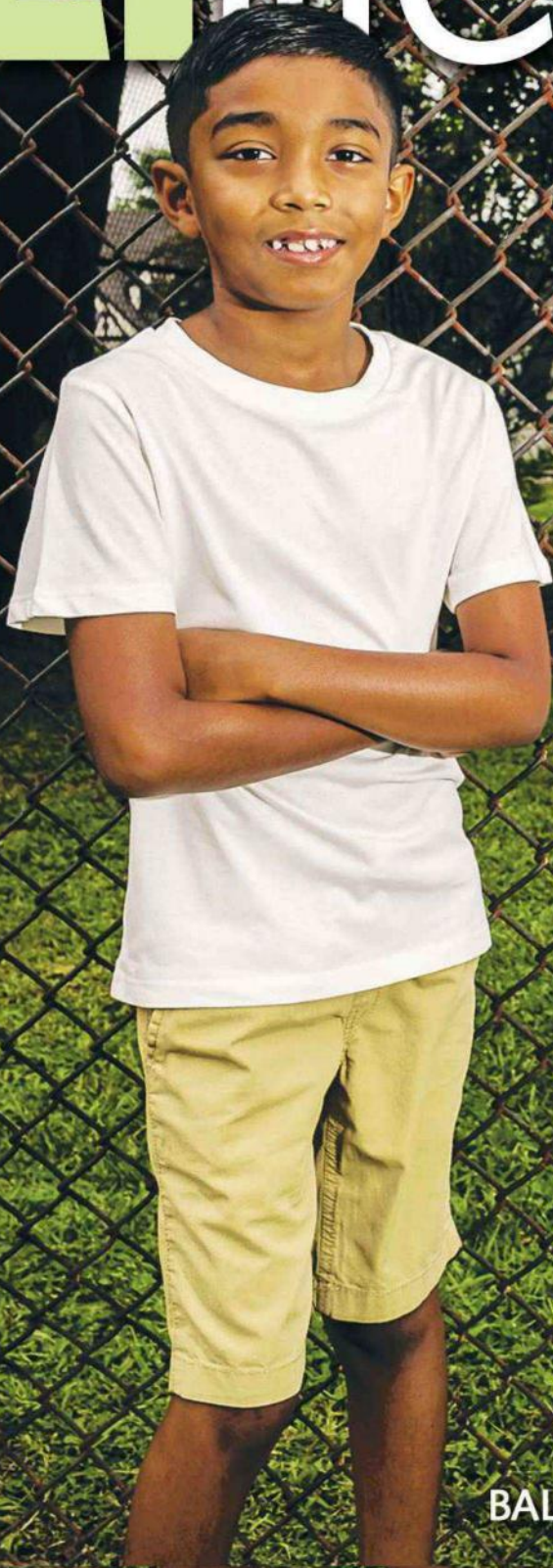


Llife



Neighbor to neighbor

BALDWIN SCHOOL PROJECT STARTS CONVERSATION E2

JEFF BACHNER

act2 | For these teachers, retirement led to reinvention **INSIDE**

N1

In this issue

Today's cover story takes a look at the "Hello Neighbor" project, which encourages civic responsibility in young Baldwin students and has given them a chance to express their hopes and dreams.

In Act 2, we focus on two couples — united by marriage and temperament — who have found success and newfound passion in retirement as artists.

Don't forget to check out today's Faith and Seniors calendars for virtual and in-person events.

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COVERSTORY

GETTING PEOPLE TALKING

A project called "Hello Neighbor" seeks to open a multigenerational dialogue

BY DONNA KUTT NAHAS
Special to Newsday

"I hope people will not be mean to each other because of the color of their skin." "I dream that people will stop littering." "I hope to solve world hunger."

These are just some of the issues on the minds of about 150 Baldwin elementary school students, who — as second-graders — were photographed for an ongoing project called "Hello Neighbor." Launched in the spring of 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the initiative's goal is to not only foster kindness and cultivate inclusion, but also to give young children a voice and forge connections between different age groups in the community.

