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April 2021

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Dock to Dish: Authentic Blue Point Oysters Come Home

By Kate Berube

Housed at the site of the old Lace Mill, the Blue Point Brewery's current operation is a mix of tradition and innovation. On a recent Sunday afternoon, I enticed some friends to come check out what they had going on down there with a well-placed mention of beer, whispers of a culinary master in residence and the promise of socialization after a year spent at home. In truth, I was there to see a man about an oyster.



All photos Belinda Randolph Mills



It was at least true that the Brewpub located inside the brewery recently upped the ante by recruiting renowned Chef Paolo Fontana, who honed his craft while serving as apprentice to none other than Mario Batali at Babbo. Everything that comes out of his kitchen is exceptional but if you try his trademark 7-layer rainbow cookie cake, I promise you'll dream about it at night. I had already eaten two pieces and was debating if anyone would notice me reaching for a third, when the waiter carried out what I had been waiting for. Two dozen authentic Blue Point oysters.

These days, the Blue Point name brings to mind great beer, but not so long ago it was once exclusively synonymous with oysters. Really good oysters. So good in fact, they were served in Buckingham Palace to Queen Victoria after she was said to proclaim she would eat no other. They became so sought after, that at the height of their popularity, a New York State law was enacted that clarifies that to be considered a Blue Point oyster, the bivalve must cultivate right here in the Great South Bay for at least 3 months of its life and prohibits the use of the name in any other circumstance, in an effort to stem the tide of imitations flooding the market. Unfortunately what had been there for eons took precious few years to destroy, and by the 1970's, the shellfish population in the Great South Bay declined to the point where real Blue Point Oysters hadn't been found on restaurant menus in my lifetime. Until now. We were here to investigate if they lived up to the legend.

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Sunny Days FYI FYI

Diana Reid



I found these "words of wisdom" from an unknown author and thought I would share them.

"There are two days in every week about which we should not worry.

Two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is yesterday with its mistakes and cares,

Its faults and blunders, its aches and pains.

Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday.

We cannot undo a single act we performed.

We cannot erase a single word we said.

Yesterday is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is tomorrow.

With its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance.

Tomorrow is also beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds.

But it will rise.

Until it does, we

have no stake in

tomorrow, for it is

yet unborn.

This just leaves

only one day....

Today...

Any person can

fight the battles of

just one day.

It is only when you

and I add the bur-

dens of those two

awful eternity's...

Yesterday and

tomorrow that we

break down.

It is not the experience of today that drives people mad.

It is the remorse and bitterness for something which happened yesterday

and the dread of what tomorrow may bring.

Let us therefore live but one day at a time".

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Bayport-Blue Point Honors Top Students

At Bayport-Blue Point School District's recent board of education meeting, the district's Class of 2021 valedictorian and salutatorian were each presented with a certificate and a medal in recognition of their outstanding academic and extracurricular accomplishments.

Photo courtesy of Bayport-Blue Point School District



At Bayport-Blue Point School District's March 2 Board of Education meeting, the district's Class of 2021 valedictorian, Lindsay Lessing (right), and salutatorian, Cecily Phua (left), were each presented with a certificate and a medal in recognition of their outstanding academic and extracurricular accomplishments.

Valedictorian Lindsay Lessing and salutatorian Cecily Phua have each established themselves as highly motivated individuals both inside and out of the classroom, and have often crossed paths while doing so. Lessing and Phua have each enrolled in 11 AP courses throughout their high school careers and have earned the designation of AP Scholar with Distinction. Both students are also heavily involved in the Tri-M Music Honor Society, Lessing as the chapter president and Phua as the treasurer, and are active members of Bayport-Blue Point High School's Interact community service club.

Throughout high school, Lessing also been part of the symphonic band, jazz band, full orchestra and pit orchestra, and has represented the district in the All-County ensembles on the oboe. She was a starting defender on the field hockey team that went on to win the county championships in 2019. While she is still deciding which college she will attend, she hopes to pursue a degree in engineering or physics in the fall.

Phua studies several instruments, with flute as her main focus. She has been named a NYSSMA All-State musician, having been selected as an alternate for both flute and piccolo. She has enjoyed performing in the pit orchestra, the LIFC Honors Flute Choir, SCMEA All-County ensembles and the Bay Area Summer Orchestra. She is also involved in the Peer Education Program and the Students Against Destructive Decisions club and has played on the girls varsity golf team since her freshman year. She is also still in the process of deciding which college to attend but plans to study both science and music performance.

Bayport-Blue Point School District congratulates both Lessing and Phua on their extraordinary achievements and thanks them for being such exemplary and well-rounded representatives of their district and community.



Bayport Civic Association



Councilwoman Kate Mullen recently administered the oath of office at the Bayport Civic Association 2021 swearing-in ceremony marking the group's 19th year of service. The Officers are (right to left) Sgt-at-Arms Joe Saetta, Treasurer Rich Wyeroski, Recording Secretary Kerrylyn Kraft, President Bob Draffin, Vice President Joe Libertelli and Historian Joe Ogno.



Discovering a Diversity of Authors

Earlier this winter and in honor of Black History Month, students and staff throughout Bayport-Blue Point School District were encouraged to read at least one book by a black author whose work they had not previously read. A wide variety of suggestions were available in the school libraries, spanning different time periods and



genres. Once each reader had finished their book of choice, they wrote a short book review, which entered them into a raffle for a chance to win a gift card. Students and staff alike enjoyed discovering the rich selection of work by the authors.

We're On a Roll!

