

Fire Island Chronicle

Volume III Issue 6

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August 6, 2016

Summer on Fire Island



Photo credit: Nicole Brems

FREE

Warrior Appreciation Night in Ocean Beach

By Alejandro Serrano

More than 30 veterans marched down Baywalk Avenue, in between salutations from Ocean Beach firefighters, police officers and the general public, from the ferry terminal to the north ferry dock on Friday, June 22 for this year's Warrior Appreciation Night.

"It was very successful," said former OBFD chief and Warrior Appreciation Night co-organizer Andy Miller. "People had a great time and our honored guests enjoyed themselves immensely."

This year's proceeds were in support of Hope for the Warriors and Project9Line - two nonprofit organizations that work on reintegrating returning veterans into civilian life through means such as empowerment.

"We donate to different veteran assistant groups and have brought different groups into the fold and introduce them to Fire Island," Miller said. "And introduce Fire Island to the different groups."

Veterans were greeted by the Bay Shore Fire Department with a flag tunnel and the BSHFD marching band, on the

mainland, prior to boarding a special 4:15 p.m. ferry that gets escorted across the bay by police and fire boats from the south shore.

Warrior Appreciation Night was started nine years ago when a couple OBFD members decided that something had to be done in appreciation of returning veterans. It has been an annual event since then, with the exception of two years following superstorm Sandy in 2012, according to Miller.

The first year there were about 10 veterans and the following year the amount doubled and kept increasing every year, according to OBFD Chief Ian Levine. This year, neighboring fire and police departments - like the Ocean Bay Park and Kismet Fire Departments - assisted the OBFD with the event.

"The whole beach comes together for this," said Levine. "Try to raise a lot of money."

Every January the OBFD votes to do the event again and then starts preparation if the vote passes, according to Levine. Proceeds from the night went to The Wounded Warrior Project when Warrior Appreciation Night first

started. However after discordance with the OBFD's values, organizations were changed. The organizations that receive the funds are also considered in January's vote.

"We put it out to the membership to make sure that they still want to do the same causes and stuff like that," said Levine.

The discordance Levine alluded to were the spending habits of the Wounded Warrior Project - 40 percent of the nonprofits' \$225 million fundraised money was spent on its employees in 2014, according to a Jan. 27, 2016 New York Times report.

Levine said he hopes this year's event fundraised approximately \$100 thousand, if not more with donations. Tickets to the cocktail party were \$50 and OBFD t-shirts were sold by the ferry terminal for \$20 - \$5 from every sale was donated. Donations for the warrior cause are still being accepted.

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Fire Island Chronicle

Publisher/Editor
Nicole Brems

Writers

Ben Amato
Sybil Bruncheon
Thomas Carey
Katie Cunningham
Nick Kalantzopoulos
Mackenzie Lowry
Nikita Ramos
Devyn Savitsky
Laura Schmidt
Alejandro Serrano
Charles Witek

For information regarding editorial and advertising:

631-875-8903
fireislandchronicle@gmail.com
fireislandchronicle.com
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Blue Point, NY 11715

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Letter From the Editor

Hello Fire Islanders!

It's hard to believe it's already August! This summer is flying by, in a few short weeks it will be Labor Day.

August is full of exciting events across the island that we'll be covering, I'm excited to share in the experiences with all of you. Be sure to let us know if you're involved with an event that you'd like to have covered.

Best, Nicole Brems
Publisher/Editor

Ocean Beach Youth Group's Performance: "Seasons of Love"

By Alejandro Serrano

"Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes, how do you measure a year?" sang Ocean Beach Youth Group (OBYG) kids, working their way to an audience on-beat clap along and big finish of "Seasons of Love" from the musical "Rent."

The song was the last one of nine in this year's OBYG camp performance of "Seasons of Love," a musical theater review, on Friday, July 29 at the Ocean Beach community house.

"It's nice to be able to put on a show that is camp-centered and Fire Island-centered because it is such a community," said OBYG drama director Kerri Ford. "It is a group effort. It is more about the process and the love that is here for OBYG."

The performance began with

five kids discussing what should be the song of the summer for the camp. After listening to the radio to no avail they decided to host auditions to learn what summer means to different campers.

