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**The Leader**

*The Leading News Source for Long Island's Gold Coast Communities.*

Vol. 79 No. 12 February 26, 2026

Locust Valley, New York 11560

www.theleaderonline.com

\$1.00



Photo: Patricia Brexel

*The blizzard of 2026 started on Sunday, February 22nd. Snow continued to fall thru Monday afternoon. Many areas of Long Island received over 2 feet of snow, with wind gusts up to 59 MPH. Schools were closed for two days.*



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# Luxury Properties Presented by Regina Rogers



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## Plum Island, 1954-2026: A Requiem

**BY RUPERT DEEDES**

About 20 years ago, *The Leader* ran a front-page picture of a mangled body of a strange dead animal swept ashore near Oyster Bay.

The story accompanying the picture suggested that more than a few residents believed the dead animal was the subject of experiments at Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC).

In all likelihood it was not, but rumors surrounding the high-security facility on the island have accompanied it since it was built more than seven decades ago.

Research at PIADC has been phased out, and will come to an end at the end of 2026, when the last of the lab activities will be transferred to the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kansas.

US Congressman Nick LaLota (R-NY1) has been a leader in researching and supporting an environmentally-sound solution to the Plum Island decommissioning.

Here we provide a brief history of the island and plans for its future, followed by a detailed timeline of all the important developments and events on the island from pre-Revolutionary days until today.

### The Island

Plum Island is an 840-acre island in the Long Island Sound, just off Long Island's North Fork (New York), a short distance from Connecticut. It has been federally owned since the 19th century and was long home to the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), a research laboratory focused on foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease.

The facility was established in 1954

and operated at Biosafety Level 3Ag, authorized to handle certain livestock pathogens. PIADC is slated to close as its functions are transferred to the National Bio and Agro Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kansas, a transition continuing through 2028. All research work on the island will end by the end of 2026

**Beyond its scientific role, Plum Island has significant historical and ecological value:**

**Ecology:** Over 200 bird species — nearly one-quarter of North America's — have been observed there. Endangered species like the piping plover and important seal haul-out sites are found on the island.

**History:** Fort Terry (a coastal defense and research site) and the Plum Island Lighthouse, both on the National Register of Historic Places, reflect 19th- and 20th-century military and maritime heritage.

**Transition, Cleanup, and Research Legacy**

As PIADC winds down operations, the focus is increasingly on what comes next. The closure of a high-security research facility raises both practical and environmental questions:

**Cleanup:** The facility's infrastructure — including old laboratories and support buildings — will need environmental remediation to address contamination from decades of animal disease research and laboratory operations. The 2020 law that blocked the sale of the island directed DHS to fund cleanup activities, but full environmental restoration will be a long-term task.

**Reuse of infrastructure:** There is ongoing planning and discussion about how to repurpose structures on the

island once research ends. Ideas range from ecological research hubs to historic preservation, but no final consensus yet exists.

As the island transitions away from federal biosecurity operations, state, local, and advocacy stakeholders are preparing for a post-lab future — but cleanup, regulatory compliance, and environmental monitoring remain essential prerequisites before opening the island to wider public use.

**Federal Legislation and Congressional Action**

In 2008, Congress passed a law requiring Plum Island to be sold at public auction to help finance the new NBAF facility in Kansas. This triggered decades of conservation opposition. In 2020, Congress amended that law to block the sale to private parties and direct the federal government to offer the island first to other federal, state, or local agencies. The law also provided \$18.9 million for contamination cleanup.

**Current Legislative Efforts**

Several bills introduced in the 118th and 119th Congresses (2023–2025) aim to define Plum Island's long-term future:

**A. Plum Island National Monument Act (House)**

Introduced by Rep. Nick LaLota and others, this bill has been reported out of committee and would direct the U.S. Department of the Interior to conduct a



Congressman Nick LaLota (courtesy US Congress)

resource study and move toward establishing Plum Island as a national monument.

**B. Plum Island Preservation Act (Senate)**

Sponsored by Senators Richard Blumenthal, Chuck Schumer, Chris Murphy, and Kirsten Gillibrand, this bill would permanently protect the island from development and require a formal management plan developed with stakeholders. It has been introduced and considered by Senate committees but has not yet advanced to final passage.

**C. Plum Island Preservation Study Act**

A companion measure passed, requiring a special resource study by DOI to evaluate Plum Island's national significance and suitability for designa-

(Continued page)

## Bruce Blakeman Officially Nominated for NYS Governor

**BY LEADER STAFF**

Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman has been officially nominated as the Republican Party and Conservative Party candidate for Governor of the State of New York.

Blakeman will face the beleaguered incumbent Governor Kathy Hochul, who is seeking the Democratic Party and socialist Working Families Party nominations, but faces a Democratic primary election being waged against her by her own Lt. Governor, Antonio Delgado.

Hochul got a "boost" recently, as the socialist antisemite Mayor of New York City, Zohran Mamdani, embraced Hochul's reelection. Mamdani distinguished himself this week by denouncing the death of Iranian dictator Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who murdered over 200,000 people - mostly innocent protestors - seeking freedom in Iran.

"I am honored to officially be the Republican and Conservative Party candidate for Governor of New York and

am grateful to Chairman Cox, Chairman Kassar and all of the delegates who share our vision for a more affordable state," stated Blakeman. "While Kathy



Bruce Blakeman



Kathy Hochul

Hochul drives up taxes and sends electricity bills soaring, we are building the coalition that will win statewide in November and restore common-sense leadership to Albany."

Blakeman is running on his strong record of fighting crime, protecting women and children, and reducing taxes in Nassau County. With over 1.5 million residents, Nassau County is New York's most prosperous and second largest by population suburban county in New York.

## Glen Cove Mayor, Red Cross Aid House Fire Victims

**BY LEADER STAFF**

A raging house fire at 5 Beverly Road in Glen Cove brought out seven local fire departments - and both Mayor Pam Panzenbeck and Deputy Mayor Donna McNaughton were on the scene to assist the rescue efforts.

On February 25, 2026 at 10:50 AM, the Glen Cove Volunteer Fire Department got an emergency call of a residential house fire at 5 Beverly Road, a two story private dwelling.

There was one occupant inside the residence at the time of the fire, who was transported by Glen Cove EMS for smoke inhalation. There were no firefighter injuries.

Over 60 volunteer firefighters, including mutual aid partners, responded to the scene.



Pam Panzenbeck

Responding were 4 Engines and 3 Ladders under the leadership of Chief Justin Valeo, along with Chiefs Sujeski and Grella.

The fire was brought under control at approximately 11:30 AM, and firefighters remained on scene for nearly two hours to secure the smoldering structure.

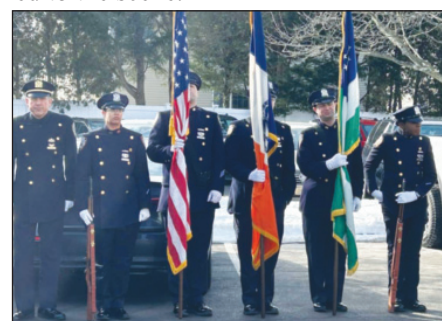
Fire Departments from Sea Cliff, Glenwood, Roslyn, East Norwich, and Jericho all provided backup and personnel to assist in dousing the raging fire in Glen Cove.