By Kate Berube

Inspired by a recent community discussion on local culinary offerings, the Gazette set out to discover BBP's most beloved sandwich. The results, gathered over multiple social media platforms and dinner table discussions, were wide and varied. "I hadn't heard of half the sandwiches people were listing," remarked one local participant, "but by the time I finished reading through them, I was ready to try them all!" Though each offering had its enthusiastic supporters, two clearly came out a cut above the rest.

On the very top of the list is Cavanaugh's hot roast beef hero served on melted mozzarella garlic bread with waffle fries. Made the same way for the entirety of Cav's 35-year history, this time-tested favorite has the added benefit of being classically nostalgic comfort food. We find it goes best with a tall pint of Guinness and a good conversation. Customers are given some generous portions, so bring extra napkins and a big appetite.

Coming in a strong second, The Fish Store's classic flounder filet sandwich is surrounded by crisp lettuce, thick tomato slices, red onion, and home-made tartar sauce on an artisan bun.

Served with hand cut fries and their signature coleslaw, it's best enjoyed down by the water while on your lunch break with a cold Arnold Palmer. Openly endorsed by veteran Gazette editor Tom Reid, who states simply, "Seth makes a top notch sandwich over there."

And with all of the local contenders, each community member is bound to find their own favorite among the dozens of delicious sandwiches nominated. We hope it inspires you to #eatlocal tonight!



Photos: Jhysa Gonzales



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Celebrating Like Centenarians

Donning curlers, canes and gray hair, students at all three Bayport-Blue Point School District elementary schools recently celebrated the 100th day of school by dressing up as 100-year-olds. In addition to being silly in their costumes, the students also commemorated this milestone by participating in various lessons and activities related to the number 100.

Photos courtesy of Bayport-Blue Point School District

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Step Back in History Through Music is the latest online video release by The BAFFA Beat Goes on, presented by the Bay Area Friends of the Fine Arts. Historical events have often given birth to songs and music that we are familiar with long after those events are history. Please listen as the BAFFA Chorus, under the direction of Choir Director, Martha Campanile, performs two of those songs. Chester, composed by William Billings, is an a cappella piece that was considered an anthem of the American Revolution. After reading Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, Stephen Foster wrote My Old Kentucky Home. The National Endowment of the Arts rated his composition as one of the "Songs of the Century." Both songs are now part of American history. The video will be available at www.baffa.org, the BAFFA Facebook page or on YouTube beginning on March 31st. For further information call (631)589-9343.

Muñeca Arthouse announcing Opening of "Ratgrl at Home" exhibit

Blue Point exhibit March 18-April 4— Muñeca Arthouse is pleased to announce the opening of their new exhibit "Ratgrl at home, a new works show," by artist Ratgrl of Bohemia. Ratgrl is a prolific visual artist who has shown her work all over LI, NYC and BK. Her powerful series, "At home" breaks down identity of home to her. Whether it's the people, place of ethnic and cultural family origin, or country; she dissects her feelings of creating and being home. Ratgrl's first solo exhibit at Muñeca Arthouse comes after an intense year for the world. On the heels of losing her mother, 2020 saw her family being devastated by Covid-19. Losing her father in April to the virus and burying him while her brother was in a ventilator with the illness. As well as the rest of the chaos in the world.

Bio and Artist statement for

J. Valentin a.k.a Ratgrl | Artist & Owner of Muñeca Arthouse

Bio: Visual artist, J.Valentin or Ratgrl. weaves together many cultural and familial influences in her works. Known for her heartbreaking POP art style, Ratgrl works in traditional and digital media; incorporating a graffiti and comic book aesthetic to her work. She deals with serious and dark subject matter in a colorful, playful way, often creating single panel comic images. Influenced by loved ones here and gone, she honors them with color, remembrance, and sadness. Through street and public art on Long Island, she has cultivated an audience and following. Valentin continues to create new work, alongside her other ventures. J.Valentin has worked for and with many non-profits on L.I. including, East End Arts Council, Huntington Arts Council and Patchogue Arts Council (PAC). As of 2017, she has joined the Patchogue Arts Council as the first Latinx member of the board of trustees. Her most recent venture Muñeca Arthouse. A 3 year experiment and passion of artist Ratgrl to bring a contemporary graphic aesthetic to the arts community on Long Island. Located in lovely Blue Point, Muñeca Arthouse focuses on making the gallery an inclusive space that is more representational of our colors, cultures, gender and purse strings. Selling fine art, artist merch, kidrobot vinyl art toys, prints, postcards, jewelry, pottery, pins and more. Muñeca Arthouse is making it possible for everyone to be able to collect the art that moves them.

Websites: ratgrl.com, munecarthouse.com

Follow her on Social Media!

Facebook and Instagram: [@ratgrl_](https://www.instagram.com/ratgrl_)

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In Person Boating Classes Begin Again

By Kate Berube

Planning to operate a motorboat or JetSki this summer? Patchogue Bay Power Squadron, a non-profit group that teaches boating safety, has announced the return of in-person ABC boating classes, which allow attendees to learn the basics of boating and earn the NYS Boating Certification. The classes will be offered on two consecutive Saturdays, April 17 and April 24 at Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville. Both classes will be held outdoors, and masks and social distancing will be required. The cost of the course is \$75 per person and covers course materials.

As of January 2020, all boaters in NYS are required under Brianna's Law to complete and carry proof of a NYS Boating Certification. Age groups are being phased in over the course of the next several years to ensure everyone can comply with the law.

Born on or after Jan. 1, 1993 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2020. Born on or after Jan. 1, 1988 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2022. Born on or after Jan. 1, 1983 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2023. Born on or after Jan. 1, 1978 will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2024. All motorboat operators regardless of age will need a boating safety certificate beginning in 2025.