Auditions were broken up to age groups of 6-, 3- and 4-, 8-, 5-, 9-, 7- and 10-year-olds - each performing a different number varying from "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" from "Mary Poppins" to "Hakuna Matata" from "The Lion King."

"It's a mix of what would work well with them and what would look good on them," said Ford.

Campers and camp counselors had five weeks to prepare for the musical. The focus for kids 10 years old and younger was a musical theater piece. For older kids it was improvisation, and they were welcomed to learn the musi-

cal theater pieces, according to Ford.

"The kids are dedicated," she said. "They come to rehearsal and the kids that had lines put in the effort and would meet with me for five minutes after camp."

It was a good turnout according to camp counselor Logan Middleton. Middleton, a Babylon resident and Ocean Beach summer local, said he has been a part of the OBYG as long as he can remember.

"It went smoothly. There were some tweaks here and there, but that happens," he said. "They kind of do something different every year which allows campers to do something totally different. The camp is very close to me."

There was an announcement of a special dance from the Hip-Hop Electives, before

the 10-year-olds closed auditions. Approximately a dozen campers and a couple of camp counselors from the hip-hop dance group took the stage to Jason Derulo's upbeat "Get Ugly."

Campers were still unsure about what the song of the summer should be, after auditions were over in the musical. A little girl read what every group had just sung from an enlarged notebook page on the right of the stage. After campers agreed there can only be one summer song the piano part of "Seasons of Love" began playing over the loudspeaker and the curtains opened for the finale.

"I wish we had an organization like this in my other village" said OBYG director Ralph Scordino. "Some great woman said this and here you have it: 'It takes a village!'"



Warrior Appreciation Night continued

"We cover our expenses and we pay for the tent and whatever food we can't get donated or whatever we want that we have to pay for," he said. "And then everything else is 100 percent given to the two organizations that we support. We don't take any administrative fees or anything like that."

Both Miller and Levine thanked people who helped this year and in previous years, but said they want to expand the event for next year.

"Each year we try to get bigger and bigger," said Levine. "It's a really heart-warming event and it's really for the warriors. We are doing it to give them a good feeling and to say 'thank you' to them."

Fire Island Association Summer Meeting

By Alejandro Serrano

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Col. David A. Caldwell implored public comment of the proposed \$1.2 billion Fire Island to Montauk Point (FIMP) project feasibility study at the Fire Island Association's meeting on Saturday, July 30.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' New York District released the draft of the FIMP proposal early last week and public comment is open until Sept. 30, according to a July 21 Army Corps press release.

"We want your feedback," Caldwell told attendees in the community house. "If we don't get the feedback we can't address the issues...It's impossible to do something like this with this many people involved were everybody is going to be happy. What we are trying to do is come up with the best solution."

The 1960 Congress approved the coastal storm risk improvement project for the area, however a rough relationship between the interior department and the Army Corps of Engineers prolonged progression of FIMP for 56 years, according to Fire Island National Seashore Superintendent Chris Soller.

Now as the relationship is better and the project is advancing, Soller said people must remember Fire Island is a barrier island with active natural processes.

"We have a different missions, the core of engineers and the park service, and we found a balance in the plan that we put forward that is looking to provide protection and dune reconstruction in front of the communities were the infrastructure is and allowing the existing processes and the dune systems

that exist in the other areas to build naturally," he said.

Caldwell was a special guest at the FIA meeting and outlined the proposed FIMP project with a 13-slide presentation and several print-outs. Caldwell also gave an update on the Fire Island to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) short-term storm precaution project.

The FIMI stabilization project will be undertaking eight contracts - one of the contracts, the Smith Point County Park one, is already complete and the Robert Moses State Park work is almost complete, Caldwell said. The third contract was broken down to six smaller contracts, bringing the total to eight. The Robert Moses State Park to Seaview to Fair Harbor contract was approved Friday, July 29 Caldwell said and construction will begin this fall. Remaining contracts are underway with construction projected for fall 2017.

FIA Vice President Rodman Paul said he is concerned the elongation of the time table for the FIMP project will stagger its passage in Congress and jeopardize necessary funds, but nonetheless completing FIMI is a priority.

