to me, as the county's chief fiscal officer."

He added, "No one is suggesting that the secretary of defense be given a term



File photo

Some legislators want the chance to reevaluate County Executive Steve Levy's appointment of Police Commissioner Richard Dormer, who is pictured above center, behind Levy.

so that he is no longer accountable to the president of the United States. Why would the Suffolk Legislature try to do this with the police commissioner, unless their goal was to appease the police union? The Legislature might as well put the president of the PBA in charge of the police department, which is their underlying objective anyway."

Suffolk Police Benevolent Association President Jeff Frayler's retort is that Levy blames his union for everything.

"The reality of it is, when you're looking at something as important as the police department is to the public, there needs to be some autonomy in order for the police professionals to act like police professionals, rather than to be under the finger of a county executive," Frayler said. "Prior to Steve Levy, we never saw a county executive run a police press conference. We never saw a lot of things that are detrimental to the police department. And in fact, when it hurts the police department, it hurts the public."

Commissioner Richard Dormer is less than forthcoming with the Legislature, Frayler claims, partly because "... if he says one thing that the county executive doesn't want, he'll be fired."

Dormer countered, "This is about the PBA. I have no issues with the legislators.

I have a good relationship with legislators. I also have a professional and open relationship with the county executive and when I need to voice my objections, I feel comfortable in doing so."

He said, "I do agree with the county executive on how to save taxpayer dollars without negatively impacting public safety. The union is not happy because we have saved tax dollars while at the same time bringing crime down. We transferred officers from behind desks and assigned them to the streets, doing the job they were hired to do. This has upset Mr. Frayler, who believes that spending more money is the only way to run the police department."

A public hearing on the matter is slated for Feb. 2, Cooper said, and could be voted on in March or April.

If enacted, Levy would have 180 days to either resubmit Richard Dormer's name or submit another candidate for the police commissioner post.

Cooper said, "The important thing is the Legislature, one way or another, will be on the same page as the county executive, and both the executive branch and the legislative branch will be in agreement that the person heading up law enforcement for Suffolk County is the best possible person."

Jack Abrams school embraces Hats for Haiti fund drive

After seeing graphic images of the devastation in Haiti, students at Jack Abrams Intermediate School decided to pitch in and try to address some of the suffering. Last week, the youngsters began promoting a "Hats for Haiti" initiative to raise money for relief efforts in the Caribbean country.

Students, teachers and support staff members are being encouraged to wear hats to school and kick in \$1 to a relief fund for each day they do so. "They will color in a hat that has the logo of a husky (the school mascot) on it and give it to their teachers so we can hang them in the hall to show participation," teacher Cristina Anderson said.

The school has a well-established tradition of helping others in need, even those far from Huntington. New teachers quickly sign-on to such efforts and

Students, teachers and support staff are encouraged to wear hats to school and kick in \$1 to a relief fund for each day they do so.

students feel good about being able to contribute in some small way to the worldwide humanitarian effort.

It's not surprising that Anderson, who earned an undergraduate degree at Fordham University, quickly embraced the cause. "In college, I volunteered in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, volunteered teaching inner-city kids and was a volunteer in the Rose Hill Society, a group that shows prospects and their families

around campus," she said.

After graduating from Fordham, Anderson obtained a master's degree the following year in 1994 at Sacred Heart University. She then taught for three years in a Catholic school in Westchester where she was living at the time. Her career in Huntington started on Feb. 2, 1998.

"I believe that you have to 'pay it forward' and volunteering and helping others makes you feel good," Anderson said. "I try to show my class, through experiences like this, that how you feel after doing a good deed for someone else is your reward."

The teacher's sixth-grade students are up for the effort and so is the rest of the school. "My class was so enthusiastic about making posters and announcing to the school what 'Hats for Haiti' is about," she said.

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This fall, chains must post calories, but who's counting?

BY PATRICIA PROVEN
 timesnpt@btrnewsletters.com

How much more could your waistline stand for you to eat on a day you indulged in an oversized, deep-fried onion ring? And were you really cutting out calories when you ordered that healthy-sounding salad instead of a burger and fries?

By fall, you should be able to find out easily enough but be forewarned: Once you know the caloric content of your favorite fast-food meals, you might change your selection. That is, if the restaurant hasn't changed it first.

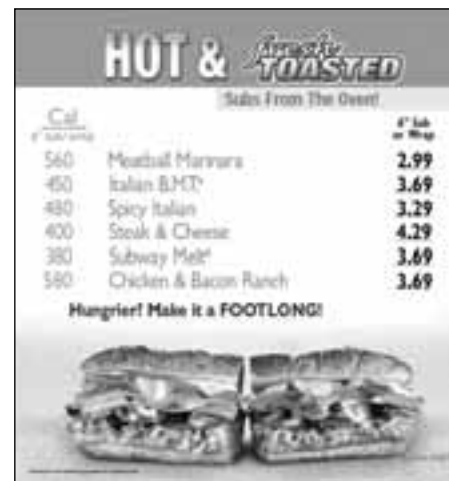
Come Oct. 28 in Suffolk County, eatery chains with 15 or more locations in the nation must post the calories of their meals in two places — on menu boards and printed menus, for both eat-in and take-out items.