Anyone operating a Personal Watercraft (JetSki™, Wave Runner™, etc.) must currently have a boating safety certificate regardless of age, and must be at least 14 years old. NYS Boating Certification is a lifetime certification and can be added to your NYS issued driver's license, non-driver ID card, or learners permit. It's represented by a small anchor on your ID and will automatically be added each time you renew.

Spots are limited, to register contact: Mary Sullivan | LI Maritime Museum | Call: 631-854-4974 | Email: msullivan@limaritime.org



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New Documentary Captures the Heart of BBP's Celtic Spirit

By Kate Berube

For those currently counting the hours until the next BBP St. Patrick's Day Parade, you're not alone, and a new documentary might help hold you over.



The first episode in a music travel series entitled Sounding Home, the 36-minute film follows the Northport Pipe and Drum Band throughout their parade rituals during the beloved annual Bayport-Blue Point St. Patrick's Parade. Bagpipes Calling features Sayville's own Celtic musicians Tom Falco and Luke Powers, and is narrated by its filmmaker Andrea Wozny, herself a Northport bagpiper. The majority of the story is centered around the after celebration inside the legendary Grey Horse Tavern in Bayport, who's cemented place in the Long Island music scene once drew an eclectic pool of talent from near and far. For those acquainted with the area, the scenes are filled with local landmarks and familiar faces, including former Grey Horse proprietor Linda Ringhouse.

Wozny is a gifted storyteller, in equal parts folksy and sincere as she guides you through the day, but it's the introduction of expert piper Luke Powers that makes you stop to realize you are witnessing something truly special. When speaking of Irish music and culture, Powers exudes a passion that can't be feigned and its resulting authenticity is powerfully engaging, made all the more staggering when he begins to belt out Gaelic. You may have come for the beer, but you stayed to hear him play.



The Northport band is notable for its diverse membership, considering most pipe bands traditionally have a connection to a police, union, or fire association. The resulting camaraderie between the band members is tangible and translates effortlessly through the screen. The genuine affection they display for each other, particularly

Falco, is infectious and compels you to continue rooting for them long after the credits roll across the screen.

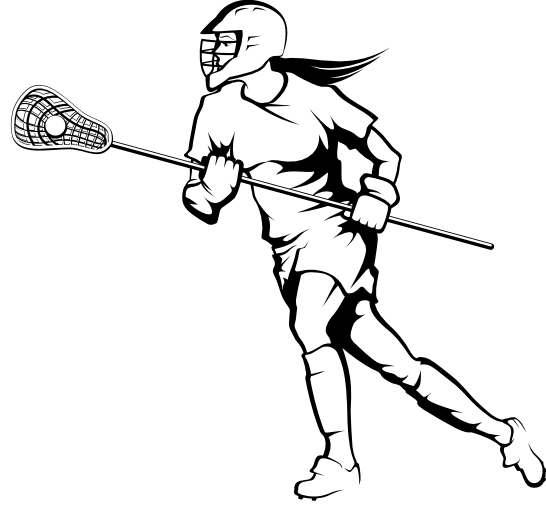
Bagpipes Calling is available for streaming on its website <https://www.andreawozny.com/bagpipescalling>



BBP Girls Lax Begins Season Ranked 16th in the Nation

Playing for the first time since Spring 2019, the Bayport Blue Point Girls Varsity Lacrosse team will return to the turf ranked 16th in the nation according to the US Lacrosse Magazine Nike's Pre-season National Top 25 Teams list.

The ranking comes as no surprise considering the all-star roster of BBP's team which includes powerhouse senior midfielders Alexis Niblock (USC), Maddigan Miller (Stanford), and Alexandra Fusco (Stony Brook) in their final season as Phantoms. 6 of the players are also Under Armour All Americans: Maddigan Miller, Alexis Niblock, Christine Dannenfeler, Maggie Kennedy, Keira Rooney, and Katie Clare. Congratulations to Coach Ryan Gick and all the varsity girls and good luck this season!



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BBPHS Boys' Volleyball Takes the Court for the First Time

By Kate Berube

Following an increase in interest, Fall 2018 saw the introduction of boys' volleyball to James Wilson Young Middle School. The middle school team met with much success, but for the players moving up there wasn't a comparable program available at the high school level, causing boys wanting to continue with volleyball past 8th grade to travel to East Islip to compete.

Until this year when, under the thoughtful leadership of Athletic Director Timothy Mullins, BBPHS launched their own boys' volleyball program. Curtis Williams, son of famed BBP girls' varsity volleyball coach Toni Mulgrave, leads the Phantoms in their inaugural JV season.

"These young men are an absolute joy to coach! They have high energy and a strong belief that we can compete with anybody," Coach Williams says of his players. "They fought hard for this program and I'm going to be right there fighting alongside them.

They've gotten better every time we've stepped on the court and that's all I could ever ask for as a coach."

Williams is a familiar face to the volleyball community, many of whom play club volleyball under him as well. "He always has something to work on with us. Even if you are the best player, he always has ideas that we can work on to make us better," says sophomore Jesse Renneisen. "He's an easy person to speak to and we can tell he really cares about us."

It's that bond and the general sense that they are creating a legacy for future generations here at BBP that makes this season so special despite its challenges. George Rose, a freshman who played during the first years of the middle school program, recently reflected on the experience: "It's really exciting being part of a brand-new team. I get to see the development of the program as I go through school and hopefully help to create a foundation that will last for years."

The boys hold out hope that a varsity team will be established in the near future, allowing the current team to grow with the program they founded. In the meantime, their inaugural season is only half way finished, and they're here to win.