With the house gutted by fire, one resident has been displaced.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation by the Nassau County Fire Marshal's Office.

"Our members, along with our mutual aid departments, responded quickly and worked aggressively to bring this fire under control," stated Glen Cove Fire Chief Justin Valeo. "Their training, teamwork, and commitment to protecting Glen Cove were on full display. I am extremely proud of every member who answered the call."

Mayor Pam Panzenbeck and Deputy Mayor Donna McNaughton were present on scene to assist with coordination of support services, including Red Cross assistance.



Glen Cove Fire Department (courtesy GCFD)

## Editorial

### A JUST WAR - THE LIBERATION OF IRAN

This newspaper has openly called for the liberation of Iran - and the removal of the Ayatollahs' terrorist dictatorship that has ruled there since 1979.

President Trump is now acting - in one of the boldest initiatives in modern history - to finally rid the world of the Ayatollah terror regime - and give the 90 million Iranians their freedom, self determination and their country back.

The Ayatollahs have threatened America with nuclear war - and made "Death to America" the national creed.

After less than a week of US heavy precision air strikes, the Ayatollah regime is toppling, with most of its leaders killed, and the sinews of its power - the infrastructure, enforcers and thugs of the Revolutionary Guard - bombed out and decimated.

Soon, very soon, the bombing campaign will stop, and the Iranian people will emerge to finish the job: arresting and executing the murderers who have butchered and oppressed the people of Iran.

Soon, very soon, Iran will choose a new way forward - whether that is a liberal constitutional monarchy under Reza Pahlavi, the son of the late Shah, or some other form of democratic government.

But the age of fanaticism and blood-letting of the Ayatollahs' "Islamic Republic" will be gone forever.

President Trump deserves great praise: he faced down the critics and appeasers who would have left 90 million people suffering under the thrall of a despotic tyranny that threatened the entire world with nuclear terror. And he acted decisively and humanely.

Those people marching in the streets, shouting and opposing Trump - many of them financed and organized by the Communist Chinese - are "useful idiots" aiding and abetting murderous dictatorships.

NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani is one of the worst - smiling like a jackel while millions of innocent people were arrested, tortured, raped and murdered by the Ayatollahs. But now opposing all efforts to stop that tyranny. He is himself an evil monster.

We are at a turning point in the history of the world: Let us finish-off the Islamist dictatorship in Iran for good - and start a new era of moderation and prosperity in the Middle East and the world.

*The Publisher*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: We encourage our readers to express their view regardless of opinion, through the Letters to the Editor column. Letters published represent the viewpoint of our readers. *They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Leader* and, in fact, may be of opposite viewpoint. Letters should be typed and mailed or emailed to the editor's attention. Letters will be edited for length, clarity and accuracy. All letters should be signed and contain author's address and telephone number for verification. Although it is discouraged, we will withhold an author's name if the subject matter is sensitive or the writer may be subject to intimidation or harassment. Letters that contain accusations or important "facts" must demonstrate knowledge in the area described or show evidence for their writing. *The Leader* will not return letters and reserves the right to publish them at a later time or not at all, due to lack of space or editor's discretion.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The Leader* has received several unsigned letters to the editor. We will respect an author's request for anonymity, but must have your name, address, and phone number. We want to hear from you and publish your opinions, so in the future, kindly include the above requested information.

### VOTING MATTERS

*To the Editor;*

The president pointed out that the system was broken (he was right) and that he was the only person who could fix it. Many people believed him. Well, he's looking to replace it rather than fix it.

What can save democracy? We can. Dwight Eisenhower said: "There is nothing wrong with America that the faith, love of freedom, intelligence, and energy of her citizens cannot cure." We the people have been given the power by the founders, but we have to vote as if we care about proper representation. We must hold Congress accountable to look out for our welfare.

The people in Congress have to understand that lobbyists and corporations didn't elect them. If they're not representing the people, they're not doing their jobs.

I understand that people typically vote according to party philosophies, but I should point out that Congress has abandoned those philosophies and focuses on job security. We must show them that the people determine their job security. In 2026 we have to restore the system of checks and balances which is critical to the survival of our democracy. This time, you can't be complacent and just vote a straight party line. Look into the candidates.

If the current situation continues for another 3 years, there may not be any way to repair the damage. The 2026 election is the most important election of our lives. Your children and grandchildren are depending on you.

Charles Gueli

**NANCY GUTHRIE,  
BE PRAYERFUL, BE ALERT**

*To the Editor;*

By the time you read this there will hopefully be good news about Nancy Guthrie. Our nation has prayed for her, her famous daughter, Savannah, and her family.

The abduction of this beautiful, charming 84-year-old woman is alarming and very concerning to us all. Nancy Guthrie is known as a sweet, beautiful church going lady. Millions of us have been introduced to her via national television. We feel like we know her and Savannah as they have been welcomed into our homes via television for many years.

We have asked the question "Why would someone do this to such a wonderful elderly lady?" The best answer seems to be for money. Savannah Guthrie makes millions each year as anchor of the Today show. She would appear to be a deep well for cash. Sadly,

it might not necessarily be for cash. People seemingly kidnap and kill others for no apparent reason. Some people kill others simply because they want to kill someone. Yes, it's a horrific thought, but we know it's true.

Nancy Guthrie's kidnapping is a frightening reminder that no one is ever beyond becoming a victim of a crime. Just because you are good and kind does not make you immune from being the target of evil. Evil doesn't care who you are, how religious you are or how nice you are to others. An evil person will rob, hurt and kill even the very best of people. This crime reminds us that you are never totally safe, wherever you may live. You may live in a small town, a rural community or in a gated, security filled place but evil people plot, scheme and look for a way. We can never be too careful.

Lights are important around your home. Bad people don't like the light. An evil person loves darkness more than light. The lighter the better. A barking, biting dog makes intruders think twice. A barking dog is like a big alarm going off. Bad people don't like alarms. Be safe entering your home late in the evening. This is where light and a dog help. A handgun in your pocket also helps. Have the handgun in your hand and the safety off. If someone comes at you from out the bushes then protect yourself. If someone is waiting on you in your house and have your gun in hand, you can defend yourself against the evil perpetrator. Security cameras can be great for catching people later but they may not prevent anyone from attacking you.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We all hope and pray this happens to no one, but it does. It happened to Nancy Guthrie and none of us are immune.

In 2024, 533,936 persons were reported missing in the United States. 203,330 were over the age of 18. Be prayerful for Nancy Guthrie and be alert.

Dr. Glenn Mollette

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*The North Shore*  
**Leader**

TEL: 516-676-1434  
news@theleaderonline.com  
advertising@theleaderonline.com

Lally Communications, Inc.  
Publisher

**TIM MAGUIRE**  
*Editor*

**MAUREEN DALY**  
*Managing Editor*

*Reporter*  
**NIALL FITZGERALD**

*Copy Subscription*  
**ORIT KEMPNER**

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*Reporter*  
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## Op-Ed: ICE Withdraws from Minneapolis; Illegal Immigration is Winning

By STEVE LEVY

The Democrats' scheme over the last decade has been to flood the nation with as many illegal immigrants as possible, with the hope that, in the end, Independents and soft Republicans would cave and eventually accede to the overwhelming majority of these individuals being allowed to stay in America.

Their gamble might have cost them an election in the short term, but it is likely to win them big time in the long run.