"First things first the dunes have to be built and then we have to worry about maintaining them," he said. "FIMP's passing in Congress is super important to the maintenance of FIMI."

He also said he understands why the dunes aren't built in the summer months to not interrupt leisure, but he is wondering if the delay is worth it.

The Army Corps of Engineers began a reformulation study of the project before super-storm Sandy struck in 2012. Sandy's aftermath shifted

the project - a big cost of the project is lifting houses to reduce storm risk said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Planning Center for Coastal and Storm Risk Management Director Joe Vietri.

"Hurricane Sandy dumped onto the New York/New Jersey area \$5.1 billion dollars," he said. "An entire years' allocation of [the Army Corps of engineers] money was given to this area for a large series of complex problems. Of the 114 studies currently in the Army Corps of Engineers, New York District has 47 of them."

With large amounts of money at stake, decisions such as finalizing the project's draft are not taken lightly, according to Caldwell.

"If you are going to address the right things in the environment, if you are going to address the right things in the community you really have to go through this detailed process in order to end up with a smart decision at the end of the day and not rush into something that you are going to regret 20 years later," he said.

Maggie Fischer Memorial Cross Bay Swim

By Laura Schmidt

The Maggie Fischer Memorial Cross Bay Swim was held July 22 on a beautiful, sunny morning and competitors were ready before the sun rose. Shuttles took competitors to the start line at 5:30 a.m. The race began at the Fire Island Lighthouse Dock and ended in Bay Shore with 6.2 miles in between for swimmers and kayakers to push themselves to the finish.

The first recorded swim took place September 5, 1947 and had only 15 competitors. This year's race had 108, a record high in the swim's history. The swim is a fundraiser in the name of Maggie Fischer a 17-year-old Saint Anthony's High School student who passed away just days before the 1999 Cross Bay Swim. Fischer was a loving friend to all, a member of the swim and crew team at her school and a lifeguard at the Saltaire community.

Fischer was always a passionate and generous soul who strived for success her whole life, according to her close friends. She never gave up when she set her mind to accomplish something and it's because of Fischer's beautiful spirit and will to never give up that this race is now dedicated in her name.

Competitors this year ranged in age from 17 to 64 years old. Of all swimmers overall, Christopher Arena, 17, of Amityville, finished first with an amazing total time of 1:43:37. The second place was earned by Noah Chernik, 18, of Bay Shore, with a time of 1:54:55.

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Cross Bay Swim continued

Meghan Slattery, 18, of Bayport took third place overall with a time of 1:56:48. Slattery, a recent graduate of Saint Anthony's High School, was also this year's recipient of the scholarship given in Fischer's name. Since each swimmer in the race must raise a minimum of \$500 that goes toward Hospice Care Network Children's and Family Bereavement Program, some of that money goes toward a scholarship given to a student each year as they move forward with their education.

The money for the hospice program goes toward counselors to help those who are struggling with an illness, as well as family and friends who need help getting through difficult times.

The cross bay swim is a challenge no matter what weather conditions, but this year, swimmers and kayakers were lucky to compete during a morning with a beaming sun and mild wind. There were friends and family waiting by the finish line to support their loved ones competing. Sweatshirts, T-shirts, towels and food were being sold and those proceeds went to the hospice program.

Trophies were given to the top three competitors, female and male, in each of the three age groups. It was a great race to put money toward a good cause and help those who truly need it. Next years race is expected to be another joyous event for people to gather and support one another.

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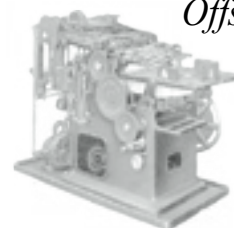
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Island Roots

Tales From Fire Island People

Sally Potterton

By Mackenzie Lowry

I first met Sally two summers ago. My friend, Jake, was living in her house for the summer while he helped her son do work on their post-hurricane home. Jake would come to work at Rachel's every day and tell me about this British woman he lived with, who would tell him her stories over tea. In her prime, she drew fashion art for big New York papers and in her school days in England, The Rolling Stones played at her dances.