"We feel people should be fully informed about what they're eating," said Nancy Huehnergath, director of the New York State Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Alliance. "Most consumers don't know what's in their restaurant food."

She and other healthy-eating advocates argue that, rather than overloading people with nutritional information, simply highlighting caloric values is enough to encourage patrons to make better eating choices and, ideally, help improve their health.

Labeling laws could also lead companies to "product reform," Huehnergath said. Admitting there are, oh, 2,000 calories in a deep-fried onion ring dish would "probably embarrass" a company and spur them to make their offerings healthier.

The Suffolk Legislature passed the local mandate, sponsored by Legislator Lou D'Amato (D-North Babylon), in February 2009 but is not the only municipality in the country to have done so recently. Restau-



Courtesy Nancy Huehnergath

A Subway menu listing calories.

rant chains in New York City and Westchester County have already edited their menus to comply with calorie labeling laws in those areas, Huehnergath said.

At least one chain in Suffolk has a head start on compliance with county law: Applebee's boasts a new category of less-than-550-calorie dishes. The corporation admits no connection between its new options and menu labeling legislation, however.

"We feed the neighborhood and that means providing tasty choices for everyone," spokeswoman Nancy Mays said in an email, "whether that's a Real Burger or a lower-calorie dish like the Under 550 menu. The decision was guest-driven. We wanted to offer our guests choice."

As local eateries fall in line with Suffolk's rules later this year, Huehnergath noted that there's also movement on the federal level: the Health Reform Act pending in the U.S. House and Senate makes a national menu labeling law possible soon.

Letters

Continued from page A10

whatever it wishes based on political ideology.

4. The Supreme Court consistently ignores and contradicts a fundamental constitutional goal that speaks about "the general welfare of the people" when their decisions entitle major corporations to have the same rights guaranteed to people. The word corporation does not appear anywhere in our constitution. Corporations by their very nature are undemocratic institutions invented by government. People are not a creation of government. It defies logic to compare them as equals under the law or in any other way, no matter how hard one tries.

5. Citizens do not vote and when they do their perceptions are clouded by a news reporting industry that puts rating and profits above their obligations to clearly expose corruption, unethical conduct and ensure citizens are educated and informed.

6. The Constitutional makeup of the U.S. Senate is fundamentally flawed and not based on equal representation by population. Worse yet a super majority

is required to enact legislation and one senator alone can stop anything in its tracks

7. A system of gerrymandering handicaps democratic principles of one man one vote and every vote counts the same.

If that is not enough evidence that we are losing our way consider:

- Over 15 percent of American workers are unemployed.
- One in eight Americans and one in four children are on food stamps.
- CEOs in major corporations earn on average more in one day than their workers earn in one year.
- One percent of Americans own 50 percent of the wealth.
- There are still many who naively believe that when government serves the common good it is equivalent to socialism; that taxes are an evil invention that confiscates the assets of those who benefit the most from our economic system; that there is such a thing called a free market, and the regulation of greed can be left in the hands of self-regulation.

Unless a way is found to expose and confront these problems honestly and directly this ship we all love called America will eventually sink.

Leo Montagna
 Northport

PEOPLE



Huntington Fire Chief's Council

The Town of Huntington Fire Chief's Council recently held their annual installation of officers. The Huntington Town Board was on hand to congratulate the officers, and Huntington Supervisor Frank Petrone administered the oath of office to the Executive Board. Pictured from left: Second Vice President Scott Waryold of the Greenlawn FD, First Vice President Robert "Beefy" Varese of the Northport FD, Supervisor Petrone, President Larry Cavanagh of the Eaton's Neck FD and Treasurer Gary Hontz of the Eaton's Neck FD. Absent from photo was Secretary John McKenna of the Northport FD. The Fire Chief's Council is comprised of the volunteer fire departments and EMS agencies that provide fire protection and emergency medical service throughout the Town of Huntington.

Photo by Steve Silverman



Teacher poetry award

Cold Spring Harbor High School music teacher, Mr. Vaughn Fritts, won first place in a poetry contest. He said, "I have been writing poetry all my life and have been published in several journals. This particular award is called the Harold Witt Memorial Award and is sponsored by the journal Blue Unicorn."

Congratulations!

Paolano named to Notre Dame dean's list

Mark Paolano of Huntington has been named to the dean's list for outstanding scholarship during the fall semester of the first year of studies at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. Students who achieve dean's honors at Notre Dame represent the top 30 percent of students in their college.

