

Letters

Able and willing to lend a hand for village

TO THE EDITOR:

I was VERY excited to see the drawing depicting the NEW vision for our village. Having lived here for 16+ years ... it's about time!

Please let me know how I can help with this endeavor! I am able and willing to lend a hand in any way that I can to make this happen, and I have a lot of friends that feel the same way.

Kate Passaretti
Poquott

Consider incorporation for Setauket

TO THE EDITOR:

The Setauket Village Center project sounds interesting, but to avoid all the bitterness, wrangling and frustrations among the local residents that have plagued the Stony Brook redevelopment, I would urge that you first consider forming an incorporated village of Setauket, which would give the residents the power to control the development and insure that the businesses reflect the needs and desires of the residents, and not just those of the tourists.

Clayton Collier
Old Field

Don't make Stop&Shop the ogre of the area

TO THE EDITOR:

The Setauket Village Center sounds and looks, in theory, like a good idea. We look like the Cinderella between two beautiful sisters (Port Jefferson and Stony Brook). What about traffic? And taxes? Is this really going to be paid for solely by "backers" and "investors" as yet unnamed?

I look forward to hearing more about this center. As an aside, it might be nice if you didn't make Stop&Shop appear to be the ogre of the area. It's a good store, a necessary one, is run by a very civic-minded manager and manned by local folks. Bringing food boutiques into the proposed center would certainly meet a need, but getting rid of Stop&Shop would be most inconvenient to residents and unfair to the chain and to the people who work there.

Janet M. Bingham
Setauket

Make a playground part of the park plan

TO THE EDITOR:

I am a resident of Setauket and am just thrilled with the proposal of the village as is my family. I have two questions. 1) Where is the funding coming from for this? Will our property taxes be affected? 2) In the park area are you planning a children's playground? There is no playground for children in Setauket now. We either have to go to West Meadow Beach or to our neighboring villages to play. Please make sure this is part of the plan. I think this is an exciting and much needed change for our community and long overdue. Setauket is a beautiful place to live and raise a family, and we think this would just complete the town.

Ann Biasetti
Setauket

Preserve valuable coastal resource

TO THE EDITOR:

The challenge of the Long Island Traditions' nomination of the West Meadow Beach Historic District to

the National Register of Historic Places with the support of Senator Flanagan's bill #S.5663 to save the cottages will not stand against the lengthy irreversible progression of legally binding federal/state/town protection to improve and preserve publicly owned West Meadow Beach Peninsula.

The basis of this environmental protection of our coastal resources started in the 70s. In the early 70s, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established to protect and enhance the environment.

Through the EPA's involvement in the National Estuary Program, Long Island Sound was designated as an estuary of national significance leading to the Long Island Sound Study. The West Meadow Beach Park Restoration Plan meets the goals of the Long Island Sound Study's comprehensive conservation and management plan to increase public access to the Sound and to enhance recreational and scientific uses.

The 1972 federal Coastal Zone Management Act is the foundation of all state coastal programs, establishing a partnership between the federal government and coastal states for the management of coastal resources. The act binds the federal government to consistency with approved coastal programs such as the New York State Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program (LIS CMP) providing the framework for the wise stewardship for designated coastal areas.

Under the federally approved LIS CMP, West Meadow Beach is an important component of the program's designated Stony Brook/Setauket Outstanding Natural Coastal Area. As such, specific action is cited to restore this significant natural resource.

"Discontinue cottage leases, remove the cottages and restore dune and native beach vegetation in accordance with Brookhaven's plan to restore ecosystem benefits and achieve public access to the coast."

One of the most significant pieces of state legislation enacted in the 70s is the State Environmental Quality Review Act, Article 8 of the New York State Conservation Law. In 1991, the Supreme Court of New York affirmed the town's restoration plan in the removal of the cottages from public parkland. The court advised the town to conduct a complete State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) of the cottages and the peninsula prior to the restoration initiative.

The SEQR process found no historical significance of the existing beach cottages with the beneficial impacts of the restoration efforts included but not limited to "enhancement of the visual character of the peninsula by the removal of the 'strip' of primarily dilapidated structures, which are incongruous with the wetlands, dune and water dominated natural environment in which the cottages are situated.

"A reduction of runoff and a decrease in septic leachate, which will reduce contamination to the groundwater and surface waters adjacent to West Meadow Beach."

It is unclear why Long Island Traditions submitted their nomination at this late date when they had more than ample opportunity to participate in the lengthy required SEQR review process.

Under suburban status, Brookhaven Town established the department of planning, environmental and development division of environmental protection. The town's comprehensive land use plan and the subsequent Three Village Hamlet Study approved the town's restoration plan.