"The elementary students have been given the opportunity to be part of a meaningful project, to think about their future and to say their thoughts and ideas," said Baldwin schools Superintendent Shari Camhi.

Inspired by a similar project in Oregon, "Hello Neighbor" started at Brookside Elementary and has since been expanded to the Steele and Plaza elementary schools, with plans to bring it to the other two elementary schools in the district — Lenox and Meadow — this school year.

As part of the project, Baldwin High School advanced



DANIELLE SILVERMAN

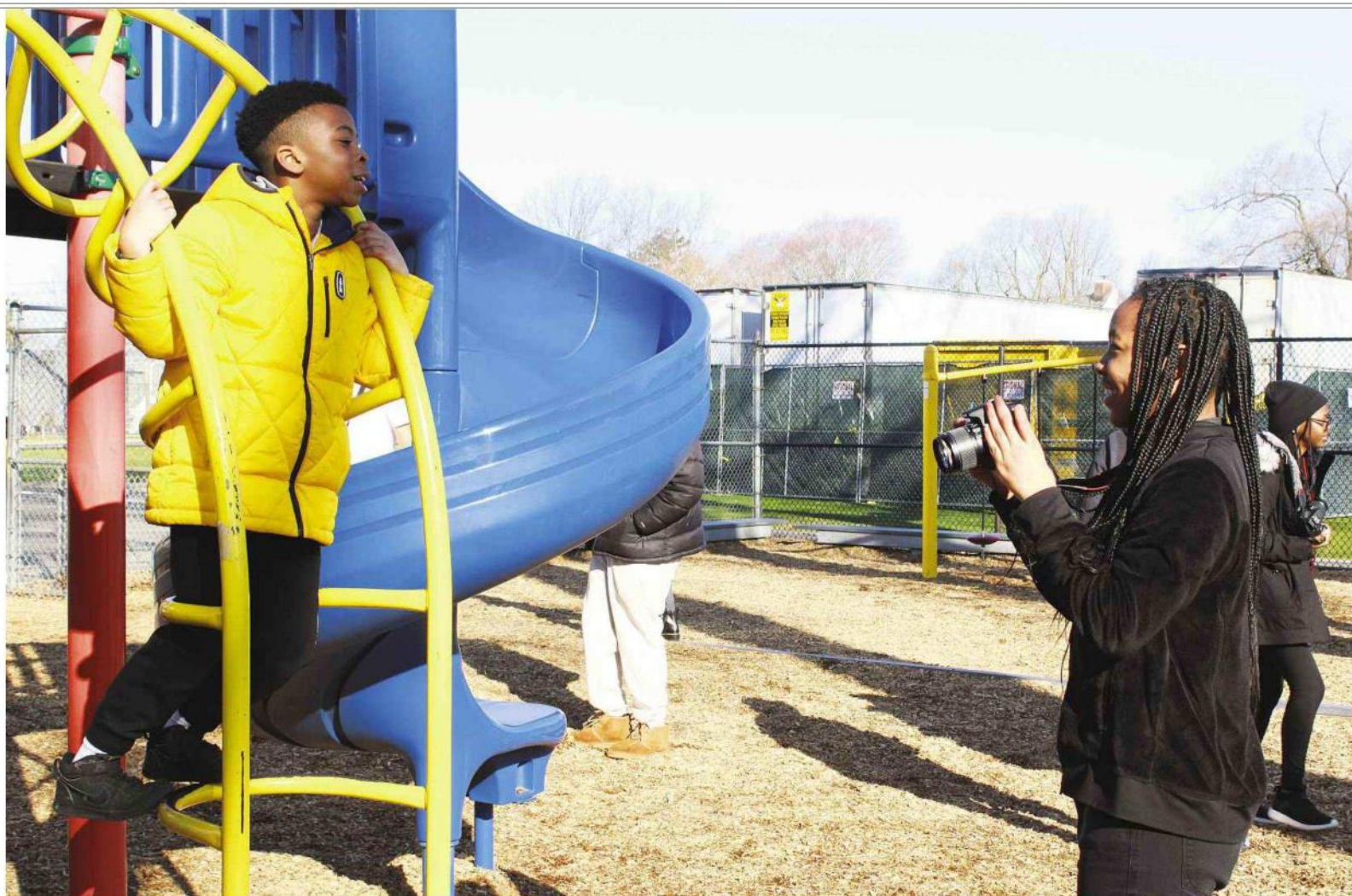
Lucy Cain, 8, stands by her portrait outside Baldwin's Plaza Elementary. She is worried about people going hungry, she told her interviewer.