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FOOTBALL RETURNS TO BBP

BBP Football triumphantly returned to the field for their long awaited season opener on March 22, securing a 28-14 win against Islip. Sophomore JJ Aiello scored three touchdowns and had two interceptions with Junior Jameson Smith bringing in the fourth TD. Kicker Rosario Constantino, who doubles as a varsity soccer star, completed all 4 field goal attempts. Senior Quarterback Luke Scharner, recently named to News12's Top 100 High School Football Players list, passed for an astonishing 158 yards and 2 touchdowns. Congratulations Phantoms on a stellar home opener!

Photos Mikaela Carroll



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Words Make You Think, Music Makes You Feel

By Dr. Meridith Leo

The NYSCAME/SCMEA All County 11th and 12th grade Festival can make you feel the joy that music brings to some hardworking musicians and artists. Each year, the New York State Council of Administrators of Music Education, and the Suffolk County Music Educators' Association work with local district representatives to select the most qualified musicians to participate in the 11th & 12th grade "All County Festival". Our own community musicians and singers were among those who were selected for this festival event. The following BBP students were selected for 2020/2021:

Luke Farley (12th grade) - Bass 1 - Mixed Chorus
Arianna Martinez (12th grade) - Alto 1 - Mixed Chorus
Katherine LaFountain (11th grade)- Soprano 1 - Mixed Chorus
Katie D'Ambrosio (11th grade)- Soprano 2 - Mixed Chorus
Jessica Schaller (11th grade)- Bb Clarinet - Concert Band
Colin Feddern (12th grade) - Trumpet - Concert Band
Christopher Cody (12th grade)- Violin - Symphony Orchestra
Christian Capitano (11th grade)- Double Bass - Symphony Orchestra
Lindsay Lessing (12th grade)- Oboe - Symphony Orchestra
Cecily Phua (12th grade) - Flute - Symphony Orchestra

"In acknowledgement of their continued hard work through this challenging year and their selection to this elite group, these outstanding musicians were presented with Certificates of Recognition at the BBP Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. Well done!", said Janet Borowski a parent and SEA-BBS member. Truly the passion these students have for music and singing is what helps us to remember that life is one grand sweet song, so start the music!

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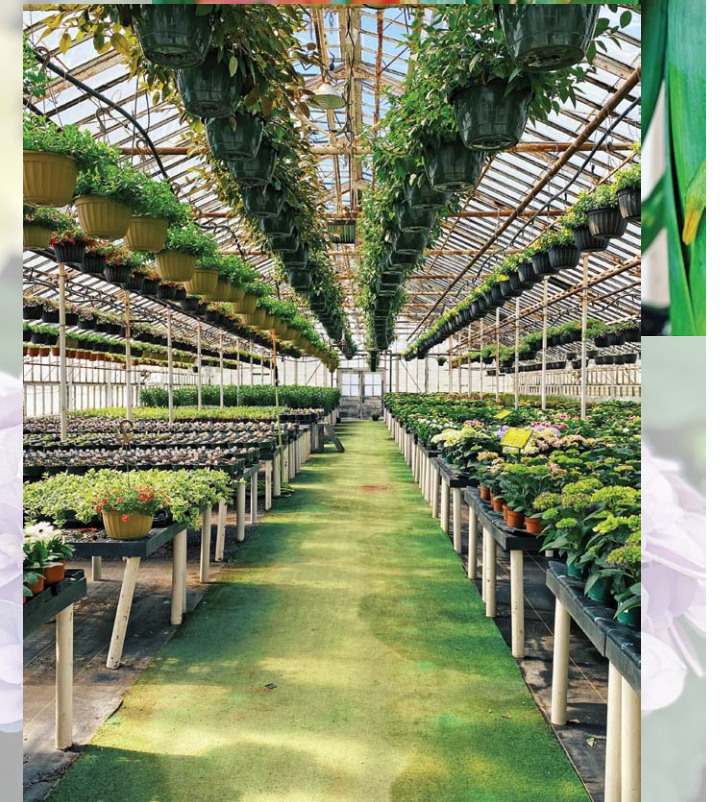
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Spring Has Arrived at the Bayport Flower Houses

by Kate Berube

Spring is here and nowhere is that more apparent than at the Bayport Flower House! Awash in vibrant spring hues, the greenhouses are abound in annuals just in time for the warmer weather to arrive. After a particularly long and snowy winter, it's most certainly a welcome sight.



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The Gazette's Get Around



Ann Dorothy Garcia, 95, keeps up with local news with The Gazette while relaxing in Merritt Island, FL.

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Stellar Spellers

Bayport-Blue Point School District congratulates fifth graders Julian Fernandez from Academy Street Elementary School, Nicholas Morrow from Blue Point Elementary School and Eric Swink from Sylvan Avenue Elementary School, who each won the spelling bee at their respective school. The three students, who have now advanced to compete in the 2021 NYC Regional Spelling Bee, were honored at the district's March 2 board of education meeting in recognition of their spelling accomplishments.