In 1996, the appellate division of the Supreme Court of New York affirmed the earlier supreme court decision of 1991 that ordered not only the removal of the cottages but also affirmed the importance of unfettered public access to public parkland.

1996 State Legislation Assembly bill A.1108a, and Senate bill S.7829 introduced binding implementation of the SEQR approved restoration plan commencing in the year 2004 with a scheduled removal of the cottages with the exception of the historic Gamecock Cottage. Before the bill was signed by Governor Pataki, state agencies were contacted to comment on the proposed legislation. With no opposition, including New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the bill was signed into law.

As we approach the year 2004, it is time to end this

long-lasting controversy and collectively move forward to improve and preserve Brookhaven's most valuable public coastal resource, West Meadow Beach Park.

Grace Vander Voort, president
Conservationists United for
Long Island

On Election Day, remember LaValle's threats

TO THE EDITOR:

Many of us who campaigned for a yes vote on the January 2002 referendum, which asked Brookhaven voters whether or not to adopt the ward system for electing members of the town council, will never forget the threat made by Supervisor John LaValle a few days before the ballots were cast.

He warned us in the Three Village/Port Jefferson area that "if this ward system passes and you elect a Democrat, then I can assure you that your district will be destroyed." When asked to explain, LaValle said, "You will get strip malls and any other bad thing we choose to vote on.... And if your councilperson comes to us with a request, then we will say, 'Did anyone hear someone say something? I didn't hear anything.'" (The Village TIMES HERALD, January 17, 2002, p. A3)

It is now a few days before the next election, this time when Supervisor LaValle is up for re-election.

Howard Scarrow
Setauket

Thank you for so many letters in the paper

TO THE EDITOR:

I am sure I speak for many when I say "thank you" to The Village TIMES HERALD for publishing so many letters from local residents in recent months, especially those dealing with national issues. This is an important editorial policy change from the recent past when letters were often not published for two or three weeks after being sent in, meaning they were often stale and irrelevant when they finally did appear. Now, one can be reasonably sure that the paper will print them quickly.

The Village TIMES HERALD is performing a valuable public service by providing a forum for the expression and exchange of political views and should be commended for its strong sense of civic responsibility.

Elio Zappulla
Stony Brook

Vote for Wastiewiz, the candidate involved in community activities

TO THE EDITOR:

Will the Ward System work in Ward #1? The new system is supposed to provide a councilperson who will represent a smaller geographical area, i.e.: the community. The person that should be elected is supposed to be a person who has been involved in community organizations, and community activities, with an emphasis on "involved." There is only one candidate who meets those criteria, and his name is John "Jay" Wastiewiz. A volunteer for numerous organizations and clubs, including the Setauket Fire Department, he has the credentials that indicate a willingness to serve a constituency. Now is the time to see if the Ward System in Ward #1 is going to work, and it could if the voters do the right thing and vote for Mr. Wastiewiz.

Ed Wendol
Port Jefferson Station

Editorial

In search of chills and candy

The season of the great pumpkin is again upon us. And with so many truly scary things to worry about, parents may have a harder time than usual answering the following question: should I let my little monster go trick-or-treating on Halloween?

Defying conventional wisdom and flying in the face of common sense, we say, yes! This is the year to celebrate Halloween as it is meant to be celebrated, with children knocking on their neighbor's doors — whether they are strangers or close friends — and demanding candy. And parents, older siblings, uncles, aunts, baby sitters, family friends, grandparents and everyone else who can be persuaded to go for a walk through the neighborhood, ought to join them.

What many of us learned from trick-or-treating as children — call it the magic of Halloween — is that our neighbors are not that scary. By and large, our neighbors are friendly members of the community, just like us. That guy down the street who looks just like Jack-the-Ripper? It turns out he's a nice guy. Statistically speaking, parents should be far more worried about driving their kids in cars along dangerous roadways than they should be about trick-or-treating.

And beyond the value of trick-or-treating for building community, we ask you to consider the plight of your neighbors. Picture those who have once again purchased Halloween candy and carved pumpkins, swept their doorsteps, and cleared leaves, only to see a handful of trick-or-treaters stop by. What happens? Every year these poor souls are forced to consume those five bags of candy that they purchased "just in case" all by themselves. Is this fair? It certainly can't be healthy.

If you do choose to take our advice, and take the entire family on a trick-or-treating expedition into the dark and dangerous shadows of your neighborhood, please do it safely. We recommend the following American Academy of Pediatrics Website for some Halloween safety tips: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/octhalloween.htm>.

However, if the thought of trudging through the neighbors' leaves as the kids go on their annual quest for candy is what you really find scary, don't despair. There are any number of Halloween parades, festivals, parties and events that will satisfy the children's taste for both the sweet and the terrifying, without risking parents' ankles.