The withdrawal of ICE troops in Minneapolis sends the message to Democrats and to the radicals that, if they just disrupt enough and create enough chaos in the streets, the establishment and those seeking law and order will ultimately back down to the insurrectionists.

In a previous op-ed, I warned Republicans not to become the Democrats' useful idiots in the left's quest to remake America into a socialist nation by integrating tens of millions of illegal aliens into our system.

Unfortunately, many Republicans started touting the legalization of undocumented immigrants who have not committed further crimes after their illegal entry.

The same retreat was heard from Governor J. Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma and Florida Congress members Carlos Jimenez and Maria Elvira Salazar.

They will rue the day that they caved to this blackmail. As noted by Peter Schweitzer in his book, *Invisible Coup*, three-fourths of incoming illegal immigrants associate with the government expansionist policies of liberal Democrats and vote accordingly. They have been providing Democrats with the large majority of their votes since the Clinton political team began a concerted effort to add 1.2 million new voters for the 1996 election by weakening the



Steve Levy

usual standards for citizenship.

When Democrats get control of the presidency and both chambers, they will quickly legalize these millions of illegal border crossers and make them a significant voting bloc that will make it exceedingly difficult for Republicans to retake power in the foreseeable future.

The great Professor Victor Davis Hanson wrote a poignant article on how Democrats purposely create chaos when Republicans control the presidency in order to create an unsettling mood within the public, which doesn't like messy

situations.

The Mid-American citizen wants peace and calm, and will tend to vote for the party out of power with the hope that they will restore it.

That was the modus operandi in 2020, when Democrats created such incredible havoc in the streets after the George Floyd murder, knowing that the public would revolt and seek a change in the presidency to restore order.

This is counterintuitive, of course, since it was the Democrats themselves who caused the chaos. But just like we see with the affordability issue, it's the party in power that will be blamed

Normally, a plot hatched by Democrats to fundamentally change America by importing tens of millions of illegal aliens would be stifled by public outrage. But we are not in normal times. There is no longer a non-partisan fourth estate. If we had a fair press, editorialists around the nation would eviscerate Democrats for trying to undermine the rule of law and basic American values.

But this is a press corps that has graduated from the same pro-Marxist colleges as have the leaders of the Democratic Party.

They see themselves at CNN and The New York Times, first and foremost as Team Blue. They have done everything they can to paint the insurrectionists in Minneapolis as the wholesome fighters for justice against the evil Gestapo agents at ICE.

The press also glorifies the brigades that harass and dox ICE officers. Could you imagine if a group of people started to monitor when police officers were going to raid the home of a drug dealer

and then gather their people to block the movement of the officers, get in their faces and create havoc to hamper the arrest of the drug dealer?

Even members of this press corps would call it outrageous.

But preventing illegal aliens, even those who committed crimes, from being deported, is touted as a public service.

The socialists who control our schools have now even indoctrinated our kids to bolt the classroom and march in opposition to our law enforcement agencies hired to protect them.

The Marxists in academia, teamed with the thousands of taxpayer-funded NGOs, radical activists judges and Team Blue media, have backed the Democrats' plan to keep the millions of illegals Biden welcomed in so that America is fundamentally moved toward a more socialistic utopia.

Mainstream America exhibited a valiant effort in fighting back, but it appears this withdrawal is a concession that the left is on its way to victory in their quest to remake America into a more socialist nation.

And when that happens, all those who affirmatively answered the poll stating ICE went too far will just have to accept that they surrendered the battle.

Steve Levy is president of *Common Sense Strategies*, a political consulting firm. He served as Suffolk County, New York, executive, as a New York state assemblyman and host of the "On the Right Side Podcast." He is the author of "Solutions to America's Problems" and "Bias in the Media." [www.SteveLevy.info](http://www.SteveLevy.info) @SteveLevyNY, [steve@commonsensestrategies.com](mailto:steve@commonsensestrategies.com).

## Long Island is Pizza Strong

By PATRICIA BREXEL

Wednesday, February 25th was Long Island Pizza Strong Day! \$5 from every pie sold that day went to the family of Nassau County Officer Patricia Espinosa.

Over 300 Pizzerias united to support a community effort of pizza against drunk driving. 100% of the proceeds will be given to her family.

The support was amazing, Ralph's Pizzeria in Bayville was packed with families enjoying delicious pizza, as Ralph's phone was ringing off the hook for more orders. All the Pizzerias that participated, some as far as North Carolina, were very busy with patrons who were more than happy to support



Keeping up with the orders at Ralph's Pizzeria.

her family, and eat delicious pizza.

Nassau County Police Officer Patricia Espinosa, 42, was tragically killed on Saturday, January 31, 2026, when a suspected drunk driver hit her vehicle on Route 347 in Suffolk County, while she was on her way to work. She is survived by her husband and a young daughter.



Nassau County Legislature Samantha Goetz with family and friends supporting the cause.

## Albertson-Roslyn Heights Republican Club

Our 1st meeting of 2026 will be  
Tuesday, March 10th, 2026  
starting at 7:00 pm at the

Williston American Legion, Post 144,  
730 Willis Ave., Williston Park, NY 11596.

Our guest speaker will be

**Elaine Phillips**

Nassau County Comptroller



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## Raynham Hall Seeking Local Artists Inspired by "We the People..."



The United States Constitution (courtesy the White House)

**BY LEADER STAFF**

The Raynham Hall Museum is looking for artistic submissions, inspired by the opening lines of the United States Constitution.

The finalists will be exhibited at Raynham Hall under the "We the

People" exhibition from April 23-August 20, 2026.

This year's exhibition is inspired by the 250th anniversary of the 1776 founding of the United States of America, and it is Raynham Hall's third annual Call for Artists to submit their works.

Artists from Long Island and New York City are invited to submit entries for Raynham's upcoming exhibition. A panel of local experts will select the artworks included in the show, and the opening reception will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2026.

"We the People" are the three opening words of the Constitution, that place the power of the United States not in a

monarch, nor even in individual states, but in its citizens.

The US Constitution reads: "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America..."

"The original promise of those words was eloquent and evocative — yet from the start, that promise was only partly true," stated Raynham Hall in a press release. "The story of the United States is one of continual redefinition, as peo-

ple of many backgrounds have claimed their place and pushed the nation toward its ideals of a more just and equitable society."

"Shifts in our population continue to fuel ongoing debate over who may be recognized as a citizen," added the Raynham press release. "We invite artists to respond to these tensions and possibilities, and to explore through their work what 'We the People' means today."

For more information on entering your artwork, please visit Raynham Hall's website at: <https://raynhamhall-museum.org/exhibitions/>.

The deadline for entry is Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

## Friends of the Bay Kicks Off Project to Restore Clams



Clams seedling

Friends of the Bay has initiated the Re-Clam the Bay project to help restore a healthy clam population in Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor.

Over the past decade, our local waters have experienced a drastic decline in clam and oyster populations.

The goal of the Oyster Bay-based nonprofit organization, working with the Town of Oyster Bay, is to stock the town's newly designated and protected shellfish sanctuary areas with locally sourced adult hard clams. These clams will never be harvested and left to spawn and help repopulate our bays.

The group is trying to raise funds to purchase the clams. One hundred percent of the donations received will go to

the Re-Clam the Bay project.