The quote on the photo of Ethan Boodram, 8, could start a conversation about homelessness — or about kindness.



JEFF BACHNER

ON THE COVER. Ethan Boodram with the "Hello Neighbor" weatherproof "banner" that bears his picture and quote.



Baldwin High School advanced photo student Britney King, near left, worked with Micah Elliot in March to get the portrait that is featured on school grounds, below. It is important for people to know, said Micah, who is now in third grade, that “when you are mean to others, you can cause physical harm or you can hurt their feelings.”

PATRICIA DREXLER

photography students snapped portraits of second-graders in the district. Those photos were then blown up into 2-by-3-foot weatherproof banners, with each student’s hopes and dreams printed on them. The banners have since been hung on fences outside district schools.

Baldwin — the only school system in New York State to implement the project — was recognized by the New York State School Boards Association last year for its use of “existing resources to introduce unique learning environments.”

“One of our goals is learning how to be meaningful and relevant, and one of the ways is to connect them to something bigger than ourselves,” said Camhi. “In many instances, it’s about civic responsibility.”

ART MEETS CIVICS

Lucy Cain, 8, is already exercising her civic duty in her Baldwin neighborhood.

Now a third-grader at Plaza Elementary School, Lucy’s dream was that “everyone has what they need to survive.”

“Some people don’t have

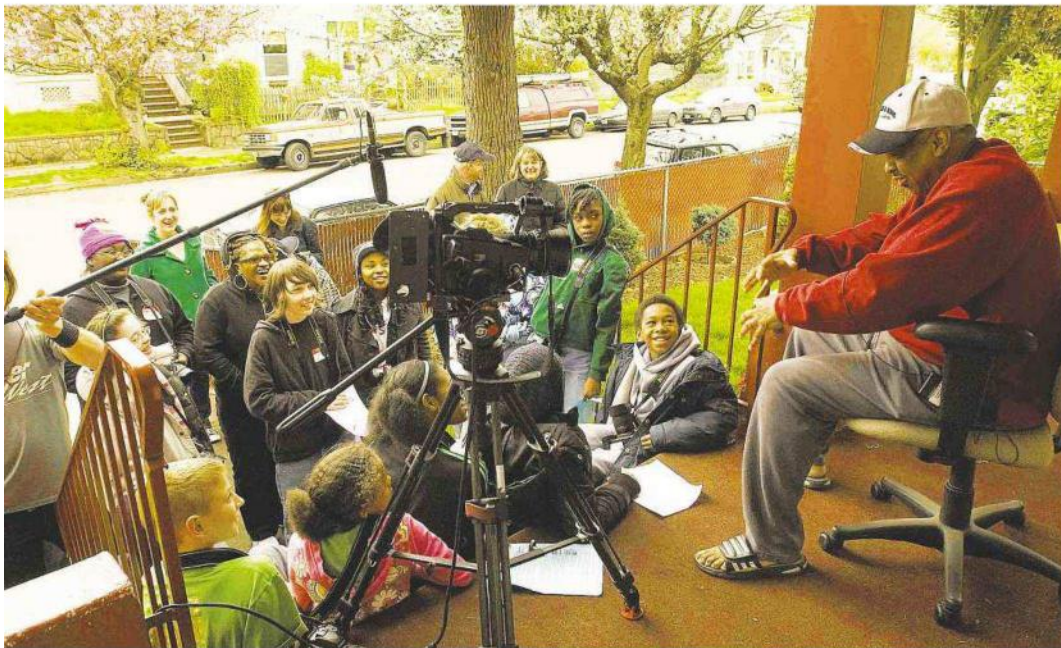


PATRICIA DREXLER

Elementary school student Kamal Bartley, top, was photographed by Baldwin High School student Ash Bruegel for the project.