Photo courtesy of Bayport-Blue Point School District

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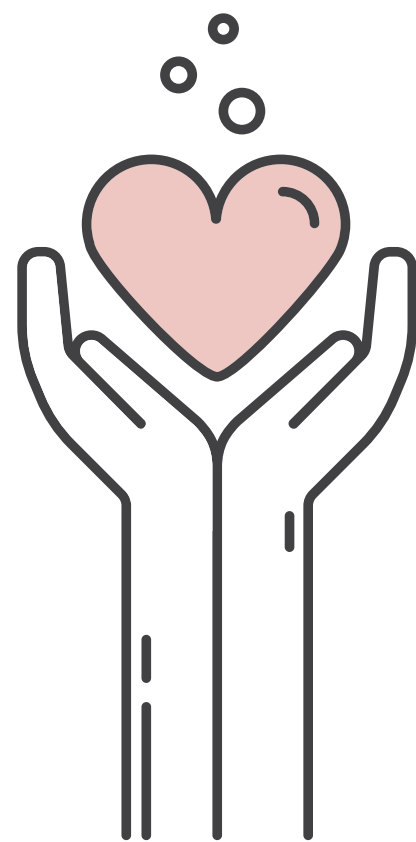
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The New Norm

By Christine Spencer, LMHC

I don't know about you, but every time I hear someone say, "The new norm," I feel my blood boil. I pray to God this is not the "new norm" and why the heck would we want it to be? It is hard to believe that it has been a year since the world shut down and all of our lives changed forever. I hope you take a minute, (or ten) to validate your survival and accomplishments during that horrific time. Yes, we will all have stories for years about the pandemic, but the sad part is I think we will all have some scars as well.

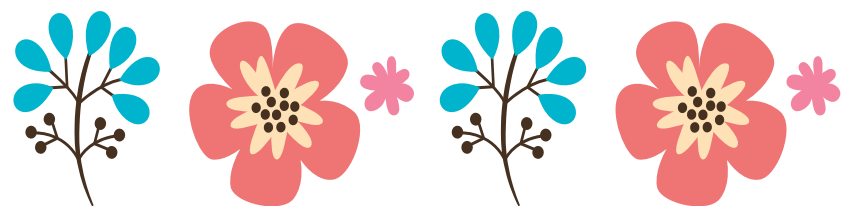
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported in June 2020, "out of people surveyed more than 40 percent reported symptoms of anxiety, depression, and increased substance use in addition to other struggles. And more than 10 percent said that they had seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days compared to just over 4 percent who said the same thing in 2018." There is no question, read any survey, that there are elevated levels of stress, anxiety, depression,

suicidal ideations, substance use and overall adverse mental health over the past year. Mental health professionals have worked harder over this past year to accommodate the increase in symptoms in our own clients as well as adjusting to a bigger caseload requiring much more of our time and attention. This cannot be the new norm; stress, isolation, economic pain and adverse mental health.

As the world starts to slowly open up again let's self-reflect on the things that worked for us during the pandemic. I have seen firsthand how this community has come together to support each other by shopping local, getting take out from our neighborhood restaurants, checking on our neighbors, and enjoying all that Bayport Blue Point has to offer by getting out on foot and bike. Prioritizing our health has been a common theme. People are working out at home, walking, running or participating in the many outside exercise classes available. Spending more time with our immediate family and being able to all sit around the dining room table for a meal that isn't rushed has been one of my greatest joys. Having the opportunity to be more engaged in our child's learning, whether good or bad, has developed long lasting bonds. A survey that pulled at my heart strings was conducted by Shelter Animals, who runs a database that tracks shelter and rescue activity. They reported, "Pet adoptions during the pandemic, the group, which tracks about 500 rescue organizations across the country, recorded 26,000 more pet adoptions in 2020 than in the year before — a rise of about 15 percent." More families have increased their unconditional love by our furry friends. This is the new norm I could definitely get behind; prioritizing health, family, community and animals. Interestingly enough, when we switch our focus from negative stimuli such as the virus, death of loved ones, social isolation, political unrest, virtual learning, and loss of jobs, to things that bring us joy and pleasure such as engaging in activities that bring us overall happiness, our brains will begin to rewire.

The saying, "be kind to one another, you never know what someone is struggling with," has more impact after this past year. Everyone is struggling in one way or another and there is no hierarchy to pain and suffering. It is real and serious no matter what. So now more than ever let's sit around that family table a little longer, cherish our elderly population, respect our essential workers, reach out to someone if you are struggling and ask for help, go for a walk, sit by the beach, cuddle with your animals, play with your kids, have a date night with your soul mate and most importantly, prioritize your self-care. If healing is the "new norm" and recovering from a year of unrest and turmoil, we need to reset our intentions and priorities. Look back over this past year and ask yourself, "What life changes improved my life and which life changes decreased joy and pleasure?" Recalculate accordingly.

Resilience is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or toughness." The pandemic challenged this quality and tested all of our resiliency. We survived and soon we will thrive because we are alive and even more so because of the storm we weathered. Our resiliency was put to the test and we rose the occasion, we are resilient and able to spring back into action. The nice weather is on its way and the virus is decreasing. Give yourself permission to move forward with a new destination and purpose. Yes, there was loss, pain and suffering over this past year; validate and mourn, but we are not going to stay stuck in those emotions. It is time to heal, grow and reclaim our life's purpose. Take the first step, set your goals, have a grateful heart and when you look back a year from now you will be amazed at how far you've come.