Donors can pay \$50 to buy a full bushel of 100 clams, purchase a partial bag or multiple bags. For more information and to donate visit [www.friendsofthebay.org/re-clam-the-bay](http://www.friendsofthebay.org/re-clam-the-bay).

Friends of the Bay is focusing on clams because they have a higher survival rate than oysters but are also highly effective at filtering water.

Funds raised for the project will be used to buy locally sourced clams through wholesaler Captree Clam Seafood Company.

For two years, during two days in the spring and two days in the fall, the adult clams will be spread over the new town-designated shellfish sanctuaries in Oyster Bay, Cold Spring Harbor and Mill Neck Creek.

"We're excited to be spearheading this project that will hopefully be a win-win for everyone involved and the environment," said Christine Suter, Friends of the Bay executive director.

Friends of the Bay will host a kickoff event at the Oyster Bay Brewing Company located at 36 Audrey Ave., on Friday, March 6, from 5 to 7 p.m.

For more information, contact Christine Suter at 516-922-6666 or visit [www.friendsofthebay.org](http://www.friendsofthebay.org).

## Waterfront Center Hires Coach Zach Runci for Sailing School

**BY LEADER STAFF**

The Waterfront Center in Oyster Bay has announced that Coach Zach Runci has joined the WaterFront Center's High School Sailing coaching staff.

Runci recently served as Head Sailing Coach at Fordham University, after nearly ten years leading the SUNY Maritime College sailing program. He brings more than a decade of collegiate and youth coaching experience to the Waterfront Center.

During his tenure at SUNY Maritime, Runci's teams qualified for numerous ICSA National Championships across multiple disciplines, including two Top-5 national finishes, and dozens of Academic All-American distinctions.

"Youth sailing has always been central to Zach's coaching career," stated the Waterfront Center in a press release. "Since 2011, he has coached with the Bellport Bay Sailing Foundation, where he currently serves as Head Race Coach. Under his leadership, Bellport junior sailors have consistently dominated the GSBYRA league, winning multiple team trophies and most recently sweeping the podium in the 2025 Grand Prix Championship Series."



Coach Zach Runci out on the water (courtesy the WFC)

Runci is a graduate of Old Dominion University, where he competed in the ICSA for four years and helped qualify his team for four Open National Championship events.

He remains an active competitor in one-design and team racing and has won multiple Grade 3 match racing regattas through Oakcliff Sailing Center.

"Coach Runci's experience at the highest levels of collegiate sailing, combined with his dedication to youth racing and athlete mentorship, makes him an incredible addition to our High School Sailing program," added the Waterfront Center. "We are confident that his leadership will strengthen our competitive pathway and inspire our student-athletes both on and off the water."

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## Plum Island, 1954-2026: A Requiem, Continued

(Continued from page 3)

tion as a protected unit — a key step before full preservation legislation is enacted. This study bill received bipartisan support and movement in the Senate.

**Status:** No final, signed law yet designating Plum Island's ultimate status, but the study requirement and ongoing proposals demonstrate strong congressional movement toward preservation rather than sale.

### Positions of State and Local Governments

#### New York and Connecticut Delegations

Lawmakers from both states have been consistent advocates for preservation. New York's senators (Schumer and Gillibrand) and Connecticut's

(Blumenthal and Murphy) are cosponsors of preservation legislation, emphasizing ecological value, historical heritage, and regional identity.

#### Local Governments

Suffolk County (NY) officials have held discussions with federal agencies about assuming stewardship or playing a significant role in future management. Conservation groups and county leaders broadly support permanent protection.

No state governments oppose preservation; rather, the dominant local preference is toward conservation, public access, and historical tourism rather than development.

#### Evolving Vision for Plum Island's Future

Based on current legislative and

advocacy activity, the emerging expectations for Plum Island include:

#### Protected Natural Area

##### Most proposals envision:

- Permanent conservation status (e.g., national monument, wildlife refuge)

- Ecological restoration and habitat management

- Public access for hiking, bird-watching, education, and tourism

This contrasts sharply with earlier plans to sell the island to the highest private bidder.

#### Integrated Stewardship

**Discussions include shared stewardship models involving:**

- Federal agencies (DOI, Fish and Wildlife Service)

- State and local governments (e.g., Suffolk County)

- Nonprofit conservation organizations

Different groups might manage different aspects — natural resources, historic buildings, research facilities — in coordinated plans.

#### Preservation + Interpretation

**Beyond simple protection, advocates propose:**

- Visitor facilities

- Educational interpretation of the island's biological research history and ecological value

- Historical preservation of Fort Terry and other landmarks

These would make the island a living

laboratory of nature and history once biosecurity operations have ceased.

#### Remaining Uncertainties

Despite strong momentum for preservation:

- Legislation has not yet been signed into law to establish permanent status.

- A final management plan and timeline await completion of mandated studies and political consensus.

- Cleanup and environmental assessments will likely shape what uses are feasible and safe.

- Funding commitments and administrative arrangements among federal/state/local bodies remain unresolved.

#### In Sum

Plum Island's future is moving away from decades as a high-security federal lab toward conservation and public use. Congress has blocked private sale, mandated studies, and is actively debating preservation legislation.

The New York and Connecticut delegations support protecting it as ecological and historic treasure rather than allowing development. Cleanup and environmental restoration are essential precursors to any broader use. What is emerging is a bipartisan, multi-agency effort to transform Plum Island into a managed conservation and heritage space, with ongoing legislative, administrative, and ecological work continuing into the next several years.

## Plum Island: A History



The Plum Island Animal Disease Research Center (courtesy DHS)

BY RUPERT DEEDES

The history of Plum Island is rich and varied, with changing times, historical context, and national challenges changing the use of the island and its purpose.

**Here are highlights of the Island's history:**

**Colonial Background, 1640s–1700s:** Plum Island is incorporated into English colonial land grants on Long Island's North Shore. The island is used mainly for grazing livestock, fishing access, and maritime navigation reference American Revolution, 1775–1783: No major battle occurs on the island, but it sits inside a strategic maritime corridor between Long Island, Connecticut, and New England ports British Naval Control, 1776–1783: After occupying New York City, British forces dominate Long Island Sound. Plum Island was likely used for naval observation, anchorage, and patrol support.

It also served as part of Britain's blockade network against colonial shipping.

**1783–1812:** The island is returned to private use, and is mostly used for agricultural and maritime business. There is no permanent federal presence on the island.

**War of 1812:** The British fleets again control Long Island Sound, and the vulnerability of eastern Long Island becomes clear. This leads directly to later

coastal fortification planning.

**1815–1880s:** The island is privately owned and used for fishing stations, small farms, and navigation markers. No major infrastructure is built on the island.

**Strategic Reassessment (late 1800s):** The rise of steel warships and long-range artillery increase U.S. fears naval attacks on New York and New England.

**Spanish–American War as a Catalyst (1898):** The War exposes weakness of U.S. coastal defenses. Congress authorizes major harbor fortifications.

**Establishment of Fort Terry.** In 1899 the U.S. Army acquires Plum Island, and Fort Terry is constructed as part of the "Endicott System." The purpose of the fort was to protect Long Island Sound, the approaches to New London, and the eastern routes to New York Harbor.

**Infrastructure (1899–1915):** The first fifteen years of the 20th Century saw the building on the island of concrete gun batteries, ammunition depots, barracks, searchlight stations, and submarine mine controls.