So, one sunny afternoon, I pulled on a dress, grabbed a box of cookies, and went over to meet Sally. I'm not sure how old she is, maybe in her 70's, and I'm not sure she knows exactly how old she is either. Once you reach a certain age, you stop counting.

Sally wears big glasses with tortoiseshell frames and has thin, wavy white hair. If you've been in Ocean Beach long enough, you have probably seen her artwork on community posters or possibly family portraits in your friends' summer homes. For years, she made money on portrait commissions around the island.

Sally has been coming to Fire Island for over 40 years, with at least 20 of them spent living here full-time with her late husband, Mike Taylor, and her son, Tom. Originally, they lived in Ocean Bay Park before moving to "the big city," Ocean Beach. At the time, living in Fire Island full time had become something of a trend.

"There were a lot of people who did it. It was actually quite friendly. There were firemen's dinners all winter. About once a month they'd have these dinners and we'd go dance... We'd all see each

other at the post office. It was a big meeting place in the winter - still is."

Mike left his job on the mainland to work on houses and volunteer with the Ocean Bay Park Fire Department. Sally kept up with her artwork; taking trips to the mainland every few weeks to meet with clients until the invention of fax machines made her job easier. She worried about Tom making friends with few kids around, but wherever kids were, he found them. Their first few winters were tough to get through, but they fell in love with the peacefulness of island life.

Nowadays, living full time on the island is much less common and even Sally only comes down in the summer. In the years Sally has spent here, she's left her mark not only through art, but also in more subtle ways.

On the day I first sat down to meet Sally for tea, Ocean Beach was spraying pesticides to kill mosquitos. We helped her close all the doors and windows of her Wilmont home before sitting on the porch for teatime - it was too hot to be stifled inside.

"The trucks come by with these big blue clouds of smoke trailing behind them, and children chase them around the streets. They don't realize how dangerous it is."



Years ago, Sally tried to fight against the pesticides they used around Ocean Beach. A better alternative, she explained, are dragonflies. The colorful, majestic dragonflies are pretty big as far as insects go, but they are, in fact, only harmful to mosquitos they feed on. In comparison to this natural solution, she told us, the chemicals used in pesticides are not only dangerous to plant life and other animals, but also to the people who breathe them in.

So when the Ocean Beach board turned down her dragonfly idea in favor of pesticides, Sally took matters into her own hands. She and a friend ordered boxes and boxes of dragonfly eggs and secretly planted them under homes all around town. They weren't sure if they would all survive, but they did.

Most people don't think twice about the dragonflies following through town, except maybe to appreciate their beauty. Little do they know, each one is a mark of one woman's tenacious actions and unrelenting beliefs.

With every dragonfly that zips through my yard, I think of Sally.

On The Wild Side

HARD CLAMS

By Charles A Witek III

The Narragansetts, who lived in what's now Rhode Island, called them "poquahock," which Englishmen shortened to "quahog."

Biologists call them *Merccenaria mercenaria*, derived from a Latin word for "wages" or "commerce," because the same Naragansetts, and other tribes, made beads out of their shells and used them in trade.

Long Island restaurants and markets call them "chowders," "little necks" and "cherrystones," depending on size.

And most folks just call them "clams."

Whatever you call them, they are—or, sadly, were—a keystone species of Great South Bay, which once provided more than half of all quahogs sold in this country.

In addition, clams are filter feeders, which draw water in through the "neck," more properly known as a "siphon," and eat the organic matter that such water contains. When healthy clam beds still spanned Great South Bay, 40% of the entire bay's waters passed through quahog's filters each day.

Clam numbers collapsed, largely because of severe overfishing during the 1970s, and have fallen so low that, the daily filtration rate has fallen to a mere 1% of the bay's waters.

Diminished quahog abundance also caused the bay to lose much of the ecosystem that the clam beds created. When quahog were abundant, they created a bottom environment that supported other forms of life. For example, two species of marine worm were associated with the beds, which in turn were one of the primary foods for

winter flounder. The flounder, despite their tiny, toothless mouths, also fed on the clams themselves, although they were limited to the quahog's "spat," young clams barely the size of an infant's pinky-nail.

Today, the flounder population has also crashed, and it is reasonable to ask whether the loss of the clam beds was a contributing casue.