Obituaries

Maria Pawlukiewicz

Maria Pawlukiewicz of Huntington Station died on Jan. 11 in her 95th year. She was the beloved wife for 51 years of the late Jozef; the loving mother of Irena (John) Rozycki and Bronislawa Kilian. Mrs. Pawlukiewicz was predeceased by her daughters Albina, Helena Pawlukoic, Teresa Nauss and her sons-in-law Michael and Walter. She is survived by her son-in-law Charles Nauss. She was the grandmother of John Pawlukoic (Kerry), Walter Pawlukoic (Jane), Helen Kilian-Walsh (James), Richard Kilian (Michelle), Elizabeth Gorski-Schlottmann (Matthew), Mary-Jean Rozycki-Jones (David), Alicia Rozycki-Lozano (Francisco),

Veronica Rozycki (fiancé Joseph Navarchi), Steven Nauss (Trish) and Andrew Nauss; the great-grandmother of Cory, Kaitlyn, Emma, Allie, Samantha, Michael, Christian, Olivia, Julia, Sabrina, Sophia, Soraya, Jared, Evonne, and Mya. Maria and her husband were born near Wilno, Poland. They were separated from their oldest daughters, Helen and Bronislawa in 1940 and taken to separate Soviet prisoner-of-war labor camps in Siberia. After their release they both served in the Polish Army under the auspices of the British government. They arrived in Huntington in 1951 and worked at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church for 23 years. Ma-

ria was a religious, loving, kind and generous person who did her utmost to help her family in Poland and in America. She had numerous friends and enjoyed cooking traditional Polish meals for her family. She will be missed by those who loved her. She will spend eternity with Jesus and Mary, to whom she had a deep devotion, and with her beloved husband, Jozef.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday Jan. 15 at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Smithtown. Burial took place at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Huntington.

Arrangements entrusted to A.L. Jacobsen Funeral Home of Huntington Station.



Teacher awards

The Association of Suffolk County Supervisors for Educational Technologies recognized Dr. Robert Colascione, Cold Spring Harbor HS chemistry teacher, as a Bright Light at its January 2010 luncheon. Bright Lights are selected for the leadership role they play in integrating technology into their classrooms. Congratulations Dr. Colascione! Pictured from left: Mr. John Contess, director of technology, Ms. Linda Soupios, technology integration specialist, Dr. Robert Colascione and Dr. Janice Elkin, Board of Education president.



The science of sheeps' brains

News from Lloyd Harbor Elementary school: Ms. Jane DeRosa's fifth-graders were treated with a visit from Dr. Hromadka from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory during science class. While the students examined samples of sheep brains, Dr. Hromadka answered the many questions they had about how the brain works and the intricacies of the human nervous system.

What an exciting day!

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- or -

Write to People Section, PO Box 707, Setauket, NY 11733 and include your phone number.

Legals

EJA Consulting Group LLC Art. of Org. filed w/Sec. of State on 11/23/09. Office location: Suffolk Co. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process to: c/o EJA Consulting Group, LLC, 222 E. Main St., Huntington, NY 11743. Purpose: any lawful purpose. Latest date upon which LLC is to dissolve: no specific date.

28 12/24 6x th

Notice of Formation of Love, Nature, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Sect'y of State of NY (SSNY) on 10/14/09. Office location: Suffolk County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to the LLC 3 Colonial Dr., Huntington NY 11743. Purpose: any lawful purpose.

35 12/24 6x th

The Application for Authority of BLUE OCEAN SYSTEMS LLC was filed with the SSNY on 11-02-09. The LLC was organized in Dela-

ware on 06-01-05. Office: Suffolk County. Principal office address: 3511 Silverside Rd., Suite 204B, Concord Plaza, Wilmington, DE 19810. SSNY designated as agent of LLC whom process against may be served. The P.O. address which SSNY shall mail any process against the LLC served upon him: c/o CorpCo, 910 Foulk Rd., Suite 201, Wilmington, DE 19803. The address of the office required to be maintained in the jurisdiction of its organization: 108 Haverford Rd., Ste. 100, Wilmington, DE 19803. The name and address of the SOS where a copy of its articles of organization is filed is: Delaware SOS, 401 Federal Street, Suite 4, Dover, DE 19901.

157 1/21 6x th

Notice of Formation of De Sena, Sieben, Terino & Associates LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. Of State of N.Y. (SSNY) on 10/03/2009. Office location: Suffolk County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 324 So.

Service Rd., Ste. 107, Melville, NY 11747. Purpose: any lawful activity.

160 1/21 6x th

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Good save

Continued from page A1

him out, brought him to safety, made sure he was OK and then I left," Karen said.

Budani then yelled that his wheelchair was still in the car, and the bus driver, Richard Ruggero, who is also a Huntington Hospital security guard, ran and rescued it.

"That was crazy," Budani said, "because at that point, the inside of the car was on fire. This guy was going into fire to get my chair."