**Early 20th Century Military Role, 1900–1918:** The island is manned by the United States Army, which places large-caliber artillery on the island to help guard shipping lanes.

**Interwar Decline, 1920s–1930s:** Following the First World War, the fortifications on the island became obsolete as new aircraft and submarines reduce usefulness of shore facilities. The Army's garrison on the island is reduced.

**World War II Reactivation, 1939–1945:** Fort Terry reactivated, and anti-submarine defenses, radar and coastal surveillance, and training facilities are built.

**Postwar Demilitarization, 1946–1951:** The coastal artillery deemed is deemed obsolete, and the Army abandons most installations, allowing the buildings on the island to deteriorate.

#### Cold War & Biological Security Concerns

**Early 1950s:** Growing fear of Soviet biological warfare, agricultural sabotage, and livestock epidemics lead to the U.S. government reconsideration of the island's usefulness.

Selection for Biological Research,

(Continued on page 8)

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# Plum Island: A History Continued

(Continued from page 7)

**1952:** Federal government selects Plum Island for high-containment research for its natural isolation, military security legacy, distance from major cities, and existing, if dilapidated, infrastructure.

Transfer to Civilian Agency, 1954: Control of the island is transferred to the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA establishes the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC).

The mission of PIADC was the study foreign animal diseases, especially Foot-and-mouth disease, African swine fever, and Rinderpest – and protect U.S. livestock industry.

The lab was built on top of—rather than replacing—the abandoned military base.

## The Biolab Era (1954–Present)

Establishment and Early Years (1954–1970s): The Opening of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), operated by the United States Department of Agriculture. PIADC’s primary mission is defined as studying “foreign animal diseases” not present in the United States, especially foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

PIADC, a high-containment labs (pre-BSL system, later BSL-3/4-equivalent) becomes the U.S. only large-scale FMD research site.

**Cold War Context (1960s–1980s):** Work at PIADC focused on vaccine development, diagnostics, and emergency response. The lab also served as part of national defense against agricultural bioterrorism and state-sponsored sabotage of the U.S. food system.

**Post-Cold War Expansion (1990s–2001):** The research at the lab is expanded to include African swine fever, classical swine fever, and Rift Valley fever, and there is an increased collaboration with universities and state agencies. But the aging infrastructure is becoming a growing problem.

Homeland Security Era (2003–2015). In 2003 the control of the lab is transferred to the Department of Homeland Security, and the mission expanded to include terrorism-related bio-threats, agro-terrorism scenarios.

Security at the lab has also increased

to include armed patrols, restricted airspace, and upgraded perimeter systems.

Decline and Drawdown (2015–2025). The age of the facility is catching up with it. The facilities become increasingly obsolete, leading to rising maintenance costs – and to the gradual transfer of functions to mainland sites.

By early 2020s the core research at the lab is largely phased out, and the island is heading toward closure,

Safety and Containment Incidents at Plum Island (1954–2020s)

Over the years, there have been several safety accidents, and less severe incidents, on the island.

The lab on the island did not experience a catastrophic mass-release event, but it accumulated a significant record of containment lapses, infrastructure failures, and compliance problems, especially from the 1980s onward.

## 1. 1978 Foot-and-Mouth Disease Containment Breach (wastewater System)

Date: 1978 (internal USDA documentation; later referenced in GAO reviews)

Issue: Inadequate effluent sterilization

PIADC’s wastewater decontamination system was designed to chemically treat liquid waste before discharge. In 1978, inspectors determined that certain effluent streams bypassed full sterilization; monitoring systems were not consistently calibrated; and treatment records were incomplete.

The concern was not that FMD escaped and caused an outbreak — it did not — but that effluent controls were technically insufficient for the pathogen risk level being handled.

The problem triggered system redesign and procedural reform in the late 1970s.

## 2. 1990s: Infrastructure Decay and GAO Warnings

Key period: 1993–2003

Oversight body: U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Multiple GAO and Inspector General reports identified cracked containment seals; deteriorated negative-pressure systems; corroded waste pipes; and roof leaks above laboratory zones

A 2003 GAO review warned that parts

of the facility were “approaching structural failure,” and that containment reliability depended heavily on manual vigilance rather than engineering redundancy.

This was not a single dramatic event, but a systemic vulnerability: a high-containment lab operating inside mid-20th-century retrofits of early 20th-century military buildings.

## 3. 2004–2005 Power and Ventilation Failures

Dates: August 2004; January 2005

Agency in charge at the time:

After transfer from USDA to DHS in 2003, the facility experienced backup generator failures during storms; temporary loss of negative-pressure containment; and emergency activation of manual sealing procedures.

No pathogen release was documented, but the episode demonstrated that redundant power systems were aging; ventilation integrity was not fail-safe; and that severe weather posed systemic risk.

This became part of the policy argument for relocating high-risk animal disease research inland.

## 4. 2008 Flooding and Storm Intrusion

Date: 2008 (storm-related flooding)

Plum Island’s coastal siting created exposure to storm surges; basement flooding; and saltwater corrosion.

Flooding affected lower mechanical spaces that supported containment systems. Although pathogen zones remained intact, the event reinforced the vulnerability of a coastal, aging facility in an era of intensifying storms.

## 5. Occupational Safety Complaints (1980s–1990s)

Former workers alleged inconsistent respirator enforcement; incomplete vaccination compliance; and poor carcass disposal procedures.

Some complaints were documented in internal reviews. None established deliberate misconduct, but they revealed a workplace culture that was stretched by budgetary and structural limits.

Assessment of Plum Island Incidents

Plum Island’s pattern was not catastrophic release but chronic engineering fragility.

Its vulnerabilities were related to infrastructure age; environmental exposure; deferred modernization; and heavy reliance on procedural compliance.

It never experienced a massive accident like the April 1979 accidental release of anthrax spores at the Soviet biolab at Sverdlovsk— but it operated closer to its engineering limits than comparable modern facilities.

## COVID-19 and the Modern Biolab Safety Debate

The safety incidents which had accompanied the Plum Island facility since its inception were echoed in the debate over the origins of the COVID epidemic.

The controversy over the origins of COVID centers on the possible role of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the relationship between the research performed at the institute and the origins of COVID-19.

Regardless of where one comes down on this question of the origins of the epidemic, the debate highlighted structural issues that are directly relevant to Plum Island:

### Shared Risk Factors

Across Wuhan, Plum Island, and other high-containment labs:

- Work with novel/high-risk pathogens
- Human error
- Equipment failure
- Incentives to downplay incidents
- Political sensitivity

The COVID debate made visible something specialists already knew: No biocontainment system is zero-risk.

### Institutional Transparency

One of the central criticisms in the COVID debate was:

- China delayed access to records
  - China restricted inspections
  - China limited disclosure
- This contrasts with (imperfect but real) mechanisms in the U.S.:

- GAO investigations
- Congressional hearings
- Media reporting
- FOIA information releases

Plum Island benefited from these, even when they were uncomfortable.

(Continued on page 10)

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## Obituaries

**APRILE**, Claudette C. of Glen Cove, NY on February 19, 2026 at Age 87. Beloved wife of the late Radames. Loving mother of Marcelo, Marcio and Marcos. Proud grandmother of Gabriel, Lucas, Gabriela and Joao-Antonio. Claudette was an excellent cook whose meals brought comfort and joy to everyone around her.