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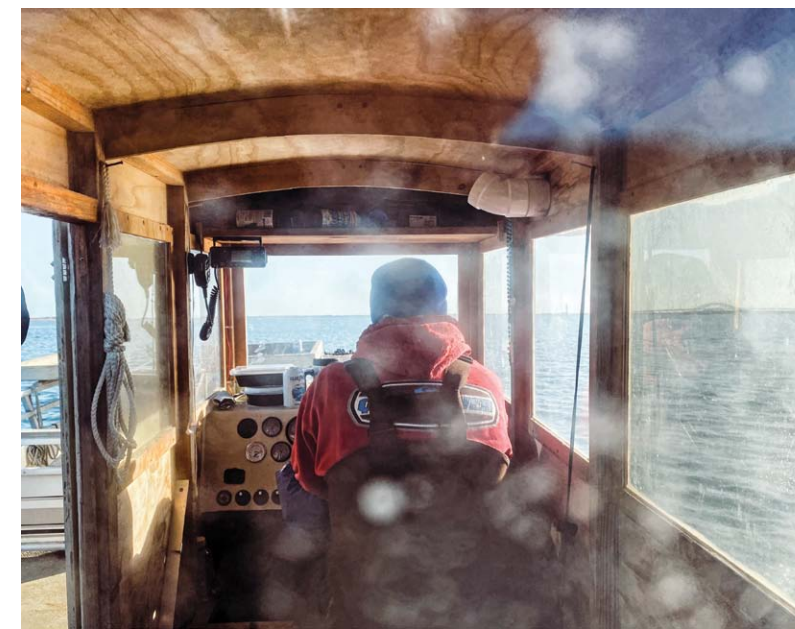
OUR LOCAL

Shops & Restaurants

Blue Point Oysters from page 1



All photos Belinda Randolph Mills



Smothered in hot sauce and a creamy horseradish, Maris Stella Blue Point's go down smooth, particularly when accompanied by Blue Point Brewing's Shore Thing, a pale lager crafted on sight with a touch of Amagansett sea salt. You can drink easy knowing every pint contributes to the efforts underway to revive the Great South Bay, as a portion of each purchase funds four local nonprofits immersed in clean water initiatives. The truth is, there's a reason things produced on our island are nationally known; the secret to our delicious bagels, beer, and oysters lies in our water. For a long time, it's been in dangerous decline.

Keenan Boyle is a third generation baymen, like his father and grandfather before him. A home-grown Sayville native, Keenan is the caretaker of the Sayville Historical Society's Edwards Homestead, a 1785 farmhouse where he resides with his family. But ask anyone in these parts, and they'll tell you Keenan is the man to see about oysters. At 6 feet 7 inches, he wears the moniker TallMuthaShucka as a badge of honor. His laid-back affability and vast knowledge of the water endears him to library patrons and bar flies alike and generates a loyal following of shellfish enthusiasts. He's committed to taking back the name Blue Point to mean unequivocally grown here in the Great South Bay on the South Shore of Long Island. And what better place to get that message out, than at Blue Point Brewery where if you're lucky, you can catch him shucking oysters so fresh they were living in the sea that afternoon and spinning tales of a bygone era of bivalve glory.

After more than a decade of gathering other farmers' yields, Keenan leased 2 acres of local seabed through the Town of Islip's aquaculture program in January 2020 and started up his own operation, turning the TallMuthaShucka name into its own brand. His inaugural crop is set to go to market in 2022 as genuine Blue Point oysters. In the meantime, he works hand in hand with other local providers bringing their fare to the masses, including the incredible Maris Stella's we tossed back at the brewery.

The next day photojournalist (and adventure aficionado) Belinda Randolph-Mills and I set out for Captree Boat Basin where we met up with Keenan and Maris Stella's founder, Sixto Portilla, for a first-hand look at how sustainable shellfish cultivation is being reinvigorated on the south shore. Aboard Sixto's work boat, the late afternoon sun was still unseasonably warm, and as I listened to our miniature expedition team talk shop, I leaned back to hold tight to the pure joy of being back on the Great South Bay after a long and difficult winter.

Sixto, a biologist by trade, was conducting research at a local hatchery when he won the lease lottery for an acre of seabed through Islip's newly established program. Starting in May 2014, they had 20,000 oysters that first harvested in 2015, which grew to 500,000 oysters this year, as they worked to catch up with the demand. "He's been doing it for years, so he has the most established farm," Keenan explained to us as we cut through the bay toward the under-water farmland. "His product is consistent and always available. The oysters I get from him have a deep cup and plump meat which is what I'm looking for." I'm told that prized deep cup is attributed to the turning and care the oysters receive, a labor-intensive task that can be brutal during New York winters. The meat is made possible by the proximity to the Fire Island Inlet, and the steady flow of clean water and food it provides.

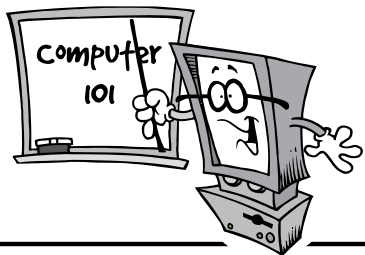
"Each year since we've been here, the water seems to get clearer and clearer." Sixto, clad in a pair of waders, jumped into the frigid bay to haul one of the dozens of oyster bags resting on the bottom of the shallow water. Those oysters will be moved to floating cages as the weather warms up, but since October have been residing on the seabed floor. Dozens of oysters are dumped out of the single bag to the wooden counter. As Keenan expertly shucked open the freshest oysters I'll ever be privy to, Sixto notes that etiquette dictates the first one eaten be unsullied by any sauces, to allow for the detection of the unique underlying flavor. Acquiescing, I took my time to chew through the soft yield to the undiluted briny sweet flavor. In the ensuing quiet Sixto asked, "How does it taste?" For a person who traffics in words by the count, I was momentarily at a loss for them. It was both entirely different and strikingly familiar. If taste is the dominant memory sense, the triggered sensation can only be described as nostalgic. It was like diving into the heart of a wave on the clearest sun-drenched summer day at Davis. "It tastes like Home," I answered.