Giving children a voice



COVER STORY from E3

food and homes, and I want everyone to have that," she told her second-grade teacher, Christine Garguilo, who interviewed her in March for the project.

As a Brownie Girl Scout, Lucy is doing what she can to stave off hunger in her community by collecting nonperishable food to donate to a local pantry, said Lucy's mother, Emily Cain, 40. Lucy, who aspires to be president of the United States one day, also enjoys joining her family and local civic groups, along with the Scouts, to clean up neighborhood parks, said her mother, who has two children and is a freelance copywriter.

Last month, Lucy visited her banner at Plaza Elementary. Reflecting on the issue of homelessness, Lucy said that "people who don't have homes" make her feel "kind of sad inside" and that if they read her banner, "They'll know that someone cares about them."

Cynthia Boodram, 36, said the art project helped her see another side of her son, Ethan, whose hope is to "help homeless people and animals by sharing my kind words and actions."

"By him participating, it opened my eyes to what he thinks about the problems in the world," said Boodram, a mother of two and an account manager. "When I heard about it [the project] and saw the banner, I said, 'Oh, wow.' I didn't know he felt like that. We think they are only thinking about video games and not real-world problems."

Now, the third-grader wants to find programs in the community so he can "help out and be involved by donating food and water," his mother said.

"I want people to be aware of what's happening in the world, to be aware of the homeless people and animals," Ethan said. "I want people to help out by giving them food."

Nomi Rosen, Baldwin schools' administrator for professional development, implemented the project, which she said focused on second-graders because they study different types of communities. She said the students' hopes and dreams have

changed over the years.

"During the pandemic, their hopes and dreams were so painful because they were wishing the world would get better. They were all about health," said Rosen. Since then, she said, they have shifted to dreams "second-graders normally have," like being a firefighter or helping the world become more peaceful.

INSPIRATION FOR PROGRAM

Oregon artist and photojournalist Julie Keefe launched the "Hello Neighbor" project in 2007 to bring her North Portland community together after gentrification created a loss of social and economic diversity.

Keefe said she taught lower-income middle-school students the basics of photography and interviewing techniques. The children then took portraits of their adult neighbors, which they printed with a quote from each person and hung across their neighborhood.

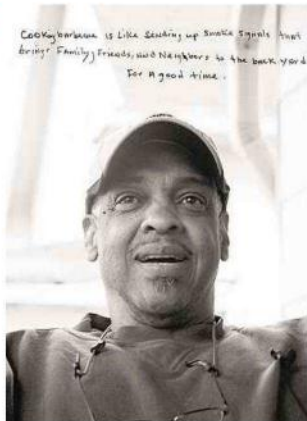
After the initial unveiling of the project, it traveled to six cities in Oregon. With the support of a \$75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and Caldera, a Portland-based arts nonprofit, it became the state's largest collaborative public art project, Keefe said.

Outside of Oregon, about 10 school districts — primarily in the Pacific Northwest and Southwest — have implemented their own versions, she said.

"We have so many testimonials of children saying that I never knew my opinion mattered, never knew that my neighbor would want to talk to me," Keefe said. "Places using this to create connections between children and their neighbors ... give children a voice where they didn't know they could be heard. This made a very large impact and had a ripple effect in communities like Baldwin."

Susan Zwirn, professor of fine arts education at Hofstra University in Hempstead, praised the Baldwin school district for understanding "the role of art to empower kids and to help them realize their hopes can be heard [and] recognized and are important in the broader community."

Tommye Washington, above and at right, was interviewed for an Oregon "Hello Neighbor" project in 2007. Residents' portraits, with quotes, were displayed around town.