Interment will be held in Brazil. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)



**ATSIDIS**, Nikolaos of Bayville, on February 18, 2026 at Age 88. Beloved husband of Maria. Loving father of Soula (George), John (Maria) and Michael. Proud grandfather of

Nicole, Themie, Stephanie, Niko and Nicky.

Donations may be made in his memory to All Saints Greek Orthodox Monastery. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)



**BATTAGLIA**, John M. of Glen Cove, NY on February 23, 2026 at Age 68. Beloved husband of Barbara. Loving father of

Michael (Kimberly) and Megan. Dear brother of Donna (Christopher), Christopher (Ramona) and the late Lisa. Also survived by several nieces and nephews. John was passionate about magic, collecting collectables, pins and music. Interment is Private. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**BRUENNER**, Georgette Kernell July 31, 1950 - February 14, 2026. Georgette Kernell Bruenner, 75, passed away February 14. Born in 1950, Georgette grew up in Port Washington, Long Island, the second of six children

of Mary and Joseph Kernell.

She graduated salutatorian of the Class of 1972 at Alfred University and earned her Masters in Human Genetics from Sarah Lawrence College in 2007.

Georgette married the love of her life, Eric Bruenner, in 1972 and is survived by him and their sons, David (Kate) and Eric (Jamie), and their grandchildren: Charlotte, James, and Ben.

Georgette had an interesting and diverse career including positions at the Boston Stock Exchange, and the New York Advertising Agency Wells, Rich, Greene, where she was the account executive for Alka-Seltzer. After raising her children, Georgette wrote for the Port Washington News. She later earned her masters degree and practiced as a genetic counselor at Brooklyn Hospital and Northwell Health.

A funeral service will be held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 9 Carlton Ave, Port Washington, NY on Saturday, February 28 at 11am.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Northwell Foundation online at <https://support.northwell.edu/donate-to-northwell-health> or to the Breakthrough T1D foundation online at <https://www.breakthrough1d.org>. [www.Whitting.com](http://www.Whitting.com)

**FUSCHETTO**, Cesare, Our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Cesare Fuschetto, 91, passed away peacefully on February 20, 2026, and entered into the presence of the Lord. A man of quiet strength, he taught us the value and joy of family. Whether he was tending to his garden, or just spending time with family, he lived a life full of joy. He dedicated his life to his family, teaching them the importance of prayer, integrity, and respect. He is survived by his beloved wife of 65 years, Maria, his daughter Anna (husband Jordan) and his son Antonino (wife Linda) and his many cherished grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was

preceded in death by his daughter Antoinette. Interment at Holy Rood Cemetery. [www.Whitting.com](http://www.Whitting.com)

**HENDERSON**, Paulette, died on January 29th, 2026, following an extended illness. Paulette was a graduate of Locust Valley High School and Cornell University. Much of her career was devoted to international education beginning with a two-year tour teaching French at a secondary school in Ghana. As part of a demonstration project at PS75 and other schools, Paulette taught ESL classes to parents who wanted to better understand how to support their children's progress. For several years, Paulette was an instructor in the International English Language Institute at Hunter College.

Paulette rose to the rank of Professor in the faculty of Borough of Manhattan Community College. Paulette earned a Doctorate in multilingual and multicultural studies from NYU based on the challenges and successes of students mastering English as a Second Language. Paulette is survived by her husband John Henderson, son Michael Henderson, and sister Hester Simpson. Interment was private. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**KUCZA**, Paul A., on February 18, 2026, age 86, of Oyster Bay, NY. Loving father Kathleen Miller (Walter Fremer), and Michael Kucza (Rosa). Cherished grandfather of Courtney Brennan (Nick), Sarah Senn (Cole), Julie Kucza, Michael Kucza Jr., and Peter Kucza. Proud great grandfather of Shane Brennan and Summer Senn. Dear brother of the late Joseph Kucza Jr., (Barbara) and Anna

Kiskorna (Anthony). Also survived by many loving relatives and friends. Interment Pinelawn Memorial Park. [www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com](http://www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com)

**LEONARD**, Rose of Locust Valley, NY on February 24, 2026 at Age 92. Beloved wife of the late William. Loving mother of Bill, Paul (Debra) and Rosemary (Larry). Proud grandmother of Nicole and Cassandra. Dear sister of the late Paul and Dom Tricarico. Also survived by loving nieces and nephews. Interment at Calverton National Cemetery. Donations may be made in her memory to your favorite charity. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**McCONIE**, James Stephen, on Feb. 18, 2026, age 86, of Bayville, NY. Beloved husband of the late Carol Jean. Loving Father of James, John, Jeffrey, Jay, and the late Jerry. Cherished grandfather of John, Colleen, Logan, Hunter, Skye, Kristen, and Michael. Dear brother of the late Ruth Pellegrino. Devoted companion his dog the late Buddy. Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends. In lieu of flowers donations in his memory can be made to Bayville Fire Co., #1. To donate you can send a tax deductible gift to: The Bayville Fire Company Attn: Fund drive, 258 Bayville Avenue, Bayville, NY 11709. [www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com](http://www.oysterbayfuneralhome.com)

**MOORE**, Joann, 66, of Coudersport, passed away Saturday, January 10, 2026, at UPMC-Cole, Coudersport, PA. Joann "Jo Jo" was born on May 17, 1959, in Glen Cove, and grew up in Oyster Bay, the daughter of the late Charles and

*(Continued on page 10)*

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## Obituaries Continued

(Continued from page 9)

Mary (Zwolinski) Moore. Joann is survived by a sister, Patricia Martini of Coudersport; a brother, Charles Moore Jr., of Long Island, and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, Joann was preceded in death by a sister, Deborah Bulck, a nephews, Billy Martini, and Billy Bulck.



**PIEPER,** Troy Gardiner of Muttontown, on February 23rd, 2026 at age 53. Beloved son of Karin and John "Joe". Loving brother of Damian (Kristin) and Kristina (Cole Trautmann). Dear uncle of Liam, Riley, Jack, Kellan and Bode.

Visitation at Dodge-Thomas Funeral Home of Glen Cove on Saturday, March 7th, 2026 from 10:00am - 1:00pm. Funeral Service at Dodge-Thomas Funeral Home on Saturday, March 7th, 2026 at 12:00pm. Interment is private. Following the Service, the family will hold a reception at Nassau Country Club: 30 St. Andrews Lane, Glen Cove.

Donations may be made in his memory to Wounded Warrior Project or Tunnel to Towers Foundation [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)



**PIETROFERE,** Nicholas A., lifelong resident of Glen Cove, on February 25th, 2026 at age 86. Devoted husband of the late Dorothy. Beloved father of Lori Pietroferre Pagnillo (Michael), Deborah Yanes (Cipriano) and Kim Thorne (Garry). Proud grandfather of Elizabeth (Mike), Tammy (Eddie), Amanda, Christle (P.J.), Nicholas, Brianna (Zach), Brenden and Skyler. Loving Great-grandfather of Marcus, Ariana, Derek, Madison, Emily, Adelaide, Brilynn, Roman and Theo. Dear brother of Joseph Pietroferre. Also survived by loving nieces and nephews. Nicholas worked for the City of Glen. Interment at Holy Rood Cemetery. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)



**PHILLIPS,** Joan V. of Glen Cove, on February 17, 2026 at Age 84. Beloved wife of Robert B. Loving mother of Suzanne. Founder of Animal Lovers League of Glen Cove. Interment at Locust Valley Cemetery. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**RODRIGUEZ,** Carol D., on February 12, 2026, age 77, of Bayville, NY. Loving mother of Veronica Ciampi (Joey), Victor (Diana), Vanessa Lagalante (John), Vinnie (Michelle), and Vito (Roussana). Cherished grandmother of Jaici, Devon, Junie, Justin, JT, Julia, Vito Jr., Michael, Nicolette, Jaida, Anthony, Gianna, Joseph "Jopop", and

Joey. Predeceased by her husband Horacio "Rey", from whom she had been long separated. Also survived by many loving relatives and friends.