Look for the second part of this feature in next month's Gazette, for a first-hand look at how an unlikely union between environmental conservation groups, local municipalities, science researchers, and fisherman is bringing our bay back from the brink and how you can get involved.



pc Help101

By Rich Vatalaro



Hello readers,

Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) are popular but often misunderstood. There are many misconceptions about them—misconceptions that may be stopping you from



adding a useful layer to their security and privacy defenses.

So, here are some common myths.

1. VPNs are for illegal activity.

Some people think that VPNs are only useful for doing things like torrenting, accessing geo-locked content, or getting around work/school/government firewalls. While they certainly are used for those activities, that doesn't mean that's all they're good for or that everyone who uses a VPN is planning to do something illegal or immoral with it.

As awareness of corporate surveillance and criminal hacking has grown, so have concerns about personal privacy. Many people believe that it should be their choice when and how they give up some of their privacy, and don't want prying eyes on their normal, legitimate behavior. A VPN gives them more control over what they share and with who, and a little less to worry about.

2. I don't need a mobile VPN.

Some people think they don't need a mobile VPN because their carrier looks after their security or has a lot to say about privacy.

While it is true that carriers and ISPs have a secure telecom infrastructure because they are bound by law to do so, many ISPs have shown they are also extremely interested in tracking their subscribers and profiting off their data. Even though it feels like you're protected behind that special IP address that is automatically assigned to you by the ISP when you take up the service, your ISP can, themselves, see exactly:

When you log on and off

The websites you visit.

How much time you spend on those sites?

and more... depending on your habits and the apps you use.

Using a VPN shifts your trust from your ISP to your VPN provider, so you can choose to use your carrier's secure telecom infrastructure without giving your carrier access to your browsing data.

3. VPNs will slow down my internet connection.

Since a VPN sends your network traffic on a bit of detour it must travel further than it would without a VPN. Technically that means your traffic is slower, but that doesn't necessary mean it has to be noticeably slower. Most VPN providers offer you the choice to choose a server near you, which makes the detour smaller. Also, encrypting, and decrypting data takes time. However, there is a benefit to using a next-gen VPN with modern encryption compared to older VPNs. The technology has improved over the years and VPNs have become faster and more efficient.

4. My VPN won't let me watch Netflix.

Many streaming sites and apps don't like it when you use a VPN to watch their content and some just outright ban it (because they have an obligation to lock certain content based on region), which leaves some people believing they must choose between privacy or entertainment.

Now, if getting around locked content is not your main purpose for using a VPN, simply look for one that offers a bypass feature, otherwise known as a split tunnel. This basically tells your VPN that certain apps get a pass and can connect without being encrypted, thus "splitting" the tunnel into TWO—one that is private and one that is not. So, you can have your banking app running, shielded by your VPN, and watch Netflix.

5. VPNs are for geeks and power users.

While this may have been true in the past, VPNs have become easier to use over the years. With the introduction of paid VPNs, vendors have taken it upon themselves to lower prices and improve quality, and to make their products easier to use.

You should expect a straightforward installation process and intuitive functionality that makes using a VPN just as easy as checking your mail or browsing social media safely.

In closing, I hope everyone is continuing to stay safe and COVID-19 free. If you're eligible hopefully you have received your vaccination or at least have it scheduled and that we all continue to do our part by wearing our masks, socially distancing, and limiting ourselves to small groups. Remember I am always available to offer advice, answer your questions, and access your PC remotely for repairs and tutoring. I am back to making house calls again with the necessary precautions. I have added Smart Home Speakers such as Alexa and Google Home to my list of services from setup to automating your home. I can install your new equipment and can show you how to use them. I can set up your Wi-Fi or wireless printing and show you how to use your new Smartphone. Any situation you encounter or to simply answer a question via an e-mail or phone call I am available. Simply send your questions to: Rich@PCHelp101.com or call me at 631.590.1469.

Happy Passover and Happy Easter.

Thanks for reading,

Rich Vatalaro

Lockdown Creativity

By John Cox

My wife Kathy loves antiques. Such is her love for them, that she's known to browse at every antique shop and auction house close to Sayville. When we were married in 1972, she already had a set of old caned chairs for our handed down ice yellow formica kitchen table, soon replaced by a much older round oak table from a local auction house. It just so happens, I love old homes and old stuff in general, and most of these pieces Kathy comes by require the use of a good carpenter, which I happen to be, so clearly she married the right man. This is a story of one such antique.

25 years ago I came home from work to find an 8' high 5' wide and 2' deep absolutely gorgeous French Armoire. This piece is beautiful, actually from France and a deep red brown oak. It has handmade, highly decorative forged hinges and included a skeleton



key lock with the original key!

The doors were meticulously carved with swirls and leaves shaped like aloe all around and an embossed field in the center of each door. The inside was as beautiful as the outside, with four oak raised panels on each of the two doors. Every edge was chamfered and the chamfer flowed softly to each corner where it was square again. The top had a very ornate carving on the front, there are fluted half columns with arrow heads carved into the center where the doors meet and along the length of both outside corner. I was clearly in love with this piece... but what on earth am I going to do with it? It was gigantic, my ceilings are 8'6" and it just barely fit standing up! This piece was worthy of another addition to my home. Kathy found it in an auction house in Patchogue and

just could not leave it there, it had to come home with her. I get it, I have the same disease when it comes to old cars and motorcycles but this was in my sitting room against a wall and it was a giant, the proverbial elephant in the room.