However you chose to observe it, have a safe and Happy Halloween.

Opinion

Vision for a village center lifted my spirits

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very elated to see the proposed vision for Setauket.

Having lived here for almost 40 years, I was really saddened to find out about Swezey's closing for good. I've been fretting about what will happen to our lovely community that was so enticing when I chose to move here with my family.

Seeing the vision for a village center was such a positive

experience for me. It actually lifted my spirits! I'm all for it and may be willing to help you 'get the show on the road' should you need some.

Good luck, and don't give up. We need to keep our beautiful Setauket the beautiful place it has always been.

Gigi Durcan
Port Jefferson Station

New center looks and sounds perfect

TO THE EDITOR:

I was so excited when I read the article about the Setauket Village Center. I sat down immediately to write my feelings to you. Coincidentally, I was thinking how nice it would be to have a "town." The present

shopping centers are too spread out. This new center looks and sounds perfect. What a great idea. Thanks to all involved.

Cassie Maher
Setauket

What about the traffic? the water? the stores?

TO THE EDITOR:

I just got today's copy of The Village Times Herald with its front page article on this grandiose scheme of a new vision for Setauket, taking it out of its "humdrum" existence and making it like Stony Brook and Port Jefferson.

I have so many questions about this that I hardly know where to begin. Has anyone really thought this through? I would like to know who will allow present tenants to stay. It is obvious that the rents would go sky high for those tenants, and the result will be as it is in Stony Brook and Port Jefferson — a sort of musical chairs game where stores come and go in a dizzying manner. In Stony Brook there used to be a butcher's shop, a pharmacy, a hardware store to name a few. Now it is very pretty, but locals can't shop there for everyday things.

Port Jefferson doesn't have a supermarket as far as I know, but they did at one time. What about the traffic, which is horrendous right now? What about the water? Long Island is fragile, and this whole concept would test its fragility even more than it is now. I don't find Setauket humdrum, and I shall miss Swezey's where I have shopped for the 22 years it has been there, but all the other stores one needs are here at affordable prices. Some of you reading this may

remember Billy Blakes which was up on Nesconset Highway where Kohls is now. At the time Billy Blakes was proposed the architect came with his plans, and it was announced that the store would be like Lord & Taylor in Garden City. Those of you remembering Billy Blakes will, to paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen in a different context, "know Lord & Taylor and Billy Blakes was no Lord & Taylor." I am very disappointed in Steve Englebright for promoting this scheme. I would also like to add that about two weeks ago I ran into his assistant in the pharmacy, and I asked her outright about the rumors of these plans. She denied knowing anything about any of it. It is not politically correct to say this was a lie, so I will just say she was "economical with the truth."

I shall not forget that exchange. Finally, does anyone really think this could all be accomplished by 2005?

I live in an area where the Suffolk County Water Authority agreed to put in main water and the whole thing would be done in six months with the roads restored to pristine condition. I need hardly say that several years later, the roads have yet to be restored.

Margaret A.M. Sullivan
Stony Brook

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Solve the traffic problem on Route 25A first

TO THE EDITOR:

Your plans for Setauket Village look beautiful, BUT as a long time resident of Setauket I can't believe you are going ahead with this before solving one of the biggest problems we have, the traffic along Route 25A. It can only get worse with this project, and more traffic lights and/or "calming" it down (whatever that means)

will not work. If you turn Route 25A into a four-lane highway, it will make things even worse. So what's the answer? Perhaps a more modest plan and a little road-work that will relieve the already existing congestion on Route 25A.

Robert Polin
East Setauket

Basic idea nice, but preserve some woodland

TO THE EDITOR:

The overall plan for the Setauket Village Center is nothing short of amazing. Every idea is a winner, with the possible exception of the Greenway. The basic idea is very nice, however, I'm very disappointed that none of the 48 acres will remain wild. Especially considering Mr. Englebright's environmental record, I'm surprised and perplexed that the opportunity to place at least half

of the acreage into protection would be overlooked.

With so much emphasis these days on open space preservation, I just don't understand developing this last parcel of fantastic woodland. Think of the devastation to the wildlife that this parcel houses.

Manna Cali
Stony Brook

An opportunity we should not pass up

TO THE EDITOR:

Well! The Setauket Village Center is the best news I have heard in a long time for our community! We have lived in Setauket for 17 years and moved here because of the beauty and historical character of the community. However, I've always been bothered by the strip mall

architecture of Route 25A. This is an opportunity that I hope we do not pass up. I look forward to learning more about the plan. So far, you've got our support!

Bob & Terri Arrigon
Setauket

Email your letters to
vbr@tbrnewspapers.com

More letters on pages A24 and A25