For Karen, rescuing people seems to come naturally.

When he lived in Malibu years ago, Karen saved two friends on separate occasions from drowning in the Pacific Ocean. Another time, he witnessed a car accident in Queens, where a young man's leg was completely severed. Karen stanch the bleeding before the ambulance arrived, perhaps averting a worse catastrophe.

"There was a thousand people there," he recalled of Queens accident, "but nobody did anything." Explaining his own celerity, he said, "It's kind of just a reaction. Any time there's an accident or anything, I've always stopped to see if I could help. I guess because I had a little medical background. But saving [Budani], you didn't need a medical background."

Karen hopes that other people would also react like he does during these incidents.

"That way, I wouldn't have to be in harm's way," he mused.

Budani, who sustained spinal cord damage 17 years ago from a motor vehicle accident, has been a quadriplegic ever since, and though his hands don't really function well, he is able to drive a car with hand controls.

Now, he is thankful to be alive and eternally grateful to his rescuer.

"One of the things I've noticed over the years, people generally want to help," he said. "People are generally kind. But this was above helping. This guy put himself in harm's way to help me. I'm just grateful to him."

Budani's mother, Elsie Callahan, said, "There are no words to describe how grateful we are. We got a second shot at life. And if anyone deserves it, it's Patrick."

The day after the accident, the two men met at Huntington Hospital so Budani could thank Karen in person, and now the two men are looking forward to getting to know one another better.

Karen said, "We're supposed to have dinner together. I'm waiting for him to call. I mean, it's a like a new friend."

Budani said, "I have a feeling we're going to be friends for a long time."

Toaz

Continued from page A1

could fit into the classrooms at 300 Nassau Road, with the remainder schooled at Woodhull.

Originally opened in 1939, as Toaz Junior High School, 300 Nassau Road was sold by the district to Touro Law School in 1981. Touro, in turn, sold it to the Good News New York Church in 2008, which owns the building today.

Reporting on the building, Smith said, "This is a school. It was a school. It can be a school. ... The building is in remarkable condition."

Still, Smith advised that work would need to be done, including reconfiguring classrooms, replacing windows and fixing masonry. He suggested a new entrance to the building and a building addition that would house the main office and principal's office, and would also serve to improve security to the building.

The building, which already has an elevator, would also need other improvements to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, including changing accessibility into the gym and auditorium, he said.

Other changes would include site improvements, such as reconfiguring the parking lot for greater ease of traffic.

Total cost for building work, which would probably take about two years, Smith estimated at \$18.98 million. With a recent appraisal of the building coming in at \$10 million, the total cost for reconstruction and purchase would be close to \$30 million. Rogan asked Smith if the school could be used for other grade levels, but Smith said the small playing fields would not work for anything above sixth

grade, where team sports are an integral part of curriculum.

To build a new building of comparable size, Smith said would cost about \$50 million.

If the district could prove the necessity of adding space or facilities, the State Education Department would provide building aid for education-related improvements. Parking lot improvements and administrative space would not be included in the aid package, Smith said. Building aid would probably come to about 30 percent of the building's total cost: for reconstruction and purchase.

As they evaluate options, the board still doesn't know whether the building's owners are willing to sell but will ask the district lawyer to inquire about its availability and price.

The board has looked at other options to increase classroom space for the burgeoning student population. In 2008, BBS presented a plan that reconfigured and added on to each of the six elementary schools at a cost of \$41 million.

After reviewing BBS's latest proposal, McGrath said, "If you need space, I think it's the most cost-effective way to get it."

The Jack Abrams Intermediate School was not mentioned in the enrollment scenarios Monday night. When asked what would happen with the Abrams building if the district were to acquire Toaz — would it be sold or used in some other way — board President Bill Dwyer said Tuesday that it's too early to tell.

"What was presented was simply a scenario that fills the building to demonstrate how it could be used," Dwyer said. "The final configuration of the district and how each building would be used is, at this point, still undetermined."


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SPORTS

Blue Devils come up big in final minutes

GIRLS HOOPS

BY ROBERT LEUNER
katsports@tbrnewspapers.com

Freshman Raynisha Witherspoon converted two free throws and junior Jackie Waldron hit a layup in the final minute of play as the visiting Huntington Blue Devils stopped the Comsewogue Warriors 32-26 in League V girls basketball action last Thursday evening.



Courtesy Jim Hoops

Huntington's Raynisha Witherspoon races down the court.

The Huntington win puts them within two games of qualifying for the playoffs with four games to go.

"That was our biggest game of the season," said Huntington head coach Brad Reminick. "That's what we have to do. We showed great character at the end. I couldn't be happier."

Waldron led all scorers with 12 points on four three-pointers. Witherspoon chipped in with eight points. Sophomore Cindy Edwards and junior Michelle Rubino each had nine points to lead the Warriors.