Photojournalist Julie Keefe launched the original "Hello Neighbor" project in 2007 in North Portland, Oregon.



Student participants in Oregon visit the "Hello Neighbor" banners displayed at a local coffee shop in 2008.



DAWN MCCORMICK

Banners are placed where pedestrians passing Plaza Elementary can view them and read about students' hopes.

can cause physical harm or you can hurt their feelings.”

While some of the children focused on people or animals, others voiced concern about environmental issues like pollution.

Third-grader Anna Yanantuono, 8, for example, dreams that one day “people will stop littering.”

“She’s always talking about stopping littering, ever since she was in kindergarten when they started teaching her about littering and how it affects the environment,” said Anna’s father, Craig Yanantuono, 42, a graphic designer.

Camhi said the project is a way to introduce the children to their neighbors. After “Hello Neighbor” was unveiled at Plaza Elementary in May, Camhi said she noticed a woman walking by who stopped to read the photo banners and teared up. The woman said she was a Baldwin High School graduate and was “touched by meeting the next generation of kids coming through our school,” Camhi said.

“That’s exactly the reaction we hoped for,” Camhi said. “In a simple way, it allows elders of the community to get to know our young people. We live in a world that is so fast-paced and so isolated that to get a sense of who lives in your community, who the next generation coming up is and what they think, is a way to connect the dots.”

After Lenox and Meadow elementary schools adopt the project, Camhi said the district is discussing “starting all over again” with a new generation of second-graders at Brookside Elementary School. There are also plans to leave up the existing photo banners as the youth transition from elementary to middle school, she said.

She added that they are considering expanding the project to the broader community, with advanced photography students taking portraits of seniors who live in housing in North Baldwin or those who attend a community senior center.

Said Keefe: “It’s all about getting people to acknowledge their neighbors and recognize each other. And it all starts with a simple hello.”



PATRICIA DREXLER

Baldwin High School student Jamila Bennett took photos of Makhi Rhino at Plaza Elementary in March.

She added, “Science and math awards receive a lot of community attention. Musical concerts are big events, but art displays are often quiet affairs. By placing these large photos outdoors, the voices of the kids are seen and heard. In the diverse atmosphere of Long Island schools, young children’s voices are often not heard. This kind of art project sets up a dialogue not only between generations but the

children of different ages and the community. Dialogue is how we nurture a sense of community.”

HIGH SCHOOL PHOTO PROJECT

Britney King, 15, was one of the high school students chosen to photograph second-graders at Plaza Elementary School earlier this year.

“They were really friendly and nice. It was fun to see them pose,” said King, who is

now a junior.

Tamia Lindsay, 16, a senior at Baldwin High School who is also an advanced photography student, said she, too, relished working with the younger students.

“It felt good to talk to them and hear what they had to say and have a connection with them,” said Lindsay, a member of the school’s National Art Honor Society. “They are a lot younger than me, and I felt it

was really important to leave a good impact on them, be a good role model. I was in elementary school once, and they will be like me one day.”

Patricia Drexler, an art and photography teacher at Baldwin High School, said her students benefited from working with the second-graders.

“They learned how to work collaboratively with other people on a project. They can say, ‘I did this and I made this kid happy,’” she said. “Photographs can bring the community together, and there’s a collaboration between high school students and elementary school students. Everyone worked together for an end result.”

Feona Elliott, 40, says she was thrilled to have her son, Micah, 8, participate in the project earlier this year because he will “feel his thoughts are valued and will be represented in the community.”

Micah’s dream was that “everyone will be nice to each other in the future.”

Elliott said that her son, now in third grade at Plaza Elementary, frequently reflects on television newscasts or tells her stories about someone mistreating a friend at school and asks why people can’t be kind to one another.