Interment is private. [www.oysterbay-funeralhome.com](http://www.oysterbay-funeralhome.com)



**STOEHR,** John M. suddenly on February 5, 2026 at the young age of 33. He was a long-time resident of Locust Valley and more recently living in the East Side of NYC. John is survived by his beloved parents Barbara & Chris Stoehr, and his loving brother Christopher (JR) Stoehr, all of Locust Valley.

John was an active member of the Grenville Baker Boys & Girls Club. He graduated from Locust Valley High School, followed by a Bachelors Degree in Economics from the University of Michigan, a school he loved and re-visited each year to see his friends and attend football games. – Go Blue!

What we will miss most about John is his great sense of humor and the way he could liven up any gathering he was in. He was deeply loved and will be greatly missed by all his dear friends and family.

Arrangements entrusted to Dodge-Thomas Funeral Home, Glen Cove. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**SYMANSKI,** Diane H. – on Feb. 26, 2026, age 84, of Bayville, NY. Beloved wife of the late Mike. Loving mother of Michael Symanski, Karen Garces (Kenny Naughton), and the late Paul (Lisa). Cherished grandmother of Diana Garces, Krystina Garces, Timmy Dunn Jr., Jason, Kelly, and Jack. Proud great grandmother of Evan Halliday. Dear sister of John Koloski (Robin), and the late Dough Koloski (Janet). Also survived by many loving nieces, nephews, relatives, and a Nan to all.

Visiting Oyster Bay Funeral Home, 261 South St., Oyster Bay, NY on Tuesday from 4-7 p.m. Funeral Service Oyster Bay Funeral Home, Wednesday 11:00 a.m. Interment Bayville Cemetery. [www.oysterbayfuneral-home.com](http://www.oysterbayfuneral-home.com)

**TSIDIS,** Nikolaos of Bayville, NY on February 18, 2026 at Age 88. Beloved husband of Maria. Loving father of Soula (George), John (Maria) and Michael. Proud grandfather of Nicole, Themie, Stephanie, Niko and Nicky.

Donations may be made in his memory to All Saints Greek Orthodox Monastery. [www.DodgeThomas.com](http://www.DodgeThomas.com)

**VALEO,** Theodore L. Jr., on January 31, 2026. Beloved husband of Sheree; loving father of Heather, Christopher, Jessica, and Justin (Stacie); proud grandfather of Cally, Colton, Cooper, Bryan, and Ryleigh. Dedicated 49 year member & Commissioner of the Glen Cove Volunteer Fire Department.

Interment: Locust Valley Cemetery. [www.Whitting.com](http://www.Whitting.com)

## Plum Island Continued

(Continued from page 8)

### Policy Consequences

#### After COVID:

- Governments reassessed lab oversight
- Emphasized biosafety culture
- Tightened reporting rules
- Increased funding for containment upgrades

The decision to replace Plum Island with NBAF looks prescient in this light. Conspiracy Theories vs. Documented History

Plum Island has attracted more conspiracy theories than almost any U.S. research facility. Among them:

#### Lyme Disease Origin Theory

- Claim: Lyme disease was engineered or escaped from Plum Island.
- Often linked to Lab 257.

#### Evidence:

- Lyme disease identified in Connecticut (1970s)
- No credible proof of weaponization

Genetic evidence points to natural evolution

#### Assessment: Not supported

#### Offensive Bioweapons Program

- Claim: Plum Island ran secret weapons research.

#### Reality:

- US offensive bioweapons ended in

1969, on President Nixon order

- Plum Island focused on animals, not humans

Records show defensive research Assessment: Limited classified work, but no evidence of weapons deployment

#### Deliberate Disease Releases

- Claim: The government tested diseases on civilians.

#### Reality:

- Documented lab accidents occurred

- No evidence of intentional release

- USDA/DHS incident reports exist Assessment: Unsupported

- Nazi Scientists and "Dark Science"

- Claim: Former German scientists ran secret programs.

#### Reality:

- Some German scientists entered US programs (Operation Paperclip era)

- None documented as running Plum Island bioweapons programs

#### Assessment: Largely mythologized Why Conspiracies Persist

The Island and the work on it appear to be a perfect setting for conspiracies theories: The secrecy surrounded the research work; the island isolation; the military ruins; disease outbreaks nearby; and limited public access.

## Mozart's Requiem at St. John's

By VICTORIA R. CROSBY

Music Director at St John's of Lattingtown, Ruairaidh (Rory) F. Sutherland, who has been bringing world class performances to the Episcopal Church, recently announced the upcoming Mozart's Requiem which will be presented during the season of Lent on March 15 at 3pm. The performance will feature the St. John's Festival Choir and Orchestra which includes local soprano, Sarah Moulton-Faux, who has a growing International reputation, Heather Petrie, contralto, who sings with the chorus at the Metropolitan Opera, and has been called by critics "a true contralto, with a big, deep resonant projection that can fill a hall," tenor Bryce Westervelt, the Music Director at St. John's Episcopal Church in Cold Spring Harbor, and Robert Garner, bass, also a member of the chorus at the Met.

British born Ruairaidh Sutherland is an internationally recognized choir director and a Fellow of the Royal College of organists in London.

A reception will follow the perform-



St. John's Festival Choir

ance held in the Gothic inspired Parish Hall at the church.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear one of the greatest musical compositions performed by accomplished musicians.

Tickets available online at [tix.com](http://tix.com) are \$50 for adults, \$20 for full time students, \$5 for 18 and under. Tickets will be available at the door; however prior booking is recommended due to limited space.

For further information contact [music@stjlat.org](mailto:music@stjlat.org) or call (516) 672-3226 ext. 12.

### LLC

Notice of formation of Tax Boss Advisors LLC. Articles of Organization filed with the Secretary of State of New York SSNY on 09/16/2025. Office located in Nassau. SSNY has been designated for service of process. SSNY shall mail copy of any process served against the LLC to c/o Northwest Registered Agent, 8 The Green, STE B, Dover, DE 19901. Purpose: any lawful purpose.

### LLC

Notice of formation of 168 Hegemans LLC Articles of organization filed with the Secretary of State of N.Y. (SSNY) on 12/11/25. Office location: NASSAUCounty. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC, 7 Coriegarth Ln, Locust Valley, NY, 11560. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

# Community Gathers for 5th Annual Tribute and Honor Awards



Honorees are seated front and center alongside fellow Veterans and First Responders, with board members, family members, and community leaders gathered behind them.

Photos by Elizabeth Sagarin

The Tribute and Honor Foundation hosted a recordbreaking, sold-out crowd on Saturday, February 7, at its 5th Annual Tribute and Honor Awards Ceremony & Fundraising Gala, bringing together veterans, families, first responders, elected officials, and community leaders from across Long Island.