For many years, quahogs were abundant enough to support a large commercial fishing industry. As late as the mid-1980s, someone driving across the Robert Moses Bridge to Fire Island would see the bay dotted with clam boats, even when such boats had to break through salt ice in the middle of winter.

Today, only a handful of clambers still work Great South Bay, and harvest limits are so restrictive that no one can depend just on clams for their income. Instead, the remaining clambers are generally older, semi-retired baymen, or commercial fishermen who harvest many species, and only fall back on clams during times when fish and crabs are not available. Clams are now so scarce that even with very few clambers still working the bay, natural reproduction can no longer sustain the resource.

The quahog industry, such as it is, depends on either private aquaculture facilities or clam hatcheries maintained by some towns, which grow out young quahogs until they are large enough to stock in the bay, where they must grow even larger before reaching harvestable size.

However, efforts to restore the bay's clam beds are still being made. The Nature Conservancy, has taken over a former commercial clam bed in the Blue Point area, east of Hecksher State Park, where they plant clams every year

in an effort to jump start natural reproduction.

Because clams can't move around too much, depending on their muscular "foot" to pull them through bottom sediments, they must broadcast their eggs and milt into the water, and depend on the currents to complete the eggs' fertilization. Fertilization is density-dependant, meaning that when there are a lot of clams in one place, the eggs are more likely to be fertilized.

By planting a lot of clams in the waters off Blue Point, which are currently off-limits to harvest, the Nature Conservancy is trying to get clam density up to levels that better assure fertilization.

Unfortunately, those efforts have been hampered by the annual return of brown tides. Although quahogs are filter feeders, the microscopic algae that causes brown tide, a tiny plant with the big name of *Aureococcus anophagefferens*, is so small that the clams can't use it for food. At the same time, it becomes such a dominant part of the bay's plankton mix that it effectively smothers the clams, stunting their growth when it does not kill them completely.

On the other hand, the inlet that broke through Fire Island east of Davis Park is bringing clean ocean water into the bay, and diluting the effects of brown tide in nearby waters. Quahogs there have responded to the influx of clean salt water, with their shells exhibiting the broad annular rings that demonstrate fast, healthy growth. Hopefully, the new inlet will allow clams to form a dense bed, where they can reproduce and increase in abundance, and begin to seed spat in adjacent parts of Great South Bay.

In the meantime, there are

still enough clams in the bay to provide a good meal for anyone willing to go out and get them. The one hitch is that before anyone can harvest a clam, even for personal consumption, they must get a license from one of the towns, which generally only allow residents to clam in town waters. But if that obstacle can be overcome, all that it takes is a simple clam rake, or a willingness to go clam "treading"—feeling for clams with your feet—to put some quality shellfish on the table.

The would-be clammer needs to be aware of regulations, which generally limit the number and size of the quahogs that may be harvested. Also, most towns restrict the waters where clams may be taken, certifying areas that are free from various sorts of pollution; even certified waters should be avoided after heavy rains, which lead to runoff and increased levels of coliform bacteria.

But with those caveats always in mind, quahogs should be enjoyed.

There is something very right about watching the sunset, while eating clams on the half-shell and drinking a glass of Long Island wine.

Sybil Sez!

QUESTIONS! WE GET QUESTIONS!!! ... and Mummie tries to answer them!!

Dear Sybil, I'm spoiled! My refrigerator back in Manhattan has an automatic ice maker!... and out here on the Island I have to fill ice trays! I have to fill ice trays!! And for some reason, the ice cubes freeze all chipped up and falling apart! What the Hell am I paying all that rent for? And am I actually doing something wrong? Help! N.K.

Dear Chip... er...N.K., I sympathize completely with your plight! Why would someone want crushed ice unless you actually had a nice Italian Ice-man chained inside your fridge? I have learned on my own about the ice tray trick! First of all, make sure your trays are completely clean and rinsed out. No chips left over from the last failure! Fill them with cold water almost to the top, but not quite! They should be filled as separate cubes, not so full that they all join into a giant pool of water over the individual pockets! Then, carefully place the trays on the wire shelves up in the freezer, not on the floor of the freezer, and definitely not stacked on top of each other. The freezing air circulating completely around them makes the cubes ice up fully and evenly! Even if you don't have enough room on the wire shelves, put them anywhere in the freezer, but not on top of each other. The water in stacked ice trays above and below will cause them to freeze at different rates, and that's where the fracturing starts! Trust me! It really works! Your Fire Island ice cubes may not be as Park Avenue-Perfect as you're used to... but at least they'll be intact!