But this game had little to do with offense. Both teams played a stingy defense that forced turnovers, including 22 for Huntington and 20 for Comsewogue. Ultimately, it was Comsewogue's lack of offense that hurt them. The Warriors hit just one of 13 shots in the first quarter. In fact, they didn't score until junior Samantha Kane hit a basket with just two seconds left on the clock cutting Huntington's lead to 7-2.

The second quarter saw Comsewogue put forth their best offensive effort. This time it was Huntington lacking any consistency. The Blue Devils didn't score until the 3:22 mark, and they lead by four at 9-5. Slowly, however, the Warriors chipped away.

Two three-pointers by Edwards pulled the Warriors within two at 12-10 and a three-pointer by Rubino put them within one at 14-13. Then, with time running down, senior Mary Kate McKinnon slipped through the Blue Devils for a layup with three seconds left on the clock to give Comsewogue their first lead of the game at 15-14.

The Warriors momentum carried over into the third quarter, that is for



Courtesy Epoch 5

College hall of famer joins forces with MSG Varsity

"Training for Life," the new monthly show hosted by College Football Hall of Famer and Huntington resident Don McPherson, debuted Friday, Jan. 22 on Cablevision's iO TV (Channel 14). "Training for Life" with McPherson takes an upbeat approach to the "off field" issues of student athletes' lives. The show will serve as an informational resource for parents and coaches as they help young people navigate the demanding world of high school sports. The first show was about keeping sports in perspective and keeping sports fun.

Upcoming show topics also include: recruiting, sports ethics and sportsmanship. In addition to the monthly show, McPherson will have exclusive weekly web content on msgvarsity.com, including exclusive video, a column where he will share his insights and a segment during which he will answer viewers' questions. "I grew up playing sports, and I know first-hand about the real issues and pressures around sports and competition," McPherson said. "Training For Life' is going to open the dialogue, help address these issues and share what sports is all about — to have fun and love to participate."

the first minute when Rubino gave her team a three-point lead at 17-14. But that would be all the points they would score. Comsewogue missed their next 12 shots in a row, as Huntington began to chip away at the Warriors lead. By the end of the quarter they were up 20-17.

The Warriors managed to cut Huntington's lead back to one point at 23-22. But that would be as close as they would get. The Blue Devils dominated the boards in the finals minutes getting two and three shots at the basket while Comsewogue struggled. A turnover by Edwards with 58 seconds remaining and a missed layup by Rubino with 24 seconds on the clock all but sealed Comsewogue's fate.

Huntington, on the other hand, did

not fold under pressure. The free throws by Witherspoon and clutch basket by Waldron were enough to give the Blue Devils a much needed win.

"We don't have a good offensive team," said Comsewogue head coach Bill Lyons. "Offensively, we're inexperienced. We don't really have a high-low game. When we make shots we tend to play better. Somebody is going to have to step up and take charge."

The Huntington win gives both teams an identical 5-5 records.

Huntington will compete next against when they host Kings Park on Jan. 29 at 7 pm. Then they host Rocky Point on Feb. 2 at 6:15 pm. Sayville is next on Feb. 4 until finally hosting Hauppauge on Feb. 9. Game time is 6:15 pm.

Harborfields, Huntington teams compete in league championships

Hundreds of talented athletes represented their high school teams by competing in the Suffolk County league championships, which were held last weekend at Suffolk Community College in Brentwood. The Harborfields and Huntington girls track teams took on League IV and finished with solid performances. The Tornados came in fifth place while the Blue Devils finished sixth. Kings Park won the league title after scoring 133 points compared to second-place finisher Eastport's 75. Sayville came in third and Islip placed fourth.

For Harborfields, Michelle Gaye came in fourth place in the 3,000-meter run (11:16.91). Kelsey Margey and Lucy Seery placed first and second, respectively, in the 1,000-meter run (3:09.36, 3:11.49). Margey also won the 1,500-meter run (5:14.98). Sarah Crowley placed sixth in the 300-meter dash (46.67). Seery, Leslie Huffman, Chelsea

TRACK

Farinacci and Margey won the 4x800 relay (10:16.98) and the 4x200 relay team came in sixth place in 2:00.64.

For Huntington, in the 55-meter dash, Dania Merilan placed sixth (8.05). Merilan won the 300-meter dash in 44.55. Emilie Pugliese came in fourth place in the 600-meter run (1:45.34). Celine Takekoshi took fifth in the 1,500-meter run. The 4x400 relay finished in fifth place in 4:37.63. Molly Arceri won the shot put (28-06.00) and Hannah Helrich came in fifth in the triple jump (32-07.50).

The Huntington and Harborfields boys track teams finished second and third, respectively. Kings Park won the league championships, finishing with 127 points.