It is important for people to know, said Micah, that “when you are mean to others, you

WINNERS

Compiled by Michael R. Ebert

MARIA ALICIA CARRILLO SEPULVEDA

Associate professor



Maria Alicia Carrillo Sepulveda of Mineola has secured a \$428,400 grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to support a three-year project to investigate how obesity leads to hypertension. Sepulveda serves as an associate professor at the New York Institute of Technology's College of Osteopathic Medicine, which she joined in 2014. Before that, she completed her doctoral studies at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil and postdoctoral training at the Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine at the University of Iowa and the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University.

MARY JO O'HAGAN

School board member



Mary Jo O'Hagan of Baldwin has received the Cooperative Leadership Award from the National School Development Council in recognition of her leadership and efforts to establish cooperative relationships to improve educational programs for students. O'Hagan was elected to the Baldwin School District's Board of Education in 1994 and continues to serve as president. She has also served the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association in various capacities — including president, vice president, secretary and treasurer — since 2001 and is a member of the New York State School Boards Association's State Legislative Network and Commissioner's Advisory Council.

ADELINA BLANCO-HARVEY

School board member



Adelina Blanco-Harvey of Uniondale has received a citation from Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman for her efforts coordinating the International Music and Salvadoran American Heritage Night, which was held last month in the Town of Hempstead. Blanco-Harvey, the owner of Bachs Premier Consulting Corp., is the regional manager at Premier Endodontics of Long Island and has been a member of the Uniondale School District's Board of Education since 2019.

JANIS BOREMSKI

Educator



Janis Boremski of Huntington has received the New York State Educator of the Year Award from the New York State Art Teachers Association. Boremski is the fine arts coordinator for Valley Stream School District 13 as well as an art educator at the district's James A. Dever Elementary School. She is also on the executive board for the Art Supervisors Association of Nassau County and is co-chairwoman for the New York State Art Teachers Association's Region 9 in Nassau County.

NOMINATE A WINNER Email information about the accomplishment or honor to winners@newsday.com. Include photo in JPEG format; color is preferred.

SENIORS

Some listed events are virtual; please call ahead before going to any event.

OVER 50 FAIR

Melville: More than 80 exhibitors, classes, guest speakers, a singles lounge, hearing screenings, live acoustic music and more, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Huntington Hilton, 598 Broadhollow Rd., \$5 online, \$7 at the door, free for veterans with ID, over50fair.com, 516-621-1446.

LIVE THEATER

Huntington: EastLine Theatre Company presents a script-in-hand production of "The Guys," by Anne Nelson, based on a true story, 2 p.m. Sunday, Huntington Library, 338 Main St., free, register at myhpl.org, 631-427-5165.

ONLINE: MONDAY MYSTERIES

Rockville Centre: Discuss the mystery novel "Confessions on the 7:45," by Lisa Unger, noon Monday, hosted by Rockville Centre Library, 221 N. Village Ave., free, register for a link at rvclibrary.org, 516-766-6257.

ONLINE: INTRO TO ANDROID PHONE

Huntington: Learn how to make your phone more secure, easier to use, navigate screens, and about the many apps common to all Android phones such as the map, contacts, camera and calendar apps, 2 p.m. Monday, presented by SeniorNet, free, register for a link at seniornetli.org, 631-470-6757.

ONLINE: SHOULD I PUT MY HOME IN A TRUST?

Shelter Island: Learn about different types of trusts, funding and the benefits of putting assets into a trust, 3 p.m. Monday, hosted by Shelter Island Library, free, register for a link at shelterislandlibrary.org, 631-749-0042.

JOURNALING CIRCLE

Locust Valley: Prompts and tools are used to explore different writing topics; includes built-in writing time and an opportunity to share at the end of the program; 6:30 p.m. Monday, Locust Valley Library, 170

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Bellport: Learn what to do before, during and after an emergency, 4 p.m. Friday, South Country Library, 22 Station Rd., free, register, sctylib.org, 631-286-0818.

LORINA CAPITULO

Buckram Rd., free, locustvalleylibrary.org, 516-671-1837.

MAXIMIZING FUN, MINIMAL EXPENSE

Oceanside: Learn how to save money or go free to some of your favorite entertainment and cultural experiences, 2 p.m. Tuesday, Oceanside Library, 56 Atlantic Ave., free, oceansidelibrary.com, 516-766-2360.