Sybil! You always post about your cooking and recipes here and on Facebook. You should do a cookbook of your own! I have a question. My frying pans and saucepans back in NYC are all in great shape and aren't

warped or bent on the bottom. But the ones in the place I rent on the Island are all uneven, dented, and rock back and forth on the burners. I have to be careful stirring food in them if I don't hold them steady by their handles. Did the former tenants wreck them in fights, play racket ball, or is it the salt air? Can you explain it to me? Thanks, Kim.

Dear Kim! No!!! ...well, maybe not. It's unlikely your predecessors actually bent the cookware over each other's heads... (although I DO have to say that there is a house of women down the walk from me who have certainly scared the police away from their ..um..."domestic disputes"!) ...and come to think of it, there is a Cherry Grove Ladies Racket Ball League, but frying pans are not recognized as sanctioned equipment! And it's definitely NOT the salt air! No, Kim, I have the feeling that all your cookware has been inadvertently damaged in the kitchen sink. Even pots and pans made by Revere Ware (in the old days!) or All Clad (today!) are no match for the big cookware killer; dunking in dishwasher while still molten hot from the stove! It's truly deadly! The metal will contract and warp so quickly sometimes you'll actually hear it clank! Cheaper pans may crack or their handles may pop off! Expensive cookware will put up a fight for a while, but finally it too will start to stress under the extremes! It only takes a few times of plopping them straight from the burner down into a hissing cloud of steam to turn them into what you might find in Ma & Pa Kettle's hillbilly hovel. So my recommendation is to always let your pots and pans and cookie sheets and Dutch ovens, etc., etc. come completely to room temperature before you start them soaking. Let them rest! They've



earned it after making you a delicious meal. And they're no harder to get clean even if they've cooled down....and they'll last forever! I promise.

Dearest Sybil! How the heck does your garden out here on Fire Island look so good, no matter what? It's infuriating! Mine gets all frazzled, even when the weather has been easy. Am I over-watering, under-watering, or???? I don't expect miracles, but you must be able to suggest something!...unless, maybe all those flowers in your pots are fake?!?! JEEESH!

Dear Jeeesh! LOL! No, they're not artificial, but I certainly have been tempted! ...every Summer at some point, and especially last Summer with that unending heat wave with crushing humidity but no rain and no breezes! Last season, everything in my garden began to die from mold, bacteria, fungus, and rot. It got so bad that the shingles on the house around my garden deck actually began to rot as well. You know, Bette Davis once said so eloquently, "Getting old isn't for sissies!"... well, neither is gardening! Above

and beyond the extravagant expenses, and the backbreaking physical labor, there's the heartbreak! Sometimes, you really do have to "Let go, and Let God!" If you want your garden, whether it's in pots or boxes or flowerbeds, to thrive, read articles on the Internet about what you planted. Ask questions from folks who are gardening out on Fire Island, not in Westchester, Piscataway, or Chelsea! The salt air alone is a huge factor, and so is the way the plants have to survive a Winter without any human contact at all! One thing I will say, and I say it so humbly; I'm surrendering to good old Mother Nature more and more. I'm gradually planting things that are truly compatible with the environment they're living in, and not showpieces that have nothing to do with Fire Island and only serve as "vanity pieces" for my ego. I have grown very fond of the wildflowers that find their way into my pots, even if other people call them weeds. Queen Anne's lace, fleabane, golden rod, cornflowers, butterfly weed, Joe Pye weed, sneezeweed...ok! Ok!...

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The Asian Tiger Mosquito

Facts and Fiction

By Katie Cunningham

In August of 1985, a couple of mosquito control officers at the Port of Houston noticed a gnarly looking mosquito appear, presumably with a shipment of used tires coming from Asia. This mosquito had distinctive white stripes on its legs, and had no compunction about aggressively biting you during the day. 30 years later that mosquito - *Aedes albopictus* - is considered the most invasive mosquito species in the world and has spread to over 37 states including New York.