For Harborfields, Alex Boccard and Austin Coneys came in second and third, respectively, in the 3,200-meter

run. Patrick Slutter came in fifth. Ricardo Gallegos came in second in the 1,000-meter run. In the 600-meter run, Brad Nelson and

Colin Hall came in fifth and sixth, respectively. Tyriek Johnson and Boccard took second and third, respectively, in the 1,600-meter run. Slutter came in fifth. The 4x800 relay came in second place. Sean MacLeod finished the shot put in second place.

For Huntington, Tyre Brown took fourth in the 55-meter dash. Ryan Ackerman came in sixth in the 1,000-meter run. Jared Thorbourne took second in the 600-meter run and Stevenson Gabriel came in fourth. Tyriek Johnson won the 55-meter hurdles and the long jump. Dante Allen finished in fifth place in the 300-meter dash. The 4x400 relay took fourth place, the 4x200 came in second and the 4x800 finished third. Richie Fernandez placed fifth in the shot put. Luis Lopez came in fourth in the triple jump.

EDITORIAL

Let's go Jets ...

into the offseason, unfortunately. But Gang Green gave it their best, far exceeding limited preseason expectations, considering they were fielding a rookie quarterback, led by a rookie coach and for many years frustrating their fans with underachieving teams. The Jets gave their fans a thrill ride, from a 3 and 0 start to losing streaks to their coach mistakenly declaring the playoffs were out of reach.

What's that familiar phrase? Wait till next year!

By the way, the Giants started 5 and 0 and did not reach the playoffs. What's that other phrase? Oh yeah, something about not counting your chickens.

Ready to be scared?

TBR Newspapers has long been proud to feature a monthly column from the Long Island Index. This month the organization, dedicated to informing Long Islanders in order to promote more intelligent decision making for our future, released a video that should be required viewing for everyone living here. It spells out in shockingly clear terms the crisis we face — employment trends, property tax comparisons, the brain drain and much more — and the hurdles we need to clear to reverse decades of decline. Check it out on YouTube; search for The Clock Is Ticking on Long Island; then sit back and shudder for the next four minutes.

Then ... figure out how we can change what you've just seen — soon, if we are to have a satisfying future on Long Island.

**Inspire, influence and provoke — write!**

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words, should arrive by Monday the week you wish them to run and may be edited for length, libel and good taste. We do not publish anonymous letters. Please include your phone number and town of residence for confirmation. Email your letter to timesnpt@tbrnewspapers.com or send it to The Times of Huntington, PO Box 707, Setauket, NY 11733.

The opinions of columnists and letter writers are their own. They do not speak for the newspaper.

OPINION

No axe to grind

TO THE EDITOR:

Leslie Berliner is barking up the wrong tree when she impugns me in her recently published letter about “the doggone big deal” at Coindre Hall. Her letter poses several questions about me that I would like to answer for the record.

First, I am not “pushing” a ban on dogs at Coindre Hall. I did suggest at a recent park trustees’ meeting that as an extreme solution to the problem of off-leash dogs we could ban them entirely if dog owners continue to defy park personnel and regulations, a somewhat Swiftian modest proposal.

Dogs are welcome at Coindre Hall — on leash. The site is not designated as a natural borders off-leash dog park. Dog owners who use the park are well aware of the situation yet many continue to disregard the leash requirement and have little regard for the neighboring homeowners. As a park trustee, it is my concern that parks rules and regulations be observed and enforced. That is the only and “real” reason for my modest proposal of a ban on dogs.

Leslie asks who my supporters are. There is no nefarious plot here. I have no supporters whom I am aware of. I am seventy-five years old and have been a park trustee for almost half of those years and have been known locally as an environmentalist and advocate for open space preservation and parks for even longer. I have served on many town boards and committees over the years, have written numerous articles, columns, and letters on environmental issues, and have taught natural history to children and adults. I have no anti-dog ax to grind. I hope my supporters would be all law-abiding citizens who have a bone to pick with dog owners. ATV riders, vandals, and others who abuse our parks and disregard the rights of others. Leslie, that's the doggone big deal.

Alex McKay
Northport

More accountability

TO THE EDITOR:

I'd like to respond to Tom Kehoe's recent letter disparaging my proposal to provide a fixed, five-year term for the Suffolk County police commissioner. Unfortunately, Mr. Kehoe's arguments demonstrate his lack of understanding of what my bill seeks to accomplish, which is not surprising since he admitted to me that he did not bother to read the actual resolution before writing his letter. That may also explain his failure to grasp why my proposal makes good public safety policy.

Greater oversight equals greater accountability. This concept is key to ensuring that public officials maintain the confidence of the people they work for and is at the core of why I authored this legislation.

Everybody knows the Police Department is comprised of dedicated individuals who risk their lives every day to protect the safety of Suffolk residents. But currently, the police commissioner is the only major county department head who serves an open-ended term. Although the initial appointment is made by the county executive and approved by the county Legislature, the police commissioner is thereafter only answerable to the county executive. Since I would argue that county legislators are closer to their constituents and generally have a better idea of the needs of their local communities, this lack of accountability simply doesn't make sense.