With no where to put it, Kathy cleverly broke it down and stored it in the basement. But since then, we have this work of art in pieces in the cellar, the doors would call to me whenever I passed them but they really called out to Kathy. Every time I remodeled a room in the house, Kathy would say, let's use these somewhere. How about a head board or a wall ornament over the couch? I could feel this armoire's presence in the house for 25 years. It became the Thing In The Cellar, I would look away whenever I passed it, afraid it would follow me upstairs and want to be mounted somewhere. When COVID hit, we were at home like everyone else looking at all the work that needed to be done. Like many people locked down, the bathroom on the first floor was suddenly screaming to be remodeled. It hadn't bothered me all that much before, when I would leave early and come home late, but there it was talking to me. So I ripped it out and sure enough, standing there among the exposed studs, was my Kathy saying "Those doors down in the basement would look good in here."

Oh boy, now what? Too small for an entrance door, too big for a vanity. Ok Kathy, you come up with an idea and my brilliant beautiful wife did. The room is fairly large for a first floor bath 6'6" x 9' with the vanity, toilet and shower along the left side wall. The right side was just wall so we removed some studs, put in a header and I just happened to have some oak veneer in my warehouse that had ironically been laying around for the past 25 years. I lined the opening at the back with the oak veneer and installed 8 oak shelves. Now this opening is five feet wide and five feet six inches high and four and one half inches deep, with 8 shallow shelves. We mounted the doors there, skinned the head piece that is also big two inches deep and put the armoire front on the wall over that opening.

It finally found a place in my home. Now there is an elongated seat, you know the one, in the bathroom directly across from this beauty and I often times sit on this seat and the armoire now sings to me a beautiful song, a pleasure to look at. I now have the largest antique locking, carved, fluted, arrow head medicine cabinet in the world. All finished it looked warm and inviting, a work of art really. I went to open the door only to find it locked. Kathy had hidden the key from grandchildren who love to open and close things, especially with a skeleton key. I went to open the doors for the first time, slid the key in the keyhole with a satisfying click and slowly I opened the carved door. And there on the shelf, of this world record medicine cabinet, was a lone jar of spaghetti sauce all by itself.

Walter Found Another Cool Bird

This is a female Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*); the male lacks the rusty coloration. It's a stout large-headed bird that frequents trees and shrubs that surround ponds and streams. From their perches they spot fish and dive, head first, into the water to catch their prey in their long, strong bills. They make a distinctive chattering/racheting sound. The latin species name for the Belted Kingfisher is a variation of the word "halcyon"; they are said to be omens of times of prosperity and happiness: the halcyon days. I hope we see a lot of kingfishers this spring. We could all use a renewal of prosperity and happiness.

(Author's note: I had planned to use a photo of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird for this edition, but I could not locate the photos. However, I wanted you to know that this is the time to prepare for their arrival in mid-May. The first thing you need to do is attract them. This red is the easiest color for them to spot as they go zipping by. Red flowers are good (consult with the good folks at the Bayport Flower House or Daisy Gardens for the best nectar producing flowers to plant) but also think of other means: Red cushions on you law furniture, red umbrellas on your picnic table and any kind red lawn ornament. Once you attract them, you need to give them a reason to stay. . You can also use red-colored hummingbirds feeders filled with commercial or home-made nectar. The nectar should be clear. You can use



*Belted Kingfisher
2020 Long Island, NY*

commercially available nectar, but avoid those with red dye. You can make your own by adding 1/4 cup sugar to 1 cup of water. I use tap water that I heat to drive off the chlorine. Feeders will need to be cleaned frequently, especially during hotter weather. It may be a bit labor intensive, but seeing these birds in your backyard is a true summertime delight.
-Walter Petrule



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Creating customer awareness is key to nurturing your business's success. With reliable distribution by the US Postal Service to more than 13,000 upper-income households in our area, The Gazette is an advertising vehicle that delivers. Put our reach and reputation to work for your business with a strategic advertising plan that will help build your brand and bring more customers to your door.

The Gazette

Bayport-Blue Point and Sayville
363-0154 | www.bayportbluepointgazette.com

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Here's 7 Great Reasons To Call Bryn:

- ✓ BBP Schools Alum
- ✓ Advanced Web Strategy
- ✓ Extensive Print Marketing
- ✓ Expert Negotiating Skills
- ✓ Life-Long Neighborhood Resident
- ✓ Active Chamber of Commerce Member
- ✓ Top 1% of Real Estate Agents Nationwide




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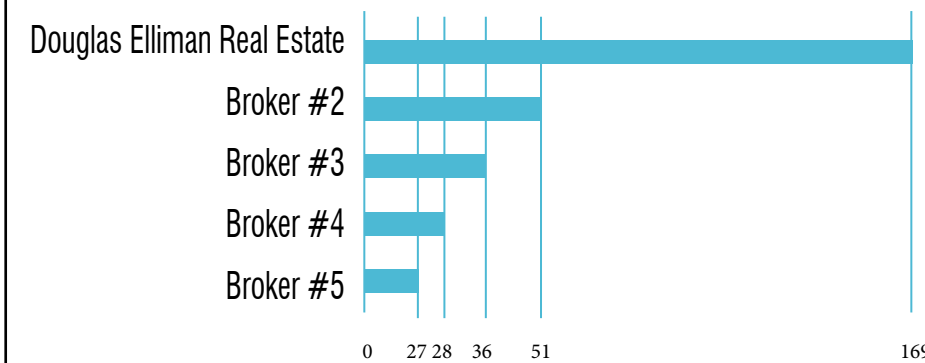
e-PRO, SFR, SRES
Licensed Associate R.E. Broker



631-363-5455 – Direct
631-332-8899 – Cell/Text
631-585-8500 – Office
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Top 5 Real Estate Companies By # of Residential Homes SOLD In Bayport, Blue Point, Sayville & W. Sayville Between 1/1/2020 & 12/31/2020



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