The story of the Asian Tiger Mosquito's rapid proliferation up the East Coast is more important this summer than in previous years, as it is the only mosquito in New York known to scientists who have the capability to spread exotic tropical diseases like Zika. Not only is a very aggressive species of mosquito, but also it is also a "container mosquito", and has the capabilities to breed in tiny amounts of stagnant water. This is unlike the mosquito that spreads the West Nile virus, which mostly lay their larvae in salt marshes farther away from human populations. The constant media bombardment regarding Zika has made it hard to discern how worried we should be about it spreading in a place like Fire Island.

The Asian Tiger Mosquito is a close relative of the same pest - *Aedes aegypti* - that is responsible for the current outbreak of Zika in South America. With hundreds of United States athletes about to descend on Rio de Janeiro Brazil for the 2016 Olympic Games, the possibility that Zika will gain even more ground in the U.S. when they return is a real fear for many. At the moment, the only confirmed cases of Zika in NY have been imported, which

means they were brought in by people who had traveled to Zika infested areas.

Fortunately, there are a few things working in our favor. First, the Asian Tiger Mosquito is not a picky eater. They are just as likely to bite animals as they are people, making them unlike their Brazilian cousins who truly prefer living indoors with and feasting on us humans.

Another aspect is the history of other tropical diseases here in New York. They have never managed to gain a foothold here in recent years despite overseas outbreaks. According to Janet McAllister, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention research etymologist says that the situation for a transmission of a tropical virus so far from tropical climates would have to essentially be a perfect storm of timing between bites, allowing for 7 days of incubation before it can be passed on to another human. The uneasy takeaway here is, officials acknowledge that although an outbreak is possible, they don't know to what extent at this point.

Despite that a significant outbreak is unlikely in this area, officials have been taking cautionary steps to study and reduce the Asian Tiger Mosquito population. At the Fire Island Biennial Science Conference, Dr. Ilia Rochlin from Suffolk County Vector Control presented a recent study that was done where male Asian Tiger Mosquitoes are biologically sterilized using an incompatible strain of the *Wolbachia* bacteria, raised under laboratory conditions, shipped to the field sites, and released into the wild. These males are unable to produce viable offspring when they mate with females.

The outcome of this prelimi-

nary study was encouraging. Sterilized males were released last year for 9 weeks between June and August. In that time a 32-35% reduction in egg hatching occurred in both New York, and other test sites located in Kentucky and California. This particular method has the added bonus of being non-GMO and environmentally friendly.

While this method has only been tested, the state and counties where Asian Tiger Mosquitoes primarily are found in New York have been heavily sprayed, and there are a few things you can do to protect yourself and your family further.

First, try to eliminate any possible breeding grounds for the mosquito. Almost any amount of water is an acceptable place for the female Asian Tiger Mosquito to lay her eggs, so make sure you overturn any container where water can gather including bird baths, pet dishes, old tires and rain soaked trash cans and planters.

Another way of protecting yourself is DEET, which was developed initially to protect our troops in the jungle. Despite the bad press, the EPA says registered brands are safe if they are used as directed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends any product that is between 20% -50% DEET. However, it is not approved for use on children under 2 months old. Additionally, applying it to children's hands is advised against since they often put their hands in their mouths and eyes.

If the idea of DEET leaves a bad taste in your mouth, there are other options that are safe and effective. Picaridin is a synthetic version of piperine which is found in the group of plants that are

used to produce black pepper. It was widely used in Europe and Australia but has only been available in the United States since 2005. Lemon eucalyptus oil has also proven effective, and is easily found on Amazon.com.

The fact is, while a widespread infestation of Zika or another tropical disease is relatively unlikely here in New York at the moment, it is indeed possible. The best protection for you and your family is an insect repellent that you use often and diligently checking your yard for containers that are potential breeding grounds for these biting pests.