Both the commissioner of health services and the commissioner of social services, among others, already serve fixed terms that regularly come back before the county Legislature for reapproval. If these key department heads require the Legislature's ongoing confidence to continue serving, why should the police commissioner be any different?

This is not my first foray into enabling greater public accountability of county services vis-à-vis enhanced legislative oversight of departmental appointments. Last year, I authored a law to terminate the holdover appointment of the previous commissioner of social services because there was insufficient legislative support for her reappointment. When the county executive realized this, he withdrew her name and came up with an alternate nominee. This individual was subsequently approved unanimously by the Legislature and has been serving very effectively in that position ever since.

Mr. Kehoe's argument that my proposal is politically motivated is laughable. Because of term limits, I am currently serving my last two years in the county Legislature. I wrote this bill not to appease anybody except my own conscience. However, it is already drawing support from my legislative colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Not only have several of my fellow Democrats signed on as co-sponsors, but some of my Republican colleagues have indicated they plan to vote for my bill when it gets to the floor.

I want to be clear that day-to-day oversight of the police commissioner, and the Police Department as a whole, will still rest in the hands of the county executive. My bill would simply allow the Legislature to have some level of oversight at regular five-year intervals. After all, if the police commissioner loses the confidence of a majority of county legislators, who their constituents rely upon to be their voice in county government, we have a real problem.

People want more accountability from government, not less. That's why this proposal is right for public safety and Mr. Kehoe is wrong for opposing it.

Jon Cooper
Suffolk County Legislator
18th Legislative District

Sinking ship

TO THE EDITOR:

Submitted in response to the editorial “Mandarin everyone?” (Jan. 14).

In the backdrop of stories about two wars, terrorism, crime, a financial industry out of control, millions unemployed and absurd stories claiming our President embraces Marxist policies, there is one important and shocking story few have seen fit to address and it need to be told. That story is about American democracy becoming dysfunctional.

There is a lethal combination of factors that has put this ticking time bomb in place. The factors are money, self-interest and the decisions of our supreme court. Worse yet, it could become irreversible and no one can be sure when Americans will wake up or how they will react when they finally figure out they have been duped.

1. We have allowed the power of big “money” in our political system to overpower the fundamental democratic ideals of “people power” and the principles of justice, ethics and fairness we have all been led to believe make us who we are and want to be. Some could say the problem is not about enforcing the law but about what is allowed under the law.

2. Supreme Court decisions equating big “money” to be the equivalent of the right of free speech has tragically corrupted the entire political process. The enormous power of money drowns out the voices of the people and determines who is able to run for political office, who has the ability to win elections and, most importantly, it has created a legal bribery system that controls the entire legislative process. Most notable is when a senator fighting to pass legislation that would help ordinary people was defeated and when asked why he responded, “The lobbyists own this place.”

3. We have a constitution is so vaguely written the court too often disagrees on it's meaning. This allows uninformed pundits the leeway to interpreted it to mean

Continued on page A6

Speak softly and wield a big whistle!

Remember those Calgon commercials, where kids fighting, dogs barking and phones ringing overwhelm a mom? At the end of her rope, she begs Calgon to take her away. (I'm not exactly sure how a woman with that much going on would find the time for a bath that would help her relax and unwind. And what would happen to the kids and the dogs while she was in the bath?).

As a basketball coach, standing in the middle of a gym floor, competing with the sounds of bouncing balls, squeaking sneakers, kids screaming and parents barking instructions to pint-sized warriors, I am grateful for something much more valuable than bath soaps: the whistle. Blowing into it creates some semblance of order without shouting "BE QUIET!" or "Pay Attention!"

Shouting at the top of my lungs for everyone else to quiet down would be the ultimate hypocrisy. Besides, once I play the volume game with kids (the loudest wins, the loudest gets attention, the loudest must be right), I'm fighting a losing battle. My children and their friends can and will reach decibel levels I couldn't imagine if they think the game is a volume standoff.

In the last week, I've had several occasions

to make effective use of that small piece of tin that demands attention and loosens the steely resolve of 6-year-olds who are as eager to listen to me during a game as they are to do extra credit for homework.

Some examples might amplify — if you will — my appreciation for the only thing standing between me and a "Lord of the Flies" world on the basketball court.

Before every practice, the boys take as many shots as possible at the two baskets in our gym. When it's time to start, I wrap my lips around my whistle and tell my daughter — who often offers to help with her younger brother's practices — to back up so I don't hurt her ears.

SCREECH! Translation: "Stop dribbling the ball and let's start practice."

One of my son's teammates recently camped out on the offensive end while his teammates played short-handed defense.

SCREEEEEEECCCHHH! Translation: "Hey, Joey, get down here and play the other half of this game or I'll replace you with someone who wants to play!"