“From the very beginning, these Awards were created not only to honor our veterans and veteran supporters, but also to shine a light on issues that are deeply important to the veteran community,” said Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews, President and Founder of the Tribute and Honor Foundation. “Each Award category reflects a specific form of service, leadership, or advocacy that strengthens our community and ensures veterans are seen, supported, and remembered.”

The 2026 honorees included Peter Carbone (Community Service Award), a

U.S. Army veteran and longtime member of Bayville’s American Legion Post 1285 who has dedicated more than five decades to veteran advocacy and civic service; Officer Owen Valance (Impact Award), a U.S. Navy veteran and Glen Cove police officer recognized for advancing awareness of veterans’ mental health; Long Island Cares, Veterans Services (Homefront Award), honored for providing food security and wrap-around services to veterans and their families; Eileen Shanahan and the Warrior Ranch Foundation (Awareness & Remembrance Award), recognized for elevating awareness of veteran suicide and creating spaces for healing through equine therapy; Robert Freeland (Volunteer Award), a Vietnam War veteran and Commander of Port Washington’s VFW Post 1819 honored for decades of volunteer leadership; Philip Como

(Leadership Award), a decorated U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and longtime civic leader; and Scott Whitting (Legacy Award), a U.S. Army Special Forces Vietnam veteran recognized for a lifetime of continued service.

The Front Runner Award was presented posthumously to Simone Renaud, affectionately known as the “Mother of Normandy.” After witnessing the liberation of her hometown of Sainte-Mère-Église during World War II, Renaud devoted her life to honoring fallen American soldiers and supporting their families. Her lifelong commitment helped strengthen the sister-city relationship between Sainte-Mère-Église, France and Locust Valley, New York, and inspired the founding of Operation Democracy, which advances

remembrance, education, and international understanding rooted in shared democratic values.

Accepting the award on behalf of his mother was her son, Maurice Renaud, President of AVA — Friends of American Veterans — who traveled from France to attend the ceremony.

“To see my mother’s lifelong work remembered in this way was deeply moving,” Maurice Renaud said. “Remembrance is not about the past alone — it is a responsibility we carry forward.”

Now in its fifth year, the Tribute and Honor Awards Ceremony continues to grow in both reach and impact, raising vital funds to support veteran-focused initiatives across Long Island.

For more information, visit [TributeAndHonorFoundation.org](http://TributeAndHonorFoundation.org).



(L-R) Richard Bathie, honoree Peter Carbone, honoree Robert Freeland, and honoree Philip Como. Photo: Tribute and Honor Foundation.

## Atlantic Steamer Fire Company Ice Water Rescue Drill



The Atlantic Steamer Fire Company’s Dive Team. Photo: Todd Kennedy

Sunday morning, February 15, the Atlantic Steamer Fire Company held an ice water rescue training drill. Members took to the frigid waters at the Theodore Roosevelt Park’s boat ramps, which is adjacent to the fire company’s marine facility, in Oyster Bay. These brave volunteers trained to sharpen their life-saving skills. The bay has not frozen over for several years, so this was a great opportunity for such practice.



Rescuing someone who fell thru the ice.

The training equipment used was and ice sled, throw lines, ice awls, cold-water suits, dry suits, and other specialized ice rescue gear, and the Atlantic Steamers dive truck.

This rigorous training was led by the Dive Captain Pablo Fernandez, Boat House Captain Bill Gagliano, and assisted by Chief Francesco Barbera and other dive team members.

Atlantic Steamer Fire Company has the only Dive Team on the north shore of Nassau County. New members are always welcome. If interested in becoming a Firefighter, EMT, Boat Team, Scuba Rescue Diver, contact the Atlantic Steamer Fire Company at 28 East Main Street, Oyster Bay, or call them at (516) 554-2611.



Pulling them to safety with the Ice Sled. Photos: Frank Maiorana, Jr.

### Locust Valley Library

#### MARCH PROGRAMS



For more information visit us at: [www.locustvalleylibrary.org](http://www.locustvalleylibrary.org)

**Retirement Planning & Investment Workshop**  
Wednesday, March 4 at 3 PM  
Presented by Morgan Stanley Wealth Management Team of Melville.

**Create and Express**  
Wednesday, March 4 at 6 PM  
Relax, create art and talk about resilience with Cassandra Stoffers, from CEC Health Care.

**Beam Me Up: The Creation of Star Trek: Online**  
Friday, March 6 at 2 PM  
Clive Young charts Star Trek’s evolution from a “western in space” into a cultural icon, spanning TV, films, and lasting global impact.

**Book to Film: Read It, Watch It, Talk About It**  
Tuesday, March 10 at 2 PM  
**The Butcher Boy** by Neil Jordan  
1 hour, 50 minutes; Rated R

**Irish Soda Bread and a Movie**  
Thursday, March 12 at 1 PM  
**The Commitments** 1 hour, 58 minutes; Rated R  
Indulge on Irish Soda Bread and watch the film!

**NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps Training**  
Tuesday, March 17 at 3 PM  
Learn to prepare for any type of disaster or emergency.

**Senior Scam Presentation**  
Wednesday, March 25 at 3 PM  
Presented by TD Bank Safe Certified Presentation of East Norwich.

**Spring Equinox Sound Bath: Festival of Flowers**  
Tuesday, March 31 at 7 PM  
Presented by Andonia Fthenakis. \$5 fee is required. Bring yoga mat, blanket, eye covering and pillow.

#### ONGOING PROGRAMS

**ARTIST OF THE MONTH**  
STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY MONICA RANDELL  
RECEPTION: SUNDAY, MARCH 3  
FROM 1 - 3 PM  
THE GOWNS OF THE GOLD COAST

**POETRY EXCHANGE GROUP**  
PRESENTS  
**FAVORITE POEM BY YOU**  
**AND SOMEONE ELSE**  
SATURDAY, MARCH 7 AT 11 AM

**MATINEE THURSDAYS AT 1 PM**  
MARCH 5  
MOVIE: MONEYBALL  
2 HRS, 15 MIN - RATED PG-13  
MARCH 19  
MOVIE: BELFAST  
1 HR, 38 MIN - RATED PG-13

**MONDAY MAVENS BOOKCLUB**  
FEBRUARY 9 AT 7 PM

**BETTER THAN FICTION BOOK CLUB WITH ALLISON**  
TUESDAY, MARCH 10 AT 7 PM  
**THE SECRET** BY RHONDA BYRNE

LOCUST VALLEY LIBRARY  
170 BUCKRAM RD, LOCUST VALLEY, NY 11560  
(516) 671-1837



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## Congratulations To Our Top Leaders In Our Locust Valley Office

### Production Leaders



1st Place  
Kimberly Bancroft



2nd Place  
Alexis McAndrew



3rd Place  
Huailing (Helen) Deng

### Unit Leaders



1st Place  
Kimberly Bancroft



2nd Place  
Alexis McAndrew



3rd Place  
Huailing (Helen) Deng

### Listing Leaders



1st Place  
Kimberly Bancroft



2nd Place  
Alexis McAndrew



3rd Place  
Amy Tansill

Locust Valley Office | 1 Buckram Road, Locust Valley, NY | 516.759.4800 | [danielgale.com](http://danielgale.com)

Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated.