<http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2016/06/asian-tiger-mosquito-zika-virus.html>

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ACROSS

- 1. Spheres
- 5. More peculiar
- 10. Singer Ives
- 14. Prefix meaning 1000
- 15. Light wispy precipitation
- 16. Type of sword
- 17. Chemist
- 19. Haul
- 20. Church bench
- 21. Mountain crest
- 22. Radar signals
- 23. Viscera
- 25. Celebrations
- 27. To and ___
- 28. An Italian dessert
- 31. Dental filling

- 34. Doggy
- 35. Neither ___
- 36. Rude person
- 37. Nasal passage
- 38. Monster
- 39. Actress Lupino
- 40. Whips
- 41. Noodles
- 42. Taking delight in beauty
- 44. A parcel of land
- 45. Uteri
- 46. Early spring flower
- 50. Ere
- 52. Unsophisticated
- 54. Lyric poem
- 55. Anagram of "Crab"
- 56. A certain cut of meat

- 58. Conceal
 - 59. Daisylike bloom
 - 60. Nameless
 - 61. At one time (archaic)
 - 62. Utilizers
 - 63. 8 bits of data
- DOWN
- 1. Relative of a giraffe
 - 2. Mature
 - 3. Moved by the wind
 - 4. Drunkard
 - 5. Exaggerate
 - 6. Cuts into cubes
 - 7. "Darn!"
 - 8. Flagrant
 - 9. Beam
 - 10. Mass confusion

- 11. Revolts
- 12. Harvest
- 13. Lower limbs
- 18. Beset
- 22. Ho-hum
- 24. At a distance
- 26. Circle fragments
- 28. Forceps
- 29. Classify
- 30. Urine component
- 31. Nile bird
- 32. Connecting point
- 33. Words from other languages
- 34. Piety
- 37. Untidy one
- 38. Horse feed
- 40. Be furious
- 41. Might

- 43. Cold dessert
- 44. Admirers
- 46. Made from apple juice
- 47. Bonkers
- 48. Dimwit
- 49. Tubular pasta
- 50. Dull pain
- 51. Reasonable
- 53. Blind (poker)
- 56. Letter after sigma
- 57. Chemist's workplace

solution on page 12

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they're even called "Weeds!", but they're beautiful too! And so very well suited to our Zone 6/ Fire Island climate! Try them out, and celebrate the fact that you're also helping out the birds, the bees, the butterflies!...and maybe a bat or two too! Oh, and try dead-heading blossoms that have wilted. Dead-heading is the clipping off of the flowers that have "passed". You can keep a lot of garden plants bushy, robust, and even re-blooming simply by clipping off their dead flowers (and leaves too!). Clean garden shears or mini-snips by dipping in rubbing alcohol to prevent spreading bacteria during your pruning. When you dead-head a plant, you're preventing it from "going to seed" which is its first priority. The blossoms of flowers are technically their sex organs, with the stamens being the "male" and the pistils being the "female" parts. The seeds are the fertilized "eggs" so to speak! Not to be gross or politically provocative, but when you dead-head a flower, you technically are giving it an abortion of sorts. Flowering plants immediately try to reflower and reproduce. That's their only concern!...not winning you the rose trophy at the local flower show! The good news is that many plants are actually stronger by not going through all the work to produce seeds. Perennials usually multiply by spreading their roots, bulbs, or corms underground. And annuals benefit by dead-heading because they only live one year and die in the Winter anyway. It's very difficult to get annuals to actually return the following Spring by "self-seeding", so why not keep dead-heading them and "force" them to rebloom more and more luxuriantly to the end of the season! With gardening, I find that there's always a balance between exertion and surrender. Finding that balance is the trick! Pick and choose your battles, and breathe. BREATHE. ...the best way to find peace and pleasure in gardening is to take time everyday to sit quietly and admire both what you've created and what Nature has decided. Find gratitude. Be present. Say "thank you". Sybil Sez!

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(You too can send your questions and suggestions to Sybil Bruncheon at Brunchon@hotmail.com. You can also join Sybil on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, and Pinterest, her own blog, and at her websites, SybilSez.com and Sybil-Bruncheon.com. She currently is appearing in weekly shows at The Island Breeze right here in Cherry Grove, Fire Island, every Friday at 5-ish for her SYBIL'S FUN & GAYmes!)