Then there's the time three teammates were fighting with each other for the ball.

All of them made their own version of the

The whistle loosens the steely resolve of 6-year-olds as eager to listen to me as they are to do extra credit for homework.

it's-my-ball-get-away-from-me face.

SCREECH! SCREECH! SCREECH! (with some urgency). "Hey, cut it out! We're on the same team. Spread out so he can pass it to you and then you can take a shot."

One of the players was annoyed he couldn't get to the basket. Rather than pass, dribble away from tough defense, or take a difficult shot, he removed the obstruction — his opponent — by knocking him hard to the floor before taking an open shot which, to his credit, he made.

SCREEEECCCH! SCREECH "Tom! Don't do that! That's a serious foul! The boxing class is down the hall to your right."

During practice, I suggested we put all the balls on the sidelines and play one-on-one tag. One of the kids insisted he wouldn't play because he didn't like it.

SCREECH! (Short burst. I held the longer bursts in case he demonstrated contin-

D. None of the above



BY DANIEL DUNAIEF
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ued defiance). "Fine, go sit with your parents until this exercise in man-to-man defense is over."

No, I don't need warm water and bath soaps to reduce the stress that comes with doing the equivalent of herding cats on a gym floor. Just give me my whistle and stand back. Now, if I could only get my wife and kids to let me use it in our house ...

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious Day

Grandparents are a pretty amazing group of humans. This past weekend, I took my granddaughter to see "Mary Poppins" at a matinee performance on Broadway and discovered that there were almost as many grandparents in the audience as children. And if they weren't all biological grandparents, then they were borrowed grown-ups of a "certain age."

The production puts together the best of Walt Disney offerings, with memorable, sing-along melodies, beautiful sets, great high-tech hijinks and appealing children in the cast. There is even a plot for adult sensibilities. My granddaughter is 8, and I kept my eye on her throughout the play, watching for signs of youthful restlessness. But she sat, riveted by the characters and action on stage, throughout the entire two-and-a-half hour performance. (There was an intermission, which we spent walking about and talking nonstop.)

One child sitting behind us, who looked to be about the same age, said loudly toward the climax of the second act, "I hate when they stop the play to sing!"

Grandparents are the magic generation.

I knew what she meant because I remember having that same reaction, when a cousin took me to see "An American in Paris" at Radio City Music Hall when I was 12. But my granddaughter seemed not to hear her and remained totally engrossed.

In many ways, children today are a lot more sophisticated than they were two generations ago. One reason, of course, is that they routinely see almost everything on television and on computer screens. Their conversations are peppered with allusions we never even imagined at their age. They also have learned to sit for long periods and watch performances. And their parents, our children, probably expose them to more events in this age of globalization than our parents ever could. I remember what a big deal it was when I was taken to a movie. There was no television until I was 10.

There is another advantage that young children enjoy today. Most children have grandparents. This is a remarkable fact

to my generation. When I was a child, people simply did not live as long, and so lots of children never knew their grandparents. And grandparents are the magic generation: we can spoil without consequences, we seldom have to scold, we can love unconditionally without tempering love with discipline. In some ways, we are children's genies or fairy godmothers — buying things for them or taking them places they would otherwise not experience.

And there is a more serious side. Because grandparents today are often healthier and more vigorous, they can more readily step in and serve as surrogate parents in times of emergency.

For example, a friend has just assumed the care and responsibility of raising her 3-year-old grandson. Her son, who is a single parent, has fallen ill and cannot care for his child. Indeed, she is facing the prospect of having to care eventually for them both. Fortunately she is a loving and vigorous woman in good health as she approaches 60, and seems

to have accepted her new responsibilities.

Past generations have sometimes found themselves having to step into the role of parents to their grandchildren as well. Lucky are the grandchildren in that situation today, however, because the probability is that their grandparents are more energetic and robust for the task.

Do you who are of that "certain age" remember what children's bedtime is like? How easily today could you get on your knees to give that pre-bedtime bath? Corral a toddler to sit at the dinner table? Summon the patience to get him finally to fall asleep?

There are more resources available now for the task at hand, which certainly makes life easier for all the generations. This is especially true for grandmothers, who today commonly have jobs and careers, assuring more adequate finances.

A couple I know, who had been planning their retirement in the glorious southwest for the last 20 years, have now retired and switched tracks by committing themselves to a major role in the

Between you and me



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lives of their son's twins. Also a single parent, their son was wildly outnumbered by his children and without any childcare experience or resources. Thanks to pensions and good will, together they cope.

So grandparents aren't the same as they were in past generations. And that will certainly have an effect on today's grandchildren, I thought to myself as I looked around the Broadway theater, jammed with children and white-haired adults, all waiting for the magic carpet to unfurl and carry us, for a couple of hours, to a different world.

And by the way, I have discovered the true identity of Mary Poppins. She's grandma.

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