ONLINE: GO LEAN WITH PROTEIN

Elmont: Learn how much protein you actually need and ways to incorporate high quality, lean protein into your diet, 11 a.m. Tuesday, hosted by Elmont Memorial Library, free, register for a link at elmontlibrary.org, 516-354-5280.

THE HISTORY OF WALL STREET

Hewlett: A look at the turmoil caused by various national and global events that caused the markets to crash, and learn about the auction market system and how brokers trade equities on the New York Stock Exchange, 11 a.m. Tuesday, Hewlett-Woodmere Library, 1125 Broadway, free, hwpl.org, 516-374-1967.

FUNNY LADIES OF COMEDY

Roslyn: Discussion about the lives and careers of beloved female comedians, including Fanny Brice, Mae West, Phyllis Diller and Joan Rivers, 1 p.m. Tuesday, The Bryant Library, 2 Paper Mill Rd., free,

bryantlibrary.org, 516-621-2240.

APOLLO 13: THE SUCCESSFUL FAILURE

Centereach: Tom Barry of the Cradle of Aviation Museum discusses the Apollo 13 mission and what went wrong and right, 7 p.m. Tuesday, Middle Country Library, 101 Eastwood Blvd., free, register, mcplibrary.org, 631-585-9393.

POETRY OPEN MIC NIGHT

Long Beach: Bring your poems, prose, spoken word, lyrics and songs up to the mic, sign-up starts on arrival, limit of three poems or two songs (no epics), timing at the mic depends on attendance, led by Nassau County poet laureate Paula Curci and 2017-2019 poet laureate of Nassau County Peter Dugan, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Long Beach Library, 111 W. Park Ave., free, register at longbeachlibrary.org for an event reminder, 516-432-7201.

ONLINE: LOCAL BEACHES

Hewlett: Discussion on the history of Jones Beach, 1 to 2 p.m. Thursday, hosted by Hewlett-Woodmere Library, free, attend in-person or visit hwpl.org for a link, 516-374-1967.

SUBMIT EVENTS at newsday.com/submitevents or email to events@newsday.com. Photos should be attached as JPEG; photos become Newsday property for use in all media.

SENIORS SOCIAL CLUB

Manorville: Seniors 62 and older may visit the animals, walk the grounds, attend a presentation in the newly renovated Woodland Hall to learn about wildlife, and enjoy a beverage and snacks with other seniors (no pets or children), 10 a.m. Thursday, Long Island Game Farm, 489 Chapman Blvd., \$10, call 631-878-6644 for reservations (strongly encouraged), longislandgamefarm.com.

DEMENTIA AWARENESS FOR CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY

Holbrook: Willing Hearts, Helpful Hands Caregiver Support Initiative provides a table with information on services and funds available to families in the community, 2 p.m. Thursday, Sachem Library, 150 Holbrook Rd., free, sachemlibrary.org, 631-588-5024.

THURSDAYS ON THE BAY

West Sayville: Easy Street performs an eclectic variety of rock, blues, funk, soul and country music, bring a chair or blanket, 6 p.m. Thursday, Long Island Maritime Museum, 88 West Ave., free, isliparts.org, 631-888-3525.

MY LIFE AS A BEEKEEPER

Brightwaters: Thomas Santorelli discusses beekeeping on Long Island and why bees are critical to our environment, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Bay Shore-Brightwaters Library, 1 S. Country Rd., free, Suffolk County cardholders can register at bsbwlibrary.org, 631-665-4350.

KNITTING AND CROCHETING CLUB

Glen Cove: Meet up with other knitters or crocheters, start a new project or bring a current one, bring your own needles and yarn, 10 to 11 a.m. Friday, Glen Cove Library, 4 Glen Cove Ave., free, register at glencovelibrary.org, 516-676-2130.

Compiled by Gina Tabarus
with LaToya Rodriguez
and Daniel Variano